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GARDENA VALLEY JAPANESE CULTURAL INSTITUTE

The Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute (GVJCI) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit community center formally incorporated in 1967 but its roots began over a hundred years ago. GVJCI engages the community to explore the Nikkei heritage, culture, and contemporary issues through a variety of programs and services. Community space is offered to a wide variety of nonprofit cultural, educational and community-based organizations in the South Bay, as well as private rentals. GVJCI also provides affordable housing through the JCI Gardens Apartments, the adjacent senior housing property. Built by the community and sustained by the community-- your participation, volunteerism, and support enables GVJCI to continue to provide accessible programs and services to the South Bay.

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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GVJCI Quarterly Newsletter

Stephanie Mayeda
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 Layout & Design



Gardena Valley

JCI QUARTERLY

Newsletter of the Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute

In Memoriam: Amemiya Sensei

By Lawrence Hada, Gardena JCI Kendo Dojo

On September 5, 2016, Tadao (Amemiya) Nanaumi Sensei (Kendo Kiyoshi 7 Dan) passed away at the age of 94. He was not only a great and skilled instructor of Kendo, but a loyal and close friend to all at the Gardena JCI Kendo Dojo. He practiced Kendo from a young age prior to WWII and was an integral part of rejuvenating Kendo in Gardena and the formation of the Dojo at the Gardena Valley JCI after the War. His practice of the Art of Kendo was not limited to the physical training but it also encompassed the philosophy and values of Kendo. He demonstrated all the true Kendo values in his everyday life and lived the life of a true Samurai. He was always a formidable opponent and his Kendo spirit was always very strong. He instructed and actively practiced with us until he was well into his 92+ years of age and encouraged us by attending practice until 2 weeks prior to his passing.



In the 27 years that I've had the privilege to know him, his humility kept him from elaborating on any of his personal accomplishments that we heard about from other sensei who knew him during those times. Instead, Amemiya Sensei would change the subject and not talk about himself. He would always say that he was no different from us and always learned something from us. He felt that you should learn all you can to grow as a human and there is always something to learn until you die.

On September 16, 2016, the Gardena JCI Kendo Dojo hosted a Kansha Keiko to honor him. Dojos belonging to Southern California Kendo Federation were invited to attend. Quite a few kenshi participated and some Dojos even canceled their class instruction to attend and honor him. He loved to do and watch Kendo, so we thought what better way to say farewell and express our gratitude but to do the art he loved at the Dojo he loved.

Every time we would part at the end of our Kendo practice on Friday, he would always say, "Arigato gozaimashita, gambatte kudasai" (Thank you and please do your best). Though no longer physically with us, his strong spirit will compel us to do our best as he always requested. We, the members of Gardena JCI Kendo, offer our deepest gratitude to you, our beloved Amemiya Sensei, for all the patience and sincerity you showed us over the years and the privilege to know you. Farewell my friend, I will miss you.



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NEW CLASSES AT GVJCI

SOUTH BAY YOSAKOI

TUES, 6-8PM (Instruction)

8-9:30PM (Extra Practice)

GVJCI Nisei Veterans Memorial Hall

What is Yosakoi? Yosakoi is a Japanese fusion dance and song style, combining some of the most enjoyable elements of different cultures into a dynamic experience. South Bay Yosakoi focuses in on the fun and encourages anyone to try dancing with them, regardless of age or dance experience. Tuition: \$5 each lesson. Contact Information: Jonathan Tamashiro at worldofyosakoi@gmail.com or (916) 365-6476.

COMPUTER/SMARTPHONE/

TABLET CLASSES

Computer classes: 7 weeks

Oct. 18th - Dec. 6th

Tuesday 11 AM- 12PM

Learn the basics of computers and how to navigate through the internet.

Smartphone/Tablet Classes: 7 weeks

Oct. 20th - Dec. 8th

Thursdays 11 AM- 12 PM

Learn the basics of both Android and Apple phones, and even bring in your tablets!

7 weeks of either computer or smartphone class:

\$35 for TNK Members

\$50 for NON-TNK members

Individual classes:

\$7 TNK members

\$10 NON-TNK members

For more info call us at 310-324-6611 or email us at info@jci-gardena.org.

Yatai Food Festival Recap

By Debbie Mochidome, GVJCI Volunteer

BOOM! Duh-duh-DUH! BOOM! BOOM! Yuujou Taiko's mighty drums were letting the whole neighborhood know it was the first ever Yatai Food Festival! We were too poky getting to the JCI the day of the festival, so sadly, we missed the intricate song stylings of Michael Murata (of Mixed Plate Jam fame and beyond). But, the sweet, sweet Motown sounds of the legendary Asian Persuasion beckoned us to come hither and savor the temptations that lay ahead.



