



JCI QUARTERLY

Newsletter of the Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute

GVJCI MATSURI FUNDRAISER THANK YOU'S

The 2025 GVJCI Matsuri Fundraiser theme was "A South Bay Tradition". For over 70 years, the GVJCI Matsuri has been a South Bay Tradition reuniting family, friends, and neighbors. This amazing event could not have happened without the hard work and commitment of our **Volunteers, GVJCI Member Organizations, GVJCI Board, Staff, our families and the support of the community.** We are also grateful to our Corporate Sponsors, Local Businesses, and Nurseries for their time, financial and product support.

I want to thank and praise our Senior Volunteers, **Tomo No Kai (TNK) Members**, for all their support in selling Matsuri Presale Coupons and/or amazing food preparation. They also made the best spam musubi. I also want to thank the **Friday Craft Class** and the **Community craft donors** for the craft donations and each of the TNK classes that volunteered: **Bingo, Chair Yin Yoga, Gentle Yoga, Hula Class, Mahjong, Line Dancing, Qi Gong for Healthy Back, Studio Artists Workshop, Oil Painting Class, White Elephant Committee**, and the **Tomo Cafe Calligraphy group**.

I also want to thank the **Nisei VFW Post 1961** for their leadership in preparing the Somen Salad using their secret recipe. A thousand thanks to the **Gardena Buddhist Church** for their famous Chirashi and Inari, and their **ABA Club** for running Bingo. Thank all of you for all your hard work and support for the GVJCI.



The GVJCI Member Organizations, Wow! Thanks to all the members' hard work from setup, Matsuri day, breakdown, to cleanup. Merchandise Holding booth-**BSA 683**, you are a small troop but mighty. All day Maintenance, **BSA 719 and 310**, you all made the Matsuri sparkle. Plant booth-**Dai Ichi Bonsai Club**, your expertise was notable. Yakisoba-**Gardena JCI Kendo**, Kanpai!! Chili Tamale Hot Dogs-**Gardena Judo**, Udon-**Gardena Kendo Club**, Spam frying-**Mori Line Dance Group**, Shaved Ice-**Kyudo Renmei Club**, Drink Runners-**Gardena Naginata Dojo**, Greeters/Drink Runner-**Ryukyukoku Matsuri Daiko LA**, Andagi-**Yuujou Taiko**, **Shinobue Flute**

Club, Luna Sol Yoga, **Nikkei Social Dance Club**, Food Prep-**Manzanar Committee**, Raffle Booth-**Gardena Valley Nisei Club**, **South Bay Singers**, **Sandy's Pickleball Friends**, **Ikebana Demo-Ikebana Class**, Food Pick Up-**Japanese Language School**, **Na Pua O Kapo**, Beer Garden-**LA Men's Glee Club**, **Randall & Friends**, **Bingo-Yonsei Basketball Assoc**, **Sansei Baseball**, **The Rice Team-GEO**, and our largest volunteer group of volunteers from setup/games booth/chicken grilling/chicken slicing/food assembly/food runners/buffet table/drink runner/dessert runners/breakdown and clean up-**South Bay FOR**. The GVJCI appreciates everyone's support, time, patience, and commitment to the community.

Let's applaud our entertainers: **Yuujou Daiko**, JLS Student **Avaya McCoy** for her Koto Performance, **Na Pua O Kapo**, **GVJCI TNK Hula Class**, **Line Dance Class**, **LA Men's Glee Club**, **Ryukyukoku Matsuri Daiko LA Club**, **Umeboshi Group**, and our Martial Arts Clubs Demo: **So Cal Kyudo Renmei**, **So Cal Naginata**, **Gardena Kendo**, and **Gardena Judo Club**. We appreciate everyone taking the time to make the GVJCI a special event.

I would also like to thank **Tri-City CERT** and the **Gardena Police** for educating our community on safety and disaster precautions. I would also like to thank the **City of Gardena** for its support, as well as **Mayor Tasha Cerda**, **California State Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi**, the **Nisei Week Court**, Japanese Tea Ceremony Practitioner **Kenji Mayeda**, and the **On-call Medical Assistants Nurses and Doctors**.



