

Welcoming 2021: A Year of the Ox J-Sei's 50th Anniversary



The word “vaccine” comes from a Latin word for cow, vacca, for Edward Jenner invented vaccination in 1798 by inoculating people against deadly smallpox with far milder “cowpox” or “smallpox of the cow.” Therefore, it seems entirely apt that the eagerly awaited COVID-19 vaccine becomes available in 2021—a “year of the ox” according to the Chinese zodiac.

To say that 2020 was a tumultuous year is an understatement. The election, fight for racial justice, wildfires, and, of course, the worldwide health crisis—we had it all! Luckily, difficult times often bring out the best qualities in each of us, such as, courage, love, and generosity. Throughout this pandemic, J-Sei has witnessed these great qualities amply demonstrated by our volunteers, donors, and staff members who are keeping essential services available to our beloved seniors.

As J-Sei prepares to celebrate its 50th year, we are reminded that, in 1971, a group of young people founded East Bay Japanese for Action to offer programs to the elderly in our community. And this “tradition of care and respect” continues to this day. When the local Shelter-in-Place order benched some of regular volunteers in the J-Sei Kitchen, our calls for help were answered by younger volunteers who filled the vacated positions.

A wide range of 50th anniversary celebratory activities will be held throughout 2021. Please stay tuned to our website for event announcements. Let us all rejoice in this milestone and reaffirm our commitment to Community, Care, and Culture in 2021!

– Kei Matsuda, Board of Directors and
50th Anniversary Planning Group Chair

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J-Sei Online

Since the closure of on-site classes due to Shelter-in-Place, J-Sei has quickly shifted its platform to provide virtual classes to sustain our health, wellness, and community connections. We are thankful for the willing spirit of our instructors to forge a new path and the brave seniors who as reluctant followers have learned how to log on. We are especially indebted to retired programmer Eric Hoppenfeld for helping us navigate online, providing training for staff, and tech support.



The new online J-Sei community center offers the following on-going classes.

Online Class Schedule

Monday

- Tanoshii Japanese* (10 am)
- Tai Chi for Arthritis (1 pm)

Tuesday

- Gentle Yoga (10 am)
- Writing (10 am)
- Tai Chi 2 (12:30 pm)
- Community Ukulele (2 pm)

Wednesday

- Qi Gong (10 am)
- Sogetsu Ikebana (1:30 pm)

Thursday

- Minyo no Odori (10 am)
- Strength & Balance (10 am)
- Mah Jong Club (12 pm)

Friday

- Beginning Tai Chi (1 pm)

**Currently not open for new students.*

Groups

- Let's Talk (2nd Mon, 12:30)
- Staying Healthy* (1st & 3rd Mon, 2:30 pm)
- Singing (1st Tu & 3rd Wed, 10 am)
- Aging Together* (1st & 3rd Wed, 10 am)
- Japanese-Speaking Community (4th Thurs, 2 pm)
- Men's Group (1st & 3rd Fri, 10 am)
- Family Caregiver Support (Tues, tbd)

J-Sei Connect

J-Sei Connect offers a variety of virtual workshops and community forums to engage individuals in reflection, dialogue and creative expression. These range from origami, cooking and sake workshops, to film talks, book events, and community conversations on coping with COVID-19. To see what is upcoming, visit www.j-sei.org and sign up for our eBlast news.

Please contact Jill Shiraki at jill@j-sei.org if you are interested in trying any of the classes, or need technical assistance. We will connect you with the instructor who will provide you with the meeting link and other information.

