



Official Newsletter of the Honolulu
Japanese Junior Chamber of Commerce

SAKURA

SPRING 2023

President's Message



Aloha HJJCC Members,

The year has been flying by and it's been great seeing so many of you coming out to events! Our Spring Sakura newsletter covers some exciting events such as the volunteer opportunities we had to assist other local organizations, the return of our Japan sister cities to Hawaii, an udon and matcha tiramisu cooking class, a karaoke night + potluck, a sneak peek into your DiSC style of communication, and another HJJCC member golf outing.

We feature a section on the 70th Cherry Blossom Festival Court, who have completed their year as Court members. Thank you so much to the members of the 70th Court for your commitment and for doing such a wonderful job representing the Festival within our local community, the mainland, and Japan.

There is also a look into the journey of the 71st Contestants to Festival Ball where the new Court was crowned. A huge congratulations to our 71st Cherry Blossom Festival General Chair, Heather Furutani, and the members of her Steering Committee for putting on such an amazing Festival! Thank you so much for all your hard work and dedication!

With what little time we have left in this fiscal year, our Board of Directors continues to plan new and fun events for our members. Don't forget to keep an eye out for our emails and follow us on social media to stay updated on what's coming up. Thank you for supporting the HJJCC and I hope to see you all at our upcoming events!

Sincerely,
Sheri Morishige
73rd HJJCC President

Community Development

By Garrett Lau - VP of Community Development



Community events are back in full gear and the requests for volunteers have been rolling in! We were asked to volunteer again for the Sullivan Family of Companies Give Aloha Mahalo Event at the Turtle Bay Resort. We checked in attendees, assisted in the food booths, and helped out with activities in the keiki zone. There was a tented stage and tables everywhere, multiple food and drink booths, and even a toys and video game tent for the keiki. Our volunteers were invited to stay after the shift was over to enjoy the end of the party and watch a very good cover band play on stage.



The following weekend, you could find us at the Honolulu Festival Grand Parade at Waikiki. We were assigned to help out with the Saitama Dragon Float and got to learn the dragon dance! Right before the parade started, we were split up into groups of dancers and dragon handlers. It was an enjoyable experience participating in the Grand Parade and seeing many spectators in awe of the two-story tall dragon float that towered over them.

In April, we were happy to help out the Honolulu Japanese Chamber of Commerce's Chopsticks and Wine event, which was brought back in-person to the Hawaii Convention Center. Our first shift volunteers either helped check in the VIP guests or were assigned to a vendor booth to help them prep for the expected crowds. The second shift of volunteering members assisted vendors at the many wine and food booths. It was interesting to learning about the various wines being poured to each patron and the creative food dishes served to them. We were happy to help out the HJCC with their event! Be on the look out in our next newsletter for a recap of our joint community service activity with them!



International Relations

By Lori Higashi - VP of International Relations



During the last week of March, we eagerly welcomed the first sister city chapter to visit Hawaii this year, JCI Kobe! On the first day we hosted a welcome lunch at Aloha Beer and the Kobe members had the opportunity to meet the Lieutenant Governor Sylvia Luke, Executive Director of the Mayor's Office of Culture and the Arts, Makanani Sala, and State Representative Scott Nishimoto. The next day we attended the 71st Cherry Blossom Festival's highly anticipated, culminating event, Festival Ball! JCI Kobe President Miyazaki gave an impressive speech to the event's 930 guests and presented the 71st Court with pearl necklaces on behalf of JCI Kobe. On the last day of their trip, we started the day at the Kakaako Farmer's Market. Then we went to the joint CBF Welcome Picnic where we ate delicious food and played entertaining games at Magic Island Beach Park with the visiting courts from California, Nisei Week and NCCBF, the 70th Court, CBF Hospitality and HJJCC members. In the evening, we had a farewell dinner at Jade Dynasty with the newly crowned 71st Court and HJJCC members. Even though their trip was short, we enjoyed every moment to the fullest with the Kobe members!



International Relations Cont.

