



Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai Newsletter



Volume XI, Issue 2

2nd Quarter 2023

Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai Picnic Fun!

Despite predictions of showers, not a single raindrop fell on this year's Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai (NYK) annual picnic. Held on June 11, 2023 at our new location, Garvey Ranch Park in Monterey Park, over 160 NYK members gathered (more than last year!) to enjoy a day of fun with families and old friends.

Emcee **Aki Fukuhara-Vaughn** introduced the wonderful **Kokoro Taiko** who entertained us with two rousing numbers to open the picnic. NYK President **Arturo Yoshimoto** welcomed and thanked everyone for their support and attendance.

Picnic-goers were invited to enjoy hot dogs and chili (donated by Arturo) and delicious shaved ice, compliments of former president **Victor Fukuhara**.

VIPs were introduced: **JK Yamamoto**, The Rafu Shimpo staff writer, and **Yoshitaka Morioka**, former president of the Nanka Hiroshima Kenjinkai.

Treasurer Naomi Suenaka introduced the 2023 NYK Scholarship recipients: **Satoru Eto** and **Jason Yasuda** (see article on page 2).

This year, members pre-ordered 100+ delicious bento from Nijiya Market in Torrance.

After lunch, NYK members were called up to learn festival dances by **Beverly Toyama** and **Aki Vaughn**. Yamaguchi Kenjinkai happi coats were distributed to the group and, with the aid of dance captains **Kristin Kimura** and **Kevin Lee**, Beverly taught a new dance, "Shiawase Samba", to the music of "Rock with You" by Michael Jackson. Aki followed with the traditional "Tanko Bushi", also known as the "Coal Miner's Dance." Once that was mastered, everyone had fun dancing it to "Flowers" by Miley Cyrus.

Happi coats were put away and children under 12 were invited to catch as much candy as they could carry. Scholarship recipients Satoru Eto and Jason Yasuda tossed out Kit Kats

and Tootsie Rolls. After all the candy was gone, all members participated in the traditional mochi-maki (mochi toss).



Candy Toss

Photo by Shogo Hayashi

Following the mochi-maki toss our traditional group photo was taken this year by photographer **Shogo Hayashi** (see pg. 6).

After the group photo, emcee Patrick Seki introduced singer, **Mika Matsui**, who represented the USA in a singing competition held in Brazil twenty years ago. Mika sang the difficult Misora Hibari song, "Matsuri Mambo" and sang it beautifully! It was a special treat to have her entertain us.

On the other side of the picnic grounds, **Mike Vaughn** hosted the races and games for boys and girls ages 3 & under; 4-6; 7-10; 11-14; and 15-18.

Kids and adults then competed in the three-legged race, the pairs balloon toss, and the Hot Daikon game.

The final and most popular game was the balloon and basket toss. Two teams compete against each other and the team with more balloons in the basket wins. The basket is on a long pole and held by a person who gets quite a soaking.

(Continued on page 9)

2023 Scholarship Recipients Scholarship

Each year Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai awards scholarships to graduating high school students whose ancestors migrated from Yamaguchi-Ken, Japan. This year's outstanding recipients are **Satoru Eto** and **Jason Yasuda**. Essays from both recipients were very well written and interesting to read. Due to lack of space, we have included just a few excerpts from each recipient.

Satoru Eto

My grandfather told me how he saw the sky change to pink when the Hiroshima bomb was dropped, describing every vivid detail he could recall from that morning. I remember he told me how people that survived the initial bombing were like walking zombies that wandered into Yanai. However, he also reminisced on the good memories from his childhood in Yanai and how he loved diving and swimming in that small coastal town.

My visits to Yanai are significant to me as the first opportunities I had to see where my grandfather grew up. The most vivid memories of Yanai were comical attempts at tending to my great-grandparents' grave. The first time, I was six years old, and the next time I was twelve. Both times were during the rainy season in the summer, and both times there was an abundance of mosquitos and heavy rain while we were scrubbing the moss off of the stone. I felt as though I was able to become closer to my Japanese roots and show respect to my ancestors. It is also an entertaining memory as my family and I danced around the cemetery trying to avoid getting bitten by all the mosquitos while trying to light incense in the rain.

My great-grandparents lived in America for several decades, but prior to World War II, they felt animosity against Japanese people growing and decided to go back to Japan. My ancestors owned and operated a toy store that sold American goods. Among the many reasons why they decided to return to Japan, they felt the tensions directed at the Japanese community. While my ancestors avoided great suffering in the U.S. (specifically the internment camps), Japanese society had its own injustices directed at a family returning from the "enemy state". My grandfather suffered not just bullying, but physical abuse from his own community. When he came to the United States in the early 60s, my grandfather was certainly faced with some prejudice, but he confronted it with his brash personality and humor. He found work as a gardener and attended a school in Little Tokyo to learn English. Within two years of moving to the States, he met and married my grandmother. Soon after, they had three children, one being my mother.