For months, we have been working diligently to create an exceptional experience for our community. A special shout-out to the Matsuri Core Committee volunteers - **Ray Shibata, Dan Morimizu, and Wayne Nakatsu**. The sub-committees: **A/V Team, IT Team, Setup/Breakdown Team, Plant Booth Team, Cashier Team, GVJCI Interns, Raffle Prize Committee, the Supervisors, and especially to all the AVM's (Area Volunteer Managers) - Loryce Hashimoto, Dave Homan, and Dan Morimizu** for their execution and keeping every part of the Matsuri running smoothly.



As a nonprofit community organization, this annual fundraising event is crucial in supporting the operational, programming, overhead, and maintenance expenses of the GVJCI. We can continue to keep rental fees low for our community classes, and even waive fees for community youth organizations. Funding also supports our various cultural, educational, and social programs and services.

I have witnessed a community of family, friends, neighbors, teammates, and students stepping up and coming together to put on the festival of the year. Seeing every volunteer take one day of their time for the community was a sight to behold. To see old friends and make new friends working side by side, understanding the importance of giving back. Every time a generation walks through the GVJCI campus, they can proudly say that the GVJCI is still in existence because of my efforts. On behalf of the GVJCI and the future generation, I would like to extend my gratitude to everyone with much *Kansha*.

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Facebook, Instagram, Website

As you can see, the GVJCI Matsuri was a huge success because of the thousands of GVJCI supporters and you mean so much to us! We couldn't have done it without you and can't thank you enough! We hope to see you again next year!

THANK YOU EVERYONE!

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE GVJCI SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS!

On June 28 at the GVJCI Matsuri Fundraiser, representatives of the GVJCI Scholarship Committee presented scholarships to two deserving students. GVJCI congratulates them for their achievements, career goals, and their involvement and support of GVJCI and the community. We are very proud of these students and wish them success in their continued education and future goals, and hope for a long lasting engagement with the GVJCI! The following are messages from the recipients.



BRIAN TAKEO MITSUNAGA MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Justin Yong, attending California State University, Long Beach

“My name is Justin Yong, and I will be starting my second year at California State University, Long Beach, where I am majoring in Cinematic Arts. Receiving this scholarship from the Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute (GVJCI) is a true honor and means a great deal to me. I’ve been involved with GVJCI for nearly 10 years through Kendo and volunteering at the annual Matsuri festivals. The support from GVJCI extends beyond financial assistance; it has helped me stay connected to my Japanese heritage and given me the opportunity to give back to the community. The Kendo Dojo feels like a second family to me. They’ve watched me grow up, and their constant encouragement continues to motivate me and push me toward my goals. This scholarship helps alleviate some of the financial pressure of college, allowing me to focus more on my studies and creative projects as I work toward a film career. More importantly, it reminds me why staying connected to my culture and giving back to the community is so important. I’m inspired to keep contributing in any way I can and to represent GVJCI as I move forward in life.”



GARY HORI MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP
Kayla Sakurai, Torrance High School graduate, will be attending University of California, Irvine

“Thank you so much for this honor, I have so many wonderful memories here at the Matsuri’s and attending Japanese school here with my friends. I am so grateful to be a part of this amazing community.”



2025 GVJCI Matsuri Scholarship Presentation - Pictured l-r: Alison Kochiyama-GVJCI Executive Director, Justin Yong, Lawrence Hada-GVJCI Scholarship Committee Member, Kayla Sakurai, Raymond Shibata-GVJCI Scholarship Committee Member. (Photo courtesy of JK Yamamoto, Rafu Shimpo)



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GVJCI JAPANESE LANGUAGE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

The GVJCI Japanese Language School (JLS) successfully concluded the 2024-2025 school year with a memorable mini Bunka Sai in May and the return of the Graduation and Closing Ceremony in June! One of the highlights of the ceremony was the Graduation Prep class' incredible students: Logan Garcia, Marleny Garcia, Stepan Tyshchuk, Cameron Gurr, and Kairi Fukuda, who presented their speeches fluently in both English and Japanese. This was a reflection of pride and success as we celebrated each students' hard work and perseverance in their journey of Japanese learning.



Pictured above: Mayumi Fuchino Sensei
Pictured below l-r: Cameron Gurr, Logan Garcia, Kairi Fukuda, Stepan Tyshchuk, Marleny Garcia.

