Executive Notes by Cathy Inamasu

We are so happy to finally be in our newly expanded 1830 Sutter Street facility! We are grateful to Kimono Gakuen/Golden Gate Institute, for allowing NLF to lease their facility for nearly 40 years!

Our preschool programs are now in one building, in connecting classrooms-- the Jyumoku Classroom and the Wakaba Classroom. The classroom names were chosen to reflect their origins. Jyumoku means “deep-rooted tree” which we felt symbolized “legacy” which is what our historic Julia Morgan designed, Issei Women’s Building represents. Without this foundation, we couldn’t have constructed an addition to the building. Wakaba means “young sprout”, representing “new growth”, which was only made possible from the preservation of our Issei Women’s Building for the community. If you missed our Open House or Sushi Social anniversary event, we hope you plan time to stop by and visit us and the beautiful building!

As this momentous year comes to a close, we extend our deepest gratitude to all who have continued to support Nihonmachi Little Friends in our efforts to provide the highest quality of programing and services to young children, their families and the community.

Best wishes for a Happy, Healthy and Peaceful New Year!

---

Spotlight on Long-time Supporter, Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi by Joyce Oishi

A vibrant buzz of activity now emanates from NLF’s combined facility. The new addition’s classroom has been nicknamed “Wakaba” (young sprout) reminding us of the potential of our preschoolers and the original 1830 Sutter classroom has been nicknamed “Jyumoku” (deep-rooted tree) recognizing the legacy and wisdom of older generations.

The energy of those on-site, the NLF preschoolers, their teachers, staff and parents, is easily recognizable and glorious. But, there is also energy supporting the NLF community from those not on-site, those who demonstrate their commitment through love of their grandchildren.

Grandparents are a powerful force behind NLF’s success and there are many to count in those ranks. One such grandparent is Ann Kobayashi. Ann is grandmother to NLF alums Mina Han who recently graduated from college and Dylan Han, a current college student. Ann is an extraordinary grandmother having served as a State Senator in Hawaii for 14 years and serving on the Honolulu City Council for 14 years. In 2012, she was recognized as a YWCA Leader Honoree for being “a staunch and tireless advocate for women and girls, senior citizens and for civil and human rights in Hawaii.” At the time of this award, Ann remarked, "That’s why I ran for office. It was to help children, to help seniors, people who couldn’t make campaign contributions. So those were the people who I wanted to represent.” Ann credits her parents for instilling the importance of giving back to the community.

continued on page 2

---

Ann Kobayashi with daughter Susan, son-in-law Chuck Han, and granddaughter Mina Han. Missing in the photo is grandson, Dylan Han.

Photo courtesy of Susan Kobayashi
Spotlight on Ann Kobayashi (continued)

Ann’s commitment to community reached across the Pacific Ocean in offering advice to her daughter, Susan Kobayashi, Mina and Dylan’s mother. Susan previously served on NLF’s Board of Directors and its initial Issei Women’s Legacy Capital Campaign, and is currently a committee member on NLF’s Plant a Seed Campaign. Through Susan, Ann provided guidance in fund raising strategies, and more importantly, offered encouragement that the tasks ahead were achievable, contributing to the success of both campaigns.

Ann is one of many grandparents who are building a living legacy by offering their wisdom and support to NLF. It’s like “Jumoku,” the wisdom of grandparents nurturing the potential of “Wakaba,” the precious children of NLF.

Opening of the Preschool Building Addition by Makiko Kambayashi

With a dream of growing a mighty trunk from a small seed, Nihonmachi Little Friends (NLF) planted a seed of hope in October 2015, when it broke ground on the playground lot adjacent to its historic Issei Women’s Building at 1830 Sutter Street. After over a year and half of hard work and with the generosity of its supporters, NLF’s dream finally came to fruition, opening the doors of its beautiful preschool addition to children and their families on May 22, 2017.

