



# ***Florin J.A.C.L. Newsletter***

*Florin Japanese American Citizens League*

- *Sacramento Valley*

Andy Noguchi and Josh Kaizuka, Co-Presidents

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## ***Winter 2024 Newsletter***

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# Co-President's Message



By Josh Kaizuka

2023 was quite a year and one where we started getting back to our yearly in-person events. Organizing and putting on the events wasn't exactly like riding a bicycle, but thanks to our wonderful committee members, volunteers, and everyone who supported and attended, everything turned out great.

Our chapter continues to stay strong with over 200 members and still as one of the most active JACL chapters. We have some great youth members and leaders, who are taking very active roles to help us into the future. They were so instrumental in helping to coordinate on last year's Florin Manzanar Pilgrimage to make it one of the best, as well as working on the Transgender and Non-Binary Equality Resolution which passed by an overwhelming vote at the JACL convention in Little Tokyo last year.

I want to congratulate this year's board and committee chairs because we can't do what we do without them! We are extremely encouraged with the interest in our first two events of the year, Mochi Madness which was back after a four-year hiatus due to the pandemic and NTCOR, which focuses on the Model Minority myth. We are all working on other upcoming favorite events as well as on-going projects and issues relating to civil rights, social justice, and human rights.

Some other things we worked on include an event in Little Tokyo at the Japanese American National Museum titled "Our Fragile Democracy" on February 24 (detailed article in next issue). The event was the second part of the work we did with others to help obtain an apology from the California Attorney General for how the office during WWII, advocated to incarcerate Japanese Americans and the discriminatory enforcement of the Alien Land Law. Another ongoing project is with the Reclaim Sacramento Japantown ad hoc group to see what we can do to somehow reclaim the once vibrant Japantown that was part of a very diverse district known as Sacramento's West End. One more project to highlight is a virtual symposium we are working on with organizations including National JACL, Okaeri, and PFLAG, addressing concerns and support for the Transgender community.

Included in this newsletter is also an article relating to Gaza, which is a human rights disaster with so many innocent civilians being killed. The conflict there is also affecting us here so we cannot remain silent and do nothing.

I want to thank Co-President Andy Noguchi for his continuing leadership, all our awesome members and supporters for what you all did in 2023 and, look forward to successfully addressing challenges and accomplishment with all of you in 2024, the Year of the Dragon!

## Follow Us on Facebook

The Florin JACL-SV is dedicated to providing the most current chapter news, list of upcoming events, and resources to help you stay informed on local and national news. Follow us on Facebook [\*\*@florinjacl\*\*](#).



# Florin JACL Holds 88th Anniversary Luncheon



By Ras H. Siddiqui, Republished with permission from Pakistan Link

The Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) is a well-known national civil rights organization with chapters in various areas of the United States. The Florin JACL chapter centered just south of Sacramento is one of the most politically active groups in the California capital area. It takes civil rights very seriously and speaks out when there is even a hint of injustice taking place anywhere. Whenever an event affects any group in our greater Sacramento community, Florin JACL is there.

The chapter held its 88th Anniversary at the Valley Hi Country Club on Saturday December 2, 2023, one which was well-attended and wonderfully executed. The theme for this year's gathering was "Strength Through Unity" and the event reflected both.

Japanese Americans remain a proud and patriotic group in this country, but they are no strangers to suffering. During World War II, after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) as commander-in-chief issued Executive Order 9066 that resulted in the mass internment of around 100,000 people of Japanese descent in America. This most controversial order basically sidelined our constitution and targeted a group because of its ethnicity. A patriotic and law-abiding community lost homes and property and suffered forced displacement. Some survivors from that era were present at this event including those who were born in what has rightly been called concentration camps. Since its inception in the year 1935, the membership of the Florin JACL has indeed seen and experienced a great deal.

The event itself was a formal yet cheerful affair thanks in part to emcee Josh Kaizuka's great sense of humor. Josh is the Co-President of the Florin Chapter of the JACL. In his opening remarks he welcomed everyone and said that this was an opportunity to bring the community together. Josh also highlighted the fact that Sac State (CSU Sacramento) was once again well represented here and asked every Florin JACL Committee Member to stand up and be recognized. He also brought up the Florin Chapter's continued stand on human and civil rights in spite of it not being popular amongst some people in the community. Kaizuka also introduced several sponsors and their representatives present.

