



# JAWA Connections

*The Japanese American Women Alumnae of UC Berkeley Newsletter*

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**Japanese American  
Women Alumnae of UC  
Berkeley**

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## Welcome!

Dear JAWAUCB Friends,

This fall semester, we celebrated the return of students to campus. Their energy and spirit inspire and bring hope as we spend another year marked by the ongoing effects of Covid-19.



JAWAUCB has a legacy of advocacy through cooperation and a generosity of spirit in difficult times. We trace our roots back to the 1920's and 30's when Japanese American students at Cal could not find housing due to racial discrimination. In 1937, after ten years of fundraising, our founders bought a house on Hearst Avenue that became both a dorm and gathering place for Nikkei women. In 1967, when housing discrimination was no longer a problem, they sold the house, and its proceeds were given to the UC Regents for the Japanese Women Alumni Scholarship Fund Endowment. This legacy motivates us to connect with and support future generations of students and alumni.

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Outgoing Board Chair, Dr. Lisa Hirai Tsuchitani, embodies the characteristics of our founders. Her intimate knowledge of the University through her teaching in the Asian American and Asian Diaspora Program (AAADS) in the Ethnic Studies Department and working on various academic committees focused on Asian American students have expanded and given a human touch to our connections to the University. When the pandemic lockdown hit UC students, Lisa bore witness to the challenges they faced. In turn, we wrote to you asking for donations to UC to assist struggling students. Knowing how the Asian Hate outcry affected students, we spoke out against racism and to stop Asian hate. Lisa's organizational talents and ability to synthesize big ideas and concepts made for a smooth process as the Board worked through a strategic planning process that reflects our vision of an expanded connection with Cal and aspirations for JAWAUCB in the 21st Century. To date, we have completed a statement of purpose and of core values which we will present at our annual awards meeting this spring. These are just a few examples of the Board's work under Lisa's leadership. We appreciated her leadership and steadfast support during her tenure.

Recently, Stacy Kono, JAWACUB Board vice-chair, wrote, "I joined the JAWA board because I am interested in being part of a multigenerational community of women leaders to support the next generation and uplift our community's history at UC Berkeley and beyond." She captured the uniqueness of JAWAUCB and the broad spectrum of its members' professions and cultural and community interests. For example, at a past awards luncheon, I heard one member speak who was the first and only woman in a Ph.D. chemistry program in the '50s. At that same event, I was delighted sit to across from a well-known artist and from the youngest woman to serve as president of the League of Women Voters of Berkeley, Albany, and Emeryville. JAWACUB welcomes all women and men with an interest in supporting and inspiring Asian American women in the spirit of our founding Japanese American alumnae.

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Under the guidance of board member, Julie Nishihara, JAWA has a new website which will make its debut on January 1, 2022. It will be a good way to stay in touch. The website address will remain the same: [www.JAWAUCB.org](http://www.JAWAUCB.org).

Grace Morizawa

Dr. Grace Morizawa, Chair

JAWAUCB Board of Directors

*Newsletter editor note: Grace is a retired elementary school teacher and principal, and currently works as the Education Coordinator for the National Japanese Historical Society. She received her Doctorate in Education (Ed.D.) from Cal in 2014.*

## Visit our Updated Website!

Thanks to the hard work of Julie Nishihara and Hallie Trang, our website has been updated. We now have a list of our past awardees, more information about our history, and photos from previous events.

In January, take a look at: [www.JAWAUCB.org](http://www.JAWAUCB.org)

## About Us

The Japanese American Women Alumnae of UC Berkeley (JAWAUCB) is a chartered chapter of the California Alumni Association (CAA). Our mission is to “inspire and support Asian American women as learners, leaders, and contributors to local and global communities in the spirit of our founding Japanese American women alumnae.” Since 1970 our scholarship program has granted over 160 undergraduate and 70 graduate student scholarships to Asian American women. We also have sponsored a variety of events and activities with campus partners such as the UC Berkeley Nikkei Student Union, the Asian American & Asian Diaspora Studies Program, and the Center for Race and Gender to engage and support current students and alumni of UC Berkeley.

