

President's Message



Aloha HJJCC Members!

The first few months of 2022 sure flew by! Despite Omicron surges earlier in the year, we were still able to hold amazing events safely. We were so fortunate that case counts started to decline and mandates were lifted as we approached perhaps the busiest months of the 70th Cherry Blossom Festival.

I would like to extend a very heartfelt thank you to the Board of Directors and CBF Steering Committee members for organizing all of the great events that you will read about in this issue of the Sakura Newsletter.

We are so excited for all of the events in the works for the next coming months and hope you will join us at these events to meet your fellow HJJCC members for networking and camaraderie. If you have friends that might be interested in joining the HJJCC, bring them out to one of our upcoming events so they can see firsthand what this organization is all about!

Looking forward to seeing you soon and please save the date for the return of our premier fundraising event – Nijikai 2022! If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at president@hjjcc.com.

Sincerely,
Kari Kiyota, 72nd President

SAVE THE DATE!



The poster features a large red sun with cherry blossom branches in the foreground. The HJJCC logo is in the top left. The text reads: 'Honolulu Japanese Junior Chamber of Commerce', '2022 NIJIKAI', 'JUNE 24, 2022 | 6 - 9 PM', and 'ALOHA TOWER MARKETPLACE'. At the bottom, there are illustrations of traditional Japanese buildings and a torii gate. A small text box says 'NIJIKAI IS A 21+ EVENT' and 'hjjcc.com/nijikai'.

Enjoy a night filled with entertainment, food samples from your favorite local eateries, hosted beverages, and more!

Tickets will be available soon so stay tuned by following us on Instagram or liking us on Facebook.

Community Development

By Ross Kohara – VP of Community Development

These last few months were filled with change as our community transitioned from the threat of the Delta variant to the Omicron variant and we remained flexible in our community service opportunities.

In November, we partnered with Aiea Elementary School in an outdoors beautification project. Members worked with the grounds crew on tasks that included weed whacking, hedge and tree trimming, and other outdoor clean-up activities.

With the Omicron variant hitting our community during the winter months, we were still able to provide help to our friends at the Daijingu Temple of Hawaii with their New Year's omamori sale.

In February, we returned to the Hawaii Foodbank to provide them with our support. We partnered with them on a smaller scale activity that included primarily our member volunteers, with a few friends from JCI Hawaii and the Honolulu Chinese Jaycees. We helped to pack 330 emergency food boxes for their Home Isolation Quarantine Food Services Program for individuals having difficulty accessing food and supplies during COVID isolation.



We have our fingers crossed that the major threat of COVID-19 is behind us. As our community transitions to a sense of normalcy, we also have a few volunteer opportunities involving large events on the horizon. We will continue to be on the lookout for new service opportunities and will remain flexible as the environment around us requires. **If you have any organizations or suggestions for future events, or are interested in joining our Community Development Committee, please contact Ross Kohara at community.service@hjcc.com.**

International Relations

By Garrett Lau – VP of International Relations

Although we couldn't visit Japan last year, we celebrated with Kobe JCI again with a Secret Santa gift exchange between our sister city chapters. It was a fun event with a variety of gifts, mutual appreciation, and entertaining presentations! We were

