The GVCI envisions a vibrant network and a welcoming space for all persons interested in Japanese heritage and culture where his

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

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 GVCI to continue.

The GVCI envisions a vibrant network and a welcoming space for all persons interested in Japanese heritage and culture where his/tradition and respect for all humanity are promoted.

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2020!

Happy Year of the Rat! Akemashite omeditou gozaimasu! The Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute (GVJCI) Board and Staff send you best wishes for 2020. As we begin this new decade, we look back at GVJCI’s growth in programs, services and activities. Not only have we made big strides from our humble beginnings, but we seem to be bursting out of our seams not having enough available space and time to hold all of the activities of the GVJCI and our member organizations. We are so fortunate to have such an active community center day and night, seven days a week, where so many call GVCI a second home. We could not do all that we do without your support, participation, and collaboration. We sincerely thank you as participants in our programs and services, as volunteers, as monetary and non-monetary donors, sponsors, and as community collaborators. We look forward to a continued relationship with all of you in 2020.

Below is the list of our 2019 donations, grants, and sponsorships (if we inadvertently missed any names, please let our office know)….thank you!

In gratitude,
Allison Kochiyama, Executive Director
**Yoga and Zumba**

**Yoga**
- Is the yolk of my life
- Yoga mat portable
despite it.

**Zumba**
- The sexiest form of exercise I know
- Get up and dancing again
- Enjoying Zumba at age 71

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**Yoga and Zumba**

*By: Genie Nakano*

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**Caregivers can assist with:***

- **Cooking**
- **Driving**
- **Light Housekeeping**
- **Home Exercise & more**

**Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) on staff**

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**Call us today!**

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**The Trusted Choice for In-Home Care**

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

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**Tomo Na Koi Corner continued from page 5**

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**Yoga and Zumba**

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**How to get in touch**

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

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**Tomo Na Koi Corner**

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**Yoga and Zumba**

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Board of Directors Updates
Teri Kuwahara and Steven Awakuni have been members of the Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute Board of Directors since 2015. They both served on the Board Governance Committee, and were instrumental in facilitating the development of GVJCI’s new Mission Statement "A space to engage, share and embrace the Nikkei experience and culture" and Vision Statement. Teri served as the Chair on the Governance Committee and helped to formalize the board committee structure, policies and procedures. Steven also served as Chair of the Governance Committee and guided the Board in the examination and updating of GVJCI’s risk management policies and procedures.

Both Teri and Steven have ended their terms in December 2019. On behalf of the GVJCI, I want to extend my gratitude and appreciation for their support as members of our Board of Directors.

Ray Shibata
President, Board of Director

Facility Updates
By Dayton Lee, Interim Facility Operations Manager

Growing up in Gardena, I’ve always viewed the GVJCI as the place where I played Sansei Baseball and where we would go for the annual carnival. Nothing more, nothing less. Later in life, I opted not to make the move to Texas with the rest of my family colleagues. So, when I received the call to ask if I was interested in helping out the GVJCI on a temporary basis… I thought, sure I can do that. And so began my tenure as the interim Facility Operations Manager at the Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute. This was a complete departure from the marketing and advertising of Toyota vehicles and products that I did. This was not only a change in responsibilities, but coming from the corporate world, this was a change in work environment.

In my brief time here, I’ve discovered that the GVJCI is so much more than just a place where I played baseball or visited the carnival. It was interesting to learn that the roots of the GVJCI date back to 1910 and that there’s such a proud history that spans over 100 years. We are a non-profit community center that provides affordable classes, programs, services and facilities to the South Bay. Non-profit being the key term here, quite different from the “for profit” company I came from. Being non-profit, we rely on donors, fund raising efforts and the support from our member organizations to keep our lights on. Again, quite different from what I was used to.

It’s been said that time heals all, but time also takes its toll. Everything eventually experiences wear, breaks down and requires maintenance, upkeep and repair. As was the case with the glass doors of the two-story JCI building. The building had its grand opening in 1976 and over time it’s seen some improvements, but nothing recent. Over the past 43 years, the three sets of glass doors have stood the test of time, but with anything that ages…they’ve had their share of “operational” issues. We’re happy to announce that as of late October, we had all three sets of doors replaced. We appreciate everyone’s patience throughout the process and we’re extremely happy to have fully functioning doors!

