



# SAKURA



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE HONOLULU JAPANESE JUNIOR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Spring 2018

## President's Message



Aloha HJJCC Members!

Wow, time really has flown by and we're in the last few months of our fiscal year. On March 17th, we successfully completed our 66th Cherry Blossom Festival Ball where our new 66th Cherry Blossom Festival Court was crowned. I would like to take this time to thank our Cherry Blossom Festival Steering committee for all of their hard work over the past months to organize our Festival. I would especially like to thank and congratulate our 66th Cherry Blossom Festival General Chair, Crystine Ito, for all of her hard work, sacrifice and commitment to continuing the long legacy of the Cherry Blossom Festival.

We have completed our hosting of our 1st sister chapter from Kobe JCs and are looking forward to our San JCs, from Kurashiki, Kojima and Tamashima, arrival in mid-April and the Odawara JCs arrival in mid-May. Let's not forget about our much anticipated 7th Annual Nijikai event occurring on June 1st this year at the Pomaikai Ballrooms, details to follow in this newsletter. We are in our final months of our fiscal year but have so many opportunities and events for our members to participate in.

As I had mentioned in the previous newsletter, this year marks the 150th Anniversary of the 1st Japanese Immigrants to come to Hawaii, known as the Gannenmono. Those that paved the way and inspired future generations of Japanese Americans in Hawaii. Without them, we may never have had the Cherry Blossom Festival or the Honolulu Japanese Junior Chamber of Commerce. The State of Hawaii would definitely not be what it is today. With recent headlines, it's important for all of us to do our part and inspire others by doing the right thing, setting a good example so we too can pave the way for future generations just like the Gannenmono did for us. Despite the challenges our society faces, our efforts to promote and celebrate the good of our community and for our leaders to continue to inspire others, collectively we will keep this state and country great.

Thank you for making the Honolulu Japanese Junior Chamber of Commerce what it is today. If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to email me at [president@hjjcc.com](mailto:president@hjjcc.com).

Sincerely,

George Takase  
68th Honolulu Japanese Junior Chamber of Commerce President

# 66th Cherry Blossom Festival - *Inspire*

by Crystine Ito, General Chair - 66th Cherry Blossom Festival

On March 17, 2018 at the Sheraton Waikiki, the 66th Cherry Blossom Festival held its Festival Ball, the culmination of many months of hard work and dedication by our fifteen Queen Contestants.



Before the selection of our new Queen and Court at Festival Ball, preparations for the Festival begin well before the New Year. With over 20 cultural and personal development classes, taught by a dedicated team of skilled instructors, each Contestant was given the opportunity to experience different aspects of their Japanese Culture while developing themselves both personally and professionally.

This year, our Queen Contestants participated in five public appearances at several of Oahu's malls including Kahala Mall, Windward Mall, Pearlridge Centers, Ala Moana Center, and for the first time, Ka Makana Ali'i. These appearances allow our Queen Contestants to introduce themselves, promote the Festival and to showcase different aspects of the Japanese culture to the community with performances such Japanese odori, koto and taiko. Of course, the highlight of each public appearance was the introduction of our Queen Contestants, where each individual was asked a question on a variety of subjects, allowing them to practice their public speaking and appearance skills.

Other events included our Contestant Reception and Golf Tournament. The year, Contestant Reception was held at The District Nightclub where family and friends were able to interact with the Queen Contestants in a casual setting while enjoying an evening of food, prizes and dancing.

Photo by  
Chris Kwock Photography



# 66th Cherry Blossom Festival - *Inspire*

by Crystine Ito, General Chair - 66th Cherry Blossom Festival

Despite the stormy forecast for the weekend, we were gifted with sun and clear skies for our Golf Tournament. This year's tournament was held at Pearl Country Club and featured a three-man scramble format with an awards banquet to end the evening. On the course, golfers enjoyed food and drinks from various vendors while our volunteers, Queen Contestants and members of the 65th Cherry Blossom Festival Court facilitated course games and cheered them on.