As mentioned earlier Japanese Americans are a very patriotic group as a Flag Salute and the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance started the formalities here. This was led by Rick Uno. An official welcome on behalf of the Board to everyone by Titus Toyama, Board Member and Chapter Treasurer followed. Titus elaborated on the event's "Strength Through Unity" theme and how it emphasizes that we as a group are not alone, and that relationships with other organizations are very important. He also briefly mentioned the awardees at the event and shared a bit of the Florin JACL history and all that the chapter has done and is doing for civil rights.

Josh returned and shared housekeeping information and some details of the Silent Auction, items donated by some individuals present and shared the time that it would end. We sure hope that someone bid on those large panels for Josh's sake! Lunch followed and all the sponsors were thanked. **(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)**

**(FROM PAGE 3)** To name just a few, Platinum Sponsors here included the Ayad Al-Qazzaz Endowment and CSUS Hornet Family and Friends, Delegata, Law Offices of Mark E. Merin, Law Offices of Joshua Kaizuka, Sharif Jewelers and Titus and Donna Toyama. The Gold Sponsor was SMUD, and Silver Sponsors included CAIR-SV/CC, Nancy & Aleck Darr, Walter & Kathleen Menda, Andy & Twila Noguchi, Heidi Sakazaki and Marielle Tsukamoto. And ending the list were Bronze Sponsors Asian Resources, Inc., and the Nichi Bei Foundation.

The Awards Presentations followed. The first awardee was Sac State President Emeritus Robert S. Nelsen who received the Florin JACL's Kansha-sho (Gratitude) Award. Since the former CSUS President could not make it to the event accepting it on his and his wife Jody's behalf was Mark Wheeler the Interim Chief of Staff of the University. This award was presented by Marielle Tsukamoto who provided a great deal of background as to why President Nelsen deserved this honor. Nelsen himself addressed the gathering via video.

Tom Nakashima was given the Florin JACL-SV Leadership Award which was presented to him by Christine Umeda. Tom is not only a local Radio Personality but has attained a celebrity following in Sacramento (The Eagle 96.9). And he has never forgotten his roots in the local Japanese American community. As an author he co-wrote "We The People" with Mary Tsukamoto and is considered a real trailblazer in field of local Asian American media of many forms. A very deserving award recipient.

Next the Florin JACL Community Leadership Award was presented to Professor Ayad Al-Qazzaz by Josh Kaizuka. The Professor with his 55-year teaching career (and counting) at California State University, Sacramento is a highly regarded figure in the regional community. He has had a leadership or advisory role in the Asian, Middle Eastern, Arab-American, and Muslim community in the Sacramento area for decades and his popularity amongst his former students is very real. Case in point was event emcee and old student Josh Kaizuka. The chemistry and humor that they shared here at this event was wonderful to see. But within the humor remained a great deal of shared wisdom. The local philanthropic contributions alone of octogenarian Professor Al-Qazzaz continue to win him awards including this one by the Florin JACL. It made him very happy. I will cherish this as long as I live, he said.

Ending the segment, the Community Service award went to the Buddhist Church of Florin. It was presented to their representative Eric Fujii by Andy Noguchi and Twila Tomita. Founded by Japanese Americans in the year 1919 the church is still going strong today, 104 years later. It is also well known in the outside community for its Obon Festival. "Our mission continues to be to share the wisdom and compassion of the Buddhist teachings and practice with the greater community" reproduced quoted from their website here. The Buddhist Church of Florin has played a pivotal role in the regrouping and revitalizing of the Sacramento area Japanese American community after they returned home after their unjust confinement in World War II.

To conclude, some regrets are shared for not being able to stay till the end of this event. But this was an invitation which could not be ignored, especially these days when there is war and injustice rampant in our world. This brings us back to how well Professor Al-Qazzaz explained his admiration for the Florin JACL here. You are totally (and not partially) humanitarian, he said. After 9/11/2001 it was this community which stood with patriotic American Muslims who were at the receiving end of many abuses. And today when Palestinians are being bombed in Gaza members of the Florin JACL stand with them here in Sacramento demanding a ceasefire. And they have been doing this while not forgetting Israeli lives lost in the conflict. They are totally humanitarian, and this article is a very small way of expressing our thanks to them.



# Mochi Madness Returns after Four Year Hiatus

So you would think that after not having the event due to the pandemic would have made us rusty and disorganized to put on one of our really fun events right? No way! The madness went off like a charm!

