



Official Newsletter of the Honolulu
Japanese Junior Chamber of Commerce

SAKURA

SUMMER 2023

President's Message



Aloha HJJCC Members,

Even though it's been just two months since our last newsletter, those particular months were jam-packed with events and some pretty big ones at that! Most notably the long-awaited return of our Japan sister cities to Hawaii, our inaugural HJJCC Dodgeball Tournament – Invitational, and of course, NIJIKAI 2023! We also joined forces with the Honolulu Japanese Chamber of Commerce to tackle an island-wide effort in feeding those in need, learned to make temaki (hand rolls) from sushi chefs, released our application for the 72nd Cherry Blossom Festival Queen Contestants, and elected the 2023-2024 HJJCC Board of Directors who will be officially installed this weekend.

As my one-year term as HJJCC President comes to an end, I would like to say “thank you from the bottom of my heart” to everyone reading this. To our HJJCC members, thank you for coming out to our events and supporting us as a chamber. We would not exist without all of you. I hope you all have fun memories and continue to make many more great memories and friends! To the 2022-2023 HJJCC Board of Directors, thank you SO MUCH for all of your hard work and dedication during these past 12 months. You have all accomplished so much and I'm so thankful for all of the amazing opportunities you've provided our members to network, learn, and give back to their community. Thank you for supporting me, our chamber, and the other organizations we've partnered with throughout the year.

It has been a truly humbling experience and a great honor to serve as your 2022-2023 HJJCC President. Thank you for entrusting me with this role and I hope you all continue to come out and take advantage of the vast opportunities that the chamber continues to offer. While this will be my last message in the newsletter as the HJJCC President, I know we'll still see each other again at upcoming events! 😊

Sincerely,
Sheri Morishige
73rd HJJCC President

Community Development

By Garrett Lau - VP of Community Development



At the beginning of May, a group of our members were able to help out with the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii's Irasshai: Eat, Drink, Kampai! event in volunteering at their food booths, parking attendance, and cleanup. Alongside other volunteer groups, we were able to work together and contribute to a successful event for JCCH.



For the Foodbank National Association of Letter Carriers Food Drive, we partnered with the Honolulu Japanese Chamber of Commerce to assist the Foodbank in unloading, sorting, and boxing donated canned food from all over the island. It was a meaningful event to work together with the HJCC to help the Foodbank in their goal of feeding the hungry.



At the Hawaii Plantation Village's 33rd Annual Obon Celebration, we volunteered at the KC Waffle Dog tent in making and selling waffle dogs to the Obon Celebration attendees. We sold out of all the waffle dogs before the end of the night, making it a success for everyone!



Lastly, we were asked to assist with the Mo'ili'ili Summer Festival in setting up and volunteering at their Concession Stand with other fellow JCI Hawaii. The festival was really crowded and the volunteers worked so quickly fulfilling orders that most of the food items sold out before our shift ended! Afterwards, we walked around the Festival and enjoyed the other exciting activities and booths!

International Relations

By Lori Higashi - VP of International Relations

At the end of June, members of our last sister city chapter from Odawara city in Kanagawa visited for a weekend in Hawaii!

On their first day, we took the Odawara JCs to meet with the Chief of Staff of the Mayor's Office, Sam Moku, and the Executive Director of the Mayor's Office of Culture and the Arts, Makanani Sala. Later that evening we gave them a warm and local style welcome with a sunset dinner picnic at Ala Moana Beach Park. We enjoyed getting to know each other while indulging in delicious Hawaiian food. We continued the night at Pitch Sports Bar playing darts and celebrating their first night in Hawaii.

One of the highlights of the Odawara JCs' trip was participating in a community service project at the Na Mea Kupono Learning Center. They helped to clean within and around a lo'i pond and harvest the water that had spinach growing it in. After a fulfilling morning under the sun, we ate North Shore favorites, Giovanni's garlic shrimp plates and Waiola shave ice.



International Relations Cont.



For the final night, we hosted a Farewell Dinner at Dave & Buster's Pa'ina Hale Showroom where we reignited the Odawara and HJJCC traditional competition of Pantyhose Tug-of-War, played a dancing game organized by the 71st CBF Court, and celebrated the Odawara JC newly weds.

All of us couldn't stop laughing as members went head to head to win the tug-of-war trophy that was brought from Japan. Congratulations to the Odawara JCs who beat our HJJCC participants and earned the rights to take home the trophy back to Odawara. We ended the night playing games in the D&B's game area and made the most of our last evening together.



