This has been a challenging time for everyone, and we want to sincerely thank you for your support during this unprecedented time. Your safety is our priority.

While living through a pandemic is new to us, some things are not: like the support from you, our Member Organizations, donors, volunteers, friends and community! As the GVJCI’s largest annual fundraiser, we are pleased to share that this year’s 2020 GVJCI Virtual Matsuri Fundraiser was a success and we couldn’t have done it without you!

The Annual GVJCI Matsuri Fundraiser has been a South Bay tradition for over 60 years, bringing all ages of the community together, including many generations of families, for a fun-filled, family-friendly weekend celebrating the Nikkei culture. We are pleased that we were able to continue our tradition with our very first Virtual Matsuri!

Who would have thought that we would be experiencing a global pandemic that changed our lives in so many ways? Last year, we made many new changes to our annual matsuri, and I didn’t think I would be reporting any additional changes, at least major changes this year. But of course almost everything changed! Pivoting from a physical matsuri to a virtual matsuri was new for all of us! What didn’t change was the tremendous support from you, our Member Organizations, donors, friends and supporters of the GVJCI. GVJCI is deeply grateful for the support the community gives each year.

The 2020 GVJCI Virtual Matsuri Fundraiser was held from June 22 – 26, and was completely online. Guests enjoyed virtual matsuri content throughout the week. Each day began with a special welcome from GVJCI Board Members and staff followed by videos and social media posts featuring GVJCI Matsuri favorites like taiko, hula, games, imagawayaki, spam musubi, yakisoba, martial arts and more! We even included a virtual matsuri welcome from GVJCI Board Members and staff followed by videos and social media posts featuring GVJCI Matsuri favorites like taiko, hula, games, imagawayaki, spam musubi, yakisoba, martial arts and more! We even included a virtual matsuri welcome from GVJCI Board Members and staff followed by videos and social media posts featuring GVJCI Matsuri favorites like taiko, hula, games, imagawayaki, spam musubi, yakisoba, martial arts and more! 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A special thank you to our GVJCI Board President, Ray Shibata and GVJCI Executive Director, Alison Kochiyama for their continued leadership, insight and support. Thank you to our Matsuri Committee members for your input, suggestions and hard work. Your combined effort and support made the Virtual Matsuri a huge success! We are committed to carrying out our mission: “A space to engage, share, and embrace the Nikkei experience and culture” even if it is in new and unexpected ways! We invite you to follow us on Facebook and Instagram, and to sign up for our emails through www.jci-gardena.org/ to stay up to date with the latest information from us.

As a nonprofit community organization, this annual fundraising event is essential in support the operational, programming, overhead, and maintenance expenses of the GVJCI. Funding also supports our various cultural, educational, and social programs and services especially during this challenging time. On behalf of the GVJCI, we sincerely thank you all!

returned from page 2

Hello! My name is Rei Shindo. I, after 3 years, including the entirety of my first job, am happily graduating. I am proud that I was able to finish this program so quickly, and I hope to use the skills I learned. This school has given us all very good memories to keep and has taught us concepts to use. Hopefully, I will be able to return to JCI, perhaps as a volunteer. Although I will be quickly gone, it was still fun. I wish JCI the best as the staff here has done for me in the past. Thank you!

** Continued from page 5

Continued from page 5

** Insert any legal disclosures i.e. underwritten by CWIC etc.

Molly Kiku Trotter

Hello! My name is Miki Uchida. I have been going to JCI for over four years. I will always remember having so much fun doing the three-legged race with Kiku every year. I am grateful for all of the amazing teachers, volunteers, and students here at JCI! Thank you!
With much regret, I’ve decided to cancel the November Okinawa tour; a difficult decision, but the uncertainty caused by the coronavirus (quarantines, travel restrictions, and the possibility of a worldwide surge in the fall and winter) make a November tour untenable, or at the very least, not enjoyable.

Also, and again with much regret, I’ve put the Spring 2021 Okinawa Tour on hold. Like the November Okinawa tour, there are too many uncertainties to confirm a spring tour. As for the next Japan tour, I can’t provide any information other than we’re in a wait-and-see mode. As soon as international travel opens up, I’ll send out announcements. I’m looking at fall 2021 as a possibility for Okinawa, also spring 2022.

Please look for updates in the next newsletter, or you can contact me at timtoyama@gmail.com or 310-848-9890 phone and text.

Please stay safe and healthy!