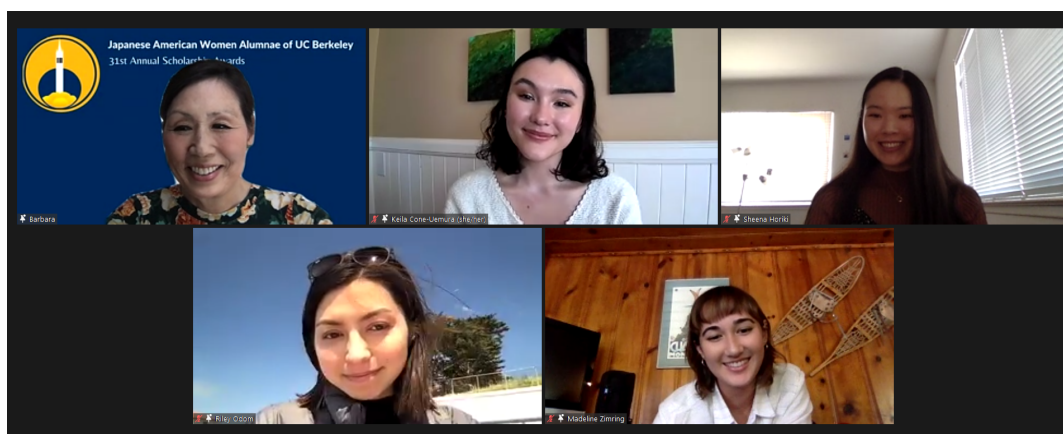
# JAWA UCB's 2021 Annual Scholarship Awards Event

By Stacy Kono

The JAWAUCB board was excited to host its 31st annual scholarship award event (a virtual event for a second time) on April 17, 2021. Over 50 alumni and broader community members joined to celebrate the inspiring work of our scholarship recipients and to celebrate the leadership of Japanese American women in our communities.



For our Outstanding Alumna Award, we recognized the tireless activist, Chizu Omori, who attended UC Berkeley in the 1950s where she became active in the civil rights movement. She was named a plaintiff in the William Hohri class action suit which sued the US Government for injuries suffered as a result of WWII exclusion and imprisonment of Japanese Americans that went before the Supreme Court in 1987. She also co-produced the award-winning documentary, *Rabbit in the Moon*, with her sister Emiko, chronicling the history of political tensions and generational divisions within the Japanese American community as a result of WWII incarceration. JAWAUCB selected Chizu for this year's award for her courage and tireless work for civil rights.

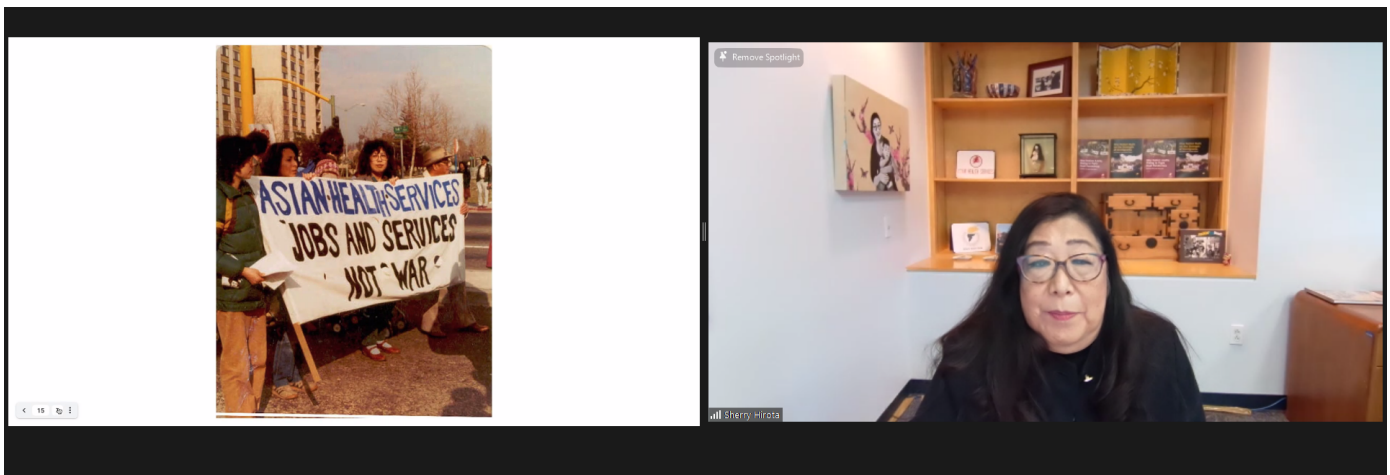


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We then honored our 2021 Scholarship Recipients: Keila Cone-Uemura, Sheena Horiki, Riley Odom and Madeline Zimring, who we highlight below. We congratulate our scholarship recipients for their commitment to their studies.