Satoru plans to attend Drexel University in Philadelphia. Major: First Year Exploratory Studies (FYES Program). His favorite subjects are future environmental science, biology, calculus, political science, and world history. He intends to pursue a master's degree after completing his bachelor's.

Jason Yasuda

I have been to Japan once with my family and my grandparents, **Helen and Henry Yasuda**. We visited Yamaguchi Prefecture and more specifically Kaminoseki, the hometown of my grandfather. Although I was young at the time, being only in Elementary school, I still remember this part of the trip vividly. Both my grandparents were so passionate about telling us stories of their time in Japan, but when we finally reached Kaminoseki after a long day of driving in from Hiroshima, it felt like a weight had been lifted off my grandfather's shoulders.

My grandfather had always told my cousins and me that it was his goal to take each of us to where he grew up in Japan and, as the youngest grandchild, my grandfather's dream had finally been accomplished. The small town had a more intimate feel than the hustle and bustle of the metropolitan cities in the North. There was a certain charm and homey feel to Kaminoseki which I hadn't gotten previously exploring other prefectures in Japan. Even though the town was unfortunately more vacant than it had been since my grandfather's last visit, he was still able to find longtime friends from his childhood who remained in the small local shops. We visited my grandfather's old school, home, temple, and even the place he had gotten married!

My ancestors came to the United States in 1898 to Hawaii to work at sugar plantations and later in 1902 they moved to the mainland in search of better life and higher paying jobs. About one third of the 30,000 contract laborers going from Japan to Hawaii had been from Yamaguchi Prefecture. In the United States they began their new lives operating a boarding house in Seattle and later moved to Nebraska to work in sugar beet fields. Later the family moved more south towards Arizona and California where they eventually started a fruit stand which grew into a grocery market business that grew to multiple stores across Los Angeles.

My family actively participate in the Japanese American community in Little Tokyo to try and keep their children connected to their ancestor's culture.

Jason will be attending the University of California Santa Cruz to pursue an undergraduate degree as a Network and Digital Technology major. Although he is not sure what career path he wants to take, he is interested in the areas of technology and how it can be implemented in real life.

Please see photo on page 8.

Fun photos from the 2023 NYK Picnic!



Photos this page by Shogo Hayashi & Tony Fukuhara.





Photos on this page taken by Tony Fukuhara and Shogo Hayashi.



Photos on this page taken by Tony Fukuhara.



Photos this page by Shogo Hayashi.

Thank you to All of Our Donors!



