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Tomodachi

Volume 40, Issue 3 May 2020 Newsletter

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Richard Shinomoto

Hi everyone,

I hope you are staying healthy and safe at these uncertain times. The Southeast Japanese School and Community Center is committed to keeping our members safe.

Here are the following Center updates:

- The Center remains closed until further notice.
- Annual General Meeting (June 7) is postponed. Date TBD.
- Recognition Awards Dinner (June 20th) is postponed until 2021. Date TBD. We will honor the Outstanding Service Awardees. All high school scholarships will be mailed out this month and announced in the July newsletter.
- All events in July are canceled: Camp Hanabi, Rascals Basketball, and the Cultural Festival & Odori (July 25-26).
- No bingo for the months of May, June, and July.
- Reverse Draw Fundraiser (May 30) is postponed to October 17th. Tickets still available.

Thank you to everyone who volunteered their time at our Center's annual clean-up days on Saturday (Feb 29) and Sunday (March 1). The Center could not function if it weren't for all our generous volunteers.

Please take care everyone. Stay home and stay safe.

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CALENDAR

(Online meetings)

Advisory Committee Mtg-1st Wed 7pm

Center Bd Mtg-2nd Wed Monthly 7 pm

Aug	1	Monthly Bingo games	6:30 pm
	22	First Day of Japanese School	8:45 am
Sept	6	Rascals Basketball begins	1-5 pm
	12	Monthly Bingo games	6:30 pm
Oct	3	Monthly Bingo games	6:30 pm
	10	Pancake Breakfast & Boutique	7:00 am
	17	Reverse Drawing Fundraiser	6:00 pm

All events listed are subject to change
Please check SEJSCC.org for updates

SEJSCC Mission statement: To preserve and share our Japanese heritage and its traditions with the community through cultural, educational and social activities.

Dear SEJSCC families-

During this time of uncertainty, the daily challenges we face while co-existing with the invasive COVID-19 virus have completely overwhelmed us. We want you to know we are thinking of you all, our members and families and hope you are remaining safely inside and staying healthy. To any families who have been directly affected by this crisis, we offer our most heartfelt sympathies, no words can express.

We miss seeing everybody and assure you our members' health and safety is our first concern. We continue to take this matter very seriously and are following the recommendations of the CDC for the LA County Dept. of Public Health. In due time, we will overcome this crisis but with respect for all our safety, and those directly affected, we must cancel all events through July. Yes, we are very sad we will not have our Annual Cultural Festival and Odori on July 25-26th. It was a difficult decision but many months are dedicated to planning this event and with all the uncertainty mounting, it is the safest decision at this time.

As we all respect the Shelter-in-Place mandate, we'd still love to see our members and families. Please post any photos on our Facebook site: Southeast Gakuen (South East Japanese School & Community Center) or Instagram #Southeastjapaneseschool.

Let's stay strong, and try to remain optimistic; we are in this together. We can't wait to see your smiling faces returning to our Center when it is safe again. Please check our website (SEJSCC.org) for any updates or changes, or you can email the Center at Gakuen@sejscc.org for any questions. Thank you as always for your continued support.

With Hope,
SEJSCC Board of Directors

NORWALK DANCE CLUB

Norwalk Dance Club sends well wishes for continued health and safety to all our members and friends and to the members and friends of our most invaluable Community Center.

The Dance Club held their February Social on the 22nd with the theme of International Night. 55 dancers from throughout the Southland gathered at our Center to enjoy an evening filled with ballroom, Latin, and swing dancing. Receptionists Edna and Chiemi were at their familiar spot to provide a friendly greeting and guidance to table seating. DJ Yuso Kurihara provided a copy of the music and dance program so everyone could plan ahead to fill their dance cards with their favorite partners.

One of the highlights of the evening was the snack which Co-chairs Harriet and Helen had planned to keep everyone's energy well fueled. The lasagna, garlic bread, green salad, and orange slices provided a bit of Festa de Italia. Faithful helpers Jean, Aileen, and Hideko assisted with the preparations and serving. The Dance Club thanks all our loyal members and friends from the dancing community for supporting our events and lending a hand at the end of the evening to fold up and store away all the tables and chairs.

