



2021
COVID-19 COMMUNITY FUND
GRANTEE REPORT



API Legal Outreach (APILO)

API Legal Outreach is grateful for its Covid-19 Community Fund Grant from the San Francisco Japantown Foundation. This grant supports direct legal services, COVID-related relief such as PPP and unemployment benefits, and advocacy for small business protections such as commercial eviction moratoriums. Specifically, API Legal Outreach has utilized grant funds to:

- Provide legal representation against threatened evictions and pandemic assistance to over 40 small businesses in Japantown. This work is done in partnership with Perkins Coie LLP.
- Advocate for an ordinance to create a rent repayment plan.
- Provide educational workshops with other community partners to address the rise in anti-Asian hate crimes. Topics covered include: brief history of modern anti-Asian violence; how to report crimes; what is a hate crime vs a hate incident; what to do as a bystander; what are your rights?; and how to get help if one has experienced a suspected hate crime.



GenRyu Arts mid-year report for January – June 2021

SF Japantown Foundation grant has supported GenRyu Arts (GRA) successful launch of 6 virtual presentations online with community partners, Facebook page, and YouTube channel. This 26th Anniversary “Senshin” (enlightened mind) program for the first half of calendar year 2021 highlights the experiences and cultural experiences of our GenRyu Arts family and friends such as; Oshogatsu Celebration, Cherry Blossom Festival, Boys and Girls Day Festival, and Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month.

Our Youth Leadership program has produced 4 videos’ so far for this calendar year to share with the public on the art of origami, taiko, and sharing glimpses into the history of our cultural arts practice in our community. Thanks to the SF Japantown Foundation grant it has secured matching grants from California Arts Council that supports our youth leadership program, and especially our upcoming Japan Week, and Japan Day scheduled for the second half of this year.

The funds from SF Japantown Foundation not only supported our new virtual programming but has provided the funds to support our infrastructure, programming team, and local artists to keep the organization vital. We also have researched and in the process of purchasing equipment to upgrade our ability to present virtually and look forward to a productive year including hiring local artists in SF to present on our virtual and live programming.



Hokka Nichi Bei Kai

On behalf of Hokka Nichi Bei Kai, we are grateful for the Japantown Foundation's generous support for the beautiful and historical Kanso-an Tea House at Hokka Nichi Bei Kai.

We are pleased to report that the 2020 Japantown Foundation Grant was used for the refurbishment of Hokka Nichi Bei Kai's Kanso-an Tea House walls. The specially constructed traditional Japanese tea house has sustained damage over the years, particularly the walls of the tea house, which are made of a special Japanese material (tsuchikabe).

We originally planned to refurbish the walls for the "project of the year" of 2020, but due to the pandemic, events could not be held and income sources such as donations were cut off. Therefore, we could not raise funds for a project to repair the old and broken walls.

We have been reconstructing the walls since May 2020, and the generous grant from the Japantown Foundation will allow us to continue and complete the project. The construction is still in progress, but will be finished very soon.

Once again, we would like to express our sincere appreciation for this grant.



Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (JCCCNC)

The Center is excited to announce after 417 days, we have reopened our doors as of May 3, 2021. We are excited to welcome back our members and program participants. We have resumed limited programs and activities based on the latest health and safety protocols provided by the SF Department of Public Health. As we begin to implement our in-person programs and activities, we will be taking a phased approach. We will continue to engage with our constituents and followers online and through social media platforms by offering virtual activities, workshops, lectures and discussions. As of December, we have hosted over 95 various virtual events, programs, classes and workshops and will continue adding and hosting virtual events, programs, classes and workshops throughout the 2021 calendar year.

With funding from the San Francisco Japantown Foundation, we will be adding a staff position to assist with the Center's online virtual program development. This new part-time staff position will help advance the concept of creating and engaging a virtual Japanese American community beyond our current demographics and help monetize our programs, increase our membership, create discussion and chat groups, and expand our fundraising potential. We hope that this will evolve into a full-time position and potentially into more than one position to meet the increasing need to develop a virtual community and programs. We look forward to having the ability to create this much-needed position to help carry out the mission of the Center.



Japantown Community Benefit District (JCBD)

The Japantown Community Benefit District (JCBD) has been closely monitoring the impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) since shelter in place took in effect on March 16, 2020. JCBD staff and Community Ambassadors began weekly communications with as many of our merchants/businesses and those who live and work in Japantown to not only listen to their concerns, but also to keep everyone informed of any updates from the City of San Francisco. The safety of our community and visitors is of utmost importance.