Featured Programming

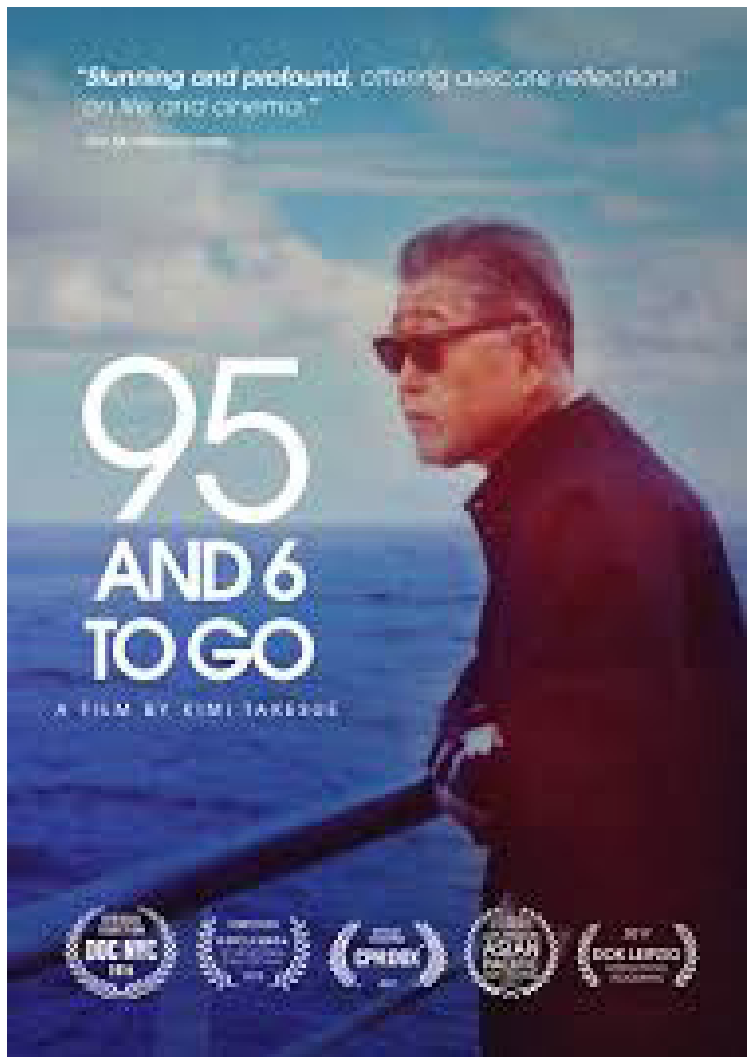
J-Sei At the Movies: An Evening with Kimi Takesue

Friday, January 15

In “95 and 6 To Go” filmmaker Kimi Takesue captures the cadence of daily life for Grandpa Tom, a retired postal worker born to Japanese immigrants to Hawai'i in the 1910's. Amidst the solitude of his home routines - coupon clipping, rigging an improvised barbecue, lighting firecrackers on the New Year - we glimpse an unexpectedly rich inner life. As his granddaughter queries his history of love and loss, a stalled film project becomes a collaborative inquiry into mortality and how one constructs a personal narrative with memories that span almost a century.

Shot over six years in Honolulu, this intimate meditation on absence and family expands the vernacular of the “home movie” to consider how history is accumulated in the everyday and how sparks of humor and creativity can animate an ordinary life.

RSVP to jill@j-sei.org with “At the Movies” in the memo, to receive the link to view the film and join the discussion.



Kimi Takesue is an award-winning filmmaker working in documentary, narrative, and experimental genres. She is the recipient of the John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship in Film. Takesue's documentary 95 AND 6 TO GO (2016) was nominated for the prestigious 2017 European Doc Alliance Award. The film screened at over twenty-five international festivals.



Simple Japanese Cooking

Thursdays, January 21 and Feb 25, 3 pm

What flavors and hopes will the new year bring? We have carved a new path that encourages our creative resourcefulness in the kitchen through our cooking classes with Azusa Oda. Join us as she introduces more ways for us to find ease in preparing familiar Japanese dishes of comfort to bring us into the new year and warm our soul. Azusa Oda, author of *Japanese Cookbook for Beginners*, will continue to cultivate our skills to bring delicious and satisfying Japanese meals to the table. Azusa Oda is an avid home cook, food blogger of HumbleBeanBlog.com and designer. RSVP to jill@j-sei.org and indicate "Cooking Jan 21 or Feb 25, or both"



Oshogatsu Celebration

Friday, January 29, 1 pm

In our virtual landscape, we are discovering ways to connect and celebrate in community. Join us for our Japanese New Year's celebration, an auspicious occasion to ensure hope and goodwill upon the year ahead. Honor our aging elders and celebrate 90+ years of living with special messages and reflections. Experience Japanese cultural traditions through music and dance by Minyo artists Keiko Allen and Kimie Hoshi.