Everyone is missing the fun and friendships of our weekly dance classes, dance practices, and monthly socials. Hopefully we haven't lost our groove, rhythm, or timing as we patiently await the resumption of our previous lives! If we hadn't already been thankful, we now especially appreciate the Center and our friends there for being such an important part of our lives and well being. We look forward to more expert instruction from our teacher, Glenn Yata, although he may have to reteach us everything we had learned so far this year. We will surely all be eager students ready to retrain and stretch those muscles and step smoothly "toe-knee-heel" for a waltz or foxtrot and sway those hips for some sexy Cuban motion for a rumba or cha cha cha. So hang in there everyone, be well, and hope to see you soon!

Dance classes are held Tuesday evenings at 7:00, 8:00, and 9:00 pm in our gym on the best, most spacious dance floor. Ballroom dancing is well documented as a prescription for a healthier, happier lifestyle sharing an enjoyable physical activity with friends both old and new. Our socials are held on the 4th Saturday of most months and are open to anyone who enjoys ballroom, latin, and swing dancing. New dancers are always welcome so stay tuned for the bright day when we are reopened and please come join our classes & dances for fun times and good eats too!

サウスイースト日本語学園

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This program is open to everyone regardless of race or religion.

This is the Time to Be Slow Poem by John O'Donough

This is the time to be slow,
Lie low to the wall
Until the bitter weather passes.
Try, as best you can, not to let
The wire brush of doubt
Scrape from your heart
All sense of yourself
And your hesitant light.
If you remain generous,
Time will come good;

And you will find your feet
Again on fresh pastures of
promise,
Where the air will be kind
And blushed with beginning.

Southeast Japanese School & Community Center Activities List

If you are interested in any of the activities at the Center, please contact the person listed below

Southeast Gakuen: Kimie Matsumoto (562) 863-5996

Judo: Sergio Lemus email: sergiolemus@mac.com

Norwalk Nikkei Seniors: Becky Shinomoto (562) 863-5996

Na Wahine 'O Kawena: Karen Toyoshiba (562) 863-5996

Karate: Brock Nishimura (714) 826-9128

Ukulele Class: Kamaki Keawe (714) 928-7157

Guitar Class: Yuji Hata (562) 641-6097

Norwalk Youth Sports: nysyouthsports@gmail.com

Hikari Taiko: (866) 6HIKARI hikaritaikodrummers@gmail.com

Kendo: Brian Yoon email: norwalkkendo@gmail.com

Norwalk Dance Club: Edna Kurihara (714) 369-2463

Hawaiian Karaoke Club: Stan Shimomura (562) 865-9672

Koto Class: Kozue Matsumoto (661) 877-1996

JAPANESE SCHOOL

We hope everyone is staying safe and well at home. Thank you Gakuen families and teachers for your dedication and perseverance as we face the challenges of our daily life at home.

Events in March began with the Hinamatsuri, "doll festival", a celebration of girls. Students viewed the collection of dolls at the monthly assembly and heard a presentation from Mai sensei and Saori sensei. We are truly blessed to have the priceless collections of hina ningyo for students to enjoy.

Awards for the nengajo contest winners were presented during the assembly to students whose nengajo were selected by the national organization, AATJ (American Association of Teachers of Japanese). We have never had so many winning entries before. We are so very proud of all our winners. For the elementary lower level, Kaya Ochoa received first place for most original; Louie Munoz received second place for most comical and Ailani Tamashiro received 3rd place for most comical. Makoto Lew received 3rd place in the same division for most artistic. Rachel Sugahara received first place for most artistic in the college division. Please see their outstanding work online at <http://www.aatj.org/nengajo-contest/2020>. Congratulations to all.

With the abrupt closure of the community center, the teachers collaborated and spent many hours to learn how to teach online with tools such as Zoom and Google classroom. With all the challenges, the teachers are successfully teaching the students each week. Thank you teachers for all your hard work and thank you parents for your patience as we work through this unprecedented circumstances.

The COVID-19 Virus has resulted in many tragic losses. The Gakuen family mourns the loss of one of our own, Klete Ikemoto, husband to Teiko and father to Kiyomi, Kimiko, and Keiko. The Ikemoto family has been an integral part of the Gakuen for many years. The entire Gakuen family, teachers, parents, and students wish to express our sincere condolences to Teiko and the family.



Klete working at a Festival game booth



Gakuen students listen to the Hinamatsuri "doll festival" presentation by Mai Sensei



Congratulations to our Nengajo winners!!

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Thank you for your support!

