



Eden Seniors Enjoying Skit by Sansei, 1970

J-Sei's Grassroots Beginning Over 50 Years Ago



In the fall of 1968 and spring of 1969, third world students, black, brown, native Americans and Asian students at UC Berkeley organized a student strike to advocate for Ethnic Studies to make the university more relevant to communities of color. This successfully led to the development of an Asian Studies Program in 1970 which had a Community Class section where students carried out specific projects in the east bay area.

Student activists from UC Berkeley visited Hamilton Japanese Issei Senior Center in San Francisco for ideas. A group of students gathered support from community leaders, local JACLs and religious organizations and began the first programs for the Issei in the east bay. The programs included a series of trips and interactive gatherings.

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J-Sei Online

We will continue to hold our on-going classes online via ZOOM. We are impressed by all of you who have adapted to a regular online practice. Please contact Jill Shiraki at jill@j-sei.org if you are interested in trying any of the

below classes, or need technical assistance. We will connect you with the instructor who will provide you with the meeting link and other information. All of our classes are open to all. Donations are not required, but appreciated.

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 (11 am)
- Strength & Balance (10 am)
- Mah Jong Club (12 pm)

Friday

- Beginning Tai Chi (1 pm)

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 (1st Thurs, 4 pm)

J-Sei Connect

J-Sei Connect offers a variety of virtual workshops and community forums to engage individuals in reflection, dialogue and creative expression. To see what is upcoming, visit www.j-sei.org and sign up for our eBlast news.

**Currently not open for new students.*



Lessons from Two Pandemics: Eric Arimoto, Kris Mizutani, Lance Toma, Robert Nakatani, Lisa Fujie Parks

J-Sei Featured Programs



Film Talk with Kimi Takesue (L), Kathy Hashimoto (R)

J-Sei at the Movies

J-Sei at the Movies has been meeting monthly for the past three years to watch Japanese and Japanese American films. Since shelter-in-place, host Kathy Hashimoto has moderated in-depth and personal conversations with filmmakers such as Steven Okazaki, Akira Boch, Philip Kan Gotanda, and Kimi Takesue. The video recordings are available for viewing on J-Sei's YouTube Channel. J-Sei Movie Night is generally held on the 2nd Friday of the month. Please check the J-Sei website for upcoming featured films and guests.

Virtual Book Club

Join our Virtual Book Club and engage in weekly online discussions that include a comprehensive summary, and thoughtful question prompts to get you started. Return to read comments and questions from fellow book club members. Then, get together for a virtual gathering at the end of the series to share impressions and insights. J-Sei's Book Club has explored the following books: *American Harvest* by Marie Mutsuki Mockett, *Southland* by Nina Reyvoyr, *Lament in the Night* by Nagahara Shosun, and *Phone Booth At the Edge of the World* by Laura Imai Messina. Those interested in joining the J-Sei Book Club should contact Jill at jill@j-sei.org.



Simple Japanese Cooking

Thursdays, April 22, May 27 & June 17 at 3 pm

We continue to try new recipes and learn to create heart-warming, soul-satisfying dishes with tips and techniques taught by Azusa Oda. You are invited to cook alongside Azusa, or log in to see the demonstration. The best part is in the tasting which can be enjoyed when you try out the recipe. Classes will feature a variety of dishes: Takikomi Gohan, Shioyaki, and Braised Cabbage and Turnip Greens (April 22), Matcha Roll Cake (May 27), and Bukkake Udon/Soba (June 17).

The suggested donation is \$10-\$15 per class. RSVP to jill@j-sei.org and indicate "Cooking" with the date of the class you plan to attend.

Azusa Oda, author of *Japanese Cookbook for Beginners* is an avid home cook, food blogger of HumbleBeanBlog.com and designer. *Japanese Cookbook for Beginners* is available for \$20 at J-Sei.



Mikami Vineyards & Wine Tasting
 Fri, April 23, 7 pm

Raise a glass with Jason Mikami, owner of Mikami Vineyards in Lodi, CA and learn about his family's grape-growing tradition that spans three generations. The Mikami wine experience originated in 1896, when Jason's grandfather emigrated from Japan to Northern California and began growing wine grapes in Lodi. It was interrupted by the family's internment in Rohwer, Arkansas, but was rebuilt upon their return. In 1963, Jason's father purchased the land where Mikami Vineyards stands today, and sold grapes to California wineries.

