

Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California

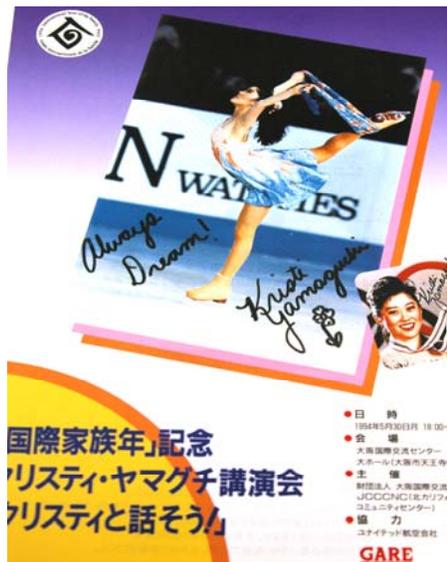
Overview of U.S. - Japan Exchange Programs to Japan and Cultural Exchange Programs with Japanese Counterparts (1989- 2014)

Historical Overview of JCCCNC Programs to Japan

For over two decades the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (JCCCNC) has been a leader in creating and organizing annual cultural and grassroots exchange programs to Japan as an opportunity to improve the relationship between the United States and Japan in particular as it relates to the Japanese American community.

The JCCCNC has introduced a diverse audience of all ethnic backgrounds to the people and culture of Japan in particular with our sister city Osaka as well as Kobe Japan. Some are first time travelers, while others have made numerous trips on a regular basis. Participants have also included individuals born and raised in Japan who are now permanently residing in the United States.

Although the JCCCNC's activities and communication with Japan began in the late 1980's through the encouragement and support of then Consul General Shunji Yanai and former Consul General Ryozo Kato to address the economic tension between the two countries, regular grassroots programs began to emphasize the importance of improved understanding that can only be gained by traveling to Japan. This was initiated with the JCCCNC's Kristi Yamaguchi Goodwill Tour in 1994.



Ms. Yamaguchi is known in the United States and around the world as the first Japanese American to win the Olympic Gold Medal for Figure Skating in 1992. However, there was little recognition for Kristi's achievements in Japan. Thus, in 1994, the Kristi Yamaguchi Goodwill Tour to Japan (Osaka, Kyoto and Tokyo) was organized to introduce Japanese audiences to Kristi and, at the same time, introduce Kristi to her ancestral roots. Kristi quickly captured the hearts of the thousands of Japanese citizens who met her on her tour. By making herself available for public appearances and other activities, Kristi embraced her audience with her sincerity and integrity. Kristi also had a chance to visit her maternal grandmother's relatives in Wakayama City, and paid her respects to her ancestral gravesite in the nearby area.

A year after her visit, the Great Hanshin Earthquake occurred in Kobe. Because of her visit to the area and the wonderful memories from her trip, Kristi did not let this tragic event go unnoticed. She immediately and generously donated to the relief efforts organized by the JCCCNC, which raised over \$600,000 and shipped over one and a half tons of relief goods directly to citizen relief efforts to provide emergency supplies and monetary donations to the

local YMCA branches in Kobe and Osaka, the City of Osaka as well as to two orphanages in Kobe City whose buildings were totally destroyed.

On March 11, 2011, the JCCCNC immediately established the Northern Japan Earthquake Relief Fund to aid the survivors of the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, and subsequent nuclear disaster. The Relief Fund plan is a three-fold plan for relief, recovery and rebuilding phases, which is believed to take more than five years.

The campaign - a community and volunteer driven effort - grew to become the largest Japanese American community based relief fund in the United States with over 12,000 donors, 25,000+ members on Causes.com, and more than 125 events raising over \$4 million.

People to People Exchange Programs with Japan

Subsequent to the Kristi Yamaguchi Goodwill Tour, several Sister City Programs were planned and organized by the JCCCNC to celebrate San Francisco's relationship with the City of Osaka.

However the largest trip organized by the JCCCNC took place in 1997 where a citizen delegation of 174 individuals visited Osaka to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Sister City relationship. Amongst the delegates was a large percentage of individuals reflecting the diversity and inclusivity of San Francisco, and it was the first time in San Francisco's history to send such a large official delegation to its sister city. Programs and activities to commemorate the event included a week long exchange of educators, business leaders, non-profit leaders, elected officials and artists to dialogue and exchange with their counterparts.



Again in 2002, for the 45th Anniversary the JCCCNC organized another Sister City anniversary, which involved the San Francisco 49ers football team and their exhibition game against the Washington Redskins at the Osaka Dome.



In 2007, Mayor Gavin Newsom led an almost exclusively Japanese American delegation headed by the JCCCNC to Japan to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Sister City relationship. The theme of the tour was to promote new businesses to San Francisco's Japantown.

