Executive Notes by Cathy Inamasu

Thanksgiving is the season for gratitude, for sharing, for remembering the special people in our lives. At this special time, Nihonmachi Little Friends is giving thanks to all of you for your generous support and guidance, as it moves forward with its Plant A Seed Campaign (PASC).

NLF is happy to report that it has received a stream of grants, pledges, and donations since the last newsletter. NLF has obtained a grant from the Herbst Foundation which will go toward the construction of the elevator, making the addition and the current Sutter Street building fully ADA compliant, and a grant from the Herzstein Foundation, which will be used for general construction.

Generous donations and pledges have also been received from numerous individuals as well as the following community groups and organizations, including the Parent and Teacher Community Council of the Japanese Bilingual and Bicultural Program at Rosa Parks School, JACL San Francisco Chapter, Japanese American Religious Federation, San Francisco Associates and Enchantees, and Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Northern California. In ad-

Plant A Seed Campaign (PASC) Update by Makiko Kambayashi

Bush Site preschoolers enjoy singing songs to the seniors at Kimochi Home.

Over 160 guests enjoyed delicious food at the Sushi Social in November.
In-depth Study on Mail  by Maya Yoshikawa

Last year, the After School Program (ASP) K-1st grade children showed interest in exploring the mail system in the United States. Before school let out for the summer, the ASP teachers asked the families to send post cards during the break. The ASP ended up receiving many post cards from all over the world.

When the new school year started, the K-2nd graders enjoyed reading and investigating all the post cards received. Many children showed interest in the different stamps, while others wondered how the post cards arrived at the ASP from all over the world. By researching how mail is transported to the ASP, they decided to open their own mail service system at the ASP.

First, Yosuke-sensei’s Group put all their effort into making a big mailbox, as the symbol of the ASP mail service. They looked through many pictures of mailboxes from around the world to decide the best design.

They went on a fieldtrip to investigate the actual mailboxes that are used by the USPS, and realized that they were in need of making a logo as well as the collection time sign, to run the service efficiently. After much discussion, they decided to name their mail service, ASPPS (After School Program Postal Service).

Join us in planting a seed in our community. Thanks to your strong trust and confidence in us, our seed is about to grow and develop. The San Francisco Planning Commission recently approved NLF’s preschool addition project, making it the first community project after the Japantown Cultural Heritage and Economic Sustainability Strategy (JCHESS) was established. Now we are working to obtain our building permit from the City. As momentum and donations to this project continue to grow, we estimate that we will break ground by early 2015.

Our immediate goal is to raise $250,000 by early 2015 to qualify for a construction loan. We will continue to fundraise during the construction period so we can restructure the loan into a mortgage loan with a lower principal amount. Contributions to our Plant A Seed Campaign are an investment in San Francisco’s children and in our neighborhood. Here are ways for you to get involved with the campaign:

* Make a multiple-year pledge toward a donor wall level;
* Make a one-time gift of any amount. Please contact us if you are interested in making a gift of stock;
* Form a group for a naming opportunity;
* Get your family and friends together and share the effort; and
* Introduce the campaign committee to prospective donors.

There are a variety of recognition opportunities for donors to the Plant A Seed Campaign, and some naming opportunities are already being fulfilled by supporters. We welcome the chance to speak with you in detail about the specific donor wall and/or naming opportunities at each level, beginning at $5,000.

On behalf of the children, their families, our staff, Board and PASC Committee, we thank you for your continued support and generosity.

Presentation to honorees, Yuki and Sam Seiki and Warren Eijima at the Sushi Social.

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New Building Naming Opportunities

New Building Street Level
1. Building Name ........................................... $1,000,000
2. Nihonmachi Little Friends Lobby .................... $200,000
3. Tané Maki Garden ........................................ (funded)*
   *Contributed by NLF Board, Staff, Capital Campaign Committee,
   Advisory Board, and families

New Building Second Level
4. Children’s Learning Center ............................. $250,000
5. Atrium ...................................................... $100,000
6. Peace Garden ................................. (funded - The Herbst Foundation)
7. Parent Communication Center
   Historic Building ................................  (funded - Larry K. Toji, Jr.)
   New Building ............................................... (funded - Larry K. Toji, Jr.)

