Quality of Life
in Our Community

Satoko Yamamura (91)
“Kutaniyaki Vase and Cymbidium”
Quality of Life Arts Showcase
Keiro virtually hosted the third annual Keiro no Hi Festival to celebrate older adults in the community on Saturday, September 12, 2020. Although the scheduled bento pickups were unfortunately cancelled at the last minute due to poor local air quality, the livestream resulted in over 2,000 views from across the United States. The program included messages from community leaders, performances by community artists, and fun workshops. During the program, older adults from the community showed off artwork where they expressed what quality of life means to them.

The virtual livestream can be viewed on YouTube by searching “Keiro no Hi Festival 2020.”

Keiro invited older adults in our Japanese American and Japanese community to participate in this year’s event by creating and sharing their art to express what quality of life means to them. Enjoy their pieces!

I enjoy making these to make other people happy. Making others happy is my purpose in life.

- Ralph Ichikawa
Five years ago, I discovered the joys of trout fishing! It is such a relaxing time to “get-away” for peace, relaxation, and sometimes the adrenaline rush of catching a trout.

- NJ Nakamura

Quilting summons my creative spirit. Designing with colors and forms is an artistic expression, an antidote to being inundated with the current speed of changes and ideas.

- Virginia Suzuki

Joy of life and doing something fun during the pandemic restriction.

- Paul Imahara

To view all the artists’ titles and artwork in detail, please visit keiro.org/arts-showcase.
**Welcome to Keiro Connect: Fall 2020 Edition!**

While 2020 has certainly been a challenging year, I optimistically look forward to next year, and Keiro’s 60th anniversary. Even as Keiro evolved to meet changing needs, our purpose—enhancing the quality of senior life in Our Community—has remained constant. As we pondered our mission and the best collaborative approaches to advancing the wellbeing of older adults and their caregivers, five key elements of a high quality of life became apparent—physical, mental, emotional, health and wellbeing; self-defined quality of life became apparent; physical, mental, and connectedness to others; a sense of financial and social security; and the autonomy to live the way we want.

I invite you to join us in celebrating our 60th anniversary—by continuing all the good work you do to support the older adults and caregivers in your lives. It takes a community to care for our older adults, and Keiro remains committed to providing culturally sensitive, person-centered programs and services.

Although the holidays will look different this year, I hope you are all able to engage safely with your loved ones.

**Gene S. Kanamori**
President & CEO

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**“The Most Important Thing is That I Feel Secure Now”**

**Tales of Service and Support From an Iyashi Care Patient**

Even before she was introduced to Iyashi Care, 74-year-old Ellen Mizoguchi knew that wellbeing is affected when living with a chronic medical condition. Ellen overcame rectal cancer in 2001 and due to the treatment, her digestive tract runs at unpredictable speeds. Regulating her digestion requires ongoing management, balancing medications to help her go about her days.

But for Ellen, taking care of herself involved more than medication management, as difficult life events, medical conditions, and mental health were in constant interplay. She shared these challenges freely, hoping they reach others facing similar struggles.

In 2019, Ellen enrolled in Iyashi Care and found the team understood the nuances that come with treating a chronic medical condition. "The team kind of puts things together into perspective. They're invaluable," she said.

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**Tale 1: Medication Coordination**

Ellen was taking medications prescribed by different doctors for digestive regulation, pain, occasional sleep problems, anxiety, and depression. She finally found the coordination she sought with Iyashi Care.

She reviewed her list of medications with the Iyashi Care physician, Dr. Yuichi Edwin Yamanami, who identified a medication that could cause bowel blockage. Together, they worked out a different set of medications that wouldn’t pose problems to her digestive track. "There has to be a careful balance of everything," Ellen said. "And I have all these doctors! So, Dr. Yamanami and the team pulled it all together."

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**Tale 2: In Case of Emergency, Call...**

Since her diagnosis in 2001, Ellen went to the hospital with a bowel obstruction on four different occasions. During the most recent bowel obstruction, she was able to call Joshua Northcutt, the Iyashi Care nurse. Ellen expressed her gratitude for being able to call Joshua, saying, "He was right there when I needed him.”

After she recovered, Joshua and Ellen decided she should start using the Life Alert emergency response system. "He told me — because you live alone, you have to make sure you have [a way to] contact [emergency services]," she said. Ellen continues to live independently, but now with a support system in place in case of a medical crisis.

