



**Connect and  
Converse**

# Welcome to Keiro Connect: Fall 2019 Edition!

On behalf of Keiro's Board of Directors and staff, I would like to extend warm holiday greetings to Our Community.

Starting on Halloween night and continuing through New Year's Day, this season is a time when we engage in so many connections and conversations with our loved ones.

As we reminisce about past holidays, the costumes we wore as kids, the delicious turkey dinners, the gifts that were given or received, and all the mochi eaten on New Year's Day, we are fortunate to have those memories and social interactions in our lives.

This holiday season, please reach out to someone you care for and continue to create memories. This is a time when we reconnect with loved ones, often through conversation. The conversation can be casual and light, or a deeper discussion about life and getting older. Whether it's over the phone or FaceTime, or in person with good food, that single conversation can have a huge impact on enhancing someone's quality of life. It can spark new ideas, bring back fond memories, and most of all, keep each one of us engaged and connected with those around us.

I would like to wish all of you peace, love, and joy during the last two months of 2019 and a safe and prosperous 2020.

*Gene S. Kanamori*



Gene S. Kanamori  
President & CEO

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## Keiro no Hi Festival: Connecting Back to Little Tokyo

When Yoshi and his wife, Masako, heard about a festival for Japanese American and Japanese older adults, they were both surprised and a little curious. "We wanted to spend the weekend out," said Yoshi, who just turned 96. They live close by in a condo, but rarely made their way around Little Tokyo. This event became a perfect reason for them to spend a weekend together and enjoy something they had not experienced before.

Yoshi and Masako were among the 1,100 attendees of the second annual Keiro no Hi Festival in Little Tokyo. Families, caregivers, friends, and volunteers from across Los Angeles, Orange, and Ventura counties descended on the Japanese American Cultural & Community Center plaza for the special day.

On stage, a host of entertainers and performers kept the plaza tent busy. The San Fernando Valley Japanese American Cultural Center Meiji Ondo group, Fujima Kansuma Kai, and Asian Persuasion were only some of the groups who

performed. The ensembles ranged from dancing to singing and taiko drumming.

Jenny from Palos Verdes said the stage performance schedule was a big reason why she came this year. "They played my favorite songs," she said.

And during the Rajio Taiso exercise, Jenny even made a new friend, Mizue.

Together, they enjoyed the performances and even exchanged numbers, spending the lunch hour together. "Yes, I met a new friend," said Mizue, gesturing to Jenny.

"This is the first time we had something like this, so you know, I felt like aging...is not so bad after all," said Shoko. It was the first time in a while that she and her friend, Eleanor, had been in Little Tokyo. Together, they enjoyed the free bentos and were thankful for the bus transportation from South Bay so they did not have to drive to Little Tokyo.

Complimentary bus transportation was popular among attendees, with an increase in the number of buses provided this year. People rode from five different locations across Los Angeles and Orange counties.

Keiro no Hi is meaningful not just to those enjoying the activities, food, and resources, but also to those behind the scenes. Close to 70 young volunteers turned out, many of whom were university students. They dedicated hours to supporting the event's services and needs.



"The amount of young people here this year is great," said Sandy, while sitting at lunch with her friend, Caroline. "I wasn't as active when I was younger and I recommend young people now to get active in culture and community."

From meeting new friends to trying new things, many who came this year were glad to attend. For many, this annual tradition not only changes perceptions of aging but celebrates it as well.

"This was my first time. I ended up running into friends here and I enjoyed the program," said Sugako, who went through the trouble of taking public transportation to the festival without knowing who she might see there. "I'm glad I did, and I will continue to come."

For the full article, visit [keiro.org/news](https://keiro.org/news).

Keiro秋号へようこそ!

ハロウィンから新年まで、家族や友人と集まる機会が多い楽しい季節が始まりました。周りの方と充実した時間を過ごせる事はとても素晴らしいことだと感じております。

今回のKeiro Connectのテーマは「会話」です。カジュアルで日常の何気ない会話から、加齢やあるいは人生論について熱く語るものまで、人との会話というのは懐かしい思い出を語りあったり、新しいアイデアが生まれたり、私たちにとって良い刺激になるものです。何より、周りとのつながりを持ち続けるための大切なツールなのではないでしょうか。このホリデーシーズン、電話や実際に会って、たくさんの会話を楽しめる時期になることを願っております。

Keiro理事会及びスタッフを代表いたしまして皆様へホリデーシーズンのご挨拶とさせていただきます。皆様にとって素晴らしい2019年の終わり、そして2020年の始まりとなりますよう心から願っております。

ジーン・カナモリ  
代表兼最高経営責任者 (CEO)



## What Does Iyashi Care Provide?

Since 2017, our Iyashi Care team has assisted more than 150 older adults and their families with the challenges of living with serious illnesses and debilitating symptoms. This ongoing series of articles explains how Iyashi Care can provide meaningful services to you and your loved ones.