The JCBD started the “Heart of Jtown” Fundraising campaign on May 26th to solicit donations that go directly to support our small businesses. Through a grant application process that began in July, we awarded 80 grants. Applicants were notified on Wednesday, September 9th of their awards and starting Monday, September 14th we began issuing payments. Since then, portions of the funds raised, including funds from the SF Japantown Foundation, have gone into much needed PPE supplies, assistance in Kinokuniya Building’s Shared Space area, tent activation for Restaurants at the Plaza, Outdoor Dining banners, and Buchanan Mall Bistro Lights.



Japantown Community Youth Council (JCYC)

It has been a full year since JCYC partially re-opened its Chibi Chan Preschools due to the urgent need for childcare for families of essential workers. COVID-19 restrictions for social distancing continues to impact JCYC's ability to recover adequate tuition revenue. However, JCYC is now able to serve approximately 80% of the normal enrollment for Chibi Chan Preschool.

In addition to the grant from the San Francisco Japantown Foundation, JCYC has also secured COVID-19 recovery grants from the Asian Pacific Fund and San Francisco Office of Early Care to mitigate the financial hardship of JCYC's childcare programs. At this time, Chibi Chan continues to move forward on a path to pre-pandemic self-sufficiency.

<https://vimeo.com/551695891>



Japantown Task Force (JTF)

The Japantown Task Force (JTF) staff received a directive from the Peace Plaza Committee Co-Chairs, Jon Osaki and Richard Hashimoto, to begin the implementation of the video-documentation process to track the progress of the Peace Plaza Redesign project from the start date of April 2021. The video-documentation of the project will not only provide a historical recording of the project but will be used in order to outreach to and communicate with the Peace Plaza project supporters, many of whom submitted letters of support and public comments during San Francisco city meetings, as well as the community at large. To that end, JTF staff submitted a draft production plan, for the period of April 2021 to December 2021, targeting 1-2 minute vignettes, updating on the progress of the Peace Plaza project. The communication campaign will focus primarily on the utilization of our various social media platforms: websites, Facebook and Instagram accounts.

In order to implement the video-documentation of the Peace Plaza project, JTF hired videographer Max Loubet to begin production of the Peace Plaza segments, with the first film-short project to be submitted by the end of May 2021. This first project will be a thank you to the community and supporters from the Peace Plaza executive committee members. Additionally, monthly meetings are being instituted between the Community Consultant, the Peace Plaza Executive committee, and the Peace Plaza Redesign team, to maintain lines of communication. Moving forward at a minimum, monthly vignettes will be shared with the community and supporters providing updates on the progress of the project, as well as additional information blasts provided as they occur. JTF is also planning a Community Town Hall, for feedback from the community on the final design of the Peace Plaza design on a date To Be Determined.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1pbGzJBajlU3dXipnqdGZkKLI2p8xE_82/view



Kimochi, Inc.

Founded and incorporated in 1971, Kimochi, Inc. is celebrating 50 years of providing ethnically and culturally relevant services to seniors. The mission of Kimochi, Inc. is “to provide a continuum of culturally sensitive programs and services to all seniors and their families to preserve their dignity and independence, with a focus on the Japanese American and Japanese speaking community.” Kimochi's goal is to provide these targeted seniors with structured activities and programs that will improve their quality of life and postpone or prevent their need for institutionalized care.

Kimochi received funding from the SF Japantown Foundation in support of our Elderly Nutrition Program Congregate and Home-Delivered Meals programs. During the pandemic, Kimochi saw a meteoric rise in need for nutrition support among the older adults we serve. In April 2021, Kimochi served 13,929 meals to 1,102 seniors. This is almost triple what would we serve in a typical April before COVID-19! The Home-Delivered Meals Program serves seniors age 60 and older, who are homebound and/or isolated, nutritionally challenged and at-risk of malnutrition or food insecurity. The Congregate Meals Program serves any senior over the age of 60 who resides in the city of San Francisco.

2020 presented Kimochi with challenges never before seen in our 50-year history, but we are proud to say that staff and leadership have risen to those challenges with determination and grace. It has been with the invaluable support of volunteers, community members, and organizations like SF Japantown Foundation, that Kimochi Nutrition Program staff have fed record numbers of seniors at risk for food insecurity.



