

PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT For Immediate Release

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JCCCNC Celebrates Children at 20th Annual Children's Day Festival in Japantown

SAN FRANCISCO – On Saturday, May 5, 2012, over 1,200 people crowded Japantown Peace Plaza in San Francisco for Kristi Yamaguchi's Children's Day Festival, celebrating children in recognition of the national holiday, Kodomo no Hi (Children's Day), in Japan.

The festival featured traditional Japanese crafts like *origami* (paper folding), *koinobori* (wind carp) and *hachimaki* (headband) making, fishing and balloon games, and food booths hosted by local community organizations, as well as dance and music performances including *odori* (traditional Japanese dance), hula, ukulele, *taiko* (drumming), *shamisen* (string instrument), *kendo* (martial arts), other performances by youth, and an art contest sponsored by Sakura of America.

Children and fans of all ages were also treated to a special appearance by Kristi Yamaguchi who took time to meet and greet festival attendees and sign copies of her newest children's book "It's a Big World, Little Pig."

This year the JCCCNC was fortunate to receive support from the Japan Center Malls and Kinokuniya Mall. Teaming up with the Japan Center Malls helped to improve the overall festival experience with new décor including windsocks to fly high above the event, and \$5 off coupons to all Japan Center Malls tenants. The Kinokuniya Mall provided space for a special kite craft station, which helped to expand festival activities and attract mall patrons on the west side of Webster Street to the main festival grounds. "By collaborating with the local merchant community, the JCCCNC took one step towards its goal of providing a more unified Japantown festival," says Ryan Kimura, JCCCNC Programs Director, "it was a much more successful festival this year because of the teamwork," he adds.

The festival was the highlight of a one week Children's Day celebration in which the JCCCNC offered traditional kimono dressing for kids and hosted over 60 San Francisco public school classes, nearly 1400 students, K – 2nd grade for their Children's Day School Visit Program. The school visits educated children on *Hinamatsuri* (Girls Day) and *Tango no Sekku* (Boys Day) doll displays, crafted paper *koi* (carp) and *kabuto* (helmets), and learned a Japanese folk dance. By learning about the dolls and their history and through crafts, children were able to learn and celebrate Japanese culture in a way that is meaningful to them, their friends, and their family's.

The event was sponsored by the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (JCCCNC), with support from: The Henri and Tomoye Takahashi Charitable Foundation; Hatturo and Amey Aizawa Family Charitable Trust; Japan Airlines; Comcast; Union Bank; Consulate General of Japan; Japanese Community Youth Council (JCYC); Japan Center Malls; Kinokuniya Mall; and Sakura of America.

Performance groups at the festival included: ABC Preschool; Clarendon Elementary School Taiko; Gen Taiko; Hideko Nakajima – Hauta and Shamisen; J-Town Hui; Kirakiraboshi Choir; Madame Michiya

Hanayagi Dance Group; Hālau Ka Liko Pua O Kalaniākea; UCB; and the San Francisco Kendo Association.

Activity booths were hosted by the following groups: 2011 Cherry Blossom Court; Asobi Arts; Balloon Angels-Pine United Methodist Church; California Highway Patrol; Clarendon Elementary School JBBP; George Washington High School; Japanese National Honor Society; Japanese Community Youth Council (JCYC); Kintetsu International; Nakayoshi; Nichi Bei Weekly; Nihonmachi Little Friends; Nobirukai; Rosa Parks Elementary School-JBBP; St. Ignatius Japanese Language Program; and Xperience.

For more information or to participate in next year's Kristi Yamaguchi's Children's Day Festival in Japantown, please contact the JCCCNC at (415) 567-5505 or email programsevents@jcccnc.org.

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About 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.