

SAKURA

FALL 2023



AARON MURAKI

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Aloha HJJCC Members!

I am honored to serve as the 74th President of the Honolulu Japanese Junior Chamber of Commerce. The HJJCC has helped me grow personally and professionally through community engagement and I am forever grateful for those experiences. The HJJCC has given me so many opportunities to succeed and now it is my turn to give back.

We started the new fiscal year running, with our Board of Directors jumping into events right away! Our Community Service committee had a very busy Obon season and averaged two to three events per month during the summer. We also held membership mixers, a golf outing and our first quarter Young Business Roundtable. We have a lot more events coming up, such as our 72nd Cherry Blossom Festival events and appearances, hosting our Japan sister cities, and our annual Nijikai event will have some very exciting updates!

I would like to thank our Board of Directors and their committee members for sacrificing their time to help plan all these events. I am truly grateful! Through their hard work and dedication, we are able to engage and grow our membership.

I am very excited for this year, and we hope to see all of you at our upcoming events. We truly have the best members, and we will continue to work hard for you! If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly at president@hjjcc.com.

Mahalo!
Aaron Muraki
74th HJJCC President



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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

BY DAVID TORIGOE, VP OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

“And we can’t stop, and we won’t stop.” -Miley Cyrus. Our Community Development Committee has created many opportunities for members to give back to the community with fun and fulfilling events so far this year.

In the month of July, we helped out with three events. The first event was the 2023 Dragon Festival where we helped the Honolulu Chinese Jaycees and Chinatown 808. We refereed the Dragon Boat Land Race and supervised the keiki activity tent. The next event was a two-night volunteer effort helping the Haleiwa Jodo Mission with their bon dance. The first night we set up the tents and lights for the bon dance and prepared the teri beef for cooking. The second night we assisted with the drinks at the concession stand as well as sold items at the merchandise stand. Lastly, we greeted government, business, cultural, educational, and civic leaders from Japan at the airport for the 2023 JASH Sister Summit, “The Ties that Bind.”

In August, we helped out the Waipahu Soto Mission with their bon dance. We prepared and ran food and cashiered at the concession stand for both nights. The next event was the 19th Annual Korean Festival, where we had the opportunity to run the keiki games and assisted some of the food and drink vendors. To wrap up the month of August, we helped with the Inaugural Megabon event put on by JCI Honolulu and Hawaii Todaiji at Aloha Stadium. At this event, we directed cars to their respective VIP, vendor, and volunteer parking stalls.

To start off the month of September, we helped the Hawaii United Okinawa Association with admissions alongside Shinka at the 41st Okinawan Festival. The next event was the Kapahulu Center Matsuri. We ran the keiki games and prepared chicken plates. To wrap up September, we had the opportunity to help at the Hawaii Plantation Village Harvest Festival. We made and sold KC Waffle Dogs with the help of owner, Dayton Asato.

On behalf of the Community Development Committee, thank you for volunteering. We will continue to plan more fun and fulfilling community service events this winter. Hope to see you all there!

If you are interested in joining the Community Development Committee where you can plan some of our upcoming Community Service events or have an event that needs volunteers in the future, reach out to me at community.service@hjjcc.com.



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

BY KIRSTIE MAESHIRO-TAKIGUCHI, VP OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

One of the notable programs the HJJCC has to offer is International Relations (IR). We are very fortunate to have relationships with five sister chapters in Japan: The Kobe Junior Chamber (JC), Odawara JC in Kanagawa Prefecture, Kurashiki JC, Kojima JC, and Tamashima JC in Okayama Prefecture (collectively known as the San “3” JCs). These relationships, which were formed by members of our organizations almost 50 years ago, give our organizations the opportunity to celebrate the similarities and differences in our cultures as well as help the international relationship between Hawaii and Japan continue to grow.

Every year, our organizations strengthen our bond and sister chapter relationship through an exchange of hospitality and culture. In the fall, HJJCC members along with members of the Cherry Blossom Festival Court, travel to Japan on a two-week Goodwill Tour to visit our sister chapters in their hometowns. From the moment we land in Japan or walk off the trains, we are welcomed like family by our sister chapter members. During the 2–3-night stay in each sister chapter city, we are able to strengthen our friendship with each other while experiencing the city’s unique culture, lifestyle, and food. Another purpose of the Goodwill Tour is for the HJJCC and Court to visit our many CBF sponsors and thank them in person for their support and generosity over the years.

In the spring, each sister chapter visits Hawaii, and our International Relations Committee plans an aloha-filled itinerary from the moment they arrive that showcases our local hospitality. We try to give our visiting JC members a fun and different experience of Hawaii that they might not typically do as a regular tourist. Whether we are visiting our sister chapters in Japan, or they come to see us in Hawaii, these opportunities of bonding and fellowship transcend language barriers and are valuable memories and friendships that will last a lifetime.