New Building Roof Level
8. Rooftop Play Yard ......................................... $150,000
9. Children’s Garden ........................................ (funded - Maria Matsu)
10. Worlds of Wonder Art Walls (4 panels) .......... $25,000 each

Donor Wall featured in Entry Lobby

Major Donor Categories
- Ginkgo - Ichou .................... $250,000+
- Pine - Matsu ......................... $25,000+
- Bamboo - Také ..................... $100,000+
- Oak - Kashiwa ....................... $10,000+
- Maple - Momiji ...................... $50,000+
- Cherry - Sakura ..................... $5,000+
NLF celebrated its 39th Anniversary event on Friday, November 21st, at its 1830 Sutter Street building. Masanobu “Massy” Sato and his associates prepared a delectable array of delicious sushi, and along with the delicious sushi, over 160 guests enjoyed other foods, drinks and great company.

The program portion of the event was emceed by Adrienne Pon, the Executive Director of the S.F. Immigrant Rights Commission and the Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs, who is also the proud grandmother of Remi, a current NLF Bush Site preschooleer. Consul General Masato Watanabe welcomed the attendees, and the guests were then treated to a special performance by Kaori Nakano who sang “Akatonbo”, accompanied on keyboard by NLF parent, Kaoru Kida Mesa. Six year old NLF alum, Kenzo Mesa, then performed “He’s a Pirate” from Pirates of the Caribbean on keyboard.

Honored that evening were Sam and Yuki Seiki and Warren (and late wife, June) Eijima, long-time Nisei grandparent supporters who are exemplary role models of community supporters and an inspiration to all. Between them, their six grandchildren attended NLF’s programs, and now range in ages from 13 years to their early 30s. They have continued to attend and support NLF events each year, long after their grandchildren have left the programs, and have contributed greatly to the growth and development of the organization in Japantown, over its many years. The honorees were presented framed artwork, created by the Sutter Site preschoolers and teacher, Misa Okayama.

Mr. Eijima shared some thoughts afterwards: “As I near my 94th birthday next March, I wish to share a sentiment along with Sam, that honestly, it’s quite an honor to receive community recognition while we’re still both alive and kicking. However, I want to return the recognition bestowed on us to the NLF Staff and Board for your dedication and service to the community. Particularly, I want to thank Cathy Inamasu and Mari Matsumoto, for nearly four decades of sustained and loving care for all the children of our village. You honor me, but it is the recognition and gratitude for the existence of NLF that my family wishes to acknowledge. Again, NLF – Thank you very much for all your loving and dedicated service to the community!”

NLF Capital Campaign Committee members, Joyce Oishi and Karen Kai, updated the audience on the status of the Plant a Seed Campaign (see update on the Campaign on pg. 1). To enthusiastic applause, Joyce announced that the S.F. Planning Commission unanimously approved the plans for this project on September 18th and HKIT Architects had filed final papers with the Department of Building Inspection for the building permit application. Karen recognized woodwork designer, George Slack, who built the the Issei Women’s Legacy Donor Wall in the 1830 Sutter lobby. He has a long working relationship with Kaz Naganuma of NDD Creative, who designed the wall. George will be retiring shortly, but has graciously agreed to complete NLF’s second donor wall in the new building as his last project with Kaz!

The program concluded with Dale Minami and Ai Mori, parents of Ellie, a current NLF Sutter Site preschooler, speaking about their personal connections to the historic 1830 Sutter Street facility (former Japanese YWCA), and NLF’s importance to future generations and Japantown in general. They reiterated the crucial need to assist NLF in raising the funds to complete this new addition project.

*Sushi Social photos courtesy of Koji Iwata
In-depth Study on Tags

While studying hats, the Bush Site preschool 3 year olds in Makiko-sensei’s Clam Group, noticed that each hat had a tag on the inside with different symbols on them. The children were encouraged to guess what the different symbols meant before investigating each. The following are some conversations among the children discussing the “no ironing” symbol:

“It looks like a triangle”, “I think it’s onigiri”, “I know onigiri, my mom makes it”, “Looks like a foot”, “Looks like a sock, too”, “I think daddy’s foot”, “No, it’s mommy’s foot”, “No shoes!”, “I don’t wear shoes inside home”, “I don’t either”, “but I do”, “I think, no foot”, “I think don’t step on it”, “Yes, I think it says, be careful”, “yes, don’t step on the hat”...

The children were encouraged to participate and share their own ideas and thoughts freely, using their imagination. They were also learning how to accept their friends’ differing opinions throughout the process of the project.

