

# KeiroConnect



## Long Time No See

Catching up with Our Community







#### FROM THE ARCHIVES

## 1994

Many residents of Keiro's former Boyle Heights Campus were at a loss for words to be able to meet the Emperor Emeritus Akihito and Empress Emerita Michiko of Japan. The royal couple visited to learn and appreciate the culturally sensitive care being offered in Los Angeles. They took a tour of the facility and conversed with the facility's residents and some of Keiro's founders.



# Welcome!

A MESSAGE FROM KEIRO PRESIDENT & CEO



*Gene S. Kanamori*

Gene S. Kanamori  
President & CEO

Every year I look forward to the holiday season, as it is a chance for us to reconnect and converse with our loved ones. As we head to the year-end, we dedicate this edition to **conversation**.

Some of my favorite conversations happened during this year's in-person Keiro no Hi Festival. From sharing our delight about the entertainment to hearing how your lives have been, I realize how much I missed this part of our events these last three years.

Conversations – whether they be long or short, challenging or filled with laughter – are essential to our lives. Talking with one another can help us prepare for the future, reminisce about the past, and hear new ideas that can inspire action. They can be a starting point, a resolution point, or a pivotal point in our lives.

This publication covers conversations from all angles – from dinner table chats during the holiday season, to truly difficult ones that cannot be avoided while caring for a loved one, and more.

I would like to wish you all a wonderful holiday season. We are truly grateful for all of your support in helping Keiro continue to enhance the quality of senior life in Our Community.

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大切な人たちとつながり合い、会話を楽しめる、このホリデーシーズンを毎年心待ちにしています。年の瀬が近づく今、この号では「会話」について掘り下げてみます。

対面で開催された本年の敬老の日フェスティバルでは、楽しい会話が日々交わされました。ステージでのパフォーマンスの感想から、最近の生活の様子まで、過去3年間のフェスティバルでは交わすことができなかった様々な会話を楽しむことができました。

難しい話から笑いに富んだ話まで、長短にかかわらず会話は私たちの生活に不可欠です。会話がきっかけで将来の準備が始まったり、懐かしい思い出を振り返れたり、新たなひらめきで行動に移すことができました。会話は人生における出発点、解決点、転換点等、様々なきっかけになり得ます。

この冊子では、食事を囲みながらのホリデーシーズンの会話から、大切な人を介護する上で避けられない難しい会話まで、様々な会話を網羅します。

皆様に素敵なホリデーシーズンが訪れますように。Keiroが高齢者の生活の質の向上に継続して取り組めるよう、いつもご支援いただいていることに、心より感謝申し上げます。

ジーン・カナモリ  
代表兼CEO





# A Celebration Worth Waiting For



Keiro no Hi, or “Respect for the Aged Day,” is a Japanese holiday that honors and celebrates older adults. On September 17, 2022, Keiro held its 5th annual Keiro no Hi Festival in person for the first time in two years. This year’s festival was hosted at four local community organizations in Pasadena, Gardena, Cerritos, and Venice. We asked several attendees what being able to come together and have in-person conversations again means to them.



## Irene and Mitzi | Pasadena

Irene and Mitzi were attendees of the Keiro no Hi Festival at the Pasadena Buddhist Temple. The two are longtime friends who got to know each other through their husbands over 50 years ago.

**Irene:** We were discussing between the two of us that we like going in person. Today was nice after [not being able to gather for] two years. It really was.

**Mitzi:** To be able to get together with people was really nice.

**Irene:** Especially getting to see some friends. Wasn’t that great? I do like going in person to Little Tokyo though.

**Mitzi:** The only thing is sometimes a lot of the older people have problems transportation wise.

**Irene:** What I also liked was the idea that they had us show our vaccines, took our temperature. I think everyone’s trying to be very careful because we are older.



## Merry and Richard | Cerritos

Merry and Richard are husband and wife who attended the festival at Cerritos Baptist Church together. They were both glad to be able to attend the festival in person this year since they took part in the drive thru Keiro no Hi Festival in 2021 at Orange County Buddhist Church.

**Merry:** These events are important to bring back the Japanese heritage and it makes you realize people are grateful for what we’ve done. It’s nice to be catered to for a change because all these years doing church activities or whatever, we’re always doing things for everybody else. Finally, now we can sit down and enjoy. So, thank you!

**Richard:** The expectation of possibly seeing someone I knew from the past was also nice. I’ve lived in this area for over 50 years. There’s a lot of Japanese families that I know here in the area. So, I was hoping that the word got out and they would come.