The 13th Annual Mochi Madness Event sponsored by the Buddhist Church of Florin and Florin JAACL-SV was a resounding success and a lot of fun. We had over 150 RSVPs and 23 walk ins. When we heard about the number of RSVPs, we knew that we had to rethink things and we set things up in the parking lot area where there was plenty of room. Even Mr. Noda, who at 102 years old, came out to make sure that the mochi was pounded right!



Stan Umeda passed on the Mochi Master title to Greg Umeda, as our 2024 Mochi Master who had a crew of volunteers. Stan was there to sit back, watch and enjoy.

A big Florin thank you to the Mochi Madness committee lead by Judy Fukuman, Buddhist Church of Florin, the Buddhist Women's Association, and all our wonderful volunteers and attendees who all made for a perfect day and a great potluck afterwards!



# Florin JACL-SV Reaffirms the 2012 Human Rights for All Perspective and Calls for a Ceasefire in Gaza

By Josh Kaizuka

Our chapter's concerns with the human rights violations of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank have been on going for over a decade. At the same time, we have also supported the Jewish community when there have been incidents involving hate and antisemitism. Due in large part to the strong leadership of our chapter over the years, we have advocated for civil and social justice causes for all, as well as speaking out on

human rights abuses even when in another country. What happens in another country can affect things here and taking a position advocating for human rights all the time, instead of just when it is convenient and popular, is the right thing to do.



1/15/24 - Janice Nakashima, Marielle Tsukamoto, Dr. Harry Wang



11/7/23 - Andy Noguchi, Twila Tomita, Sue Teranishi

Andy Noguchi, Twila Tomita, Marielle Tsukamoto, Janice Nakashima, John Onate, Fumie Shimada, and Makiko Yamashita worked over a six-month period on the “Florin JACL Human Rights Perspective for All” which was presented to our board and unanimously approved on January 4, 2012.

The “Perspective for All” states that:

1. The Florin JACL will continue to educate the public about the human rights, civil rights, and civil liberties of people throughout the world and support their defense.
2. In issues related to the Middle East, the Florin JACL will continue to:
  - a. Support the human rights of Palestinian people.
  - b. Defend the human rights of Israeli civilians and other people when under attack.
  - c. Promote the human rights lessons of the Holocaust and other genocide tragedies.
  - d. Reject the idea that supporting Palestinian human rights or disagreeing with any Israeli government policy is anti-Semitic, a criticism of the Jewish people or religion, or anti-Israel.
  - e. Speak out for democracy, human rights, and freedom in the region as it did in support of the people of Egypt.
3. Florin JACL members, as Americans, strive to represent the interest of the American people and do not ally ourselves with any foreign government or any policies infringing on human rights.

Today with the current conflict and humanitarian crisis in Gaza, the “Perspective for All” takes on even more significance. Clearly the horrendous attack by Hamas resulting in the killing of around 1,200 and the taking of 200 hostages in Israel must be condemned. There are still about a hundred hostages that must be released. **(CONTINUED ON PAGE 7)**

# Florin JACL-SV Reaffirms the 2012 Human Rights for All Perspective and Calls for a Ceasefire in Gaza

**(FROM PAGE 6)** We must also speak out and address the humanitarian crisis in Gaza being perpetrated daily since October 7 by the Israeli military campaign. As of now, around 33,000 Palestinians killed, about 70% are women and children, over 74,000 injured, and 1.7 million Gazans (75% of the population) had been displaced. Because most hospital no longer function and the one in Rahfa is only partially functioning, documenting deaths is difficult and there are likely many more thousands unaccounted for, including those buried under rubble, buried without being counted, or left where they were killed. The UN Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator reported on January 5, 2024 that,

*“Gaza has become a place of death and despair.*

*...Areas where civilians were told to relocate for the safety have come under bombardment. Medical facilities are under relentless attack.*

*A public health disaster is unfolding. Infectious diseases are spreading in overcrowded shelters as sewers spill over. Some 180 Palestinian women are giving birth daily amidst this chaos. People are facing the highest levels of food insecurity ever recorded. Famine is around the corner.*

*For children in particular, the past 12 weeks have been traumatic: No food. No water. No school. Nothing but terrifying sounds of war, day in and day out.*

*Gaza has simply become uninhabitable. Its people are witnessing daily threats to their very existence – while the world watches on.”*

