



Official Newsletter of the Honolulu
Japanese Junior Chamber of Commerce

SAKURA

WINTER 2023

President's Message



Aloha HJJCC Members,

I hope everyone's 2023 is off to a great start! The days are flying by and I can't believe we are more than halfway done with the 2022-2023 fiscal year!

Our Board of Directors have been keeping busy planning new events for the upcoming months. Our Winter Issue of our Sakura Newsletter includes a look back of what we've been up to since our last issue in November including volunteering at Daijingu Temple and the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii's Ohana Festival, taking a class from Dragon Beat Taiko Hawaii, donating two full boxes of toys to Toys for Tots Hawaii while networking at Beer Lab, learning how to climb the corporate ladder during a panel discussion featuring three local business leaders, playing golf and billiards with new and familiar faces, and watching a basketball game with the Honolulu Japanese Chamber of Commerce.

We were very fortunate that travel restrictions were lifted in the last quarter of 2022, which allowed us to go back to Japan on a modified version of our Goodwill Tour. With a smaller group and a shorter trip, we had a jam-packed schedule, but even managed to see our sister cities who we are excited to welcome back to Hawaii this Spring and Summer!

The 71st Cherry Blossom Festival is in full gear, so please don't miss a chance to see them at a public appearance or show your support by purchasing a t-shirt or souvenir book! The 15 Queen Contestants are keeping very busy along with the 70th Court who will pass along their crowns at Festival Ball later this month.

Look out for some exciting things within this issue including some history on a water throwing festival, a new tournament announcement from the Sports Committee, and last but not least, a Save the Date for our annual Nijikai in June! As schedules get busier and busier, I hope you can make it out to some of our events to network with your fellow members, give back to your community, and/or just have fun! Thank you so much for being a member and supporting our organization! ☺

Sincerely,
Sheri Morishige
73rd HJJCC President

Honolulu Japanese Junior Chamber of Commerce

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Community Development

By Garrett Lau - VP of Community Development

We rang in the New Year with Daijingu Temple by volunteering to help them with omamori sales. We spent our New Year's Eve and Day filling and packing orders for many types of omamori charms. It was an experience to see so many people pick up their orders early in the morning after the clock struck twelve. The crowd was never ending as people stood in line throughout the day to pick up their orders and find out how lucky the new year will be through the omikuji fortunes.

The Japanese Cultural Center was able to bring back their Ohana Festival and we were happy to help them out again. We volunteered for parking duties during the day and had a chance to check out the different booths throughout the festival once our shifts were over. It was fun to experience the Ohana Festival in person again and to see all the amazing activities and performances!

Coming up soon for Community Development is the Sullivan Family of Companies Give Aloha Mahalo Event at Turtle Bay and assisting Hawaii Foodbank with one of their food drives! Stay tuned for more opportunities to give back to the community coming your way!



International Relations

By Lori Higashi - VP of International Relations

In November, our International Relations committee and San JC members organized a virtual Onigiri (Rice Ball) Cultural Exchange event for both of our members to participate in an activity together. At the event we shared onigiri recipes, taught each other how to make onigiri, and played games. Since the San JCs were not able to travel to Hawaii this past year, it was a great way to share our Japanese and local Hawaii culture with each other and continue to strengthen our sister city relationship.



GOODWILL TOUR

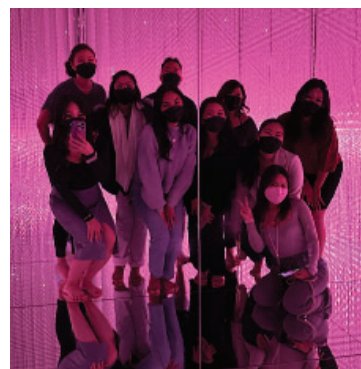
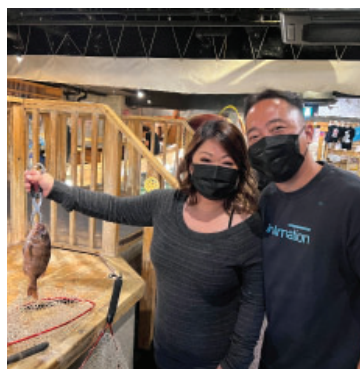


After a three year hiatus, the HJJCC President, Executive Vice President, VP of International Relations, 70th CBF General Co-Chair, and members of the 70th CBF Court had the incredible opportunity to travel to Japan as part of the HJJCC's Modified Goodwill Tour. The court was beaming with excitement from the moment we arrived in Japan. For some court members, it was their first time ever visiting Japan which made the trip especially meaningful. Throughout the trip, we had the opportunity to experience Japanese culture, language, and traditions firsthand. From praying at the Heian shrine in Kyoto, practicing our Japanese speaking with friendly taxi drivers, to learning about the rich history of each city — it was truly an unforgettable experience that helped each of us deepen our connection to our Japanese heritage.

