Greetings, and hopefully all of you are doing well during this pandemic. It has been quite a year, to say the least. I’d like to give special recognition to our courageous and dedicated staff who provided creative remote learning experiences while we eventually transitioned to in-person programming during the summer. It makes me very proud to have been involved with NLF since opening its doors in 1975, working with devoted early care and education-minded individuals, parents and families, with support from the community. Our alumni continue to return as parents in the programs, which is testament to the organization’s good work!

Although we are serving smaller numbers of students, we were able to accommodate all those who wanted to return to in-person learning. While over 90% of our staff were also able to return, a few were unable to due to medical and family situations. We look forward to their return once things can return to a more normal situation. One of those staff members needing to shelter in place, was sensei Ryoko Weber. We offer her and husband, Peter, a big CONGRATULATIONS on the birth of their twin girls, Keiko and Emiko, in early November! Something very joyful to mark this COVID-19 year!

So cheers to NLF and all of you, our supporters, in making the first 45 years successful ones! We look forward to the next 45! Wishing you a happy and healthy 2021!

NLF’s 45th Anniversary Virtual Celebration

On Friday, November 20th, NLF celebrated its 45th Anniversary with a virtual Sushi Social and program. Co-emcees, E.D. Cathy Inamasu and NLF Board Member, Dawn Mokuau, opened this first-ever Zoom Anniversary program with personal remarks and a toast for the occasion. Through a video recording, the Honorable Toru Maeda, Consul General of Japan in SF, provided warm welcoming remarks praising the organization’s 45 years of service. This was followed by NLF’s special YouTube Channel utilizing some of the same formatting and programming used for distance learning with the preschoolers. This video presentation highlighted NLF’s special components for success (the children, families, staff, community and legacy building) and related those to the essential sushi ingredients which create harmonious and delectable flavors. Also included were interviews with current students, parents, and community members, reflecting on the new normal, and a special announcement of NLF’s 1830 Sutter Japanese YWCA being added to the National Register of Historic Places earlier this year.

Completing the 30-minute program was Dr. Anthony Brown and Nihonmachi “Big” Friends sharing their performance of Sukiyaki from NLF’s 2019 Sushi Social, a well-loved encore. Special acknowledgement goes to Andy Tonozuka and We Be Sushi for donating 25% of the event’s take-out orders to NLF, and to sponsors MUFG Union Bank and Wells Fargo. We look forward to an in-person celebration next year!
On March 17th, the staff prepared for the mandatory Shelter in Place (SIP) by cleaning and disinfecting the classrooms and toys that were used by the children. We were all uncertain as to what would be happening next.

As the SIP began, the staff began discussing the best ways to continue to serve and keep in touch with our children and families. A special private NLF Preschool YouTube Channel was created and aired twice a week, thanks to Maya-sensei! It was a huge success and helped to connect the children and families with their teachers and staff who provided arts and crafts activities, instrumental concerts, spotlights on teachers’ pets, science experiments, story time, baking lessons, exercise/dance challenges, Yuji-sensei’s jujitsu lessons, and everyone’s favorite “Cooking with Uncle Todd” as he shared NLF’s special lunch recipes with our families. It was so great to see the photos of the children recreating the activities at home with their families and enjoying meals from Uncle Todd’s recipes. In addition to the YouTube Channel, the teachers set up Zoom accounts to do weekly group and music sessions with the children and their families.

Once City and State agencies provided guidance on reopening, the administrative staff worked hard to prepare for a safe reopening in July. The staff worked diligently to convert our large Wakaba classroom into 2 pods of 9-10 children, the Jyumoku classroom into a pod of 10 children, the conference room/lobby into a pod of 9, and the Xperience2 classroom into a pod of 9 children, while cutting our enrollment in half. We were happy to be able to accommodate all the families and staff that wanted to return to school on July 1st.

Preparations for the reopening included staff training on the new health and safety policies and informing parents of how our “new normal” was going to look. We were excited and nervous about reopening, and were pleasantly surprised at how smoothly things worked out. What is our new “normal”? Everyone is wearing masks, a daily temperature check is done on all staff and children before entering the classrooms, parents are only allowed in the lobby, the children know what 6 feet of physical distance means, our usual fundraisers and gatherings such as our parent general meeting, evening Halloween party, and parent educational workshops are all being done virtually.

