January 2023

Dear 2023 Takahashi Youth Ambassador Fellowship Program Candidate:

We are excited that you are interested in applying for participation in the 2023 Takahashi Youth Ambassador Fellowship Program (TYAFP). Participants selected for the program will participate in a 7-month program which includes a trip to Japan from August 1-10, 2023*. Please find enclosed a copy of our 2023 application form with detailed instructions.

The Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (JCCCNC/the Center) is proud to have provided opportunities for Bay Area youth to travel to Japan for cultural exchange programs for the past 26 years. As part of the 40th anniversary of the San Francisco-Osaka Sister City relationship, the JCCCNC and the Consulate General of Japan in San Francisco sponsored the first exchange program (Shinzen Goodwill) to Osaka and Kobe, Japan in 1997.

If you are selected as a member of the 2023 TYAFP, you will spend the spring/summer months developing life skills focusing on global responsibility and civic involvement; developing an appreciation and understanding of citizen action and involvement through community and international volunteerism; understanding the history of the Japanese American community in San Francisco; developing a deeper understanding and awareness of your role as an ambassador; participating in cultural workshops to learn about Japan – its history, culture and customs; and spending time together as a group in preparation for our journey.

The TYAFP Selection Committee will look closely at the dedication of the participant to make a full commitment to the Program once they are selected. This commitment by all participants allows the TYAFP Committee the opportunity to fully plan and prepare for a successful program and trip to Japan.

While the primary beneficiaries of the TYAFP are its youth participants, the families of TYAFP youth are also afforded a unique opportunity to benefit from the enriching cultural exchange activities locally. TYAFP families are also expected to promote the principles of the program. The dedicated effort of the TYAFP families plays a critical role in the success of the Program, especially as parents that support and learn with their children. All participant families are expected to enthusiastically and reliably meet the TYAFP commitments.
Activities for the Takahashi Youth Ambassador Fellowship Program participants include:

- Participation in community activities and events
- Japanese/Japanese American history and cultural workshops
- Leadership development and communication workshops
- Team building activities
- Family potlucks and get-togethers
- Fundraising activities developed and implemented by the youth

If you are interested in applying, please note that the deadline for submission of your completed application and letter of recommendation is **February 24, 2023, by 5:00 p.m.**

Once your application is received, we will contact you about scheduling interview times for parents and applicants, which will fall within the dates of February 25-March 5, 2023. The interviews should last no longer than one hour. The TYAFP Advisory Committee will make their participant selections no later than March 7, 2023. You will be notified by mail shortly thereafter.

If selected to participate in the 2023 TYAFP, here is what will be required of you:

- Attend a family orientation meeting in late March or early April at the JCCCNC.
- Attend all TYAFP activities (please see the tentative schedule on the application form). A complete calendar will be provided at the TYAFP Orientation Meeting.
- Prepare for travel - get a passport and required Covid vaccinations/boosters.
- Become a member of the JCCCNC.
- Continue to serve as a mentor to the students who follow you in this program to encourage their interest and appreciation of Japan.

If you have any questions, please contact Lori Matoba at lmatoba@jccnc.org or by phone at (415) 567-5505.

We look forward to meeting you soon.

Sincerely,

Paul Osaki
Executive Director
JCCCNC