We are sincerely grateful for all of the JLS families, the amazing Parent Group: Miki Gilmour, Milli Yamamoto, Seiko Kussman, Hiromi Parks, Amy Kushigemachi, and Megan D. Baca, West High School and CAMS volunteers, community volunteer Erica Toide, along with all of our Sensei's relentless support, dedication, and contribution to enable us to provide the highest quality of instruction and immersive cultural experience for our students. A special shout out to Megan D. Baca, who invited the school to hold a cultural event at Lafayette Elementary School, accompanied by her generous donation to JLS. It was truly a joy to share the love and appreciation for the Japanese language and culture with Ms. Williams and the 3rd graders at the school. We are thankful for Stephanie Ajifu, Momo Yone, and Fumihide Itokazu of Ryukyukoku Daiko Los Angeles Branch for their breathtaking Taiko performance. Lastly, I'd like to express our deepest gratitude to Sayaka Shigeta of Shin-Sen-Gumi Group for the fundraising opportunity and the generous donation to our school. This spirit of collaboration and community is what makes our school unique.




The new school year 2025-2026 is now open for registration! Children's In-Person Classes and the Adult Online Conversational Class will begin on Saturday, September 6, 2025. We look forward to a renewed year of Sports Day, field trips, New Year Celebration, Bunka Sai, and many more cultural events in collaboration with a highly committed Parent Group Committee and incredibly talented Stephanie Mayeda, GVJCI Program Manager.

In closing, it has been a humbling experience to serve as the principal of GVJCI JLS and work with dedicated professionals who share the same passion and commitment to preserving the Japanese language and cultural heritage. I wouldn't have been able to

orchestrate this role without the continued support of Alison Kochiyama, Executive Director, and all of the wonderful GVJCI staff, past principal, Larry Hada Sensei, Vice Principal Masumi Sensei, and our multi-talented teachers, Mayumi Sensei, Chiaki Sensei, Noboru Sensei, Asaka Sensei, Aki Sensei, and our newest addition, Stephanie Sensei. Thank you for all that you do for GVJCI JLS. Taihen Otsukaresamadeshita.

With Sincere Kansha,
Judy Kawazoe
Principal, GVJCI Japanese Language School





Thinking of donating your car to charity? Now you can, and at the same time, support GVJCI! We have teamed up with Harold's Car Donation Service.

HOW IT WORKS:

1. Call or email us to arrange pickup at (310) 324-6611 or cars@jci-gardena.org.
2. Harold's Car Donation Service (HCDS) will arrange towing, always free of charge to you. (Disabled Vehicles, Junk Cars, Scrap Cars and Wrecks also accepted.)
3. HCDS handles all DMV paperwork at time of pickup, including Release of Liability.
4. After the car is sold, your acknowledgement and tax forms will arrive by mail.
5. You get rid of an unwanted car and get the satisfaction of helping others. You also get an IRS approved tax deduction. Yay!

CONGRATULATIONS 2025 JLS GRADUATES!

(Abridged speeches. Visit our website for full versions.)



Good morning. My name is Logan Garcia, and I'm 16 years old. I have been attending JCI for 7 years. On holidays like Sports Day, Children's Day, Girls' Day, and many others, we would

have class activities that taught us the meaning and history behind each tradition. I was able to use what I learned to communicate when I visited Japan. I felt accomplished the moment to realize that I could read and speak while I was there. If I could give any advice, it would be: try to apply a little Japanese to your everyday life, even if it's something small. There're so many memories I've made here that I won't forget. Looking back at where I started and seeing how much I've grown from a beginner, learning hiragana, to advanced, making conversation and reading kanji, I feel incredibly grateful. I want to say thank you to all the staff for supporting me on my educational journey. I also want to thank my Mom and Dad for giving me this opportunity. Thank you.



My name is **Marleny Garcia**. I have been with JCI for seven years. I'm grateful to have learned so much about Japanese culture and language through JCI. JCI has been a place full of

wonderful memories—like making mochi, doing morning exercises, participating in sports festivals, and giving New Year presentations. What I enjoyed the most at JCI were the fun activities such as the sports festivals and New Year presentations. When I'm at JCI, I feel very safe and at ease—because everyone here is kind, thoughtful, and welcoming. If you think the only reason to come here is just to study and then go back home, please reconsider. Learning also includes making new friends and building relationships. You can also learn things you didn't know about others—like their history and culture. I will truly miss JCI from the bottom of my heart. But maybe this isn't just a community—perhaps it's better to call it “family.” When I see how the people here care for each other, it really feels like a true family. I will always think of JCI as a safe and comforting place in my heart.