These events all lead up to the highly anticipated Festival Ball. Our Queen Contestants opened the evening with a taiko performance followed by the Western Phase, where they presented their prepared speech while wearing an elegant forest green evening gown. As guests dined during intermission, our Contestants prepared for the Eastern phase of the competition. As each reappeared, they graced the stage in an authentic silk Furisode kimono. Each kimono was flown from Japan and specifically chosen for each Contestant by Watabe Wedding Corporation, a Diamond Sponsor. During this phase, our Contestants put their public speaking skills to the test as they answered an impromptu question. At the end of the night, a panel of judges selected the 66th Cherry Blossom Festival Queen, First Princess and three Princesses. Miss Popularity and Miss Congeniality were also announced to complete the 66th Cherry Blossom Festival Court. This was also the last official appearance of 65th Cherry Blossom Festival Queen Heather Omori and her Court.



# **66th Cherry Blossom Festival - Inspire**

*by Crystine Ito, General Chair - 66th Cherry Blossom Festival*

We would like to extend our congratulations to all of the 66th Cherry Blossom Festival Contestants on an outstanding performance and welcome our newly crowned 66th Cherry Blossom Festival Queen and Court. We would also like to congratulate Collette Masunaga, the recipient of the Violet Niimi Oishi Scholarship. This award was established by Dr. Scott Oishi in memory of his mother who was crowned the first Cherry Blossom Festival Queen. This \$5,000 award is given to one Contestant for their continued education. They are selected for their educational excellence, essay submission and community service involvement.

The theme of this year's Festival was Inspire. As our 66th Cherry Blossom Festival comes to a close, we look back and reflect on the hard work and generosity of everyone who supported this annual tradition, and we continue to be inspired by these collective efforts. Our hope is that this Festival has inspired our Contestants, volunteers, supporters and the community to not only learn and explore beauty of their history and culture but to share it with others, all while making positive differences in the community.

Thank you to our Sponsors, Award Donors, Instructors, Honorary Advisors, HJJCC Board of Directors and members, CBF Steering Committee members, our families and friends for supporting this Festival. It is with the hard work and dedication of these groups and individuals that this Festival will continue to thrive and inspire others.



*From left to right: Miss Congeniality Karly Misako Kanehiro, Princess Kylie Kimie Hisatake, Princess Kaydi Azure Hashima, Queen Melanie Camille Michiko Carrié, 1st Princess Mika Lyn Nakashige, Princess Chelsea Momoka Briggs, and Miss Popularity Shelby Keiko Wai'oluikamālie Meador.*

# Sister Festivals of the Cherry Blossom Festival

## Hawaii Hospitality Committee

by Crystine Ito, General Chair - 66th Cherry Blossom Festival

Each year, through the exchange of hospitality, our Hawaii Cherry Blossom Festival continues to maintain and strengthen relationships with our sister city festivals: Nisei Week in Los Angeles and the Northern California Cherry Blossom in San Francisco.

Our 66th Cherry Blossom Festival Hospitality Committee, comprised of past and present HJJCC members, CBF Steering Committee members, former Queens and Courts, their families and many friends of the Festival was lead by this year's Committee Chair, Traci Miwa-Kobayashi. After months of planning and preparation, we were ready to host our mainland guests here in Hawaii.



Guests from our visiting cities enjoyed a fun-filled schedule of activities including racing through the pineapple maze at Dole Plantation, getting their hands dirty while eating garlic shrimp from Giovanni's Shrimp truck, cooling off with shave ice from Matsumoto's, satisfying sweet tooths while making chocolates at Menehune Mac, and so much more. Of course, the highlight of their visit was attending our Festival Ball, where Nisei Week Queen Jordyn Adachi, Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival Queen Jacquelyn Chew and their Courts watched and supported the Queen Contestants of the 66th Cherry Blossom Festival and helped welcome the newly crowned Queen and Court to the "sisterhood of the traveling kimono."

Photo by  
Chris Kwock Photography



Photo by  
Chris Kwock Photography

# Sister Festivals of the Cherry Blossom Festival

## Hawaii Hospitality Committee

by Crystine Ito, General Chair - 66th Cherry Blossom Festival

This year, our 66th Hawaii Cherry Blossom Festival Queen and Court, will take their inaugural trip together to San Francisco, and then to Los Angeles, participating in parades, coronation balls, sightseeing and indulging in local cuisine. These trips provide an opportunity for Court members to bond and create memories with each other, while continuing to learn about their Japanese-American history and culture.

