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 Apartments, the adjacent senior housing property.

The GVJCI was founded in 1964 by a group of dedicated community leaders who wanted to preserve and promote Japanese culture and history. 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
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.

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

Board of Directors
Ray Shibata, President
Alicia Kita, Vice President
Marilyn Tsuga, Secretary
Terry Terauchi, Treasurer
Kathy Koma, Director
Craig Uchida, Director
Richard Nakanishi, Director
Joseph Nakashima, Director
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GVJCI Board of Directors
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Richard Nakanishi, Director
Joseph Nakashima, Director

GVJCI Quarterly
Summer 2019

2019 GVJCI MATSURI THANK YOU!
By Cathy Lee, Development & Events Manager

What do 1,600+ volunteers, hundreds of volunteer hours, thousands of tasty food items eaten & games played, amazing entertainment and awesome martial arts demos equal? The 2019 GVJCI Matsuri Fundraiser of course!

Sunny skies and perfect weather set the tone for the 2019 GVJCI Matsuri Fundraiser. As the GVJCI’s largest annual fundraiser, we are pleased to share that this year’s Matsuri was a huge success thanks to YOU! We thank all who came out to enjoy this event and support the GVJCI!

We hope you enjoyed the new layout that opened up the food booth area. Also new this year, was our Mega Matsuri Raffle, Credit Card Scrip & Raffle Ticket Purchases, awesome banners and a Quarter Toss game just to name a few.

Saturday and Sunday were filled with endless fun and excitement as eager Matsuri attendees of all ages experienced our many offerings of delicious food, fun games, entertainment, bingo and ondo dancing. Yakisoba returned, and as always, was a crowd pleaser!

I was recently asked if I could describe the Matsuri in one word, what would that word be? My answer? "Spectacular!"

Definitely, it was a lot of hard work and planning for everyone… but it paid off and everything was spectacularly fun and delicious! From the tasty food, fabulous entertainment, the gracious generosity of our corporate sponsors & donors, but most of all to see how our community rallied together in support of the 2019 GVJCI Matsuri Fundraiser through their countless hours of hard work, planning and volunteering was the best! It was great seeing families and friends of all ages enjoying this fun-filled annual South Bay tradition!

This Matsuri would not exist without the support, hard work, and dedication from our Member Organizations, Volunteers, GVJCI Board, Staff and their families, Matsuri Area Volunteer Managers, before, during, and after the Matsuri. We are so thankful for the many committed Matsuri supporters including the local businesses, nurseries, and individuals who generously donated raffle prizes, plants, white elephant sale items, crafts, and monetary donations.

Many of our game booths were run by youth volunteers from our Member Organizations. We are thankful to see these dedicated youth volunteers year after year, and even returning as adult volunteers! Way to go!

Every year our senior volunteers work tirelessly behind the scenes. They prep ingredients, cut all of the fresh produce and even solicit all of our raffle prizes—we are so thankful for all they do! Harry Yonemura from ABC Nursery is always instrumental in managing the very popular plant sale year after year! Great job Chika Nagata as this year’s emcee! I wish I could name all of our fabulous volunteers… please know we appreciate all of you!
ADVENTURERS CLUB NEWS
By Tim Toyama

The next outing for the Adventurers Club is the BEGIN concert on September 1st, Sunday, 2pm to 4:30pm, at the Redondo Beach Performing Arts Center.

“Straight from Okinawa for their very first mainland US concert, BEGIN takes the stage at the Redondo Beach Performing Arts Center. This exclusive show is hosted by the Okinawa Association of America (OAA), which is celebrating its 110th Anniversary this year. BEGIN has been serenading fans for nearly 30 years with their iconic melodies about their beloved island home infusing blues with traditional Okinawan music elements. Their songs convey love for their island prefecture, a deep respect for the land and nature with fond memories of their childhood. Their music prominently features the sanshin, an Okinawan three-stringed banjo.”

The Adventurers Club purchased 36 tickets at $50 each (10% discount). These are the cheap seats, but the theater isn’t large so these seats are fine. If you’d like to purchase tickets, please contact Tim Toyama as soon as possible, these tickets will be fast. The tickets will only be sold in pairs.

There are more expensive tickets (up to $150 each) that can be purchased on the OAA website: http://www.oaamensore.org/

To purchase Adventurers Club tickets, or for more information, or if you’d like to be on the Adventurers Club email list, please contact Tim Toyama at: timtoyama@gmail.com, or 310-848-9890 phone and text.

The two upcoming tours to Hokkaido are Sold Out. The previous outings to Tananka Farms and “Mamma Mia” at West East Players were Sold Out. Here are a few photos.