Seen and Unseen: Queering Japanese American History Before 1945

VIRTUAL EXHIBIT Continues

www.j-sei.org/seen-and-unseen/

Seen and Unseen is the first-ever exhibit focused on Nikkei (Japanese Americans) who were involved in intimate same-sex relationships or defied gender roles in the early 20th century. Queer Nikkei are virtually non-existent in Japanese American history, but this exhibit brings them into view. Drawing from recent research by scholars in history, cultural and literary studies, *Seen and Unseen* brings to light a hidden past when same-sex relationships and female impersonation were accepted parts of Japanese immigrant culture, and how queer Japanese Americans expressed themselves as the Nikkei community came to mirror white American fears of same-sex intimacy and gender nonconformity.

After a successful start, a new series of conversations that reflect a Multigenerational Japanese American Queer community will be scheduled for February through March 2021. Updated information will be posted at the above link on the J-Sei website.

Poetry Flows Through Our Blood

February 28, 3pm



In celebration of his new book, *Seize*, and in commemoration of Day of Remembrance, Brian Komei Dempster invites fellow Japanese American poets Brynn Saito and Mia Ayumi Malhotra to join him for this dynamic group presentation. Through a reading of their work and interactive dialogue, these poets will share how the whispered voices of their ancestors infuse the present—and how the legacy of Japanese American wartime incarceration shapes their poetry and connects them to one another. Last March, these poets were part of a joint panel that planned to explore intergenerational trauma of the Japanese American prison camp experience, when COVID-19 disrupted their plans. Here, we find another rendition.

Seize focuses on Dempster's experience of raising his son, Brendan, who suffers from intractable epilepsy and pervasive developmental delays. Moreover, the book explores wartime imprisonment, domestic/familial/racial tensions, and legacies of trauma and violence—along with paths towards resolution. Through juxtaposition, the poems link seemingly disparate events through a central metaphor: seizure.

Brian Komei Dempster's most recent book of poems is *Seize*, published by Four Way Books in fall 2020. His debut book of poetry, *Topaz* (Four Way Books, 2013) received the 15 Bytes 2014 Book Award in Poetry. He is the editor of both *From Our Side of the Fence: Growing Up in America's Concentration Camps* (Kearny Street Workshop, 2001) and *Making Home from War: Stories of Japanese American Exile and Resettlement* (Heyday, 2011).

Like Dempster, Malhotra and Saito write to document their family history and honor their ancestors. All three poets contend with complex issues of gender, culture, and identity.

Brynn Saito is a poet, writer, and educator. She's the author of *Power Makes Us Swoon* (2016) and *The Palace of Contemplating Departure* (2013). She is an Assistant Professor at Fresno State University.

Mia Ayumi Malhotra is the author of *Isako* (Alice James Books, 2018), winner of the Alice James Award, the Nautilus Gold Award for Poetry, a National Indie Excellence Award, a Maine Literary Award, and finalist for the California Book Award.



Brynn Saito, Brian Dempster, Mia Malhotra

WELCOME TO THE J-SEI BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Barbara Morita

Raising my kids in Berkeley I am in awe of the evolution from JASEB to J-Sei and steps in between. Within the J-Sei community I have enjoyed meals, events, classes and teaching the Friday Craft class. Thank you.

For the J-Sei board I hope to add the perspective of an experienced disaster medical responder, clinic disaster planner and community disaster trainer.