We can’t tackle everything at once, so for the immediate future we’d like to focus our attention on the JCI building. Replacing the glass doors were just part of the long list of things needed to give this two-story building a much-needed facelift. We’d like to be proactive and renovate not only to refresh appearance, but also to improve usability, functionality, energy efficiency and hopefully address those items before they become “front burner” issues. These improvements will have to be spread over time. As I’ve mentioned, for projects such as donations and fundraising efforts. That’s hard enough, but we’re also challenged by increasing operational expenses. Keeping with the philosophy of providing affordable classes, programs and services, we’ve not increased hall and classroom rental rates for quite some time. It’s gotten to the point where some of the amounts charged didn’t even cover operating expenses.

It’s not sustainable for the GVJCI to continue to absorb increases in operating expenses, while keeping costs unchanged. We have this community asset and legacy that we have the responsibility to take care of and to ensure its continuation for future generations. With the start of the new year, we’ll be making nominal Adjustments to rental costs. We do this not for profit or gain, but just to continue to operate as we have and to be able to make the improvements the GVJCI so needs. We hope you can understand.

Again, thank you all for your continued support and generosity!!

The Adventurers Club Announcements!

Next stop: Okinawa and Kyushu!
There will be two tours; each tour will spend half of the time in each area.
Fall 2020: Nov. 11 – 22 $3,800 per person (land cost only); $685 single supplement.
This tour will cover Okinawa, including the southwest islands, Naha, Manza Beach, Peace Memorial Park, Churumi Aquarium, and Gyokusendo Cave; Kyushu will include: Uraga; Nagasaki; Arita; Fukuoka.
See the changing of Fall colors!
Spring 2021: March 26 - April 6 $4,200 per person (land cost only); $750 single supplement.
This tour will cover Okinawa, including the southwest islands, Naha, Manza Beach, Peace Memorial Park, Churumi Aquarium, and Gyokusendo Cave; Kyushu will include: Kagochima; Nagasaki; Arita; Karatsu; Yufu; Beppu. See the cherry blossoms in full bloom!

Please note that these are tentative destinations, and that they are subject to change based on availability at the time of booking.

Why Okinawa?
Okinawa is the southernmost part of Japan, and is far from the main islands of Japan. With its distinct culture inherited from the Ryukyu Kingdom, Okinawa has always been considered an exotic destination even in Japan. The sea is gorgeous, the atmosphere in Okinawa is peaceful and relaxed, the local cuisine has its own unique style and flavors, different from mainland Japan. Also unique is Okinawan music and dance, accompanied by the sanshin.

Why Kyushu?
Since the 3rd century BC, various countries from around the world crossed the seas arriving in Japan to trade. Kyushu was the location where many of these cultural exchanges occurred. Its rich history boasts some of the most famous territorial wars between powerful different from mainland Japan. Also unique is Okinawan music and dance, accompanied by the sanshin.

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Eagle Scout Project
We are very fortunate that Anton Shiozaki from Troop 378 selected the GVJCI for his Eagle Scout project. After discussion with GVJCI staff, it was decided that a new raffle drum was needed to replace the one that’s been in service for over 30 years. He wanted to create a drum that was not only functional, but also looked nice. Anton researched several drum designs and started drawing what he wanted. After several attempts, Anton decided to build a drum with clear acrylic and wood accents.

He was given guidance by his Eagle Scout Advisor, Lori Fan and Assistant Scout Master Glenn Saruwatari. They taught him about counter balancing and weight requirements. In the end, the completed raffle drum came out even more beautiful than he could have imagined.

Anton has been going to the GVJCI since he was a child. His mom was born and raised in Gardena and he always accompanied his parents to GVJCI functions. He played Sansei Baseball and would help at the booth while his dad cooked chicken at the Matsuri. He has many fond memories of attending GVJCI events and felt it would be great to give something back beyond his service hours.

He began his scouting career with Pack 862 at Faith United Methodist Church in Torrance. When he was 11, he bridged over to Troop 378 in Walteria. Anton received his Eagle Scout Award on November 6th of this year. He is so appreciative of all the help and hard work from the many people that supported him along the way.

In the near future, Anton wants to attend UC Irvine or UCLA while majoring in mathematics and statistics. He said his dream job would be to be a sports statistician working on analytics.