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**Tale 3: A Prepared Planner**

Prior to this interview, Kanako Fukuyama, the Iyashi Care social worker, called Ellen to discuss long-term planning. Ellen felt reassured after going over these decisions with Kanako and the Iyashi Care team. “It dawned on me that now, somebody has to do this in every family or it is chaos,” she reflected.

When asked what she wished more people knew about Iyashi Care, Ellen immediately responded, “How all-encompassing it is — but not all at once.” She went on to explain, “Having been through cancer, at first I was like, ‘Okay, palliative care is what you go through before hospice’ — but that’s not the way it is. Palliative care can extend over a period of time.”

"If Dr. Yamanami and the team hadn’t listened to everything I said, I would not be where I am now. My system is working, and she knows I’m working with the team to support,” Ellen said.

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

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**Contact us to learn how Iyashi Care can help you or a loved one.**

213.873.5791
[keiro.org/iyashi-care](http://keiro.org/iyashi-care)
LT Eats is a program that delivers fresh, warm meals prepared by local restaurants to older adults living in Little Tokyo. This program, in partnership with Little Tokyo Service Center, Little Tokyo Community Council, and Keiro, was developed to support those severely impacted by COVID-19. Since the first delivery made in early April, more than 7,500 meals have been delivered to over 900 older adults. Given the changing Safer at Home regulations, the program will continue through the end of the year.

“I look forward to every meal. I am so extremely grateful. Please convey my appreciation to everyone.”
- Little Tokyo resident

**LITTLE TOKYO EATS**
**SUPPORTING VULNERABLE OLDER ADULTS AND LOCAL BUSINESSES DURING THE PANDEMIC**

**Class is Where the Home is:**
The Transition to Virtual Programming for Zen Aerobics and Tai Chi/Qigong Classes

“Everyone was just experimenting, and then we were like ‘Oh! We can see each other!’”

And so began the first Zoom Zen Aerobics class from Zenshuji Soto Mission, according to Program Coordinator Amy Honjiyo. She and Setsuko Nakahara, organizer of the Tai Chi/Qigong class at Los Angeles Hompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, both Keiro Grant recipients, have moved their programs online due to the COVID-19 pandemic – and both agree, it has been a journey of adaptation.

Amy and Setsuko shared that the virtual transition has been a constant learning process, as many participants started off as beginner Zoom users. Zoom troubleshooting became a regular class occurrence that both had to navigate early on.

Despite these challenges, both programs have been working hard to improve the quality of their classes. In some ways, the shift has even created more accessibility for their participants. Setsuko explained, “People don’t have to worry about traveling to class – it’s a little easier from home.”

However, Amy and Setsuko both acknowledged that the in-person connection still feels like a missing piece. Setsuko commented, “When we do get back together, I think we’ll appreciate each other a lot more.” For now though, this virtual gathering helps the members stay connected. Amy shared, “Every week I take screenshots, because there is something that someone is doing that’s humorous.”

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

**Freshly Retired:**
Wade Utsunomiya

After retiring in 2014, Wade Utsunomiya was ready to enjoy some quality time. With six years under his belt, Wade shared some of the ways he spends that time, while offering advice for other recently retired adults.

“I would say to someone who has retired, ‘You deserve to be happy after working so long!’”

When Wade first retired, he took time to reflect on the direction he wanted his life to take next. He realized he wanted to pursue the things that brought him happiness. Whether it’s competitive sports or acting as an extra in TV shows like *This Is Us*, Wade continues to pursue connection and fun.

“It’s important to remember that having fun while aging can take adjustments. My advice is to be realistic about what your situation is, to [continue to] enjoy things that you always enjoy.”

Outside of COVID-19 times, you can still find Wade shooting hoops or swimming in the pool during the day. At night, however, you are more likely to find him on the dance floor, grooving to old-school rhythm and blues. “I can’t go to every dance, and I probably shouldn’t drop into the splits as often, but I love it as much as ever.”

“As I’ve gotten older, I’ve come to see how cherishing relationships with family and friends is really the most important thing.”

In addition to the quality time he spends with his loved ones, Wade also honors the memory of Amy Utsunomiya, his late wife, through the “Amy Utsunomiya Memorial Youth Community Service Award” given to youth who are following her legacy of service to the Pasadena Japanese American community.