## "I Statements": A Powerful Tool for Caregivers



IYASHI  
CARE



### Faith and Cris | Venice

Faith and Cris met for the first time at this year's Keiro no Hi Festival at Venice Japanese Community Center (VJCC). Faith was crowned a princess of the 2022 Nisei Week court. Cris is a member at VJCC.

**Cris:** Events like [Keiro no Hi Festival] bring the community back. That's very valuable. I don't know if there's any price for that.

**Faith:** I think there's this added dimension of being able to sit next to someone and talk to them in a way that a virtual environment can't really provide. I personally don't think we would've emotionally connected in the same way if we were speaking virtually. It goes to show how important being in person really is and how much we should value it.

In-person gatherings are imperative to keeping the community alive and helping people connect and converse on a deeper level. After a successful return to in-person Keiro no Hi celebrations, Keiro is looking forward to hosting more in-person events in the community in the future!

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

### 2022 Keiro no Hi Fine Arts Showcase

Keiro's annual Fine Arts Showcase invited those ages 60 years and older to express themselves through various art mediums, including paint, pottery, and more. This year's theme was *Tsunagari* or Connection. Enjoy the different artistic interpretations of *Tsunagari* by our community members!

To view this year's arts showcase gallery, visit [keiro.org/arts-showcase](https://keiro.org/arts-showcase).



When caregiving for a loved one, the first steps include identifying *what* to do. However, *how* to get these things done is where the challenge for family caregivers often lies.

In these types of situations, the family usually knows what needs to be done – but having the conversation can be stressful. At Keiro's 2022 Caregiver Conference, Iyashi Care social worker Kanako Fukuyama, MSW, and clinical manager Andrea Strouth, MSW, shared tips for navigating through difficult conversations.

In these situations, "I" statements can be a very powerful tool. "I" statements focus on the speaker's feelings and beliefs. Kanako explained, "Using 'I' statements can often lead to more productive, effective conversations because the speaker shares their thoughts, rather than projecting on or telling the other person what to do.

'You' statements often cause people to shut down, because they can sound accusatory or bossy." A common format for an "I" statement is, "I feel [emotion] when [situation or observation] happens."

A "You" statement could be, "Mom, you left the stove after you were done cooking several times already. You shouldn't be cooking anymore." On the other hand, a sample "I" statement could be, "I feel concerned for you when you refuse extra help. I feel like help from an in-home caregiver would benefit you. Our family wants to support your wishes to stay at home for as long as you can."

"I" statements are a useful starting point for having constructive conversations about difficult topics because they can create a non-judgmental space. If family caregivers feel they could use additional support, Iyashi Care may be able to assist. Sometimes, having a neutral third party facilitate care conversations can help everyone feel heard. In addition to supporting older adults with serious or chronic illnesses, the Iyashi Care team provides advance care planning and family counseling as the patient and family collectively pursue the best quality of life possible.

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

For more information about Iyashi Care, contact us at

213.873.5791  
[programs@keiro.org](mailto:programs@keiro.org)



# Connections and Conversations Among Community Organizations

Since 2006, the Nikkei Senior Network (NSN) has been a unique program that brings together different community leaders who work with their older adult groups at various churches, temples, senior groups, and community centers. These meetings allow community leaders to collaborate with one another through shared experiences to strengthen individual programs that support older adults.



CEWN's Grab & Go lunch event



Brandon Okita, vice president of FIA Insurance, presenting during an NSN meeting on transportation liability (August 2022)

## The NSN During the Pandemic

In 2022, 25 community leaders representing 21 different organizations in Los Angeles, Orange, and Ventura counties participated in NSN meetings and discussions. The NSN meets virtually on a quarterly basis and has evolved to include large and small group discussions, guest speakers, and various presentations on different topics.

Especially during an unprecedented pandemic that presented these organizations with new challenges, the NSN provided them with a platform to discuss their concerns, share advice, and support each other during these changes.

## Taking Notes for Reopening

Sue Kawasaki, president of Continuing Education for the Nikkei Widowed (CENW), shared how the NSN has been a beneficial support system for her and CENW. When organizations began to slowly bring back in-person gatherings, Sue would listen and take notes about what other organizations were doing to keep their members safe such as cleaning procedures and other safety measures.

When planning to bring their members together in person, Sue took out her checklist of protocols that were drawn from listening during NSN meetings. She shared, "CENW was fully prepared and felt quite comfortable ensuring the health and safety of our members for

the first in-person meeting in June of 2022. This could not be possible without hearing all of the discussions and comments from members of the NSN."

## "Talk Story" Inspiration

Another challenge that CENW faced during the pandemic was keeping in contact with their older adult members who did not have easy access to online communications. In 2021, CENW started a new "Talk Story" program that was inspired by work other organizations were doing to stay connected with their members during the pandemic.