The World Health Organization reported that an “unprecedented 93% of the population of Gaza is facing crisis level hunger, with insufficient food and high levels of malnutrition....Starvation, destitution and death are evident.” On January 26, 2024, The International Court of Justice (ICJ) found that the current treatment of the Palestinians in Gaza by the Israeli military may plausibly constitute genocide in violation of international law. A few days later, a judge for the Federal Court for the Northern District of California also found plausible genocide and concurring with the findings by the ICJ. Many say that issues involving Israel and Palestinians are complicated and won't take a stand. However, what is not complicated is that the deaths of so many Palestinians, 70% of whom are women and children, must stop now. Crisis level hunger, destitution, forced removal, and the trauma, must stop now.

We have publicly joined with others to call for a ceasefire, humanitarian aid in Gaza, and to end the US funding used to perpetuate this human rights disaster including a response to Mayor Steinberg's Op-Ed in the *Sacramento Bee* explaining why he would not even entertain a Cease Fire resolution submitted by City Councilmembers Katie Valenzuela and Mai Vang.  
**(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)**





## Florin JACL-SV Reaffirms the 2012 Human Rights for All Perspective and Calls for a Ceasefire in Gaza



11/7/23 - Josh Kaizuka

**(FROM PAGE 7)** We have joined in petitioning National JACL to also do the same and to end partnerships with groups that label organizations or individuals who advocate for the human rights of Palestinians, as antisemitic or supporters of terrorists. Organizations such as the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) publicly labels organizations such as Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) and Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) as antisemitic, terrorist groups, and supporters of terrorists, something our chapter knows is false. As of now, National JACL has refused to call for a ceasefire, take a position, and remains silent.

We also co-sponsored a NCWNP District ceasefire resolution with the NCWNP Youth Board for. Only four chapters, Berkeley, Florin, Sacramento, Silicon Valley and the District Youth Board voted for the resolution, ten chapters voted against, and three did not want to take a position.

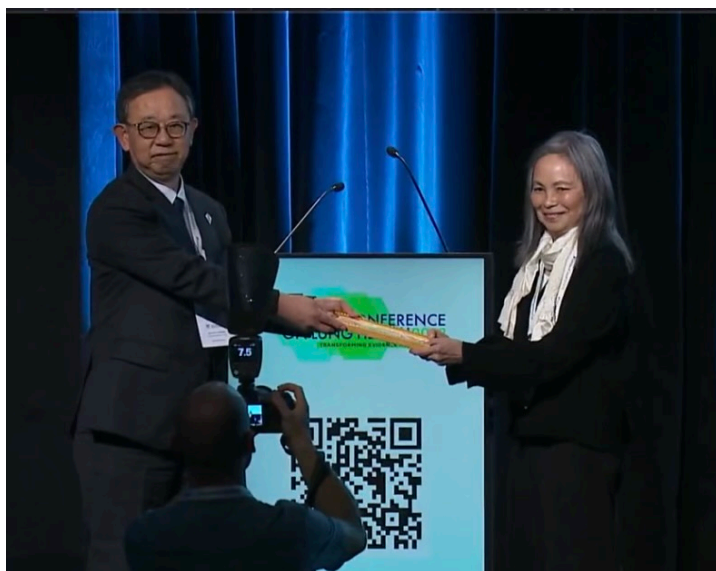
Florin JACL-SV members have been engaged calling for a ceasefire at press conferences, rallies, and we will continue to speak out because silence is not an option. Speaking out and doing something because it is the right thing to do is our chapter's legacy and we continue in that tradition.

## Florin Member Dr. Paula Fujiwara Receives the Princess Chichibu Memorial Tuberculosis Award

By Josh Kaizuka

Paula, born in Sacramento but working abroad for many years, joined our chapter after attending a virtual NCTOR event a few years ago and from hearing about us at Parkview Presbyterian Church.

What is kind of amazing is that Paula not only has an interest in civil rights and social justice, but that she has dedicated her work to combat tuberculosis worldwide for over 30 years and became the first Japanese American to receive the Princess Chichibu Memorial Tuberculosis Award at the 54th Union Conference on Lung Health last November in Paris last November. **(CONTINUED ON PAGE 9)**





# Florin Member Dr. Paula Fujiwara Receives the Princess Chichibu Memorial Tuberculosis Award

**(FROM PAGE 8)** Most people do not hear much about TB locally, but it is the world's second-leading cause of death killing 1.36 million people in 2022 according to a recent World Health Organization report.

