

July 2007



Nihonmachi
LITTLE FRIENDS™

Japanese Bilingual & Multicultural Childcare

NIHONMACHI LITTLE FRIENDS

The Scoop

Executive Notes by Cathy Inamasu

This past spring, NLF's fundraising for its programs was a great success, thanks to many of you. Our Dowa No Omatsuri theater performance and auction, held in early March at the Palace of Fine Arts Theater, was a fun and rewarding event, bringing in a profit of approximately \$30,000 (a new record)! This production always draws out the many hidden talents of our children, staff, families, Board members and volunteers. Special thanks go to Melody Takata and her Gen Taiko Arts for opening the show, as always. We also hope you were able to come out to the Cherry Blossom Festival in April, where NLF's popular "yakniku" and onigiri food booth, did a booming business. Despite the rain on the first weekend, the crowds came out to enjoy this annual community festival, showcasing the best of Jtown.

Summer marks the busy enrollment season for NLF's programs, and a time to say our fond farewells to our preschool and fifth grade graduates. This year we have 40 preschoolers moving on to various public and private schools in San Francisco and the Bay Area. In addition, over half of our After School Program's graduating 5th grade class was comprised of students enrolled at NLF since their preschool years...or 8 years! We hope everyone stays in touch. It's always heart warming to hear back from families and students, catching up on their lives, and often finding out about other NLF alums they've kept in contact

with, or that they had met someone who attended NLF, etc. The circles of people that NLF has touched over its 32+ years continually grow and move, often intersecting and returning back to us.

This summer we also welcome back a number of alumni students who are volunteering at the preschools. Mina Han (8th grader), Mika Matsu (9th grader), Monica Choi (10th grader), Reid Sata (8th grader), and Miya Alas (8th grader), are giving back to NLF through helping the teachers and working with the preschoolers. We appreciate their volunteerism and community service.

Enclosed in this issue of our newsletter is a "save the date" postcard for our joint fundraising dinner with the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) to be held on September 27th. NLF is honored to work together with the AFSC, a long-time friend to the Japanese American community. It promises to be a very memorable celebration, and we hope to see you there.



Bush preschoolers love celebrating the Week of the Young Child (in April) with a fun filled Pajama Day!

Sutter Site Parents Obtain a Parent Action Grant from the First 5 Commission

by Linda Asato

Thanks to the leadership and persistence of the parents of Kevin Yieh, Maya Bhandari, Isabel Tilles, Maya Riley, and Emi Tsutakawa of the Sutter Site Preschool, a \$3500 Parent Action Grant from the First 5 Commission has been awarded to support activities geared towards parent engagement with their children and with other families. This coming year this group (and any other interested parents willing to help) will organize five family outings -- Angel Island, Slide Ranch, Zeum or the Exploratorium, SF Zoo, and fruit picking. Additionally, the grant will pay for audio recordings in Japanese and English of several Japanese books circulated through the weekly blue "Raising A Reader" book bags.

The grant will pay for admission to the activities for a limited number of families and will pay a stipend for people to translate the books. The group will announce how families can participate. The intention is by taking part in these fun

family activities parents will get to know each other better and support the development of our children. We hope some of you will be interested in supporting and/or joining in the activities. A special thank you to NLF for allowing parent participation points for parents who help organize activities and/or attend meetings on behalf of the project. This certainly encourages parent leadership and involvement in our site. If anyone has questions or interest, please don't hesitate to contact any one of the organizers.



Committee Reports

Special Events Committee:

NLF will be participating in the annual Nihonmachi Street Fair which will be held on Sat. & Sun., August 11th & 12th. Come out and visit us at our information booth!

NLF would also like to invite you to join us at our annual potluck picnic on Sunday, September 30th from 11:00 at the Julius Kahn playground near the Presidio. Stop by to share lunch and good company!

