

August 2006



Nihonmachi
LITTLE FRIENDS™

Japanese Bilingual & Multicultural Childcare

NIHONMACHI LITTLE FRIENDS

The Scoop

Executive Notes

by Cathy Inamasu

NLF's 30th preschool graduating class is now entering kindergarten. The 40 graduates and their families are embarking upon a new chapter in their child's educational life, and we wish them all the best. Perhaps we'll see some of these alums back as volunteers at NLF in about 9-10 years.

NLF has been privileged to have the commitment of many individuals in working with the organization throughout its past 30 years. Some of you might have noticed some significant changes in the staff and Board over the past 12 months.

Our long-time cook, **Midori Tomono**, retired this past fall after over 22 years of service. Many of our alumni and their families fondly remember her delicious lunches and missed her familiar face at our Cherry Blossom skewered beef booth this year. She enjoys walking around the city, so you may see her out and about during the daytime. **Kiyomi Davis** also retired after teaching at each of NLF's sites for a total of 12 years. She is currently helping her son with his recovery from surgery, but looks forward to substituting in our programs when her time permits in the near future. **Cornell**

Cobbins, a teacher for over 15 years, moved on to take over as the Operations Director of a childcare agency in Visitation Valley. While we certainly miss him at NLF, we congratulate him on his promotion! On the Board level, **Dr. Winston Wong**, stepped off after serving on the Board as a general member and chairperson for over 10 years. We heartedly thank these incredible people for their dedicated service and generous contributions to NLF over the years. Their work has made a difference and positive impact in the life of NLF.



NLF Staff members enjoy a delicious luncheon catered by Board member, Diane Noguchi, Nell Noguchi and Haruko Nakamoto during Staff Appreciation Week in May.

Interview With Mr. Jack Hirose

by Susan Kobayashi & Mari Matsumoto

NLF's 30th Anniversary celebration dinner last November ended on a dramatic "surprise" high note when we received enough pledges to enable us to pay off the remaining \$150,000 of our mortgage. After several generous individuals pledged amounts ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000, bringing the outstanding mortgage down to \$95,000, Jack Hirose became the hero of the evening when he pledged to donate the remaining \$95,000 needed to retire our mortgage!

Born and raised in San Francisco, Jack Hirose attended its public schools and also attended Japanese classes at Kinmon Gakuen. A graduate of Mission High School, he started classes at City College of San Francisco as an engineering student. However, after attending City College for only one year, he was interned, first in Tanforan Assembly Center, and then in Topaz relocation camp, outside of Delta, Utah. While in Topaz, Jack worked as a farm laborer in Idaho and Utah, picking fruit and working on sugar beet crops. Drafted into the Army out of Topaz, Jack was assigned to the Military Intelligence Service, (M.I.S.), after three months of basic training, "...because I knew a little Japanese from having attended classes at Kinmon Gakuen." He was sent to the M.I.S. language institute in Minneapolis for one year of intensive language training. "I was lucky in that, in the one year I studied Japanese, the war ended." In September, 1945, one month

after WWII ended, Jack was among two shiploads of recent MIS language school graduates sent to the Philippines. Although he was supposed to have gone to Korea from the Philippines, he was instead sent to Japan when the Army lost his orders. It was his first time there, and he spent one year in Tokyo as part of the Occupation forces.

Discharged from the Army in 1946, Jack went to Golden Gate College for two years where, because he had been out of school for five years, he decided to forego his original objective of becoming an engineer, and instead studied accounting, "because I knew my math..."

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Mr. Jack Hirose speaking at NLF's 30th Anniversary Celebration in November after his pledge announcement.

Jack Hirose Interview (continued from page 1)

In 1951, after completing his internship as an accountant, he became “one of the first – if not the first – Asian CPA, (Certified Public Accountant), in San Francisco.” He opened his own office and ran a successful practice for over fifty years. As one of the first Nikkei CPA’s, he had quite a number of the Japanese flower grower accounts. In addition to a thriving practice as a CPA, Jack also ran the concession at the Japanese Tea Garden in Golden Gate Park for over thirty years.

After returning to San Francisco, Jack also met his wife, Kiyō, and they both still live in San Francisco. Their son lives in Los Angeles where he works as a real estate appraiser.

Now semi-retired, Jack has more time to enjoy his favorite hobby, golf. In fact, (he wanted us to mention), thirty-four years ago, in 1972, he and Jimmy

Hamada, (now deceased), were among the first Asians to join a private golf club in Northern California! (How amazing that there hadn’t been any Asian members before then!) In addition to golf, Jack is an active member, serving as ‘Acting President’ of the Optimists’ Club, which recently celebrated its 50th Anniversary.

Asked about how he heard about NLF and his motivation for such generosity toward us, he credits Hats Aizawa for telling him about NLF, and said, “I try to make my donations go to younger people.” As a former CPA, Jack also gave the very pragmatic reason that if he didn’t donate, “my taxes would be too high.” Other organizations he has supported include the Japanese Community Youth Council, Kimochi, Inc., Golden Gate Optimist Club, Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern

California, Christ United Presbyterian Church, Pine United Methodist Church, and Sei Ko Kai, (Christ Episcopal Church), to which his parents belonged. In addition, Jack also gave \$100,000 to the Japanese American Memorial in Washington, D.C. Mentioning that he had played golf with George Aratani “many years ago”, Jack joked that perhaps a part of him also wanted to match his, (Aratani’s), donation. Whatever motivated his generosity, NLF is deeply grateful for Jack Hirose’s magnanimous donation which, along with all the other generous pledges received at our 30th Anniversary celebration, which allowed us to reach the significant capital campaign goal of retiring our mortgage. By helping to ensure NLF’s continued presence in the Nihonmachi community, our generous donors have made an important investment in our community’s future!