おはようございます。僕の名前はローガン・ガルシアです。僕は16歳です。僕はJCIに通い始めて7年になります。スポーツデー、こどもの日、女の子の日などの祝日には、それぞれの伝統の背後にある意味と歴史を教えてください。実際に日本に行ったときには、学んだことを活かして会話をすることができました。現地で文字を読んだり、話したり出来ると気が付いた瞬間に達成感を感じました。もし、日本語の勉強を始める人や、続けている人にアドバイスをするとしたら、たとえ小さなことでも、毎日の生活に、少し日本語を取り入れてみてください。ここでのたくさんの思い出は、忘れられません。初級でひらがなを学び始めてから、会話ができ、漢字も読めるまでになった自分の成長を振り返ると、感謝の気持ちで一杯になります。僕の学びの旅を支えてくれたすべてのスタッフの皆さんに感謝したいと思います。そしてこの機会を与えてくれた母と父にも感謝したいと思います。ありがとうございました。

私 の名前はマーレニーです。私はJCIに7年いました。JCIで日本の文化や言語についてたくさん学べたことを嬉しく思います。JCIは、お餅つきや朝の体操、そして運動会と新年の発表をしたとても思い出深い場所です。このような楽しい活動をするのが一番楽しかったです。JCIにいと、私はとても安全で安心できると感じます。それは、ここにいる皆さんが親切で、思いやりがあって、温かく迎えてくれるからです。「もし、ここに来た理由が『学んで、帰るだけ』だと思っているなら、考え直してみてください。」と言いたいです。学ぶことには、新しい友達を作ったり、人とつながったりすることも含まれます。ほかの人の歴史や文化など、ほかの人について知らなかったことを学ぶこともできます。私は心からJCIを恋しく思うでしょう。これは単なるコミュニティーではなく「家族」と呼んだほうがいいのかもしれない。ここにいる人々がお互いに気遣っているのを見ると、本当に本当の家族のように感じます。いつも心の中で安全で安らぐ場所としてJCIを思い続けます。



AUGUST

HEALTHY BRAIN HABITS

FRI, AUG 8, 1-2PM

GVJCI UPSTAIRS CLASSROOM 207/208

Workshop by Alzheimer's LA. It's never too early or too late to learn about brain health! Our physical health, nutrition habits, and overall lifestyle can play a large part in keeping our brains healthy and functioning normally. Let's give our brains a little more thought and learn about what we can do to improve the health of our brain. To RSVP, visit lyyti.in/Healthy_Brain_Habits_0959.

If you have any questions, please contact Kristy Huang-Arai at (323)930-6257 or e-mail khuang@alzla.org. Admission is free.

サウンドバスヒーリング

8月9日 土曜日、午前10時-午後11時

二世ベテランズホール 参加費無料

BYヨガインストラクター坪田ナナ

7つのサウンドボールを使ってストレッチとサウンドヒーリングを取り入れたセッションです。各自ヨガマットやバスタオルを持参してください。

参加申し込みはGVJCIのWEBサイトにアクセスするか、GVJCIオフィスまでお越しください。

SANSEI STORIES WRITING WORKSHOPS

WEDS, AUG, 13, 20, 27, SEPT 3, 10, & 17

GVJCI Upstairs Classroom 205

Write and tell your story. Write about yourself, your family, your friends. Add a story to your legacy. This workshop is designed to help new and experienced writers develop an idea, character or story. Tim Toyama will conduct the workshop. Participation fee is \$10 for each workshop or \$60 for the entire series.

MODERN KINTSUGI WORKSHOP

SAT, AUG 16, 5-8PM

GVJCI Upstairs Classroom 207/208

Kintsugi is the ancient Japanese art of mending pottery... transforming a once broken vessel into a work of art by highlighting the fractures with precious metal powder such as gold or silver. In this hands-on workshop, we will practice a modern kintsugi method instead, using a new type of urushi that is faster drying, with synthetic adhesive and putty that will allow students to experience this artistic process in shortened form. The workshop will also cover the history, culture, and concept of kintsugi and urushi, and the differences between traditional and modern kintsugi methods. Fee is \$175 per person. Visit the GVJCI website to register!