2019 Board Fellowship
By: Bryce Ikemura

Over the last year, I had the extreme pleasure of sitting on the board of directors for the Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute as a board fellow through Kizu’s Board Fellowship program. As I initially attended board meetings, I quietly observed the way the board members functioned together, discussing and debating various topics seeking eventual consensus to move forward as a unified body. Occasionally, the board members would ask my opinion. I became more comfortable sharing my thoughts from month to month as my mentor, Ray Shibata, helped guide me through the workings of the board and encouraged me to be more vocal during meetings.

I served on a few committees through the Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute’s board, including the Development Committee, Day of Remembrance Committee, and Matsuri Committee. Each committee was different in their respective meeting objectives and end goals, but each gave me important insight and perspective as I began seeing how each independent committee fit into the organization’s larger vision.

Particularly, I feel that my experience as a fellow is highlighted by the opportunities I had to work with the organization’s stakeholders at Day of Remembrance and at Matsuri. While learning about the direction and administrative planning behind an organization’s functions was important, I am thankful that I was able to meet and interact with the people who are personally invested in the GVJCI on a daily basis.

At the end of the program, I had become more comfortable around the board’s members and with the organization, but more importantly, I found myself more invested in the GVJCI’s mission and more passionate about my community. I am looking forward to being more involved with the GVJCI in the future and hope to continue giving back to the community that has given so much to me.

April Deadline for 2020 GVJCI Youth Scholarships
The GVJCI will be awarding scholarships to 2020 South Bay high school seniors and GVJCI Japanese Language School graduates (may live outside of the South Bay area). 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.

Applications are available on our website: jci-gardena.org. Submission deadline is April 1, 2020, and award presentations will be made on June 27, 2020 at the GVJCI Matsuri Fundraiser.

Scholarships available: Gary Hori Memorial Scholarship, Gardena Valley JACL Scholarship, and the Gardena Valley Gardeners Association Legacy Scholarship, and other GVJCI scholarships.
$500 - $999
In Memory of Kazuo Roger Kawata, Dulcie Ogi
In Memory of Frank & Sueko Yamasaki, Robert DDS
In Celebration of Eleanor Igawa's 95th Birthday

$1000+
In Memory of Myrna Kawahara & Robert Murakawa
In Memory of Sarah Yamaguchi & Doug Inaba
In Memory of Myrna Kawahara & Robert Murakawa

Vehicle Donations
Anonymous

In-Kind Donations of Items or Services
Honda Kitchen
ABC Nursery
Akaiyama Suzakou
Akaiyama, Miles
Amy Roper & Wallis Yamamoto
Wally Yonezawa Pearl Co
Anonymous
Akaiyama, Donna
Akaiyama, Ken
Akaiyama, Ken
Akaiyama, Kei
Tomita, Barbara S.
In Memory of William "Bill" Igawa
Akaiyama, Dorothy
In Memory of Al & Victoria Nakamatsu
Nakamatsu, Maria
In Memory of Kazuo Shimine
Akiyama, Karen
Mikami, Lynn
Mikami, Shirley
Shigemoto, Miyoko
In Memory Of Erik Shinozuka
Suehiro, Midori
In Memory of Kinuyo Sugimoto
Akiyama, Larry
In Memory of Sarah Yamaguchi
Joyce, Donna
In Memory of Enosu Yamashita
Uyekawa, Gary T.
In Memorairy of Dean Satoshi Yonemori
Anonymous

Hasta Luego, Asako
By: Mamoko Ym, Program Coordinator

You may have seen Asako's watercolor paintings on display at the GVJCi Art Show or maybe she taught you at one of the upstair Bridge area during the Matsu?! Were you a student in her weekly Tomo No Kai Sumie class? If you were lucky, you
designated your own hat in her Summer Hat decorating workshop or made a pendant in her Jewelry Recycling class.

Over the years, as I got to know Asako Ota, I discovered a richness in a world that I didn't know. Asako had lived in
Colombia for a time and spoke fluent Spanish. She also ran her own sushi res-
taurant, Uozumi, in the city of Palmdale for nine years. I eventually discovered
that Asako was an expert seamstress.

For 26 years, Asako worked at Mattel as a Fabric and Pattern Supervisor for Large and Small Dolls, Barbie & Ken, etc.,
to traveling in H.K., México & Taiwan to work
with their soft goods production plants. The worked intimately
with designers and engineers and even has her name on Mattel's patent for the soft body cover
that she helped design.