“Create Your Legacy” Grant Won by NLF!

The students from NLF’s After School Program (ASP) have been awarded a \$15,000 grant from Ameriquest Mortgage Company’s “Create your Legacy” program. \$10,000 of the grant will be used to purchase new computer equipment for the program, enabling the K-5th graders to have better access to digital information and resources. The other \$5,000 will be used to develop a community garden, adjacent to the front of the 1830 Sutter building, in honor of the 100th Anniversary of Japantown.

“This is an opportunity to provide a grant that can really help children make a difference in their community,” said Julie Brandt, senior vice president of philanthropy and community engagement at Ameriquest. “We are proud to have selected an organization where the kids have demonstrated an active and passionate interest in supporting their community.”

Nihonmachi Little Friends won as the result of its creative grant submission – where the children participating created a video demonstrating how they would use funds to improve their community. **Maya Yoshikawa**, an ASP staff member who assisted the students with this grant proposal and the video-making said, “We were really thrilled to have been selected through this nationwide competitive process. The children did a wonderful job in putting the video together and have been able to experience the sweet success of their hard efforts. We also want to thank our two ASP parents for their indispensable help on this project: **Miki**

Heitzman for editing the video tape, and **Kazuyoshi Yamaguchi** for shooting the video tape.”

Winning programs were selected based on need, appropriateness, creativity, originality and the involvement of youth in the planning and development of the projects, and were chosen by Ameriquest associates nationwide. The \$15,000 grants were given in recognition of children’s innovative and creative ideas for improving their after school programs and their neighborhoods through community service and teamwork. This is the first year of the “Create Your Legacy” program which is expected to award up to \$1 million annually.



Students of the After School Program

Capital Campaign Update

by Makiko Kambayashi

NLF has been working very hard at its \$2.2 million Capital Campaign to fund the acquisition of and improvements to the historic 1830 Sutter Street building. Since the beginning of the Capital Campaign, we have been able to raise over \$1.5 million (70%) through donations, pledges and grants. At its 30th anniversary in November 2005, NLF reached an important milestone by raising enough money at that event to complete the acquisition of the building. Looking ahead, NLF needs to raise another \$700,000 by the end of 2007 to complete necessary upgrades and renovations to the Sutter Street facility. In this newsletter, we would like to share with you our recent fundraising efforts and plans for the future.

Donor Appreciation Event

In an effort to reach out to our existing and new donors, NLF hosted in June, a major donor appreciation luncheon at the Radisson Miyako Hotel. The event was attended by over 60 donors who had contributed \$1,000 or more to NLF's Capital Campaign. The luncheon gave NLF the opportunity to thank these donors in person, give an update on our fundraising progress, and garner new ideas as to how to reach our

next goal. We were also able to raise \$66,000 in donations/pledges through this event, and the funds raised will also be used to match a \$20,000 grant from the **Lisa and Douglas Goldman Fund**. Special thanks go to the **Hide Oshima Family**, who donated \$10,000 as a new matching challenge to NLF's campaign during the luncheon!

Donor Wall

As many of you know, NLF has commissioned the *Issei Women's Legacy Donor Wall*, to be installed in the central foyer of the Sutter Street building, to acknowledge the substantial contributions of its Capital Campaign donors. There are five levels of donations starting at \$5,000, each recognized with a traditional Japanese toy. We plan to unveil this beautifully designed Donor Wall at our annual event on Thursday, November 16th. The event will also provide us with an opportunity to celebrate the retirement of the mortgage with the community. If you are still interested in participating in the donor wall, it is not too late to do so – just contact us!

Grant Seeking

NLF has recently received a \$10,000 grant from the **Morris Stulsaft Foundation** to help with our renovation projects.

We have also just submitted proposals to the Bothin Foundation, the William G. Irwin Foundation, the Stanley S. Langendorf Foundation, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Sidney Stern Memorial Trust and the Herbst Foundation, seeking a total of over \$300,000 from these organizations.

For more information on how you can participate in and join the Capital Campaign, please call 415-922-8898 or e-mail nlfchildcare@yahoo.com.



NLF Preschoolers performing at City Hall celebration of the 100th Anniversary of Japantown.

Your Annual Support is Needed

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

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

1830 Sutter Street Capital Campaign Donor Wall: Pledge or contribute and have your name be a permanent part of the Issei Women's Legacy 1830 Sutter Street building.

Name: _____
Address: _____ Phone Number: _____

Amount of donation: \$ _____ Amount of Pledge: \$ _____ to: General Program Support _____ Building Fund _____

I would like to have my name on the 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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2031 Bush Street
San Francisco, CA 94115

Phone: 415-922-8898

Fax: 415-922-0135

Email: NLFChildcare@yahoo.com

SAVE THE DATES:

*NLF Capital Campaign
"Burn the Mortgage"
Celebration*

Thursday, Nov. 16th , 6:00pm

*NLF family and community picnic on Saturday, Sept. 30th,
In celebration of the 100th Anniversary of Japantown
10:30-2:00 at Golden Gate Park*

*If you would like to join our potluck picnic, please RSVP to
NLF.*



NLF Preschoolers marching in the 2006 Cherry Blossom Festival.



Sutter preschoolers create with blocks.

Wish List

*Desktop Copier



Bush preschoolers enjoying a hot summer day.