Our featured keynote was Sherry Hirota, the CEO of Asian Health Services (AHS) in Oakland and Co-Chair of One Nation Commission. Sherry talked about first coming to AHS as a patient and then joining the staff as an office manager. She shared how AHS was founded to address the needs of communities in Oakland Chinatown. Its mission and programs for language and health care access was shaped by “the idealism and advocacy of many UC Berkeley and local community activists.”



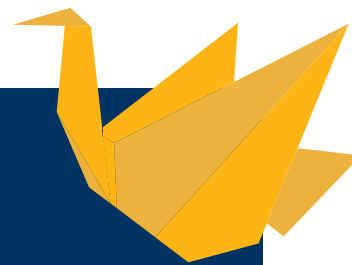
Sherry then spoke about her experience at AHS in 2020 “facing the perfect storm of immigrant bashing, COVID-10 and anti-Asian attacks.” Since then, her work has expanded to advocating for larger policies to address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on Asian Americans, to fight anti-Asian violence, and to ensure our democracy represents all of our communities. Sherry’s talk inspired an interest in our audience to get more engaged and support larger efforts for social justice.

This year’s event highlighted the connection between our education at UC Berkeley and our involvement and impact on our broader community. You can watch the full recording here: [tinyurl.com/JAWAUCB2021](https://tinyurl.com/JAWAUCB2021)

# Please Save the Date!

Saturday, March 12, 2022

We have high hopes for our 2022 Annual Spring Scholarship and Awards Luncheon! Right now, we are set to hold an in-person luncheon at Cal's Alumni House on campus. We will send definitive news in January. Our spring event will feature keynote speaker, Patricia Wakida, Wasabi Press proprietor, artist, writer, and community historian. We will honor our 2022 scholarship awardees and our 2022 Outstanding Alumna, Midori Kono Thiel, Japan arts specialist and calligrapher. Watch for more news!



## Spotlight on Our 2021 JAWAUCB Scholarship Awardees

By Barbara Kawamoto

Our 2021 JAWAUCB Scholarship awardees are continuing the tradition of making a positive impact on our lives. We were captivated to hear them share their Cal journeys at our Annual Scholarship Awards meeting. This year, we honored undergraduates Keila Cone-Uemura, Sheena Horiki and Riley Odom, along with graduate student, Madeline Zimring. The following are some highlights of what they shared, and some thrilling updates since our meeting.



**Keila Cone-Uemura** spoke about her studies in English and Theater Performance Studies. It was exciting to hear about her desire to continue writing stories about Japanese Americans and their families, while using theater to explore multigenerational stories. Keila has an exciting addition to her resume. Last summer, she wrote a mini musical about the architect, Julia Morgan, part of a competition for the Berkeley Playhouse. Keila's piece was chosen and will be fully staged and performed at the Playhouse's Annual Gala in Spring 2022. It is her first staged musical and we are extremely proud and happy for her!

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**Sheena Horiki** shared her interest in cognitive neuroscience while she was in her senior year and studying molecular and cell biology. Sheena appreciated JAWAUCB's scholarship as it supported her research at Cal, where she completed an honors thesis on brain recovery after injury. During the meeting, she shared her hope to work in a healthcare setting or in a cognitive research lab. Kudos to Sheena, who is now an assistant Clinical Research Coordinator (CRC) in Neurology at the UCSF School of Medicine.