Japanese American Youth to Japan

Following the Great Hanshin Earthquake, in 1997, the Shinzen Goodwill Basketball Program to Japan was created. This program, involving local Nikkei youth aged 13-15 years, allowed young people to spend up



to two weeks in a homestay program in both Kobe and Osaka to learn the Japanese culture, customs and language. Although the youth are initially attracted to the program because of its sports component, the experience of being able to spend time with a Japanese family and make friends residing in a foreign country outweigh any of their original interests.

Over 1,200 youth and their families have participated in this program and over 70% of the Bay Area participants with the Shinzen Program have returned to Japan to live, work and travel or have expressed a desire to return back to Japan either during or after college to further their knowledge about Japan.



In 2008, the JCCCNC launched the Nikkei Youth Cultural Heritage Program (NYCHP), a one-month cultural and language immersion program for college-aged students in partnership with the Kobe YMCA Language School. The NYCHP allows students to experience daily Japanese life first-hand and use their new language skills. Day trips to historical locations, as well as cultural arts classes allow students to gain a better understanding and appreciation for Japan, its culture, people and history. Since 2009, students from cultural centers in Los Angeles, Seattle and Hawaii have also participated and a pre-trip tour to Tokyo, Kyoto and Hiroshima has been added.

In 2011, with support from The Henri and Tomoye Takahashi Charitable Foundation, the JCCCNC started the Takahashi Youth Ambassador Fellowship Program (TYAFP). The TYAFP is a unique and exclusive scholarship opportunity for youth to participate in workshops aimed at developing their leadership skills, educating them about the Japanese American experience and community, and culminating with a trip to Japan. Through their participation they have the opportunity to create new friendships, meet with leaders, volunteer and immerse themselves in Japanese culture giving them the necessary tools and confidence to become the leaders of tomorrow.

Programs to San Francisco to Develop a Better Understanding of American Society

Programs to encourage Japanese residents to visit the United States are also encouraged to learn more about Japanese Americans.

The Shinzen Goodwill Basketball Program also invited students from Osaka and Kobe to live with a host family and participate in planned activities in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Second, immediately after the Great Hanshin Earthquake a delegation of individuals involved in various mental health professions was invited to San Francisco to learn about activities and programs to help treat Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and the mentally challenged community. Since that time, annual trips have been conducted with over 360 individuals involved in these educational exchange programs to the San Francisco and non-profit study programs in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Cultural and Furusato Exchange Programs to Japan

For the past two decades the JCCCNC has also been conducting cultural and Furusato tours to Japan. The purpose of this program is to specifically encourage multi-generation Nikkei to travel back to Japan to learn more about their own ancestral heritage.

Relying on information and data obtained from the Japan Overseas Migration Museum in Yokohama, it was learned that the largest percentage of Japanese emigrating to the United States and the Kingdom of Hawaii was from the following five Prefectures: Hiroshima; Okinawa, Kumamoto; Yamaguchi and Fukuoka, and thus, contact was made with each of the Prefectural Offices listed above to request assistance with the tour to specifically assist with locating gravesites or local temples for the participants to visit.



Since it is difficult for many of our participants to obtain a copy of their koseki tohon, either because they have no record of the name of the household head or knowledge of how to obtain it, contact with Prefectural Offices provided important information to start the inquiry.



The result of the Furusato tours has allowed for a deeper respect and appreciation for Japan in general, but more specifically for the ancestral members of a participant's family. Being able to personally visit and "feel" the land where your ancestors once lived and learn the regional language and customs still shared by residents of those Prefectures today provides a sense of wholeness, regardless of whether you are able to speak the language or know a great deal about the Japanese culture.

These tours also identify and distinguish the reasons why certain types of food or folk crafts are created in the various regions to more thoroughly understand the importance placed on Prefectural contributions and uniqueness of a region. It also allows Nikkei to explore a side of Japan not often experienced by foreigners visiting the country.

Discover Japan Program

In 2002, the JCCCNC launched its Discover Japan Campaign in cooperation with Kintetsu International and All Nippon Airways (ANA). The Discover Japan Campaign was initiated to encourage Nikkei and their families to self-travel to Japan at a discounted price for JCCCNC members. To date, over 450 individuals have taken advantage of this travel opportunity program to Japan.



Chronological List of Activities

Overall, over 2,000 persons have participated in one or more of the JCCCNC organized tours to Japan, with each participant expressing an overwhelming desire to return to Japan and further the relationship established by these programs.

