

# KeiroConnect



## Charting a Course

Mapping Keiro's Way Forward





# Greetings!

A MESSAGE FROM KEIRO BOARD CHAIR



*Jack Kurihara*

Jack Kurihara, PharmD  
Board Chair

Reflecting on my first year as Keiro Board chair, I am grateful for every opportunity I had to meet so many community members at various events and gatherings throughout the year. It has been a pleasure to connect with all of you—to see your faces and hear your stories—but it has also strengthened my passion to ensure Keiro continues to meet the evolving needs of older adults and caregivers.

Throughout 2024, Keiro was able to empower over 800 older adults to embrace and take charge of their personal aging journeys through the 40 Quality of Life Classes that we hosted, as well as through our inaugural Active Aging Fair. Every unique person in Our Community is why Keiro is on this path to enhance the quality of senior life.

When I joined the Keiro Board of Directors in 2016, I wanted to honor the legacy of our predecessors and their commitment to the Japanese and Japanese American community by ensuring we support and listen to their needs. With the exciting announcement of the board and care home and our continued promise to provide programs and resources to the community at large, I look forward to being there every step of the way to serve and support the needs of our ever-growing community.

Keiro理事長としての初年度を振り返りますと、年間を通じて様々なイベントや集まりで多くのコミュニティの皆様と出会う機会をいただいたことをとてもありがたく感じます。皆様と対面し、直接お話を伺うことができたのは非常に貴重な経験でした。同時に、Keiroが高齢者や介護者の方々の変化するニーズに応え続けていかななくてはならないという私の思いが一層強まりました。

2024年に、Keiroは生活の質向上に焦点をあてたクラスを40回実施したり、初のアクティブエイジングフェアを催し、800人以上の高齢者の方々に自分自身の老後という旅路と積極的に向き合う機会を提供することができました。コミュニティの皆様お一人お一人の存在こそが、Keiroが高齢者の生活の質を向上させるためにまい進している理由です。

2016年にKeiro理事会に参加したとき、先人たちが残してくれた宝・レガシー、そして、彼らが持っていた日本人および日系アメリカ人コミュニティへの献身的な精神を尊重するために、皆様のニーズを支援し、耳を傾けていくことを決意しました。ボード&ケアホーム開設に向けた発表と、コミュニティ全体にプログラムやリソースを提供し続けるという約束と共に、変化し続けるコミュニティのニーズに応え、支援し、これからも皆様と共に一歩一歩寄り添っていくことを楽しみにしております。

ジャック・クリハラ  
理事長

# Welcome to the 2025 Keiro Connect Annual Edition

A MESSAGE FROM KEIRO PRESIDENT & CEO

As an older adult and someone who has been involved in aging services for over 50 years, I am often reminded that it's not what happens to you that matters, but how you respond to it. Throughout life's journey, we all encounter speedbumps and unexpected detours, but with the destination clearly in mind, we are able to chart a course through these obstacles.

At Keiro, we similarly reflect upon the many challenges we have faced over the years, but through it all, we never lost sight of the destination—our vision to create a community where everyone lives healthier and more fulfilling lives. Drawing upon the results of the 2023 and 2024 community-wide surveys to identify the evolving needs of older adults and caregivers, we reaffirm our commitment to build upon our nearly 65-year legacy of caring for older adults and caregivers from generation to generation.

This year, we are excited that our new board and care home will be an additional option for those in need of memory support. We invite you to join us on our course as we provide you with the resources needed to help navigate your aging journey with confidence.

自分自身も年齢を重ね、50年以上にわたり高齢者サービスに関わってきた者として、大切なことは自分に何が起るかではなく、起こったことにどのように対応するかだとよく思うことがあります。人生の中で、私たちは皆、障害物や予期せぬ迂回路に遭遇しますが、目的地をはっきりと心に定めていれば、これらの障害を乗り越え、道を切り開いていくことができると考えます。

