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Long Beach

JAPANESE CULTURAL CENTER

NEWSLETTER



Joann Matsunaga
President 2026

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President's Message

Happy New Year, everyone! Shinnen Akemashite Omedetou Gozaimasu! Good-bye to the Year of the Snake and hello to the Year of the Horse!

First, I'd like to introduce myself. My name is Joann Matsunaga, and I am honored to serve as your President for 2026-2027. I have a long-standing connection to the Long Beach Japanese Cultural Center, having been involved here since I was young. My younger brother and I were members of Judo as kids, and today I am proud to be part of Kokoro Taiko.

I also want to introduce the rest of our Board:

- 1st Vice President: Anthony Tanaka
- 2nd Vice President: Joshua Ungos
- Treasurer: Joanne Leivici
- Secretary: Wanda Higaki

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank our outgoing officers- Florence, Ole, and Atsuko- for their incredible dedication. Otsukare sama deshita. We value your insight and expertise, and we welcome your guidance as we navigate this year. A special thank you to Anthony and Joanne for kindly continuing in your roles.

Our first big event of the year- Shinnenkai was on the 1st of February. I hope many of you were able to join us in the festivities, enjoying the delicious food and wonderful company. It looked like we had a fantastic turnout! Thank you all for your contributions to the food and dessert tables – your efforts made the event so special.

To our dedicated volunteers, please know how much we appreciate you. Your time and hard work are invaluable. From helping with setup, quietly working in the kitchen, serving, and replenishing dishes, you make everything run smoothly – often without needing to be asked. And a big thank you to everyone who stayed to help with cleanup; with so many helping out, it was a quick and efficient process.

**Long Beach Japanese
Cultural Center**
1766 Seabright Ave
Long Beach, CA 90813

www.lbjcc.org

**LBJCC is a 501c3 organization and
your donations are tax deductible
as the law allows.**

Fed Tax ID: 95-3416426

**Long Beach Japanese Cultural Center
2026 Board of Directors
Executive Committee**

**President –Joann Matsunaga (310)387-8163
1st Vice President – Anthony Tanaka (562) 455-7470
2nd Vice President –Joshua Ungos (562)810-4555
Treasurer – Joanne Leivici (310) 994-0553
Secretary –Wanda Higaki (310)897-6526**

Organization	Contact	Phone	Meeting Time/Other Info
Beikoku Shodo Kenkyukai	Hiroko Ishiguro	(562)431-0820	Classes: Mondays 10am-1pm
Grace First Presbyterian Church	*Danny Nakagi	LBtunstrops@hotmail.com	Services: Sundays 9am & 11am
Kimekomi Doll-Yukari Kai	*Atsuko Yomogida	(562)715-3949	Classes: 3rd Sat of the month, 1:30pm-3:30pm at LB Buddhist Church Instructor: Mrs. Yukari Kanesaka
Kokoro Taiko Kai of Long Beach	*Joann Matsunaga	(310)387-8163	Practices: Saturdays 1-3pm
Long Beach Buddhist Church	*Keiko Shibata	(562)533-6431	Services: Sundays 10am at 2360 Santa Fe Ave Long Beach
Long Beach Ikenobo Ikebana	*Izumi Minamitani	(310)292-0179	Classes: 2nd, 3rd & 4th Saturdays 1:30pm (call to confirm)
Long Beach Japanese Language School	*Ole Nervik	(562)533-2994	Classes: Saturday 8:45am-12:30pm
LBJLS Alumni & Friends Assoc	*Nancy Kobata	(562)896-9537	
Long Beach Ondo Group	June Donovan	(562)708-3633	Practices: May-June Mondays & Wednesdays 7:30-8:30pm @LBJCC Ondo for exercise October-May, Friday 7:30-8:30pm @ LBBC
Long Beach Judo Dojo	*Anthony Tanaka	(562)455-7470	Practices: Tuesdays & Fridays 7pm-9pm
Long Beach Kendo Dojo	*Hayato Okawa		Practices: Mondays & Thursdays 7:30-9:30pm
Long Beach Shotokan Karate	Andy Ongos		Contact: Andy Ungos (562)810-7555 Practices: Wednesdays & Fridays 5:30-7pm
Ueki Tree Trimming Club	Wanda Higaki	(310)897-6526	
			*Denotes Voting member organization
Website/Newsletter	Jay Shaheen	(562)305-8982	
Membership	Joanne Leivici	(310)994-0553	
Building Superintendent	Osamu Nishimura	(562)644-1443	
Scholarship Committee	Joanne Leivici	(310)994-0553	
Senior Luncheon	*Keiko Shibata	(562)533-6431	1 st & 3 rd Wednesday of the month, call for reservation