It was truly a weekend filled with uncontrollable laughter and unforgettable memories with the Odawara JCs. We are excited to continue our sister city chapter relationship for many years to come and make a comeback by bringing home the tug-of-war trophy this November!



Thank you to all of the members who helped organize, attended, and volunteered at our sister city hosting events over the past few months! All of the visiting group members raved about the good time they had with our members and are grateful for our one of a kind, aloha hospitality. We hope you enjoyed meeting and spending time with them as well!



Management Development

By Claire Fukuoka Tsuha - VP of Management Development



NIJIKAI 2023 was back in full force this year, hosting 500 guests for a magical night of food, beverages, entertainment, and festivities at Generations Ballroom at the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii on Friday, June 16!

Guests enjoyed food and beverage samples from 11 local restaurants – Bamboo Catering, Kahai Street Kitchen, Karai Crab, La Tour Café, Morton’s The Steakhouse, Pai Honolulu, Pint + Jigger, Roy’s Waikiki, Shokudo Kaimuki, STRIPSTEAK, and Westman Café – and four local beverage distributors – The Cherry Company, Island Distributors, The Odom Corporation, and RNDC Hawaii. The night was filled with music and laughter, with Ryugen Taiko kicking off the event with an invigorating taiko performance, live music entertainment throughout the night by Micah Ganiron, an astonishing magic show by Shoot Ogawa of The Magical Mystery Show, and the ever-popular photobooth by Expressions Hawaii. The 71st Cherry Blossom Festival Court was also present to facilitate the fan-favorite lucky drawing with an awesome roster of prizes that got many lining up for tickets!



Proceeds from Nijikai support our various HJJCC programs that provide our members with leadership, networking, and professional development opportunities through our Young Business Roundtable, International Relations, Community Service projects, and membership mixer events. A portion of this year's proceeds were also given to support Aloha Harvest, who hosted an informational booth and spoke to guests about their organization's initiatives at NIJIKAI 2023.

A huge mahalo to the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii, Bamboo Catering, our lucky draw donors, and our generous company sponsors: Gold Sponsors – First Hawaiian Bank, Ko Olina Resorts; Silver Sponsors – Austin, Tsutsumi & Associates, G70, KAI Hawaii, WSP; Bronze Sponsors – Friends of HJJCC, Hawaii United Okinawa Association, PITCH Sports Bar, Rising Phoenix Jaycees, Ronald N. S. Ho & Associates, Ross K. Shimokawa Ameriprise! And a special thanks to the hardworking Nijikai Committee, who planned, organized, and executed a successful NIJIKAI event! NIJIKAI 2023 would not have been possible without all your support!

We hope to see you at our HJJCC Installation & Awards Banquet on July 22 at the Generations Ballroom at the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii as we install our 2023-2024 Board of Directors, celebrate and thank our outgoing Board, and recognize a few outstanding HJJCC members for their contributions this year. Until then, kanpai!



Membership Development

By Hailey Takayesu - VP of Membership Development

In May we had our General Membership Meeting and Elections. This was the first one back in-person since 2019 and we had a great time seeing everyone who attended! Various board members shared events that happened over the year, we elected the 2023-2023 Board of Directors, and welcomed new members who had joined within the 2022-2023 fiscal year. Thank you to everyone who came out and congratulations to the 2022-2023 Board of Directors!

This past week, members got the opportunity to learn how to make Temaki (hand rolls) from the sushi chefs at Fukuro. We had tons of fun learning the technique so we can make our own hand rolls at home. Members also got to enjoy a nice pau hana, complete with delicious pupus from Buho. Thank you to Buho and Fukuro for hosting us!

If you're interested in getting involved and helping to plan future Membership events, email 2023-2024 VP of Membership Development, Kacie Hirotsu at membership@hjjcc.com to join the HJJCC Membership Committee!



72nd Cherry Blossom Festival

By Kristin Alm & Garrett Matsumoto - 72nd Cherry Blossom Festival General Co-Chairs

The Cherry Blossom Festival is proudly sponsored by the Honolulu Japanese Junior Chamber of Commerce and is one of the longest, continuously running ethnic festivals in Hawaii. The Festival is an important cultural event in our local community, supported by numerous businesses, generous supporters and dedicated volunteers.

NOW ACCEPTING QUEEN CONTESTANT APPLICATIONS FOR THE 72ND CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL!

Please visit our website at cbfhawaii.com for more information, including a list of eligibility requirements, the application form, and application deadlines.



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.cbfhawaii.com/apply to review the complete list of eligibility requirements and to download the application.

Completed applications must be postmarked by August 1, 2023.