Asako's journey to becoming an expert pattern maker started

Toyama, Jim & Angie
Takano, Dr. Ernest
Terao, Jun
The Loft Restaurant (North Torrance)
Three Weavers Brewing Co.
Torii, Jim & Angie Torrance Restaurant
Townsend Appliances
Toyama, Tim & Naomi Turtle Beach
Unique Plant Rentals
United Plant Growers
Universal Waste
Uwahori, Sade
Uyemura, Ray
Uyemura, Bob
Vons Market, Gardena
Vivreeter, Atsuko
Wakai, Glen & Rosemary
Walton, Michael
Waste Resources Inc.
Watanabe, Sue
Watari, Joe & Sach
Yamada, DDS
Yamashiro, Enrique
Yoshimura, Eileen

On December 7th we celebrated our 40th Year Anniversary at our annual Xmas party! We ended 2019 with 767 total members. Thank you!

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

As a young child in Santa Barbara. Being poor, Asako's parents could only buy her one dress per year. Asako scoured discount
stores for fabrics and every Christmas would ask her friends and family to send cloth.

One day, she saw an ad in a magazine for the Sugino Dress-Making School in Japan. Three years later, with the money she
saved up, Asako flew herself to Japan and studied her 17 year course in 1 year. Despite the intense and concentrated
studying, she managed to find time to study Hana-Ike, Koto,
and Hana-Ike. It has now come time for Asako to say goodbye. It is bittersweet,
but knowing all the magic she's had in her life, I feel like she has
so much more magic awaiting her.

Hasta Luego, Asako

Toyama, By: Kim T

I'm 67 years old. I've struggled with health issues my entire life. From my early
years through the present, it's been asthma. When I hit my 50's, my illnesses
included hypertension, high cholesterol, and Type 2 diabetes; my
numbers were off the chart, especially my blood sugar; at one point my doctor
told me that if my blood sugar didn't go down, he would put me on insulin. In
2015, I ruptured a spinal disk, and after agonizing four months, finally had spine surgery. I was a big mess. And then I discovered Genie Nakano's yoga classes
at the GVJCi. Gradually, by taking Genie's classes, I recovered from the spine
surgery, and eventually took a Yoga Teacher Training course and became a
certified yoga teacher. I began teaching low-impact aerobics classes (*Move & Groove*) at the GVJCi, and also began teaching Zumba. I lost 20 pounds. My
blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar numbers are no longer sky-high;
my numbers are normal; I haven't had an asthma attack in three years. If I can do it, anyone can! Please take care of yourself!
In addition to yoga, Move & Groove, and Zumba, the GVJCi offers many health
classes. Visit the GVJCi website, or call 310-324-6611 for more information.
DAY OF REMEMBRANCE EVENT - SCREENING OF THE UNTOLD STORY: INTERNMENT OF JAPANESE AMERICANS IN HAWAI'I
SAT, FEB 22, 2-4:30PM
GVJC1 Main Hall
We invite you to our annual Day of Remembrance event to commemorate the anniversary of the signing of Executive Order 9066, which caused the mass removal and imprisonment of Japanese Americans during World War II. This year’s program will feature the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawai’i’s documentary The Untold Story: Internment of Japanese Americans in Hawai’i followed by a panel discussion. Free to the public, but donations are appreciated! No registration required. For more information, please email us at info@jci-gardena.org or call us at (310) 324-6611.

LA FOOD BANK FOOD DISTRIBUTION
WED, FEB 5, MAR 4, APR 1, 9-10AM
GVJCI Parking Lot
10-12lbs boxes of shelf stable items for Seniors 60 years and older. 1st come 1st served! Ends promptly at 10AM. NO RSVP.

ALZHEIMER'S LOS ANGELES – UCLA DISEASE RESEARCH FRIDAY, FEB 14, 10AM-12PM
GVJCI Upstairs Classroom 207/208
Get an update on where research is at in the search for a cure for Alzheimer’s Disease. A speaker from the Mary S. Easton Alzheimer’s Disease Research at UCLA will share about past and present clinical trials. Admission is FREE, but donations are appreciated. RSVP to info@jci-gardena.org or (310) 324-6611.

SMARTPHONE TRAINING - iPhone SAT, FEB 22, 10AM-12PM
GVJC1 Upstairs Classroom 207/208
Do you have difficulty seeing or hearing on your smartphone? Come to this FREE workshop to learn how to make your phone louder and easier to hear. Learn the basic functions of your smartphone and much more! Class size is limited. Please RSVP at info@jci-gardena.org or (310) 324-6611.