TOKYO

The trip started in the beautiful and lively city of Tokyo. We spent our first full day visiting sponsors. Ms. Nakano welcomed us at Japan Airlines (JAL) and shared with us her love for the Big Island and different Japanese foods. Later we met Mr. Ouchi and Mr. Yazawa from JTB who we spoke to about tourism and Japanese New Year's traditions in Hawaii. It was so special to meet our sponsors and express our gratitude for their continued support. For lunch we visited the Japan Sakura Foundation (JSF), where we were greeted by their Sakura Court members and the 70th CBF Court performed a hula for the luncheon attendees. Despite the language barrier and some having never traveled to Hawaii, they treated us with a comforting aloha spirit and hospitality. We also had the chance to meet Mr. Hosoda, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and Japan Sakura Foundation Chairman. While visiting the Speaker's residence, we discussed the relationship between Hawaii and Japan, and learned about the variations of cherry blossoms.

On our free time, we fished for our dinner at Fishing Restaurant Zauo, took many pictures walking through the teamLabs Planets museum, ate to our hearts' content at Tsukiji Fish Market, and did lots of shopping!



KYOTO

Next stop, Kyoto! Right when we arrived in Kyoto City, we were in awe of the perfect balance of well-kept historic monuments mixed with a modern city. Our group was greeted by Watabe Wedding Company, one of our generous sponsors who helped coordinate our Kyoto trip. Watabe Wedding President Tani joined us for a day of official visits which began with meeting the Governor of Kyoto, Mr. Nishiwaki. While taking a group photo, we taught Governor Nishiwaki how to shaka. After, we met the Deputy Mayor of Kyoto, Mr. Sakakoshi who recommended places to sightsee throughout Kyoto. We ended our first day in Kyoto by visiting Watabe Wedding's headquarters and each of the Court members were dressed in special wedding kimonos of vibrant colors and ornate designs.

The following day, our group explored the historic and cultural scenes of Kyoto with the help of our MK drivers. We visited beautiful sites, temples and shrines including the Arashiyama bamboo grove, Kitano Tenmangu, Kinkaku-Ji, Tenryuji Temple, and Kiyomizu Dera. We also made our way to the bustling Nishiki Market where we bought trinkets, kanzashi, and snacks. Our group felt completely immersed into Japanese culture and history. It was truly a remarkable visit that we're so grateful for!





To our pleasant surprise, it just so happened that all of our sister cities were also in Kyoto attending a national JCI convention. It's been over three years since we've last seen them on the Goodwill Tour in 2019. We were so happy to briefly meet with them in between their events. We look forward to seeing them again real soon when they come to visit this spring!

HIROSHIMA

Our day trip to Hiroshima began with a visit to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, where we learned about the city's history and the disastrous impacts of nuclear war. The artifacts and firsthand accounts painted a picture of this tragedy and the importance of continuing to learn and share the history. The Court then hung the 1,001 cranes we folded to symbolize the friendship between Japan and Hawaii. We registered our cranes and wrote a message of peace and aloha to submit to the database. Before making our way back to Kyoto, our group indulged in okonomiyaki — a savory pancake dish that Hiroshima is well-known for. A few of us enjoyed oyster okonomiyaki which is a mixture of Hiroshima specialties. While a short visit, Hiroshima was such a special place to visit and we're grateful for the opportunity to learn about an important part of our history.



International Relations Cont.

After three long years, we are excited to welcome our sister cities back to Hawaii this spring! Kobe JCI will be visiting at the end of March, San JCs will be visiting at the beginning of April, and Odawara JCs will be visiting in June. The International Relations committee will be diligently planning an aloha filled itinerary to show the sister chapters our local hospitality! These exchanges are valuable experiences for all of our sister city and HJJCC members. Even though there may be a language barrier, it does not stop us from having fun and making long lasting memories.

If you are interested in joining the International Relations committee to help plan and participate in the sister city hosting, please email Lori at international.relations@hjjcc.com.