Keiroにおきましても、同様に、これまでの長い年月の中で直面してきた多くの課題や困難を振り返ると、その過程において決して目的地・ビジョンを見失うことはありませんでした。私たちのビジョンは、誰もがより健康で充実した生活を送れるコミュニティを作ることです。2023年と2024年に実施したコミュニティ全体が対象の調査結果を活用し、高齢者と介護者の方々の変化するニーズを特定することで、世代から世代へと高齢者と介護者の方々を支えてきたKeiroの約65年の歴史を基盤に、さらなる発展に向けて尽力してまいります。

今年、認知機能でサポートが必要な方々のための選択肢に、新しいボード&ケアホームが加わることを、大変うれしく思います。老後という旅路において、皆様が自信をもって航海できますよう、今後も必要なリソースを提供し、ともに歩んで参りたいと思います。

ベバリ・イトウ  
代表兼CEO



*Beverly Ito*

Beverly Ito  
Keiro President & CEO

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## 2024 SNAPSHOTS

April | Caregiver Conference



August | Emergency Preparedness Class



September | Keiro No Hi Festival



October | Active Aging Fair



November | Nikkei Senior Network Meeting



## THANK YOU FOR A GREAT YEAR!



## Keiro Purchases Property for Board and Care Home

In June 2024, Keiro announced its intent to develop board and care homes to support those affected by memory loss. We are pleased to share that the first property has been purchased in the South Bay.

Following analysis of its 2023 community needs survey, in June 2024, Keiro launched the next phase of its plan to develop financially viable, self-sustaining services for the community. This included a community-wide survey and focus groups with an emphasis on memory care and board and care homes. The survey was available online from June through September 2024 and was open to all community members. The survey was conducted in English and Japanese, with an option to request paper surveys. A separate invitation for the focus groups was sent to all individuals who signed up for the 2023 community needs survey.

Additionally, in the event of a diagnosis of a form of cognitive impairment, having a professional or paid caregiver was identified as the most preferred care option, followed by moving into a facility that can provide caregiving services.

Following a long history of thoughtful research, planning, and development, including the aforementioned community-wide surveys and focus groups, the need for advanced care beyond what can be provided at home has been clearly demonstrated, particularly for those with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.

The process of successfully establishing the first board and care home involves multiple complex steps, including renovation, licensure, and staffing. "Although the opening date is dependent on the successful completion of a number of necessary steps, we at Keiro remain committed to updating Our Community as progress is made," said Beverly Ito, Keiro president and CEO.

Keiro is excited to announce this new endeavor and work towards opening the board and care home—yet, the cornerstone of our mission remains to enhance the aging experience of older adults and caregivers as they live and thrive in their local communities.

**"Ongoing health education and advance care planning, especially related to Alzheimer's and other dementias, are areas where Keiro will continue its focus."**

*- Beverly Ito, Keiro President & CEO*

Keiro received over 900 responses to the memory care survey. 79% of respondents completed the survey in English, and 21% completed the survey in Japanese. 85% of respondents expressed that they are moderately to very concerned about their cognitive health as they age, and noted that noticeable memory loss affecting daily activities, difficulty performing familiar tasks and/or managing finances, and increasing confusion about time and/or location would prompt them to seek a medical check-up.

For more information, frequently asked questions, and to view the survey results, visit [keiro.org/survey](https://keiro.org/survey).

アンケートの詳細は[keiro.org/jp/survey](https://keiro.org/jp/survey)をご覧ください。

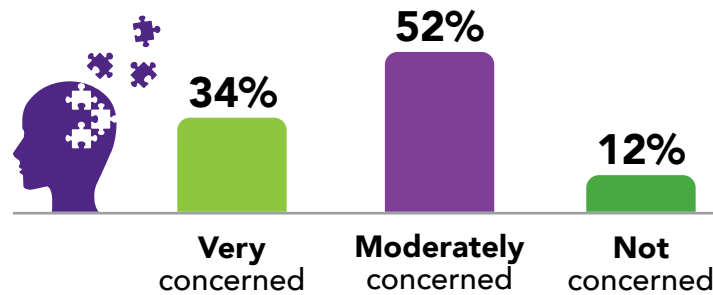




## Memory Care Survey 2024

Keiro conducted a follow-up survey in summer 2024 focused on understanding the needs and preferences for memory care services and programs, including board and care models, in Our Community.