### Goals of Care Discussions

Goals of care discussions are led by trained professionals to help identify the patient's level of understanding about their situation, and lead to a deeper understanding of the patient's true needs. This is a key service that Iyashi Care provides, with the team conducting these conversations on almost every visit.

"A good part of our two-hour visit is to clarify what they want and what they hope for," said Kanako Fukuyama, Iyashi Care social worker.

The conversation always begins with the question: What is your current understanding of where you are with your illness? The Iyashi Care team then guides the patient through a series of questions to further understand the preferences of the patient and their family during the course of an illness, and how best to prepare them for the future.

Kanako recommends that goals of care discussions should be held as soon as possible following a diagnosis, when the patient has the capacity to talk about it. Although these discussions are

led by professionals, it does not hurt to have such conversations now amongst the family. Sometimes, lack of conversations can result in disagreements within the family.

Tony was diagnosed with dementia and had life-limiting symptoms. There was an option for him to receive intensive treatment for his symptoms, but with Tony approaching his 90th birthday, two of his children felt that was not a good choice. However, his youngest child wanted his father to continue treatment as long as options existed.

"Quality of life is taken differently for each person. In this situation, the definition differed amongst the siblings," Kanako said. For this case, the Iyashi Care team facilitated a meeting with all three siblings to be able to express their hopes and concerns, and reach a consensus. "At the end of the day, we do not make the decision; it's ultimately up to the family members. And our role as the Iyashi Care team is to provide resources and tools for them to make these decisions."

For the full article, visit [keiro.org/news](http://keiro.org/news).

Keiro and Providence present the first palliative care program in the United States catered towards Japanese American and Japanese older adults and their families. The program provides an extra layer of care by working together with the patient's current healthcare team.

Contact us today about how Iyashi Care can help you or a loved one!



## Keiro Chats Video: Do you consider yourself old?

### Food for thought: What would your answer be and why?

Keiro interviewed community members about whether they considered themselves "old" or not. While many said no, there were some who said yes, and others in between.

Those who answered no responded that it's a matter of attitude, that "age is just a number." They consider people old when they don't have hope, can't give love to others, or when they just sit around and don't do anything.

Those who answered "yes" often referred to their age as a reason. A 66-year-old commented he never thought he would live this long, so he thought he was old. There were also answers of "yes and no." While they mentioned their physical ailments, they feel they are young at heart. One participant said he would have answered no three weeks ago but his recent back pain has proven that he is "bound to be old."

The definition of "old" differs for everyone and changes throughout their lives.

**Keiro Challenge:** This holiday season, try asking this question to your family and friends. Check out our YouTube Channel, [@KeiroConnect](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCkeiroconnect) for our community members' answers.



## CAREGIVERS & COMMUNICATION

Here are some ways in which our community members communicate with their loved ones and/or family members who are also caregivers:

"To communicate about my mother with the large extended family, I used email. When the family played the telephone game, the message became so inaccurate and misleading it started a family panic. **I wrote my email with short sentences to avoid misunderstandings.** Bullet points were very useful."

"My father-in-law was a challenge due to his hearing loss. He tried very hard to lip-read, but that was no good. When asked, 'Dad where is your KEY?' he would answer, 'I don't have to PEE.' Funny, but frustrating and sad. **The whiteboard and marker were very successful.** We wrote our questions and comments on the board and he would verbally answer back. This worked great."

"For my mom we **set up a Nest Cam in the TV family room.** This is where she usually is after dinner, so my siblings can track if she's there or not. We used to call her on the phone, but sometimes she didn't answer. Now we can talk to her via the camera too."

Share with us how you communicate by emailing [contact@keiro.org](mailto:contact@keiro.org) or messaging us through our Facebook page!



Photo Courtesy: Darrell Miho

## Supporting the Strong Ties of *Hibakusha*:

### American Society of Hiroshima-Nagasaki A-Bomb Survivors

Haruyoshi was on his way to deliver food to his older sister, who was a patient at a prefectural hospital, when he experienced a flash from behind. He was just 14 years old on August 6, 1945, when American forces dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. He never made it to see his sister, whose hospital was just feet from the blast's epicenter, and he never saw her again.

To this day, it is a memory that still scares him.

He is among the dozens of *hibakusha* members from the American Society of Hiroshima-Nagasaki A-Bomb Survivors, better known as ASA. The group formed in 1972, dedicating its work solely to helping *hibakusha* in the United States receive free health check-ups from doctors commissioned by the Japanese government every two years.

*Hibakusha* is a word designated for people affected by the 1945 atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Currently, 176 members are active with the Los Angeles group, and the members' average age is 86.

To continue their organization and legacy, ASA leaders explored and created a new element: lunches. Junji Sarashina, a *hibakusha* and ASA president, says he was inspired by various

luncheons hosted within the community, and decided to apply to the Keiro Grants Program to promote social connections for his members.

Though simple, a lunch with good company can mean so much more – there's an unspoken understanding, a silent comfort that members have with one another. "They can talk to each other in Japanese. And it's easier to communicate to reveal their inner feelings with a fellow *hibakusha*," says Junji.