SAVE THE DATE

HJJCC

二次会
NIJIKAI
2023

いらっしやいませ!

FRIDAY, JUNE 16, 2023 | 6:00PM - 9:00PM
GENERATIONS BALLROOM AT THE JAPANESE CULTURAL CENTER OF HAWAII

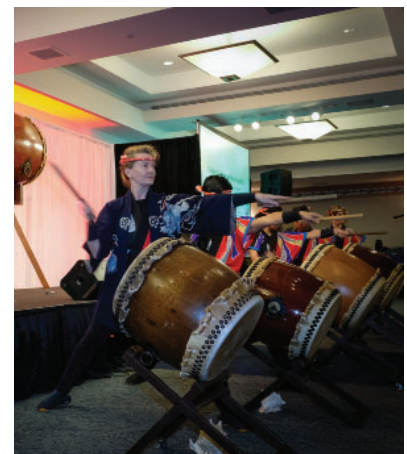
71st Cherry Blossom Festival

By Heather Furutani - 71st Cherry Blossom Festival General Chair

あけましておめでとうございます or Happy New Year! On Sunday, January 15, 2023, the 71st Cherry Blossom Festival officially kicked-off and held Opening Ceremonies at the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii's New Year's Ohana Festival. We are so grateful to the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii for allowing us to host our Opening Ceremonies after a two year hiatus of their annual New Year's event.

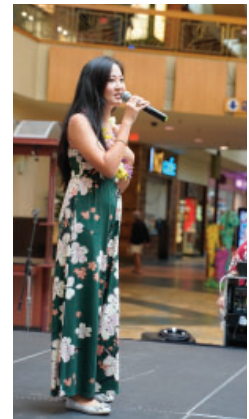
During our event we had a beautiful blessing by Reverend Akira Okada, thank you Reverend Okada for your support of the Cherry Blossom Festival and bringing us luck for this upcoming Festival year. The program began with an electrifying performance by the Taiko Center of the Pacific. We were so happy that Consul General Yutaka Aoki and his wife Mrs. Aoki were able to join us for our Opening Ceremonies as well as say a few words. The 70th Cherry Blossom Festival Court made an appearance and Queen Shari Nishijima said a few words to kick off the 71st Festival. Then the moment everyone was waiting for, the big reveal and introduction of our 15 71st Cherry Blossom Festival Queen Contestants.

Thank you to all the Sponsors, Donors, Honorary Advisors, Instructors, and Festival supporters who joined us for our 1st event of the 71st Cherry Blossom Festival.



71st Cherry Blossom Festival Cont.

The 71st Cherry Blossom Festival Public Appearances kicked off at Pearlridge Center last month. We had an exciting Judo demonstration by Hawaii Kaikaku Judo Club and got to learn more about our Queen Contestants as they answered questions about their hobbies, education, and occupation. Our second Public Appearance which was held at Windward Mall where Cara Tochiki amazed the audience with her musical talent of singing and Queen Contestants answered various cultural questions.



Next, the Contestants made an appearance at Kahala Mall. The program began with an energizing kendo demonstration by the students of Kenshikan Kendo Club. The winners of the annual Cherry Blossom Festival Haiku Art Contest, sponsored by the Japanese Women's Society Foundation (JWSF), were recognized and awarded by JWSF President Lori Fujikawa-Casey. Applicants had to write an original haiku, the Japanese style of short-form poetry, and artwork that reflected this year's theme, Tsunagu. The Queen Contestants showcased their poise and critical thinking skills as they answered pertaining to international, national, and local current events.

71st Cherry Blossom Festival Cont.



Our fourth Public Appearance was at Royal Hawaiian Center and Nishikawa Minokimi performed an elegant Nihon Buyo number. This time the impromptu questions were not focused on one category. The Queen Contestants were kept on their toes and asked a mix of questions.

Join us for our final Public Appearance at Ala Moana Center Stage on Sunday, March 5 (3:00-4:00 PM) for the last chance to see and learn more about the 15 Queen Contestants.

Contestant Reception was a fun event where contestants and guests could let loose. The event was held at The District, where the 70th Court created a series of different games for the Contestants and HJJCC Members to participate in. We also had an array of lucky draw prizes for our guests to win! At the end of the formal program, attendees took to the dance floor and sang along to pop songs played by the DJ.



71st Cherry Blossom Festival Cont.