Lee, Larry	\$10.00	Tashiro, Juliana	\$40.00
Ikenaga, Chieko and Kenji	\$20.00	Thompson, Bruce and Fusako	\$40.00
Taketani, Linda and Richard	\$20.00	Toyama, Masae (Beverly)	\$40.00
Yamada, David,	\$20.00	Wada, Emi and April	\$40.00
Yamasaki, Fusaye,	\$20.00	Wong, France	\$40.00
Yoshida, Fred,	\$20.00	Yamachika, Yoko	\$40.00
Yoshimura, Fred and Sachiko	\$20.00	Yamada, Jean and Henry	\$40.00
Itagaki, Edward and Setsuko	\$30.00	Yamasaki, Keiko	\$40.00
Warren/Nishiyama, Scott and Janice	\$30.00	Yasuda, Bob	\$40.00
Yasuda, Kathleen	\$30.00	Yasuda, Margaret	\$40.00
Eto, Yuki	\$40.00	Yasuda, Ricky	\$40.00
Eto, Satoru	\$40.00	Yoshida, Caroline	\$40.00
Ford, Umeno	\$40.00	Hayashida, Linda	\$48.00
Fujimoto, Mitsugi and Katsuko	\$40.00	Fukuhara, Victor and Masako	\$49.00
Fujita, Ayako and William	\$40.00	DeVito, Sachiko and James	\$50.00
Fukuhara, Cindy	\$40.00	Fukumoto, Kiyo	\$50.00
Hashibe, Eiko	\$40.00	Hiroshima Kenjinkai	\$50.00
Hashibe, Eric	\$40.00	Itagaki, John and Marlene	\$50.00
Hirai, Miyeko and Koji	\$40.00	McGuire, Wendy	\$50.00
Hopfield, Joe and Judy	\$40.00	Morioka, Yoshitaka (Hiroshima Kenjinkai Former President)	\$50.00
Imamoto, Eiko and Kenny	\$40.00	Nanka Kenjinkai Kyogikai	\$50.00
Inada, Shirley and Ronald	\$40.00	Nishiyama, Dexter and Connie	\$50.00
Inamine, Debi and Brian	\$40.00	Shigemitsu, Tom and Judy	\$50.00
Inoue, Sayoko	\$40.00	Tanaka, Frank and Teri	\$50.00
Iwamasa, Chikae and Utaka	\$40.00	Tanaka, Leonard	\$50.00
Kamimura, Eunice	\$40.00	Tanaka, Yaeko	\$50.00
Kawahara, Glenn	\$40.00	Yamada, Masaharu	\$50.00
Kawano, Scot	\$40.00	Nakaoka, Ken	\$60.00
Kimoto, Atsu	\$40.00	Yasuda, Bill	\$60.00
Koyama, Elaine and Frank	\$40.00	Yoshida, Clark	\$74.00
Masuda, Jane	\$40.00	Kawahara, Bert	\$80.00
Matsumoto/Mukai, Susan, David and Luca	\$40.00	Kishimoto, Yoshiko	\$80.00
Matsushima, Bob and Teresa	\$40.00	Kawahara, Martie	\$80.00
Mitacek, Lynette and William	\$40.00	Ono, Mitsuko	\$80.00
Miyamoto, Esther	\$40.00	Jasso, Yoshino	\$100.00
Monji, Garry and Joy	\$40.00	Katsumoto, Kaiji and Toshiko	\$100.00
Monji, Yoshiko	\$40.00	Morimoto, Kiyo	\$100.00
Morihisa, Lynne	\$40.00	Murakawa, John	\$100.00
Nagamine, Ellen	\$40.00	Nakatsu, Joan	\$100.00
Nagamine, Hisako	\$40.00	Otani, Kihei (Ehime Kenjinkai President)	\$100.00
Nakayama, Y Mary	\$40.00	San Gabriel Nursery	\$100.00
Nishikawa, Mitsunori	\$40.00	Suenaka, Naomi	\$100.00
Nishiki, Nancy	\$40.00	Vaughn, Mike and Aki	\$100.00
Ochi, Florence	\$40.00	Kawahara, Bert	\$101.00
Ono, Mitsuko	\$40.00	Fukuhara, Trace and Joann	\$206.00
Ono, Yoshi	\$40.00	Kimura, Bruce	\$240.00
Ramsey, Milan	\$40.00	Hernandez, Lisa	\$500.00
Seki, Patrick	\$40.00	Otaya, Michi	\$540.00
Taniguchi, Mariko	\$40.00	Yoshimoto, Arturo	\$1,040.00
Tao, Tricia	\$40.00		
Tashiro, George	\$40.00		

Every donation is appreciated. Your support of Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai enables us to continue our annual events and will greatly contribute towards the 120th NYK Anniversary Celebration in 2025.

Thank You to Our Volunteers and Prize Donors at the 2023 Picnic!

Set Up and Breakdown of Equipment & Banners

Satoru Eto, Trace and Joann Fukuhara, Victor and Masako Fukuhara, Warren Fukuhara, Manami, Kysa, Remi, and Shogo Hayashi, Atsu Kimoto, Bruce and Lorraine Kimura, Kristin Kimura, Kevin Lee, Florence Ochi, Michi Ota, Patrick Seki, Naomi Suenaka, Tricia Tao, Mike Trozzo, Mike and Aki Vaughn, Clark Yoshida, and Arturo Yoshimoto.

Ice, Water, Soft Drinks, Juices, Hot Dogs & Chili

Compliments of Arturo Yoshimoto, Manami, Kysa, Remi, and Shogo Hayashi.

Sno-cone Set Up and Volunteers

Compliments of Victor and Masako Fukuhara, Paige Fukuhara, Tony Fukuhara and Warren Fukuhara.

Mochi Pick up and Packagers

Bruce and Lorraine Kimura, Shogo Hayashi, Naomi Suenaka, Mike and Aki Vaughn, Clark Yoshida, and Arturo Yoshimoto.

Registration

Atsu Kimoto, Lorraine Kimura, Michi Ota, Naomi Suenaka, Florence Ochi and Tricia Tao.

Bento Orders and Pick Up

Atsu Kimoto, Bruce and Lorraine Kimura, Michi Ota, Trace and Joann Fukuhara.

Scholarship Committee

Mike Vaughn and Naomi Suenaka.

Dance Instructors and Captains

Beverly Toyama, Aki Vaughn, Kristin Kimura and Kevin Lee.

