

Japan America Society of St. Louis, Inc.
c/o International Studies and Programs
University of Missouri–St. Louis
366 SSB
1 University Blvd.
St. Louis, MO 63121-4400

Japan America Society Annual Report 2018

The Japan-America Society of Saint Louis (JASSTL) was founded in 1967 with the mission **to promote friendship and mutual understanding between the peoples of Japan and the United States.** The Society is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization and is an all-volunteer society governed by 20+ elected members of the Board. The Office of International Studies and Programs (ISP) at University of Missouri-St. Louis provides operational support to the Society.

JASSTL is the major information clearing house in the St. Louis Metropolitan Community. The Society receives over 100 inquiries about Japan in a given year and we answer them free of charge. The Society receives requests for translation services, lectures, authentic cultural activities, and demonstrations from local libraries, schools, and other organizations. In addition, JASSTL supports the St. Louis Japanese Language School for children and adults by hosting an annual fundraising golf tournament. JASSTL has made donations every year since 1998, totaling more than \$65,000.

2018 marked a significant transition in the Society's leadership team. Dr. Chikako Usui stepped down as JASSTL President after a tenure of 10 years, but not before ensuring a highly-dedicated and well-qualified team was in place to continue the success of the society. Greg Gorman, an active JASSTL board member and well-respected member of the St. Louis Japanese community, assumed the role of President beginning January 1, 2018. Kenichi Kitajima of Novus International stepped down as 1st Vice President due to his return to Japan, with Toshio Kitamura of CSI Leasing now filling his position. Linda Austin of the JAS Women's Association (JASWA) remains the 2nd Vice President. Dr. Joel Glassman transitioned from his role as executive director to continue to support the Society as 3rd Vice President. The JAS also used this opportunity to strengthen its treasurer position with the addition of Ron Sakai of Wells Fargo Advisors, and the addition of Chairman Mike Kimzey as assistant to the treasurer.

2018 also saw changes in our administrative support team. Chip Meyer transitioned from his role as Program Manager and continues to support the Society as a board member and as Secretary. The role of Program Manager is now filled by Tiffany Arnold, who works with the student assistant to coordinate annual programming and take care of day-to-day administrative tasks.

This new leadership team will continue the growth and success that the society saw under Dr. Usui. During the past five years, the Society has recruited new corporate board members, including representatives from Safety National and the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Additionally, it strengthened the annual business/economic and cultural programs by obtaining grants from various sources, including the Japan Foundation, Keizai Koho

Center, Sasakawa Peace Foundation, and TOMODACHI (US-Japan Council). Of these, the largest grants have been from TOMODACHI for 2013-2017 (\$92,000), the Japan Initiative grant for 2015 (\$28,738) and 2016 (\$29,238), the Boeing Employee Community Fund grant for 2016-2018 (\$8,500) and the Japan Update grant for 2015-2019 (\$60,000). We also received smaller grants for new programming, including the Richard J. Wood Art Curator Series grant (\$4,963) and the NAJAS single speaker series grant (\$1,322).

2018 was not only successful in terms of securing new grants, but also in terms of recruiting new and engaging current corporate members. Our new members include community partner World Trade Center St. Louis, and Urban Chestnut Brewing Company. These memberships have not only generated revenue for the Society, but have been invaluable in terms of elevating the quality of our programming. For example, Urban Chestnut has kindly donated their locally-brewed beer to several of our annual events for guests to enjoy free of charge, and Hussmann provided an event space and support for our Fall Japan Update. Additionally, existing corporate memberships have increased their commitment to the Society, with CSI Leasing increasing its membership level from Silver to Gold, and Nidec Motor Corporation from Gold to Platinum.

After a 3-year-long capacity-building exercise that began in 2015 upon securing the Center for Global Partnership (CGP) grant, the Society has achieved a sustainable level of growth, and has successfully raised funds for ongoing administrative support. This includes the implementation of event-level budgeting via QuickBooks to ensure that the Society meets its annual fundraising goal. This year, we met our \$19,000 fundraising goal due to the board's efforts in securing new grants, improving our annual programming, and securing new corporate memberships. This profit ensures that we can continue to invest in and improve our annual programming. Additionally, it allows the Society to retain our Program Manager on a part-time basis.

All the above efforts go directly to fulfilling our mission and serving the St. Louis community, largely by strengthening our **annual programs**. Below is a list of the events and programs we offered, along with a short summary of how we are improving on each event/program.

2018 Events

January 21 Shinnenkai 新年会 New Year's Celebration

The event featured Deputy Consul General Kenji Tanaka from Chicago, Dave Lowry's remarks about the Japanese New Year's celebration, kagami-biraki (sake opening ceremony), New Year's special meal, and fukubukuro raffle. The event was held at Sushi Sen Restaurant and enjoyed a full house with 65 attendees.



