

## ALOHA, FRIENDS!

I am excited to be here in the lovely Portland area and back in the Pacific Northwest! I am truly honored to be serving the Oregon community as the new Executive Director of the Japanese American Museum of Oregon and continuing to share our history with the world. I have been involved in preserving Japanese American history for the last 16 years, starting with my service as part of Friends of Minidoka and most recently with the National Park Service at Honouliuli National Historic Site.



It is an honor to be able to help steward our ancestors' stories and make sure they are not forgotten in the larger fabric of American history.

For those of you who do not know me well, I am a Yonsei/ Gosei and second generation Korean American; I carry the last names of both sides of my family. My mother is an immigrant from Seoul, Korea. On my father's side, we immigrated from the Hiroshima area to Hawai'i, then to the continental U.S. My great grandmother was born in Honolulu and my great grandfather was Issei. My great grandparents fell in love in eastern Washington and ran away to Oregon where they were able to marry and start their family. My grandfather and my older great aunts and uncle were born in Oregon. My grandfather specifically was born in The Dalles, before my family moved down to Southern California. During World War II, a majority of my family were incarcerated at Manzanar. I also had family incarcerated at Minidoka who then settled in Ontario after the war; their surname was Sugai.

I grew up in Idaho where I got involved with the Minidoka National Historic Site and continued my service working

# JAPANESE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF OREGON

SUMMER 2023 | VOLUME 23 | ISSUE 1

## A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

On behalf of the Japanese American Museum of Oregon, we are thrilled to welcome Hanako Wakatsuki-Chong as our new Executive Director. Since her arrival on June 6, a special Executive Transition Team has worked with Hanako to share their collective knowledge and history. We look forward to supporting Hanako in the development of a vision for JAMO's future.

The JAMO Board of Directors expresses our gratitude and appreciation to the executive search committee for their contributions throughout the hiring process. Along with consultant Joe Wahl and Associates, we sincerely thank committee members Chisao Hata, Connie Masuoka, Peggy Nagae, Ted Nakamura, Curtis Suyematsu, and Matt Tsugawa for all their work. Additionally, we extend our thanks to Mark Takiguchi for his role as Interim Deputy Director during this transitional period.

or volunteering at Tule Lake National Monument, Manzanar National Historic Site, Amache National Historic Site, Kooskia Internment Camp, and Honouliuli National Historic Site.

Coming to Portland feels like coming home to a community that I have known forever—one that is special to me and just feels like family. I appreciate all the work that Lynn Fuchigami Parks, JAMO staff (Kiyo, James, Lucy, Elissa, Erin, and Chisao), and the Board of Directors have done to get the museum to where it is today. I can only hope that I will be able to serve the community as effectively as my predecessor and I promise to do so to the best of my abilities.

# COLLECTIONS

## THE OUCHIDA FAMILY COLLECTION

Hideo Ouchida was a boy of 15 when he entered Minidoka with his parents, Shigeta and Shitsuka, and four siblings. They were assigned to Block 39, Barrack 2, Unit E—a barren room furnished only with a stove, army cots, and a bare light bulb hanging from the ceiling. To make their space more habitable and escape the boredom and depression of life in camp, Shigeta and Shitsuka became prolific craft makers. Artmaking tended to be a communal activity in camp, with many taking art classes and showing their work in exhibits. While his parents were making artwork, Hideo was busy playing sports and building model airplanes.

The family saved the crafts they made at camp, along with templates and some of the raw materials. Hideo Ouchida donated this extraordinary collection of over 120 objects to the Japanese American Museum of Oregon in 2022.

Shitsuka was an expert at crafting jewelry out of tiny shells, bits of ribbon, and metal found around Minidoka. Shell brooches and corsages were first crafted at Tule Lake but later were also made at Topaz and Minidoka. Shells were dug up, sorted, bleached, and painted, then arranged into flower shapes to replace real corsages at weddings and funerals.

Shigeta's handiwork included small drawings on reclaimed boards, carved birds mounted on greasewood branches, and over 55 carved animals embellished with paint and scrap metal. Not only did Shigeta and Shitsuka save many examples of their handiwork, but they also kept the supplies used to create them: tools, pins, string, wire, cardboard templates, paintbrushes, and 14 jars of carefully bleached and sorted shells.