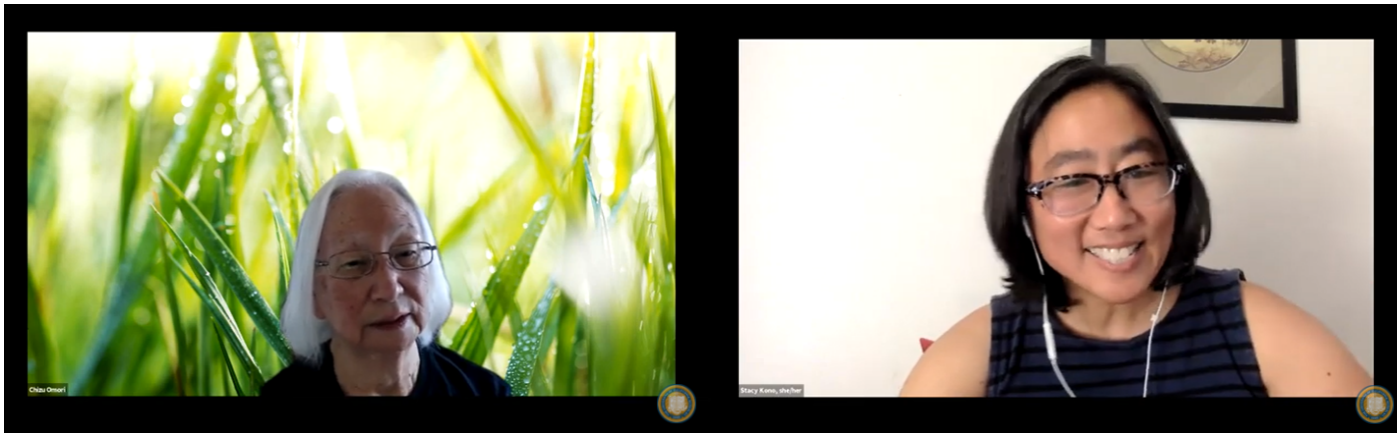
**Riley Odom** grew up in a predominantly-white small town in Montana. Berkeley gave her the opportunity to connect with her Japanese American roots, and then study and work in Tokyo for a summer. Riley now resides in New York City, where she's launching her career in financial services. She's glad to report, "I absolutely love it!"



A life-long passion for languages led **Madeline Zimring** to study French, German and Italian literature. Her undergraduate thesis was focused on refugee literature. She received her M.A. in Modern Languages at Oxford. Now, as our graduate awardee, she is working on her PhD in Comparative Literature. Following grad school, she hopes to work as an interpreter or a translator or teach at the college level.

Congratulations to all of our talented awardees. We look forward to hearing more updates about them as they progress in their careers and interests.





## 2021 Homecoming, JAWA Highlights

By Lynn Nakada

Over 5000 alumni and parents in-person, with an additional 2400 virtually world-wide, participated in UC Berkeley's Reunion and Parents Weekend at Homecoming from October 1-3, 2021. JAWAUCB, as an alumni chapter, hosted a virtual lecture, "Continuing the Legacy of Activism with Chizu Omori," on Saturday, October 2. In conversation with JAWAUCB Vice Chair Stacy Kono '95, Chizu Omori '54 talked about the people, organizations, and movements that have inspired her activism over the years. Awarded by JAWAUCB as its 2021 Outstanding Alumna because of her strong commitment to civil and human rights, Chizu continues her activism today in support of immigrant rights and Black reparations movements.

If you missed our presentation, you can view it at the following Zoom link:  
[tinyurl.com/JAWAHomecoming2021](https://tinyurl.com/JAWAHomecoming2021)



On Friday, October 1, Past Chair Lisa Hirai Tsuchitani '92, MA '94, PhD '00, was awarded the Spirit of 1868 Volunteer Award, which acknowledges alumni and friends who have demonstrated outstanding volunteer leadership and accomplishments in support of the university's philanthropic and outreach efforts. A tenured lecturer in the Asian American & Asian Diaspora Studies Program, Lisa was recognized for her leadership of JAWAUCB, the Japanese American Studies Advisory Committee, and the

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Asian American and Pacific Islander Standing Committee (AAPISC), among many other contributions to her alma mater. Lisa was joined by her son, Kohei '25 and friends from JAWAUCB, The Library Advisory Board, and AAPISC, as well as Chancellor Carol T. Christ and members of the Cal Alumni Association Board of Directors and the UC Berkeley Foundation Board of Trustees. Upon accepting her award, Lisa graciously acknowledged her family, friends, and elders for teaching her “the importance of centering humility and kindness in all that we do, courageously and unapologetically.” Congratulations, Lisa!