Our next visiting group was the Kurashiki, Kojima, and Tamashima JC chapters, aka the San JCs, from Okayama Prefecture! Shortly after their arrival, they enjoyed lunch at Kakaako Beach Park and met with the Lieutenant Governor Sylvia and the Chief of Staff of the Mayor's Office, Sam Moku. The next day we held a welcome dinner at Side Street Kapahulu. It was a great opportunity for HJJCC members, past presidents, and the 71st Court to meet and get to know the San JC members. We had the honor of JCI USA National President, Nate Martin, also joining us for dinner and helping us give a warm welcome to our guests. After dinner, we continued mingling and bonding while playing simulated golf, soccer, and baseball at the Sports Box in Ala Moana Shopping Center. On the last day of their visit, we took the San JCs to an algae clean-up at Maunalua Bay. Seeing all of our bags full of algae was very rewarding! Later in the evening, we had a farewell dinner where we ate delicious food, played telephone charades, and celebrated birthdays together. Kuraski President Tokuda, Kojima President Tsubomoto, and Tamashima President Nishi surprised HJJCC President Sheri Morishige with a super cute, custom t-shirt with all four of the presidents' faces on it. We concluded the night playing games at Dave and Busters. We will cherish all the memories we shared with the San JCs and can't wait to make more in the near future!



International Relations Cont.

From June 22 to 25, our final visiting group, the Odawara JC chapter, will be visiting us! If you're interested in attending the hosting events and meeting the Odawara members, please RSVP by June 12 via the Google Sheet link in the email sent out to membership in March. We are looking for volunteers to help with driving and set up for events as well. If you have any questions, please email Lori at international.relations@hjjcc.com!

Management Development

By Claire Fukuoka Tsuha - VP of Management Development

Tickets for Nijikai 2023 are now on sale!

Please join us for a fun filled night of food, drinks, and live entertainment!

Please see any Nijikai Committee member or HJJCC Board member for tickets, or purchase online at: hjjcc.com/nijikai2023.

Hope to see you there!
Thank you for your support!

The poster features a dark background with a stylized illustration of a person in traditional Japanese attire. At the top center is the HJJCC logo, which includes a cherry blossom motif. Below the logo, the Japanese characters '二次会' (Nijikai) are written in a large, glowing white font. Underneath the characters, the word 'NIJIKAI' is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font, followed by '2023'. A white-bordered box contains the text 'FRIDAY JUNE 16 6 - 9 PM'. Below this, the venue 'GENERATIONS BALLROOM JAPANESE CULTURAL CENTER OF HAWAII' is listed. A paragraph of text describes the event as an evening of entertainment, food samples, and beverages. A smaller line of text states that a portion of the proceeds will support Aloha Harvest. At the bottom, a white-bordered box contains the ticket purchase link 'HJJCC.COM/NIJIKAI2023', and below that, the pricing '\$80 EARLY BIRD | \$100 AFTER JUNE 4' and the note 'NIJIKAI IS A 21+ EVENT' are displayed.

HJJCC

二次会
NIJIKAI
2023

FRIDAY
JUNE 16
6 - 9 PM

GENERATIONS BALLROOM
JAPANESE CULTURAL CENTER OF HAWAII

Enjoy an evening filled with entertainment, food samples from your favorite local eateries, and hosted beverages.

A portion of this year's proceeds will support programs for our non-profit recipient, Aloha Harvest.

Get your tickets here!
HJJCC.COM/NIJIKAI2023

\$80 EARLY BIRD | \$100 AFTER JUNE 4
NIJIKAI IS A 21+ EVENT

Membership Development

By Hailey Takayesu - VP of Membership Development



In February, members got a chance to try their cooking skills making handmade udon noodles and matcha tiramisu. Big mahalo to Chef Makoto, Chef Amanda and Chef Diego for walking members through the process of making our own noodles! Members got to enjoy their hard work with a yuzu kosho dressing and finished off the meal with a yummy matcha tiramisu. If you weren't able to attend the workshop but want to try it on your own, we've included the recipe and directions below!