HOME COURT DOCUMENTARY FILM

SCREENING

SAT, AUG 30, 2-5PM

GVJCI Main Hall

Join us for a special screening of the basketball documentary: Home Court. Home Court is the coming-of-age story of Ashley Chea, a Cambodian American basketball prodigy in Southern California whose life intensifies as recruitment heats up. As she

overcomes injury as well as racial and class differences between her home and private school worlds, in peer groups, and against rival schools, Ashley strives to become her own person and leave a legacy behind. A post-film discussion with the president of the Nikkei Basketball Heritage Association, Jerry Nakafuji, will take place after the screening. Admission is \$15 per person. Please visit the GVJCI website to register

SEPTEMBER

OUCHI-GOHAN WORKSHOP: MOCHI 5 WAYS!

SAT, SEPT 14, 10:00AM-12:00PM

GVJCI Nisei Veterans Memorial Hall Kitchen

Participants will be instructed by veteran sushi chef Mike Inouye on how to prepare a variety of Japanese home cooking! This fall (September), we will learn how to make mochi five different ways and with a variety of fillings. \$80 per participant, \$20 for recording for people who can't attend. Limited to 8 people for the in-person workshop. To register, please visit the GVJCI website.

SOUND MEDITATION & GENTLE BREATHING TECHNIQUES

FRI, SEPT 19, 1:00-3:00PM

GVJCI Nisei Veterans Memorial Hall Kitchen

What to bring: Yoga mat (or substitute; a bath towel or rug is fine), extra towels, blankets, socks, etc. to keep you warm when lying on your back. This session focuses on the deep healing properties of sound using singing bowls. To register, please visit the GVJCI website or visit the GVJCI office. This workshop is made possible through funding from Keiro.

GVJCI 2026 CALENDAR: PURCHASE AD SPACE



SUPPORT THE GVJCI BY PLACING AN AD IN OUR CALENDAR! THE CALENDAR WILL BE DISTRIBUTED TO OVER 1,600 PEOPLE AND BUSINESSES AND IS ENJOYED THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO PURCHASE AD SPACE.

FULL SIZE: \$900 BUSINESS CARD SIZE: \$200

HALF SIZE: \$550 WELL WISHER: \$150

THIRD SIZE: \$350

PLEASE CONSIDER SUPPORTING US BY PLACING AN AD IN OUR CALENDAR. ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT THE GVJCI. CONTACT: CATHY LEE AT CLEE@JCI-GARDENA.ORG OR 310-324-6611

GVJCI ART SHOW

SAT, SEPT. 28, 11AM-5PM

SUN, SEPT. 29, 10AM-4PM

GVJCI Nisei Veterans Memorial Hall

This year, the theme for the GVJCI's annual art show focuses on the Nikkei experience in America. If you'd like to submit your artwork to our art show, please visit the GVJCI website. Come show your support for our local artist community! Light refreshments will be served. Admission is free, but donations are welcomed.

OCTOBER

OUCHI-GOHAN WORKSHOP: PLANT-BASED JAPANESE HOME COOKING

SAT, OCT 12, 10:00AM-12:00PM

GVJCI Nisei Veterans Memorial Hall Kitchen

Participants will be instructed by veteran sushi chef Mike Inouye on how to prepare a variety of Japanese home cooking! This fall, we will learn plant-based Japanese cooking focusing on vegetables, mushrooms, tofu, and more. \$80 per participant, \$20 for recording for people who can't attend. Limited to 8 people for the in-person workshop. To register, please visit the GVJCI website.

CAREGIVER CONFERENCE

SAT, OCT 25, 10:00AM - 2:00PM

GVJCI Main Hall

For Keiro's second Caregiver Conference in 2025, we will be



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heading to the South Bay! Centered on Building a Strong Care Foundation through advance care planning, this event will offer valuable insights, practical strategies, and expert guidance to empower caregivers to secure not only their loved ones' futures but also their own. Together, we'll explore innovative tools and resources designed to enhance caregiver support for Our Community in the South Bay. Registration opens Monday, August 18, 2025 and will close Friday, October 10, 2025, or when capacity is reached. This event will have a limited number of tickets, and participation will be available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Registration is required to attend. For questions, please contact programs@keiro.org.