So, what exactly is a yatai? If you've been to Japan or seen Japanese movies, they're those little tarp-sided food stands that pop up on the sidewalks after the sun goes down. Inside, somebody's cooking a couple of yummy specialties on a portable grill. Customers sit at a teeny counter, order, eat, and get the heck out so the other people standing right behind them can grab their seats.



The yatais at the JCI served up all kinds of deliciousness too. There were succulent BBQ ribs from Gardena Bowl, a rainbow of shave ice from Bob's Hawaiian Restaurant, sizzly guacamole-smothered tacos from Tom's Tacos, perfect little inaris from @ Home Kitchen, and creamy chestnut tiramisu in a cup (!) from Hisaya Chestnuts. We finally settled on Otafuku's/OtaJoy's scrumptious okonomiyaki, with Sutadonya's luscious pork donburi for Alvin, and Aloha Pizza's fiery Kilauea Wings for me. YUM! And, the beer garden bloomed with happy folks enjoying their frosty Sapporo beers. All this, and nobody breathing down our necks, guilting us into eating faster!

Now, as you can already tell, the food wasn't the only star; there was some seriously awesome entertainment to go with it! Kyle Toyama and Kurt Ikeda blew us away with their wizarding ways with the spoken word. The Ryukyukoku Matsuri Daiko, Rival School, and Prototypes dance troupes were simply breathtaking! Their gravity-defying whirls, twirls, leaps, and bounds would totally outdazzle any of those groups you see on America's Got Talent! And, the preview to Daniel Sugimoto's Letters to Eve was Broadway musical theater at its finest—a great book and lots of show-stoppers! Look for it at the Tonys one day!

The five hours or so we were at the Yatai Food Festival just flew by, like any other time you're having fun. So, BIG HUGS and THANK YOUS to EVERYONE who had a hand in making this event truly a night to remember!



Special thanks to all restaurant vendors, craft vendors, volunteers, entertainers, Japan Alliance, Yatai Food Festival Committee, GVJCI staff and board members. Thank you to everyone who came out to support this event! Funds from the festival will go towards our programs, and ensuring we can have low cost/free programs for the many community members who come to the GVJCI.

Sponsors

Sapporo USA

Sutadonya
Sun Noodles

Japan Alliance

Stephanie Mayeda & Stephanie
Munson - Decorations &
Photobooth

Donors

Sea Veggies
Imuraya
Takaokaya
Otafuku by Otajoy
Jungle Anime Store
Ezaki Glico USA

Craft Vendors

Etch Glass
Tamiza's Treats
Hello Sushi Store
Nandeshiko Kai
Duds Apparel

Performers

Yuujou Taiko
Michael Murata
Asian Persuasion
Kurt Ikeda
Kyle Toyama
Dan Sugimoto and Letters to Eve
Cast
The Prototypes and Rival School
Dance Crew
Ryukyukoku Matsuri Daiko

Yatai Committee Members

Jesse Hiraki
Ryan Yamamoto
Megumi Yuhara
Brian Shigekuni
Hideki Obayashi
Sharon Sawai
Derek Hirano
Michelle Yamashiro

Restaurants

@Home Kitchen
Gardena Bowl Café
Hisaya Chestnuts
Bob's Hawaiian Style Restaurant
Tom's Tacos

Community Partners and Organizations

AADAP
Rafu Shimpo
Okinawa Association of America
Little Tokyo Historical Society
Boy Scout Troop 242

Equipment

Miles Akiyama - Electricity
Don Hirabayashi - Truck



Gardena Valley JCI NEWS

Last Chance to be a Charter Friend of the Gardena Valley JCI!

Joining in 2016 will make you a "Charter Friend" and a legacy for subsequent years. 90 Charter Friends have joined and raised \$18,665 - 74% of our first year goal. We need more Friends to make our modest goal! Please complete the "Friends of Gardena Valley JCI" form at www.jci-gardena.org under the "How To Help" tab or visit our office for an envelope, and be part of this South Bay treasure.

The Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute is an integral part of the South Bay community. Japanese American clubs/organizations are here and have been a part of many Japanese American lives. Today, clubs/organizations are continuing to use the GVJCI as a place to hold meetings and classes. And, the GVJCI is creating programs that enrich all aspects of the Nikkei communities in the South Bay from the descendants of the farming communities of Gardena, Moneta and Lawndale, to the families of post-war immigration from Japan; from Japanese Americans from Hawai'i to Japanese descendants from Central and South America.

The area is home to one of the largest population of Nikkei in the U.S. and the GVJCI is a foundation of the community. Please join as a Friend of GVJCI to help support the center and its programs such as Day of Remembrance observation and the TANOSHII Fun Camp for children to discover their heritage. GVJCI is more than a place but a space for which all of South Bay can explore Japanese heritage the contributions to the culture and communities in the South Bay. New Charter Friends since July 2016.