## New Board Member Bios

By Carol Tateishi

We are very pleased to introduce Janice Koyama and Sayuri Takagawa, our new board members. Their selection reflects our ongoing efforts to seek a broad spectrum of intergenerational experiences, wisdom, and perspectives to inform our work.



**Janice Koyama** was born in Paris, Texas and raised in Pasadena. She graduated from Cal in 1966 with a BA degree in History/Political Science and a Masters of Library Sciences in 1968. After graduation, she worked as a reference librarian at Bancroft Library, the UCLA College Library and CSU Long Beach. Janice moved back to Cal as Head of Moffit Undergraduate Library and returned to UCLA as Assistant/Associate University Librarian, retiring as interim University Librarian. During her career, Janice received numerous professional awards and recognitions at Cal:

Campus Management Fellow with the Vice-Chancellor for Undergraduate Affairs; Acting Assistant Provost, College of Letters and Science; induction into the Order of the Golden Bear; and co-chair of the Chancellor’s Advisory Committee on Asian American Affairs. Honors at UCLA include the Asian Pacific Alumni Distinguished Staff Award and upon retirement in 2004, Emeriti status by the UCLA Faculty Committee. At the state and national level, Janice has served as President, California Academic and Research Librarians; Governor’s appointee for two terms to the California Library Services Board;

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President, California Library Association; California Academic and Research Librarian of the Year in 1991; and a member of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges Evaluation Team. At the community level, Janice was President of the Board of Directors of the Japanese American National Library in San Francisco, and Chair of the Board of Directors, LEAP, Inc. (Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics). Janice joined the JAWAUCB board as an opportunity to be of service to Cal and the Japanese American community, to work with intergenerational Japanese American women and to be part of educational efforts that address Japanese American and AAPI issues. She sees JAWAUCB as engaged in developing new directions and feels it is a great time to be involved with its ongoing success. Her personal interests include Sogetsu ikebana, jazz and classical music, playing the piano, art (specifically Oaxacan wood carvings, Japanese dorei bells and woodblock prints) and art history and, of course, reading, especially historical fiction.



**Sayuri Takagawa** graduated from Cal in 2013 with a major in Peace & Conflict Studies and a minor in Global Poverty and Justice. After graduating, Sayuri worked with MISSEY (Motivating, Inspiring, Supporting, Serving Sexually Exploited Youth) in Oakland as a youth advocate and training coordinator to help create curriculum and conduct trainings to service providers, law enforcement and community members. Later, she attended UC, Hastings College, receiving her J.D. with a concentration in Criminal Law in 2019. Currently,

Sayuri serves as a Deputy Public Defender at Biggam, Christensen and Minsloff in the Santa Cruz County Public Defender's Office. Sayuri is joining the board to help continue the legacy of advocacy that JAWAUCB is rooted in, believing that JAWA is a unique and resilient organization that supports future scholars to obtain higher education while reminding future generations of the history of struggles that students of Asian descent have endured. In connecting her Cal days and joining the JAWA board, she says, "UC Berkeley was the beginning of my academic career that allowed me to grow as a person, scholar and advocate."

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I hope to be part of an organization to provide my own background in further preserving this history of Japanese American students at UC Berkeley.” In addition to Sayuri’s professional interests and work, she was an international competitor in Olympic-Style Taekwondo, ranked 4th in the US in 2019, enjoys surfing, photography and cooking and is fluent in Japanese.