Members also got to enjoy a fun night at Karaoke in March. It was a great way to hang out with fellow members, sing our hearts out and be entertained. Those who attended also got to participate in a fun game of bringing a food item to share that begins with the same letter as their first name. Be sure to check out our Instagram reel to see what everyone brought!

Coming up soon is our General Membership Meeting and Elections. This is the first one back in-person since 2019 and we can't wait to see you all! The event will be held Friday, May 26th at BoxJelly and we will be electing our 2023-2023 Board of Directors, welcoming new members and going over updates and upcoming events. Check out our website for more information about the event and format of elections. Hope to see you there!

Udon Workshop Recipes

Udon Noodles (1 serving)

Ingredients

- All-purpose flour 100 g
- Water 45 g
- Kosher salt 5 g
- Cornstarch for rolling and dusting

Directions

1. In a small bowl, stir water and salt together until salt has dissolved.
2. In a large mixing bowl, add flour and slowly add salted water until a shaggy dough forms.
3. Hand knead the dough in the bowl until it forms a ball, about 5 minutes.
4. Place the dough in a ziplock bag and allow to rest at room temperature for 30 minutes. Knead for a couple minutes and allow to rest for 1 hour.
5. Knead again for a couple minutes and allow to rest for a minimum of 2 hours. The dough should be smooth.
6. Using a rolling pin, roll the dough into a long rectangle as thin as possible, about 1/8 inch thick.
7. Dust with the rolled dough with cornstarch and fold over four times.
8. Slice dough into 1/8 inch strips. Fluff and separate the noodles.
9. Boil a pot of water. Add noodles to the boiling water and cook for 12-15 minutes.
10. Strain noodles and rinse under cool tap water to remove excess starch.
11. Now the noodles are ready for hot or cold applications.

Yuzu Kosho Dressing (for cold udon, 1 serving)

Ingredients

- Water 1/4 c / 50 g
- Yuzu juice 1 Tbsp / 12 g
- Rice vinegar 1 Tbsp / 12 g
- Olive oil 1 Tbsp / 10 g
- Yuzu kosho 1/2 tsp / 4 g
- Tsuyu (soup base concentrate) 1/4 c / 60 g

Directions

Whisk all the ingredients together and toss into udon noodles.

Suggested toppings: vegetables, bonito flakes, wakame, nori, eggs, fish cakes, abura

Udon Workshop Recipes

Matcha Tiramisu (8 servings)

Ingredients

- Matcha powder 10 g / 1 Tbsp
- Water or milk 375 ml / 1.5 cups
- Optional: vanilla extract or orange liqueur 2-3 tsp

Heat water or milk and dissolve matcha powder, allow to cool. Add extract or liqueur.

- Heavy cream 240 g / 1 cup
- Mascarpone cheese 225 g / 8 oz
- Granulated sugar 80 g / 1/3 cup
- Savioardi lady fingers 200 g / 1 package
- Matcha powder for dusting 20 g / 2 Tbsp

Directions

1. Whisk mascarpone with sugar until soft and smooth.
2. Scraping down sides of the bowl often.
3. With the mixer on, slowly drizzle in the heavy cream. Increase the speed to medium-high and whip until firm and fluffy.
4. Make sure to scrape down the sides to prevent lumps.
5. Dip half the lady fingers quickly and completely but do not soak or they will become soggy.
6. Place side by side on the bottom on an 8x8" pan.
7. Spread half the mascarpone mixture, repeat with the remaining ladyfingers and mascarpone mixture.
8. Smooth the top. Cover and refrigerate for 4 hours - overnight.
9. Before serving dust with matcha powder.

71st Cherry Blossom Festival

By Heather Furutani - 71st Cherry Blossom Festival General Chair



On Sunday, March 5 we wrapped up our Public Appearances at Ala Moana Center. Audience members were treated to an energetic and exciting performance by Ryugen Taiko. This was also the last chance the public could see the 71st Cherry Blossom Festival Queen Contestants as they answered an impromptu question at Center Stage.