ASA always organized a formal luncheon when doctors visited from Japan, but Junji says there is a stark difference in these new, more informal gatherings. "The [doctor's gathering] event is formal, everyone wears a tie. It's not the same as hanging out at luncheons like these."

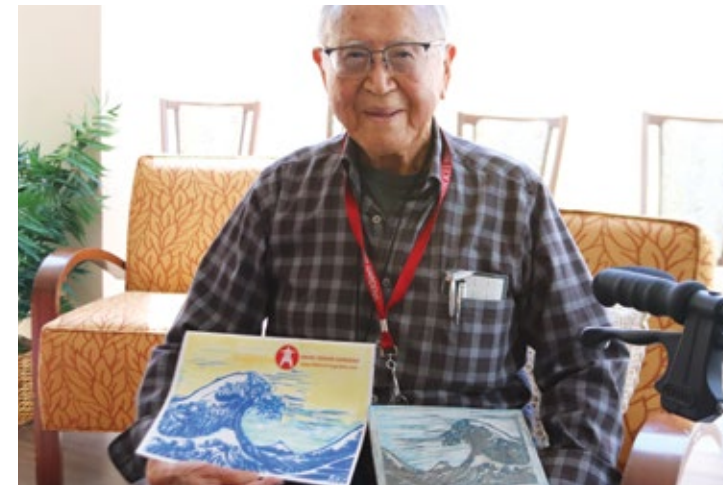
Now, he says with a big laugh, "they just keep talking."

Most of the Keiro funding for this gathering allows members to leave their homes to enjoy the meal and to organize transportation for those who can no longer drive themselves.

Fujiko Yoshikawa, an ASA member, says there are things she can only say at the luncheons, and only among other *hibakusha*. Like Junji, she agrees there's an unspoken understanding amongst the members. It's their shared trauma and survival that keeps them connected in ways others cannot imagine.

ASA Director Darrell Miho is now working to further share these stories, but their legacy also lives on through their connection with each other. He hopes to continue providing a place for these *hibakusha* to gather and just chat.

For the full article, visit [keiro.org/news](http://keiro.org/news).



## Keiro Superstar: Dr. Bob Yonemoto (98)

Even after two open-heart surgeries, a pacemaker, and nearly a century of sweet memories, Dr. Bob Yonemoto says he has a few secrets to living a healthy and full life, aside from daily exercise and eating sensibly.

"I'm very moved by the goodness in the world. When I hear or see goodness, I want to support them," said Dr. Bob, who is quick to point out other people's kindness and cherishes those special gestures, as it is a big part of his character.

While his hands might have stopped performing medical miracles and surgeries, they continue to create beautiful pieces of music and art.



Today, the walls in Dr. Bob's room look more like a gallery than a living room. On them, he hangs dozens of block prints, each of them hand-crafted through hours of dedication, time, and effort. The gallery ranges from portraits of Mother Theresa to his wife, and even a self-portrait.

"I feel that you have live with a certain purpose," he said. "And my feeling is that in order for your spirit to live on, you need to have interest in what's going on in the world around you."

For the full story, visit [keiro.org/news](http://keiro.org/news).



## AHEAD ON AGING: 5 TIPS AND TRICKS FOR SAFE HOLIDAY SHOPPING

The holidays are a fun time full of family gatherings, food, and gift exchanges. Shopping can be both exciting and chaotic during the holidays, so here are some tips that may help during the busy season:

- 1 **Use coupons:** When valid coupons are available, check the fine print for the discount code. Take pictures of the coupons/barcodes and pull them up on your phones at the store.
- 2 **Beware of scams:** Delete emails that may look suspicious, or are not from the actual establishment. "Free" giveaways and delivery email notifications are often too good to be true.
- 3 **Take your time:** Visit stores and malls during weekday mornings when they are less crowded. Bring a small cart with you to help you carry all of your purchases.
- 4 **Use the buddy system:** Pick a friend to go shopping with and catch up with them at the same time, or find someone that you want to get to know and take them with you.
- 5 **Protect your personal information:** Do not provide more information than is required. Avoid using public Wi-Fi at locations like coffee shops to make purchases as well. These freely available Wi-Fi connections are not secure, so refrain from making purchases.

For the full tip sheet with additional information, please visit [keiro.org/news](http://keiro.org/news).







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 **KEIRO BULLETIN:**

**JOIN US!**  
**#GIVINGTUESDAY**  
Tuesday, December 3, 2019

**IYASHI 癒 CARE**

#GivingTuesday is a global online celebration of generosity through charitable giving. This year, Keiro is dedicating #GivingTuesday to **Iyashi Care**, our culturally sensitive palliative care program. We hope you will join us on this day to support this innovative program through online donations to continue enhancing the quality of life for our older adults in Our Community!

More at: [keiro.org/Giving\\_Tuesday](http://keiro.org/Giving_Tuesday)

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