71st Cherry Blossom Festival Queen & Court

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

In May, the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii held their inaugural Irasshai event, full of amazing food, delicious sake, and incredible entertainment! The court sold Golden Tickets for the grand prize - and sold out of tickets! They ended the night with helping close out the silent auction.

the Court attended the HJCC Dodgeball Invitational tournament to support registration, retrieve dodgeballs, and announce the team awards. There was a lot of excitement and laughter! Congratulations to all the teams!



Diamond sponsor KZOO radio conducted an interview with the court to hear updates on their experiences so far and what else they look forward to. It's always a pleasure working with KZOO!

Malama Kipuka, a non-profit with WCIT Architecture and tasked with reactivating public spaces, adopted Mother Waldron park and requested assistance with folding origami flowers for their art installment in honor of Mother's Day. Queen Samantha Marumoto, Princess and Miss Congeniality Jennifer

71st Cherry Blossom Festival Queen & Court Cont.



Kumura, and Princess Amber Yonamine helped passersby with their origami flowers and wrote messages to moms and mom figures!

The 71st CBF queen and court were honored at Honolulu Hale with honorary certificates to commemorate their achievements and wish them well in representing the local Japanese community. Joined by friends and family, the court graciously accepted their certificates and thanked their respective Councilmembers. Mahalo to Councilmember Calvin Say and Chair Tommy Waters for the honor!



At the end of May, the court volunteered with Shinka Hawaii at the Hawaii United Okinawa Association golf tournament at Pali Golf Course. It was a beautiful day to serve up some smiles and make memories!

The next day, the Queen and court were honored to assist the Japanese Women's Society Foundation with their monthly Friendship Tea at Hale Pulama Mau at Kuakini Hospital. Together, they listened to stories from the senior residents and enjoyed a tasty bento lunch. After lunch, they made uchiwa fans and folded origami flowers together. It was a heartwarming time! This particular Friendship Tea was in honor of Mrs. Lillian Yajima, who would sponsor the annual Adopt-A-Mom program for Mother's Day at the facility



In June, Princess Amber Yonamine helped to kick off bon dance season with the first bon dance at Hawaii's Plantation Villages in Waipahu! After helping to take orders at the concession stand, she folded origami with keiki and visitors to the Cherry Blossom Festival tent. She even joined in to dance for a song or two!



71st Cherry Blossom Festival Queen & Court Cont.

Up next was HJJCC's signature Nijikai event at the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii! The court was hard at work selling lucky draw tickets but also enjoyed the incredible entertainment and delicious food. Congratulations on another successful Nijikai!

The Odawara Jaycees paid a visit at the end of June, and the court had a fun time welcoming them at Ala Moana Beach park. They shared Hawaiian food and listened to them share about their hometown! At their farewell party at Dave and Buster's, the court organized a fun and challenging dancing game so that everyone could learn some new moves. There were a lot of laughs - and great dance routines!

In between the Odawara Jaycees' welcome and farewell parties, the court volunteered at Honpa Hongwanji Betsuin's annual bon dance. They helped sell bon dance towels, collect donations, and passed out flyers for CBF Search. They were also able to bring smiles to children's faces by helping with a keiki fishing game and spin-the-wheel. For a few court members, it was their first bon dance (ever!) so they all joined in with the crowd to dance a few songs!

Part of the CBF court experience is choosing and organizing a community service project that is meaningful to each court member. 1st Princess Chirstyn Okuno chose the non-profit Houseless Outreach & Medical Education (HOME) Project and organized a towels and socks drive. The HOME Project is part of the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM), where Chirstyn will be a student soon. We are proud to announce that together with the court and with support from the community, she was able to collect 242 towels and 322 pairs of socks!



71st Cherry Blossom Festival Queen & Court Cont.



Kicking off July was the Moiliili Summer Festival in the Varsity parking lot! It was another packed event, and the court folded origami with visitors to the CBF tent, while sharing about their Festival experience.

The court has also been busy preparing for a trip to sister festival Nisei Week in Los Angeles, as well as the upcoming Goodwill Tour in Japan. Queen Samantha Marumoto has also launched her community service project sewing heart shaped pillows for Queen's Medical Center breast cancer patients. For more information on her project and how you can help, be sure to check CBF's social media!

Young Business Roundtable

By Kacie Hirotsu - Young Business Roundtable Chair

The goal for the '22-'23 fiscal year was to host YBR events that provide key takeaways that members can immediately apply to their professional careers.