On March 31st, we were blown away by the 71st Queen Contestants at their culminating event of their Cherry Blossom Festival journey at Festival Ball. The event was held at the Sheraton Waikiki Hawaii Ballrooms. This was the result of 7 months of hard work and dedication, as contestants participated in a variety of cultural classes, visual and communication classes, and weekly rehearsals.

The 71st Cherry Blossom Festival Queen and Court were selected by a panel of judges composed of distinguished professionals and leaders in our community.

The program began with a Taiko performance from the 15 Queen Contestants called “Sakura Daiko” or Cherry Blossom Drum Song. Then we got our heart pumping with a high energy taiko performance by Kenny Endo Taiko Ensemble. During the Western Phase, contestants came out rocking the stage in an opening number choreographed by past contestants. Then Contestants delivered a one-minute speech about topics they hold dear to their hearts in elegant evening gowns. In the Eastern Phase, the Contestants wore furisode kimonos sponsored by Gold Sponsor, Watabe Wedding Corporation, that were personally selected to match their personalities. Each contestant answered an impromptu question to showcase their deductive reasoning and communication skills.



L-R: Princess and Miss Congeniality Jennifer Dee Emi Kumura, Princess and Miss Popularity Emily Mieko Johnson, Queen Samantha Ke’olani Marumoto, First Princess Chirstyn Shihori Okuno, and Princess Amber Masaye Yonamine.

71st Cherry Blossom Festival Cont.



We announced the winner of the Violet Niimi Oishi Scholarship and this award was presented by Dr. Scott Oishi. Dr. Oishi donates this scholarship award in honor of his mother, the first Cherry Blossom Festival Queen- Violet Tokie Niimi. This scholarship is awarded to help a contestant reach their academic goals. Contestants are selected based on their educational excellence, essay submission, and community service involvement. The 70th Cherry Blossom Queen and Court made their last appearance on stage as they represented the Festival, the Honolulu Japanese Junior Chamber of Commerce, and the state of Hawaii throughout the year with grace and elegance. At the conclusion of our program the 71st Cherry Blossom Festival Queen, First Princess, three Princesses, Miss Popularity, and Miss Congeniality were crowned.

Congratulations to the 71st Cherry Blossom Festival Queen Contestants for an amazing night! You all exuded confidence throughout the night and I am so proud of all you've accomplished together throughout this experience. Welcome to the sisterhood and the Cherry Blossom Festival Ohana!



71st Cherry Blossom Festival Cont.



We were so excited to welcome and host our sister festivals, Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival from San Francisco and Nisei Week Japanese Festival from Los Angeles. Our Hospitality committee showed our guests to many different local food spots around the island. Our guest took a morning hike up Makapu'u Point Trail and enjoyed paddle boarding through Haleiwa. We are so grateful for the opportunity to strengthen our sister festival bonds and the continued friendship between our three sister festivals.

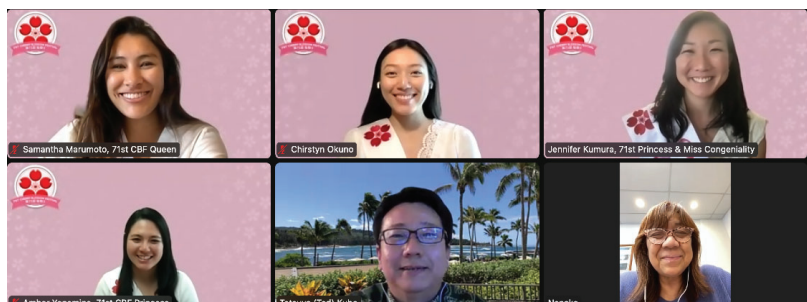


Our Closing Ceremonies was held on Saturday April 8th and we gathered together to celebrate the conclusion of the 71st Festival. During the event gratitude was expressed to our Festival Sponsors, Donors, Cultural Instructors, Board of Directors, and Steering Committee Members. The 71st Contestants shared their journey with a slideshow of memories. They were also awarded their Mrs. Yajima Cultural Award which allows each Contestant to continue their interest and education in a Japanese Cultural activity.