Jason evolved the business in 2004 when Mikami Vineyards began producing its own wines, a move that has yielded accolades including Gold Medals from the San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition and Sunset Magazine. Mikami wines have very limited production runs, but Jason has graciously donated samples so the J-Sei community can experience the Mikami family legacy.

An RSVP on Eventbrite is required to receive the link for the online event. A wine-tasting kit featuring three 3-ounce samples of Mikami wines will be available for \$25 donation. Donations are not required, but appreciated.

SoulCollage

VISUAL
 MEDITATION
 ART IS A STATE
 OF MIND.
 5X 7" COLLAGE.
 MIXED MEDIA
 MAT BOARD

ALLOW THE
 CHAOS TO
 SWIRL INTO
 BEAUTY
 ...AT ITS OWN
 PACE.
 DON'T RUSH THE
 CREATIVE
 PROCESS.



Soul Collage for All
 Thurs, May 13, 2 pm

As we transition through this past year's pandemic and all that we carry, art can help us find our way. Explore SOUL COLLAGE, an intuitive process for self discovery. Join us online to create your own collage, discover the wisdom, and share them with each other. Soul Collage, an expressive arts practice founded by Seena B. Frost in the 1980s is now practiced worldwide. The method develops creativity and intuition, encourages self-discovery, and provides personal guidance. Visual Artist and facilitator Cynthia Tom will share this creative process with us at J-Sei. Participants will receive a 5 x 7 mixed media mat board and sleeve, and a list of suggested materials to collect.

Cynthia Tom's work evolves from an intuitive, communities of color-inspired place. She is a visual artist (painter, mixed media, found object sculptor, installation, photographer) and curator who explores ancestral patterns, healing, empowerment spirituality, and feminism through the lens social justice, fostering dialog and building community in innovative ways.

RSVP to jill@j-sei.org with Soul Collage in the subject line.



Perspectives: Queerness, Ethnicity and Gender in the Arts

April 18, 2021, 4-5:30 pm

Join us for Seeing LGBTQ Nikkei, a series of programs centered on the perspectives and insights of different generations of queer Japanese Americans. What factors have impacted LGBTQ+ Japanese American artists of different generations?

Participants will include Rey Fukuda, Jill Guillermo Togawa, Nikiko Masumoto, Michael Matsuno, and traci kato-kiriyama as moderator. For more information, visit <https://j-sei.org/seen-and-unseen/>



VIRTUAL EXHIBIT

Seen and Unseen: Queering Japanese American History Before 1945

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.

<https://j-sei.org/seen-and-unseen/>



Students Involved in EBJA: Wayne Wong, Gayle Momono, and Dennis Terao

J-Sei's Grassroots Beginning Over 50 Years Ago (cont. from front)

EBJA wanted to overcome the alienation and loneliness that the Issei experienced, and wanted to eliminate the cultural barriers that prevented Issei seniors to attain the support they needed. Building communication between generations and nurturing a cohesive community were significant goals.

As a result, EBJA successfully created social programs, trips and provided social services and outgrowths of EBJA's effort include the Berkeley Nikkei Center, Eden Senior Center and Sakura Kai Senior Center, which continue vibrant offerings today.

Meanwhile community activists were also breaking barriers with East Bay Issei Housing (EBIH) which was incorporated in 1978 and included participation from 23 nonprofit Japanese American Citizens League and religious organizations. EBIH focused on senior

housing for Japanese American seniors and was instrumental in creating three housing facilities. The efforts of EBIH led to a 100-unit independent senior housing building in Hayward and care homes in Hayward and Berkeley. With a broadened scope of services, EBJA and EBIH merged in 1986 to form Japanese American Services of the East Bay which was renamed J-Sei in 2010.

There were many progressive and dynamic individuals involved in the start-up and evolution of this much needed and valued organization who will be highlighted in future videos and historical archives. All of us are grateful for these individuals who had the skills, commitment and foresight to build this critical community support which continues to make a positive impact today.