KOKORO YOGA
WITH GEORGE NISHITANI

What is Kokoro Yoga? What are the benefits?
Kokoro Yoga is a Yoga class that is suitable for all ages and levels. It started as a concept from me who constantly had trouble or boredom of repetitive yoga, and changed that to a class that is “customized” to what the students want and is not the typical yoga class.

The class sequence is often changed depending on who attends or if there is something that the students wish to work on. Most importantly, ALL students do not have any pressure of doing postures that do not suit them.

There is a mixture of power yoga that is fitness and natural movements, as well as breathe-work and meditation. The class is for all ages and for all levels.

There is also a Yoga Fit class on Wednesdays that focuses on fitness with weights; weights are optional and we encourage everyone to bring their own weights since we have a limited number.

Q: Please give a short biography of yourself.
A: Six years ago, I was in a dark place, with health and many other things. I found this thing called yoga that allowed me to change that part to a positive side.

Q: Why should people attend your class?
A: Yoga is movement of how to relax and think, many of which revitalize the body itself. I encourage all to attend once, not because of the immediate yoga benefits, but allow an open mind and off the mat.

Classes are from 7pm to 8pm as follows:
Monday, Room 206 - Yoga
Wednesday, Room 201 - Yoga
Friday, Room 201 - Yoga

George can be reached at 213-820-2836 or hgn12599@gmail.com.
BALLROOM DANCING
By David Hitot

The GVJCI Tomo No Kai’s Ballroom Dancing meets on Fridays from 1 to 2 PM at the Little Tokyo Service Center office at Gardena Valley JCI. Mariko Loechridge with LA County based small business clients and entrepreneurs at all stages of development. Her areas of specialization range widely from business plan creation, community outreach to social media marketing. Please contact Mariko Loechridge at mlochridge@ltsc.org to schedule your free of charge appointment. You can also follow along for updates about upcoming workshops and incubator opportunities on social media @LASmallBizcubator.

FREE 30-60 minute small business consulting sessions with Mariko Loechridge on Tuesdays from 2-9 PM at the Little Tokyo Service Center office at Gardena Valley JCI. Mariko works with LA County based small business clients and entrepreneurs at all stages of development. Her areas of specialization range widely from business plan creation, community outreach to social media marketing. Please contact Mariko Loechridge at mlochridge@ltsc.org to schedule your free of charge appointment. You can also follow along for updates about upcoming workshops and incubator opportunities on social media @LASmallBizcubator.

TAIKO TIME!
WANT TO LEARN TO PLAY TAIKO? Taiko isn’t just hitting a taiko drum. It’s an emotional feeling that the whole body and mind can experience. It’s an art form that combines music, dance, martial arts, athletics and culture. And IT’S FUN.

Taiko classes offered at the GVJCI on Sunday afternoons, starting at 1:00 noon, for basic beginner, beginner, intermediate and advanced classes. Minimum age is 10 years. For further information, contact the instructor directly (Judi Kaminishi, Director of Yuijou Daiko at JKaminish@gmail.com or check out our website www.yuijudaiiko.com. New 8-week taiko class, starting September 15!!

NISEI WEEK SPECIAL!!!
FREE ELDERS LAW SEMINARS

- How to avoid Joint Tenancy “Pitfalls”
- Is my Living Trust and POA’s updated?
- Estate Planning: Tips, Tricks, and Traps
- Save $1,000 in Probate Fees and Estate Taxes
- Get Medi-Cal to pay for long-term care
- How to protect the family Home
- Have a peace of mind!!

SEATING IS LIMITED
Call (800) 403-6078 for Reservations

LTSC BUSINESS CONSULTATION

THE JCI NEEDS MORE THAN OUR WARM MEMORIES TO Evolve and sustain itself. The JCI needs to be able to count on each of us as a FRIEND, at whatever level is comfortable to you; www.jci-gardena.org/friends

As Woody and Buzz in Toy Story remind us: Everyone needs a FRIEND! Friendship is that irresistible warmth that brings life to our memories. As the song goes, “You’ve got a friend in me.” Does the JCI have a friend in you?

The JCI needs more than our warm memories to evolve and sustain itself. The JCI needs to be able to count on each of us as a FRIEND, at whatever level is comfortable to you; www.jci-gardena.org/friends

Maybe you’re like me:
- Born in So Cal, or only remember life in So Cal
- Fought with siblings over the pink (or the orange) manju from Sakuyara
- Grew up in the South Bay, grad of a local high schools (Go Tartars!)
- Younger than the JCI carnival (or maybe not). Summer starts with the JCI carnival, shave ice, yakisoba, dango and bingo!
- Recall the OLD Meiji Market on Redondo Beach Boulevard: the fish counter, the concrete floors, the magical Botan candy
- Remember the Fishman and his truck
- Ice cream cones at Clark’s Drug were a dime
- Missing Saturday morning cartoons because of Japanese School

Back then, with five kids, my mom kept our activities close to home to get everyone to school, lessons and practices on time, and to Gardena once a week for Japanese school.