A series of events were held to celebrate this important milestone with NLF’s supporters and community members. First, a Private Preview and reception was held on May 17th for NLF’s major donors. Guests enjoyed refreshments and private tours of the new facility, along with a revealing of the stunning Plant a Seed Campaign Major Donor Board featuring traditional Japanese trees representing six recognition levels. A Blessing/Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony was also held during the same week, including families and neighbors. Rev. Debra Low-Skinner from Christ Episcopal Church, Pastor Grace Kaori Suzuki from Christ United Presbyterian Church, and Rev. Ronald Kobata from the Buddhist Church of San Francisco gave blessings. Consul General Jun Yamada gave congratulatory remarks during the short program. Lastly, an Open House was held on July 8th, featuring a reveal of the Children’s Songs Community Building Campaign Display with three recognition levels representing beloved children’s songs. Among a couple of hundred visitors were NLF alums who enjoyed reconnecting with their senseis or teachers, and prospective families and their preschoolders. Honoring the Tanabata tradition, guests were invited to write their wishes on tanzaku or special strips of papers which were hung on bamboo branches and displayed in the lobby outside the Wakaba classroom of the new building addition.

Fundraising for the new facility is continuing as the construction costs were greater than anticipated. Naming opportunities are still available starting at $1,000, with recognition on donor boards prominently displayed in the new building’s lobby. Information on ways to help NLF reach its goal can be found at its website, www.nlfchildcare.org. On behalf of the children, their families, our staff and board, we thank you for your continued support and generosity.
In 2012 Nihonmachi Little Friends began its capital campaign to create a new building that, along with the historic 1830 Sutter Issei Women’s Legacy building, would be a permanent home for its preschool programs. Inspired by the action of planting a seed that would one day grow to be a beautiful tree, the “Tané Maki” or Plant a Seed Campaign was begun. Through the generosity of many donors, NLF’s dream is coming true.

Reflecting qualities of strength, beauty, richness, flexibility and steadfastness; the theme for recognition of the major donors to the Tané Maki/Plant a Seed Campaign is traditional Japanese trees. With thanks for helping NLF continue to grow and pass on the rich cultural and community heritage of Japantown, major donors will be listed in a specially created display in the main lobby of the new building:

**Levels of Giving**

- **Ginkgo 公孫樹(いちょう)**: $250,000+
- **Bamboo 竹(たけ)**: $100,000+
- **Maple 紅葉(もみじ)**: $50,000+
- **Pine 松(まつ)**: $25,000+
- **Oak 梧(かしわ)**: $10,000+
- **Cherry 桜(さくら)**: $5,000+
Nihonmachi Little Friends’ Children’s Songs Community Building Campaign Display

Levels of Giving

$3,500 +
Koinobori
Carp Streamers こいのぼり

$2,500 +
Okina Taiko
The Big Drum おおきなたいこ

$1,000 +
Kaeru no Uta
The Frog Song かえるのうた

Strengthening Nihonmachi as a community has always been an important part of NLF’s mission. Traditional songs that pass along culture and teach language are an integral part of the NLF experience. For our Community Level donor board, recognizing significant grassroots donations, NLF will recognize donors in a display in the lobby of the new preschool building. Community donors will be listed in three categories represented by three of our most well recognized children’s songs.

Donors of $5,000 or more are eligible for the Major Donor Board.
The Escape Room Project at the After School Program (ASP)

This past spring semester, the After School Program’s 3rd – 5th graders embarked upon “The Escape Room” Project. A few of the students had gone to the real “Escape Room” in Japantown and their enthusiasm about it sparked on-going conversations and discussions. To see if the students could create their own Escape Room, the staff invited a guest speaker from Los Angeles, Tamami Kawakata. She was the actual creator of “The Escape Room” from SCRAP Entertainment. Through her presentation, the students learned they needed to create a story with an escape goal, develop puzzles to be solved, and finally solve the puzzles to obtain the key for the escape.