### How concerned are you about your COGNITIVE HEALTH as you age?



### Most preferred CARE OPTIONS:

- A professional or paid caregiver providing home care
- Moving into a facility that provides caregiving services

### What would prompt you to seek a MEDICAL CHECK-UP?



62%

Noticeable memory loss



58%

Difficulty performing familiar tasks and/or managing finances



53%

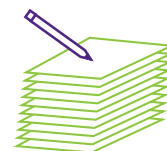
Increasing confusion



51%

Concerns about memory from family or friends

ONLY 1 in 10



respondents have a **detailed written plan** for if they or a loved one were diagnosed with **cognitive impairment**



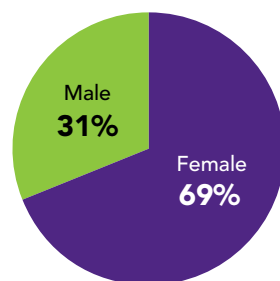
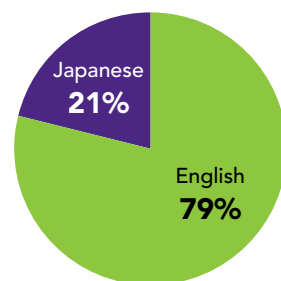
Nearly **1/3 of respondents** consider **\$3,000 - \$6,000**

to be a reasonable monthly fee for a board and care home that provides memory care.



**72%** would consider moving into a **KEIRO BOARD AND CARE HOME**, if needed.



### WHO ANSWERED?



**972** completed surveys

- 54% online 
- 46% paper 



**58%**

have engaged with Keiro within the past five years

The survey was offered online in both English and Japanese, with an option to request a paper survey. Responses from focus group participants aligned with the survey outcomes. For more information, please visit [keiro.org/survey](https://keiro.org/survey).

## Breaking Barriers In Older Adult Mental Health Services

by Peter Gee

Mental health care remains an essential yet underutilized resource for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (AA/NHPIs), who report the lowest rates of mental health service utilization and help-seeking behaviors among all racial and ethnic groups in the United States. Disaggregated data highlights concerning disparities, particularly in the Nikkei community, which experiences elevated rates of suicide ideation and a heightened need for emotional and mental health support.

Older Asian Americans face compounded challenges, including housing and economic insecurity, social isolation, caregiver stress, and the long-term effects of untreated mental health conditions. These issues are further exacerbated by systemic gaps in California's public mental health systems, such as "inadequate infrastructure for older adult mental health services, inconsistent outreach efforts, and a lack of workforce training in geriatric mental health care."

Research shows that by age 75, nearly half of all Americans will have experienced a diagnosable mental health disorder, often manifesting as chronic conditions or dementia in later life. For older AA/NHPIs, these challenges are intensified by pervasive discrimination—50% report regular encounters with discrimination, and 20% have experienced hate incidents or

crimes—adding significant strain to their mental health and overall well-being.

### Culturally Sensitive Approaches to Mental Health

Based on Little Tokyo Service Center's (LTSC) extensive experience serving older adults, addressing these mental health needs requires a comprehensive, culturally sensitive approach tailored to the unique characteristics of the community. For instance, LTSC's value-based care model addresses underlying social determinants of health—such as housing insecurity and limited health care access—that intersect with mental health challenges. Collaboration with community organizations like Keiro enhances this continuum of care, strengthening the support network for older adults.

### Addressing Roadblocks and Stigma

Despite these efforts, significant barriers hinder the provision and accessibility of mental health services for older adults in the Nikkei community. Mental health stigma remains a pervasive issue, with many older adults hesitant to seek help due to fears of shame or burdening their families. Culturally tailored outreach and education are vital to reducing stigma and encouraging help-seeking behaviors.



Heather Harada, Keiro Director of Strategy, and Peter Gee

Keiro 

+  Little Tokyo Service Center

### Keiro & LTSC's Mental Health Services Partnership Impact in 2024

**110**  
clients served

**3,395**  
hours of mental health counseling and case management provided

There is a critical shortage of culturally competent, bilingual mental health providers for the AA/NHPI community, compounded by treatment models that inadequately address the community's unique needs. With a social services team of over 30 bilingual Japanese- and Korean-speaking clinicians and case managers, LTSC is part of a small network of community-based organizations addressing behavioral health service gaps in Los Angeles County.