The Long Beach Japanese Cultural Center Mission Statement

The Long Beach Japanese Cultural Center has served as the primary facility in the Long Beach Harbor area in furthering an understanding and appreciation of the Japanese culture and the Japanese American experience through its offerings of cultural and visual arts instruction, as well as Japanese language classes, events and activities for the benefit of citizens of all ages, ethnicity and religious affiliations.

Our Mission is:

- To enhance the lives of the citizens of the Long Beach/South Bay area through accessible, quality instruction in the various Japanese cultural, visual, language and martial arts.
- To serve as a cultural resource of civic and community events, thus adding to the already rich cultural diversity of the area.
- To preserve and further the timeless cultural traditions which are our legacy by generations past.
- To collect, document and establish an archives library of historical artifacts, data, visual images and an oral history of the Japanese American experience in the Long Beach and surrounding areas to serve as a unique educational resource.

Congratulations again to Adrianna Tanaka on receiving the Dr. John Kashiwabara Scholarship! I completely agree with her hope for more engagement and collaboration between our organizations – that's a wonderful goal for us all to work toward.

Looking back at 2025, I'm proud to share that the LBJCC celebrated its 75th Anniversary! That's a pretty amazing milestone, and it's all thanks to everyone's support and dedication. Thank you! We hope to continue the traditions for years to come. We are forever grateful to our "senpais" (upperclassmen/women/elders/predecessors)- whose efforts, struggles, and perseverance have brought us to where we are today. I hope to uphold their legacy, and I humbly ask for your continued support as we move forward together.

If you have any concerns or questions regarding the Center and/or its organizations, please feel free to contact any of us on the board or your group representatives.

With this winter's unpredictable weather – from sunny and warm days to downpours and strong winds -please be well and take care. I look forward to seeing everyone out and about around the Center! Let's make this New Year one of kindness and support: "Let our New Year's resolution be this: We will be there for one another as fellow members of humanity, in the finest sense of the word." – Göran Persson (former Prime Minister of Sweden)

- Joann Matsunaga, President

- Answers for Emoji Food Quiz
- 1. Cupcake
 - 2. Hotdog
 - 3. Milkshake
 - 4. Banana Split
 - 5. Popcorn
 - 6. Egg Pie
 - 7. Moon Pie
 - 8. Cheese Corn Ball
 - 9. Onion Ring
 - 10. French Fries
 - 11. Hamburger
 - 12. Pancke
 - 13. Cheesecake
 - 14. Fruit Punch
 - 15. Cotton Candy

Adding a 😊 or ❤️ to a text is a very common now days. Did you know that the first wide spread emoji 絵文字, were created in 1999 by Japanese artist, Shiegetka Kurita. Try this emoji food quiz to see how fluent you are in emoji!

GUESS THE FOOD

- 1. ☕ 🍰 _____
- 2. 🔥 🐱 _____
- 3. 🍼 🍋 _____
- 4. 🍌 📉 _____
- 5. 🌞 🌿 _____
- 6. 🥚 🍰 _____
- 7. 🌙 🍰 _____
- 8. 🧀 🌿 ⚽ _____
- 9. 🍷 💍 _____
- 10. 🇫🇷 🍷 _____
- 11. 🍷 🍔 _____
- 12. 🍳 🍰 _____
- 13. 🧀 🍰 _____
- 14. 🍎 🍌 🍋 _____
- 15. ☁️ 🌸 _____