The students divided into two groups with each group creating an Escape Room. One group was called “Escape from the Planet” about planning a return to Earth from planet Saturn, escaping from an evil scientist. The other group was the “The Space Station” whose story was about their space station running out of fuel and needing to find a way to return to Earth.

Research for their project was done at the neighborhood library to gain more knowledge about planets and space stations. A guest speaker from NASA, arranged by one of the parents, provided more facts about space travel and alternative fuels found in other planets. A special fieldtrip to visit a parent architect at his office helped the students learn the basics of what is involved in building a space ship or rocket.

The finale for the project would be for each group to try the other’s Escape Room and see if they could solve the eight puzzles and escape within the one-hour time limit. Each team almost escaped, but ran

Continued on page 6

Your Support is Needed—Be a Part of a Legacy

Plant a Seed (Tane Maki) Campaign Major Donor Wall: Pledge or contribute and have your name be a permanent part of the 1830 Sutter Street building.

Name: __________________________________________ Phone Number: __________________________

Address: ________________________________________
Email address: ____________________________________

Amount of donation: $ ____________ Amount of Pledge: $ ____________

I would like to have my name on the donor wall at the following level:

$5,000 (Cherry/Sakura) $10,000 (Oak/Kashiwa) $25,000 (Pine/Matsu)
$50,000 (Maple/Momiji) $100,000 (Bamboo/Take) $250,000 (Ginkgo/Icho)

Children’s Songs Community Building Campaign Display: Pledge or contribute and have your name be a permanent part of the Community Donor Wall.

I would like to have my name on the donor wall at the following level:

$3,500 (Koinobori/Carp Streamers) $2,500 (Okina Taiko/The Big Drum)
$1,000 (Kaeru no Uta/The Frog Song)

Credit Card Donors:

Name as it appears on the card: __________________________ Amount: $ ____________ Card Expiration date: __________________

Card number: __________________________ Email address: __________________________ Phone Number: __________________

Please remit this form and contribution to: NLF, 1830 Sutter Street, San Francisco, CA 94115 (415) 922-8898
A Teacher’s Perspective — “Roly Poly Project”

In the spring of this year, Carmen-sensei’s Tomato Group children displayed an interest in the roly-poly bugs they were finding in various outdoor gardens. They spent time observing them both outside and in the classroom, asking questions such as “What do they eat?”, “Do they have eyes/nose/ears/mouth?”, “How many legs do they have?”, “Where do they live?”, “Which are mommies and which are daddies?”

The children set out to find answers to some of their questions. Kaila said “I think they eat dirt because worms eat dirt and roly-polies eat dirt.” They tried giving the bugs some fruit (oranges) and crackers and observed what happened over the weekend. They discovered the crackers had lots of little holes but couldn’t tell if the oranges had been eaten.

The Tomato Group decided to meet up with Ryoko W’s Playdough Group at the Cottage Row garden to find out more about the bugs. Kai and Natoma told the Tomato Group children that they can find the bugs “under rocks, leaves, trees, just under things”. The Tomato Group used this information to find a lot of bugs. They unfortunately didn’t find any more roly-polies, but they found a similar insect called a “Sow Bug”, as well as some slugs and snails, which they brought back to school to study and care for them.

Carmen-sensei and the Tomato Group discussed and made predictions as to what kind of places roly-polies live in? They were split on their opinions of hot or cold and wet or dry environments. So they did some research from reading books on the habitats of roly-polies and discovered that they needed logs/sticks, leaves, and a damp and cold environment. The children collected lots of leaves and made a habitat for their bugs. The children got to observe a very special moment during their study when they watched a sow bug having its babies. They saw many tiny white baby sow bugs crawl out of the mommy sow bug’s tummy!

During the project, the children learned new vocabulary: abdomen, exoskeleton, molting, habitat and damp. And throughout the process of the project, the children developed a better understanding of roly-polies and other bugs, sharpened their collaboration, observation and prediction skills, and happily shared their discoveries with their families and friends.