The partnership's measurable outcomes—including reductions in depression and anxiety symptoms and increased social connectedness—highlight the importance of community-based solutions. By fostering resilience and well-being in the Nikkei community, LTSC and Keiro exemplify how culturally responsive care can break barriers and improve mental health outcomes for older adults.

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

### A Transformative Partnership

Financial insecurity further limits access to care; however, LTSC's partnership with Keiro enables the organization to provide free mental health services to older adults in the Nikkei community. Together, LTSC and Keiro address these challenges by integrating evidence-based therapy with bilingual case management in a culturally sensitive framework.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

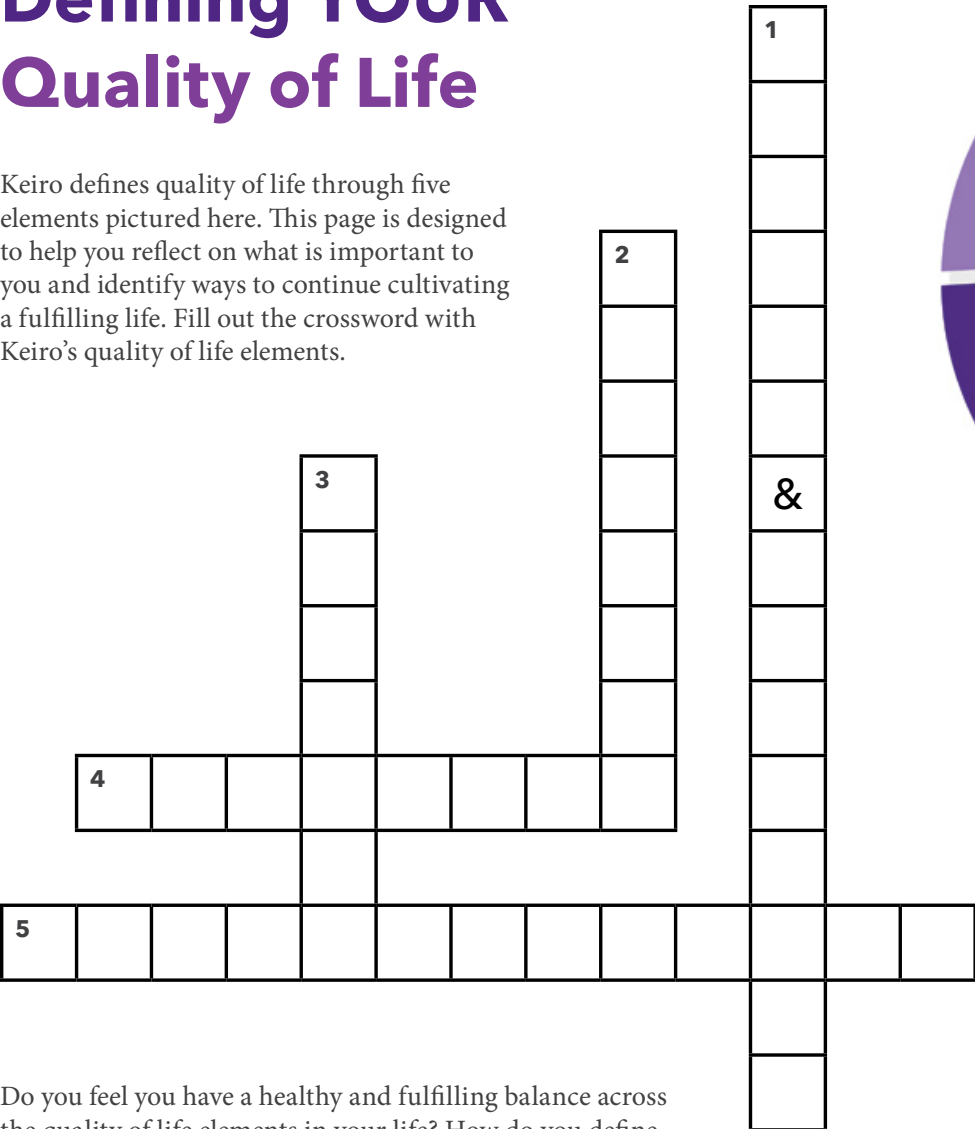


**Peter Gee, RN, MPP** is the Director of Service Programs at Little Tokyo Service Center. He has over 15 years of leadership experience at human service and community development organizations in New York City.