NOVEMBER

OSECHI RYORI COOKING WORKSHOPS:

Japanese New Year Foods

SAT, NOV. 1 & NOV. 15, 10:00AM-12:00PM

GVJCI Nisei Veterans Memorial Hall Kitchen

Learn to make Osechi Ryori (traditional Japanese New Year foods) in time for the new year! Participants will be instructed by veteran sushi chef Mike Inouye on how to prepare a variety of dishes. This is a two-part workshop series taking place over 2 Saturdays. In-person participation fee is \$90 for the entire series and includes all foods and supplies. A recording of the class will be available for \$20 for those who cannot attend. Limited to 8 people for in-person workshops. The recording for each workshop will be shared with all paid participants. This workshop is for ages 16+. To register, please visit the GVJCI website!



Saturday, September 13, 2025 | 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple (Nishi)

Entertainment. Crafts. Games. Vendors. And More!

Register Today!



Age 60+: Free
Age 59 or Under: \$20



Bus Transportation: \$5
Available in Torrance

More info: keiro.org/knh | 詳細は: keiro.org/jp-knh

Keiro

GVJCI STAFF UPDATES

In April, we said goodbye to **Yukiko Natori**, our Senior & Bilingual Programs Coordinator, who was with us for two years. We thank Yukiko for her contributions to our Senior Programs and Japanese Bilingual Programs. We're grateful for her dedication and hard work in developing and coordinating much needed community services like our Senior Bento Program, smartphone classes, and always making our seniors feel welcomed.



The GVJCI Japanese Language School welcomes our newest sensei **Stephanie Ajifu**! Stephanie Sensei is a recent graduate of Cal Poly Pomona with a degree in Liberal Studies, and is excited to teach at the GVJCI Japanese Language School, where she shares her passion for education and cross-cultural communication. Stephanie Sensei was also GVJCI's former Nikkei Community Intern during the Summer 2023, and she currently serves as the Branch Leader of Ryukyukoku Matsuri Daiko Los Angeles, which is one of our new GVJCI Member Organizations. We are very excited to have her a part of our school and GVJCI staff!

GVJCI Japanese Language School is sad to announce that Noboru Sensei and Asaka Sensei will not be continuing in the Fall. **Asaka Morita** Sensei had been a veteran teacher since 2019, instrumenting innovative lessons that cater to the students' interests and current pop culture. From in-person teaching in the classroom to virtual instruction on Zoom, Asaka Sensei flawlessly transitioned from multi-leveled curriculum and brought in an engaging learning environment, featuring relatable experiences in Japan as the students traveled with the iconic Simpson family and infamous character, Tanjiro, from the world-renowned anime, Demon Slayer. One of the most impactful influences that Asaka Sensei brought to our school since the pandemics was her recruitment of the Japanese High School volunteers: Shingo, Keigo, Riko, Riki, Yura, Miyo, Kai, Akane, Mina, Carina, and Yuma. These dedicated and talented students join the class from all parts of the world, whether it's from Japan, Australia, or even Indonesia. They are diligent to join the classes on Zoom despite the time differences and have been an incredibly valuable support for our students' learning. We are deeply touched by their commitments.

Noboru Mishima Sensei had been an integral part of the GVJCI Japanese Language School staff since 2023. His thoughtful integration of traditional Japanese cultural practices, including the construction of kusudama origami and the demonstration of the intricate techniques of Japanese calligraphy, truly enriched the learning experience for the children. With great patience and dedication, Noboru Sensei focused on individual students' progress and growth. Not only did he fostered a deeper appreciation for the artistic aspects of Japanese heritage, but he also facilitated a more immersive environment for learning the Japanese language.

Although Asaka Sensei and Noboru Sensei will be missed in their regular roles, we are grateful that they will continue to be a part of the GVJCI Japanese Language School community and our language and cultural workshops. We like to extend our heartfelt appreciation for their ongoing support to inspire and enrich the students' learning of the Japanese language and cultural heritage.

2025 GVJCI ELEMENTAL FUNK

CONCERT FUNDRAISER

MASQUERADE PARTY

Saturday, November 8th, 2025

4:00 pm - 9:00 pm

21+

Come join us for the BEST live band in the South Bay... Elemental Funk!!