Andrea Maoki Joins the Board

Growing up in the East Bay, Asian league basketball, Daruma no Gakko, and countless bazaars and obon festivals shaped my sense of what it meant to be a part of a community. Equally important were the many volunteers who supported my grandmother and her issei friends through church, Sakura-Kai and early J-Sei programs. I am so grateful for the chance to have seen this legacy of care and service in action, and it has strongly influenced me into adulthood.

In many ways, I have settled in a predominantly Latinx community in Oakland. I live here with my partner and two kids, and have now worked in the area for Oakland Unified School District as a teacher, program coordinator, and site administrator for nearly twenty years. We've more recently had the chance to reconnect with Nikkei organizations such as Buena Vista's youth basketball and Daruma no Gakko, and of



course, J-Sei. As a board member, I hope to help build intercultural and intergenerational programming, in addition to supporting J-Sei's tradition of amazing care for the elders of our community.

Welcome Hannah Tang!

Hannah Tang officially joined the J-Sei's staff in January as the new Chef Assistant however Hannah was already a familiar face around the kitchen as she was one of the essential volunteers who stepped in to help volunteer during the pandemic. In her role of Chef Assistant, Hannah works alongside Chef Yuji to cook and prepare the meals that are delivered to homebound seniors who are unable to shop or prepare meals for themselves. In a typical week, Hannah and Yuji prep and cook over 240 lbs of meat and 200-300 lbs of vegetables for the senior lunch program.

Hannah comes to J-Sei with a background in hospitality management and currently is in her fourth season working for the Golden State Warriors in the Game Experience department as a stage manager and audio sweetener. She joined J-Sei to serve the community while



also exploring her passion for food. Providing food for others is her favorite way to show her appreciation.

50th Anniversary Celebrations Planned

Spring is here, and the J-Sei staff, board and volunteers are busy planning events to celebrate our 50th Anniversary!

Since we don't know when we can start holding in-person gatherings, the current plan is to combine celebrations of this milestone with our virtual or hybrid (on-line and in-person if possible) events throughout the year.

For example, our annual Family Festival and holiday celebrations will include references to our history since 1971. Also in the works are special on-line events, such as panel presentations by individuals who played key roles in the early decades of our organization. This newsletter will feature articles by or about them as well.

30th Annual Crab Feed a Hit

This past year has been filled with many 'firsts' including J-Sei's first to-go Crab Feed. We missed seeing friends and family while dining, but we did see happy faces as they walked up or drove up for their meals. The 650 meals sold out in record time and while we had to adjust all preparations in a new location for takeout as opposed to dine in, none of this would have been possible without the dozens of cheerful volunteers who cut bread, packed noodles and salads, baked cookies, bagged crab, assembled to-go bags, and handed out meals.

A very special virtual event, Coming Full Circle - The Music of Otonowa provided excellent entertainment and discussion for the evening. Many thanks to Akira Tana, Masaru Koga, Ken Okada and Art Hirahara for sharing their music and reflections from their tours 2013-2019 in commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the Northern Japan Earthquake, Tsunami and Nuclear Disaster. Originally a trio formed to play a benefit for Northern Japan Earthquake and Tsunami disaster victims, Otonowa has emerged as an ensemble that travels year after

In addition, we have launched two important projects: 50th Anniversary Videos and the new Historical Archive. Under the Video Project, we are producing a short film chronicling our fifty-year history and shorter clips on current services and programs. And a big thank you to those who have contributed hundreds of valuable images to our Historical Archive! We can't wait to share these videos and images with you during our celebrations.

We still hope to hold an in-person 50th gala event in the Spring of 2022 and will confirm plans when we are able to gather again. Please watch for event announcements at the J-Sei website and in our e-mail updates and join us.



year to share the healing power of music. Please enjoy the full event recording on J-Sei's Youtube channel.

Thanks also to Susan Shimamoto for the most delicious dressing that she makes every year and we appreciate Acme Bread's donations. The Crab Committee was ably led by Matt Fujikawa, and members Amy Shinsako, Wendy Kiniris, Tiffany Nguyen and Diane Wong. Everyone's participation is greatly appreciated with all proceeds supporting the wide range of J-Sei's community services.