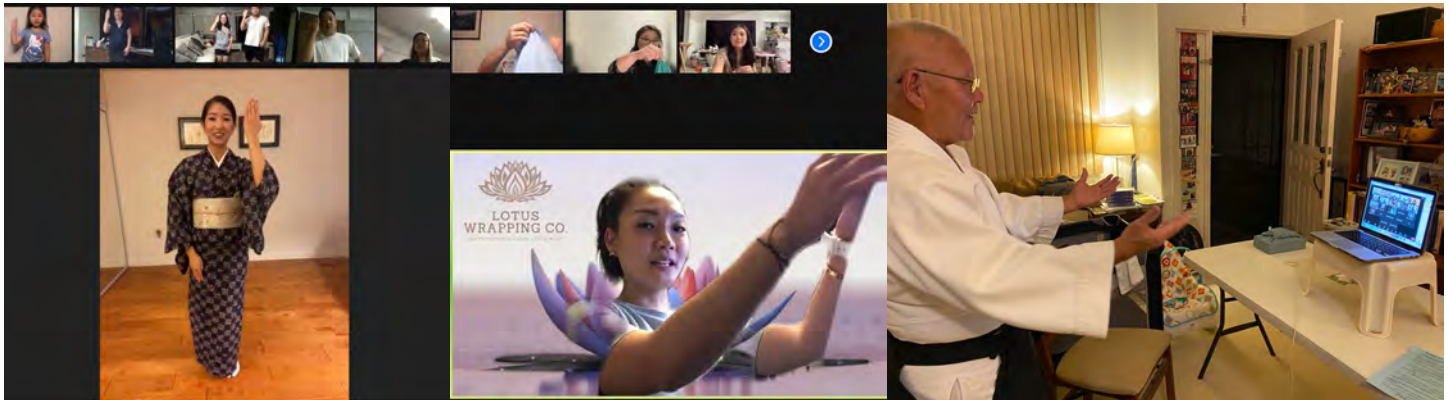


We were so happy to participate with Kobe JCI again. We hope to visit Kobe JCI, San JCs, and Odawara JCI later this year if travel opens up. Here's hoping for a fun year ahead!

Membership Development

By Heather Furutani – VP of Membership Development

In November, we continued to meet virtually in order to keep everyone safe as COVID restrictions were still in place. The Membership Development committee planned a Virtual Bunka No Hi or Cultural Day event. This is a national holiday held annually in Japan on November 3rd for the purpose of promoting culture, the arts, and academic endeavors. During our virtual event we had three different cultural activities. First, Nishikawa Minokimi Sensei taught our members and guests Nihon Buyo, which is a classical Japanese dance. We all enjoyed learning and engaging in this style of dance. Then, Jadyne Yomono of Lotus Wrapping Co. taught us furoshiki or Japanese gift wrapping. Her mission is to offer an elegant gift wrapping solution that is easy, beautiful, and better for the environment. Members and guests learned many different ways to wrap a box with sustainable material. Last, we welcomed Terence Omori Sensei who taught us about Aikido. We learned different types of breathing techniques to help stay calm. We are very grateful to our instructors for teaching us their love of Japanese culture. Thank you Michelle Ota for being our moderator for this event!



The HJCC enjoys giving back to the community during the holiday season and we've supported Toys for Tots for the past few years. We decided to have our first in-person event for Membership Development this fiscal year – our Holidays are Brewing members only event. We are so thankful to Beerlab Hawaii for hosting. Members donated an unwrapped toy or gave a monetary donation towards Toys for Tots. Throughout the night, we enjoyed drinking locally made beer and played various holiday games. It was nice to see people in person and celebrate the start of the holidays together. Thank you to Leighton Ota and Scott Motobu for helping to put on this event!



November and December are the busiest shopping months of the year! As a way to help our members out, we had a few shopping events this holiday season. It was also a great way to support local business in Hawaii. We are very grateful to In4mation and Slashers Hawaii for allowing our members to shop with a 10% discount. Thank you to McCully Bike Shop for giving our members access to a pre-holiday sale with up to 20% off. Ten Tomorrow, who is also a Cherry Blossom Festival Donor, opened up her shop and allowed our members to shop in-person during this special event. Members enjoyed 15% off of Ten Tomorrow and other locally made products from various local vendors.



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Membership Development (Cont.)

To kick off 2022, members had an amazing opportunity to engage in mochi pounding or mochi-tsuki. We are so grateful to the Tenri Cultural Center and the Young Men's Association for taking us step-by-step through the mochi pounding process. Members even got to shape their mochi and enjoy some freshly pounded mochi. It was a great way to experience one of the most popular Japanese New Year's cultural activities.

As COVID numbers started to decrease and restrictions started to loosen, we decided to still keep things safe and be vigilant for our members by having a Picnic in the Park event! This was supposed to be our first event of the fiscal year but got shut down due to the rise in COVID cases back in August 2021. We were so glad we could bring this event back! Members and guests played a photo scavenger hunt game throughout Kapiolani Park, then enjoyed a nice bento lunch from KYM Bento. Afterwards, members played some friendly team games and it was great watching as members got really competitive. We were so happy we could see people in person while still being safe and having fun! Thank you Michelle Ota for checking in our guests and Sheri Morishige for picking up the delicious bentos.