Beer, Wine & Comforting Appetizers available for purchase! Credit card payments only please. No Cash!

Early Bird Tickets: \$55.00 through Oct 24

GA Tickets: \$65.00 at door

Limited quantities of tables for 10 people available for purchase.

Two ways to purchase tickets (ends 11/6/25):

Visit the GVJCI website to purchase tickets.

Ticket purchase available at GVJCI office.



PRE-ORDER DISCOUNTS

GVJCI CAR SHOW FUNDRAISER

SATURDAY, AUGUST 16TH, 2025

10AM - 3PM

Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute
1964 W. 162nd Street, Gardena, CA 90247 | www.jci-gardena.org | (310) 324-6611
501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization

Early Bird Tickets \$10 (Order on GVJCI Website thru August 4th)

- General Admission: \$15
- Children 12 & under - Free
- Pinewood Derby Races
- Free Games for Kids
- Vendor Booths
- Family Fun
- Okamoto Kitchen Food Truck (Available)
- Handel's Homemade Ice Cream (Available)

Cashless Event - Credit / Debit Cards Only

WWW.JCI-GARDENA.ORG | FACEBOOK.COM/GVJCI | GARDENAVALLEJCI | #GVJCIARSHOW

continued from page 5



Hello, my name is **Kairi Fukuda**. I am 16 years old and I have been attending JCI for 7 years. I always had a language barrier with my family in Japan, so I came to this school so I could communicate with them and also be in touch with my Japanese culture. I really enjoyed all the events we did at this school, like dressing up for Halloween and celebrating Japanese holidays such as Undokai, Hina matsuri, Setsu bun, and Kodomo no hi. The most impressive thing about JCI is how everyone comes together to share the Japanese culture. There are many things I've learned over the years about my own culture that I hadn't been taught before and when at this school you really feel a sense of belonging and respect for Japan. Overall, thank you JCI for everything. Thank you to my teachers, my friends, and the school. I wish you all the best.



Hello, my name is **Cameron Gurr**, I am 17 years old and I have been attending JCI for the past 7 years. JCI has taught me everything from the Japanese language to its culture throughout sports days and Japanese holidays. I have been able to use what I learned here practically during my two visits to Japan, where I was able to understand and talk with the locals despite my small understanding of the language. I am thankful for the community this school has welcomed me into, and the friends I was able to meet due to JCI. JCI has undoubtedly changed my life for the better, teaching me not just the language, but discipline, the joy of learning, and how rewarding it can be to dedicate yourself to something for so long. Overall, I want to thank JCI and its personnel for the welcoming environment they have shown me for the entirety of my time at the school.



Hello. My name is **Stepan Tyshchuk**. I am 14 years old and have been attending JCI for 7 wonderful years. I started in Nyumon class and have been through all the classes and met many great classmates, teachers, and people during my time here. One of the most fun and enjoyable parts of Japanese Cultural Institute school is the special events, such as the calligraphy or the sushi making as they teach you some of the Japanese culture. One of the things that I remember best about JCI school is just how kind the teachers are, and how much they care about you and your learning. I would also like to thank all the JCI teachers and staff for their hard work and being so supportive while creating such a wonderful learning environment.

こんにちは。私の名前は福田海里です。私は16歳で、JCIに7年間通いました。私はいつも日本の家族と言葉の壁があったので、彼らとコミュニケーションを取るために、そして日本の文化に触れるためにこの学校に来ました。ハロウィンの仮装や運動会、ひなまつり、節分、こどもの日などの日本の祝日を祝ったことなど、この学校で行ったすべてのイベントが本当に楽しかったです。JCIで1番すごいと思うことは、みんなが一緒になって日本の文化を分かち合っていることです。この学校で学んだことで、今まで教わらなかった自分の文化についてもたくさん知ることができました。ここにいると、日本に対する尊敬やつながりを本当に感じるすることができます。JCIの皆さん、すべてに本当にありがとうございました。先生方、友達、そして学校に感謝しています。みなさんに、たくさんの幸せがありますように。