The children are amazing and resilient and we are so grateful for our brave and dedicated staff who are truly essential workers giving their all each and every day. The children are thriving in this crazy uncertain time, never complaining about wearing masks or being in the same pod every day. The teachers provide engaging activities, outdoor music time, project based learning, weekly letters emailed to the families informing them of their pod’s activities, taking neighborhood walks, while trying to continue some normalcy like celebrating the monthly birthdays of the children. Parent teacher conferences were done via Zoom with parents given a learning story written to their child. The learning stories focus on an event or accomplishment by the child and incorporates our Core Values of

“Omoyari” (being considerate)
“Nintai” (perseverance)
“Kansha” (gratitude)
“Souzousei” (creativity)
“Gakumon” (learning).

We are so grateful for everyone (parents, staff and children) who are all doing their part to keep us safe and healthy. As the winter break approaches, we are beginning to consider how can we do our annual dance performance virtually in February. Please save February 28, 2021 to find out!

This year, we didn’t have our usual Halloween Party at night so the children and staff wore Halloween costumes on October 30th and we had a little trick or treating on the roof top playground with each pod taking turns. Thanks to the generosity of the parents bringing in treat donations, the children had fun collecting many great items in their bags.

Yuji Chicken reads a story on NLF’s YouTube channel while Uncle Todd shares NLF’s special lunch recipes.

Children in the Conference Room pod do an observational drawing of a golden pumpkin.

Peace Garden group pod shows their “souzousei” (creativity) during group time.

Jyumoku children enjoying the rooftop playground.
With schools closing in mid-March, due to the Pandemic, the ASP staff geared up for distance learning in April to coincide with SFUSD’s remote programming. It was a huge challenge that the staff rose up to meet, keeping the best interest of the children and their families in the forefront. To make the most out of a difficult situation, the staff created a weekly program platform on-line.

ASP’s weekly remote program consisted of homework support, enabling students to find homework assignments and supplemental work on-line; Japanese homework support and storytelling; physical challenges with guest Yuji -sensei; Art and Science Activities; Book/Reading Club; Treasure Hunt; Escape Room; Dungeon and Dragons; and parent support “Tea Parties” in both English and Japanese.

As an example of an on-line group project, “Treasure Hunt” enabled K-2nd graders to enter Fantasy Island and become pirates hunting for the ultimate treasure. Each week they looked for clues and solved problems to accumulate gold coins. At the end, they were able to redeem the gold coins for an actual prize.

A virtual end of the year celebration and 5th grade graduation was conducted via Zoom in June. Although not all of the students could attend, it was nice to see most of the 5th grade graduates and acknowledge the promotion of all the students to the next grade.

With child care programs allowed to re-open in July, the ASP held their first summer program, a fun-filled 4 weeks, in-person, with two pods of 12 students each! The summer was designed for children to explore their curiosity in various ways without screen time. There were lots of STEAM activities throughout the day, and of course a good dose of “free play” time. Summer program topics included experimenting with our 5 senses, volcano studies, wood working, and soap box racers, while promoting team building, engineering challenges, creativity, and critical thinking skills. As everyone needed to practice their safety protocols, the days looked quite different from before. But every effort was made to make the days meaningful and exciting. It was a great mini reunion for students and teachers!

In-person programming started with the school year in mid-August. The original hours for the ASP were planned from 1:30-5:30pm, but several students needed to go back onto Zoom at 1pm. Therefore, children needing to log on for 1pm sessions, could arrive at 12:45pm. There continues to be two pods of students with two teachers each. It’s been a challenging fall as the teachers juggle homework assistance and group projects. We’ll see how the schedule might change in early 2021... and how the ASP can accommodate those changes to meet the needs of the students and families.

Thanksgiving discussions focused on the process of getting food and goods and acknowledgement that many people are involved in producing a single everyday item. The ASP students decided they wanted to express their “kansha” (gratitude) to the Church’s janitor, Oscar, who helps keep the building clean and safe during the current pandemic. They created a big banner to express their thanks to him.