Sake is an alcoholic drink made from fermented rice and can be referred to as Nihonshu in Japanese. We are so blessed that Tama, the owner of Hanale By Islander Sake Hawaii hosted a sake tasting event for our members and guests. We got to try four different types of sake, including a hot sake, while Tama explained the history of sake and different facts about sake in America as opposed to sake in Japan. Tama went above and beyond our expectations by allowing us to eat many delicious dishes during the event. Hanale is located at 25 N. King Street and just opened a month ago. Visit them and try their omakase set.

We look forward to welcoming you to more events in the next few months! If you have event ideas or are interested in getting more involved, please contact Heather Furutani at membership@hjjcc.com.



Young Business Roundtable

By Claire Fukuoka – Young Business Roundtable Chair

On Thursday, January 13, we hosted our second Young Business Roundtable (YBR) session of the fiscal year with a virtual presentation, “Purchasing in Paradise: The Hawaii Real Estate 2021 Recap and 2022 Expectations”, featuring Evan Tom. Evan, a Realtor Associate with Coldwell Banker Realty and a fellow HJJCC member, shared his knowledge and local expertise of the Hawaii real-estate market. Evan discussed the basic principles of investing and things to consider when purchasing property in Hawaii, the state of the current market and the effects of inflation on buying patterns and the local economy, and a helpful summary of 2021 real-estate trends as well as a projection into 2022. Concluding the content-filled session, members got a chance to virtually network in small groups via breakout rooms. Thank you to Evan for sharing your expertise and to all members who attended this session!



Hope to see you at our next YBR event!

Happy Birthday!

DECEMBER

- Kara Iwasaki
- Darren Yoshioka
- Andrew Holt
- Gina Maeda
- Leighton Ota
- Mark Saiki
- Christopher Nakamura
- Joseph Peters
- Andrew Uyehara
- Eryn Kawamoto
- Justin Akai
- Chelsea Okamoto
- Curt Ueda
- Matthew Minaai
- Jolyne Kurihara
- Sean Rodan
- Taylor Date
- Kevin Ching
- Travis Ito
- Victor Pyun

JANUARY

- Scott Motobu
- Jaylin Petersen
- Christopher Anjo
- Allen Komori
- Sheldon Hardin
- Korey Tsubota
- Kristyn Katayama
- Jaylin Petersen
- Mika Nakamoto

FEBRUARY

- Ross Kohara
- Victoria Nakayama
- Garrett Lau
- Nathan Ichiriu
- Thomas Yamaoka
- Terrence Kawano
- Andrew Pang
- Leila Mitsunaga
- Claire Fukuoka
- Kelcie Nagata
- Cindy Koge
- Ariel Lee
- Hailey Takayesu
- Carly Ishihara

MARCH

- Christin Lovell
- Kari Kiyota
- Matt Takayesu
- Kristina Ono
- Nicolas Wong
- Ryan Sakai
- Kayla Ueshiro

70th Cherry Blossom Festival

By Kirstie Maeshiro-Takiguchi and Ruth Taketa
70th Cherry Blossom Festival Co-General Chairs

We welcomed the New Year with our annual Opening Ceremony and official unveiling of the 70th Cherry Blossom Festival Queen Contestants as part of the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii's Ohana Festival Virtual Show. The program was filmed at the beautiful balcony and garden of the Imin International Conference Center. On the same day of the viewing, our HJCC President, Kari Kiyota, General Co-Chairs, and the 69th Court visited Daijingu Temple of Hawaii to receive a New Year's blessing. Reverend Akira Okada performed the blessing ceremony and we presented a tamagushi offering to bring the Festival luck and continued success for the year.

Since Opening Ceremony, the Queen Contestants were busy attending festival events while attending all their cultural classes and professional development training. We were able to have two in-person public appearances at Royal Hawaiian Center and Windward Mall. At the appearances, the Contestants answered impromptu questions to practice their public speaking and critical thinking skills. At the Windward Mall appearance, our winners for this year's Haiku Art Contest were announced. The Japanese Women's Society Foundation (JWSF) sponsored the monetary prize for the Haiku Art Contest and Patricia Matsuo, JWSF President Elect, presented the awards to the winners.

On Valentine's Day weekend, family, friends, and festival supporters enjoyed a fun night of games and dancing at our annual Contestant Reception. This year's "Pretty in Pink" theme was a big hit and many of our guests dressed up in festive Valentine's Day colors. As our first in-person social event, we were so happy to finally come together and enjoy each other's company.