To recap this year, we had three successful events. In the fall, we had "Investing: Tips for Better Investment Outcomes" with Gordon Nihei. In the Winter, we had a panel discussion focusing on "Climbing the Corporate Ladder: Tips to Advancing Your Career" with three (3) business leaders in Hawaii: Rob Nelson (President, Finance Factors), Kai'ulani "Lani" Shinsato (Director, Customer Energy Resources Programs, Hawaiian Electric Company) and Mark Nakamoto (Vice President, Sodexo). Lastly, in the Spring, we hosted a workshop called "People Smarts: Strategies to Bridge the Communication Gap" with Cindy Sakai, Co-Founder and Resultant, of Th!nk LLC where she introduced us to a relationship-building tool called DiSC.

For those that attended our events, we hope you implemented one or two key skills and it helped you to level up in your career. Look out for our next YBR next quarter focusing on Public Speaking!

Sports Committee

By Curt Ueda - Sports Director



On May 7th our Sports Committee held our inaugural HJJCC Dodgeball Tournament - Invitational at the Manoa Valley District Park Gym. Co-Chair's Crystine Ito and Rosten Tsuha along with the rest of our Sports Committee worked tirelessly for 6 months to put this brand new event together. The event is a HJJCC member only event with special invites to our fellow Jaycee organizations. We were lucky to have the Rising Phoenix Jaycees join us and are looking forward to having the other Jaycees attend next year.

Congratulations to the winners of the tournament:



1st Place: Da Braddahs & Claire



2nd Place & Best Sportsmanship: Untouchaballs



3rd Place: Dodge Coins



Best Uniform: Rainbow Rampage

1st Place
Da Braddahs & Claire

2nd Place
Untouchaballs

3rd Place
Dodge Coins

Best Sportsmanship
voted by the officials
Untouchaballs

Best Uniform
voted by the
71st CBF Court
Rainbow Rampage

Sports Committee Cont.

This event would not have been possible without the support and generosity of our donors and volunteers. Mahalo to our Donors - Community Planning and Engineering Inc., Rainbow Drive-In, HMSA, PSH Insurance Inc., State Farm, Pint Size Hawai'i, and Island Popper.

Thank you to Tobie Egami for the logo design, Design Pagoda for printing the banners, members of the 71st Cherry Blossom Festival Court, photographer Wayne Wu, all the tournament officials and volunteers.



On June 10th we held our 4th HJJCC Member Golf Outing of the year. Our members socialized and had fun playing 18 holes at the Hawaii Prince 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 The Hall by Beer Lab Hi in Pearlridge Shopping Center.



Japanese Culture: Tanabata (七夕) and Hoshimatsuri (星祭り)

By Kirstie Maeshiro-Takiguchi - Historian

For more than 2,000 years, the Tanabata Festival, or the Star Festival, is held every year on July 7 in numerous cities across Japan. The origins of the Tanabata Festival are traced back to the Chinese Star Festival called the Qixi Festival. It is based on the legend of two star-crossed lovers, a princess of the sky king, Orihime, and a cow herder prince, Hikoboshi. They fell in love and lived along Amanogawa, the Milky Way. Because their love for each other distracted them from their duties, the sky king separated them on the far ends of the Amanogawa and only allowed them to meet once a year on July 7 as punishment. During the Tanabata Festival, people write their wishes on colorful pieces of paper called “tanzaku” and tie them to the bamboo branches. Because of bamboo’s characteristics of growing straight and upwards, it is believed the wishes tied to its branches will reach the heavens. At the end of the festival, the branches along with the wishes are burned so that the wishes will come true.



Happy Birthday!

JUNE

Terrence Cuyo
Kathryn Fujitani
Lori Higashi
Jordan Hiroe
Ashley Ishimura
Bryson Kihara
Jamie Lee
Sheri Morishige
Ashley Rae Nabeshima
Denise Nakamura
Anderson Nguyen
Jennifer Okubo
Brandy Okuda
Jarryd Yasui

JULY

Kristin Alm
Heather Furutani
Marissa Kunsch
Natalie Millon
Reeann Minatoya
Casey Miyashiro
Kurt Nagamine
Kaelyn Okuhata
Mathew Shibata
Jonathan Taketa
Ryan Toyomura
Jadyne Yomono
Troy Zheng

AUGUST

Mason Asato
Danielle Au
Dylan Butay
Jacquelyn Chew
Lauren Dookchitra
Tyler Eguchi
Larsen Ibara
Lori Kim
Kirstie Maeshiro-Takiguchi
Bryant Murakami
Aaron Muraki
Paige Norris
David Ota
Erika Sabraw
Skyler Tengan
Ross Uehara-Tilton
Kelli-Ann Wong
Robert Zane