Introductory Information
2025 Takahashi Youth Ambassador Fellowship Program

Eligibility: Enrolled in a California High School between grades 9-12*

Deadline to Apply: **Monday, March 31, 2025**
Dates of Program: April-August 2025
Cost: $3000.00*

The Program
The Takahashi Youth Leadership Ambassador Program (TYAFP) was created by the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (the Center) as a way to encourage high school students to learn about the history of the Japanese American community; learn the responsibilities of being an active civic participant; gain exceptional leadership skills, and to learn and appreciate the history and culture of Japan by serving as a young ambassador between the two countries.

What You Will Experience
Through TYAFP, applicants will gain invaluable skills such as leading peer groups; navigating through the cultural districts of San Francisco as well as in Japan; learning the value of mottainai - the concept of reuse and reinvention - and many other life and cultural skills by experiencing adventures first hand.

This year, TYAFP applicants will also be encouraged to host, plan experiences and guide Japanese high school students from Japan who will be visiting San Francisco for several days in June 2025. They will also be able to visit a Japanese high school while visiting Japan in mid July and learn important aspects about its place in world history and culture.

Responsibilities and Qualifications
Successful Applicants Must be:
-Highly Motivated to excel in the program
-Attend Classes at the Center throughout the months of April-August, 2025
-Have a genuine interest in Japan (previous travel to Japan not required)
-Have a valid passport to travel to Japan
-Be a positive group member and be willing to work with and learn from others
-Be open to new adventures and experiences including trying different culinary dishes in Japan
-Be willing to carefully follow a planned itinerary while in Japan and be on time for all events
-Be available to serve as a host to Japanese students visiting from Japan in June 2025

*Please refer to Cost of TYAFP for more information

About The Takahashi Youth Leadership Ambassador Program (TYAFP)

The Takahashi Youth Leadership Ambassador Program (TYAFP) is a program of the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (the Center). It is supported by the Henri and Tomoye Takahashi Charitable Foundation to encourage high school students residing in the San Francisco Bay Area to learn about Japanese American history and community activities, in addition to the history and culture of Japan. The planned activities allow first hand experience to develop and encourage leadership skills and to become youth ambassadors between the US and Japan through interaction with peers of their own age, and other individuals they will meet abroad.

Students are required to commit to the program by enjoying many in-person activities and events to prepare them for their trip to Japan that will take place in late July/early August. During the school term, activities will only be scheduled on the weekend but day classes at the Center will start from early June and will usually be full day sessions.

This year, participating students will be encouraged to host high school students from Japan who will be in San Francisco on an exchange program from June 5-6, 2025. This will be an opportunity to personally learn about high school life in Japan and share and exchange information of mutual interest. While in Japan, TYAFP students will have the opportunity to visit Mizusawa High School in Iwate Prefecture, and be reacquainted with the students who will visit San Francisco in June.

TYAFP encourages all students to learn the value of mottainai-the Japanese concept of no waste, reuse and repurpose. The program also encourages TYAFP students to value traditions passed down from one generation to the next, and actively get involved with local events to make a positive difference in their daily lives. Toward that end, the students will be planning, organizing and promoting a fundraising activity to help subsidize the program and focus on the value of preserving quality resources.

This program is intentionally limited to a small group of students so that individual and small group activities can be planned. Knowledge of the Japanese language is not a prerequisite. However, students must be willing to learn essential Japanese phrases, culture, traditions and customs during the program.

Upon acceptance into the program, a **nonrefundable** deposit of $1000 will be requested. This will provide us with the resources to secure the airline ticket, lodging and transportation for the program.

Here are some of the highlights planned for 2025:

*Attend the Cherry Blossom Festival in San Francisco Japantown and learn about the festival’s history and the history of Japantown

*Host a Japanese High School student and plan activities to introduce them to San Francisco
*Work with college students to plan a fundraising activity in July
*Learn about the value and practice of Mottainai
*Learn how to lead and be led
*Learn about the different regions of Japan and traditional customs and practices
*Learn what it takes to be a good ambassador
*Learn what a nonprofit organization does on a daily basis and why they are important organizations to support

TYAFP Commitment

TYAFP students must be open and willing to learn about the Japanese American community and its history in San Francisco; learn about Japanese culture, traditions and key phrases in Japanese, and strengthen their friendship skills when interacting with Japanese high school students both in San Francisco and in Japan.

TYAFP students will be asked to provide critical feedback on proposed activities planned during the summer, and will be asked to lead the group on certain days and events so that they can develop their leadership and group participation skills.

TYAFP students are responsible for staying on a specific time schedule which will include them being able to wake up on their own without constant prompting; being responsible for their valuable items while traveling to Japan such as their wallet and phone and be responsible to budget their personal spending.

At the conclusion of the TYAFP, students will be asked to make a presentation reflecting their experience in the program and encouraged to participate in other Center activities.

Parent(s) Commitment

Parent(s) must be willing to schedule time out of family outings for accepted participants to be fully engaged and involved in TYAFP activities. We understand that some events and life situations are unavoidable, but we strongly request your support for your daughter/son to have a fulfilling experience through this program.

Parent(s) will be asked to consider hosting a High School Student from Japan during the week of June 5-7, 2025. Orientation for host families will take place the week prior to the event.

Parent(s) must be willing to allow their son/daughter to travel to Japan with an adult chaperone and agree to be financially responsible for any medical or other unplanned expenses while traveling to Japan. They will also need to provide their daughter/son

with spending money they may need in Japan to purchase items and enjoy experiences that are not covered with the tour price.

Parent(s) participation in activities such as Center fundraising, cultural and community activities are strongly encouraged throughout the time of the 2025 TYAFP program.

Cost of the TYAFP

The cost of the Takahashi Youth Ambassador Fellowship Program (TYAFP) will be $3000.00. This will include all activities and experiences prior to travel in Japan, and the cost of a roundtrip economy airline ticket to Japan starting from and returning back into San Francisco; shared lodging in Japan; 3 meals a day plus all planned activities and experiences. TYAFP will be responsible for paying for any personal items they may purchase during the entire program and any transportation costs coming to and leaving the Center on the days of scheduled activities.

Proposed Schedule

March 31, 2025	Deadline to submit
April 1-5, 2025	Review of Applications
April 5, 2025	Announcement of Selection
April 7-11, 2025	Zoom meeting with parent(s) and TYAFP youth (30-45 minutes)
April 12/13 and 19/20	TYAFP students encouraged to attend cultural events during Cherry Blossom Festival
May 4, 2025	All Day Orientation at the Center
May 18, 2025	morning-Colma Clean Up afternoon-Confirm activities for Japanese high school students
May 24, 2025	Zoom to review activities and roles for hosting students
June 5-8, 2025	All day activities with Iwate High School Students/dinner Activity
June 7, 2025	Grassroots Summit Picnic-Stanford University
June 9 and 11	In Person Class and Activities at the Center
June 17 and 19	In Person Class and Activities at the Center

July 7-12, 2025 Prepare for Hidden Treasures Sale

July 12-13, 2025 Hidden Treasures Sale

July 31-August 8 Travel and Activities in Japan

August 16 2025 Graduation Lunch

September 20, 2025 Tabemasho Annual event (the Center)

(Note that the dates in Japan are subject to change by 1-2 days depending on flight availability and scheduling of activities in Japan)