こんにちは。僕の名前はキャメロン・ガーです。僕は17歳で、過去7年間JCIに通いました。JCIでは、運動会や日本の祝日を通して、日本語から文化に至るまで、あらゆることを学びました。僕は日本に2回訪れた時、ここで学んだことを実際に使うことができ、言葉の理解がまだ浅い中でも現地の人々と会話することができました。この学校が僕を温かく迎えてくれたこと、そしてJCIのおかげで出会えた友達に感謝しています。JCIは間違いなく僕の人生を良い方向へ変えてくれました。言語だけでなく、規律や学ぶことの楽しさ、何かに長く取り組むことの素晴らしさを教えてくれました。最後に、僕がこの学校に通っている間ずっと温かい環境で迎えてくれたJCIと、その関係者の皆様に感謝したいと思います。

こんにちは。僕の名前はステパン・ティシュチュクです。14歳です。JCIで素晴らしい7年間を過ごしました。僕は入門クラスから始めて、すべてのクラスを経験してきました。その間に、たくさんの素晴らしいクラスメートや先生方と出会いました。JCIでとても楽しく、印象に残っていることのひとつは、書道や寿司作りなどの特別なイベントです。これらのイベントでは、日本の文化について学ぶことができます。JCIで一番よく覚えていることのひとつは、先生方がとても親切で、生徒一人一人を大切に思ってくださいます。JCIでの一番よいところは、通うことで得られる「経験」と、先生方やスタッフの皆さんが僕たちを学校の一員として迎えてくれることです。最後に、JCIの先生方やスタッフの皆さんに、素晴らしい学びの環境を作りながら支えてくださったことに感謝したいと思います。

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Friends of the GVJCI is now in its 10th year! Thank you to all of our Friends who have made a pledge and continue to support us through the years! It's not too late to become a Friend of the GVJCI this year!



Please consider demonstrating your support of the GVJCI, both its historic role and services to the Nikkei community and its expanding role for the next generation, by joining the Friends of the Gardena Valley JCI with an annual pledge. You can be a Friend for as little as \$10 per month or \$100 annually. This is a small commitment with a big impact!

FRIEND LEVELS:

- \$5,000+ **DIAMOND**
- \$1,000 - \$4,999 **PLATINUM**
- \$500 - \$999 **GOLD**
- \$250-\$499 **SILVER**
- \$100 - \$249 **BRONZE**



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Why be a Friend of the GVJCI?

- Annual gifts help us with annual budgeting & funding our programs and services
- You get to partner in creating impact in our community
- We get funding that we can rely on each year
- We're able to use your dollars where we need it most!
- Our Impact
 - 70+ years in the South Bay community and going strong
 - 40+ annual programs & classes for seniors, youth, young adults and Japanese-speakers
 - 500+ annual volunteers
- We all need Friends, won't you be our Friend?

"For me, in these times of seeing the Japanese American culture assimilate more and more into standard American culture, it is terrific to see continued sharing and teaching of aspects of the Japanese culture in activities, values and ethics...The GVJCI helps create a bond, an ethnic bond, between those who experience activities..."

Grant Nakaoka, GVJCI Board Vice President and Friend of the GVJCI



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To visit the GVJCI website, scan the QR code

GARDENA VALLEY JAPANESE CULTURAL INSTITUTE

The Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute (GVJCI) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit community center providing various classes, programs, services, and facilities to the South Bay area. We also provide affordable housing through the JCI Gardens Apartments, the adjacent senior housing property.

The GVJCI's roots date back to 1912, when it was known as the Moneta Gakuen, a Japanese language school. In 1967, it was formally incorporated as the Gardena Valley Japanese Language School. Then, in 1968, the corporation changed its name to the Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute to incorporate the broader services and functions the organization offers. In 1971, Compton Gakuen, Gardena Gakuen, and Moneta Gakuen merged, opening its doors officially as the GVJCI's Japanese Language School. The GVJCI has a very proud history spanning over 100 years.

Today, we continue to provide a variety of activities, programs, and services. We are truly fortunate to have an active and well-utilized center serving people of all ages. We thank you, the community, for your active participation and for your support through donations and volunteerism that enables the GVJCI to continue.

MISSION STATEMENT

A space to engage, share, and embrace the Nikkei experience and culture.

VISION STATEMENT

The GVJCI envisions a vibrant network and a welcoming space for all persons interested in Japanese heritage and culture where history and tradition are honored, people are inspired to create action and change, and cultural pride and respect for all humanity are promoted.

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