Friendly Visitor (Friendly Caller) Program

In the “before times” this program was referred to as the “Friendly Visitor” program - wonderful J-Sei volunteers spending time with seniors going on walks, playing games, catching up. The Coronavirus situation has changed so many aspects of our daily lives, but luckily our program is still going strong - until it is safe to meet face-to-face again, we are currently referring to it as the “Friendly Caller” program. I feel lucky that our volunteers and seniors alike have adapted so quickly to all the changes that we’ve all faced in the last year.

One of my favorite things about this position so far has been chatting with Mrs. I once a week. At first, I was nervous about making a call to someone I had never met before - but in no time at all I began to look forward to our weekly check-ins. It turns out we have a lot in common! We both love dark roast coffee (and drink it black), and have a special place in our hearts for Japanese floral design. We do our best to match volunteers and seniors with similar interests - I’ve not once felt awkward speaking with Mrs. I;



we always have a lot to talk about, even if it’s just about the weather or current events.

Talking to Mrs. I every week reminds me of having phone conversations with my obaachan when she was still alive, and it brings me a kind of joy I haven’t found anywhere else. I asked Mrs. I to tell me some things about the program that she loves. Here is what she said:

“There are many things I have been grateful to each Volunteer Caller for, such as: Friendliness, warm support, kind heart, sincere willingness, wide knowledge, encouragement...The list can go on much longer. Even though I have never met most of them, I feel like they are all my long time friends. I sincerely hope this wonderful program will be continued as long as possible.”

If you or someone you know would be interested in getting involved with our Friendly Caller program (either as a volunteer or call-recipient!), please see the information below. We have volunteers that speak both English and Japanese. You can also learn more about the program on our website. I look forward to hearing from you soon!

-Lisa Tsubouchi, Program Coordinator: 510-654-4000 ext. 13, lisa@j-sei.org.



Stop Anti-Asian Racism

With the increase in violence targeting Asian Americans, we appreciate the resources that community leaders, API organizations, and concerned citizens are offering.

Here are just a few that we find helpful as we face forward, take care of ourselves, and stand up for each other.

Self Care Tips for Asian Americans Dealing with Racism Amid Coronavirus (HuffPost)

Provides 6 tips to take care of yourself and others during the mounting stress and attacks against Asian Americans.

<http://bit.ly/3vOYp46>

Stay Safe from Hate Booklet

Asian American Federation distributes a FREE Stay Safe from Hate booklet that: (1) Helps you to communicate calmly and de-escalate tense situations, (2) Teaches you easy techniques to defend yourself physically, and (3) Shows you how to protect others using bystander intervention methods.

<http://bit.ly/3ICGpWb>

Compassion in Oakland

Compassion in Oakland promotes safety in the community and coordinates escort support for seniors in Oakland Chinatown.

<https://compassioninoakland.org>

Stop AAPI Hate

Asian American Pacific Islander communities stand up against hate during the COVID-19 pandemic. Report a hate crime. Stop mis-information.

<https://caasf.org/stop-aapi-hate/>

Bystander Intervention Training

Learn the 5 D's of Hollaback's methodology for responding to harassment: *distract, delegate, document, delay, and direct*; and how to prioritize your own safety while intervening. You'll learn how your identities can shape your experience of harassment and the impact that harassment has on you and your community as a whole.

<https://www.ihollaback.org/bystanderintervention/>



Graphic via NYC Stop Asian Hate Toolkit



Search "J-Sei" on YouTube to find videos of past events, classes, conversations, and more.



Otonowa, our Crab Feed Special Performers, in Conversation. Find J-Sei on YouTube to watch this and more.

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:
Yasuyo Floyd



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The Mikami Vineyards Legacy & Wine Tasting on April 23rd will be held in conjunction with J-Sei's 50th Anniversary, honoring our community legacies.

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Save the Date!

- Apr 18** Perspectives: Queerness, Ethnicity and Gender in the Arts
- Apr 22** Simple Japanese Cooking
- Apr 23** Mikami Vineyards & Wine Tasting
- May 13** Soul Collage for All
- May 27** Simple Japanese Cooking
- May 31** Memorial Day (J-Sei Closed)
- Jun 17** Simple Japanese Cooking