"I remember one group said they would go out and stand in their doorway and safely talk to their members to check in and interact with them... I thought what we could do was to target those individuals without emails, and have volunteers call these members to chat

and check in," Sue shared. Many of their members appreciated these regular check-ins. Talk Story has now evolved to focus on connecting with members who cannot attend their in-person gatherings.

## The Joys of Connecting

Sue expressed that she really enjoys listening to what other organizations are doing and absorbing information that is discussed during NSN meetings. "[The NSN] enabled me to cope with the enormous task of keeping CENW members connected during these stressful times... I truly appreciate the support Keiro has given to the community groups."

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

For more information and to join future meetings, visit [keiro.org/NSN](https://keiro.org/NSN).

**"[The NSN] enabled me to cope with the enormous task of keeping CENW members connected during these stressful times... I truly appreciate the support Keiro has given to the community groups."**

- Sue Kawasaki

President, Continuing Education for the Nikkei Widowed



Sue Kawasaki during a CENW gathering (August 2022)





## Getting More Out of Family Conversations

As we approach the holiday season, we will partake in family gatherings and reconnect with people we may not have seen in person throughout the pandemic. During this time, there could be multiple generations of family members under one roof, creating the opportunity for us to engage in conversations with our multigenerational loved ones. Studies show that reciprocal intergenerational transfers including instrumental and emotional support from children may improve older adults' subjective health status and lower depression. What are the benefits of connecting with your family members? And how can you provide more meaning in the conversations you have?

### Benefits of Intergenerational Connections

#### Broader and new perspectives

Having relationships with diverse age groups can help you expand your perspective. While the younger generation can provide new ideas, the older generation can bring years of experience to the conversation.

#### Reduce stereotypes and preconceptions

Interacting with different generations can help decrease beliefs, preconceived notions, or stereotypes people may have about other generations. One study by Cornell showed that programs with intergenerational components along with education on the aging process helped reduce such prejudice.

#### Positive attitude about aging

An AARP survey shows those who have close intergenerational friendships are more likely to have a positive outlook on aging overall.

### Digging Deeper into "Small Talk"

#### Recognize small talk as a first step, not the end all

A simple question has the potential to expand a conversation in more ways than one. Small talk lays down the foundation for a more fruitful conversation to follow where we can truly learn more about each other.

#### Open questions and follow-up questions

Formulating questions based on previous responses is key to digging deeper. Close-ended questions (i.e. "yes" or "no" questions) often restrict the potential for the conversation to continue. When thinking of open-ended questions, ask yourself "who, what, when, where, why, or how?"

#### Take turns sharing about yourself

Oftentimes we may see it in Japanese cultural values to prioritize asking questions rather than sharing about ourselves. Take turns as you speak instead of spotlighting one side or dominating the conversation. Not only does opening up about yourself establish trust with who you're communicating with, it encourages the other person to open up about themselves. Only open up what you're comfortable sharing.

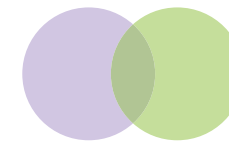
For the full article, visit [keiro.org/news](https://keiro.org/news).

### Keiro's Quick Tips for Intergenerational Connections



1

Acknowledge **different vocabularies** and that there may be acronyms or word choices that are understood by certain generations.



2

Rather than focusing on the differences, try to **find common ground** and timeless topics that are relevant to all generations such as food, sports, etc.



3

Ask more **specific questions** such as "Are you still walking your dog everyday?" or "Were you able to grow a lot of tomatoes in your garden this year?" rather than "How have you been?"



4

Be open to **different thoughts, perspectives, and ideas**; find ways to meet in the middle.



5

Use **body language** to show that you are engaged in the conversation such as nodding, eye contact, etc.



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If you have any questions, please contact [programs@keiro.org](mailto:programs@keiro.org) or **213.873.5708**.



## Keiro's Quality of Life Classes

December's Quality of Life Theme: **Connectedness**

Connectedness - whether at an individual, family, or community level - is vital to physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing.

Learn more about the importance of connectedness and quality of life at our December virtual classes!



## Caregiver Conference

Caregiver Conference  
will be back IN PERSON in 2023!

**Save the Date!**  
**March 18, 2023**

Join us for our annual Caregiver Conference!  
Registration opens **January 2, 2023**.

Visit [keiro.org](http://keiro.org) to register and for class descriptions.

For more information: [keiro.org/caregiver-conference](http://keiro.org/caregiver-conference)