

From Lisa Sakai: The Straight Stuff



Covid ennui is a thing. It is as pervasive as the virus it is named after, and, while not life-threatening, can certainly be debilitating. Everything starts to be viewed with a certain amount of boredom: food, work, TV, life; lethargy becomes the default. Does everyone know what I'm talking about? Raise your hand if you do, because if you just nod your head, I'll think you're napping.

So, how do we combat this fatigue? Unfortunately, it's the same way we talk ourselves into going to the gym – with conscious physical effort.

First: **MOVE**. One Sunday, not too long ago, I registered 728 steps for the ENTIRE day. Most of that was made up of trips from couch to refrigerator and couch to bathroom. This is not what I mean by move. Physically, get off the couch, get away from the screen, and go outside and just take a walk for 30 minutes. A body in motion stays in motion. You'll be amazed at how much better you feel afterwards.

Second: **ENGAGE**. Boredom is a state of mind. Get out of your routine and do something different. Learn something new and take your brain for a walk. Better yet, get involved in something bigger than yourself. When we're helping others, we re-frame our own existence into something that is meaningful and positive. Something like the USJC for example. (How did you like that segue?)

This year, the theme for USJC's focus is: Climate, Clean Energy, Environment, ESG (Environment Social Governance). Can we, the Midwest Region, contribute anything to these important topics?

I think we can. In the Midwest, there is a growing focus on agricultural sustainability, fresh water sustainability, smart city sustainability. Within our group and within our group's Contact Lists, I know we have some amazing brains out there who would be willing to share their knowledge and insights on these topics. Think about what you know and who you know and what interests you. Then be prepared to throw your ideas out there at our next meeting (date TBD but coming soon).

"The cure for boredom is curiosity."

— Dorothy Parker

Memorial Tribute to Irene



Irene Hirano Inouye
1948-2020

USJC members are invited to join family and friends for a special event, "Remembering Irene: A Memorial Tribute," at 7:00pm CST on April 28. The virtual program will feature remembrances of Irene's impact on and contributions to society through the countless lives she touched and the many causes she championed. Registration is available [here](#).

Irene Hirano at a USJC reception here in Chicago in 2012.