The Escape Room Project at ASP

(continued from page 5)

out of time. They were given more time afterwards and the two groups were able to solve the puzzles and escape! Success!!

The students developed many skills during the project including team work, time management, creative puzzle-making (thinking out of the box), story writing, math and science. The groups of children worked together to solve the puzzles to reach their “Escape” goal.

Photos by Lisa Mizuiri

THE SCOOP
Sushi Social 2017 Photos

Chef and Owner Andy Tonozuka and his chefs from We Be Sushi, prepared delectable sushi for the evening. Photo by Kaz Lewis

The performance by “Ich, Ni, San, Go” with (left to right) Shoko Hikage, Masaru Koga, Mark Izu, Anthony Brown and Jimi Nakagawa, was enthusiastically received by the audience. Photo by Kaz Lewis

Ways to Support NLF

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 (check NLF’s website for other ideas).

* **Online Donation:** You can give online through our website at [www.nlfchildcare.org](http://www.nlfchildcare.org)
* **Amazon Smile** If you shop online at Amazon.com, you can designate a portion of your purchases to go to NLF by signing up at www.amazonSmile.com and select charity: Nihonmachi Little Friends.
* Designate your contributions through the United Way to go directly to NLF. NLF’s code number is 3251.
* **Remember NLF in your will or estate planning.**
* **NLF is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.** Your contribution is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

NLF recognized and honored the Capital Campaign Committee members for their dedicated work with two building projects. From left to right: Taisei Yoshitsugu, Tracie Brown, Augie Phillips, Mari Matsumoto, Kaz Naganuma, Cynthia Tsuchimoto, Chuck Han (accepting for his wife, Susan Kobayashi), Karen Kai, Adrienne Shiozaki Woo, Makiko Kambayashi, Cathy Inamasu and Joyce Oishi. Photo by Tomo Hirai/Nichi Bei Weekly

Nihonmachi Little Friends

**Staff**

Holly Dela Cruz Keiko Moore
ThuyVan Do Maiko Murakoshi
Todd Eshima Asuka Nagase
Carmen Huang Misa Okayama
Cathy Inamasu Makiko Romero
Sara In Asuka Uchida
Naoko Kobayashi Ryoko Weber
Yukie Krumholz Fen Xiao
Nicholas Li Charlene Xu
Jack Lin Yuwen Ye
Naomi Miura Olivia Yee
Lisa Mizui Anna You

Eiko Matsushima, Intern

Board of Directors

Adrienne Shiozaki Woo, Board Chairperson
Joelle Matsuura, Board Vice-Chairperson

Alice Akiyama Curtis Lowe
Thaomy Beltran Tiffanie Muraoka
Amybelle Capule Augie Phillips
Kevin Chan Irene Duller Robinson
Roger Gula Mayuko Saul
Mindy Iwanaka Mia Yaginuma
Susie Kagami

Capital Campaign Committee

Cathy Inamasu Kaz Naganuma
Karen Kai Joyce Oishi
Makiko Kambayashi Augie Phillips
Susan Kobayashi Adrienne Shiozaki Woo
Mari Matsumoto Cynthia Tsuchimoto
SAVE THE DATE:

Dowa No Omatsuri: A Festival of Children’s Stories Fundraiser

Sunday, February 25, 2018
12:00pm – 4:00pm
Palace of Fine Arts Theatre

The preschoolers were invited to Rosa Park’s JBBP Undo Kai at a neighborhood park in October and participated in the tamaire game.
Photo by Ryoko Weber

Runners and walkers enjoyed NLF’s Big Steps for Little Friends’ 5K event in Golden Gate Park in October.
Photo by Kevin Kitsuda Photography

Students of the NLF After School Program’s Dance Club performed at the Osaka Matsuri in September.
Photo by Asuka Nagase

The preschoolers visited the seniors at Kimochi Home and sang the “Kata Tataki” song while giving them a massage!
Photo by Ryoko Weber