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

MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT

BY ERIC IMADA, VP OF MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT

On July 22, 2023, the incoming HJJCC Board of Directors hosted VIPs, family, friends, and guests, at our annual Installation Banquet held at the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii Generations Ballroom.



MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT (CONT'D)

Shari Nishijima, our emcee and 70th Cherry Blossom Festival Queen, began by recognizing the distinguished guests in attendance, including consulate dignitaries, sister-city chapters, Japanese and Okinawan affiliate organizations, fellow chambers, and the 71st CBF Court. In addition, we were fortunate to have six past HJJCC presidents in attendance. Mahalo to all who were able to join us in installing our 2023-2024 Board of Directors!

After rousing kanpai toasts led by Kurt Nagamine and Masato Itoh, JCI USA President, Nate Martin, was invited onstage to install our 2023-2024 HJJCC Board of Directors. After the brief ceremony, the gavel was then passed from now-Chairman of the Board, Sheri Morishige, to the newly installed 74th HJJCC President, Aaron Muraki.

Tobie Egami gave the invocation and blessed the food so that all guests could enjoy the delicious buffet dinner. Following dinner, Sheri gave her outgoing president's message that reflected on her time as the 73rd HJJCC President. She, along with the 71st CBF General Chair, Heather Furutani, then took time to recognize individual members for their dedication, commitment, and contributions to the organization.

Sheri awarded Heather with the Director of the Year award, and David Torigoe with the Member of the Year award. It was then Heather's turn to recognize the 71st CBF Steering Committee Member of the Year. She awarded it to two individuals as co-Members of the Year: Garrett Matsumoto and Brianna Yamada. Congratulations to all the award winners and thank you for your outstanding service to the HJJCC and Cherry Blossom Festival!

Next, we recognized our graduating member in attendance, Masato Itoh. Thank you, Masato, for all of your contributions to the HJJCC over your years of membership!

Finally, Aaron Muraki took the stage and delivered his first address as the 74th HJJCC President. He expressed his gratitude to those that came before him and spoke of his origins with the HJJCC, his commitment to the members and the organization, as well as his goals for the year. His heartfelt and sincere speech concluded the night, but not before we invited past-President, George Takase, to the stage to guide us through the ceremonial tejiime to end the program in true HJJCC fashion.



Mahalo to all of the VIPs, guests and HJJCC members who were able to join us for a wonderful evening, and congratulations to 74th President, Aaron Muraki, and the 2023-2024 Board of Directors!

MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

BY KACIE HIROTSU, VP OF MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

To kick off the '23-'24 fiscal year, the HJJCC assisted with hosting Anne Namba's Fashion Show at her store on Kamani Street. The 71st Cherry Blossom Festival Court was invited to model and highlight Anne's newest collection while guests enjoyed the show and had light refreshments. After the show, members and guests got a chance to shop around the store, try on her beautiful designs, and purchase her new collection firsthand. Due to covid, we didn't have this event for the past couple of years, so we were excited to bring it back!

In September, HJJCC members and guests had the opportunity to shop at always a.line after hours! They had access to a special discount of 25% off their entire purchase, as well as a surprise gift if they spent over \$200. In addition, always a.line invited Phases Hawaii to do a jewelry pop-up during the shopping event.

After everyone was done shopping at always a.line, members went upstairs and got together to pau hana at The Social Honolulu. We reserved an entire section of the restaurant so members could network, enjoy delicious pupus, and connect over refreshing drinks.

Both Anne Namba and always a.line are Cherry Blossom Donors so we are very thankful and appreciative of all the support to our organization!

Don't miss out on our next membership event! We are collaborating with the Community Development committee to put on our annual Toys for Tots event at Beer Lab HI. Be sure to check your email for the details!



72ND CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

BY KRISTIN ALM AND GARRETT MATSUMOTO, 72ND CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL CO-GENERAL CHAIRS

The Cherry Blossom Festival is a project of the Honolulu Japanese Junior Chamber of Commerce and holds the honor of being one of the longest, continually running ethnic festivals in Hawaii. Over the last 72 years, the Festival has enriched the lives of many young women of Japanese ancestry. The Queen Contestants are given the opportunity to connect with their Japanese heritage, develop both personally and professionally, and make lifelong friendships as well as memories that will last a lifetime.