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In April, the GVJCI Staff had to say our goodbyes remotely to our Program Coordinator Pam Momoko Yan during our online staff meeting. Unfortunately, Pam departed from her position due to familial commitments. We thank Pam for her hard work and nonstop energy working with our senior programs and Tomo No Kai (TNK). We will miss her!

Chikako Roper, our Bilingual Programs Coordinator has now expanded her role to work with all of our senior programs and TNK, which has transitioned online, and will continue supporting the senior onsite programs once it reopens. Thank you, Chikako!

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There are many ways you can support the Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute (GVJCI). One important way is through our annual Friends of the GVJCI Campaign. This campaign began in 2016 and our hope is to continue to grow our Friends each year! We invite you to join the 2020 Friends of the GVJCI. Making an automated online monthly pledge/donation is an easy way to support the Annual GVJCI Friends campaign! Your annual contribution will support the continued growth of the GVJCI and its programs, serving the increasingly diverse and dynamic Nikkei communities in the South Bay. Your pledge will help ensure the continued success of the GVJCI. During this unprecedented time, our Friends’ support is needed now more than ever.

Please enjoy the following interview with our longtime GVJCI supporter and Friend, Hazel Shimabuku!

Interview with Hazel Shimabuku
By Derek Oye, GVJCI Development Committee Member

How did you get involved with the GVJCI?
I have been a South Bay resident for 35 years, but I’ve lived in many different places - Oregon, Texas, and many parts of California before finding Gardena. I am originally from the Big Island (Hawaii) and could never get away from my Hawaiian accent. I think, however, that helped me make a friend at work who introduced me to the GVJCI. She started giving me various crafts as gifts as we got to know one another. I really wanted to learn how to make those crafts, so when I retired in 1999 my friend brought me to the GVJCI.
What programs and services are you involved with at the GVJCI? When I first started attending the GVJCI, I loved doing crafts and spending time with the other ladies: knitting, crocheting, plastic canvas, and layering art projects. I also loved volunteering for the senior meals program, serving hot meals to others. Currently, Erma Tahata and I are co-coordinators for Tomo No Kai, the senior club at the GVJCI. Through Tomo No Kai, we make sure all the classes have volunteers to help the teachers. I enjoy volunteering, Bingo on Monday and Wednesday, exercise, and participating or even watching classes.

What do you like most about GVJCI? What is your favorite program? I just love getting up in the morning and going to GVJCI. During winter I feel like staying at home, but I’m glad GVJCI gives me a reason to get out of the house. You know, I appreciate all the people at GVJCI - I had a stroke while at GVJCI and wouldn’t have survived if it were not for them. Fellow seniors and staff recognized my symptoms and made sure I quickly received help before it was too late!

GVJCI gives me a purpose and place to go. It gives me motivation. Being able to talk to others helps me realize my problems are not that bad. Seeing others in different situations, but not giving up - that is inspiring. My motto is don’t give up, there is always hope! I am 84 years old and GVJCI has helped me a lot!

In light of COVID-19, how are you remaining involved and connected to GVJCI? Once a month, GVJCI staff and volunteers distribute LA Food Bank food boxes from the GVJCI parking lot. I take about 30 of the boxes and drive them out to seniors who cannot drive. I also volunteer to call seniors in Tomo No Kai. I call about 42 people each week.

For quite a few they like to hear someone else’s voice and are very thankful for my phone call.

What would you like to let friends and supporters know about the GVJCI? Why is it important to support the GVJCI? The GVJCI gives many of us a reason to get up and be somewhere. The GVJCI tends to many different people and is very inclusive. Recently, they started Tomo Cafe for Japanese speaking seniors on Monday and Wednesday. Many Japanese speaking seniors look forward to Tomo Cafe and from there, realize they can participate in other programs. The programs and activities are important to keep our minds and bodies strong.

Being older now, I just love coming here and watching people. I think other seniors are the same. Being able to talk to people, join in an activity, or just being around others. GVJCI is a nice place where you can feel comfortable. You don’t have to do anything you don’t want to do. Everyone is welcome, no matter what religion or race. I will feel very fortunate when I can come back again!

We had a great time interviewing Hazel! She is kind and spirited, and during the interview she shared with us all her worldly travels, including one of her favorite adventures - walking back again! Everyone is welcome, no matter what you don’t want to do. Everyone is welcome, no matter what religion or race. I will feel very fortunate when I can come back again!

Congratulations to our five scholarship recipients who have achieved greatly academically, as well as, provided extensive volunteer hours to the community. We are very proud of all of you and wish you success in your college education!