## Alumni News

By Grace Morizawa

Nina F. Ichikawa’s travel essay, “Looking for a Gold-Rush Town Named Chinese Camp,” was recently published in the New York Times. Ichikawa takes readers on a family outing to Gold Rush Country in California. Her story expands the traditional Gold Rush Country tourist excursion to examine the history of diversity and racism embedded in this historical region. Motivated by a childhood memory of a school trips to Fort Sutter and other California historical sites, Ichikawa comments, “We never saw an Asian or Mexican face among the historical re-enactors, nor did we learn exactly who those pioneers were or how they came into their wealth and land holdings. Our absence in that history told me that we belonged in the city, which is where I returned with relief after those field trips. Now I’m suddenly curious to revisit sites like Sutter’s Fort and check their story against my family’s own 124 years in California.” Thanks to Ichikawa’s writing, the next time you visit the famous California Gold Rush Country, you will have this broader and more inclusive account of the “golden hills of California.”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/15/travel/california-asian-history.html>

Adena Ishii was elected as a Director for the California League of Women Voters in July, 2021. She served as president of the League of Women Voters of Berkeley, Albany, and Emeryville from 2017 to 2019. She is the first woman of color and the youngest ever to hold this position. As president her goal was to help the league become more inclusive and diverse. Under her leadership the chapter membership grew by 50 percent including people of color and women under 30. The board also became reflective of this multigenerational and diverse new membership. Presently she serves as the Director for Voter Services for the League of Women Voters of Berkeley, Albany, and Emeryville as well as a Director for the state league.

<https://www.kqed.org/news/11831950/how-student-adena-ishii-made-history-with-the-league-of-women-voters>



# **A Tribute to Margaret Koide Kusaba**

## **Class of '48**

**By Leslie Tsukamoto**

JAWAUCB recently lost one of our longest serving board members, Margaret Koide Kusaba. During her 23 years on the board, Margaret served as chair, recording secretary, and treasurer and retired from the board in 2015.

Margaret was attending Berkeley High School in 1942 when her family was forcibly removed to Topaz, Utah. While at Topaz, Margaret finished high school and with the help of American Friends was able to leave Topaz to attend Brigham Young University and the University of Utah. On her return to Berkeley, Margaret enrolled at UCB where she obtained a degree in Social Welfare in 1948 and was employed as a social worker in Oakland, Santa Rosa and Contra Costa County. Margaret retired from social work to care for her two children, but in 1964 decided to reenter the workforce and earned her teaching credential at San Francisco State and spent the next 20 years teaching elementary school in San Francisco.

In 2018, Margaret was honored as JAWAUCB's Outstanding Alumna in recognition of her academic career, career accomplishments and contributions to the community.

# JOIN US!

Please consider joining the Japanese American Women Alumnae of UC Berkeley!

For a \$20 annual membership fee, you will:

- Join a community of Japanese American women and friends with common interests and experiences and further the legacy of Japanese American women at UC Berkeley.
- Know you are supporting current Asian American women undergraduate and graduate students at Berkeley to reach their educational goals.
- Receive advance word of special community and educational events on campus.

The Japanese American Women Alumnae of UC Berkeley (JAWAUCB) exists to (1) present scholarship and fellowship awards from the JAWAUCB Endowment Fund established by agreement with the Regents of UC Berkeley; (2) promote donations, gifts, and bequests for continued growth of the JAWAUCB Endowment Fund for student awards at UC Berkeley; and (3) support research and educational initiatives focused on or related to Asian American women. Learn more at [www.jawaucb.org](http://www.jawaucb.org)



## JAWAUCB Board Members

### Elected Officers

- Grace Morizawa Chair
- Stacy Kono Vice Chair
- Lisa Hirai Tsuchitani Immediate Past Chair
- Nancy Arata-Fong Treasurer
- Kay Yatabe Recording Secretary
- Leslie Tsukamoto Corr. Secretary

### Appointed Officers

- Leslie Tsukamoto Historian
- Nancy Arata-Fong Nominations Chair
- Barbara Kawamoto Scholarship Chair
- Julie Nishihara Website Administrator
- Betty Kano Lunch Reservation Coord.
- Nina Fallenbaum Ichikawa Membership Chair
- Vacant Communications and Publicity
- Lynn Nakada NSU Liaison
- Carol Tateishi Newsletter Editor

### Directors at Large

- Ruth Ichinaga
- Adena Ishii
- Janice Koyama
- Joyce Takahashi
- Sayuri Takagawa

## Newsletter Team

- Editor, Carol Tateishi
- Adena Ishii
- Leslie Tsukamoto
- Grace Morizawa
- Stacy Kono