The Japanese American Museum of Oregon is grateful to the Ouchida family for this generous donation, a testament to the resourcefulness and creativity of Japanese Americans forced into imprisonment. With very little to work with, they embodied the spirit of gaman—bearing the unbearable with dignity—by beautifying their living spaces and creating a sense of normalcy through these crafts.



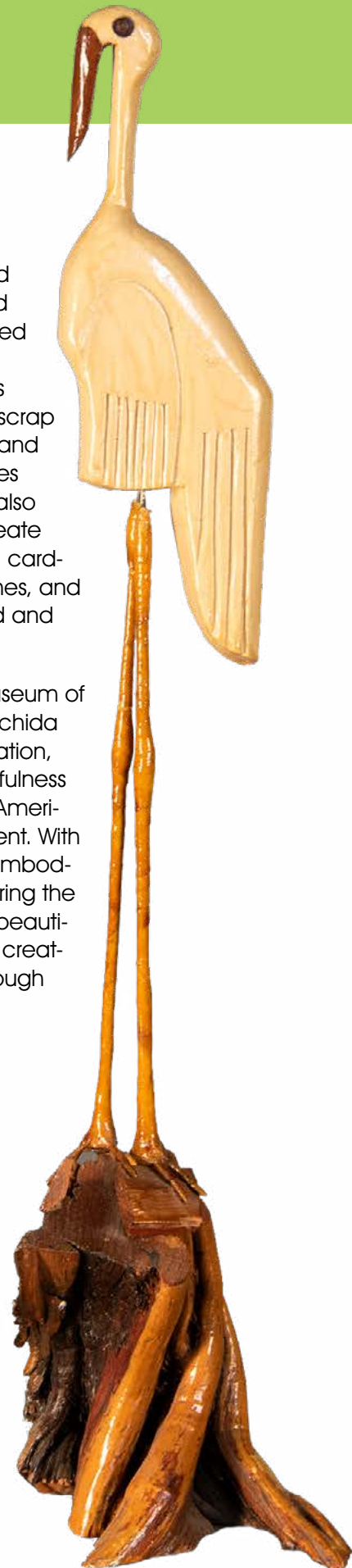
From left to right:

Shell brooches created by Shitsuka Ouchida.

Jars of bleached and sorted shells.

Templates and homemade tools.

A whimsical crane carved by Shigeta Ouchida from reclaimed wood.





# EDUCATION

Volunteer docent Marleen Wallingford leads a tour through the museum.

In April, the Japanese American Museum of Oregon held its first round of new docent training. The goal was to support docents in developing the knowledge and skills needed to lead museum tours and was developed with the guidance of current docents. The Docent Advisory Committee helped determine what to include in the printed manuals and which skills and concepts to prioritize in the training series. A huge thank you to Amy Peterson, Joni Kimoto Reeves, Marleen Wallingford, and Rie Nakanishi—I couldn't have done it without their contributions.

During the training, we covered some basics of museum interpretation, strategies to engage different audiences, ways to support visitors as they process the content of the museum, and more. Several committee members also joined the sessions to pass along their advice and expertise. At the end of April, three new people joined our team of docents—Mary Crull, Joyce Kikkawa, and Raynette Yoshida. We are thrilled to have their support! Board Member Raynette Yoshida describes the experience:



*Elissa Dingus created a user-friendly training model for all skill levels. The lessons and materials were detailed, organized, and succinct, including handouts and PowerPoint presentations. Lessons are well-paced, there's time for short breaks, student interaction, facilitated Q&A's, and practice tours. Each individual feels valued and appreciated for their volunteerism regardless of their skill and experience. Personal style is encouraged to connect and engage with visitors, have fun and be open to inviting guests to become Friends of JAMO.*

We plan to hold another round of these training sessions in the fall. Please reach out if you might be interested in attending!

—Elissa Dingus, [elissa@jamo.org](mailto:elissa@jamo.org)



## A SENSE OF PLACE: THE ART OF GEORGE TSUTAKAWA

**September 7–December 31, 2023**

The Japanese American Museum of Oregon presents an exhibition of artwork by renowned Seattle artist George Tsutakawa. His paintings and sculpture are inspired by his life in the Pacific Northwest and informed by his Japanese heritage.