- **Ongoing - Ondo for Exercise at LB Buddhist Church, Fridays 7:30-8:30 pm @2360 Santa Fe Ave Long Beach - LongBeachOndo@gmail.com**
- **May - Ondo Practice for LBJCC Summer Festival will begin in May 2026**
- **May 9th - LBJLS Mother's Day Pancake Breakfast & Craft Fair at LBJCC -8-9:30am**
- **June 25th - LBJCC Summer Festival Set up**
- **June 27th LBJCC Summer Festival**



2026 Dr. John Kashiwabara Scholarship Recipient



Adrianna accepting the Dr. John Kashiwabara Scholarship at the 2026 LBJCC Shinnenkai

Long Beach Unified School District High School senior, Adrianna Tanaka was the recipient of the 2026 Dr. John Kashiwabara Scholarship. Adrianna has been active at the Long Beach Japanese Cultural Center from a young age. She has been a member of the Long Beach Judo Dojo since she was seven years old. She is currently a brown belt and has competed in the Judo Junior Olympics and ranked 5th in the world at 11 years old. She is also active in organizations at her high school, including the Female Leadership Academy and the Asian American Heritage Association. She hopes to attend Chapman University with a major in Psychology.

Adrianna's statement about the Long Beach Japanese Cultural Center on its current role and significance:

For the last ten years since I started Judo at the age of seven, the Long Beach Japanese Cultural Center has been my second home. It's most significant role in my life, the Long Beach judo Dojo, has fostered a very strong, tight-knitted family for me since I stepped in the Dojo. Practicing Judo twice a week consistently taught me more than just physical self defense, but recognizing that the value lays in the intergenerational bond. Our senior members, black belts, and sensei teach us all mutual respect and commitment to preserve a Japanese American culture by unifying all people. Moving forward, I'd love to see the concept of mentorship being shown throughout multiple groups, and have days where all organizations like Judo, Taiko, Kendo and Karate all come together and engage with each other's activities in hopes to create a more unified hub for the Long Beach Judo Dojo.



Dr. John E. Kashiwabara was a dedicated family doctor and surgeon who practiced privately from 1954 to 1990. He was an active supporter of various community organizations including the Long Beach Japanese Cultural Center, formerly known as the Harbor Japanese Community

Center. During his career, he delivered numerous babies particularly within the Japanese-American community. His endowment fund provides annual contributions to a scholarship fund at LBJCC offering scholarships to deserving high school seniors who plan to attend a junior or four-year college after graduation.

Mother's Day

"ALOHA"

Pancake Breakfast

(FREE - DONATIONS WELCOME)

May 9

8:00 TO 9:30 am



Location:

**Long Beach Japanese Cultural Center
1766 Seabright Ave.**

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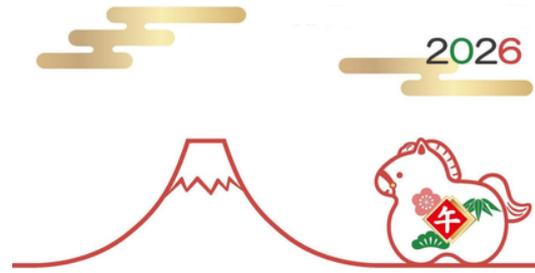
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Hand-made Crafts

AND

Treats table

SHINNEN KAI



2026 LBJCC President Joann Matsunaga



Presentation of the Year of the Horse



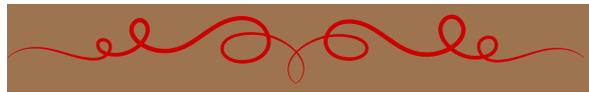
Outgoing LBJCC President Flo Kojima



Adrianna Tanaka receiving the Dr. John Kashiwabara Scholarship



Izumi "Senko" Minamitani receiving the Fred Ikeguchi Community Service Award



Everyone enjoying a slide show



Victor Fukuhara with the New Year "Kanpai"

Sunday, April 19, 2026
11:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Venice Japanese Community Center

Guided by the theme “Cultivating a Community of Care,” Keiro’s first Caregiver Conference of 2026 will connect caregivers with resources to strengthen their support network.