February 15 Making It & Breaking It in Japan

The JAS hosted Mr. Steven Gan for a free talk and book signing chronicling his amazing experience running a successful debt collection business in Japan for 12 years - the first foreign-owned business of its kind in Japan. He told the absolutely riveting story of starting his business organically and growing it to employ 30 people. His business was so successful, he drew the attention of the media, but also the ire of his competition, which used an obscure and ambiguous clause in the law to shutter his company. He now has a consulting business in Chicago, Stellar Risk Management. Following his talk, he took questions from the audience and offered autographed copies of his book, "Making it and Breaking it in Japan" for sale to about 30 audience members.



February 20 Spring Japan Update: Urban Agriculture & Farming in Japan & the U.S.

The JAS presented its spring Japan Update program featuring three expert speakers on urban agriculture. Professor Eiji Goto of Chiba University spoke about trends and technology in factory farming in Japan, highlighting the efficiencies and financial aspects of the industry. St. Louis's own Mary Ostafi of Urban Harvest STL focused on the specific efforts and adaptations required for urban farming in St. Louis and the broader social impact of this trend. And, Kevin Erickson of Loyola University in Chicago presented an overview of the challenges and opportunities of urban agriculture, from small-scale community gardens to the latest advances in aqua- and aeroponics. About 70 people braved the wind and rain to hear our speakers and enjoy our signature sushi and sake reception afterward in the lobby of Novus International, Inc., one of JAS's corporate members who generously hosted the event.



March 2 The Way of Tea and Flowers: Art in Bloom

The JAS partnered with the St. Louis Art Museum during their “Art in Bloom” event, which features floral arrangements made by local florists to accompany art pieces within the Museum. The Society offered tea ceremony and ikebana demonstrations in conjunction with this program to showcase the beauty of Japanese flower arrangement and the soothing practice of tea ceremony. It was an honor to be invited to be part of this extremely popular annual event at the museum.

April 28 Make-a-Wish

JAS partnered with Make-A-Wish Missouri to plan a reveal party in the Japanese Garden of the Missouri Botanical Garden for a local girl battling leukemia. Having dreamt of going to Japan ever since elementary school, her wish reveal was celebrated with a taiko performance by St. Louis Osuwa Taiko, a chanoyu ceremony, and performances by St. Louis Bon Odori and Okinawa Eisa. JASWA presented a check and gifts.



April 29 Passport to Japan

JAS also partnered with the St. Louis Art Museum to host another exciting Passport to Japan. This event has always been an educational and fun experience for families. This year the origami table featured many different types of origami, mainly focusing on the Year of the Dog. Koi (carp) coloring was also offered. Outside, the St. Louis Osuwa Taiko drumming group returned for another year of great music and energy. After the performance the group allowed children to try hitting the drums and practice a fun beat. After the drummers finished, it was time to head back inside to see the Bon Odori dancers. They performed traditional and modern Bon festival dances, then invited the audience to join them in three simple dances.



May 5 Art in the U.S.-Japan Relationship: Curator’s Perspectives

Dr. Xiajin Wu from the Seattle Art Museum (SAM) presented a fascinating talk about how the SAM has become one of the largest collectors of Asian art - mainly Japanese art - in the world. Dr. Wu described in detail how the museum's founder, Dr. Richard E. Fuller, became interested in “fossils of time and culture” from Japan. A Q&A followed Dr. Wu's interesting talk, where the audience explored more in depth about the art presented, then everyone enjoyed the JAS’s signature networking sushi and sake reception. We thank the Pulitzer Art Foundation for hosting this incredible event and the National Association of Japan America Societies for bringing Dr. Wu to St. Louis to speak with us.



May 7 A Celebration of Japanese Culture

May is Asian Pacific-American Heritage Month, and this year the Celebration of Japanese Culture at the Missouri History Museum was again a great success. The attendees enjoyed many different performances, including the shishi-mai lion dance with St. Louis Osuwa Taiko and a puppet show by St. Louis Japanese Language School adult students. Dr. Chikako Usui, in her delightful speaking style, taught about ikebana, demonstrating three different types of ikebana while explaining to the audience the importance of each flower or branch in the completed arrangement. The day ended with a full demonstration of the Japanese tea ceremony (Chanoyu) by Chado Society of St. Louis. We thank the many performers, the Missouri History Museum, and the audience who took time out of their beautiful Sunday afternoon to experience a mini Japanese Festival. We hope to see everyone in September at the 3-day Japanese Festival at the Missouri Botanical Gardens.



June 16 JAS Trivia Night

Our second-annual trivia night fundraiser was a huge success, with over 120 participants and multiple table sponsors. Premium tables were offered that included Japanese bento box meals from Chef de Art Catering and Urban Chestnut Brewing Company's *Konomi* beer. Attendees also enjoyed a silent auction, which featured authentic Japanese items among other temptations, as well as gift certificates to local restaurants. Everyone enjoyed the jan-ken-pon mini-game. In total, this new event raised \$4,000 for JASSTL.