NORWALK YOUTH SPORTS



Remembering Klete Kei Ikemoto

On April 2, 2020, SEJSCC lost a selfless dad, husband, friend, mentor and community leader to COVID-19 coronavirus.

Klete Ikemoto's connection to the Southeast Japanese School and Community Center spanned nearly his entire life. He grew up playing SEYO basketball and baseball for Norwalk YAG while his father coached and his mother was parent rep. Through his participation, he met his best friend, Darryl Ishii (whose father Hiro Ishii helped build the Center's gym). The two would spend hours over the years creating memories while playing basketball. Even back then, Klete could be found working at the Cultural Festival when there was only grass and dirt or playing in YAG's annual basketball tournament every Thanksgiving.

It was because of his fond memories and lifelong friendships that when it came time for his oldest daughter, Katie, to start Japanese school, he and his wife, Teiko, chose to enroll her at the Southeast Japanese School. Little did he know that it would lead to Rascals basketball and the formation of the NYS Sapphires team in 2nd grade. Younger sisters Kristi and Kelsey soon followed enrolling in Japanese school and playing with the Blue Starz and Elite teams.

Always dedicated to giving back, Klete and Teiko joined the PTA and as a parent volunteer, Klete learned to set up Girls Day dolls and make Sakura mochi. However, Klete may be most significantly remembered for the hours he gave volunteering at the Center's annual Cultural Festival and Ondo. Although there were many changes over the years, including a paved parking lot and air conditioning in the kitchen, the meaning and purpose of the festival remained the same. And for Klete, carrying on the traditions and values for the younger generation was his priority.

In order to help ensure NYS would thrive for many years and that the Center and its cultural significance would last for future generations, Klete joined the NYS Club Executive Committee (CEC). Through his

tireless dedication and ability to work with others, Klete established programs and policies to ensure consistency and equity among all NYS members. These visions and values can be seen today as they continue to guide the CEC and NYS. Klete also sat on the Center's Advisory Committee, acting as the liaison between the Center and NYS. In addition to volunteering countless hours at all the SEJS/NYS activities, he also was the Center's representative with other prominent Orange County JA community organizations to coordinate "Allegiance" ticket orders, and has represented NYS at SOC and Nikkei games dinners. Working on the CEC enabled Klete to continue those traditions from his childhood, reconnecting with old friends while making new ones. His contributions have made an indelible mark on NYS and the Center. Prior to his passing, he was nominated as an honoree at this year's Recognition Dinner for his time, commitment and efforts.

In addition to his commitments to NYS and the Center, Klete was also an active member of the Orange County Buddhist Church and volunteered with Yonsei Basketball Association through the participation of his daughters, Katie (Yonsei 24) and Kristi (Yonsei 26).

Above all, Klete was a beloved husband and father who enjoyed spending time with his family. The Ikemoto family had a special love for Disneyland; they have visited Disneyworld, Tokyo Disney and taken a Disney-themed cruise. It was a significant part of their memories and time together, and Klete loved every moment. Klete was the original "girl dad." His girls were everything to him. He had to become the expert with all princess trivia, movies, songs, becoming the 'prince' playing with the dolls, calico critters and everything cute; he enjoyed every minute of it.

Klete will be remembered for his humility, dedication to the community, and love for his family. Klete's family and friends will continue to honor him through their work and volunteerism at the SEJSCC. Teiko says that is what Klete would've wanted.

The Board of Directors would also like to reflect on what a special person Klete Ikemoto was to our Community Center. Klete was more than a member of the SEJSCC. He grew up at the Center, made life-long friends and wanted the same for his family. His 3 daughters kept him very busy and as a proud parent, he clearly became instrumental and a pillar of strength for our Center. You'd find him "in the trenches", always willing to lend a hand, no questions asked, and never hearing a complaint from him. And yet he was also a fierce and humble leader and with the help of others, reorganized NYS to what it is today. His involvement with NYS, Japanese School and the CEC Board gained him much respect and showcased his leadership skills. In 2019, the Board unanimously voted in favor with President, Richard Shinomoto, asking Klete to join the BOD. We knew he would help lead our Center toward a future so our kids of today would grow up and have a place they too could call home. Klete graciously declined, prior commitments and family filled his days, but he told Richard that he was honored. In March, Klete was to be recognized at our 2020 Recognition Awards Dinner for his Outstanding Volunteer Services but the pandemic forced our event to be postponed until 2021. We will always remember Klete's quiet presence, his warm smile, and his unconditional kind heart.