New Affinity Group Holds Well-Attended First Event

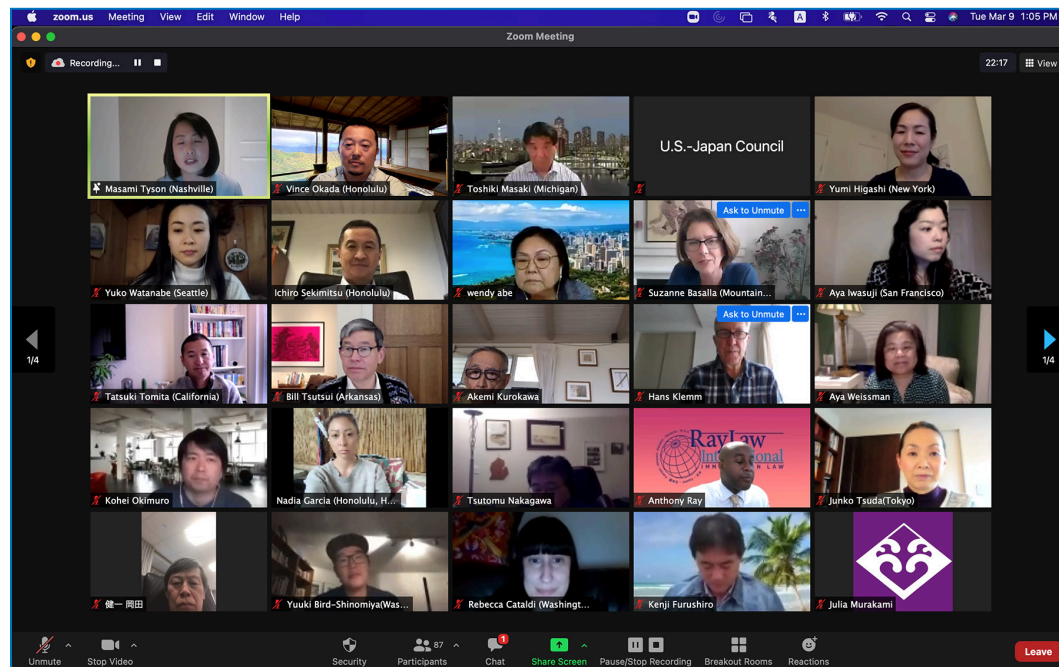
by Toshiki Masaki, JALD 2015

The USJC Shin-Issei Affinity Group held its virtual kick-off event titled “Shin-Issei Conversation” on March 9. The program was conceived and produced by eight members of the Steering Committee -- Yumi Higashi (NY), Aya Iwasuji (No CA), Masami Izumida Tyson (TN), **Toshiki Masaki** (MI, JALD '15), Vince Okada (HI), Ichiro Sekimitsu (HI), Tatsuki Tomita (No CA), and Yuko Watanabe (WA, ELP '17).

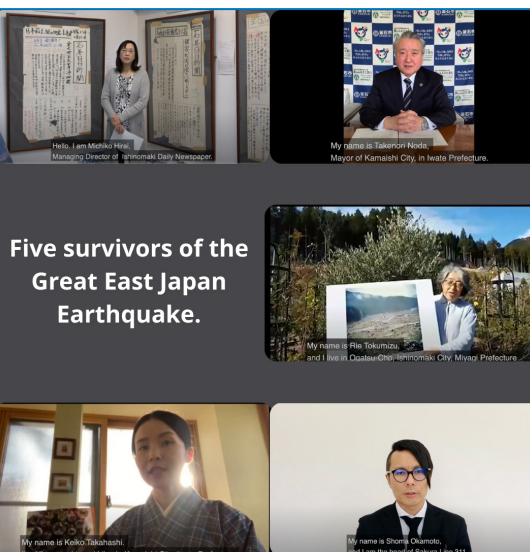
The focus of the program was to highlight the group members' diverse background (not at all bound by strict definition of Shin-Issei) and explain the group's desire to leverage their bilingual and bicultural expertise to contribute to USJC and the U.S.-Japan relationship. It featured brief description of each members' background, and discussions around meaning of “Shin-Issei” and the future direction of the group.

The program was attended by 146 people from throughout the U.S. and Japan, including 88 non-USJC members. Following the event, nearly 60 people expressed the desire to stay engaged in

the group. Building on this momentum, the group held a hanami-themed virtual networking event on April 9. If you are interested in joining the group, please contact shinisseigroup@gmail.com.



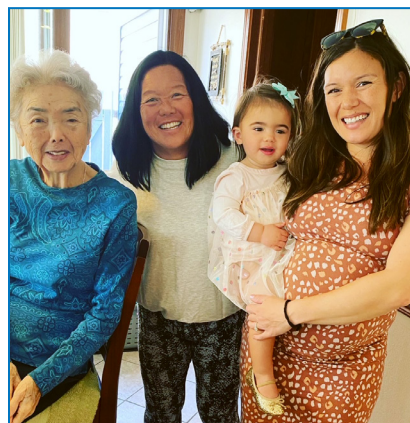
MEMBER NEWS



Five survivors of the Great East Japan Earthquake.

Ella McCann, International Program Manager for the Osaka Committee, Chicago Sister Cities International, was responsible for making Kizuna 10: Inochi Commemoration Ceremony happen. It was a very heart-felt tribute. Congrats, Ella!

Amy Houlihan (ELP 2013, below at right) said, “The past year has allowed us time to slow down and truly appreciate time with loved ones and our health. We are also grateful for our growing family as Layla becomes a big sister in May!” Four generations! From left Ruby (Amy's 91 year old Grammie, interned at Heart Mountain and Santa Anita Racetrack), Debbie (Amy's mom), Layla (Amy's daughter).



Rob Ohno (above left) has reason to be proud. Here he is with a VIP in the new PGA Tour Global Home, just opened in January. Also, his youngest son, Sam, was featured in [USA Today Golfweek!](#)

Kyle Nakamoto (JALD 2019) is featured on the Booz Allen website for his work on [COVID-19 vaccination workforce solutions](#). Thank you Kyle!