

JANUARY 2025



SEASONAL GREETINGS

Reflecting on our vibrant community, and welcoming new regional leadership

Message from Regional Chairs, Darin Arita and Julie Azuma:

Happy New Year! We are truly honored to step into the role of your new Chairs for the New York Region. As we embrace 2025, we are filled with gratitude and excitement for what lies ahead.

First, we want to extend our heartfelt thanks to USJC Board Members **Terry Suzuki** and **Rona Tison** for their exceptional leadership as Regional Chair and Vice Chair throughout 2024. Under their guidance, our region thrived with vibrant activities, including many memorable dinners and insightful experiences.

We also learned so much from our amazing members last year: **Kenshiro Uki** gave us a behind-the-scenes look at the art of ramen-making at Sun Noodle's factory. **Dr. Miho Urisaka** enlightened us on the profound connection between diet and the body's fascia, highlighting its impact on our health

and mobility. **Keishi Hotsuki** inspired us with lessons from his leadership journey as the former Chief Risk Officer of Morgan Stanley.

Looking ahead to 2025, we are thrilled to be supported by an incredible Regional Committee team, whose dedication makes all our events possible. We've started the year strong with our Shinnenkai on January 14, and next the lively Setsubun celebration on February 4.

But that's just the beginning. We are brimming with ideas and eager to explore new ways to connect, learn, and grow together as a community. If you have suggestions or would like to organize an event, we warmly invite you to reach out—we'd love to hear from you! Here's to a fantastic year ahead, filled with health, happiness, and shared moments. Thank you for being an essential part of this vibrant community. We hope to see you soon!

— Julie and Darin



EVENT RECAP: JANUARY

Kicking off the year with Shinnenkai

On January 14th, Council Leaders and Regional Chairs **Julie Azuma** and **Darin Arita** hosted New York & Vicinity members at Julie's residence for a celebratory shinnenkai.

The first event of the year was a great turn out, with members and non-member friends and family gathering to catch up over drinks and homey bites.

This was also the first event in which the region welcomed Julie and Darin as the new regional co-chairs. They shared their vision for the region in the year to come.



EVENT RECAP: DECEMBER

New York Region shares a family-style Bonenkai meal

The New York Region Steering Committee hosted a bonenkai on December 4, bringing together 50+ members, their families, and prospective members for an evening of celebration and connection.

Held at Dim Sum Palace in Midtown, the event featured a delicious selection of Chinese cuisine and provided a warm and welcoming atmosphere for attendees to reflect on the year's achievements and strengthen community ties.

Thanks to USJC Council Leaders **Julie Azuma** and **Spark Nakamura** for their efforts in organizing this memorable gathering, which set the stage for an exciting and impactful 2025.

As the last event of 2024, this gathering was also the last event before the transitioning of our Regional Chairs.

*A very special thank you to USJC Board Members **Terry Suzuki** and **Rona Tison** for their years of serving as Regional Chair and Vice Chair, and for creating the strong community foundation that we have today.*

We wish them luck as they expand their attention and support to the greater USJC organization.



EVENT RECAP: SEPTEMBER

USJC Launches the “Visionary Voices Leadership Series”: Featuring Keishi Hotsuki as Inaugural Speaker in NYC



On September 12, USJC launched a new leadership series highlighting trailblazers within its network who will share valuable insights and career advice. Kicking off the series: Keishi Hotsuki, the longest-serving Chief Risk Officer on Wall Street.

After 12 years as CRO at Morgan Stanley, he now serves as Senior Advisor and sits on the Global Advisory Board at the Japanese financial giant MUFG. Over 70 attendees, both in-person and virtual, from the business, government, nonprofit and academic sectors had the opportunity to hear Mr. Hotsuki's inspiring story of resilience, cultural adaptation, and leadership.

Mr. Hotsuki took the audience through his personal journey, starting with his challenges with the English language growing up in Japan to his graduate student days at Carnegie Mellon



University and his navigation of Merrill Lynch through the Global Financial Crisis, all of which eventually led to his becoming the youngest member of Morgan Stanley's Operating Committee under former CEO James Gorman. Mr. Hotsuki peppered his chat with his trademark humor, making for a relaxed evening for all.

The fireside chat was moderated by USJC Executive Vice President **Fred Katayama** (JALD '23). The event was co-hosted by MUFG with opening remarks delivered by its Executive Chairman Masatoshi Komoriya (MUFG Americas Holdings Corporation).

Special thanks to Noriko Furuhashi (MUFG Bank, Ltd.) and the New York regional committee for organizing this event.

EVENT RECAP: JULY

Learning about the Impact of “Food as Medicine”

On July 20, the USJC New York Region hosted a lecture exploring the connection between farming practices in the United States, food quality, and our physical health. The event featured USJC Council Leader **Dr. Miho Urisaka** (Orthopedic Movement Physical Therapy) and her business partners from Cucumber Hill Farm, an independently run farm in Putnam Valley, New York. Members and guests gained valuable insights into the importance of healthy food intake from the cellular level and the differences in agricultural practices between the United States and Japan.

Guests were also treated to special collaboration drink from Cucumber Hill Farm and ITO EN, provided by USJC Board Member **Rona Tison**– a perfect refreshment for a hot summer day.

After the event, attendees were invited to a no-host dinner at Shuya Ramen, with a special menu featuring ‘nitamago’ made with eggs from Cucumber Hill Farm.

Special thanks to USJC Associates **Mari Iwahara** and **Haruka Kokaze** for their key roles in organizing another great event.



Upcoming Events

Join us for Setsubun Soiree 2025:

Non-Member Family
and Friends Welcome!

Tuesday, February 4th
@ Tenri Cultural Institute
(43A West 13th Street)

[RSVP HERE](#)

Join us for our annual regional event, to drive out the demons and welcome good fortune into the new year!

Open to members and non-member friends and family, Setsubun Soirée is a great way to reconnect with USJC members as well as the greater Japanese American community in the region. Festive attire is encouraged.

\$35 per person (\$20 per student)

Non-member friends and family are welcome. Please register each guest individually to secure their spots!



Announcements

Announcing the JAA Honjo Graduate Scholarship

**Deadline to apply:
February 17, 2025 @ Noon**



Generously funded by the Honjo Foundation and named after USJC Council Leader and Sponsor **Mr. Yosuke Honjo**, the **JAA-Honjo Graduate Scholarship** is open to full-time graduate students enrolled at an accredited university in the New York area. The awardees are interested and involved in furthering U.S.-Japan Relations. This scholarship does not include those in medicine, music, studio or performing arts.

The JAA are currently accepting applications for 2025 Scholarships. The deadline is February 17, 2025 at noon. Please click the link below to access the application.

For more application details about 2025 Honjo Graduate Scholarship, see [the JAA application guidelines here](#). Please spread the word as this is a great opportunity for our community!

**Do you have news, announcements, or stories
that you'd like to share with the community?**

Please email Susan McCormac (susan@japanculture-nyc.com) and Mari Iwahara (mari@sibling.info) with details so that we may include it in our next Regional Newsletter.