This year's theme is 思いやり "Omoiyari," which translates to showing consideration, compassion and thoughtfulness towards others. Omoiyari inspires us to be kind to others and to be respectful of everything around us. Given everything happening across the world, we must remember that compassion helps uplift others and the community at-large through the difficult times in life. The Festival would not be possible without the support and generosity of our sponsors, donors, steering committee, volunteers, and supporters who are dedicated to continue the mission of the Festival and the perpetuation of Japanese culture.

The journey of our Queen Contestants has just begun, and we are very excited for them to learn more about their Japanese culture and heritage, and about themselves. They've attended a variety of cultural classes including Kendo, Ikebana, and Calligraphy with many more to come over the next several months.

If you're interested in learning more about the Cherry Blossom Festival or want to support the 72nd year, visit our website www.cbfhawaii.com for event details and follow us on Instagram and Facebook @cherryblossomfestivalhawaii.



Save
THE
Date

Opening Ceremonies (JCCH Ohana Festival) - January 13, 2024

Contestant Public Appearances:

Public Appearance #1 - January 20, 2024

Public Appearance #2 - January 27, 2024

Pearlridge Center - February 3, 2024

Ala Moana Center - February 25, 2024

Golf Tournament at Hawaii Prince Golf Club - February 9, 2024

Contestant Reception at The District - February 17, 2024

Festival Ball at Sheraton Waikiki - March 16, 2024

71ST CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

BY GINA MAEDA, 71ST CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL QUEEN'S ADVISOR

In July, the 71st CBF Court helped to celebrate the new 2023-2024 HJJCC Board of Directors at the annual Installation Banquet at the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii. It was a beautiful evening of awards, kanpai, and memories! Congratulations to all the awardees and the freshly installed Board of Directors!

August was another busy month! The court volunteered at the Waipahu Soto Mission bon dance alongside HJJCC members in the food concession booth. It was heartwarming to see the outpouring of community spirit at the bon dance, packed full of families and friends enjoying the food and music!

Also in August was a trip to sister festival Nisei Week in Los Angeles. The 71st CBF Court and hospitality committee members felt the aloha spirit from the moment they arrived. After a warm welcome and hearty breakfast, the court enjoyed some shopping at the Americana and Trader Joe's (of course). Later that afternoon, the court was able to visit a special exhibit at the Japanese American National Museum called Ireicho to view a compilation of records of all the Japanese Americans who were interned during World War II. They were also able to place a mark next to family member names in the tome as well as write a note of remembrance for their family. The day concluded with a fun and relaxing welcome dinner at Terasaki Budokan!

Day 2 started with an incredible breakfast hosted by the 2022 Nisei Week court's parents. They wanted to be sure everyone had energy for the full day ahead. The next stop was tours of the Japanese American National Museum and Go For Broke memorial. After a quick break to browse Little Tokyo, it was time for photos and Coronation. The evening's elegant program was full of music and incredibly talented Japanese American women. Congratulations to the 2023 Nisei Week Queen and Court!

Day 3 was parade day! After a memorable visit to the National Japanese American Veterans Memorial Court and saying mahalo to all the generous hospitality committee members and family at the Aloha Party, the 71st CBF Court joined their sister festivals on floats to celebrate another amazing Nisei Week.

The final full day in LA was spent at Disneyland. The court and hospitality committee members had a magical day making memories together! They even were able to meet Disney Ambassadors and thank the generous donors who made the day possible.



71ST CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL (CONT'D)

After recovering from the whirlwind trip, the court attended the inaugural Megabon at Aloha Stadium. About 15,000 people attended! The court greeted vendors and guests and joined in dancing for a few songs around the yagura. True to its name, Megabon was mega, and it was exciting to be a part of!

To top off summer, the court modeled in a fashion show for Anne Namba Designs! They each showcased different outfits ranging from casual to formal in front of family, friends, and HJJCC members. Anne Namba is a longtime donor and supporter of the Cherry Blossom Festival, and it was a fun way to be able to support her in return!

During Labor Day weekend, the court co-emceed and presented lei to guests at the annual Okinawan Festival at Hawaii Convention Center. It was a fun-filled weekend of food, music, and friends! There was so much to see and learn about Okinawan culture.

Kapahulu Center has been an incredible supporter of the Cherry Blossom Festival and it was wonderful to be able to support them by volunteering at their matsuri! The court helped to run a few keiki games along with HJJCC members.

Thanks to generous donors, the court was able to experience an odori class with Jackie sensei of Nishikawa school. Jackie sensei - or Nishikawa Minokimi - has studied nihon buyo (classical Japanese dance) for over 20 years! The court had a wonderful and educational night together learning the intricate movements to the song Sakura.

