



## **Japanese American Memorial Scholarship**

*Awarded by the Greater Kent Historical Society*

Before preparing this application, review the criteria outlined below. The application must be received by **March 31, 2024**. Please address your application to the GKHS Scholarship Committee. You can submit your application [on our website](#) or send your application via email or mail to:

Email: [admin@kenthistoricalmuseum.org](mailto:admin@kenthistoricalmuseum.org)

Mailing address: Greater Kent Historical Society  
855 E. Smith St.  
Kent, WA 98030

### **Scholarship Background and Information**

The Japanese American Memorial Scholarship was created through the generosity of community members of Kent. The purpose is to provide students the opportunity to pursue studies to advance social justice in any field at any accredited post high school institution.

The scholarship will be awarded to a student studying in any field, with a focus on social justice. The scholarship is a one-time payment of \$2,000 and will be paid directly to the institution.

Applicants must be a graduating senior attending any Kent high school, public and private, OR graduating seniors who have a Kent mailing address. We are looking for applicants with passion, drive, and curiosity.

### **Required Application Materials**

The following items must be included with the application:

1. Applicant Background form.
2. Unofficial transcript (or latest report card).
3. Two letters of recommendation: one school-based and one community-based.
4. *Essay*: Describe the consequences of Executive Order 9066 on local Japanese Americans, how the effects are still relevant today, and how you will work to protect the constitutional, human and civil rights for everyone in America.  
*300 words recommended; maximum 500 words.*

## **Brief Background Information About the Japanese Americans**

James Higashida was the first Japanese student enrolled in the Kent School District in 1904, at the age of 19. He had been working on farm and learned how to speak English, but wanted to learn how to read and write, so he began in first grade. He later became a distinguished dentist in Seattle.

In 1868, the first Japanese arrived in Hawaii to work the pineapple and sugar cane fields.

The Gentleman's Agreement was signed in 1908, which ended immigration of Japanese laborers.

The Alien Land Laws in 1913, prohibit Asians from purchasing or owning land.

Through leasing options, Japanese farmed and raised dairy cows. They built restaurants, dry goods stores, dry cleaning and tailor shops. At one point, they dominated the dairy industry and Pike Place Market produce.

By this time, the members of the Japanese American communities were successfully engaged in a variety of businesses and industries.

In 1924, all immigration from Japan was stopped.

October to November 1941, the Monson report concluded that Japanese Americans were loyal and would pose little threat to the U.S. in the event of war.

December 7, 1941, Japan bombs Pearl Harbor and the FBI arrests the Issei leadership of the Japanese communities along the West Coast and in Hawaii, without due process.

Executive Order 9066 was signed on February 19, 1942, allowing the military to exclude anyone of Japanese descent without trial or hearing from the West Coast. This included people with 1/16<sup>th</sup> Japanese heritage.

March 1942, the first Civil Exclusion Order was issued to the residents of Bainbridge Island and forced them from their homes to Manzanar, CA. Four Japanese Americans challenged these exclusion orders all the way to the US Supreme Court: Fred Korematsu, Mitsuye Endo, Gordon Hirabayashi, and Minoru Yasui.

1943-1945, the US Army drafts and accepts volunteers in the segregated units: 100<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion, 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team, and Military Intelligence Service.

1945-1946 War ends and the gates to the concentration camps were open, and each survivor was given a bus ticket and \$25.00 to start life anew.

Additional resources include but not limited to: [densho.org](https://densho.org), [janm.org](https://janm.org), [jacl.org](https://jacl.org)