As an adult working in LA, I found myself intrigued and involved with the Little Tokyo institutions that really hit stride when I was in college and beyond - the JACCC/ Japan America (now Aratani) Theater, JANM, supporting Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics (LEAP), Cold Tofu, Little Tokyo Service Center.

Though working downtown, we kept our South Bay roots, and in raising our daughter, found ourselves back in Gardena at the JCI for Sansei Baseball meetings, the occasional hula practice, and of course, the annual carnival. And funny thing, as we got older, we found that the JCI has evolved, too.

What we thought was just the place for senior luncheons, judo/kendo/Boy Scouts has become so much more. Like a good friendship, the JCI is ever-evolving.
2019 GVJCI SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Congratulations to our four scholarship recipients who have great academic achievements, as well as provided extensive volunteer hours to community work. We are very proud of you and wish you success in your college education!

GVJCI Gary Hori Memorial Scholarship
Joshua Matsuda, North High School graduate, will be attending UCLA

“As an Eagle Scout from Troop 719, I have been volunteering at the GVJCI for many years. The GVJCI has had a very large impact both on me and the Japanese American community as a whole, so I feel very honored to be receiving a JCI Scholarship.” –Joshua Matsuda

GVJCI Hana Nishikawa Memorial Scholarship
Shannon Shinozaki, South High School graduate, will be attending University of California, Riverside

“Receiving a scholarship from JCI means a lot to me as JCI has given me the opportunity to not only hang out with friends, but be able to connect with new people that I would perhaps not have gotten the chance to otherwise while simultaneously putting in community hours. I feel like receiving a scholarship not only recognizes the amount of work I’ve put in but also the bonds I’ve formed and strengthened.” –Justin Morimoto

GVJCI Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute Scholarship
Justin Morimoto, South High School graduate, will be attending University of California, Riverside

“Receiving a scholarship from JCI means a lot to me as JCI has given me the opportunity to not only hang out with friends, but be able to connect with new people that I would perhaps not have gotten the chance to otherwise while simultaneously putting in community hours. I feel like receiving a scholarship not only recognizes the amount of work I’ve put in but also the bonds I’ve formed and strengthened.” –Justin Morimoto

GVJCI Gardena Valley Japanese American Citizens League Scholarship
Jasper Lem, Palos Verdes Peninsula High School graduate, will be attending University of California, San Diego

“I am honored to receive any scholarship that I am awarded. However, the GVJCI scholarship has more significance to me because of my connection to the institute. I have been a member of the Gardena Judo Club since I was six years old, and a member of the Sansei Baseball League since I was eight years old. I also enjoyed the summer festival as there were games, food, shops, and, most importantly, a sense of community. I felt like I belonged to this family of closely-knit clubs, all of which have their own special talents. I am extremely proud to have received a scholarship from GVJCI, as it has been a major impact throughout my life.” –Jasper Lem

GVJCI Gardena Valley Gardeners Association Legacy Scholarship
Shannon Shinozaki, North High School graduate, will be attending California State University, San Luis Obispo

“I am deeply grateful to be a recipient of the 2019 Gardena Valley Gardeners Association Legacy Scholarship award. GVJCI has never failed to provide for the local community and I am thankful to have been a part of it. Receiving this award from GVJCI is truly an honor. GVJCI has given me so many opportunities and experiences that I could not have had anywhere else and for that, I am forever grateful.” –Shannon Shinozaki

GVJCI Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute Scholarship
Justin Morimoto, South High School graduate, will be attending University of California, Riverside

“Receiving a scholarship from JCI means a lot to me as JCI has given me the opportunity to not only hang out with friends, but be able to connect with new people that I would perhaps not have gotten the chance to otherwise while simultaneously putting in community hours. I feel like receiving a scholarship not only recognizes the amount of work I’ve put in but also the bonds I’ve formed and strengthened.” –Justin Morimoto

We’d like to announce the launch of a bilingual South Bay Nikkei Directory website! This digital directory will be updated regularly and will be accessible to all.

The South Bay is home to the largest Japanese American and Japanese national populations (collectively called Nikkei) in the mainland United States. Numerous Nikkei groups, services, and programs are concentrated in this area. However, since the South Bay Nikkei community is a unique community without a center, the community has been disconnected.