# Defining YOUR Quality of Life

Keiro defines quality of life through five elements pictured here. This page is designed to help you reflect on what is important to you and identify ways to continue cultivating a fulfilling life. Fill out the crossword with Keiro’s quality of life elements.



Do you feel you have a healthy and fulfilling balance across the quality of life elements in your life? How do you define your quality of life now?

Chart a course to discover new ways to grow, connect, and thrive at any stage of life through our classes and resources.

Visit [keiro.org/qol](https://keiro.org/qol) to learn more and take the next step today!



### DOWN:

- 1. Your physical, mental, and emotional state of being
- 2. Financial stability, consistent housing, a reliable social network, and access to high-quality, affordable services
- 3. Something that brings meaning and joy to your life

### ACROSS:

- 4. The ability to choose how to live life the way you want
- 5. Being engaged with your family, friends, and community

# What is Palliative Care?

By J. Russell Kieffer

Iyashi Care is one of a handful of community-based palliative care (CBPC) programs in Southern California and the only program focused on the Japanese American community. Palliative care developed over several decades, with its groundwork laid in the modern hospice movement begun in the 1960s. By the 1990s and early 2000s, structured models of CBPC began to emerge, driven by the need to provide care closer to patients’ homes.

### What Makes Palliative Care Unique?

Palliative care focuses on enhancing quality of life for patients with serious illnesses by addressing physical, emotional, social, and spiritual needs, unlike typical health care, which often centers on treating the disease itself. Palliative care is delivered by an interdisciplinary team that collaborates to provide comprehensive support, involving both patients and their families in decision-making to ensure care aligns with their values, goals, and preferences. It can be provided at any stage of illness, alongside curative treatments, and emphasizes symptom management and comfort. Additionally, palliative care includes coordination of care across different providers and settings and offers significant support for caregivers, aiming to reduce stress and improve overall well-being for patients and their families.

### How Widespread is Palliative Care Compared to Traditional Health Care Delivery?

Palliative care is increasingly recognized and integrated within traditional health care systems, but is not as universally common. Awareness and demand are growing due to aging populations and chronic illnesses. Many hospitals now have palliative care teams, and outpatient services are expanding, although availability varies by region. Medical education is incorporating more palliative care training, but public misconceptions and policy inconsistencies remain challenges.

### What are the Challenges in Increasing Access to CBPC?

- 1. **Financial Sustainability:** Funding CBPC programs can be challenging. Reimbursement models often favor acute care over chronic and palliative care, making it difficult to secure consistent funding. Covering the costs of services is a challenge, especially for uninsured or underinsured patients.
- 2. **Regulations and Policies:** Regulatory barriers and lack of supportive policies can impede the development and expansion of CBPC, as well as inconsistent regulations across regions and difficulties in navigating health care laws.
- 3. **Workforce Shortage:** There is a shortage of health care professionals trained in palliative care. Recruiting and retaining skilled staff in community settings can be difficult, and more training programs are needed.
- 4. **Public Awareness:** Public misunderstanding about palliative care, such as its association only with end-of-life care, can limit its acceptance and demand. Educating both the public and health care providers about the benefits of early and community-based palliative care is crucial.
- 5. **Coordination of Care:** Providing palliative care in the community requires effective coordination among various health care providers, which can be challenging. Ensuring seamless communication and continuity of care between hospitals, primary care, and palliative care teams is essential but can be difficult to achieve.
- 6. **Access and Equity:** Disparities in access to CBPC exist, particularly in rural or underserved areas. Ensuring equitable access for all patients, regardless of geographic location or socioeconomic status, is a significant challenge.

Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive strategies involving policy changes, innovative funding models, education and training programs, and efforts to increase public awareness about the value of palliative care. With the growth of community-based palliative care programs, such as Iyashi Care, more patients and their loved ones are able to benefit and improve their quality of life.