Registration Closes: **Friday, April 3, 2026**
(or when capacity is reached)
Livestream option available.



For more information, scan the QR code or visit keiro.org/CC.

Fred Ikeguchi Community Service Award Presented to Izumi “Senko” Minamitani



To the Fred Ikeguchi Community Service Award Committee, It is my pleasure to nominate Izumi “Senko” Minamitani for the Fred Ikeguchi Community Service Award. Originally from Kurashiki, Okayama, Minamitani Sensei began studying Ikenobo Ikebana at the age of fifteen. After moving to the United States, she has continued to share her passion for Ikebana and Japanese culture through teaching. She currently serves as President of the Ikenobo Ikebana Society of Los Angeles Chapter and teaches over 40 students across the South Bay, including classes in Gardena, Torrance, Palos Verdes, and Long Beach. Minamitani Sensei has been teaching the Long Beach Ikebana class since 2007.

She teaches classes and prepares floral arrangements for community gatherings such as the New Year’s Celebration. At the Summer Carnival, she offers a live demonstration of Ikebana, sharing this traditional art with the broader community. She continues her work with dedication to the community and with a strong sense of mission to keep alive the tradition of Ikebana, an art form over 500 years old. After each class, an arrangement by Masako Fukuhara, one of her longtime students, is displayed in the cultural hall. It has become a small tradition that lets us share what we learn and bring the beauty of Ikebana to our community. As the Long Beach Japanese Cultural Center celebrates its 75th year, I feel that Minamitani Sensei’s continued dedication has become an important part of its history. Through her steady effort and commitment, she helps preserve Japanese culture in Long Beach and truly reflects the spirit of community service. Respectfully, Sakurako Shimizu Student of Izumi Sensei (LB & PV Ikebana classes)

LONG BEACH

JAPANESE CULTURAL CENTER

**SATURDAY
JUNE 27, 2026**

3-9:30pm



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Long Beach Japanese Cultural Center, Inc.
1766 Seabright Ave
Long Beach, CA 90813
ANNUAL 2026



January 1 through December 31, 2026
MEMBERSHIP FORM & DONATION FORM

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Address: _____
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Email: _____

Check enclosed _____
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Paid in cash _____

____ Check here if you would like to receive newsletter by email

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Apply where needed		\$ _____
Senior Lunch		\$ _____
Other		\$ _____
Total Amount Enclosed		\$ _____



Your annual membership and donations enable us to carry out various program throughout the year.

Thank you for your continued support!

The LBJCC is a 501c3 charitable organization and all donations are tax deductible as the law allows. Federal Tax ID: 95-3416426



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Wataru Namba
7-DAN



Head Coach:
D. Tsunawaki
6-DAN

Instructor: **Craig Takeshita** 6-DAN
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LONG BEACH JAPANESE CULTURAL CENTER 2026 MEMBERSHIP AND DONORS LIST

All listed have paid their membership for 2026. Donors have the following after their names: NB (New Building or Construction Donation), BM (Building Maintenance) and/or G (General), SL (Senior Lunch) as of March 1, 2026.

