

# California-Japan Sister Cities Network

## Holiday Letter 2020

December 28, 2020

Dear Friend,

This year has been quite a difficult one for all of us, but we hope you are doing well. We at the California-Japan Sister Cities Network (CJSCN) are pleased to share our second annual Holiday Letter with you, so that the CJSCN Board, sponsors, partners, and network organizations can celebrate our mutual achievements together.

One of the many unfortunate effects of the COVID-19 pandemic this year was the cancellation of almost all events, from international exchanges to local fundraisers. This reality has hit our sister city community hard: many students who had eagerly awaited a trip across the Pacific have had to postpone or give up entirely, and many sister city organizations are treading water, unable to raise much-needed funds. As part of the few activities we were able to offer this year, CJSCN has tried to fulfill its mission as an informational and supportive hub to benefit all California-Japan sister city organizations. Although it is hard to know what the future will look like, we remain optimistic that our sister city relationships are strong enough to overcome these trying times.

See you in 2021,  
CJSCN Board



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## Looking Back at 2020

### Success of Regional Meetings

Local meetings for networking and collaborating within the [current six CJSCN regions](#) began last year, and luckily such meetings were able to continue even during the pandemic, both as online and socially-distanced in-person events. CJSCN is grateful to the local sister city organization leaders who volunteered their time to set up and run these important meetings. We hope they will continue to be held in 2021 as well.

### U.S.-Japan Sister Cities Bell Ringing: 75 Years of Peace Since Hiroshima & Nagasaki

In August 2020, CJSCN partnered with Sister Cities International, Inc., to promote a [global initiative to ring bells](#) in remembrance of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In California, 24 cities with sister cities in Japan participated in the initiative, holding a variety of socially-distanced and online events.



## 2020 Virtual Fall Workshop

In light of the ongoing pandemic, CJSCN hosted its third annual Fall Workshop on November 13, 2020 in a virtual online format. While it was unfortunate to not be able to meet in person this year, the new format provided new opportunities, such as being able to easily welcome attendees from across the entire state of California, and even from Japan. We had approximately 170 attendees join the event, representing 54 cities in California and 5 cities in Japan, plus 13 JET alumni. The workshop provided a variety of presentations and resources on current sister city activities, and how to keep programs running strong during pandemic conditions. We are extremely grateful to the Consulate Generals of Japan in [San Francisco](#) and [Los Angeles](#) for assisting us in running the technical and logistical pieces of this event. Also, we would like to thank [NTA](#), [Pegasus Tech Ventures](#), and [Takara Sake USA](#) for donating the door prizes. A full overview of the workshop with photos and resources can be found on the [CJSCN website](#).



Word cloud generated from workshop discussions on what key elements are needed for sister city organizations to overcome the pandemic.

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## Looking Forward to 2021

### Welcoming Sister City Representatives from Southern California

Since its incorporation three years ago, the CJSCN Board has been comprised of volunteer sister city representatives from Northern California, but it has always been our hope to integrate more fully with our colleagues in Southern California, so CJSCN can better achieve its vision of representing all California-Japan sister city relationships. We also hope to establish regions in Southern California that will allow sister city organizations to begin networking and collaborating locally in Southern California, just as has been done in Northern California.

### Plans for CJSCN Events in 2021

For the past few years, CJSCN has worked with its partners and local sister city organizations to offer a formal Fall Workshop and an informal Spring Workshop each year. Given the success of these events and our new abilities to collaborate more with groups in Southern California, CJSCN is planning to expand our event offerings in 2021. In the spring, we will host an online, all-state workshop with support from the Consulate Generals of Japan in San Francisco and Los Angeles. In the fall (conditions permitting), we will hold one in-person event in Northern California and one in-person event in Southern California (content will be the same). If you have suggestions for presentation or discussion topics for these events, please feel free to contact us at [info@caljapansistercities.org](mailto:info@caljapansistercities.org).



# Staying Strong During a Pandemic

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The 2020 worldwide Covid-19 pandemic has sadly caused the cancellation of most all sister city exchanges, events, and other activities. Many youth and adults who had been selected to visit Japan or America by their programs this year will not be able to do so. These missed opportunities will not be lightly forgotten, but during this very difficult time, it is important for us to remember all the great experiences and resources sister city programs provide for their participants. Therefore, CJSCN made this photo collage with images of sister city exchanges and activities from the last few years, to remind us all of the good times - those that were, and those still to come, because this too shall pass.

A full-size version of this image can be found on the [CJSCN homepage](#).

## Thank You to Our Sponsors & Partners

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We would like to recognize our sponsors and partners, without whose help CJSCN would not be possible.

**Founding Sponsor:** [Teraoka & Partners LLP](#)

**Gold Sponsor:** [Pegasus Tech Ventures](#)

**Silver Sponsor:** [Nippon Travel Agency \(NTA\)](#)

**Partners:** [Consulate General of Japan in San Francisco](#), [Consulate General of Japan in Los Angeles](#), [Sister Cities International, Inc. \(Northern California Chapter and Southern California Chapter\)](#), [JETAANC](#), [JETAASC](#), [Japan External Trade Organization \(JETRO\)](#)

## Connect with CJSCN

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