Beginning last year, ten Nikkei organizations representing both Japanese American and Japanese-speaking organizations started meeting to discuss how we can get to know each other better and collaborate. Those who came together identified a bilingual directory to gather information on various Nikkei groups active in the South Bay as the highest priority. As we gathered the information, we found out there are more than 100 non-profit organizations providing activities and services in the South Bay Nikkei community, and we reached out to each one. 50 organizations responded. They helped provide information to create this website which can be considered a virtual “hub” of the South Bay Nikkei community by which we hope will provide needed resources and linkages.
BENTO PROGRAM

“New BENTO PROGRAM starting in August!”

Japanese style healthy bento will be available for $6!

Please visit our website or campus for a weekly menu or simply call us at 310-324-6611 between 9am-12pm.

Thank you to Todd Matsuoka & Island Eats for providing us with yummy Bento for many, many months. We will miss you. Thank you!!!

NEW TOMO-NO-KAI TECHNOLOGY TIME!

Let our helpful volunteers help you navigate your mobile devices like your smartphone, tablet or laptop! Starting in August 2019, Tuesdays/Wednesdays 11am-12pm in Room #204.

*Must be a current 2019 Tomo no Kai member. This Program is FREE.

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, bus excursions and 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.

SMARTPHONE/TABLET CLASS

Aug 6th to Sep 10th, Tues 10AM to 11AM

$10 per class or $50 for the whole series, paid in advance.

Week 1 – Aug 6
Components, Symbols
Settings – display, volume/sounds, etc.
Week 2 – Aug 13
Adding contacts
Phone calls, Text messages, Email
Using the camera
Week 3 – Aug 20
Apps – Already installed & Adding New Apps
**Please bring your Apple App Store or Google Play passwords
Week 4 – Aug 27
Apps – Useful Emergency Apps
Week 5 – Sep 3
Wi-Fi/Data Usage/Storage
Week 6 – Sep 10
Questions & Answers

The GVJCI Japanese Language School concluded its 2018–2019 school year with our Promotion and Graduation Ceremony on June 22. I thank the students, parents, and teachers for their dedication and assistance in helping to make it another successful year. As always, I wish to especially thank Alison Kochiyama and the GVJCI staff for all their support and guidance.

I congratulate the promoting students, especially this year’s Graduation Class. The Graduation Class consisted of 10 students: Julia Midori Butler, Leila Tani Butler, Jason Kazuki Chau, Lia Kagari Inouye, Makani Misaki Kane, Riley Keisuke Maki, Alexa Mihara, Toshi Mihara, Layla Riddle, and Cora Ai Uchida. I hope they will look back at their experiences with fondness and continue to polish their Japanese language skills in the future.

On a sad note, Atsuko Fukuda Sensei, who has taught for two years, Aimee Shimizu Sensei, who has taught for one year, and Atsuko Vorreiter Sensei, who has served the school for 17 years and was the Vice Principal, will not be returning for our upcoming school year. Atsuko Vorreiter Sensei has always put the needs of the school and the students before herself. As Vice Principal, she always encouraged me with kind words. We always collaborated on all matters and I truly relied on her advice and guidance. I owe her deeply for welcoming me as the Principal when I first started, as well as the advice and guidance she has given me all these years. Though I will miss them all, I will treasure their friendship forever. Returning next year will be Masumi Sasaki Sensei, who will serve as Vice Principal, Chikako Suzuki Sensei, Mayumi Fuchino Sensei, and Eriko Yamamoto Sensei, who teaches the Adult Class.

On August 10, we will be conducting an Orientation/Pre-Registration to assist new student enrollment, and on September 7, we will begin the new school year. For further information, please contact the GVJCI office or e-mail lhada@jci-gardena.org.

As a youth attending Japanese School, I remember hearing the words arigatasu (thankfulness), kansha (gratitude), magokoro (sincerity), and gambarimasu (I will continue to do my best), but I was also fortunate to have seen the meaning of these words in action through the deeds of my Issei and Nisei elders. I saw a depth and feeling in these words that could not easily be translated into English, and I recognized the need to learn Japanese more in depth in order to understand and appreciate the culture fully. These words represent the values and spirit they possessed and wanted to pass on to us with all their sincerity (magokoro). In doing so, they created centers like the GVJCI, which supported Japanese language schools promoting better understanding of the Japanese culture and creating “kokeisha” (future successors) to help pass it on. I am indebted to them for their community spirit and am very proud to be associated, in even a small way, with the mission that they established.