This year's golf tournament was held at Hawaii Prince Golf Course and players took part in entertaining course games, delicious food, and refreshing drinks. The Contestants volunteered throughout the course and cheered on their family and friends as they played.

Our final event in February was our first ever Tadaima Sisterhood Moai co-hosted with the 69th Court. In Okinawa, moai is a group of people meeting with a common purpose together. The 69th Court invited former contestants to join them and the 70th Queen Contestants to make care cards for the residents of Hale Pulama Mau while sharing their contestant experiences with each other.



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70th Cherry Blossom Festival (Cont.)

After months of planning and preparation, we returned to the Sheraton Waikiki Hawaii Ballrooms for the long-awaited Festival Ball. This event was the culmination of the seven months of cultural classes, training, and rehearsal by the Queen Contestants and where the 70th Cherry Blossom Festival Queen and Court was selected by a panel of judges composed of distinguished professionals and leaders in our community.

The program began with a high energy taiko performance accompanied by members of the Kenny Endo Taiko Ensemble. During the Western Phase, the 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. The 69th Queen, Miss Popularity, and Miss Congeniality, Brianne Yamada, and her Court gave a final farewell as their year of service was now coming to an end. At the end of the evening, the 70th Cherry Blossom Festival Queen, First Princesses, three Princesses, Miss Popularity, and Miss Congeniality were crowned. Tamlyn Mika Sasaki was also announced the winner of the Violet Niimi Oishi Scholarship and the award was presented by Dr. Scott Oishi. For twenty years, Dr. Oishi has donated the scholarship award in honor of his mother and the first Cherry Blossom Festival Queen, Violet Tokie Niimi, to help the awardees reach their academic goals. They are selected for their educational excellence, essay submission, and community service involvement.

Congratulations to the 70th Cherry Blossom Festival Queen Contestants for an amazing performance and owning the stage with such grace and confidence. We are very excited to welcome all of them to the sisterhood and CBF Ohana! We would also like to congratulate and thank the 69th Court for their year of service and representing the Festival and HJCC with so much heart and compassion.

As the festival year is drawing to a close, we are truly full of gratitude. The Festival would not be possible without the invaluable contributions from our sponsors, donors, honorary advisors and instructors. Thank you for supporting the Festival and the Queen Contestants this year. Last, but certainly not least, thank you to our HJCC Board of Directors and festival steering committee for their hard work, passion, and dedication. Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, we were able to provide a meaningful experience for the Queen Contestants and have a successful festival year because of your efforts. It has been an honor to work with all of you.

70th Cherry Blossom Festival Queen and Court

(Left to Right)

Miss Congeniality Danielle Emi Au, Princess Taeler Kealohilani Akana, Princess Tamlyn Mika Sasaki, Queen Shari Michiko Nishijima, First Princess Maile Makamae Kawasaki, Princess Jordyn Yukino Valdez, and Miss Popularity Tari-Lynn Yasuko Manin.



Sports Committee

By George Takase – Sports Committee Chair

It feels like ages ago when we had our first and only Sports Committee event of the fiscal year at the Bay View Driving Range in November. It was a sold-out event with members having fun testing their golf skills, meeting new members, and seeing friends for the first time in-person in over a year. Members had so much fun that we extended the room rental an additional two hours and ended the event at 11pm! It was such a fun and successful event that we wanted to keep the momentum going but then the omicron variant hit and we needed to halt all our sports committee events for the past four months. With the mandates coming to an end and cases subsiding, we want to kick-start Sports Committee events to end the last three months of the fiscal year strong.

Our next event will be a joint mixer/networking event with the Honolulu Japanese Chamber of Commerce (HJCC) at the UH versus UC Riverside baseball game on Friday, April 9th at the Les Murakami Stadium. Members will be able to network with HJCC and HJJCC members pre-game from 5:00-6:30pm then cheer on the Rainbow Warriors at 6:35pm. [Click here for additional information on the event.](#)



Japanese Culture

Ikebana

By Kristine Wada – Director at Large



*“The whole universe is contained within a single flower.”
- Toshiro Kawase*

Spring is a wonderful season in which to practice the centuries-old Japanese art of ikebana, or flower arrangement. Also known as “kado”, or “the way of flowers”, ikebana has its roots in Buddhist traditions and evolved into a meditative practice that calms the mind, encourages creative and spiritual expression, and teaches appreciation for the beauty of each season.