The 10 Minute Challenge:
Build the tallest tower with any materials in the classroom. ASP students used their “sozoueit” (creativity) to tackle this provocation.
Thank You to Our Supporters

Along with our families of enrolled students and staff, we would like to acknowledge the following individuals who generously contributed to NLF in 2020:

Alaric Akashi & Pauline Tomita
Eric & Alice Akiyama
James Aliberti & Marlyn Murcia
Fred Barstein & Diane Nakashima
Barstein
Luc Bellet & Laura Miyano
Jason & Junko Bice
Patrick & Shina Bray
Melinda Candano
Elmer & Amybelle Bray
Mike & Clara Castro
Kevin & Valerie Chan
Sheriann Chow
Meredith Chew
Matt Dahlman & Angela Luscombe
Dave & Hijori Daniels
Sandee Desai & Shanya Becha-Desai
Robert & Arleene Drechsler
Tom Ehnhle
Todd Eng & Cristina Rivera
Aldo & Mitsuko Espinoza
Katharine Ettinger
Jordan & Sharon Fong
Koichi Fukuda
Wilson Gao & Nuai Chen
Gail Horita Gee
William Gee
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Charles Han & Susan Kobayashi
Tyler Harris & Kacey Nakashima
Miki Heitzman
Peter Herztstein & Sharon Sasaki
Jeanie Hibino
Wayne & Chris Hiroshima
Kenneth & Yoshiko Ho
Steven Holland & Tracie Brown
Carey & Linda Huang
Gary Hume & Gayle Kojimoto
Hume
Stephanie Ichinose
Michael & Vickie Ina
Mike & Mary Innes
Mary Ishisaki
Kent & Deanna Iwamiya
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Kazuomori Lewis
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Ben Lopez & Ema Williams
Gary Louie & Eleanor Gong
Jonathon & Janet Low
John & Shirley Lui
Hiro & Melody Makiyama
Scott & Kim Mamiya
Don Mar
Maria Matsui
Robert & Diane Matsumura,
in memory of Mr. Sam Seiki
Gavin & Thuy McGrane
Dale Minami & Al Mori
Patricia Mizuiri
James & Keiko Moore
Mrs. Eddie Moriguchi
Emmet Murphy & Keiko Sakurai
Nelson & Bev Nagai
Kaz & Chizuko Naganuma
Alice Nakahata
Kaz & Cindy Nakamoto
Namiko Nakatani
Steve & Suzanne Nawa
Michael & Naomi Neruda
Wes & Trudy Nitta
Yas & Yuuki Naguchi
Kay Nomura
Doug & Jamie Obana
Van Okamura & Glynnis Nakahara
Akiyoshi & Kayo Oshima
Hide Oshima
James Oshima
John Ota & Mari Matsumoto
Robert & Diane Paetsch,
in memory of Philip Wang
Kevin & Cori Pagano
Rick & Satoko Pestana
Augie & Patricia Phillips
Elise Phillips
Eugene Pulliam
Javier Rangel & Jennifer Sato
Rosa Rankin
Miko Rose
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Jimmy Wong & Jerrica Hau
Wendy Wong
Raymond Woo & Adrienne Shiozaki-Woo
Dav & Mie Yaginuma
Wayne & Anna Yamaguchi
Doug & Betty Jo Yamamoto
Joyce Yamasaki
Rachael Yamashiro
Marcella Yano
Norman Yee & Catherine Chung
Shellin Young
Shang Ying Zhu & Fen Xiao

Owner and chef, Andy Tonozuka, of We Be Sushi provided delicious bento take-out for NLF’s Sushi Social/45th Anniversary donating 25% of sales.
Undoubtedly, 2020 has been quite a year for us all. While it was a challenging year with wildfires, politics, and COVID-19, it certainly won’t be a year easily forgotten. As the holiday season and year’s end approaches, we would like to take a moment to reflect on and celebrate what we are thankful for.

**Tane Maki Garden.** Our Tane Maki (Plant a Seed) Garden, the front garden of the preschool addition, now has a beautiful sign installed, designed by NDD Creative. As a Japanese-inspired garden featuring traditional Japanese plants and flowers, it has become a welcome addition to the contemporary building. We are grateful to our green team, a group of staff and volunteers, for helping maintain the garden even when the school was temporarily closed.

**National Register of Historic Places.** Our beloved 1830 Sutter has been added to the listing in the National Register of Historic Places in January 2020, with particular recognition of its meaning for women’s history and for its association with the struggles and accomplishments of the Japanese American Issei women. This impressive feat was accomplished through a partnership with the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission, their staff, and consultant, Donna Graves, who began working on this nomination process in 2017.

Having our historic building listed on the National Register will ensure that members of the local community as well as visitors to the area will gain more knowledge of the significant history and accomplishments of these Issei Japanese American women.

