



NISEI WEEK™
Foundation

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NISEI WEEK ANNOUNCES FRANCES K. HASHIMOTO COMMUNITY SERVICE HONOREES

(Los Angeles – July 15, 2018) – The Nisei Week Foundation is pleased to recognize PyuaO2 Nagoya business association and Kizuna with the Frances K. Hashimoto Community Service Award. This award recognizes these organizations for their outstanding contributions to the Southern California Japanese American community. The annual Awards Dinner will be held on Monday, August 13 at the Double Tree by Hilton (120 S. Los Angeles Street, Los Angeles). Starting at 6 p.m., individual tickets are \$95 and tables of 10 are \$950. Also recognized at the Awards Dinner will be this year’s Grand Marshal, The Honorable Vincent H. Okamoto, Los Angeles Superior Court Judge; and Parade Marshal, Aaron Takahashi, actor and comedian; and Inspiration Award recipient Harold “Hal” Keimi, who will be recognized for going above and beyond to volunteer their time and/or service to the community. For tickets or information, call the Nisei Week Foundation at 213.687.7193 or email office@niseiweek.org.

The following organizations will receive the Nisei Week Community Service Awards:

PyuaO2 Nagoya Business Association (Minami Otsu Shoten Shinko-kai)

Minami-Otsu Dori is one of the most active city centers in Nagoya, extending to the north and south of the city. Merchants and local business owners along the street formed the PyuaO2 (Minami Otsu Shoten Shinko-kai) in 1963. This association is noted for its vision for the future growth and prosperity of the area by organizing popular events and programs. Many of its endeavors go beyond the area and enhance the larger Nagoya region.

In 1981, PyuaO2 formed a “sister” organization partnership with the Little Tokyo Business Association (LTBA) and jointly established business enhancement programs in 1989. The efforts of community volunteers, especially the late Frances Hashimoto who represented LTBA and the Nisei Week Foundation, and the late Aikira Katsuda who represented PyuaO2, created strong ties enhanced by organizing “nigiwai” or prosperous activities in their communities. Thus, the Nisei Week Japanese Festival became a symbol of their friendship and started to exchange delegations for both the Nagoya Matsuri and the Nisei Week Japanese Festival.

Every year, PyuO2 representatives visit Los Angeles to attend the Nisei Week Japanese Festival and participate in the Coronation and the Grand Parade while enhancing business networking with Little Tokyo businesses.

Each October, as the member of goodwill delegates from the Los Angeles’ Sister City Association (LANSCA), the Nisei Week queen and court and LTBA representatives visit Nagoya to attend the Nagoya Festival. They participate in the Sister City Festival, Sister City reception and join in the Nagoya Festival parade while PyuaO2 also hosts several friendship events and activities for the visiting delegation.

All these activities and exchanges over the more than three decades has fostered a strong and dynamic relationship between the two sister cities of Nagoya and Los Angeles. These two “friends” travel 5,600 miles every year to celebrate culture and community.

Kizuna

Seven years ago, a group of next generation leaders came together around shared values and wishes to fulfill our community’s needs. Through working at various nonprofit and community-based organizations in and around Little Tokyo, they were able to identify a major need for youth involvement. Despite the stereotypes associated with millennials, they knew plenty of young people who were eager to get involved but simply lacked the resources and opportunities to do so. Unable to find an organization devoted to connecting youth to our community, they decided to step up and create one by themselves.

Drawing its name from the Japanese word for “bond,” Kizuna was founded in April 2011 as a next generation community organization. Now, its mission is to build a future for our community through the education, empowerment, and engagement of the next generation. The word kizuna has no direct English translation — fitting, considering there are no words that can quite describe the depths of the connections it makes with one another. By evoking the image of a knot, it was Kizuna’s founders’ hope to not only weave the next generation into the fabric of our community, but to also strengthen the relationships between all who would take part in its programs, ensuring a tightly-knit network of community leaders that would endure for years.

After seven years, Kizuna is excited to see how its dreams of engaging the youth have come true. Its summer camp program starts the week off with campers hoarding their candy, and ends with them contributing their stash to a communal jar for their peers to share. Several of Kizuna high school students, upon graduating from the leadership program and heading off to college, return the following summer as counselors. Its internship program has produced several college graduates who have gone on to work for the very same organizations they once interned at, adding fresh perspectives to our community’s nonprofits. Kizuna found that its programs not only teach youth about community, but ignite a fire within them that keeps them coming back year after year.

Each year Kizuna has brought in more program participants, and each year it has been able to extend its reach further and further—not just in Little Tokyo, but throughout Southern California. Kizuna’s summer camp encompasses six geographic locations so that elementary and middle school campers all over Southern California can have the chance to meet new friends and learn about their heritage. Its internship program places college interns at organizations both in and outside of Little Tokyo, and organizes field trips to introduce interns to the individuals who are working to serve the Japanese American communities dotted throughout the region.

Kizuna was founded for the next generation, by the next generation. *“When we hear that our high school participants have gone back to school and founded their own community service clubs, or our past college interns have graduated and taken jobs within the Japanese American community, or when we see the same smiling faces return to our summer camp each year, we’re reminded of the same values that built our organization from the ground up: responsibility, a commitment to growth, and a desire to care for one another and give back to our community.”*

The 2018 Nisei Week Japanese Festival is a nine-day event first held in 1934, and is recognized today as one of the longest running ethnic festivals in the United States. This event will take place in Los Angeles’ Little Tokyo district from August 11-19. For a calendar of events, log on to www.NiseiWeek.org, call the Nisei Week Foundation office at 213.687.7193 or email info@niseiweek.org. The Nisei Week office is located at 244 South San Pedro Street, Suite 303, Los Angeles, CA 90012.

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