GVJCI Gary Hori Memorial Scholarship Melanie Oda, Torrance High School graduate, will be attending University of California San Diego. Melanie says: “Receiving this scholarship from the JCI has left me filled with extreme gratitude and thankfulness. This community has been apart of my life through various aspects; Judo, Kizuna, and Matsuris, and has always left with me a sense of comfort and support. Receiving this scholarship means that my community supports me in my educational pursuits at UCSD as a Chemical Engineering major. I am so thankful to have been the beneficiary of this community and the recipient of this scholarship.”

Gardena Valley Japanese American Citizens League Scholarship Alexander Ito, West Torrance High School, will be attending El Camino College. Alex says: “I am so honored to receive a scholarship from the GVJCI. I am looking forward to forward, and I know this scholarship will help propel me to success. The GVJCI has been an integral part of my life since I started studying shotokan karate at the age of seven. Receiving my black belt was one of the highlights of my life, and I was proud to give back to the GVJCI through my Boy Scout Eagle Project. I am truly grateful for all the services, culture, and opportunities that the GVJCI provides to our community.”

Peninsula High School, will be attending University of Southern California. Carina says: “Receiving this scholarship means the world to me and I am incredibly honored and grateful. I am so thankful for everything the JCI has done for me! I plan to use the money to help pay for my continuing education.”

Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute Scholarship Jennifer Shimizu, North High School, will be attending University of California Santa Barbara. Jennifer says: “I am grateful to have received this scholarship from the GVJCI. It is meaningful to not only me but to my grandparents as well because they have always encouraged me to embrace my culture. I would like to thank Wallace and Marion Shisuto and Jean Shimizu for their constant love and support. Thank you also to the JCI for giving me the opportunity to learn more about my Japanese heritage and I hope to continue my affiliation with the JCI.”

To make a donation to the GVJCI Scholarship Fund or for more information, please contact the GVJCI Office or visit our website (jci-gardena.org). The GVJCI awards annual scholarships to high school seniors, and GVJCI Japanese Language School graduates. Applicants must have been directly involved with the GVJCI or its member organizations that hold regular activity at the GVJCI. Emphasis is placed upon GVJCI and other community involvement, volunteerism and future goals. High school students must have a minimum of a 2.5 GPA and have post-secondary educational plans.

The Trusted Choice for In-Home Care

Home Care Assistance is proud to have partnered with Millennia Personal Care Services to bring customized home care to the Japanese Community.

Our exclusive approach to wellness for older adults, the Balanced Care Method™, is based on the scientifically studied lifestyles of the long-living elders of Okinawa, Japan. This approach is focused on nutrition, physical activity, social engagement and purpose and aims to enhance your loved one’s overall health and quality of life.

Call us today! 888-285-4913 or HomeCareAssistance.com/Millennia

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2020 GVJCI SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Jennifer Akioka, North High School, will be attending El Camino College. Jennifer says: “I am grateful to have received this scholarship from the GVJCI. It is meaningful to not only me but to my grandparents as well because they have always encouraged me to embrace my culture. I would like to thank Wallace and Marion Shisuto and Jean Shimizu for their constant love and support. Thank you also to the JCI for giving me the opportunity to learn more about my Japanese heritage and I hope to continue my affiliation with the JCI.”

Kristin Akioka, North High School, will be attending University of California San Diego. Kristin says: “Receiving this scholarship means the world to me and I am incredibly honored and grateful. I am so thankful for everything the JCI has done for me! I plan to use the money to help pay for my continuing education.”

Melanie Oda, Torrance High School, will be attending El Camino College. Alex says: “I am so honored to receive a scholarship from the GVJCI. I am looking forward to forward, and I know this scholarship will help propel me to success. The GVJCI has been an integral part of my life since I started studying shotokan karate at the age of seven. Receiving my black belt was one of the highlights of my life, and I was proud to give back to the GVJCI through my Boy Scout Eagle Project. I am truly grateful for all the services, culture, and opportunities that the GVJCI provides to our community.”

Melanie says: “Receiving this scholarship from the GVJCI has left me filled with extreme gratitude and thankfulness. This community has been apart of my life through various aspects; Judo, Kizuna, and Matsuris, and has always left with me a sense of comfort and support. Receiving this scholarship means that my community supports me in my educational pursuits at UCSD as a Chemical Engineering major. I am so thankful to have been the beneficiary of this community and the recipient of this scholarship.”

Carina Sakimura, Palos Verdes Peninsula High School, will be attending University of Southern California. Carina says: “Receiving this scholarship means the world to me and I am incredibly honored and grateful. I am so thankful for everything the JCI has done for me! I plan to use the money to help pay for my continuing education.”