Barbara Morita (R) with her mom Gloria Morita (L)

I am retired as a Physician Assistant after 30 years in non-profit Community Clinics including Asian Health

Services, La Clinica de La Raza, and Health Care for the Homeless. My disaster medical experience includes the World Trade Center, Hurricane Katrina, Haiti Earthquake, Indonesia after the tsunami and California wildfires. I hope that first-hand lessons learned from these events can provide

helpful perspective as J-Sei and J-Sei Home navigate our way through COVID into a “new normal” and beyond.

Aaron Muranishi

I was raised in Berkeley during the 50’s and 60’s. Our family was involved with many of the Japanese American organizations which thrived during that period. Church, youth basketball, boy scouts, and youth baseball became the focal point for many of our activities.

I didn’t stray far from my Eastbay roots for my college education at what is now CSU East Bay. After subsequently receiving my MBA from UC Berkeley in 1972, I joined the international accounting firm of Price Waterhouse (PW). While at PW, I met a couple of individuals with whom several

years later I would partner to form the accounting firm of OUM & Co., LLP in San Francisco.

The importance of “giving back to the community” was always in the back of my mind and just over 10 years ago I joined the board of Kokoro Assisted Living, Inc. Becoming a member of the board of J-Sei enables me to continue to give back. Many years ago, our family was the beneficiary of a referral from the JASEB (predecessor to J-Sei) Caregiver Registry. The services, like the Registry, and programs offered by J-Sei are critical to maintaining and expanding the



Japanese American traditions and values. I am excited to be able to help in some small way further the goal of preserving and passing on these traditions and values.

Happy Shoppers at J-Sei's Asian Artisan Craft Fair

In late November, J-Sei held our second annual Asian Artisan Craft Fair and helped local artists share their talents with the community through an on-line format. A beautiful array of products were available for early and safe holiday shopping. This was a wonderful way to support artists during the pandemic and proceeds from the J-Sei 50th Anniversary Specialty, along with handcrafted items by Amy Funabiki, Carolyn Hayashida, and Anne Takizawa, Jun Hamamoto & San Quentin Origami supported J-Sei programs.

We thank all of the artists, artisans and shoppers for their participation.

Thank you for your support!

From the artist studio and artisan warehouse, handcrafted wares by:

- Koko Baker – handwoven scarves
- Hideo Date – music CDs
- Eastwind Books - books
- Amy Funabiki – handcrafted bags
- Harvestland – screen-printed t-shirts
- Carolyn Hayashida – Vintage Ricesack Masks
- Jizake – sake products
- Chiyeko Klarman – clay and shibori textiles
- Terry Lee Pottery – ceramic ware
- Morita Arts – handcrafted ornaments, cards
- Mume Farms – preserves and food snacks
- San Quentin Origami – cards
- Tracy Takayanagi Hui – kimono jackets, jewelry, totes
- Anne Takizawa – Asian Pleated Masks
- Patricia Wakida – handscreened tshirts & dishtowels
- Jane Yamashiro – gluten-free cookies and treats
- Carrie Yoshida – paper crafts & cards
- J-Sei 50th Anniversary Specialty Items



Terry Lee Pottery

URGENT! Volunteer drivers and kitchen help needed

"A lunch and a smile!"



If you are available for weekday mornings and are not in an elevated risk group for COVID-19 we want to hear from you!

Sign up today to help prepare & deliver hot Japanese lunches to homebound seniors in the East Bay

Contact Kathleen Wong

(510) 654-4000 x16 or kathleen@j-sei.org
Or visit our website www.j-sei.org/signup

Tracy Stepping Forward

When shelter-in-place orders were implemented in March, J-Sei lost 85% of our invaluable and fantastic senior nutrition volunteer crew. Where were we going to find enough people to help us so quickly? One of J-Sei's regular volunteers Tracy Kaneshiro truly stepped up her commitment to meet the need. Recruited by a family friend and encouraged by her father board member Dennis Kaneshiro, Tracy started helping in the kitchen on Mondays and didn't realize how 'cool' the experience would be. In her daily life, she did not have the opportunity to spend time with many older individuals. She found her fellow volunteers inspiring in their knowledge of current events, pop culture and their life experiences that created resilient and positive attitudes.