In-depth Study on Rocks

At the Sutter Site preschool, Misa-sensei’s 4 year old students began an in-depth study on rocks when one of the students brought in 2 rocks he had found, describing them as eggs – big and small eggs. This started a discussion with other children who offered: “Nooo, they are rocks. They are hard”, “They are rocks, look like eggs”, “The white one is a baby egg and the black one is a Mommy egg. You crack the shell and put it in the nest”, “They are rocks. These are different shapes – kind of like rectangle, circle, diamond and square”, “Looks like a painting rock. It’s gonna be a rainbow rock”, “We can paint them!”, “The shapes are different”, “The black one is round and the white one is a triangle. We can crack them but not really smash them, because they are too hard!”

As part of their study, the children decided to have a “cracking experiment”, which led to exploring such things as how rocks can be cracked and what was inside them, classifying them by texture, how rocks can be used, etc. The rock study was incorporated into many aspects of the daily curriculum and throughout the year.

The children discovered that rocks are everywhere…on the stairs or ground, a rock bench, at construction sites watching big machines used to break down rock buildings, cracking up concrete, etc. The children also made connections between rocks and their personal experiences, such as finding rocks during their family trips to museums and big rocks in Yosemite such as Half Dome. They also developed an understanding that rocks come in many different shapes, sizes and colors, just like themselves!
Big Steps 4 Little Friends  (5K Run/Walk)
Volunteers met to start the set up for our 2nd annual 5K Run/Walk in the cold dark hours in Lindley Meadows. With the grass still wet from the night time dew, the ray of sun coming through the trees was a welcome sight.

Walkers enjoyed the beautiful weather and scenic walk in Golden Gate Park.

The registration table was ready for eager participants for our 5K run/walk.

At 9:00am the runners are off!! Members of Melody Takata’s GenRyu Arts played taiko to get the runners and walkers ready for the big event.

Corrine Nagata of NAGATA Dance, led some stretching exercises and games for the children after the runners and walkers got back to Lindley Meadows.

Alum volunteers helped serve complimentary lunch for the participants.

Thank You to Our Event Sponsors!
- Calbee
- Carion & Doty LLP
- Eugene Tomine, Attorney
- Hirose Family, in Loving Memory of Bill Hirose
- Mary and Kenzo Mizono
- Paragon Estate Group
- Sanrio
- Sports Authority
- Xperience 2

Special thanks to our great volunteers and raffle donors:
Asian American Recovery Services
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Yuji Uchida
Cori Wang
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Greg Wong
Raymond Woo
Fen Xiao
Jan Yonemoto
Shelly Yonemoto
Maya Yoshikawa
Bryant Yung

Hope to see you out here next year! We’d love to see more NLF alums join us. Please send us your email contact information to nflchildcare@gmail.com or go to our website at www.nlfchildcare.org.

Special thank you to Carol Kawasaki-Wong, Greg Wong and Myly Muraki for the great photos.
big mailbox. Unfortunately, they found only a few letters that they could deliver, because most of the senders did not follow the rules.

The Group got together and discussed how they could promote the ASPPS rules and the importance of sending pleasant mail to each other. Many children wanted to make a video clip like a TV commercial to promote the rules, while others suggested making special holiday post cards to send to Santa Claus to promote a happy mail service system.

The Group is currently working on designing the special holiday post cards. They will combine their drawings into one special design for the post card. The Group is also planning to make a video clip to encourage the ASP children to follow the ASPPS rules.

The ASP is planning to hold their annual Holiday Party on Thursday, December 18th. During the party, the Group will ask Yuji Santa, who is a “friend” of Santa Claus in the North Pole, to deliver their holiday post cards to Santa.
NIHONMACHI LITTLE FRIENDS

SAVE THE DATE:
Dowa No Omatsuri: A Festival of Children’s Stories Fundraiser
Sunday, March 8th 12:00pm – 4:00pm
Palace of Fine Arts Theatre

NLF family ice skating outing.

Check out our VIDEO highlighting NLF’s successes and goals at www.NLFchildcare.org.

Soko Bukai Legal Team Members, Dale Minami, Ai Mori, Don Tamaki, Superior Court Judge Tracie Brown & Karen Kai at the 2014 Sushi Social.

The preschoolers were able to take a chartered bus to Hidden Villa Farms in June.