



JAPAN AMERICA SOCIETY OF ST. LOUIS

セントルイス日米協会

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JAPAN AMERICA SOCIETY ST. LOUIS PRESIDENT RECEIVES FOREIGN MINISTRY AWARD AND NATIONAL ASSOCIATION HONOR

Dr. Chikako Usui, President of the Japan America Society of St. Louis (JASSTL), has been elected to the executive committee of the National Association of Japan America Societies (NAJAS) in 2017 for a three-year term. She has also recently been awarded a Commendation by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan for outstanding work in promotion of mutual understanding between Japan and the U.S.A. Mr. Toshiyuki Iwado, Consul General of Japan, Chicago, came to St. Louis for the 40th anniversary of the Japanese Festival and to personally present Dr. Usui with the Commendation.

These achievements are a fitting honor following Dr. Usui's ten years as president of JASSTL. During her tenure, she has obtained funded grants to revitalize the Japan America Society of St. Louis, greatly increasing its activity, exposure, and service to the St. Louis community. Her election to NAJAS will provide opportunities to fulfill her commitment to US-Japan relations on a national level.

Dr. Usui is an Associate Professor of Sociology and a Fellow of International Studies and Programs at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. She has served as President of the Japan America Society of St. Louis (JASSTL) since 2008. Under her leadership, JASSTL expanded its business and cultural programs and its presence in the community and increased its membership and corporate sponsorships. JASSTL provides Japan-US business programs with signature networking sushi and sake receptions, as well as authentic cultural experiences such as ikebana floral arrangement and tea ceremony, which are open to the public. It partners with schools and local institutions to present programs on Japanese culture and history and is a major player in the popular annual Japanese Festival at the Missouri Botanical Garden, one of the largest Japanese festivals in the country, drawing well-over 30,000 visitors annually.

Since the 2011 earthquake-tsunami disaster in Japan, JASSTL has been recipient of grants offered to only three other Japan America Societies in the US to foster exchange between child victims of the disaster and US students. Through the Tomodachi Friendship program, JASSTL has brought young students from Ishinomaki (near Sendai) to St. Louis to discover American

culture and has taken St. Louis area students to the tsunami-damaged regions to study recovery efforts and see the resilience of the people.

Founded in 1967, the mission of JASSTL is to promote exchange and understanding between the people of Japan and the US, provide business and cultural programs, and be the go-to source of information about Japan. People have mistakenly believed JASSTL is only for Japanese and Japanese-Americans, but its membership is diverse and welcoming to all who are interested in Japan. JASSTL is celebrating its 50th Anniversary in 2017.

To learn more about the Japan America Society of St. Louis visit jasstl.org or call [314.516.5754](tel:314.516.5754).

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