Gardena Valley Japanese American Citizens League Scholarship

Kristin Akioka, North High School, will be attending El Camino College

Melanie Oda, Torrance High School, will be attending University of California San Diego

Jennifer Akioka, North High School, will be attending University of California Santa Barbara

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ONLINE TOMO NO KAI CLASS SCHEDULE
You must be a Tomo No Kai (TNK) member in order to enroll in TNK online classes. Please note that due to COVID-19, all TNK classes will be online until further notice. All classes take place using Zoom. To register, please visit https://www.jci-gardena.org/tnk-online-classes.html.

THURSDAY
12:45-1:45PM              Strength, Stretching & Balance with Regan Read
11:15AM-12:15PM     Health & Fitness for Brain Memory with Nathan Jack Read
9:45-10:45AM              Physical Fitness for Seniors (w/weights) with Nathan Jack Read

FRIDAY
12:45-1:45PM              Strength, Stretching & Balance with Regan Read
2:15-3:15PM                Oil Painting with Steve Jones

TUESDAY
9:30-10:30AM              Hau'oli Hula O kamakani Hula Class for Seniors with Harriet Nagata
11:00AM-12:00PM     Zumba with Genie Nakano
12:45-1:45PM              Strength, Stretching & Balance with Regan Read
2:15-4:15PM                Oil Painting with Steve Jones

WEDNESDAY
9:45-10:45AM              Physical Fitness for Seniors (w/weights) with Nathan Jack Read
11:15AM-12:15PM     Zumba with Genie Nakano
12:45-1:45PM              Strength, Stretching & Balance with Regan Read
2:15-3:15PM                Zumba with Tim Toyama

THURSDAY
9:45-10:45AM              Physical Fitness for Seniors (w/weights) with Nathan Jack Read
11:15AM-12:15PM     Health & Fitness for Brain Memory with Nathan Jack Read
12:45-1:45PM              Strength, Stretching & Balance with Regan Read
2:15-3:15PM                **Meditation & More with Patty Rassouli**

MONDAY
9:45-10:45AM              Physical Fitness for Seniors (w/ bands) with Nathan Jack Read
11:15AM-12:15PM     Chair Yoga with Genie Nakano
12:45-1:45PM              Strength, Stretching & Balance with Regan Read
3:30-4:30PM                Chair Aerobics with Tim Toyama

Current TNK membership is at 995!

Established on May 31, 1979, the Tomo No Kai or Senior Citizen Friendship Society was formed to promote and support programs at the GVJCI for the senior community, as well as to provide recreational and social activities, such as the monthly senior birthday luncheon, and the annual Christmas parties. Your membership dues, class participation fees, and donations support the senior programs and GVJCI facility operations. Thank you very much for your participation and support!

Hello, my name is Erika. I am 12 years old. I have been learning at JCI for 7 years. At JCI, I have learned not only Japanese language, but also Japanese culture. It was very fun even though learning Japanese was hard. There are so many things to memorize in Japanese language such as, Hiragana, Katakana and Kanji. However, I got to understand Japanese easier by watching TV programs now because of learning at JCI. What I enjoyed the most about the Japanese culture was mochitsuki because I love to eat Japanese food. My favorite memory was when I went to the Tanaka Farm with my classmates to pick strawberries. I am looking forward to using Japanese language that I learned at JCI in Japan in the future.

Hello! My name is Hana. I am 12 years old. I have been part of Japanese Language School for 7 years. During the time I have learned many fun activities. Two of the events I look forward to each year are Christmas Party and Undokai. I love to compete especially when my team wins, and I love to give gifts to my friends. My favorite memory was when I went to the Tanaka Farm with my classmates to pick strawberries. I am looking forward to using Japanese language that I learned at JCI in Japan in the future.
AUG

ONLINE FINDING YOUR ROOTS WORKSHOP SERIES
SAT, AUG 1, 8, & 15, 10-11:30AM
Online
This class is for Japanese Americans to connect with their Japanese heritage and learn about their immigrant ancestors and beyond. We will provide resources for you if you want to discover your roots. The class is co-sponsored by Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute and Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai (NYK) with NYK instructor, Chester Hashizume, who has 30 years experience, will be conducting the class. You should know the prefecture and years experience, will be conducting the class.
To register, please visit the “Upcoming Events” page on our website.