Program Committee:

The staff at NLF's preschools and After School Program enjoyed a staff development day at the Exploratorium earlier this year. The teachers got to experiment with some new science activities and ideas, which they brought back to the children. Special thanks to Board Member Mark Triplett for making the arrangements, and to all the families who donated to the staff development fund.

Public Relations Committee:

The Japantown Better Neighborhood Plan (BNP) is a planning process led by the S.F. Planning Department, in collaboration with the community, to develop a vision for this historic neighborhood. The process will result in a plan to guide for the future use and character of the neighborhood, in conjunction with other current projects in development.

To get as much participation in developing the vision and plan for the future of Japantown, a series of small group meetings are being held from July 24th – August 19th. You can also give your input by completing an on-line survey by going to their website: japantown.sfplanning.org. For more information, contact Rosemary Dudley at rosemary.dudley@sfgov.org to be put on their mailing list.

Kindergarten Field Trips

NLF celebrated the graduation for the Class of 2007 on June 29th. The recent graduates are looking forward to a fun filled summer which include field trips to the Aquarium, a Ferry Ride to Angel Island, SF Zoo, a swim party at Rinconada Pool in Palo Alto and a Cal Train ride to Central Park in San Mateo. Special thanks go to Stephanie Shibata (Mark's mom) for arranging a special visit to the Fire Station for the Bush "Kindergartners", to be followed by lunch at her Firehouse Café.

Facilities Committee:

The Facilities Committee, led by Board Member Curtis Lowe, has been busy on several projects. The rebuilding of the new sand play area, and wood deck at the Sutter site preschool, have been completed and are being thoroughly enjoyed by the children. In June, parent volunteers painted the wheelchair ramp with a protective coating of sealant and cleaned up the graffiti on the building and fencing. There will be another workday planned this summer to work on the outdoor play area of the Bush site preschool.



We love our new deck!



Sutter Site preschoolers enjoying their new deck and sand box!

After School Program's Tile Project

This past spring, students of the ASP were industriously designing tiles for a special project entitled "My Japantown". Funding was provided by the Ameriquest Mortgage Company's "Create Your Legacy" grant, which involved students in a community project. The three panels of tiles will be installed in the parking lot of the 1830 Sutter Street building, in front of the cyclone fence. Each 6" by 6" tile is hand-painted by a student depicting one of their favorite things about Japantown. The panels are dedicated to the 100th anniversary of Japantown, which took place last year. Special thanks go to **Dii Lewis**, the father of 5th grader Tomiyuri Lewis, who helped with the lay-out design and coordinated construction of the panels.

The students and teachers were hoping to have the panels installed before the end of the school year, but the project was delayed due to a back log in getting items fired in the kiln. Therefore, the panels will be installed and unveiled once school resumes in the fall.

Please look for the beautiful tiles later, when passing by the building!



Work in progress—Students first had to draw out their design on paper.



Finished products—tiles to be part of NLF's "My Japantown" project.

Coming up this fall are two special milestones to celebrate. First, please mark your calendars for an exciting and important dinner co-hosted by Nihonmachi Little Friends (NLF) and the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) on Thursday, September 27th, 2007 at the Miyako Hotel. This event, ***Across Generations: 65 Years of Compassion, Community and Justice***, celebrates the 65th Anniversary of AFSC's Pacific Mountain Region. The proceeds from the dinner will benefit NLF's children's programs and capital campaign, as well as AFSC's Asian Pacific Islander Youth Leadership Program.

AFSC's Pacific Mountain Region was founded in 1942 to aid the 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry who were forcibly removed from their homes and communities and sent to internment camps throughout the West coast. This Region opened its first office at the former Japanese YWCA located at 1830 Sutter Street, where business was conducted until 1960. Today 1830 Sutter Street is home to NLF and whose programs help instill in the next generation, the values and principles that have been long important to keeping a vibrant community alive.

The dinner invitation will be mailed to you shortly. We hope you can join us in

commemorating this special occasion. By supporting this event, you will be supporting the symbolic partnership between AFSC and NLF that recognizes the shared history of our communities over the past 65 years and the hope we place in our future generations.

