

## PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT For Immediate Release

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### **REEL NIKKEI STORIES Helps Youth Document Family History**

First in Workshop Series Held on December 13, 2008

*San Francisco (November 17, 2008)* – Thinking of the perfect personalized gift to give to your family this holiday season? Join the REEL NIKKEI STORIES: A Nikkei Family Legacy Project first workshop on December 13, 2008 at the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (JCCCNC) and make your commitment to create a family legacy project that can be passed on for generations to come!



REEL NIKKEI STORIES is designed to engage youth, but is open to 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. Although many documentaries, books and oral histories have been produced to preserve and teach the Japanese American experience during World War II and in internment camps, your family's personal story may still remain untold and undocumented. By interviewing and video documenting your elders' stories, you will be able to start a dialogue in your family and learn first-hand accounts of the Japanese American experience.

"The REEL Nikkei Stories project is a great idea, especially because it gives people from my generation a chance to ask questions and preserve parts of their personal family histories they might not have heard much about," Haruka

Roudebush, a founding member of the Nakayoshi-JACL Young Professional's Group and board member of the JACL San Francisco Chapter said after attending the REEL NIKKEI STORIES Launch on October 18<sup>th</sup>. "Who knows what pieces of our past have yet to be revealed by our family members? Recording these memories really gives us all a greater understanding and deeper connection to the historical events our families and community survived."

REEL NIKKEI STORIES will hold the first of a series of workshops on December 13, 2008 from 11:30am-2:30pm at the JCCCNC building (1840 Sutter Street, San Francisco). This project is 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 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. In addition to hands-on workshops, REEL NIKKEI STORIES will develop 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. Cameras and equipment are available for loan to responsible participants. Participants are encouraged to share chapters of their documentaries in the REEL NIKKEI STORIES Mini-Film Festival and contest scheduled for June 2009.



The project was initially intended to collect stories from World War II and Internment Camps, but has since grown to include stories from all Nikkei generations and experiences. "REEL NIKKEI STORIES is an important project that will help preserve all Nikkei stories.

I would like to interview my father about his experience immigrating to the United States,” Asuka Nagase, a Shin-Nisei student at UC Davis and current Northern California Cherry Blossom Princess, said after attending the REEL NIKKEI STORIES Training Preview.

“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.”

This holiday season give the gift that matters most to your family and take this opportunity to capture your family history from your living relatives. For more information on how to create your family legacy project or to sign up for the REEL NIKKEI STORIES Workshop on December 13, 2008 at 11:30am-2:30pm at the JCCCNC (1840 Sutter Street, San Francisco) please contact 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.