

# **TAKAHASHI YOUTH AMBASSADOR FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM**

**Funded by The Henri and Tomoye Takahashi Charitable Foundation**

Sponsored and Organized by the  
Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (JCCCNC)

## **OVERVIEW**

In 2011, the Takahashi Youth Ambassador Fellowship Program (TYAFP) was developed by the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (JCCCNC) as a way to continue to encourage young people, particularly those of Japanese American heritage, to learn more about the Japanese American culture and community as well as their ancestral ties to Japan.

The creation of this program incorporates the best practices and experience of other previous programs created by the JCCCNC that have always and continue to emphasize civic and community involvement; developing a sense of responsibility as world citizens; knowing and understanding more about one's role as an individual of Japanese descent in the US; and how individual citizens of any age can play a role in creating a better understanding and relationship with their foreign neighbors, particularly in Japan. In addition, by focusing on leadership and civic development, the youth build a strong background and foundation for their career resumes. All participants who successfully complete the TYAFP will receive a Certificate of Completion, as well as personal letters or certificates of commendation from the Consulate of Japan, United States Senate and House of Representatives members, and California Senate and Assembly members.

## **NEED**

Although we can be certain of very few things in the future, what we can be sure of is that things will continue to change at a rapid pace, things will be more competitive and our international borders will continue to shrink. Preparing our youth to meet these challenges is essential if we want to build future leaders in our community that are creative, competitive and capable in the years ahead.

## **GOALS**

The overall goal is to develop an international youth leadership program that will have lasting benefits and impact, becoming the premiere youth program to have participated in as a student growing up in the Japanese American community. Our hope is that one day former participants will become prominent leaders in a variety of endeavors and proudly state that they were once a "*Takahashi Youth Ambassador Fellow.*"

- To develop life skills focusing on global responsibility and civic involvement.
- To develop an appreciation and understanding of citizen-action and involvement through community and international volunteerism.
- To understand the history of the Japanese American community in San Francisco and what changes are taking place today within the community.
- To develop a deeper understanding and awareness of Japan, its culture and the people as an international citizen ambassador.
- To have meaningful exchanges with youth from Japan.

## **Program Overview**

The Takahashi Youth Ambassador Fellowship Program will be broken down into three phases. Each phase will build upon the previous phase to allow the youth to acquire skills and knowledge of both civic duty and leadership.

### **Phase I: Community Involvement and Leadership Development Training (Summer 2014)**

The Takahashi Fellows will begin their journey with cultural and educational workshops learning about their own San Francisco Japantown community. In order to move forward the fellows must get a clear grasp of what types of activities and challenges have taken place in their community.

The fellows will also be encouraged to share with their peers their personal family histories and experiences. In addition to learning about themselves and their community, the fellows will also begin to develop skills such as activity/event planning and participate in team-building activities that can be used throughout their adult life. Introducing these activities will provide them with the skills needed to take on challenges and find efficient solutions during the program and in the future.

Phase I will culminate with the Takahashi Fellows creating and implementing their own fundraiser where the proceeds will be used for the TYAFP trip to Japan in 2015.

### **Phase II: Leadership Development Training and Preparation for Japan (Summer 2015)**

Phase II will continue to reinforce the skills learned in the previous phase as well as a more thorough introduction to Japan. Fellows will research cultural topics of current interest in Japan and work on their public speaking skills as they present their findings to their colleagues. In addition, team building workshops to prepare the students to improve communication amongst the group and with the public will also be emphasized. Community involvement will also continue throughout Phase II.

This phase will involve a fundraising activity for the youth to plan and coordinate to benefit those they will visit on their trip including the Nagata Kodomo Home, an orphanage located in Kobe, Japan; and residents in a Kesenuma temporary housing facility and children at the Sendai YMCA in the Tohoku Region. They will also plan and prepare for activities with these groups and others on their trip.

### **Phase III: 2015 Japan Trip**

Phase III will focus on the youth in Japan. Supervised by the JCCCNC staff, the fellows will take a 12 day journey to Japan, meeting with government officials, participating in cross cultural activities, learning traditional ways of agricultural life and staying with a Japanese homestay family. As stated above, it is the goal of the program to prepare these students to be sensitive and responsible individuals who are aware of international issues and can serve as cultural ambassadors not only of San Francisco's Japantown, but of the United States.