Kinmon Gakuen

During the pandemic, the school's terrace was plagued with homeless problems on a daily basis making access to the building unsafe, hazardous and insecure. Due to the generous grant received from the San Francisco Japantown Foundation, Kinmon Gakuen was able to install iron gates at the entrances of the historic school.

The iron gates were installed on March 2, 2021 and have effectively solved this problem. Since its installation, we have not experienced any unauthorized intrusion onto the terrace, and the faculty, staff and board members now feel safe and secure. In addition, our neighbors are pleased with the project because the pandemic forced the school's closure which made the building appear abandoned, which may have contributed to the homeless problem. We are sincerely grateful to the SF Japantown Foundation for helping make this possible. Our students and parents will also enjoy the added security measures when they return to in-class learning in the fall.



National Japanese American Historical Society (NJAHS)

In keeping with our planned activities and mission moving forward, NJAHS hosted one in-person program in February 2020 and broadcast 10 live online programs between March-December 2020, and 6 live online programs between January-May 2021. Our online audience has averaged 80-100 attendees per program.

We thank the generosity of the San Francisco Japantown Foundation for allowing us to continue our work through these programs for the community and broader public. 2020/2021

Past Events can be viewed here:

https://www.njahs.org/events/list/?tribe_paged=1&tribe_event_display=past&tribe-bar-date=2021-05-25

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hJ-X55APAzrioWZIPBjIPXjtQ2LjMswl/view>



NJAHS Fiscal Agent for Ito Yosakoi

Thanks to the planning and cooperation of our wonderful dancers, Ito Yosakoi successfully produced the 2021 Kazanami Yosakoi Dance Showcase in video form as part of the 2021 Virtual Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival. We hired a professional video editor, Ray Wong from Kollaboration SF, to stitch over 60 videos together into a mosaic-like piece for the festival. The final video showcased two yosakoi dances, Hifumi and Soran Bushi, as well as 58 dancers from 15 different teams from all over the world.

Ito Yosakoi has also been continuing to hold virtual practice for our ongoing and new members. Our virtual programming consists of regular, 2-hour Friday practices via Zoom through the JCCCNC. Due to the nature of virtual programming, we have been able to expand our membership to those who are outside of the Bay Area and California. We have also provided members with Ito Yosakoi T-shirts, which we now use during practices, in performances, and for social media promotion. With the 2021 Kazanami Yosakoi Dance Showcase being a great success and the continuing development of Ito Yosakoi's online programming, we are optimistic for Ito Yosakoi for the rest of the year. Thank you to the Japantown Foundation for supporting Ito Yosakoi!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bSOAFawXSms>



Nichi Bei Foundation

The grant that we received from the San Francisco Japantown Foundation was to help publish our San Francisco Japantown Map and Directory, which would be distributed to some 300 locations in the Bay Area by a brochure distribution company, giving Japantown increased visibility at various tourist centers while trying to drive people to Japantown. Given that a lot of Japantown is still not open, and in a particularly precarious situation, we have not started what is usually a two-month process to solicit ads and check all businesses to update the Map and Directory. We are starting to go through redesign processes, but until the state is fully open, we have no idea what will actually survive. It's also going to be very difficult to sell ads given the economic climate, but the cost of the project will make it necessary.

We are currently looking for publication in late summer, to be included in our Japanese American Community Resource Guide, which we are fully updating and publishing, thanks to a grant from The Henri and Tomoye Takahashi Charitable Foundation. The Japanese American Community Resource Guide, which will focus on community-based nonprofits across the country and the three Japantowns, will have a host of resources to help preserve Japanese culture as well. It will be printed and sent to churches and community centers across the country, and will be continually updated on our Website.



Nihonmachi Little Friends (NLF)

Nihonmachi Little Friends (NLF) greatly appreciates the support of the SF Japantown Foundation's COVID-19 Grant. The funds were utilized to support staff salaries and benefits during NLF's current fiscal year.

In July 2020, NLF re-opened its children's programs for its preschoolers and school age (K-5th graders) after being closed on March 17, 2020 with San Francisco's mandated Shelter in Place order. The programs opened at less than 50% of capacity to meet the City and SF Dept, of Public Health's health and safety guidelines. The programs were able to accommodate those families who desired in-person care and education for their children. Preschool pod sizes have been operating with 8-10 students and two teachers; while the school-age pods had 12 children with two teachers.