Born in Seattle and educated in Japan, Tsutakawa was a painter, teacher, and sculptor. His public art works, including his signature fountains, can be seen in cities across the U.S., Canada, and Japan. Visit us this fall to learn more about George Tsutakawa and his work.

*Votive Sculpture No. 1. Courtesy of the Tsutakawa Family.*



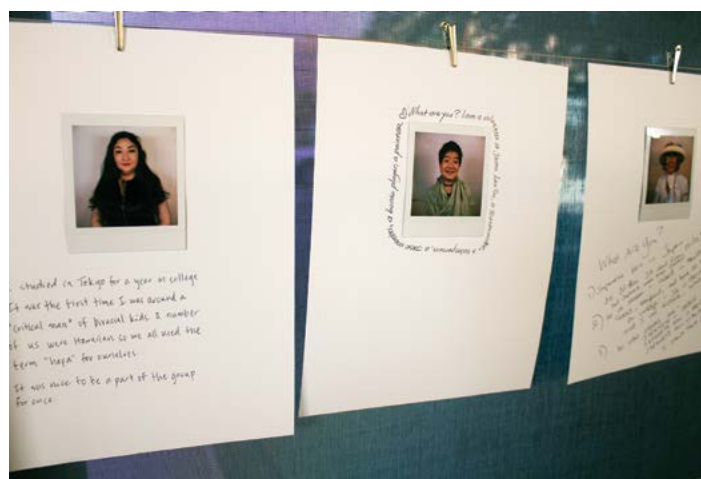
## HAPA.ME: 15 YEARS OF THE HAPA PROJECT

*part asian, 100% hapa*, an exhibition organized by the Japanese American National Museum and photographer Kip Fulbeck, broke new ground 15 years ago by exploring multiracial Asian American identity. Fulbeck photographed people who identify as hapa and asked them to write response to the typically posed question, "What are you?" In the new exhibition, *hapa.me: 15 years of the hapa project*, participants' updated portraits and statements sit side-by-side with the older ones, showing not only their physical changes over the years but also their changes in perspective and outlook on the world. The Japanese American Museum of Oregon thanks the Portland JACL for sponsoring our local exhibition of this work, which will be on view at the museum until August 13.

Kip Fulbeck was here for the exclusive Friends of JAMO opening on May 20 and gave a public talk the following day, telling stories about the people he has photographed and how viewers identify and see themselves represented—sometimes for the first time—in this project.

Participate in the local exhibition by adding your own photograph and statement. There is an instant print photo station set up in the gallery along with paper and pencils so you can write down your own reaction to the question, "What are you?" Join company with the students, parents, teachers, athletes, artists, and citizens of Earth who have already added their portraits.

*hapa.me: 15 years of the hapa project* is on view now at the Japanese American Museum of Oregon through August 13, 2023. JAMO will continue to add visitor photos during the run of the exhibition while supplies last.



From top to bottom:

Rich Iwasaki takes a photograph of a visitor at the instant print photo station.

Connie Masuoka, Jenny Yamada, Kip Fulbeck, and Jeff Matsumoto at the exhibition opening. Connie, Jenny, and Jeff are Portland JACL board members.

Visitors add their photos and statements to the exhibition.

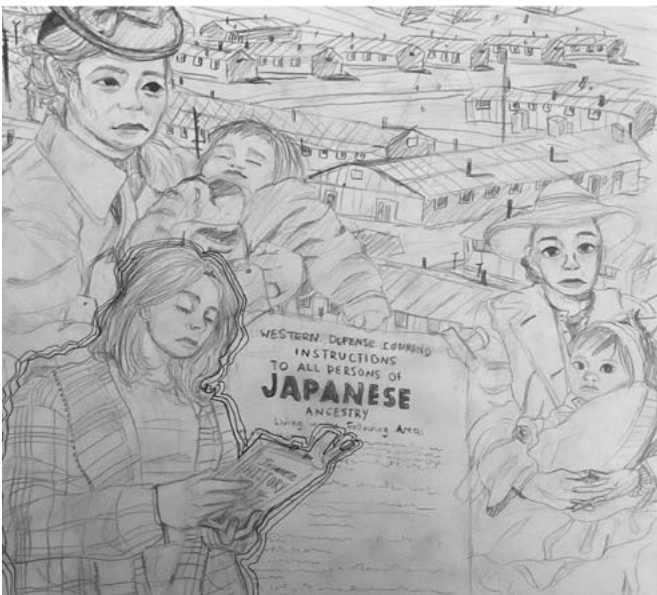


# CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2023 MINORU YASUI STUDENT CONTEST WINNERS!



This year's contest theme was Community Responsibility.