For the full article, please visit [keiro.org/news](http://keiro.org/news).
For over six months, Keiro has been providing free weekly virtual programming to create a space for older adults to stay connected and learn something new. For many participants, these forums have become a part of their new normal and a much-needed way to stay connected while staying safe at home.

David | Reseda
Favorite Forum: Community Bingo
“I hope the forum classes will continue, even after the pandemic subsides.”
David heard about these classes through his cousin and began attending more on his own. “They offer a wide variety of topics – games, crafts, information, speakers – and make it easy to attend. I don’t even have to dress up to attend,” shared David.

Sam | Orange County
Favorite Forum: Community Bingo
“I’ve learned a lot from Keiro’s classes, and was able to apply that to my senior group’s activities.”
The biggest benefit Sam shared was learning new skills. He learned how to host Zoom meetings through Keiro’s forums and now assists his church community’s older adults. “I have hosted over ten senior meetings using Zoom.”

Mitzi | Porter Ranch
Favorite Forums: BBQ Series, Estate Planning, Scattergories
“Keiro Forums are definitely one of my positive discoveries during this COVID quarantine.”
Mitzi described these forums using three “E”s - educational, entertaining, and enjoyable. “I look forward to sessions that celebrate my unique Japanese American background and heritage.”

Audrey | South Bay
Favorite Forum: Conversation Kitchen, Crafts Corner
“These forums have kept me connected with people in the outside world. I’m nearly 77 and stay at home.”
For now, Audrey isn’t quite ready to go back out yet, so the classes help her stay connected. “Keiro’s opportunities have been a life-line and life saver. I would definitely like to see it continue because I, for one, would rather meet on Zoom than drive somewhere and be in a crowd.”

BENEFITS OF MINDFULNESS AND MEDITATION
Mindfulness and meditation have become popular activities to help maintain overall health. The resources are out there and most are completely free!
Meditation and mindfulness have a wide range of health benefits.

• Multiple reports show that mindfulness and meditation reduce anxiety.
• Meditation has been shown to help slow mental decline in older adults. Research indicates attention span, self-awareness, and memory remain stronger in older adults who meditate regularly.
• “Brain networks” strengthen through meditation. Certain networks in your brain are activated when you do a specific task, like focusing your attention. Repeatedly activating these networks through meditation helps you focus on other tasks on a more regular basis.
• Mindfulness can increase your emotional flexibility – being able to stay in control of your emotions, in response to changes in mood or the surrounding environment.

For the full fact sheet, visit keiro.org/resources under “Fact Sheets.”

Join us for our Weekly Virtual Forums!
Keiro currently hosts weekly forums, games, and gatherings through Zoom featuring guest speakers, community members, and Keiro staff. Consider learning something new and connecting with others during this time!

UPCOMING FORUMS:

- Sharing Our Mother’s Recipes
  by Marion Nishimura and NJ Nakamura
  Thursday, December 3
  3:00 - 4:00 p.m.

- Feel Good Vibes: Holiday Edition (Live Virtual DJ experience)
  by Kelsey Uyeda
  Thursday, December 10
  3:00 - 4:00 p.m.

- Kokoro no Hashi (Intergenerational talent show)
  by Brandon Takahashi
  Friday, December 18
  4:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Japanese Holidays with Chef Akira Hirose and Family – A Cooking Demonstration
Wednesday, December 16
Join us as we learn from Chef Akira and his family how to prepare nabemono with and for our loved ones.
Registration closes Tuesday, December 15, 2020.

Visit keiro.org to register for events!
**SAVE THE DATE**

**VIRTUAL CAREGIVER CONFERENCE**

Saturday, March 13, 2021 • 1:00 p.m.

Registration begins: January 2021

2021 will be Keiro’s 20th year of holding our annual Caregiver Conference. We invite all caregivers, present, past, and future, to join us to gain important and practical knowledge from the comfort of your home.

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**KEIRO’S KANREKI 2021**

Keiro will celebrate its 60th anniversary next year. In Japanese tradition, 60 is a significant year representing a circle by coming back to the same zodiac year as your birth. Join us as we celebrate our history and legacy of forward-thinking service and innovation. Look out for more information on our website!

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