



**PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT
For Immediate Release**

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NEVER FORGET:

A Community Gathering to Commemorate the Events of 3/11

San Francisco (March 7, 2016) – On Friday, March 11 at 6:00 p.m., the San Francisco Japantown community will host a commemorative gathering to reflect and remember the events of Friday, March 11, 2011, when a massive 9.0 earthquake and tsunami with waves as high as 133 feet hit the north eastern region of Japan. It was the most powerful earthquake ever to hit Japan and the fourth most powerful earthquake recorded in world history.



In the Sendai area of Miyagi prefecture, the tsunami created waves that traveled 6 miles inland and the earthquake was so powerful that it moved Honshu, Japan's largest island, 8 miles east and closer to the United States.

The disaster took almost 16,000 lives, injured thousands more and over 2,500 people still remain missing today. Over 200,000 people still have no home to return to and remain in either temporary housing or permanent relocation. Over one million buildings and homes were totally or partially destroyed. The tsunami also damaged the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, which caused the evacuation of 200,000 people.

In response to the disaster, the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (JCCCNC) established the Northern Japan Earthquake Relief Fund (NJERF). The fund was initiated on the same day of the disaster and would raise over \$4 million by the end of the fundraising campaign. Over 13,000 donors and 25,000 on causes.com contributed to NJERF and various organizations, community non-profits, businesses, schools and private individuals held over 300 fundraising events.

NJERF was divided into three phases – Relief, Recovery and Rebuilding – and the fund continued for five years. The Relief Phase covered the immediate months following the disaster and addressed life-saving and survival needs; the Recovery Phase covered the years 2011 to 2013 addressing temporary housing and mental health needs; the final Rebuilding Phase lasted from 2013 to 2015 focusing on

programs and projects that helped to rebuild the human spirit, addressing mental health and community economic development.

The JCCCNC will be officially sun setting the NJERF program this year, but will continue to visit and develop new programs with the organizations that it has been working with for the past five years. Every year since 3/11, the JCCCNC has been sending delegations to the Sendai and Kesenuma area of the Tohoku region. In fall of 2016, they will be organizing a cultural tour to visit all of the six prefectures of the Tohoku region. In 2017, they plan to send a delegation of Junior High School youth to participate in an inter-cultural exchange program with other youth from the affected areas.

“Over the past five years of providing support to the people of Tohoku, when we ask what they need most, their answer isn't financial support, programs nor material goods. Overwhelmingly, when we ask that question, their answer is always ‘Don't Forget about us’”, said Paul Osaki, Executive Director of the JCCCNC.



The community gathering for the 5th anniversary titled, “Never Forget” will include a report and presentation by the Association for Aid and Relief, Japan (AARJ), a Japanese nonprofit organization, which NJERF has been supporting for the past five years. AARJ provided services in the Fukushima, Iwate and Miyagi prefectures immediately following 3/11. AARJ delivered emergency and medical supplies, provided health-related services, mobile clinics and mental health services. For the past two years, they have been focusing its programs and services in the Fukushima area of Minami-soma supporting temporary housing facilities and implementing relief assistance in eleven of the city's municipal districts.

The 5th anniversary commemorative service is open to the public. The Japanese American Religious Federation will conduct a meditation and prayer service and light refreshments and art reflecting the Tohoku region will be available. Join the community as it gathers to reflect, pray, remember and to NEVER FORGET the lives that were affected by the events surrounding 3/11.

The service will take place at the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California located at 1840 Sutter Street in San Francisco's historic Japantown.

For more information, please call the JCCCNC at (415) 567-5505 or visit their website at www.jcccnc.org.

Supporting Organizations: Buddhist Church of San Francisco; East West Academy of Healing Arts, Dr. Effie Chow; Japanese American Citizens League - Northern California Western Nevada Pacific District; Japanese American Citizens League San Francisco Chapter; Japanese American Religious Federation; Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Northern California; Japanese Community Youth Council; Japanese

Cultural Fair; Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California;
Japantown Task Force; Kokoro Assisted Living; Konko Church of San Francisco;
Minami Tamaki LLP; Nakayoshi Young Professionals; Nihonmachi Little Friends;
Nihonmachi Street Fair; Oakland Fukuoka Sister City Organization; Pine United
Methodist Church; San Francisco Japantown Foundation; San Francisco Kyoto-kai;
San Francisco Osaka Sister City Association; San Francisco Taiko Dojo; United Nation
Association of America San Francisco Chapter

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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.