**Local Landmarking.** 1830 Sutter is in the final stages of being named as a San Francisco landmark after successful hearings at the Historic Preservation Commission in October and November. The process will continue with additional hearings including the Land Use and Transportation Committee, and the Board of Supervisors. If everything goes smoothly, the landmarking status will become official by Spring 2021. Stay tuned as we plan to celebrate the local landmarking in 2021.

**1830 Sutter Restoration Projects.** With generous funding through grants from American Express/National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Crescent Porter Hale Foundation, we are about to embark on much-needed exterior work on our historic building, including the replacement of exterior windows, stucco repair, and painting of the building’s exterior. The window production, the first in the series of restoration projects, is scheduled to commence at the end of December.

**1830 Sutter Multimedia Website Project.** The Production Team revisited the Issei women’s legacy project over the summer and decided to pivot to a multimedia website. The “Dreams Interrupted: Uncovering Wartime Experiences of Issei Women” Project will explore pre-war racial discrimination; the wartime incarceration, exile, and diaspora of the Issei; and their modern-day legacy. Key features of this robust website include themed videos and content development suitable for the California curriculum. Stay tuned for further details and progress on this project.

While we have made great strides despite the pandemic and are appreciative of your generosity, we have much more to accomplish in the coming years. Fundraising for the building addition is continuing as the construction costs were greater than anticipated. Your gift will also ensure continued preservation and retention of our historic facility for generations to come. Naming opportunities are still available starting at $1,000 with recognition on beautiful donor boards prominently displayed in the lobby. On behalf of the children, their families, our staff, and board, we thank you for your continued support and generosity.
Nihonmachi Little Friends’ Legacy Donor Recognition

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. Reflecting qualities of strength, beauty, flexibility and steadfastness, the theme for recognition on the Major Donor Board is traditional Japanese trees.

Traditional songs that pass along culture and teach language are an integral part of the NLF experience. For our Community Level Donor Song Board, NLF will recognize donors in three categories represented by a few of our most well recognized children’s songs.
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:** Give online through our website at www.nlfchildcare.org. If your employer matches donations, you can double your gift!

* **Mail-In Donations:** Checks should be made payable to NLF, 1830 Sutter Street, SF, CA 94115

* **Amazon Smile** Visit www.amazonsmile.com and select charity: Nihonmachi Little Friends, and a portion of proceeds comes back to NLF!

* **United Way of the Bay Area** provides funds to NLF if you use code number 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.

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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: _____________

Email address: ___________________________ Phone Number: ___________________________

Please remit this form and contribution to: NLF, 1830 Sutter Street, San Francisco, CA 94115 (415) 922-8898

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A Message from Joyce Oishi, a mother of NLF alumni, from the virtual 45th Anniversary.

I’m going to borrow an image to describe what NLF is to me. Imagine a net and at each intersection, imagine a jewel sparkling with a little light. The jewels are our kids being nurtured at NLF and the net is us—the parents, teachers, grandparents, friends, neighbors that support NLF’s amazing work because we believe that with opportunities each little jewel, each child has a chance to shine a little brighter. And this sparkling net goes back 45 years because of the vision and support of earlier parents and, importantly, with our support, will reach forward for more years, touching more families. – because we believe in the safe, kind, stimulating place that NLF offers and we believe in the curiosity, confidence and open-hearted citizens that are nurtured at NLF, our offerings to the world.

Now, this sparkling net is a wonderful synergy in and of itself. But, place it within the tumult caused by the pandemic, searing re-examination of social expectations and the economic trauma facing families, and we could fear that this precious net might tear.

But, it hasn’t. NLF’s strong leadership and its committed staff navigated the City’s shelter-in-place order, pursued funding to keep staff, studied the guidelines required for reopening safely and methodically planned out how to operate with the new norms, keeping the joy and well-being of the children at the forefront.

In the face of unimaginable challenges, NLF has remained true to itself, in the service of children. We hope you’ll join us in supporting its work.
Many of the ASP students have shown interest in creating jungle vines to swing across the monkey bars or testing their limits by using grappling hooks/rope supports to defy gravity.

**SAVE THE DATE:**
Dowa No Omatsuri: A Festival of Children's Stories Fundraiser
Sunday, February 28, 2021
VIRTUALLY

**Nihonmachi Little Friends Staff**

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**Board of Directors**

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**Capital Campaign Committee**

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