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



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

J. Russell Kieffer, MSW, LCSW, APHSW-C, is the Senior Executive Director for Palliative Care at Providence in California, Oregon, and Washington. He has over 20 years of experience in hospice and palliative care direct practice, program development, and leadership.

## UPCOMING CLASSES

Register today! Visit [keiro.org/qol](https://keiro.org/qol).

### March

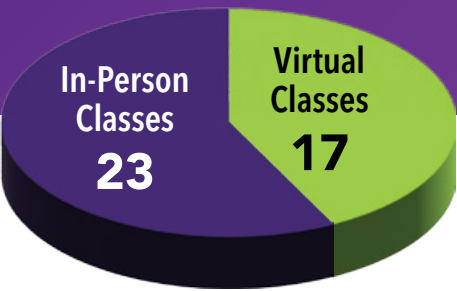
**Heritage Meets Healthy Eating**  
with Kristine Yada, MS, RDN  
Thursday, March 6, 2025 @ 10:30 a.m. via Zoom

**Caregiver Conference Insights & Takeaways**  
Thursday, March 27, 2025 @ 2:00 p.m. via Zoom

### April

**Living a Healthy Brain Lifestyle**  
with Mary S. Easton Center for Alzheimer’s Disease Research and Care at UCLA  
Thursday, April 3, 2025 @ 2:00 p.m. via Zoom

**Before It’s Too Late: Discussing Advance Planning**  
with Keiro & Changing Tides  
Sunday, April 19, 2025 @ 12:00 p.m.  
Orange County (In-Person and Zoom)



### 2024 QUALITY OF LIFE CLASSES AT A GLANCE

In 2024, 789 unique participants attended Quality of Life classes virtually and in person.

### Iyashi Care’s Impact in 2024

580

patients and families served in 2024

90%

Completion rate of Physician Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (POLST) for families enrolled in the program

Providence, our valued partner, has achieved accreditation from The Joint Commission for its hospice and palliative care programs.

IYASHI 癒 CARE.

For more information about Iyashi Care, contact us at **213.873.5791** or [programs@keiro.org](mailto:programs@keiro.org).



# Friends of Keiro

Donors and volunteers help Keiro advance the quality of life for Japanese American and Japanese older adults wherever they call home. Your support allows Keiro to adapt and meet the changing needs of Our Community. Our deepest gratitude goes to all who join Keiro in our mission to enhance the quality of senior life in Our Community.

### CASH DONATIONS

Keiro gratefully acknowledges the following donors who contributed from January – December 2024.

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- Takeo & Sayoko Akasaki
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DECEMBER | KEIRO GRANTS PROGRAM



APRIL | CAREGIVER CONFERENCE

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- Agnes Isa
- \*Gerald T. Iseda
- Shigeo & Eiko Ishibashi
- Lori Ishida
- Miyeko Ishida
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- Ikuko Ishii
- Masaaki Ishikura
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- Tosh Ishioka
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- \*Gonsaku & Mine Ito Family
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- Tomie Ito
- Pauline Itow
- Mary Iwami
- George Iwamoto
- Mabel Iwamoto
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- L.A. Homba Hongwanji Betsuin Buddhist Women's Association
- Gina Lee
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**36**  
organizations  
funded

**3,268**  
participants  
served\*

**96%**  
feel connected to others in their  
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\* based on 2023-2024 mid-year reports





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420 East Third Street, Suite 1000  
Los Angeles, CA 90013

Phone: 213.873.5700  
Email: [contact@keiro.org](mailto:contact@keiro.org)  
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#### MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR 2025!



##### Caregiver Conference - San Gabriel Valley

East San Gabriel Valley Japanese  
Community Center  
Saturday, March 15, 2025  
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.



##### 2026 Keiro Grants Programs Cycle

Application Opens: June 2025



##### Keiro no Hi Festival

Little Tokyo  
Saturday, September 13, 2025



##### Caregiver Conference - South Bay

Gardena Valley Japanese  
Cultural Institute  
Saturday, October 25, 2025  
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

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2024 Keiro no Hi Festival