



*PRESS RELEASE*

For immediate release

For more information:

Diane Tanaka 310.962.2698  
pr@niseiweek.org

## **2019 NISEI WEEK JAPANESE FESTIVAL QUEEN CANDIDATES DEBUTED – QUEEN CORONATION ON AUGUST 10**

**LOS ANGELES – July 14, 2019** – The 2019 Nisei Week Japanese Festival queen candidates took center stage for their first official public appearance to various community leaders, local dignitaries, family and friends at the Opening Ceremony event held Sunday, July 14 at the Japanese American National Museum. The seven candidates will compete for the title of Nisei Week Queen on Saturday, August 10, 7 p.m., at the Queen Coronation at the Aratani Japan America Theatre in Little Tokyo, Los Angeles.

Upon official coronation, the queen and her court will represent the Nisei Week Foundation at this year's festival and other community events locally and nationally (including Nagoya, Japan) throughout the year. The dinner prior to Coronation will be at the DoubleTree by Hilton LA Downtown, with cocktails being served at 4:30 p.m. Nisei Week Queen Coronation tickets are available at the Golden Circle level (includes special dinner prior to the event at the Double Tree by Hilton at 5 p.m.) with preferred seating at the coronation for \$180 per person; general admission tickets are \$90 per person.

The 2019 Nisei Week candidates are:

### **Marika Kate Gotschall (Pasadena Japanese Cultural Institute)**

Marika Kate Gotschall is 24 years old and graduated from California State University, Long Beach with a bachelor's degree in environmental science and policy. Gotschall is currently a barista at Starbucks in Disneyland and plans to go into a profession that works to help the environment. In her free time, she enjoys going camping and hiking, as well as scuba diving. This year, the platform she will support is the Surfrider Foundation.

### **Kayla Sachiko Igawa (Gardena Evening Optimist)**

Kayla Sachiko Igawa is 23 years old and graduated from California State University, Long Beach with a bachelor's degree in hospitality management. She plans to continue working as an event coordinator and would like to eventually become a venue manager. In her spare time, Igawa enjoys playing basketball, volleyball, drawing, going to Disneyland, volunteering as a counselor at youth summer camps, and traveling. The platform she will support this year is the Alzheimer's Association.

### **Ariel Mei Imamoto (San Fernando Valley Japanese American Community Center)**

Ariel Mei Imamoto is 22 years old and graduated from California State University, Fullerton with a bachelor's degree in accounting. She currently works as an accounts payable specialist at Tillys, a clothing company. Imamoto plans to obtain a CPA license and pursue a career in public accounting. Her hobbies include playing basketball, yoga, hiking, and learning about her family history and heritage. She has chosen Active Minds as her platform this year.

**Emily Yuiko Ishida (East San Gabriel Valley Japanese Community Center)**

Emily Yuiko Ishida is 23 years old and recently graduated from California State University, Los Angeles with a bachelor's degree in biology. She currently works as an associate teacher at the East San Gabriel Valley Japanese Community Center's Kokoro no Sato Infant Care Center. Ishida plans to pursue a career in research related to medical psychology. In her free time, she enjoys photography, indoor rock climbing, hiking, watching Marvel movies, and anything Disney. This year, she will support Shelter's Right Hand as her platform.

**Kara Chizuru Ito (Orange County Nikkei Coordinating Council)**

Kara Chizuru Ito is 22 years old and recently graduated from Concordia University Irvine with a bachelor's degree in pre-physical therapy. Ito currently works as a sales educator at Lululemon, an athletic apparel store. She hopes to become a pediatric and orthopedic physical therapist and one day open her own practice. In her spare time, she enjoys playing board games and basketball, as well as volunteering at Cornerstone Pediatric Physical Therapy Clinic. Ito has chosen to support CHOC (Children's Hospital of Orange County) Children's Foundation, as her platform.

**Mia Masae Lopez (Venice Japanese Community Center & Venice-West Los Angeles JACL)**

Mia Masae Lopez is 25 years old and graduated from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona with a bachelor's degree in business administration – accounting. She currently works as a staff accountant at AEG Presents, a company specializing in live entertainment promotion. She plans to continue working and learning in the accounting and comedy fields. Her hobbies include sharing the art of henna tattoos, shooting portrait photography, and comedic improvisation. Lopez has chosen Tree People as her platform.

**Juli Yoshinaga (Japanese Restaurant Association of America)**

Juli Yoshinaga is 23 years old and graduated from California State University, Long Beach with a bachelor's degree in communication studies. She currently works at Warner Brothers Entertainment Group in multicultural marketing. She would like to continue working in her field and one day become a decision maker to ensure that diverse communities are being reflected on the big screen. Her hobbies include cooking with her mother and volunteering for the Japanese American Citizens League. Yoshinaga has chosen Women Make Movies as her platform.

The coronation event is set to be an evening filled with laughs and entertainment, with co-hosts actress Tamlyn Tomita and ABC Eyewitness News anchor David Ono. For queen coronation and dinner tickets, contact Gerald Fukui at 213-626-2778 or [coronation@niseiweek.org](mailto:coronation@niseiweek.org).

The 2019 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 10-18. For a calendar of events, log on to [www.NiseiWeek.org](http://www.NiseiWeek.org), call the Nisei Week Foundation office at 213.687.7193 or email [info@niseiweek.org](mailto:info@niseiweek.org). The Nisei Week office is located at 244 South San Pedro Street, Suite 303, Los Angeles, CA 90012.

###