NORWALK YOUTH SPORTS

March Bingo Family Night – By Cari Manvydas

On March 7th, NYS held its monthly bingo night. The event was hosted by Team Force, the 3rd grade girls basketball team. With the fabulous help of fellow NYS girls basketball teams, it was a successful and fun evening, with approximately 100 people in attendance. A chicken teriyaki dinner was catered through the Loft Hawaiian Restaurant, with dessert from Polly's Pies Bakery. It was also the highest sales night in recent memory. As a community, we are pleased to have the opportunity to offer these types of events and to promote group and family participation. Thank you again to the girls teams who volunteered their generous time, to the Ninjas and Blue Hearts for helping set up, and to NYS/SEJSCC for their support.



Winner winner!! We go together!! The girls (L-Rt) Hina, Aly, Katie and Nina all go up to the prize table to help the winner make a difficult decision



Mika picked her bingo prize with the help of Kenzie by her side



2019 WINTER SEYO CHAMPS!!!



Congratulations to the Lightning for going undefeated during the SEYO winter season and winning their first-ever champion t-shirt!

(L-Rt.): Coach Brian, Kendall, Ryan, Joseph, Kasai, Ethan S, Jacoby, Coach Joel.

(not pictured): Matthew, Evan & Ethan T

NORWALK JUDO DOJO

By June Uyekawa

"Judo should be free as art and science from any external influences, political, national, racial, and financial or any other organized interest. And all things connected with it should be directed to its ultimate object, the benefit of Humanity."

—Jigoro Kano

Please stay safe and continue to be kind to one another. This too shall pass.

Judo remains close at heart during these difficult times



HIKARI TAIKO

By Angela Lopez

Hikari Taiko has been laying low for the past few months and doing our part to slow the spread of this deadly virus. With our events through May cancelled or on hold and the uncertainty of when life can resume with some semblance of normalcy, Hikari is doing our best to keep the spirit of taiko alive within our homes.

If there is any silver lining to all of this, it is definitely that we live in an age where social distancing can walk hand in hand with social media. Hikari has been sending out YouTube videos of taiko drills and some introductions to new pieces every week-end (with a break for Easter weekend, of course!) so our students can continue practicing while at home. Our students have done what they can to practice their taiko beats ranging from using actual practice drums or pads to transforming buckets or tires into makeshift drums.

We miss our whole Hikari family and it is not the same playing without our team beside us. We look forward to the day that we can once again come together and play as one big Hikari team. Until then, please stay healthy and safe and we will see you all soon!



Al practices at home using his drum pad



(Left)
What a great idea as Angela films the first Taiko drill to send via YouTube!!

Nothing stops TAIKO!
Practicing and staying optimistic during these times!

(Pictured Right)
Joyce's dog Milo prances to the beat of her drum as she practices in her backyard



NIKKEI SENIORS

Many senior members attended a presentation given by Keiro services on Feb. 25 just a couple weeks prior to the closure of our Community Center. It started with speaker Kylie Uyeda who warmly spoke about growing up attending Venice Community Center as a child, enjoying organized sports and activities and a place where strong friendships were made. She also spoke that Keiro had introduced various services for the seniors and currently it has brought out the elders to spend more time learning and experiencing new found enjoyment. She outlined Keiro's many features which is available to us as well. Kevin Onishi followed covering subjects of alternative transportation and various scams that he believed would be prevalent in 2020. He spoke without a microphone and articulated helpful ways to guard against clever ideas that we may buy into and brought awareness to always be on guard. Anything suspicious, don't respond!! We're grateful for the informative session and for preventive measures we can take.

Due to this current terrible pandemic, we have felt the deep sadness and loss of a very special friend - our long time and delightful member Betty Oshiro who passed away due to COVID-19 on March 22. She last attended our February speaker meeting, greeting old friends and happy to be there as we were happy to see her too! Betty and her late husband Larry were long time members of our Community Center since the early early 70's actively supporting our fundraising events to fund our new gymnasium and classroom building and also raise funds to finance it. They both enjoyed participating in Ballroom Dance, Seniors, Karaoke Clubs and Betty particularly liked Hula dancing.