Our annual Golf Tournament was at Pearl Country Club, golfers of all different levels enjoyed as some call it a 'Party on the Course.' The day was filled with entertaining games and indulging in delicious food and refreshing drinks from local favorite eateries and bars. We ended the tournament with an awards banquet where the 70th Court pulled lucky raffle tickets and awarded prizes to the teams.



Next on the Festival's calendar is the culminating event of the 71st Cherry Blossom Festival, Festival Ball. All the hard work the Queen Contestants have been putting in since September will be shown during this evening, which will include a Taiko number, Western phase, and Eastern phase. The 71st Cherry Blossom Festival Queen and Court will be selected during this event. Our Golf Tournament and Festival Ball are both sold out events.

For more information on how to purchase a commemorative souvenir book or Festival t-shirt (design on following page), please check out our website www.cbhawaii.com. Thank you for your continuous support and we look forward to seeing you at the final events of the Festival!

71st Cherry Blossom Festival Cont.



Created by the 71st Cherry Blossom Festival T-Shirt Chair and HJJCC Director, Tobie Egami, the inspiration for the t-shirt design was pulled from a mizuki knot tying. Inspired by this year's theme and it's meaning of "lasting connections", we wanted the design to reflect on the connections we make through the festival and how each of our lives are interwoven with one another from the moment we meet.

The knot displayed is an "*ume-musubi*" knot, "ume" or "plum" flowers are often celebrated as a protective charm against evil, the trees are very resilient, thriving in all climates, from inner city parks to remote frosty mountain tops. A wonderful reminder that happiness and compassion can thrive and bloom in even the harshest conditions. The three cords used in the knot symbolize the past, present and future, allowing us to look back on the relationships and connections that are at the foundation of this long lasting tradition. The relationships that the Queen Contestants are building through this festival today as they go through this journey with one another, and the connections that will be made as this legacy continues on.

The Japanese characters on the back translates to "let us walk hand in hand", may we continue to walk together through each of our journeys through life.

Available in sizes S-3XL.

Membership Development

By Hailey Takayesu - VP of Membership Development

Members got the opportunity to try their hand at taiko in November thanks to Dragon Beat Taiko Hawaii who offered a private workshop. During the workshop, Nakai Sensei taught members various rhythmic patterns and performance techniques. Members even got to play a few songs together, taking turns at the different sections of the song.

In December, members got into the holiday spirit with our “Hoppy” Holidays mixer at BeerLab Hawaii. Partnering with the Community Development’s Toys for Tots drive, members were able to enjoy two 8-oz. beers with a donation of a toy. We were able to catch up with fellow members, play some fun holiday themed games and drink some great beer! Thanks for BeerLab Hawaii for hosting and thank you to all our members and guests who donated. Stay tuned for more events coming your way in 2023!

If you’re interested in getting involved and helping to plan future Membership events, email membership@hjjcc.com to join the HJJCC Membership Committee!



70th Cherry Blossom Festival Queen & Court

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

The 70th Cherry Blossom Festival Court enjoyed an eventful holiday season by giving back to the community and being immersed in their Japanese culture! With the spirit of giving in mind, the Court partnered with the Blood Bank of Hawaii to host a Blood Drive at Windward Mall. In Hawaii, we need more than 200 blood donors every day! The blood drive was a huge success as the Court welcomed and thanked the many blood donors that signed up to give blood that day. Then to kick off the busy holiday shopping season, the Court volunteered at the Hawaii United Okinawa Association's Annual Holiday Craft Fair. They welcomed eager shoppers and helped direct the crowds!



In November, the Court also volunteered at Daijingu Temple of Hawaii to help pack and mail out Omamori, Japanese amulets that provide good luck and protection. These were pre orders for Daijingu's New Year's Omamori sale. It was nice to see that the Japanese tradition of displaying Omamori during the New Year was not only being practiced throughout Hawaii but even in the mainland!



The Court enjoyed learning more about Japanese culture when they joined the HJJCC and San JC's virtual Onigiri (Rice Ball) Cultural Exchange event! Members shared their favorite types of Onigiri and learned different ways of making Onigiri, like Yaki Onigiri! The Court enjoyed being able to connect with our sister chapters for the first time since being crowned and they look forward to meeting them when they come to visit in March!



70th Cherry Blossom Festival Queen & Court Cont.

In December, the Court helped Family Programs Hawaii with their 24th Annual Holiday Party for children and families in care. Family Programs Hawaii is a non-profit organization dedicated to maintaining the well-being and safety of children in care. The theme this year was “You are amazing” to remind each child they matter! The Court enjoyed being able to make this event special for all the children.