71st Cherry Blossom Festival Cont.

Over the past few weeks, members of the 71st Court, HJCC President Sheri Morishige, and myself visited our Diamond, Gold, and Silver Sponsors to personally thank them for their support and contributions to the Festival. Sponsors got to learn about the Court's experience as Contestants and what they look forward to this coming year.



As we close another chapter of the Cherry Blossom Festival, I leave this year with an overwhelming sense of gratitude and I am so blessed to have made many “tsunagu” or meaningful connections throughout this year.

Thank you to all our sponsors, donors, honorary advisors, and cultural instructors for your support, without you our festival would not be possible. President Sheri Morishige and the Honolulu Japanese Junior Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, I appreciate your guidance and the passion you have to uphold the mission of the Festival. The Cherry Blossom Festival Steering Committee, thank you for joining me on this journey and for your hard work, dedication, and commitment to the 71st Festival. I’ve truly enjoyed working with you all and am grateful to have had many memorable memories with you all this year.



This could be you!

**THE 72ND CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL
IS LOOKING FOR QUEEN CONTESTANTS**

Applicants must be of at least 50% Japanese ancestry and between the ages of 19 and 28 years old. Visit our website www.cbhawaii.com/apply to review the complete list of eligibility requirements and to download the application.

**Completed applications
must be postmarked by
August 1, 2023.**



70th Cherry Blossom Festival Queen & Court

By Ashley Higa - 70th Cherry Blossom Festival Queen & Court Advisor

At the beginning of March, the Court helped Gold Sponsor Gyotaku Restaurant celebrate Girl's Day at their various locations. They passed out mochi to all of their guests who were dining in or picking up take-out. The Honolulu Festival Grand Parade was exciting to be in as it was the first parade since their 3 year hiatus! The Court was also happy to help celebrate the Honolulu Festival's return at their Friendship Gala where they helped welcome guests and present awards to their recipients.



The last community event they helped at was Japan-America Society of Hawaii's 33rd Annual Friendship Golf Tournament. They spent the day assisting organizers and enjoyed seeing the participants enjoy a fun-filled tournament.



The Court was invited to a pre-showing of Defining Courage, a heartfelt and informative storytelling event about the Nisei Soldier's impact on World War II. They were brought to tears after hearing the stories told by David Ono.



70th Cherry Blossom Festival Queen & Court Cont.

With grateful hearts, the 70th Court would like to thank all the steering committee members, HJJCC board members, Cherry Blossom Festival volunteers, donors and sponsors for helping to make their year so meaningful! Each court member wrote a gratitude message for a social media series called #Thankful Thursdays. We wanted to show them here as their final sign off as 70th Cherry Blossom Festival Court members.



Shari Nishijima
70th CBF Queen

My time with the Cherry Blossom Festival has truly given me so much to be grateful for — a renewed sense of gratitude for my loved ones, a deepened connection to culture, and a heartfelt appreciation for our local community. While the story of Japanese Americans in Hawai'i isn't my family's story, it's a story I've come to hold dear to my heart. I'm grateful for the lessons and values I gained that will continue to inspire and ground me for the rest of my life. As my time as queen comes to a close, the kachikan value Ōn 恩, or debt of gratitude, is something I feel strongly. It's been an incredible honor to represent the Festival and serve our larger Hawai'i Japanese American community both here at home and abroad. I can't wait to find new ways to perpetuate

the history and values foundational to being a Japanese American in Hawai'i. Thank you to the many hands who help continue the legacy of the Festival. Thank you to the wonderful people I've met throughout this experience. And thank you to my 'ohana — new and not new — for supporting me throughout this journey.