Students were asked to submit an artwork and statement describing how their piece connects with the theme and Min Yasui's legacy.



Counterclockwise from top:  
Junior Division, First Place: Violet West, 5th Grade,  
Alameda Elementary School, Portland, Oregon.

Junior Division, Second Place: Aika Peraza, 7th Grade,  
Twality Middle School, Tigard, Oregon.

Senior Division, First Place: Gabriella Ejercito, 11th Grade,  
Aragon High School, San Mateo, California.

Senior Division, Second Place: Evie Chan, 9th Grade,  
Oregon Episcopal School, Portland, Oregon.



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THROUGH  
MAY 31, 2023

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# A FORGOTTEN COMMUNITY: A TOUR OF PORTLAND'S LOST JAPANESE AMERICAN COMMUNITY

## NEW INTERACTIVE DIGITAL STORY MAP HIGHLIGHTS 20 SITES IN NIHONMACHI

The final Story Map project meeting was held at the end of March 2023. In the background, one could hear the machines tearing down the Yamaguchi Hotel. It was a moment of mourning and the end of a year-long collaboration with the Architectural Heritage Center to create an interactive digital map of historic Nihonmachi. Supported by the National Trust for Historic Places, the online resource tells the story of the history, places, and people of a once thriving Japantown.

The sudden destruction of the historical building was a tragic reminder of what is currently at stake and why projects like this Story Map are so vital.

JAMO would like to give special thanks to Nicole Possert, Executive Director of Restore Oregon; Lynn Fuchigami Parks; Michael Hayakawa; and Jackie Peterson-Loomis for their hard work during the process of mitigation, education, and years of working for the preservation of Old Town.

The Story Map team was composed of Dale Gronso, designer; Lauren Yoshiko Terry, writer; and Stephanie Whitlock and Val Ballestrem of Architectural Heritage Center.

Research was provided by Cynthia Basye, Chisao Hata, Lynn Fuchigami Parks, and Lucas Carmichael-Tanaka.



Top:  
 A ceremony was held to honor the history of the Yamaguchi Hotel on March 12, 2023.  
 Photograph courtesy of Rich Iwasaki.

Bottom:  
 Images from A Forgotten Community story map.

# 2023 MINORU YASUI DAY

You could feel the excitement in the air as the Japanese American Museum of Oregon and the Minoru Yasui Legacy Project created an in-person and virtual event on April 1 honoring the life and work of Oregon's native son and Presidential Medal of Freedom honoree, Minoru Yasui.



Panelists Anna Ruetin, Weston Koyama, and Jessica Asai speak at the Min Yasui Day event. *Photograph courtesy of Rich Iwasaki.*

This year we unveiled several firsts under the theme **Behind These Bars: An Activist Is Born.**

- We expanded awareness of Min Yasui's cross-cultural work addressing diverse issues through the words of his brother Dr. Homer Yasui and niece Dr. Robin Yasui.
- We heard from Yonsei Jessica Asai and Weston Koyama and University of Oregon Minoru Yasui Fellow Anna Ruetin, who addressed Min's relevance to multiple generations.
- We engaged new students by including art as well as the written word in the annual contest, tying the theme of Responsibility to Community back to Minoru Yasui's legacy of justice.
- We filmed the dedication of the jail cell where Min Yasui spent nine months in solitary confinement, which included a reading of Yasui's poetry written from behind bars and an original musical piece of music created by No-No Boy.

Over 180 people joined us in-person and online. Afterward, we invited our guests back to JAMO for an after-hours reception with the event speakers.