In January, to help kick off the New Year with good luck and protection, the Court returned to Daijingu Temple of Hawaii to help with their in person Omamori Sale! It was such a delight to see all the eager visitors line up for their annual blessing and purchase Omamoris to prepare for the New Year!



The 70th Court was happy to help kick off the start of the 71st Cherry Blossom Festival with our Opening Ceremony held at the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii's New Year's Ohana Festival. Good luck to the 71st Contestants as they begin this wonderful journey!



Young Business Roundtable

By Kacie Hirotsu - Young Business Roundtable Chair

On December 8th, we had our second Young Business Roundtable (YBR) event “Climbing the Corporate Ladder: Tips to Advancing Your Career” with an in-person panel discussion 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). Our guest panelists provided insight on how they climbed the corporate ladder, adversity they had to overcome, people who played an instrumental role in their professional career, and advice on how we can advance our own careers as emerging professionals.

After the panel concluded, the guest speakers networked with our members in small groups which allowed individuals to ask questions that could relate directly to their career. This gave our members the opportunity to connect with the executives on a personal level and leave with tangible takeaways that he/she can implement into their own professional development.

Thank you to everyone who attended our second event! Our next event is coming up on Wednesday, March 15th, 2023. You’ll receive insight on your communication style, strategies to bridge the communication gap, and how to strengthen relationships. Hope to see you there!



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 three events, Networking and Billiards, HJJCC Member Golf Outing Round 2, and the HJJCC/HJJCC UH Basketball Joint Mixer.

Networking and Billiards was held on December 1 at Hawaiian Brian's. Members and guests were able to enjoy a night of competition and fun playing pool on the six reserved tables.

Our 2nd HJJCC Member Golf Outing was held on December 9. Our members socialized and had fun playing 18 holes at Pearl Country Club. We had prizes for the closest to the pin on all par 3's and also for the four low net scores with handicaps.

The HJJCC and HJJCC UH Basketball Joint Mixer was held on January 26 at the Stan Sheriff Center on the UH Manoa campus. Members were able to socialize with the HJJCC members as well as enjoy the food and drinks in the UH hospitality room. Once the game started, we were able to go up to the arena and enjoy the game.

Keep an eye out for our Inaugural HJJCC Dodgeball Tournament in May!

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: Daito Water Throwing Festival (大東大原水かけ祭り)

By Kirstie Maeshiro-Takiguchi - Historian

Throughout the year, festivals occur across Japan to pray for prosperity, ward off bad spirits, and show gratitude to ancestors. The Daito Ohara Mizukake Matsuri has been a traditional festival in Ohara, Iwate Prefecture, and is considered one of the most eccentric festivals in Japan because it is held in the coldest month of the year. Due to the Edo Castle Fire in 1657, this festival was created to pray for fire prevention and protection. For 350 years it has been a tradition for men of 25 and 42 years old, unlucky yakudoshi years for men, to bravely run half naked through the streets while being splashed with cold water by people along the roadside. The water symbolizes purification and acts as protection during their yakudoshi year. As the participants run, they pray for good health and safety for themselves and their families.



Happy Birthday!

NOVEMBER

Ashley Gabriel
 Brandon Sakata
 Dane Sako
 Elijah-Anakin Shintaku
 Eric Imada
 Jason Sugibayashi
 Justin Muraki
 Kailey Wong
 Kaleen Terayama
 Kelli Kimura
 Mika Morigawara
 Traci-Ann Kobayashi

DECEMBER

Ashley Katsuda
 Chelsea Okamoto
 Curt Ueda
 Gina Maeda
 Jolyne Kurihara
 Joseph Peters
 Justin Akai
 Kaydi Onaga
 Kevin Ching
 Koji Yoneyama
 Leighton Ota
 Mark Saiki
 Matthew Minaai
 Sean Rodan
 Taylor Date
 Victor Pyun

JANUARY

Allen Komori
 Christopher Anjo
 Jaylin Petersen
 Jayrald Rabago
 Korey Tsubota
 Kristyn Katayama
 Scott Motobu
 Shelly Imamura
 Tyler Oya

FEBRUARY

Andrew Pang
 Ariel Lee
 Cara Kagawa
 Cindy Koge
 Claire Fukuoka
 Hailey Takayasu
 Kelcie Nagata
 Kennet Winden
 Thomas Yamaoka
 Terrence Kawano