Please contact NLF if you have any items to donate to the silent auction, which will be held during the dinner. Popular items include dinner or hotel certificates, fine bottles of wine, sporting event tickets, gift cards, jewelry, electronics, etc.

This year also marks the 75th anniversary of the 1830 Sutter Street building. As the Japanese YWCA, the Sutter Street facility opened its doors in 1932 to provide temporary housing and social and educational programs for young women and girls, who were unable to obtain other assistance because of language barriers and racial discrimination. In March 2002, NLF became the owner of this historic building through the settlement of a community-supported lawsuit to save the building. NLF is proud to accept this responsibility to protect and promote the historic legacy of the 1830 Sutter building on behalf of the Japanese American community in San Francisco.

NLF has come a long way raising over \$1.6 million of its \$2.2 million capital campaign to acquire and restore the Sutter Street facility, but *remember*: Although the mortgage has been retired, there is still quite a bit more fundraising to do. NLF needs to raise another \$560,000 in order to complete the building's necessary structural and systematic upgrades.

We cannot reach our goal without the continued generosity from supporters and donors like *you*. With sixty names already on the *Issei* Women's Legacy Donor Wall, there are still spaces left for your name. Please contact NLF at (415) 922-8898 or nlfchildcare@yahoo.com to be one of the inspiring people who are part of the building's legacy or to obtain more information about how you can get involved in the capital campaign.

Renovation Update:
The wheelchair ramp adjacent to the parking lot will be re-done at the end of July, to meet the required slope standards. Some of the sidewalk, where the ramp meets it on Sutter Street, will also be repaired.

The stucco repair work on the front of the building will begin by the end of August. The work is estimated to take 4-6 weeks.

Your Support is Needed

General Program Support: Your contribution will go toward keeping our service fees affordable for our predominately low to moderate income families. There are many ways for you to support the work of NLF.

- * Designate your contributions through the United Way, and Combined Charities Federal Campaign, to go directly to NLF. NLF's code number is 3251.
- * Escrip is an easy way to have a portion of your shopping go directly to NLF. Just go to Escrip.com and follow the directions to register.

1830 Sutter Street Capital Campaign: Your contribution will go toward the building's much needed renovations. You can also pledge or contribute and have your name be a permanent part of the *Issei* Women's Legacy Donor Wall.

Name: _____
Address: _____ Phone Number: _____

Amount of donation: \$ _____ Amount of Pledge: \$ _____ to: General Program Support _____ Capital Campaign _____

I would like to have my name on the *Issei* Women's Legacy Donor Wall at the following level:
____ \$5,000 (Koma/Top) ____ \$10,000 (Origami) ____ \$25,000 (Temari/Ball) ____ \$50,000 (Tako/Kite)
____ \$100,000 (Kokeshi/Japanese Doll)

Credit Card Donors:
Name as it appears on the card: _____
Card number: _____ Amount: \$ _____ Card Expiration date: _____

Please remit this form and contribution to: NLF, 2031 Bush Street, San Francisco, CA 94115 (415) 922-8898



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NIHONMACHI LITTLE FRIENDS

2031 Bush Street
San Francisco, CA 94115

Phone: 415-922-8898

Fax: 415-922-0135

Email: NLFChildcare@yahoo.com



Bush & Sutter preschoolers marched in the annual Cherry Blossom Festival Parade in April.

SAVE THE DATE:

*"Across Generations:
65 Years of Compassion,
Community and Justice"*
Miyako Hotel
Post Street
Thursday, Sept. 27th
6:00pm

Wish List

Auction Items for our "Across Generations: 65 Years of Compassion, Community and Justice" fundraiser such as gift cards, computer software, gift certificates, etc.



Bush Site preschoolers re-enacted the story "Brown Bear, Brown Bear" at the annual dance performance in March.