Some interesting facts about Dr. Fujiwara are that she is fluent in Spanish, French and intermediate Portuguese, having worked in Brazil and Spanish-speaking communities in Latin America. She has also worked in 40 countries around the world with 11 years in Paris as the Scientific Director of The Union (International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease).

In addition to her incredible work combating TB, she is an active member of the Tule Lake Pilgrimage Committee and the Wakasa Memorial Committee. She has taken part in Tsuru for Solidarity's direct actions against US government policy on unaccompanied minors from Latin America and in October of 2023, helped produce the Tadaima virtual pilgrimage.

We are going to have to get a copy of her paper, "Food Production, Consumption and Resistance by Japanese Americans Incarcerated by the United States Government During World War II" which was published in 2020 by the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery.

You can read recent articles about her in the December 15<sup>th</sup> edition of the Pacific Citizen, Nichi Bei News at <https://www.nichibe.org/2023/12/dr-paula-fujiwara-receives-award-for-tb-work/>

Also, you can watch a fascinating presentation by Paula, Food and Power Among Japanese American Incarcerated During WWII with details that you might not have known about the camps at Gila River and Poston at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gLFZK0QYjgg>. Congratulations on a well-deserved honor Dr. Paula Fujiwara!

## Membership Update

Thank you for being a member of our community! As you may know, active membership is an essential element in a strong JAACL chapter. Thanks to your renewing membership, we can continue to defend civil liberties both locally and nationwide. We hope to see you at our events!

### Welcome to our Newest Members!

Robin Dewis  
Brayden Fukuman  
Rosanna Herber  
Rumi, Kazu, and Mana Nozue  
Elizabeth Sarine and Michael Lindsey  
Akemi Takeda  
Linnea Tamaki  
Megan Toyama  
Harry Wang and Janice Nakashima  
Jeffrey White

Renew your membership at <https://jaacl.org/member>

# 16th Florin Manzanar Pilgrimage April 26–28, 2024



**2023 Florin Manzanar Pilgrims at the Manzanar Sentry Post Sign. (Photo by Josh Kaizuka)**

A rare chance awaits you to experience the Japanese American World War II incarceration at Manzanar National Park, the best preserved of 10 major concentration camps, and what it means for today. The focus for our pilgrimage is “No More Backlash, Injustice, or Manzanars.”

The 3-day pilgrimage Friday April 26-28, 2024 is sponsored by the **Florin Japanese American Citizens League** and **Council on American Islamic Relations – Sacramento Valley / Central California** (CAIR-SV/CC). **Florin JACL members** may apply in February 2024. For more information, please contact Andy Noguchi at [FlorinJACL@outlook.com](mailto:FlorinJACL@outlook.com).

**2019 Pilgrimage Video:** For a preview of 2024, check out the neat 2019 video by Brandon Miyasaki by Googling “Florin Manzanar Pilgrimage.”

**Pilgrimage Costs:** Registration fees to cover our costs are expected to be about \$400 each (double occupancy) for the 3 day and 2- night journey, 3 days bus transport, BBQ, Saturday lunch, and T-shirt. There are discounts for Florin JACL members (\$30), camp survivors (\$75), and youth (\$50). One discount per person. This year is again expected to book up early.

**The 3-day Florin Manzanar Pilgrimage:** We recruit a diverse group of 55 people from camp survivors, Japanese American families, Muslim Americans, youth, community educators, and those involved in civil and human rights today. Our group participation tour includes interesting bus activities, discussion groups, BBQ, cultural exchange with Native Americans and Muslim Americans, visit to the camp museum, short walking tour to the barracks/mess hall/latrines, program / interfaith ceremony with 1,500 others from L.A., and bowling night.

**Covid Precautions:** To protect our passengers’ health, **all** are required to provide proof of vaccinations and current booster. We are monitoring conditions to see if other steps are needed.

If you are up for a truly meaningful 3-day adventure plus meeting and sharing experiences with others, this pilgrimage is for you. **Don’t miss this unique opportunity! (12-29-23 ver.)**



## **Save the Date – Upcoming Events!**

**May 19, 2024 - Ice Cream Social & Scholarship Awards**

**July 18, 2024 – Florin Obon Workshop**

**July 20, 2024 - Buddhist Church of Florin Obon Festival**

**December 7, 2024 - Annual Awards and Installation Lunch**

