

PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT For Immediate Release

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Applications Now Available for 2009 Shinzen USA Nikkei Youth Goodwill Sports Program

SAN FRANCISCO (October, 15, 2009) – The Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (JCCCNC) is currently seeking applicants for their 2009 Shinzen USA Nikkei Youth Goodwill Sports Program. Participants in the 2009 Shinzen Program will be traveling to Osaka, Kobe and Hiroshima, Japan from July 27 to August 5, 2009. The Shinzen Program allows youth the opportunity to learn about their culture and heritage both here in the Bay Area, through pre-trip workshops and then with a first hand experience with their families on a 10-day trip to Japan. Through spirited basketball games, youth exchanges, touring and homestays, our young ambassadors also build stronger relationships with the people of Japan.



2007 Shinzen players with players from the Osaka YMCA and two professional JBL players.

As a 2009 Shinzen participant, the youth, along with their families, will participate in community events as volunteers, host fundraising events, spend the summer months participating in cultural workshops, learning about Japan, practicing basketball and spending time together as a group in preparation for their journey to Japan next summer.

While the primary beneficiaries of the Shinzen Program are its youth participants, the families of Shinzen youth are also afforded a unique opportunity to benefit from the enriching cultural



2007 Shinzen players presenting 1000 cranes at the Sadako Monument at Hiroshima's Peace Park.

activities, both locally and while traveling in Japan. In their roles as cultural ambassadors, Shinzen families are also expected to promote the principles of the Shinzen Program. The dedicated effort of Shinzen families plays a critical role in the success of the Shinzen Program as they learn about past generations of Japanese and Japanese Americans struggles and triumphs, to the customs and traditions that they have passed down. One of the goals of the Program is to engage both the players and their families to take an active role in the Program to help further their role in U.S.-Japan relations and to continue to share our community's rich history and heritage.

The Shinzen USA Committee is looking for boys and girls (ages 14-16 years old next summer with applicant's birth date between June 1, 1993 and December 31, 1995) and their families that are interested in learning more about Japanese/Japanese American culture, traditions and heritage. **Applications are due by Wednesday, November 12, 2008.**



2007 Shinzen players and families visit Osaka Castle.

Activities to prepare for the trip to Japan next summer will include Japanese customs, language and etiquette workshops, Japanese American history workshops, basketball practices, hip-hop dance practice, volunteering at community events and fundraising. For more information on the Shinzen Program or a 2009 application, contact Lori Matoba at 415-567-5505 x226 or lmatoba@jccnc.org.

Shinzen Program History

In 1997, the JCCNC and the office of the Consulate General of Japan in San Francisco agreed that although there were a substantial number of traditional, cultural and intellectual exchanges between the U.S. and Japan, there existed a greater need for meaningful dialogue between youth in Japan and Japanese American youth. Through these discussions was born the Shinzen Nikkei Youth Goodwill Program, formed to create a more dynamic and meaningful exchange between the youth and to provide unique opportunities for the exchange of ideas and

important values among young people. The Shinzen players work to achieve these goals by creating friendships at a local level to help reinforce a future of global peace and goodwill.

Since the inaugural visit to Japan in 1997, over 1200 participants (players and their families) have visited Japan or hosted a Japanese youth in their home for the Shinzen Program. Over the years, Shinzen alumni have continued to stay involved in the Japanese American community, as youth coaches, volunteers, community interns, and many have returned to Japan to continue to build and foster international relations and stay connected to their cultural heritage.

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About the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (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 administrative support and facilities for other local service organizations. The JCCCNC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit community center based in San Francisco.