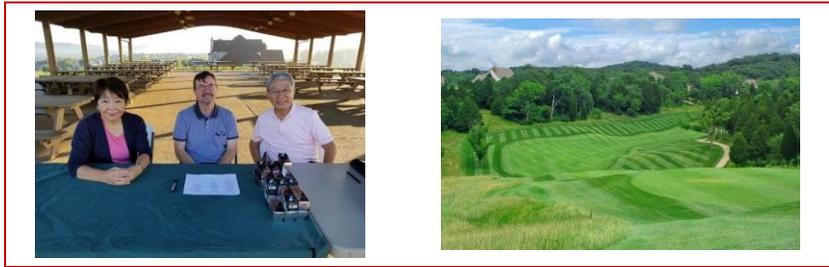
September 1-3 Annual Japanese Festival

This year's Japanese festival boasted an impressive 35,000 attendees, many of whom stopped by our booths. At the tee-shirt booth we sold not only our 2018 festival t-shirt but also tee-shirts featuring vintage festival designs, the five virtues of *bushido*, and the kanji calligraphy for flower. In addition, our beer & sake booth once again teamed up with Urban Chestnut Brewing Company to serve *Konomi* beer on draught. New to the festival was the Chindon performance group; unlike the other performances at the festival, the Chindon group performed not only on stage, but engaged in a parade-like performance, delighting festival attendees throughout the Garden.



September 13 Fund Raising Golf Outing (Pevely Farms)

This annual fundraising event for the St. Louis Japanese Language School is strongly supported by our corporate members each year. In 2018, we had 11 teams and 10 hole-sponsors. We generated a net income of \$3,341.93, of which JAS donated \$3,000 to the Language School.



November 8 Fall Japan Update: Japanese Investment in St. Louis through the Lens of Hussmann & Panasonic

The JAS presented its Fall Japan Update program featuring a three-speaker panel on Japanese Investment in St. Louis, followed by a Q&A session. Mr. Takeo Fujino (VP of Integration & Planning for Panasonic) and Mr. Tim Figge (CEO of Hussmann) spoke about the commonalities between their respective corporate cultures and philosophies. This made for a good fit, and an easy decision for Panasonic Japan to acquire Hussmann. Around 70 people attended the program, followed by our delicious sushi and sake reception provided by Mr. Naomi Hamamura of Chef De Art Catering. The program and reception were graciously hosted by Hussmann Corporation, which provides high-quality attractive food display cases in major grocery stores across the nation and around the world



November 28 JAS Annual Dinner & Meeting

Our Annual Dinner was held at Wild Carrot, a modern event venue in the Shaw neighborhood. We not only sold out of seats, but surpassed all previous attendance records with over 100 attendees. We also held a silent auction that included Japanese art, event tickets, unique private experiences, and premium spirits. Guests enjoyed a delicious buffet of both sushi and a wide selection of traditional Japanese hot dishes as the Rader String Quartet played chamber music. We honored two members of our community – Mr. Yoshiaki Shibusawa and Dr. Joel Glassman – with the Friendship and the Distinguished Service awards, respectively, for their roles in fostering cultural exchange between Japan and the United States. Mr. Shibusawa then presented the St. Louis Japanese Language School with a \$3,000 donation check, from the JAS annual golf tournament proceeds.



December 14-23 JAS Night at the Ballet: The Nutcracker

In addition to these major programs, JAS continued to offer regular ikebana (Japanese flower arrangement) workshops throughout the year, about 35 in all, and several Chanoyu (Japanese tea ceremony) experiences. These ikebana and chanoyu sessions provide the St. Louis community regular opportunities to experience and learn authentic aspects of traditional Japanese arts and culture.

2018 Board of Directors

Linda Austin	Moonbridge Publications
Bruce S. Buckland	Retired Honorary Consul General of Japan
Jack Coad	Retired from Parsons Brinckerhoff
Dr. Joel Glassman	University of Missouri-St. Louis
Greg Gorman	Nidec Motor Corporation
Kazuko Ikeda	Japanese Cultural Consultant
Dr. Yutaka Ikeda	The Boeing Company
Mike Kimzey	St. Louis County Office
Kenichi Kitajima	Novus International
Yuko Kitajima	Ascension
Toshio Kitamura	CSI Leasing, Inc.
Stephen Knapp	Honorary Consul of Japan
Peter H. Love	Goffstein, Raskas, Pomerantz, Kraus & Sherman, LLC
Dave Lowry	Japanese Activities Committee
Steve Masaki	Mass Mutual Financial Group
Ron Sakai	Wells Fargo Advisors
Dr. Chikako Usui	University of Missouri-St. Louis
Marc Vanacht	AG Business Consultants