ONLINE FOOD BOX DISTRIBUTION
WED, AUG 5 & SEPT 2, 9-10AM
GVJCI Parking Lot
DISTRIBUTION on our website to register. Please visit the “Upcoming Events” page

ONLINE KOKORO POETRY CLASS
WED, AUG 5-SEPT 23, 6:30-8:30PM
Online
Poems are your thoughts, feelings, and observations written from the heart. In this class, students will learn how to form their words into poetry. This workshop series is taught by award-winning Haiku and Tankwa writer, and journalist for the Rafu Shimpo, Genie Nakano. Participants will receive zoom link and other information a few days before each class starts. Individual classes or the entire series can be purchased. Online payment and registration only. No mail-in payments will be accepted. Fee is $8 per student.
To register, please visit the “Upcoming Events” page on our website.

ALZHEIMER’S LA KEEPING YOUR BRAIN HEALTHY
FRI, AUG 14, 10-11:30AM
Online/Phone
Brain health is connected to nutrition, health issues such as diabetes and hypertension, and physical and mental activity. Learn what you can do to improve the health of your brain. This session includes several interactive brain games.
To register, please email chatamoto@jci-gardena.org or call (310) 324-6611. Admission is FREE but donations are welcome and appreciated!

ALZHEIMER’S LA LA FOUND
FRI, SEP 11, 10-11:30AM
Online/Phone
La County offers a system of trackerable bracelets to help locate individuals who get lost. Learn how this program works and about the application process.
To register, please email chatamoto@jci-gardena.org or call (310) 324-6611. Admission is FREE but donations are welcome and appreciated!

ONLINE BILINGUAL FACIAL MUSCLE EXERCISE WORKSHOPS
SAT, AUG 22, 9-10, 11-12, 11-12:40AM
Online
Japanese/English available. $30/student for 40 minute workshop, max 3 students per workshop. Learn how to exercise muscles around your eyes, mouth and cheeks to make your facial expressions younger and brighter. Amin Hariri, founder of Kinesight Training, will help you practice their conversation skills (learn new vocabulary, how to speak casually, and more). Fee is $5 for students and $7 for non-students. Registration and payment is online only. No mail-in payments accepted.

ONLINE CONVERSATION ESL CLASS
THURS, AUG 27-30, 11-12:30PM
Online
Sign up for our online Conversation ESL Class! This class is perfect for intermedi-ate English speakers who want to practice their conversation skills (learn new vocabulary, how to speak casually, and more). Fee is $5 for students and $7 for non-students. Registration and payment is online only. No mail-in payments accepted.

ONLINE CONCERT FUNDRAISER
SEPT 2020
Online
Details Coming Soon. Please check our website for details on all. GVJCI Fundraiser proceeds benefit the GVJCI. Contact: Cathy Lee at clee@jci-gardena.org or 310-324-6611

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ONLINE KOKORO POETRY CLASS
WED, AUG 5-SEPT 23, 6:30-8:30PM
Online
Poems are your thoughts, feelings, and observations written from the heart. In this class, students will learn how to form their words into poetry. This workshop series is taught by award-winning Haiku and Tankwa writer, and journalist for the Rafu Shimpo, Genie Nakano. Participants will receive zoom link and other information a few days before each class starts. Individual classes or the entire series can be purchased. Online payment and registration only. No mail-in payments will be accepted. Fee is $8 per student.
To register, please visit the “Upcoming Events” page on our website.

Workshop provides caregivers the basic knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to care for a family member who has been diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease or another dementia. This is an evidence-based caregiver intervention.
To register, please email chatamoto@jci-gardena.org or call (310) 324-6611. Admission is FREE but donations are welcome and appreciated!

SAVE THE DATE
NEW!! GVJCI 1st ANNUAL VIRTUAL 5K FUNDRAISER
SEPT 2020
Online
Details Coming Soon. Please check our website for details on all. GVJCI Fundraiser proceeds benefit the GVJCI. Contact: Cathy Lee at clee@jci-gardena.org or 310-324-6611

7th ANNUAL GVJCI ELEMENTAL FUNK VIRTUAL CONCERT FUNDRAISER
FALL 2020
Online
Details to be shared at a later date, please visit our website for updates. Join us for a night of music, dancing and more from the comfort of your own home! All GVJCI Fundraiser proceeds benefit the GVJCI. Contact: Cathy Lee at clee@jci-gardena.org or 310-324-6611

2nd ANNUAL GVJCI VIRTUAL SIGNATURE EVENT FUNDRAISER
FALL 2020
Online
We are Going Virtual this year! Stay tuned for details! Please visit our website for updates.
Contact: Cathy Lee at clee@jci-gardena.org or 310-324-6611

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