## **WORKSHOPS (while in the U.S.)**

(Seven scheduled workshops in June–August and December, 2014 and six in June-July 2015)

- Leadership development workshops
  - Family History workshops and presentations
  - Civic and social engagement workshops
  - Planning and implementing their own programs and activities
  - Public speaking
- Cultural workshops
  - Introduction to Japan (culture, history, etiquette, language)
  - Japan “Hot Topics” discussions (current pop-culture, youth topics, food, games, etc.)
  - Mochitsuki Workshop with Mr. Yamada (December 20-tentative)

- Community involvement activities
  - Introduction to San Francisco Japantown and community organizations
  - Meet with community leaders
  - Volunteerism
- Team building activities – may include (and no experience necessary)
  - Rope’s Course
  - New Games

**COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES (while in the U.S.)**

**Volunteer Activities** - (Two scheduled **mandatory** in **bold** and choice of one other)

- **JCCCNC Annual Event** (September 20, 2014)
- JCCCNC/JCYC Halloween Carnival (October 24, 2014)
- Oshogatsu Festival (January 10, 2015)
- Bay Area Day of Remembrance (February 21, 2015)
- **Colma Cemetery Clean Up** (May 16, 2015)

**YOUTH FUNDRAISING (while in the U.S.)**

Two (2) mandatory fundraising events

- 2014 Summer - TYAFP Fundraiser
- 2015 Summer - TYAFP Fundraiser

**ACTIVITIES (while in Japan)**

(12 days includes departure and arrival days)

- Home-stays with families in Japan
- Intercultural activities with youth from Japan
  - Goodwill sports/dance/cultural exchanges
- Volunteer opportunities
  - Orphanage/senior home visits, Green opportunities
- Cultural and historical tours
- Learning cultural arts (ikebana, kendo, etc.)
- Live on a Japanese Farm – Osaka YMCA Waiwai-mura

**WHAT THE TYAFP PROVIDES**

- Round-trip airfare to Japan
- Hotel and Waiwai-mura accommodations
- Home-stay accommodations
- All activities (pre-trip and in Japan)
- Certificate of completion and certificates of recognition from officials
- Annual Alumni College Scholarships
  - Awarded by application and selected based on continued participation in community, demonstration of continued leadership and essay

**PARTICIPATION FEE**

- A Participation Fee of \$2,000.00 per participant
  - This fee covers ground transportation, meals, tour fees and program apparel

The JCCCNC administration and staffing costs are paid for by the JCCCNC and through generous support from The Henri and Tomoye Takahashi Charitable Foundation and the Hatsuro and Amey Aizawa Family Charitable Trust.

**PROGRAM INFORMATION**

Proposed dates: June 2014 – August 2015  
(see calendar for details of TYAFP Workshops and Activities)  
July 16-July 28, 2015 (Tentative Travel Dates to Japan)

Estimate # of participants: 10

Age of participants: (currently) 14-17 years old (8<sup>th</sup>- 11<sup>th</sup> grade during current 2014-15 school year)

### **PARTICIPANT and FAMILY COMMITMENT and INVOLVEMENT**

Upon selection, each participant and their parents will be required to sign a TYAFP Commitment Agreement Document.

#### ***Commitment***

- Each TYAFP youth participant will agree to actively and enthusiastically participate in *all* workshops, activities, gatherings and meetings as scheduled.
- All TYAFP participants will agree to remain involved with the TYAFP as a Takahashi Fellow.

#### ***Involvement***

- Although this Program is primarily for the participant, family participation will be greatly encouraged for the success of the overall Program.
- Families will have the opportunity to build friendships with other families participating in the Program.

### **ABOUT THE HENRI AND TOMOYE TAKAHASHI CHARITABLE FOUNDATION**



The Henri and Tomoye Takahashi Charitable Trust Foundation (Foundation) was established in 1985 to further develop and encourage an understanding and appreciation of Japanese culture, values and the arts, as well as supporting activities in the Japanese American community that promote a better understanding of Japanese American history, its challenges and its future.

Since its creation, the Foundation has provided over \$3 million in funding to various nonprofit organizations and educational institutions located within the State of California and to other institutions across the country whose focus is to promote programs in line with the intent and goals of the Foundation.

### **Introducing the Masako Martha Suzuki Scholarship**

The JCCCNC is proud to announce the creation of the Masako Martha Suzuki Scholarship. Mrs. Suzuki was an ardent supporter of the JCCCNC's programs to promote Japanese culture and history to all individuals. She had a special interest in making sure that younger generations were informed and proud of their Japanese American ancestral heritage and thus enjoyed learning about all of the activities the JCCCNC sponsored featuring young people.

This year, four scholarships will be available for youth who are previous participants in the TYAFP. Students will be required to submit a one page typed essay to the JCCCNC on what they feel can be their contribution to supporting the Japanese American community now and in the future. For more information, please contact the JCCCNC office.