The lower enrollment of students created a loss in revenue of approximately \$30,000 per month. Although 15% of staff members could not return to in-person services due to family or health concerns, full benefits were still maintained for those employees. The other in-person staff continued to be paid their full salaries and benefits. The SF Jtown Foundation's grant helped us meet these costs and retain valuable staff. Our deep gratitude goes to the SF Japantown Foundation for their invaluable grant.



Parent Teacher Community Council (PTCC) of the Japanese Bilingual Bicultural Program (JBBP)

Beginning in January 2021, with the generous support from the SF Japantown Foundation, we were able to adapt cultural activities for students into virtual formats as Rosa Parks Elementary remained on distance learning.

- Oshogatsu. We made distribution kits so students would have the materials for activities. They rotated through 4 activities in breakout rooms on Zoom. Each family also received Kagamimochi (New Year's decorative mochi set) to display and then eat!
- Day of Remembrance – We invited guest speaker Satsuki Ina, founder of Tsuru Solidarity, to speak to each grade level about her experience in the internment camps during World War II and also about the children's book she is writing. Teachers did read-alouds and/or other lessons around internment to prepare students for this visit.
- Sakura Matsuri – We had a virtual Sakura Matsuri Dance Party! We shared a google slide (Seesaw activity for primary grades) with four of our previous dance tutorials. Students practiced during the week, and on Friday, April 16th we had a dance party on Zoom. We danced to the four songs, then we watched some video footage from a previous parade. The whole school was invited to participate, and many STEAM (general education) classes joined us as well!
- Kodomo No Hi – Children's Day. Students (in-person and distance learning) did a Koinobori (carp flag) craft activity. In-person students were able to eat Kashiwa mochi. Students watched videos made by JBBP alum Megumi Matsuno on how to make onigiri. Each student and staff member received a \$5 voucher to use during the month of May at Kissako to try their onigiri.
- Virtual Taiko – We have been working with Jiten Daiko in the past and had considered a virtual format. However, in-person instruction resumed on April 26th, and we hope to restart Taiko in-person in the fall.

As the only public elementary school in Japantown, we're proud to be supported by the San Francisco Japantown Foundation. We greatly appreciate the Foundation's support and look forward to continuing to offer cultural enrichment for our children, families, and the Japantown community.

<https://youtu.be/UOk7H2HmQM4>



Sakura Matsuri, Inc.

With the generous support from the San Francisco Japantown Foundation, the Sakura Matsuri, Inc and Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival committees were able to produce the first ever “Hanami in the Plaza” on April 10-11 and 17-18. The goal of the Hanami in the Plaza was to uplift the Japantown merchants and restaurants by providing a socially distanced outdoor dining area that upheld COVID-19 safety guidelines. Since the festival was unable to produce the traditional festival due to COVID restrictions, we recognized how the absence of a physical event could negatively impact the Japantown merchants as they have expressed to us how important the festival is to their business.

The funds granted supported the rental of the logistical items (including the large outdoor tent, tables and chairs, barricades, umbrellas, etc.) in addition to hiring an experienced on-site manager to ensure the quality and safety of the event. The event was able to serve over 2,300 guests over 4 days without any issues. The event served as a safe space for community members, festival committee members and the public to gather and share in the Cherry Blossom Festival spirit and celebration. Overall, we received positive feedback from all stakeholders but especially from the merchants. We are also grateful to the Dept of Rec and Park for providing the space and were also fortunate to have the support of the SFPD Northern Station and SFFD Asian Fire Association.



Soto Mission of San Francisco (SOKOJI)

Sokoji welcomed 2021 on January 1st by holding several virtual New Year's Day (Oshoogatsu) services on YouTube. We set up a "sales" tables outside of Sokoji's main entrance on Laguna St. during New Year's week and distributed pre-ordered omamoris (amulets) and ofudas (customized ancestral wooden tablets) and omikujis (fortune papers). All these items were also available by mail.

We are preparing for our third annual Toro Nagashi (Floating Lantern) ceremony for the Obon season in July. Once again, this ceremony will be held virtually in a private backyard. Materials for the Sokoji customized lanterns and site are being purchased and the site/pond is currently being prepped. Sokoji-designed face masks and tote bags are now on the Sokoji website for sale.