



Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California

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Press Announcement For Immediate Release

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JCCCNC Welcomes the 2012-2013 Kase Nikkei Community Scholarship Interns

San Francisco (June 27, 2012) – San Francisco – The Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (JCCCNC) is pleased to introduce their six interns for the 2012-2013 Nikkei Community Internship (NCI) Program and the Kase Nikkei Community Scholarship Program. These students have been selected based on their desire to become further involved in the community, preserve the Japanese American culture, improve community outreach and become future community leaders. Both programs offer college students opportunities to increase their understanding of contemporary social, cultural, civic and preservation issues affecting our community, allow them to gain valuable skills in their individual area of interest, and grow both personally and professionally.

Throughout their internship, the interns – Casey Ikeda, Drew Mametsuka, Erika Geer, Lauren Morimoto, Miya Yung, and Sara Matsumoto - will take part in developing and implementing new programs and marketing strategies at the JCCCNC and participate in daily activities at the Center and around the community to help sustain the rich culture and traditions of the Nikkei heritage.

Casey Ikeda, who just graduated from the University of San Francisco with a degree in US History, is interested in teaching, law and working in the non-profit sector. Casey joined the Kase Program to meet and connect with other young individuals that share his passion of helping the community and to gain hands-on experience working at a non-profit. “No other internship gives you as much training with non-profit work, not only with the organization that we are assigned, but also an opportunity to learn more about community based organizations in Japantowns within the state.” With energy, ideas, and hard work, Casey wants to reenergize the Yonsei generation about San Francisco’s Japantown and make sure this community thrives for many years to come.

Drew Mametsuka is a second year at San Jose State University, currently majoring in Animation/Illustration, but thinking of changing to Pre-Nursing. Interested in community outreach, different forms of art, the outdoors, and sports, Drew applied to the Nikkei Community Internship program with intent to give back to the community. “I was raised in the Japanese American community and I think being in this program will help me become more involved, and I believe this is a great opportunity for not only me, but those who will soon be in my position,” says Drew. He adds, “I hope at the end of the program I will have somehow made a difference in my community.”

Erika Geer is a fourth year double major in International Relations and Japanese at the University of California, Davis. Actively serving on UC Davis’ Cabinet of the Japanese American Student Society (JASS), Erika enjoys creating various social events for the members



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as well as volunteering for the Sacramento JACL. Through her involvement with the Kase program, she hopes to learn the intricate details of how an idea from inception becomes an active program positively impacting the local community – a skill that she intends to apply to her role on the JASS Cabinet and in future work settings. She also looks forward to bettering her understanding of the needs of the Japanese and Japanese American community in the Bay Area. “I want to be integrated and networked; not only able to reach out to areas of the community that need [help], but also able to apply the resources and connections to address those needs.”

Lauren Morimoto is a recent graduate from the University of California, Irvine. Growing up Lauren was highly active in the Japanese American community, participating in the United Japanese Christian Church and multiple Asian summer camps as a camper and a counselor. However, through high school and college she felt as though she lost a sense of connection to her community. “I moved around from Fresno to the Bay Area and before I knew it, I was going to college in Irvine. I was doing my own thing and towards the end of college I found myself wanting to draw back to my roots and give back to the community.” Striving to reconnect and give back to the Japanese American community, Lauren hopes that the Kase Program will help her to reconnect with her roots and folks from different generations.

A third year majoring in Child and Adolescent Development at San Francisco State University, Miya Yung was introduced to the Japanese American community at a young age by her mother. She grew up around the Japanese American community and many of their youth programs like the Shinzen USA basketball goodwill exchange program at the JCCCNC, playing ten years for the SF Enchantees, and volunteering at Kimochi Home. From high school to college, Miya became more involved in other ethnic communities and now looks forward to returning to the Japanese American community. Yung comments, “Looking back, I understand how much the JCCCNC’s programs impacted my life and am looking forward to helping out around the center.” During her time in the Kase Program, Miya hopes to gain a bigger understanding of the issues currently facing the Nikkei community and help create new programs and activities to keep the community strong and engaged.

Sara Matsumoto is a fourth year at San Francisco State University majoring in Business and Marketing and minoring in Asian American Studies. While growing up in Southern California, Sara participated in many Japanese American Buddhist programs; she is interested in non-profit organizations specifically focused on the Japanese American community and broadening her skills in public relations, program development and marketing. Sara joined the Kase Program in hopes to engross herself in the Japanese American community, allowing her to mix her professional interest with her personal interests. Sara mentions “I feel as if it is our generation’s responsibility to keep our Japanese American community thriving. Personally, my JA community raised me and I want to make sure that future generations have a similar or more opportunities than I had.”

If you are interested in learning more about the Nikkei Community Internship Program or Kase Nikkei Community Scholarship Program, please contact the JCCCNC at (415) 567- 5505 or visit www.jcccnc.org.

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