To create your own arrangement, gather a vase, clippers, a kenzan (a pad with pins that allow stems to be secured), and seasonal flowers, leaves and branches. Place your kenzan in the vessel and fill with water. Experiment with cutting your branches and flower stems to different heights and placing them at varying angles. Asymmetry creates a sense of movement and liveliness.

Other tips to get started:

- Cut the stems of your flowers under water (this process is called mizukiri) to preserve their freshness.
- Remove leaves and branches below the waterline to discourage bacterial growth.
- Check out floral arrangements online for inspiration!

69th Cherry Blossom Festival Queen & Court

By Kristin Alm Kamakahi – 69th Cherry Blossom Festival Queen & Court Advisor

The 69th Cherry Blossom Festival Court ended their Court year by participating in various community service activities and supporting the 70th Cherry Blossom Festival and the Queen Contestants.

Members of the Court visited Pearl City High School Entrepreneur Class. They shared about the power of networking, about having a culturally embracing mindset, and about how a strong personal brand can elevate an individual. They also helped students develop their “elevator pitches.” It was rewarding to work with future entrepreneurs.

The Court partnered with Sakura Hawaii Alumnae to assist on a video project with Mrs. Yajima. They were so appreciative to be a part of this initiative as Mrs. Yajima is such an inspiration to the Cherry Blossom Festival!

They also explored around our island of Oahu for a weekend. To start, the Court assisted at a beach clean-up with the Waikiki Walls organization at sunrise. While picking up trash at the park and shoreline, they reminisced about the many childhood memories made in Waikiki. It was heartwarming to see how many others volunteered their time to maintain this landmark. It was an educational experience and they now understand the importance of preserving the beauty Waikiki Walls naturally possesses for generations to come.

The Court then ventured to Central Oahu to visit Mari’s Gardens located in the heart of Mililani. Tanya, Production Manager, educated them on landscaping and growing various plants, and allowed them to sample edible plants used to garnish farm to table creations. The Court also participated in a succulent making workshop. It was fun and interesting to learn about how some of their local produce is grown and to support local!

They ventured further up the north shore to The Stables at Turtle Bay for horseback riding. They were able to ride horses into the sunset and explore the terrain around the property. It was a very tranquil experience and the Court enjoyed the beautiful scenery while trying something new - it was the first time riding horses for some!



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69th Cherry Blossom Festival Queen & Court (Cont.)

In the same weekend, the Court had the opportunity to head over to the windward side to Byodo-In Temple located in the Valley of the Temples. They were able to tour the property and learned about this sacred space. The Court also had a chance to feed the fish and spend time walking around the foliage-filled grounds.

The Court wrapped up their weekend on Oahu by visiting the Pearl Harbor National Memorial. They were moved by the rich history of the location and stories shared through the artifacts on display. They learned more about Hawaii and the Japanese-Americans involved in World War II. The Court also had an opportunity to learn about the legacy of the Nisei Veterans through a lesson that they had with Lynn Heirakuji (President of Nisei Veterans Legacy) and they were reminded of what Lynn had shared with them while they were touring Pearl Harbor. The Court also explored the Aviation Museum and participated in a pilot simulator ride. It was fun and educational to explore around Oahu, this place that we call home.

They were also excited to participate with the 70th Cherry Blossom Festival on the Tadaima Sisterhood Moai event in February. The Court went to visit Hale Pulama Mau and donate care cards made at the event. The Court had a wonderful time helping to plan the event and give back to the community.

As the year comes to a close, we are so grateful for all of the hard work, passion and dedication of the 69th Cherry Blossom Festival Court. The Court would also like to share the following message with all of you:



What a wonderful year it has been. We wanted to thank the many individuals who have contributed to make this year one to remember. We were honored to represent as the 69th Cherry Blossom Festival Court and look forward to supporting the Festival's continued success.

Congratulations to the 70th Cherry Blossom Festival Court. We are excited for your upcoming journey!

With gratitude,
Brianne, Taylor O., Motomi, Taylor T. and Shelly