71st CBF Queen Samantha Marumoto has been working for the past few months on collecting materials and recruiting help from family and friends to sew heart-shaped pillows for Queen's Hospital's breast cancer program. For her CBF court community service project, she chose to donate the pillows - which are used to comfort breast cancer patients and ease discomfort during treatments - and organized a presentation with the pillows for Breast Cancer Awareness month. The court was also able to meet a cancer patient and hear her story during the presentation. The 71st CBF Queen and Court were also at the Susan G. Komen breast cancer walk at Kapiolani Park to share about the project and distribute sewing patterns. This was a deeply personal project and very fulfilling experience!

There's so much more to come with the holiday season, and the 71st CBF Court is looking forward to participating more with the community!



YOUNG BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE

BY KRISTINE OKADA, YOUNG BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE CHAIR

We hosted our first Young Business Roundtable of the '23-'24 fiscal year - "Networking: Your Game Plan & First Impression" on September 21, featuring guest speakers Will Yeh and Marissa Machida of MANIFEST. The duo are also instructors in Public Speaking and Visual Appearance for the Cherry Blossom Festival.

Will and Marissa shared their expert tips on making a good first impression (it's more than just a firm handshake!), as well as approaching attending social events with a strategic mindset. Event attendees also had the opportunity to network with one another while enjoying pupus from The Edge at 31 North.

Stay tuned for the next YBR! If you would like to get involved in planning a future event, please email me at ybrhawaii@hjcc.com.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

JULY

Kristin Alm
Michael Hamada
Natalie Millon
Reeann Minatoya
Casey Miyashiro
Kurt Nagamine
Heather Omori
Jackson Sayama
Jonathan Taketa
Skyler Tengan
Ryan Toyomura
Jadyne Yomono
Troy Zheng

AUGUST

Mason Asato
Danielle Au
Jacquelyn Chew
Tyler Eguchi
Lauren Horikoshi
Larsen Ibara
John Kalama
Lori Kim
Kirstie Maeshiro-Takiguchi
Bryant Murakami
Aaron Muraki
Shari Nishijima
Paige Norris
David Ota
Erika Sabraw
Ross Uehara-Tilton
Kelli-Ann Wong
Robert Zane

SEPTEMBER

Everett Arakawa
Dylan Butay
Jennifer Ezaki
Kacie Hirotsu
Lauren Holt
Crystine Ito
Jaren Iwasa
Maile Kawasaki
Devan Kwee
Brett Matsumoto
John-David Nako
Tyler Navarro
Nicole Ono
Michelle Ota
Kana Ribultan
Lauren Sugai
David Torigoe
Michelle Tsuda

OCTOBER

Justin Aoyagi
Emily Fukunaga
Sydney Gonzales
Jennifer Higa
Shane Ihara
Chantel Ikehara
Rex Katahara
Kenneth Kim
Colin Lee
Lauren Lee
Jamie Lee
Reid Morihara
Aaron Murai
Erin Shiroma
Kimberly Takata Endo
Evan Tom
Daralyn Yee
Jason Yuasa

SPORTS COMMITTEE

BY CURT UEDA, SPORTS DIRECTOR

The Sports Committee's goal is to create opportunities for members to meet and socialize in a sports-related setting. Since our last newsletter we held one event, our quarterly HJJCC Member Golf Outing at Turtle Bay on Sunday, August 20th. Twenty members made the long drive out to the North Shore and were able to enjoy a day of competition and fun on the course.

Please look out for our upcoming events this year including HJJCC Pickleball on October 25th, our next quarterly HJJCC Member Golf Outing on December 3rd at Mililani Golf Club, and the HJCC/HJJCC Joint Mixer on March 7th for UH Men's Basketball. To conclude the year, our 2nd Annual HJJCC Dodgeball Tournament will be held in May/June of 2024. Stay tuned!

If anyone is interested in being a part of our Sports Committee, please email me at directors@hjjcc.com



JAPANESE CULTURE - FALL IN JAPAN

BY ASHLEY ISHIMURA, DIRECTOR

紅葉狩り (Momijigari) is the time of year when the Japanese maple trees turn red, signaling autumn has arrived. Momiji is the word used for the symbol of Japanese fall when the maple leaves are tinted of red. Koyo is the natural process of the leaves changing color in the fall. The leaves start to turn red towards the middle of September in the north and ends around the middle of December in the south.

Momijigari is a tradition that can be performed in various ways such as walks in the park, hiking, having a picnic under maple trees, and many others. Japanese culture also incorporates momiji in their food. For example, momiji manju and nama momiji are cakes shaped like a maple leaf filled with red bean paste. Just like sakura in the spring, momiji in the fall is also special in Japan because it reminds everyone to enjoy what is given to us before it is gone.

