

## PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT For Immediate Release

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### JCCCNC to Launch REEL NIKKEI STORIES

Discovery Your Family History and Genealogy

*San Francisco (October 8, 2008)* – How much do you know about your family history? Have you talked to your living relatives about their experiences with immigration or their experiences during the internment and World War II? Although many documentaries, books and oral histories have been produced and written to preserve this important piece of history, for thousands of Japanese American families their stories still remain untold and undocumented. These stories are not necessarily of the more famous Nisei, but rather that of the ordinary person, whose life experiences of their past remains locked in their memory. In many cases, these stories have not been shared with their own children and grandchildren. Recognizing the urgency to capture these untold stories and preserve our Nikkei family histories, the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (JCCCNC) will launch REEL NIKKEI STORIES: a Nikkei Family Legacy Project on October 18, 2008 with an Informational Meeting and Training Workshop Preview from 10:30am-12:30pm at the JCCCNC (1840 Sutter Street, San Francisco). Made possible through a generous \$30,000 grant from the California Civil Liberties Public Education Program (CCLPEP), support from the Henri and Tomoye Takahashi Charitable Foundation and a \$2,500 grant from the Best Buy Foundation, REEL NIKKEI STORIES is designed to engage youth and all generations to take an active role and empower them with the confidence,



training and tools to interview, video document and share the untold stories of living relatives before their family histories are lost forever.

“If history becomes real to a person, it empowers them and lives through them and then can be passed on from generation to generation,” JCCCNC Executive Director Paul Osaki says about the importance of REEL NIKKEI STORIES. “The fact is the Nisei generation is passing on at an alarming rate; we do not have tomorrow, we must act today before these stories all but slip away.”

REEL NIKKEI STORIES has teamed with Japanese American professionals in the media industry, including Dianne Fukami, Jan Yanehiro and Wendy Tokuda, and film professionals from Urban Voice, a nonprofit video production company, including its Executive Director Boku Kodama, to develop the training program. Training includes a series of hands-on workshops and a user-friendly toolkit with interview questions, video techniques and an instructional DVD, which will be available online as well as distributed to schools, universities, libraries and community organizations throughout California. Participants are encouraged to share chapters of their documentaries in the REEL NIKKEI STORIES Mini-Film Festival and contest held in June 2009.

“My grandmother Kagawa passed away before I had the resources, or before I made the opportunity to permanently document her experience of living in an internment camp,” says REEL NIKKEI STORIES project coordinator Alicia Kagawa. “We have a small window of opportunity, after which we will lose hundreds of important first-hand stories. With REEL NIKKEI STORIES, I will be able to capture my grandfather’s experience fighting in World War II, and future generations of my family will better know where they came from.”

For more information or to get involved with the REEL NIKKEI STORIES attend the Informational Meeting on October 18, 2008 at 10:30am-11:30am followed by a Training Workshop Preview at 11:30am-12:30pm at the JCCCNC (1840 Sutter

Street, San Francisco). All are welcome to attend but please reserve your space by calling Alicia at 415-567-5505 or email [Akagawa@JCCCNC.org](mailto:Akagawa@JCCCNC.org).

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### **About the CCLPEP**

The California Civil Liberties Public Education Program (CCLPEP) was created in 1999 as the result of the passage of the WWII Internment of Japanese Americans: California Civil Liberties Public Education Act in 1998. The purpose of the CCLPEP program is to provide competitive grants for public educational activities and the development of educational materials to ensure that the events surrounding the exclusion, forced removal and incarceration of civilians and permanent resident aliens of Japanese ancestry will be remembered and so that causes and circumstances of this and similar events may be illuminated and understood. (Taken from website: <http://www.library.ca.gov/grants/cclpep/>)

### **About the JCCCNC**

Envisioned by the Japanese American community, JCCCNC will be an everlasting foundation of our Japanese American ancestry, cultural heritage, histories and traditions. The JCCCNC strives to meet the evolving needs of the Japanese American community through programs, affordable services and facility usage. The JCCCNC is a non-profit community center based in San Francisco.