Gold (\$500 - \$999)

Gary & Teri Kuwahara
Charlie & Carol Oyagi

Silver (\$250 - \$499)

Anonymous
Ted & Linda Gohata
Ken & Robyn Robbins

Bronze (\$100 - \$249)

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GVJCI
FUNDRAISER CONCERT

ELEMENTAL FUNK

11 12

Gardena Valley JCI
1964 W. 162nd St.
Gardena, CA 90247

Saturday, Nov. 12th, 7PM to 11PM

Limited Seating of 200 MAX. Get Your Reservations in ASAP.
Appetizers available for purchase; NO host bar.

Please, no outside alcohol.
\$10.00 Postmarked by Nov. 4th. \$15.00 at the door.

Contact: Sharon Sawai
(310) 324-6611
s_sawai@jci-gardena.org



Gardena Valley JCI CALENDAR

OCTOBER

SANSEI STORIES

SAT, OCT 22-NOV 19, 2-4PM
GVJCI Classroom #208

Write and tell your story. Everyone has stories, it's just a matter of writing them down. This 5-week workshop is designed to help new and experienced writers develop an idea, character, or story. Each 2-hour session includes reading and discussion of stories in progress. Although the subject is Sansei, the workshop is not limited to Sanseis; participants can include anyone. The workshop is limited to 8 people. The workshop will be conducted by Tim Toyama, award-winning playwright of "Visas And Virtue," "Independence Day," "Memorial Day," "Yuri and Malcolm X," and "Bronzeville." Fee: \$25.00 for the 5-week session (must register with Michelle Yamashiro, myamashiro@jci-gardena.org or call 310-324-6611), or \$6 for individual classes (on a drop-in basis)

NOVEMBER

HEART HEALTH/HANDS-ONLY CPR FORUM

SAT, NOV 5, 2-4PM
GVJCI Nisei Veterans Memorial Hall

Having a healthy heart is vital to having a healthy life. In the first part of this forum, you will learn about the steps you can take to increase your odds of having a healthy heart. The second part of the forum will be an interactive session for learning how to do the hands-only CPR technique. This is a free program, but registration is required. Please contact Kanako Fukuyama at (213) 873-5709 to register or for more information.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS WORKSHOP

THU, NOV 10, 1-3PM
GVJCI Classroom #206

Earthquakes, rains, floods and other disasters will happen. Are you prepared for the next disaster? Join us at this workshop to find out how to plan, prepare and react before, during and after a disaster. Space is limited, so please call the GVJCI office to reserve your spot.

ELEMENTAL FUNK

SAT, NOV 12, 7-11PM
GVJCI Main Hall

Get ready to get your groove on! We are having a FUN-raising event for you to attend. Great music, great appetizers, and great vibes. If you're interested in attending, RSVP by contacting Sharon Sawai at (310) 324-6611 or s_sawai@jci-gardena.org. You can also download the order form for your tickets on our website: jci-gardena.org.

IDENTITY THEFT AND INTERNET SECURITY WORKSHOP

SAT, NOV 19, 2-4PM
GVJCI Nisei Veterans Memorial Hall

Join Little Tokyo Service Center as it welcomes Matthew Kobata from American Century Investments who will help demystify the tactics scammers use and explain how to protect yourself from their fraudulent schemes. The City Attorney's office will also provide information about elder abuse including physical and fiscal abuse and how they are helping victims. A free bulk shredding truck to safely dispose of your old documents will be available from 1-3PM. Pre-registration for admission to the workshop is required. To register, please visit the website www.LTSC.org and sign up, or call LTSC at 213-473-3035.

DECEMBER

Happy Holidays to you and your family!

JANUARY

PRESENTING PERSIMMONS!

SAT, JAN 14, 2-4PM
GVJCI Nisei Veterans Memorial Hall

That's right! A program all about yummy persimmons. Meet Tosh Kuratomi, owner of Otow Orchard, whose specialty is Hoshigaki, dried persimmons, a delicacy savored in Japan and here. Tosh will explain the intricate process of making Hoshigaki, and will answer all your questions about persimmons. Tosh and Otow Orchard were featured in an episode of California's Gold with Huell Howser. This is a pay-what-you-wish event. For more information contact us at info@jci-gardena.org or (310) 324-6611.



GVJCI CAR DONATION PROGRAM



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

Here's the Easy Steps:

1. Call or email us to arrange pickup at (310) 324-6611 or cars@jci-gardena.org.
2. HCDS will arrange towing, always free 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 car is sold, your acknowledgement and tax forms will arrive by mail.
5. You get rid of an unwanted car and the satisfaction of helping others, and you receive an IRS-approved tax deduction!