We are so grateful to have incredibly generous hospitality committees in each city who are each dedicated to maintaining these friendships and relationships, and to providing these valuable, once-in-a-lifetime experiences for our Courts.

Photo by  
Chris Kwock Photography



Photo by  
Chris Kwock Photography



# International Relations - Kobe JC's

by Lori Higashi, VP of International Relations

Our Kobe Sister City JC brought 30 members to Honolulu to help celebrate our 66th Cherry Blossom Festival. Kobe JC President Takashima presented beautiful Kobe Pearls to the newly crowned 66th Cherry Blossom Court to congratulate them on their accomplishments and wishing them a great year to come. Along with the Cherry Blossom events, HJJCC International Relations committee members worked hard to share the aloha spirit with our visiting friends by hosting a Welcome Breakfast at the Airport Hotel Banquet Room, Farewell Lunch at Wisp Restaurant, and Nijikai's at TJ's Sports Bar and Grill and NOMU at Waikiki Yokochō.

A HUGE thank you to all the members who took time to help with hosting the Kobe JC's. Everything from driving, planning, and taking time out of your days to attend events ... without your willingness to volunteer, we would not have been able to have had a successful hosting. We encourage you to continue to participate in International Relations events, we have 2 more hosting with San JC's coming in April and Odawara JC's coming in May (see last page for schedules). Next IR meeting will be 4/25 (Wednesday). Email me, Lori Higashi at [international.relations@hjjcc.com](mailto:international.relations@hjjcc.com) to RSVP for San JC's and Odawara JC events or if you are interested in being part of the IR Committee.



# Community Development

by Brandon Miyagi, VP of Community Development

It was a packed first quarter for Community Development but our members showed up and delivered. We started the year off with a bang at the annual Japanese Cultural Center Ohana Festival. Members worked the KC Waffle Hot Dog booth to a thankful crowd who happily snatched up the local favorite. But it wasn't all manual labor this quarter as members got glammed up for two gala events. First they assisted with the Sony Open Banquet at the Hawaii Convention Center, and were treated to a concert by the incomparable Diana Ross for their efforts. Then in February, members got into their best formal wear to assist with the prestigious Heart Ball, a benefit gala for the American Heart Association that raised over \$1 million in a single night!



Our biggest Community Development event for the first quarter was our own Cherry Blossom Golf Tournament at the Pearl Country Club. Members spent the day handing out drinks, making KC Waffle Dogs (we're going to be pros at making these), and assisting golfers. The golf tournament was a huge success with 52 teams participating for a total of 156 golfers! The golfers expressed how much they enjoyed the tournament and we are appreciative of their support. Events such as these could not be possible without our members, and for that we are truly grateful.



We look forward to the second quarter of 2018 and hope you will come out and join us! If you would like to volunteer or have ideas for future community service events, please contact Brandon Miyagi at [community.service@hjjcc.com](mailto:community.service@hjjcc.com).

# Membership Development

by Gina Maeda, VP of Membership Development

It has been a busy season, full of good deeds and making new connections! On November 16, Honolulu Japanese Chamber of Commerce (HJCC) and HJJCC members bonded at Odori-ko restaurant with games, prizes, and an impromptu karaoke serenade. The Odoriko-a-Go-Go joint mixer hosted over a hundred members and guests!



# Membership Development

by Gina Maeda, VP of Membership Development

On December 7, the Hukilau Bar & Grill was filled with holiday cheer from the Jingle and Mingle toy drive and mixer! Attendees brought new and unwrapped toys to donate to Toys for Tots, and enjoyed live music, pupus, and cookie decorating. The donations were overwhelming – there were definitely some very happy children this holiday season!



On February 21, Anne Namba Designs hosted a fashion show featuring the 65th Cherry Blossom Festival queen and court and HJJCC Treasurer Andrew Pang! It was an evening of networking and shopping – and a portion of the sales was generously donated to the HJJCC from Anne Namba!