She was effervescent with positive energy. Her smiles were contagious and like sunshine. Betty had a beautiful soprano voice and often graced our senior's holiday luncheons with singing accompanied by our karaoke members. As one of our Board members said "She was a gift to all of us who knew her". We will miss lovely Betty very much.

Tragedies are happening to many families during this difficult time and when it is close to us as in Betty's case, we are saddened with despair. — Last week on April 8th, her son Eric also passed away due to the virus. Our deepest sympathies go to the Oshiro family, in particular to Eric's wife Lori who is also ill with COVID-19 and to their boys. We wish her full recovery, good health and much strength. Our thoughts and compassion are with her boys as well as to the entire Oshiro family. There will be a Celebration of Life in July for both Betty and Eric.

A GoFundMe Page has been set up for Eric's wife, Lori and family, if you would like to help out:

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/eric-yuichi-oshiro-memorial-fund>

And if you would also like to send your condolences to the Oshiro family, their address is: 13015 San Jacinto Street,

La Mirada CA 90638.

Our message to everyone is to stay well and stay at home to continue being safe! We'll look forward to gathering at the Center as remembered in a few months!!



Kevin Onishi of Keiro speaking at Feb. meeting



Our dear Betty Oshiro attended the event.
(Pictured above - far right in red jacket)



Helen and George listening intently



Betty Oshiro (far left) enjoying a past Keiro no Hi event with friends Harriet Sugita and Arlene Takeshita

**Please support Japanese School
Fund-raising**

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Gift Certificates (\$10 denominations)**

**Ask any Board member or Gakuen parent
Also available at the Monthly Bingo Nites**

Thank You for your support

NORWALK KENDO DOJO

Norwalk kenshi, iaidoka, family, and friends are all sheltering in place, trying to make the best of these extremely challenging times. We are keeping in touch via email and facebook, where many are posting videos of their daily kendo exercises. Thanks to our kendo training, wearing a face mask at the grocery store is a piece of cake, compared to hours of sweating in our kendo gear, unable to touch our faces, while getting hit on the head. We long for those happy times!

We hope everyone stays safe, and we look forward to when we are able to meet together again.

Please see our website: <http://www.eanet.com/norwalk>. You can also contact us at norwalkkendo@gmail.com.



Norwalk Kendo Dojo members:

Motivated and dealing with the shut down



SEJSCC BOARD MEMBERS

*If you wish to contact any of the board members,
please call the Center and leave a message.*

Linda Kusuda
Tye Masaki
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Fred Matsumoto
Carrie Nakatani
Ernie Nishii
Mas Onoda
Richard Shinomoto
Colleen Sonoda
Miki Suzuki
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

March - April

Sergio Lemus (Judo) - Sempra Company	\$1100.00
Miwa Nakagawa (Gakuen) - Boeing	\$400.00
Yoshio and Toshie Kinjo	\$200.00
Ernest and Kay Ikuta	\$50.00
Nagaoka Family Trust	\$100.00
May Tanaka	\$500.00
Hikari Taiko	\$2000.00
Misaki Okimoto	\$300.00
Ellen Oye	\$200.00
Mr. and Mrs. Hatanaka	\$100.00
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Victor Chang (NYS) - State Street Corp.	\$3500.00

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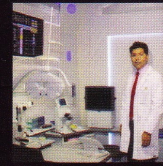
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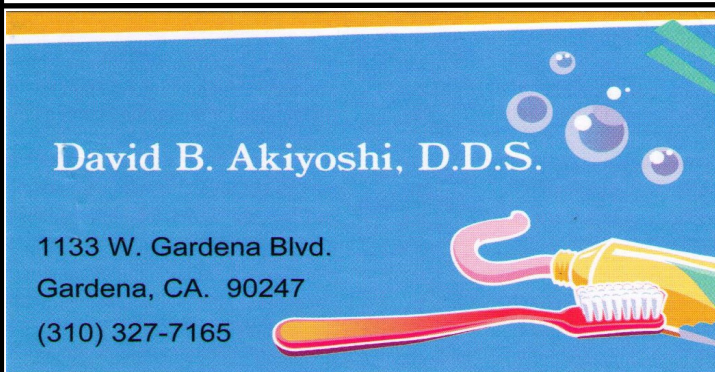


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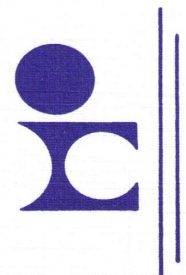
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"Tomodachi" Newsletter

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