

Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai Newsletter



Volume VII, Issue 2

2nd Quarter 2018

Fun Times at Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai's Annual Picnic

The Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai's (NYK) annual picnic was held on June 10th at the George Elder Park in Monterey Park. NYK members gathered to enjoy a day of fun with family and friends on a beautiful, warm day.

Emcee **Aki Fukuhara-Vaughn** introduced **Kokoro Taiko** who opened the festivities. Kokoro Taiko was co-founded by former NYK president, **Victor Fukuhara**. The group donates its time and talent to entertain our picnic-goers every year for which we are very grateful!



Kokoro Taiko

NYK president **Richard Fukuhara** welcomed everyone to the picnic and introduced special guests: **Yoshinori Akutagawa** Nanka Kenjinkai Kyogikai president; **Mikio Suyemoto** representing Kats Miyazato, Nanka Fukuoka Kenjinkai president; **Takako Casebeer**, former Nanka Gunma Kenjinkai president; **Yoshitaka Morioka**, former president of Nanka Hiroshima Kenjinkai, representing current president Tak Sorida; and **Yoshikuni Okita**, Nanka Kumamoto Kenjinkai president.

Scholarship Committee Chair, **Arlene Nakamura**, announced this year's scholarship recipients, **Quincey Ai-mei Kawahara** and **Kiana Kazumi Fithian** (see article on page 3).

During lunch, past NYK president **Patrick Seki**, emceed the Karaoke portion of the program. Patrick announced that he now has hundreds of American songs available and urged singers to sign up.

After lunch, members gathered to dance off some calories with *Tanko Bushi* and danced it again to *Uptown Funk*. Arlene then taught everyone how to line dance to *Skinny Genes*. Such great fun!



Mochi Maki

Children were called to gather for the candy toss and then were joined by the adults for the *mochi maki*.

Richard then asked all picnic-goers to assemble under the NYK banner for the annual group photo (see page 4).

Long-time member and volunteer, **Mrs. Yoshiko Kishimoto**, was asked to step forward and was presented a gift of appreciation for making her delicious *kintoki* (red beans) which many have enjoyed over the years (see photo on page 2).

The games were announced and toddlers, teens and adults were directed to the adjoining grassy area where **Larry Fukuhara** hosted foot races, balloon toss games, ball games, the hot daikon game, and the bedsheet folding contest.

(Continued on page 2)

NYK Annual Picnic —(Continued from p.1)

After the races and everyone had cooled down with some delicious sno-cones, the final event, the long-awaited raffle drawing, commenced. The lucky top winners won cash prizes of \$100, \$250 and \$500. There were many winners and no family went home empty handed!

And with that, Richard Fukuhara thanked all those who helped out with the picnic and wished all a wonderful summer!



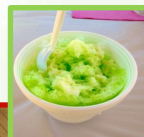
Wakiko Igawa, Yoshiko Kishimoto, Kiyoshi Igawa, and Ayako Fujita.



*Patrick Seki
Karaoke MC*



Photos courtesy of Richard Fukuhara and Steven Tani



Victor Fukuhara (center) and members of Kokoro Taiko help out at the sno-cone station.



VIP Table: NYK president Richard Fukuhara, standing next to former NYK president Henry Yasuda, with Presidents/Representatives from local kenjinkai.

2018 NYK Scholarship Recipients

Each year, graduating high school seniors, who are descendants of Yamaguchi Prefecture, can apply for a scholarship award. This year, two seniors were awarded scholarships: **Quincey Ai-mei Kawahara**, 2018 graduate of Crescenta Valley High School in La Crescenta, and **Kiana Kazumi Fithian**, 2018 graduate of Flower Mound High School, Flower Mound, Texas. Kiana and her family were unable to attend the picnic as she was at her graduation ceremonies in Texas.

QUINCEY KAWAHARA is the daughter of **Robert** and **Martie Kawahara** and the great-granddaughter of **Mokuichi Kawahara** from Ube, Yamaguchi.

Quincey will be enrolling at UCLA in the Fall of 2018 with a major in World Arts Culture/Dance. She also plans to double major in Political Science. Her passion is in dance and she wants to keep that a part of her life, but she would also like to earn an additional degree in political science because “the world of law and social justice interests me.”



Quincey Kawahara (center) flanked by NYK President Richard Fukuhara; parents Robert & Martie Kawahara; and NYK Scholarship Chair, Arlene Nakamura.

Some of the awards Quincey received are the UCLA Regents Scholarship; CVHS PTSA Scholarship; Monte Vista Elementary School Scholarship; Scholar Athlete (highest GPA on Song, 3 years in a row); National Honors Society; AP Scholar; and numerous dance awards.

She was active in the LEO Club (founder/co-president), Varsity Song (captain, co-captain), I Am That Girl (event coordinator), UNICEF (founding officer/secretary), Key Club, and CA Scholarship Federation.

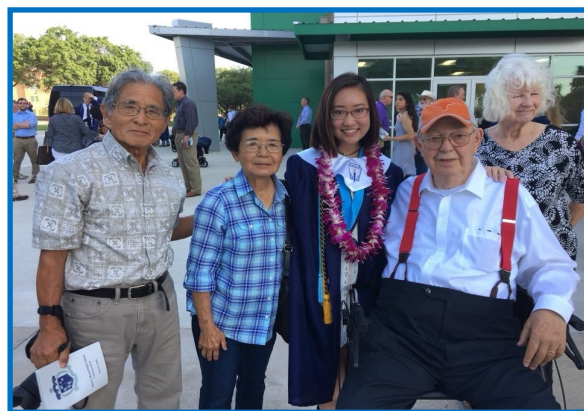
Following are excerpts from the essay portion of Quincey's application:

“A trip to Yamaguchi Prefecture would be more than just seeing pretty sites, but it would be a chance for me to get in touch with my roots. Because of my interest in finding more about my family history, I would love to visit the town my great grandfather grew up in, Ube. If I get the opportunity to travel to Yamaguchi Prefecture, seeing beautiful sites, learning about the history and culture of Japan, and digging into my own family history would be at the top of my to-do

list. Visiting Japan, specifically Yamaguchi Prefecture, is something I would like to do in the future. I think traveling to the place where my relatives were from is an important aspect in understanding more about my own history. Being able to see varying sites in Yamaguchi Prefecture would be the best way to fully experience it in its truest form.”