# Young Business Roundtable

by Chris Anjo, Young Business Roundtable Chairperson

Our February Young Business roundtable focused on providing members with an essential life skill: financial planning!

HJJCC members and their guests had the opportunity to learn from premier financial planner Jodi Nozoe Chang and CPA Ying Yang Chen about the basics of navigating life's financial challenges. Attendees learned fundamentals such as budgeting and financial sacrifice, as well as building snowmen: an analogy about diversifying personal investments with short-, medium-, and long-term goals. Jodi and Ying shared stories about real-life experiences and the financial impacts they have. Using a financial roadmap, we discussed some of the challenges that arise through major milestones in life: starting a new job, getting married, having kids, and retirement. Ying also touched on how new tax laws may affect us personally.

But the most important takeaway was that we should all start somewhere. After all, failing to plan is planning to fail!



To cap the night off, attendees enjoyed a great wine tasting by our host HASR Bistro!

Networking and building relationships is also a key component of the YBR meetings, as attendees can interact with each other and the speakers. The YBR strives to enhance the professional growth and development of our membership. For more information on YBR, please contact [ybrhawaii@hjjcc.com](mailto:ybrhawaii@hjjcc.com).





HONOLULU JAPANESE JUNIOR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

7th Annual

# Nijikai 会

POMAIKA'I  
BALLROOMS

\$70 ADVANCE / \$80 AFTER MAY 4TH

[HJJCC.COM/NIJIKAI](http://HJJCC.COM/NIJIKAI)

J U N E • 1 • 2 0 1 8  
6-9 PM



GANNENMONO  
CELEBRATING 150 YEARS



NIJIKAI IS A 21+ EVENT. NO EXCEPTIONS.

## Upcoming Events

### San JC's Hosting

Thursday, April 12th @ 6pm

Welcome Dinner - Side Street Inn Kapahulu

Saturday, April 14th @ 9am

Campus Beautification - Highlands Intermediate

Sunday, April 15th @ 6pm

Farewell Dinner - Natsunoya Tea House

### Elections

Friday, April 27th @ 5:30pm

The Plaza Club

### Odawara Hosting

May 10th to May 13th

### 7th Annual Nijikai

Friday, June 1st @ 6pm

Pomaikai Ballrooms

### Installation Banquet

Saturday, July 28th @ 6pm

Pacific Club

### Now accepting applications for the 67th Cherry Blossom Festival!

To be eligible as a Queen Contestant Candidate, applicants must:

- Have at least 50% Japanese ancestry
- Be a United States citizen and Hawaii resident
- Be female by birth
- Be at least 19 years of age as of September 1st, 2018, and not older than 28 years of age as of April 1, 2019
- Be a high school graduate

For additional qualification requirements and more information, visit [www.cbfhawaii.com/apply](http://www.cbfhawaii.com/apply) or email [cbfsearch@hjjcc.com](mailto:cbfsearch@hjjcc.com).

**Application Deadline: August 1, 2018**

## Happy Birthdays!

### April

Jon Bello  
Bryson Chang  
Leslie Chau  
Ronson Fox  
Ashley Higa  
Jessica Kaneshiro  
Tiffany Luke Masutani  
Donovan Morimoto  
Nicole Nakamoto  
Kylie Tachibana  
Desiree Uyeda

### May

Daniel Koge  
Glenn Kuwaye  
Tyler Lam  
Dylan Lau  
Lynn Miyahira  
Jun Miyasaka  
Shiho Natori  
Pierson Oyama  
Reyn Sugai  
Kelly Ann Takiguchi  
Kristen Teves  
Randi Tsushima  
Kristine Wada

### June

Seiji Aspengren  
Kisha Chun  
Terrence Cuyo  
Mari Fujimoto  
Kathryn Fujitani  
Avery Fukeda  
Lori Higashi  
Jason Iha  
Anna Itoh  
Kellen Kaneshiro  
Lara Karamatsu  
Taryn Lau  
Tiffany Mitani  
Sheri Morishige  
Aimee Nelson  
Jennifer Okubo  
Chace Shigemasa  
Ritsuko Tomari  
Chad Yamamoto

## Want to get involved?

Send an email to [info@hjjcc.com](mailto:info@hjjcc.com) to get started!