ALZHEIMER'S LOS ANGELES - HOME SAFETY FRI, MAR 13, 10-11:30AM
GVJC1 Upstairs Classroom 207/208
Find out what you can do to make your home safer while caring for someone with dementia. Learn about safety issues and how to use the latest knowledge and products to keep your loved one at home with less worry. Admission is FREE, but donations are appreciated. RSVP to info@jci-gardena.org or (310) 324-6611.

JAPANESE ONDO CLASS WEEKLY TUES & THURS, MARCH 17TH TO MAY 21ST, 10AM-12PM
GVJC1 Upstairs Classroom 204
Do you want to learn how to speak casually to others in English? Do you want to make friends or just have more meaningful conversations in English? If so, then enroll in our spring English conversation class for high beginners to low intermediate speakers! Class fee is $100 ($50 per class). To register, please visit our website, call us at (310) 324-6611, or email Stephanie (smayeda@jci-gardena.org).

SMARTPHONE TRAINING - ANDROID FRI, MARCH 20, 10AM-12PM
GVJCI Upstairs Classroom 207/208
Do you have difficulty seeing or hearing on your smartphone? Come to this FREE workshop to learn how to make your phone louder and easier to hear. Learn the basic functions of your smartphone and much more! Class size is limited. Please RSVP at info@jci-gardena.org or (310) 324-6611. Please arrive 15 minutes prior to class. Latecomers will not be allowed to participate. Must bring own Android smartphone to class.

PT CAREGIVER WORKSHOP “CARE FOR THE CAREGIVER” BY HOME CARE ASSISTANCE/MILLENA SAT, MARCH 21, 2-4PM
GVJC1 Upstairs Classroom 207/208
Join Rt. Rev. Minako Honda for this workshop as you learn how to effectively care for others while being self-efficient. Gain a greater understanding of posture and body mechanics. Develop more awareness for home safety for you and your family member or client. Know what resources are available to you while caring for others. Class size is limited. Please RSVP to info@jci-gardena.org or (310) 324-6611. Admission is FREE, but donations are appreciated.

JAPANESE HOMESTYLE COOKING WORKSHOP SAT, MAR 28 & APR 11, 2-4PM
GVJC1 Nisei Veterans Memorial Hall
Have you ever wanted to learn how to make Japanese comfort food like nikujaga, vegetable curry, and much more? Register for our 2-part cooking workshop taught by former restaurant chef Emiko Miyara. Fee is $30 per person, and space is limited. To register, please visit our website or call (310) 324-6611.

LAUGHER YOGA WORKSHOP SAT, APR 4th & Sat, MAY 2nd, 1-2PM
GVJC1 Nisei Veterans Memorial Hall
Laugh yourself out of stress and into health and humor! Laughter yoga sessions explore easy, gentle stretches, breathing exercises and laughter exercises. This class is taught by certified Laughter Yoga teacher Genie Nakano. Fee is $7 per person. To register, please call our office (310) 324-6611.

SPECIAL CLASSES COMING TO THE GVJCI!

SMALL BUSINESS FINANCIAL BASICS
A FREE of CHARGE 4-part workshop series for entrepreneurs and small business owners to understand small business financial basics including business formation, calculating start-up costs, business credit + loan qualifying and Facebook ad budgets. Learn from industry professionals and small business owners about best practices for new small business owners. Fee is $40 and limited. Please RSVP at info@jci-gardena.org or (310) 324-6611.

SAVE THE DATE!
MANZANAR PILGRIMAGE
The Manzanar Committee will hold its 51st annual Manzanar Pilgrimage on Saturday, April 25, 2020 at the Manzanar National Historic Site. The Pilgrimage serves as an important reminder of what can happen when our country fails to uphold Constitutional rights for all, whether immigrants, Muslims, or communities of color. Please check our website at manzanacommmittee.org or call 323-662-5102 for more information.

ROCKIN’ THE BOAT: FLASHBACKS OF THE 1970S ASIAN MOVEMENT BOOK RELEASE SAT, APR 18, 1-4PM
GVJC1 Nisei Veterans Memorial Hall
A book signing with over 400 photographs by Mary Umematsu Koo from 1969-1974, Rockin’ the Boat chronicles the Asian American Movement that occurred in major cities across the country, with the main focus on the Los Angeles-area. There will be a slideshow featuring photos from the book, a talk by the author, and a panel discussion by former members of the movement. Admission is FREE. RSVP not necessary. For more info, please visit our website or call (310) 324-6611.