KIANA FITHIAN is the daughter of **Chris** and **Ellen Fithian** and the granddaughter of **Kaiji** (Iwakuni, Yamaguchi) and **Toshiko Katsumoto**.

She plans to enroll at the University of Texas at Austin in August 2018. Her major will be in computer science with a goal of receiving her masters degree in that field.



Kiana Fithian (at her graduation ceremonies in Flower Mound, Texas) with her grandparents, Kaiji & Toshiko Katsumoto and Mr. & Mrs. Fithian.

Her awards and affiliations included: National Merit Commended Scholar; AP Scholar with Honor; Eastman Award; Jammin Jag Member of National Honor Society; Science National Honor Society; Mu Alpha Theta, and English Honor Society. She was the Co-President of Great Thinker's Society, and received the FWMTA Senior Scholarship.

Kiana was able to visit Yamaguchi for 3 weeks and here is a portion of her application essay:

“It was the summer after my second grade year in school. I had been surprised by my grandparents with a trip to Japan. I was beyond thrilled when I found out I would be traveling to the country where my ancestry is from.”

While visiting a school in Yamaguchi with her cousins, Kiana was “able to immerse myself in that school which allowed me to connect myself with my racial background. I have lived in a growing town just north of Dallas, Texas where the population is predominantly white. I have had very few Asian friends, with none of them having a Japanese background. I never really understood my background or embraced it. Traveling to Japan and visiting the city where my grandfather was raised showed me a whole other world that I was connected to by my blood! I am so thankful that I was able to finally embrace my Japanese ancestry and take that with me as I have grown up.”

More Picnic Photos



*Thank You to Our Volunteers at the 2018 Picnic!***Kokoro Taiko**

Victor Fukuhara, Joann Matsunaga, Greg Matsuura, Katrina Shibata, Brandon Sugimoto, Ken Sumida, and Darren Yomogida.

Early Set Up of Equipment, Banners & Breakdown

Richard Fukuhara, Arturo Yoshimoto, Manami & Kysa Hayashi, Mike & Aki Vaughn, Naomi Suenaka, Atsu Kimoto, Michi Ota, Patrick Seki, Larry Fukuhara, Helen & Henry Yasuda, Bruce and son Bryan Kimura, Alex Yasuda, and Harry Yonemura

Food and Sno-cone Set Up and Volunteers

Arturo Yoshimoto, Lea Hayashi, Manami, Kysa & Remi Hayashi, Victor & Masako Fukuhara, and Kokoro Taiko

Ice, Water, Soft Drinks and Juices—Kiyoshi Igawa**Mochi Pick up and Packagers**

Richard Fukuhara, Michi Ota, Naomi Suenaka, and Mike & Aki Vaughn

Registration—Atsu Kimoto, Michi Ota and Naomi Suenaka**Bento Orders and Pick Up**

Michi Ota and Arlene Nakamura

Scholarship Certificates Creator—Margaret Yasuda**Scholarship Co-Chairs—Arlene Nakamura and Naomi Suenaka****Dance Captains—Arlene Nakamura and Aki Vaughn****Face Painting—Miko (Igawa) Sanchez****Games & Races**

Larry Fukuhara (Emcee), Cindy Fukuhara, Carol Fukuhara, Joann & Trace Fukuhara (300 balloons), Richard Fukuhara, Victor Fukuhara, Erin Masuda, Mike & Aki Vaughn, Iowa Wong, and Doreen Yonemura

Games Prizes Purchases—Aki Vaughn**Karaoke—Patrick Seki (Emcee) & Our Talented Singers!****Raffle Prizes Purchases—Atsu Kimoto and Millie & Steven Tani****Special Gifts Purchases**

Atsu Kimoto & Millie Tani

Raffle Prizes Coordinators

Atsu Kimoto, Millie Tani, Michi Ota, Manami, Kysa and Remi Hayashi.

Rafu Shimo Certificates Procurer—Florence Ochi**Photographers**

Richard Fukuhara and Steven Tani

***** Raffle Prize Donations *****

Richard Fukuhara—\$25 Fugetsu-do Gift Certificate

Eunice Kamimura—Plants

Michi Ota—Decorative Japanese Box

Rafu Shimo—2 On-Line Subscriptions

Yae Tanaka—2, 1 lb. See's Candies Gift Certificates

Finally, thank you to the *kawaii* youngsters who helped draw the Raffle tickets!

In Memoriam

Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai member Ruby Okinaka passed away on April 14. Ruby served as treasurer of the NYK Fujinkai (women's club) and her mother-in-law, Fumiko Okinaka, was a prominent member.

NYK extends its heartfelt condolences to Ruby's family.

Let us know if you have news to share.

Contact Arlene Nakamura at arlenenakamura@gmail.com
or Aki Vaughn at aki@vaughnlawoffice.com /
562-234-5702.

Questions? Suggestions? Comments?

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Yamaguchi-Kenjinkai-Los Angeles

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