Entertainment

Patrick Seki (Emcee).

Special Guest Singer

Mika Matsui.

Kokoro Taiko

Victor Fukuhara, Nancy Kimm, Joann Matsunaga, James Recalde, Kristen Shiba, Ken Sumida, Ryan Suyemoto, and Tomoko Taguchi.

Games & Races

Mike Vaughn (Host), Cindy Fukuhara, Carol Fukuhara, Trace Fukuhara (drummer), Joann Fukuhara, Caroline Luong, Aki Vaughn, Clark Yoshida, and Scholarship recipients: Satoru Eto & Jason Yasuda.

Raffle Prizes and Game Prizes Purchases

Atsu Kimoto, Mike Trozzo, and Aki Vaughn.

Raffle Prize Coordinators

Atsu Kimoto, Clark Yoshida, Arturo Yoshimoto, and our young members.

Raffle Ticket Drum

Made by Victor Fukuhara.

Photographers

Tony Fukuhara and Shogo Hayashi.

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

Japanese American National Museum (JANM)

One-year Membership (\$95 value)
Procured by Florence Ochi

Little Tokyo Historical Society

5 Historical Books
Donated by Michi Ota

Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai

One-year Print & Digital Subscription to Rafu Shimpo
(\$177 value)

Rafu Shimpo

2-On-Line Subscriptions (\$50 value each)
Procured by Florence Ochi

Trace and Joann Fukuhara

2-10 lb. Bags of Rice and 8 Daikon
"In Memory of Henry & Mary Fukuhara"

Lisa Hernandez

20 Wooden Sushi-makers

Eunice Kamimura

Plants

Bruce and Lorraine Kimura and Family

3 Tubs of Almond Cookies
Air Fryer

Mike & Aki Vaughn

\$20 Cash

Keiko Yamasaki

3 Bottles of Wine

We apologize if we failed to mention your name!

ありがとう!!!

Picnic Fun—Continued from pg 1

This year's courageous pole holders were Saturo Eto and Jason Yasuda. Thank you, guys, for "volunteering."

The Opportunity (Raffle) Drawing closed out the day. Thank you very much to all our members who donated prizes and to our beautiful NYK children who helped draw the tickets.

The top 3 cash prize winners each won \$100, \$250, and \$500 in cash. Congratulations to you all!

Arturo Yoshimoto gave closing remarks and thanked the Board and all volunteers who helped with the picnic. And with that, the 2023 picnic came to a close. We hope everyone had fun and will join us again next year!



2023 Scholarship Recipients

(From l-r): NYK President **Arturo Yoshimoto**, Treasurer **Naomi Suenaka** with **Satoru Eto** and **Jason Yasuda**.

Photo by Shogo Hayashi.

Finding Your Roots Workshop

The Finding Your Roots workshops are led by **Chester Hachizume** who founded this program when he encountered many hurdles while trying to find his ancestors in Japan. Although this is a Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai-sponsored program and is funded by an Aratani Grant, it is opened to all.

On May 6, 2023, 25 people attended the workshop in Torrance and walked away with important information and an 80-page binder to help with their ancestral research.

If you are interested in attending a future workshop, please contact NYK Board VP **Florence Ochi** at florenceochi19@gmail.com.

Follow Us on Social Media

FACEBOOK

Yamaguchi-Kenjinkai-Los Angeles

INSTAGRAM

Username: Nanka.Yamaguchi.Kenjinkai

WEBSITE

<http://yamaguchi-usa.org>

EMAIL

Nanka.Yamaguchi.Kenjinkai@gmail.com

OR

nankayamaguchikenjinkai@gmail.com



Photos by Tony Fukuhara.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE US TO E-MAIL YOU COPIES OF ANY PHOTOS, PLEASE CONTACT US AT NANKAYAMAGUCHIKENJINKAI@GMAIL.COM.



Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai

2023 Board Officers

Arturo Yoshimoto.....President
Florence Ochi.....Vice President
Aki Fukuhara-Vaughn.....Secretary
Naomi Suenaka.....Treasurer

Board Members: Lisa Hernandez, Atsuko Kimoto, Bruce Kimura, Lorraine Kimura, Michiko Ota, Mike Vaughn (Legal Counsel), and Clark Yoshida.

Board Advisors: Victor Fukuhara, Patrick Seki, Helen and Henry Yasuda.

Yamaguchi Government Liaison:.....Laura Lee

Facebook Administrator:.....Laura Lee

Instagram:.....Laura Lee

Webmaster:.....Bruce Thompson

Newsletter Creator & Publisher:.....Aki Fukuhara-Vaughn