Tracy now helps two days a week and provides extra support for holiday meals and events. As her regular job has scaled back due to the pandemic, Tracy's volunteer time at J-Sei is her main opportunity to connect and interact with others. With younger volunteers in the kitchen she is amazed at their community work and political activism. While Tracy feels fortunate to be a part of a supportive nonprofit, J-Sei is so lucky to have Tracy and all the outstanding current and 'on hold' volunteers who keep our vital programs going.



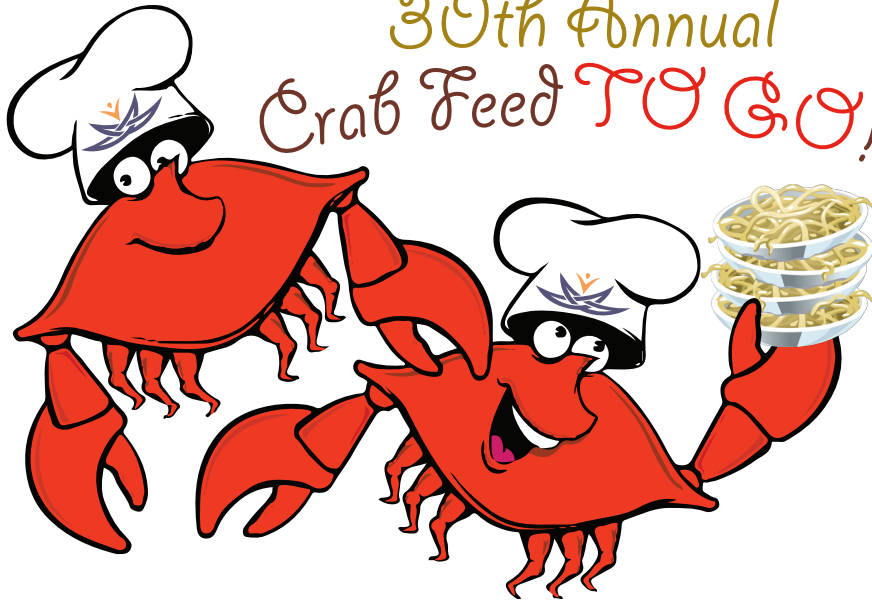
Lisa Tsubouchi – A New Member of the Team!



J-Sei is sad to bid farewell to Noriko Sato who has so ably worked as J-Sei's Program Coordinator managing the Friendly Visitor/Caller and Caregiver Registry programs. We will miss her many skills. However, J-Sei has been extremely fortuitous to bring on Lisa Tsubouchi who has many years of program coordination and planning. With her Japanese language skills, Lisa looks forward to connecting with older adults in the community. When asked what she hopes to achieve in this position, Lisa shares, "I am so thrilled to become a part of the J-Sei community! I'm excited to connect with as many of you as possible, and hope that my love of coordination and planning will bring ease and joy to those in the community that need it most. Please feel free to reach out to me any time - I'd love to hear from you!"



30th Annual Crab Feed TO GO!



Sunday, February 21, 2021

Pick-up Between 1pm to 4pm
at J-Sei, 1286 66th Street, Emeryville, CA

Cheers to crab! **The 30th Annual J-Sei Crab Feed**
will take place this year on a **TO GO** basis.

Fresh Dungeness crab, Asian salad, garlic noodles, bread, and dessert
complete the feast. A limited number of dinners will be sold.

Pre-order your delicious crab dinner by **Sunday, February 14**, through J-Sei's
website at: <https://j-sei.org/30th-annual-crab-feed-to-go/>

Or mail your order and check to be received by **Saturday, February 13**.
Please be sure to include your **phone number** with your order so that
we can schedule a pick-up time with you.

Walk up or drive up at your assigned time (between 1pm to 4pm)
to get your order at J-Sei. Then, join us online to share a toast to
J-Sei's 50 years of community!