The main JCCCNC exchange programs to Japan and programs originating in Japan to the San Francisco Bay Area include the following:

| <u>Year of Program</u> | <u>Title of Program (BOLD to U.S.)</u> | <u>Approximate Number of Participants</u> |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 1990 –2000 | 16 Trips Organized specifically to improve U.S.-Japan Relations between Japanese Americans and Japan (Osaka/Tokyo) | 66 |
| 1991 | JCCCNC sponsored tour to host physically and mentally challenged individuals (Osaka) | 30 |
| 1994 | Kristi Yamaguchi Goodwill Tour (Osaka and Tokyo) | 20 |
| 1995 | Professional Mental Trauma Care Program (Kobe/Osaka) | 10 |
| 1996 | Japanese Non-Profits Study Program to San Francisco (Osaka and Kobe) | 15 |
| 1997 | 40 th Anniversary of the San Francisco-Osaka Sister City “Citizens Ambassadors Conference” | 174 |
| 1997 | Shinzen Youth Goodwill Program to Japan (Osaka/Kobe) | 122 |
| 1997 | Culture Exchange Tour to Japan | 20 |
| 1998 | Shinzen Youth Goodwill Program (Kobe) | 68 |
| 1998 | Culture Exchange Tour to Japan | 20 |
| 1999 | Culture Exchange Tour to Japan | 20 |
| 1999 | Shinzen Youth Goodwill Program to Japan (Kobe/Osaka) | 112 |
| 2000 | Organized the first California Japanese American Leadership Delegation to Japan | 15 |
| 2000 | Shinzen Youth Goodwill Program (Osaka/Kobe) | 80 |
| 2001 | Culture Exchange Tour to Japan | 20 |

BOLD denotes organized groups from Japan

| <u>Year of Program</u> | <u>Title of Program</u> | <u>Approximate Number of Participants</u> |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 2001 | Shinzen Youth Goodwill Program to Japan (Osaka/Kobe) | 98 |
| 2002 | Culture Exchange Tour to Japan | 20 |
| 2002 | 45 th Anniversary of the San Francisco Osaka Sister City "San Francisco 49ers" | 45 |
| 2002 | Shinzen Youth Goodwill Program (Osaka/Kobe) | 70 |
| 2003 | Culture Exchange Tour to Japan | 20 |
| 2003 | Shinzen Youth Goodwill Program to Japan (Osaka/Kobe) | 118 |
| 2004 | Culture Tour to Japan | 20 |
| 2004 | Shinzen Youth Goodwill Program (Osaka/Kobe) | 65 |
| 2005 | Furusato Tour to Japan | 20 |
| 2005 | Shinzen Youth Goodwill Program to Japan (Osaka/Kobe) | 109 |
| 2006 | Furusato Tour to Japan | 25 |
| 2006 | Shinzen Youth Goodwill Program (Osaka) | 55 |
| 2007 | Mayor Gavin Newsom and 50 th Anniversary of the San Francisco Osaka Sister City Program to Japan | 45 |
| 2007 | Shinzen Youth Goodwill Program to Japan (Osaka/Kobe) | 115 |
| 2007 | Osaka-San Francisco Culinary Tour to Japan | 80 |
| 2007 | Osaka Mayor Seki Visit to San Francisco | 25 |
| 2007 | Culture Exchange Tour to Japan | 20 |
| 2008 | Nikkei Youth Cultural Heritage Program | 4 |
| 2008 | Shinzen Youth Goodwill Program (Osaka) | 25 |
| 2008 | Fall Cultural Tour to Japan | 15 |
| 2009 | Nikkei Youth Cultural Heritage Program | 10 |
| 2009 | Shinzen Youth Goodwill Program to Japan (Osaka/Kobe) | 78 |

BOLD denotes organized groups from Japan

| Year of Program | Title of Program | Approximate Number of Participants |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 2009 | Fall Cultural Tour to Japan | 15 |
| 2010 | Cultural Tour to Sapporo, Japan | 18 |
| 2010 | Nikkei Youth Cultural Heritage Program | 6 |
| 2010 | Fall Cultural Tour to Japan | 15 |
| 2011 | Takahashi Youth Ambassador Fellowship Program and Nikkei Youth Cultural Heritage Program | 14 |
| 2011 | <i>Towards Recovery and Healing - Northern Japan Earthquake Relief Fund (NJERF) – Mental Health Training</i> | 12 |
| 2011 | <i>Project Aloha – NJERF Goodwill Tour to Tohoku Crayons for Japan and Ishinomaki Field Reconstruction</i> | 20 |
| 2012 | <i>Youth for the Future – Sendai YMCA Student Visit</i> | 7 |
| 2013 | Spring Cultural Tour – Niigata and Miyagi | 14 |
| 2013 | Takahashi Youth Ambassador Fellowship Program and Nikkei Youth Cultural Heritage Program | 14 |

BOLD denotes organized groups from Japan