—*Maija Yasui*, Minoru Yasui Steering Committee



Anne Naito-Campbell and Earl Blumenauer attend the 2023 Oregon Rises Above Hate event. *Photograph courtesy of Andie Petkus Photography.*

## OREGON RISES ABOVE HATE

The 2023 Oregon Rises Above Hate celebration provided an apt kickoff to Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, bringing hundreds to the Flanders Festival Street for speakers, performances, food, and community outreach. Emcee Jeff Selby introduced speakers U.S. Senator Ron Wyden; U.S. Representatives Earl Blumenauer and Suzanne Bonamici; Multnomah County Commissioners Lori Stegmann and Susheela Jayapal; Beaverton City Councilor Nadia Hasan; Oregon State Representatives Hoa Nguyen, Khanh Pham, and Hai Pham; Sokho Eath of the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization; and Becca Uherbelau for Governor Tina Kotek's office. Cathy Sampson-Kruse of the Waluulapum Band of the Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Indian Reservation opened, followed by Oregon Rises Above Hate founder Anne Naito-Campbell. Sponsors included Lan Su Chinese Garden, Japanese American Museum of Oregon, Portland Chinatown Museum, Coalition of Communities of Color, and the Oregon Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs. Additional support was provided by the Portland Events & Film Office. Local museums were free, with JAMO drawing over 250 visitors.





# EXPO CENTER

On May 27 in partnership with Vanport Mosaic, the Japanese American Museum of Oregon presented A Day of Remembrance at the Portland Expo Center for the 8th annual Vanport Mosaic Festival.



An important component of the event was creating a way to engage with the history of this site and envision what we want to see happen in the future. To do that, JAMO worked with a group of artists to create *First, We Remember. And After?* to honor the many layered histories in the town known as Vanport: land theft, flooding, displacement, and incarceration that continues to affect the Indigenous, Black, Japanese, Japanese American, and Vanport communities.

*First, We Remember. And After?* investigates the responsibility of the present moment. Once you

become aware, what happens next? Currently, Oregon Metro is developing a process to envision a new use of the Expo Center and surrounding 53 acres of land. Because of the atrocities that happened in Hall A following Executive Order 9066 and the destruction of Nihonmachi/Japantown, this is an important site of memorial for our community. Will Metro's plans truly center the justice and healing this land cries out for? Artists Sia Hanna, Tonya Abernathy, and Daniela del Mar, along with Colloqate Design and JAMO, collaborated to create *First, We Remember. And After?* to gather community feedback. JAMO continues to meet with Expo Center staff, Metro Commissioners, Metropolitan Exposition Recreation Commissioners, and others to inform and create conversations around this history.

At this year's Nikkei Community Picnic (August 20), JAMO and our partners will be present to answer questions, find more Japanese American Vanport survivors, and present an interactive project to collect community input with the goal of influencing Metro's long term planning. What demands do you have for the future of the Expo Center? Your comments and connections are crucial to future outcomes.

—Chisao Hata

## THE LIVING ARTS PROGRAM IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE FUNDING FOR THE NEXT TWO YEARS



Metro awarded a Community Place Making Grant for The Assembly Center to research, develop community engagement, and create opportunities for community healing around the historic Portland detention center. An original theater piece created from historic documents will be directed by the Creative Director of Living Arts, Chisao Hata. Additional funding will come from a Regional Arts and Culture Council individual

artist grant. The Ronald W. Naito MD Foundation has funded the Living Arts Program to develop programming for expressive arts programs, Inaka-Back to the Land, InterACT: The Art of Creating Together, intergenerational outreach, and community healing circles. We are deeply grateful for their support!



# MEMORIAL & TRIBUTE GIFTS

NOVEMBER 1, 2022  
THROUGH MAY 31, 2023

## In memory of Ken Nakao & Ai Nakao

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## SAVE THESE DATES

**July 30:** Japanese American Historical Plaza Cleanup

**August 9:** Hiroshima/Nagasaki Remembrance,  
Japanese American Historical Plaza

**August 20:** Nikkei Community Picnic,  
Oaks Amusement Park

**September 7:** *A Sense of Place:*

*The Art of George Tsutakawa* opens at the  
Japanese American Museum of Oregon

**Weekend of October 20:** Matsutake Hunt for  
Friends of JAMO





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NOVEMBER 1, 2022 THROUGH MAY 31, 2023

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## YES, I WANT TO JOIN!

My support will help ensure that the history, art and culture of the Nikkei are preserved and shared with the community for generations to come.

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Multnomah County Commissioners  
Lori Stegmann and Susheela Jayapal  
and Beaverton City Councilor  
Nadia Hasan take in the performances  
at Oregon Rises Above Hate.  
Story on page 8. Courtesy of  
Andie Petkus Photography.