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 - ✓ FREE moving services
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 - ✓ FREE trash removal
 - ✓ FREE consultations
- with the listing of your home*



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- Conservatorship



Staci Yamashita-Iida
Attorney at Law



Judd Matsunaga
Attorney at Law

Torrance Office: 310-348-7272

VOLUNTEERS

We're looking for community members eager to help us in the following areas:

Office/ Administration support

Do you enjoy working with people? Are you well-organized and interested in learning more about computers? We are looking for a receptionist and office assistant on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Bilingual speakers (Japanese- English), greatly sought!

Technology/ Stage Crew

Do you love electronics, tech equipment, and all things gadgety? We are looking for folks who can help us with our technology equipment, and to set up/ manage our sound equipment during programs and events. Must be able to lift 20 lbs, and willing to learn about sound and light equipment.

Library/ Bridge Volunteers

Do you love books, reading, and literary programs? We are looking for folks who can help us organize and maintain our upstairs Bridge library. Repairing books, shelving and categorizing, and inputting new book donations are some things we need help with.

Fundraising & Event Volunteers

Love planning events? We are looking for folks who are interested in helping us with our fundraising programs. You'd be doing things like ticket sales, helping create more fundraisers, and concession stand support. These fundraisers ensure that we can keep our programs and classes low cost and/or free!

Social Media Curators

We're looking for volunteers who love to write, post on social media, and enjoy puns! We'll be looking for volunteers after our wonderful interns complete their time with us (we're sad to see them go!). We'll need folks interested in maintaining our social media, sending out email blasts, and helping create content for the community to enjoy.

Tomo No Kai Corner

Join in the holiday festivities at Tomo No Kai's (TNK) annual Christmas Party on Saturday, December 3 at 11am-1:30pm. You can buy your \$12 luncheon tickets through any TNK class, in the bento lunch room, or at the GVJCI Office. 2017 Tomo No Kai Membership Dues begin in January for the 2017 calendar year. Membership dues can be paid in any of the TNK classes or in the GVJCI Office beginning 1/3/17. TNK's 3rd Quarter 2016 Contribution: \$11,349. from TNK class participation fees, membership dues, and donations.

Established on May 31, 1979, the GVJCI 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 senior birthday luncheons, and the annual Christmas party. 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!

Restaurant Fundraiser at THE LOFT

Grab a bite to eat and support the GVJCI at the same time!

Stop by the Loft on Artesia Boulevard **ALL DAY Tuesday, Nov. 8th!** Present a fundraising flyer when you purchase your meal, and a percentage of the sales will be donated back to GVJCI!

Flyer is available in our office, and online at jci-gardena.org. Thank you for your support!



GVJCI Japanese Language School

We welcomed in the new school year of 2016 - 2017 on September 3, 2016 with many new youth and adults students enrolling and joining the returning students of the previous year. It was heartwarming to see everyone arriving eager to learn and improve their skills in understanding the Japanese Language. The first event of the year will be our annual Undo-kai, Sports Day, which will be held on October 22 at El Nido Park in Torrance. This year we will be collaborating closely with Michelle Yamashiro, GVJCI Program Manager, and we together hope to generate even more fulfilling cultural activities during the school year for the students at the GVJCI Japanese Language School.



contributions he made for the sake of the students and the school is deeply appreciated. We are hoping that he will find the time in the future to once again rejoin the teaching staff and our JLS family. We were however fortunate enough to have Mutsuko Shigetomi Sensei join our teaching staff and she will be instructing the Primary Class.

My appreciation and gratitude goes out to all of our Japanese Language School Family, the GVJCI, the Teachers, the Parent Group, the Volunteers, the Supporters, and our Partner Organizations. I humbly ask for your continued support and cooperation.

Douzo Yoroshiku
Onegaishimasu,
Lawrence Hada,
GVJCI Japanese
Language School
Principal



This year we are very sad that Yukikazu Nagashima Sensei was unable to join us again to instruct the students. The

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MAPRE/Commerce West Insurance Company, formerly Western Pioneer, was formed in 1948 with the help of many Nisei insurance agents to provide Japanese Americans affordable automobile insurance. MAPFRE/Commerce West Insurance Company continues the "Western Pioneer Group Program" today, in which members of Japanese American non-profit organizations can purchase automobile insurance at discounted rates. In addition, annual donations are given to non-profit organizations that have the most members joining this plan. This special discount program benefits the drivers and the Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute (GVJCI). Please ask your agent about this program. Below is a partial list of participating agencies.

COSTA MESA Miyazaki Ins. Svcs. (714) 979-8700	HUNTINGTON BEACH Mizuno Insurance (714) 964-7227	LOS ANGELES Buna Insurance (213) 626-1547	MONTEREY PARK Quality Ins. Service (323) 727-7755
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