Maile Kawasaki
70th CBF First Princess

The Cherry Blossom Festival was a transformative experience that fostered learning, growth, and friendship. Through this incredible journey, I gained a deeper understanding of my Japanese culture and heritage, connected with many amazing, dynamic women, and experienced immense personal growth. I am tremendously grateful to all those who have uplifted and supported me. To the HJJCC, CBF Steering Committee, our volunteers, advisors, and mentors: thank you for your hard work and dedication. I appreciate your enduring commitment. To my family, friends, and supporters: I am forever grateful for your love and unwavering encouragement. Truly, thank you for always believing in me. With a grateful heart, I am eternally

honored to be a part of the Cherry Blossom Festival 'ohana. Mahalo nui loa kākou and
ありがとうございます!

70th Cherry Blossom Festival Queen & Court Cont.



Taeler Akana
70th CBF Princess

There are about a million and one reasons to be thankful for this opportunity, but for me, the biggest is being a role model for Japanese American girls. When I decided to put in an application to be a 70th CBF Queen Contestant, I truly never imagined making it onto Court and being given the ability to be a role model to young Japanese American girls. Last weekend we participated in the Honolulu festival parade. As we drove down the street, I waved to all of the little girls and boys sitting along the side of the road. It was so fun to see their faces light up as we waved hello to them and sharing with them that being a Japanese American woman is special and a honor. It was at that moment I truly realized with this opportunity I was blessed with something that should never be taken for granted. I'd like to thank the HJJCC and all the festival sponsors, my advisor, who was beyond patient with me as I tamed my rebellious nature, and my friends and family, who in less than two weeks will finally be able to stop calling me a princess. I will forever be grateful for everyone and everything this past year has given me.



Tamlyn Sasaki
70th CBF Princess

I am beyond thankful for the past year of personal growth and self-discovery, serving and connecting with the Hawai'i community, learning to better understand my Japanese heritage, and forming memories and friendships that I know will last a lifetime. My family and friends have been my backbone throughout this journey, and I am forever grateful for their unconditional love and support. お陰様で: I am what I am because of you. I hope that I can continue to make you all proud.

Thank you to the Cherry Blossom Festival for the opportunity to honor those who came before me, and for reminding me of how special our community is here. どうもありがとうございます!



Jordyn Valdez
70th CBF Princess

Saying that I am thankful is an understatement. From contestant year to court year, this experience has been nothing but constant learning, and appreciation for my culture. This is truly a once in a lifetime experience that I am thankful to have had. The absolute honor I felt as I wore my first furisode kimono is a feeling I will always cherish. I am thankful to the many people that made this opportunity possible. I am forever thankful for the bonds created through the Cherry Blossom Festival. For someone who only has one brother, I now walk away with sisters from Hawai'i, San Francisco, and Los Angeles.

70th Cherry Blossom Festival Queen & Court Cont.



Tari-Lynn Manin
70th CBF Miss Popularity

I've gone through life always choosing a path where I could envision what the end would look like. After participating in the Cherry Blossom Festival, I came to the realization that I didn't want it to end. As a contestant, I was fascinated by all the Japanese cultural classes that we were able to partake in. And as a court member, I am both grateful and mesmerized by all the organizations and supporters that allow us the opportunity to be a part of the Hawaii Japanese American community. The Cherry Blossom Festival has opened my eyes to something that goes far beyond just a group of young Japanese American women learning about their culture. It has brought on unexpected friendships, and allowed me to show gratitude toward community run organizations during the various events we've been a part of, all while educating me on my Japanese heritage.



Diana Okada
70th CBF Miss Congeniality

When I was a little kid, my family and I would go to Aiea Samurai to get strawberry vanilla swirl soft serve and on the wall would be the Cherry Blossom Festival poster. My mom and I would joke that when I got older I would enter ... I guess it wasn't a joke. Seeing the poster now is a reminder of how far I have come and the impact that other's actions have without even knowing it. I am thankful for the people: our advisors, mentors, the Chowa Cuties (70th Contestants), my friends, and family for their guidance, patience, and constant support. I am thankful for the experiences: being able to immerse in Japanese culture both in Japan and Hawaii. I am thankful for all the people behind the scenes, current and past, that have allowed me to have this cultural and self-explorative experience.