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 Akashi Kazuye | 56 Johnston-Ushijima Tifany & Cameron | 111 Ramirez Mellisa |
| 2 Anna Sanchez | 57 Jones Charjani | 112 Richlin Alicia G |
| 3 Bayer Gilian | 58 Kabashima John & Janet | 113 Robbins Rachel |
| 4 Belen Brian | 59 Kaichi Ronald & Chrissy G | 114 Rodriguez Grace |
| 5 Bolanos Janina | 60 Kataoka Takako SLG | 115 Romeo Christine Tanabe |
| 6 Butsumyo David M. NBBMG | 61 Kato Jane G | 116 Rudy & Natsuyo Higuchi Romo |
| 7 Butsumyo Gregg BMG | 62 Kennedy Audrey | 117 Ruth Susan G |
| 8 Butsumyo Mas & Jean G | 63 Kim William | 118 Sakimoto & Miika Fukuwa Michiko |
| 9 Cabrera Homero | 64 Kimura Toshio NBBMG | BMSLG |
| 10 Canedo Christain | 65 Kobayashi Terumi | 119 Sanchez Anna |
| 11 Chin Angy | 66 Kojima Florence G | 120 Sarmiento Danison |
| 12 Cotta Adrian | 67 Komai Michael G | 121 Shaheen Jay SLG |
| 13 Cruz-Collins Garriel | 68 Kotani Akinori & Mayumi SL | 122 Shibata Keiko, Katrina & Aileen |
| 14 De La Torre Mark & Roselia G | 69 Kurimoto Dana M | NBBM |
| 15 Dickinson Janis & Jacob G | 70 Kuroda Masako G | 123 Shimizu June G |
| 16 Doi Gail Saito SLG | 71 Kusaba Clifford & Laura G | 124 Shimizu Ron NBBMSLG |
| 17 Dolan Marc | 72 Kuykendall Casey | 125 Shioji Walter & Marie NBBMG |
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| 19 Endo Hiroko G | 74 Lee JinHee | 127 Sramek Mary G |
| 20 Estes & Ashley Arikawa Cory G | 75 Leivici Dimitrie & Joanne G | 128 Sueki George & Bea |
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| 22 Fogarty-Smith Therese | 77 Louder Jeffery | 130 Sumi Frank & Irene G |
| 23 Fujii & Nancy Spiegel Takashi G | 78 Ma Kimberly | 131 Takade Nancy Michio BMSLG |
| 24 Fukuhara Tony & Carol | 79 Macalinao Camille | 132 Takano Mae |
| 25 Fukuhara Larry | 80 Matsumoto Milan, Leo & Cheryl | 133 Takeshita Craig BM |
| 26 Fukuhara Victor & Masako | 81 Matsunaga Michiko & Masatoshi | 134 Tanaka & Jessica Liu Anthony |
| 27 Fukumoto Janis G | 82 Matsushita Vernon & Claire NBBM | 135 Tang Michael |
| 28 Fukushima Hiro & Kyoko G | 83 Mertz & Angelica Oliva William | 136 Tokudomi Kathy G |
| 29 Garcia Seth | 84 Moon Laurie & Joseph G | 137 Toma Mieko G |
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| 37 Hayashi & Aaron Ray Shelly SL | 92 Nomoto Alan & Susan BMSL | 145 Valenzuela Patricia |
| 38 Henderson Alisha | 93 Oberle Marianne & Ron G | 146 Valles Alex |
| 39 Heney Alison G | 94 Ogata Stephanie & Marlon | 147 Vaughn Aki & Mike NBG |
| 40 Higaki Wanda | 95 Okaniwa Osamu & Sayoko BMG | 148 Wahl Kaathleen |
| 41 Higashi Fumiko G | 96 Okazaki Joyce BMSL | 149 Watanabe Mark & Phyllis G |
| 42 Hirano Kim | 97 Onishi Kevin | 150 Yamada Tex |
| 43 Hirata Vivian & Dan G | 98 Oreilly Joseph & Hideko | 151 Yamagata Beverly Yoshiko G |
| 44 Hirooka Michie G | 99 Otsuki-Marshall Nina G | 152 Yamaguchi Howard G |
| 45 Hirota Lauren | 100 Page Richard & Cynthia G | 153 Yamaguchi Dana G |
| 46 Hosoda James & Georgia Kane | 101 Pahang Gabriel | 154 Yamaguchi Rev. Steve & Alison G |
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| 48 Hosokawa Don G | 103 Paxson John & Francine G | 156 Yomogida Atsuko BM |
| 49 Hosokawa Shigeko G | 104 Perov Kira G | 157 Zepeda Rafael |
| 50 Isa Raymond G | 105 Petitt Josheph | |
| 51 Ito Beverly G | 106 Poblete Jayden | |
| 52 Iwamasa Emiko Amy BM | 107 Pontell Ashley | |
| 53 Iwasaki Mary G | 108 Prokonicheva Alina | |
| 54 Iwasaki Barbara G | 109 Quon JoAnn & Dawson G | |
| 55 Izumi Bruce & Pauline | 110 Raines Yoshie G | |



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