DINNER TICKETS \$45

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT J-SEI
BY PHONE (510) 654-4000
OR EMAIL SUZANNE@J-SEI.ORG
WWW.J-SEI.ORG

Case Manager's Corner

by Miyuki Iwata, J-Sei Case Manager

Managing Stress During COVID-19

Many people may feel extra stress during the coronavirus 2020 (COVID-19) pandemic. The following information may help you to cope with anxiousness during this difficult time. You may have the following feelings and conditions during this period:

- Fear about running out of essential supplies.
- Uncertainty about how long you will need to shelter at home.
- Boredom, isolation or anxiety, particularly due to being separated from loved ones.
- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones, your financial situation or job, or loss of the support services that you rely on.
- Fear of being stigmatized or labeled if you become sick.
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns.
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating.
- Worsening of chronic health problems or mental health conditions.
- Increased use of tobacco, and/or alcohol and other substances.

Here are some coping tips for this stressful time:

- Exercise regularly.
- Know your resources: where and how to get treatment and other support services including counseling or therapy (in person/ telehealth services).
- Take care of your emotional health. This will help you think clearly and react during urgent matters to protect yourself and your family.
- Maintain a regular routine and make changes only when necessary. This helps to keep anxiety away.
- Take the necessary and recommended precautions.
- Limit news intake to what is actually providing new information, and stick to reliable news sources. Too much information can be unhelpful and hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.
- Get enough rest and sleep.
- Relax your body often by doing things that work for you - take deep breaths, stretch or meditate, or engage in activities you enjoy.
- Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals.
- Stay hydrated, drink plenty of noncaffeinated and non alcoholic beverages
- Avoid excessive alcohol and drug use.
- Connect with others in the community. While social distancing measures are in place, consider connecting online, through social media, or by phone, mail, video calls or text messages. Even if you are in self-quarantine or mandatory quarantine, keep up social interaction using those tools to connect others. Example: J-Sei offers many classes on Zoom.

Please call J-Sei for needed resources or assistance. Leave a message and a staff member will return your call. 510-654-4000

(cont. on next page)

Senior Center Partnerships

Contact the Senior Center Partnership for details on their operations during shelter-in-place.

Berkeley Nikkei Center

1901 Hearst Street,
Berkeley
(510) 809-5202
Director: Kayo Fisher

Eden Senior Center

EDEN Japanese
Community Center
710 Elgin Street, San
Lorenzo
Contacts:
Pam Honda
(510) 676-3820 or
Janet Mitobe
(510) 760-7186.

Extending Connections

Buena Vista United
Methodist Church
2311 Buena Vista
Avenue, Alameda
(510) 522-2688

Sakura Kai Senior Center

5625 Sutter Street,
Richmond
(510) 778-3406 |
ecsakurakai@gmail.com
Coordinator:
Toshi Kuwabara

Managing Stress During Covid-19 (cont.)

Resources used for this article

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>

www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/coronavirus-safety/coping

<https://yalehealth.yale.edu/covid-19-managing-stress>

<https://www.hhs.gov/coronavirus/mental-health-and-coping/index.html>



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www.j-sei.org

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**Get Your Crab To Go! Purchase at
j-sei.org/30th-annual-crab-feed-to-go/
by Feb 14, 2021 for your Feb 21 pick up.**

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Save the Date!

- Dec 25** Christmas Day
(J-Sei Closed)
- Jan 1** New Years Day
(J-Sei Closed)
- Jan 15** J-Sei At the Movies:
An Evening with Kimi
Takasue
- Jan 18** Martin Luther King, Jr.
Day (J-Sei Closed)
- Jan 21** Simple Japanese
Cooking
- Jan 29** Oshogatsu Celebration
- Feb 15** President's Day
(J-Sei Closed)
- Feb 21** J-Sei's 30th Annual
Crab Feed
- Feb 25** Simple Japanese
Cooking
- Feb 28** Poetry Flows Through
Our Blood