71st Cherry Blossom Festival Queen & Court

By Gina Maeda - 71st Cherry Blossom Festival Queen & Court Advisor



The 71st Cherry Blossom Festival queen and court hit the ground running in April by attending their first HJJCC event the day after their coronation! They had their first introduction to International Relations at the farewell party for sister chapter JCI Kobe. They shared food and stories, and even joined in a fun game that tested everyone's eye-mouth coordination.

A couple of days later, the court bid a hui hou to sister festivals the Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival and Nisei Week. The Aloha Party, hosted by the CBF hospitality committee, was the court's first chance to meet their sister courts and start forming bonds that would continue to grow in the coming months. The outpouring of aloha, food, and orei was overwhelming!



After saying goodbye to the Kobe Jaycees, NCCBF, and Nisei Week, the court said hajimemashite to the San JC's! They attended welcome and farewell parties and learned about what makes Kurashiki, Kojima, and Tamashima unique. They even came up with challenging and exciting games for everyone like charades telephone!



Mrs. Lillian Yajima, considered the matriarch of CBF, sadly passed away in 2022 before the 71st CBF semifinalists could meet her. In tribute, the court visited her daughter, Lenny Yajima, to offer their gratitude along with flowers from Festival Ball. Before heading to Closing Ceremonies, they were able to hear stories about Mrs. Yajima and see the home where she hosted so many previous contestants.



71st Cherry Blossom Festival Queen & Court Cont.



The court flew to San Francisco to attend the 56th Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival and were sent off at the airport by the HJJCC Board of Directors. They were met at SFO airport by members of the NCCBF hospitality committee and the first stop was In-n-Out (of course). The next day, the CBF and Nisei Week courts visited the breathtaking Japanese tea garden at Golden Gate Park and had a guided tour before heading to the famous Golden Gate Bridge for more sightseeing. After a brief stop at Trader Joe's, the court had time to enjoy the street festival in Japantown. It was an eye opening experience, full of food, vendors, and entertainment! The CBF, NCCBF, and Nisei Week courts then had a unique opportunity to share about their respective careers and inspire the next generation of young women on stage at the Japantown Peace Plaza. That night was the first CBF Women's Teach In, led by the 55th NCCBF court. The candid conversations allowed the sister festivals to form an even deeper appreciation of each other and their experiences as Japanese-American women.

The next morning, the CBF and Nisei Week courts were hosted for breakfast and a tour at the W Hotel by donor Derek Sasano. Then they reported to City Hall for photos and to board their float for the Grand Parade. It was the first parade since 2019, and the streets were packed! The court was full of energy and danced and shaka-ed their way till the end! That night, the sister festivals said goodbye to each other and exchanged hugs and orei. It was bittersweet knowing that they wouldn't be seeing each other again for a few months until Nisei Week in August. The final morning was spent with a special Japantown tour by NCCBF hospitality committee member Benh Nakajo and breakfast at Sweet Maple, hosted by NCCBF hospitality committee member Allen Okamoto. The last stop was the Painted Ladies (a.k.a. the Full House houses) for fun photos and videos!



71st Cherry Blossom Festival Queen & Court Cont.



At the Honolulu Japanese Chamber of Commerce's annual Chopsticks & Wine fundraiser, the court helped in selling lucky draw tickets. They did an amazing job! In the process, they met a lot of generous sponsors and lucky winners.

Fresh from their travels, the queen and court were invited to the KHON2 studio to share about their contestant and court experiences on Living808. They were all very well-spoken and genuine! It was a great way to start the morning!



The Always Dream Foundation, founded by Olympic Gold medalist Kristi Yamaguchi, strives to provide low-income families with access to quality books and literacy support. Their annual Hawaii Gala raises necessary funds in order to realize that mission. The queen and court assisted with welcoming guests, encouraging contributions at the wish tree, and collecting bid information during the live auction. It was a beautiful and star studded evening!



The following week, 1st Princess Chirstyn Okuno and Princess Amber Yonamine volunteered with Navian for their Epic Quest fundraiser. They sold lucky draw tickets and cheered on teams as they went on their scavenger hunt through Dave & Buster's!



