

CONSULATE GENERAL OF JAPAN

275 BATTERY STREET, SUITE 2100
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94111

TELEPHONE: (415) 780-6000

Foreign Minister's Commendations for FY 2025: Summary of Contributions

Mr. Mark Kato is a founder of the Sunnyvale (California, U.S.) - Iizuka (Fukuoka Prefecture) sister city relationship. He first proposed starting sister city exchanges between Sunnyvale and a Japanese city in 2012. He then established the Sunnyvale Sister City Association in 2013 and assumed the role of president. Having explored several potential Japanese cities, he facilitated initial exchanges with Iizuka, culminating in the formal signing of a friendship city agreement in late 2013, followed by a sister city agreement in 2016. Mr. Kato has fostered these deep ties from their earliest stages to today, when it can now be counted among the most robust sister city relationships in the country. Furthermore, he was appointed Vice President of the California-Japan Sister Cities Network in 2018, contributing on a larger scale to friendship and goodwill between the United States and Japan through sister city exchanges.

Mr. Steven George Teraoka held important positions in the Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Northern California, such as becoming the president in 1994 and the chairman of the Government Relations Committee in 1996 and has long been dedicated to promoting economic relations between Japan and California. Additionally, during the visit of the Emperor and Empress in 1994, he served as the chairman of the Welcoming Committee. As a director of the California Senate International Relations Foundation, he has contributed to economic relations between Japan and California by successfully leading several missions of the governor's delegation to Japan.

Ms. Karyl Matsumoto served as a South San Francisco City Councilmember in 1997 and as Mayor for a cumulative five years between 2000 and 2019. Alongside her mayoral and council duties, she has dedicated many years to advocating for the human rights and improving the status of Japanese Americans who have faced discrimination and prejudice. Having experienced Japanese American internment during World War II, Ms. Matsumoto has contributed significantly to promoting the understanding and friendship between Japan and the United States. Her contributions include giving lectures on the history of Japanese Americans, working to preserve historical sites, and serving as Senior Advisor to the Japanese Benevolent Society of California (Jikeikai) and Interim President of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL). Through these efforts, she has worked to improve the status of Japanese Americans and foster stronger U.S.-Japan relations.

The **Ikebana International San Francisco Bay Area Chapter** was established in San Francisco in 1960. Since then, it has worked to promote ikebana, one of Japan's traditional arts, transcending school affiliations. Through various events—including monthly ikebana demonstrations in Golden Gate Park from September to May, and biennial flower shows featuring works from the seven schools affiliated with the organization—it has dedicated itself to spreading the art of ikebana. Currently, with many American members joining, the association has grown to 150 members. It contributes to the promotion of ikebana locally and fosters mutual understanding and friendship between Japan and the United States through the art of ikebana.

CONSULATE GENERAL OF JAPAN

275 BATTERY STREET, SUITE 2100
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94111

TELEPHONE: (415) 780-6000

The **Japanese American Museum of San Jose (JAMsj)** was founded in 1987. Its mission is to collect, preserve, and share historical materials related to Japanese immigrants and their descendants. Which includes exhibitions of their agricultural contributions to the Santa Clara Valley, the development of Japantown, and the history of World War II internment. The museum is dedicated to preserving and promoting the history and culture of Japanese Americans in the Bay Area through public education. Its collection features photographs, artifacts, and artwork representing Japanese Americans from the 1890s to the present day. The museum also highlights the Japanese diaspora, including Japanese immigrants from other countries and those who have recently immigrated to the United States. Through these efforts, the museum contributes to mutual understanding and friendly relations among Japan, the United States, and the global community.