Young Business Roundtable

By Kacie Hirotsu - Young Business Roundtable Chair

On March 15th, we had our third Young Business Roundtable (YBR) event “People Smarts: Strategies to Bridge the Communication Gap” with Cindy Sakai, Co-Founder and Resultant, of Th!nk LLC at Po'ai by Pono Potions. Cindy introduced us to a relationship-building tool called DiSC and guided us through a couple interactive activities to help us to identify our DiSC style. Once Identified, she shared how to have effective communication with people in each style and how we can quickly identify someone's style to strengthen relationships with employees, peers, and leadership.

After the panel concluded, our members got to take what they learned and immediately implement it during the networking part of the event. Additionally, Cindy engaged with our members which allowed individuals to ask questions that could relate directly to their DiSC style and how they can fine tune their communication.

Thank you to everyone who attended our third event and keep an eye out for our next event coming up in June!



Sports Committee

By Curt Ueda - Sports Director

The Sports Committee continues to create opportunities for members to meet and socialize in a sports related setting. Since our last newsletter we held our 3rd HJJCC Member Golf Outing at Coral Creek Golf Course. In addition our committee has been working hard in preparation for our first HJJCC Dodgeball Tournament on May 9.

Our 3rd HJJCC Member Golf Outing of the year was held on March 19. Our members socialized and had fun playing 18 holes at Coral Creek Golf Course. We had prizes for the closest to the pin on all par 3's and also for the four low net scores with handicaps. We ended the day with dinner and drinks at Buffalo Wild Wings.

Our May 9th HJJCC Dodgeball Tournament includes 9 teams, 8 from the HJJCC and 1 from the Rising Phoenix Jaycees. It is an all-day event with a round robin and double elimination format to have fun and compete. Stay tuned for highlights from the tournament in our next Sakura newsletter!

If anyone is interested in being a part of our Sports Committee, please email Curt at directors@hjjcc.com. We work together to plan future sports related events.



Japanese Culture: Golden Week, Ōgon Shūkan (黄金週間)

By Kirstie Maeshiro-Takiguchi - Historian

Since 1948, Golden Week has been one of the longest and busiest holiday seasons in Japan. Its name came from a widely used Japanese radio industry phrase, 'golden time,' which referred to the primetime listening hours during the 1950s. Because there are four national holidays closely together during Golden Week, there was a significant increase of people tuning in to the radio. The first holiday is Showa Day (Showa no Hi) celebrated on April 29 and is the birthday of former Emperor Showa. Next is Constitution Day (Kenpo Kinenbi) on May 3 honoring when the new postwar constitution was enacted in 1947. Greenery Day (Midori no Hi) follows on May 4 and is dedicated to the environment because of Emperor Showa's love for nature.

Last is Children's Day (Kodomo no Hi) on May 5 and the Boy's Festival (Tango no Sekku) is celebrated with families praying for the health and future success of their sons by flying carp kites (Koinobori). Golden Week is the busiest travel season for Japanese people. Many take advantage of the week off to travel domestically and internationally.



Happy Birthday!

MARCH

Melody Higa
Michael Iwashita
Amanda Kodama
Randi Lau
Christin Lovell
Jenna Nakagawa
Motomi Otsubo
Trey Saito
Ryan Sakai
Yoshihiro Takahashi
Matt Takayesu
Nicolas Wong

APRIL

Ronson Fox
Holly Fujishige
Joseph Furutani
Kristen Higashiyama
Mariana Ho
Brandon Lam
Tari-Lynn Manin
Garrett Matsumoto
Nicole Nishihara
Amy Perez
Ruth Shontell

MAY

Eric Akamine
Kelly Ann Fujioka
Cosmo Hirai
Liqi Huang
Casey Kodama
Ryan Nakagawa
Meagan Nakamoto
Pierson Oyama
Ryan Saito
Colin Shinsato
Reyn Sugai
Megan Tabata
Devon Tsai
Rosten Tsuha
Kristine Okada
Jesse Zhai