FALL 2025

KeiroConnect

Difficult Realities of Caregiving

Welcome!

A MESSAGE FROM KEIRO PRESIDENT & CEO

Beverly Ito
President & CEO

Through my own caregiving experience and hearing the stories of countless family caregivers, it is apparent that caregiving comes in all shapes and sizes. Whether you are caring for a family member or friend, being a caregiver brings a unique set of challenges. Oftentimes, those challenges are experienced behind closed doors, leading us to feel alone and unsupported. The greatest lessons that one can learn about caregiving are rooted in every tear shed, every night spent in the hospital, every argument with a loved one, every unexpected fall, every frantic call to the doctor, and every loss.

Keiro recognizes the need to grow our educational resources and programs to meet the evolving needs of caregivers. This is why over the past year, we have expanded the Caregiver Conference to two events a year, and supported 400 family members and friends through Iyashi Care and our mental health counseling partnership with Little Tokyo Service Center.

We hope that the stories in this edition of *KeiroConnect* can help paint a picture that there is no "right way" to be a caregiver. There will be unexpected twists and turns, but every step you take, whether you feel it in the moment or not, is grounded in your unbreakable values of love, care, and commitment.

私自身の介護の経験、そしてたくさんの家族介護者のお話を伺う中で、介護には本当にさまざまな形があることを実感しています。家族であっても友人であっても、大切な人を支えるということは、介護者として特別な悩みや困難に直面することでもあります。多くの場合、その大変さは、家庭の中で抱え込まれ、孤独や不安を感じることも少なくありません。しかし同時に、介護から学べる大切なことはたくさんあります。流した涙のひとつひとつに、病院で過ごした長い夜に、愛する人とのすれ違いや言い合いに、思いがけない転倒に、慌てて電話した医師とのやり取りに、そして大切な存在との別れに—そのすべてに、かけがえのない学びが詰まっているのです。

Keiroは、介護を担う皆さまの変化するニーズに応えるため、学びの機会や支援プログラムを広げていくことの大切さを感じています。この一年間では、介護者向けカンファレンスを年２回に拡大しました。さらに、「癒しケア」とリトル東京サービスセンターとの協力によるメンタルヘルス•カウンセリングを通じて、400名を超えるご家族やご友人を支援することができました。これからも、介護を担う皆さんが安心して暮らし、つながりを感じられるような取り組みを続けてまいります。

KeiroConnectの特集に寄せられた体験談を通じて、「介護には決まった正しい形はない」ということを感じていただければ幸いです。介護の歩みには、思いがけない出来事や予期せぬ曲がり角がたくさんあります。ときに戸惑い、ときに立ち止まることもあります。けれども、その一歩一歩には、たとえご自身では気づきにくくても、深い愛情とやさしさ、そして揺るぎない献身の心が込められています。

ベバリ・イトウ
Keiro代表兼CEO

Keiro Board of Directors

Caregiver Conference

Keiro recognizes that the difficulties of being a caregiver are unique to each individual's situation, yet many aspects are also a universal experience. By bringing together caregivers and industry professionals for a day of education, support, and resource sharing, Keiro's annual Caregiver Conference provided caregivers with the assistance they needed. In 2025, Keiro hosted two conferences, in the San Gabriel Valley and South Bay, to expand the reach of this valuable information and provide more caregivers with the opportunity to attend. Here are some key takeaways from this year's presentations:

TAKEAWAY #1: There are Different Ways to Navigate Care Decisions

In this presentation, led by Roxy Kirakosyan, the Director of Education and Outreach at Alzheimer's Los Angeles, attendees learned how self-awareness and advocacy can enhance the overall quality of care for their loved one. Roxy shared methods for identifying various care options available, community resources that support caregivers and care recipients, and navigating communication pathways with health care providers, ensuring caregivers can advocate effectively and access necessary services.

TAKEAWAY #2: Be Proactive with Advance Care Planning

Presenters Tomohiro J. Kagami, JD, and Mei Kameda, LCSW, emphasized that when caring for aging loved ones, it is vital to properly understand and complete various legal, financial, and medical advance planning documents for yourself and loved ones. Mei shared, "[Advance planning] is a tough conversation to have, and it is even more difficult when our loved ones don't want to have that conversation. There is often a sense of urgency, especially when our loved ones are ill, to execute these documents. But it is an ongoing, fluid process that people have to go through, and you need to have an open dialogue."

TAKEAWAY #3: Caregiving is Never One-Size-Fits-All

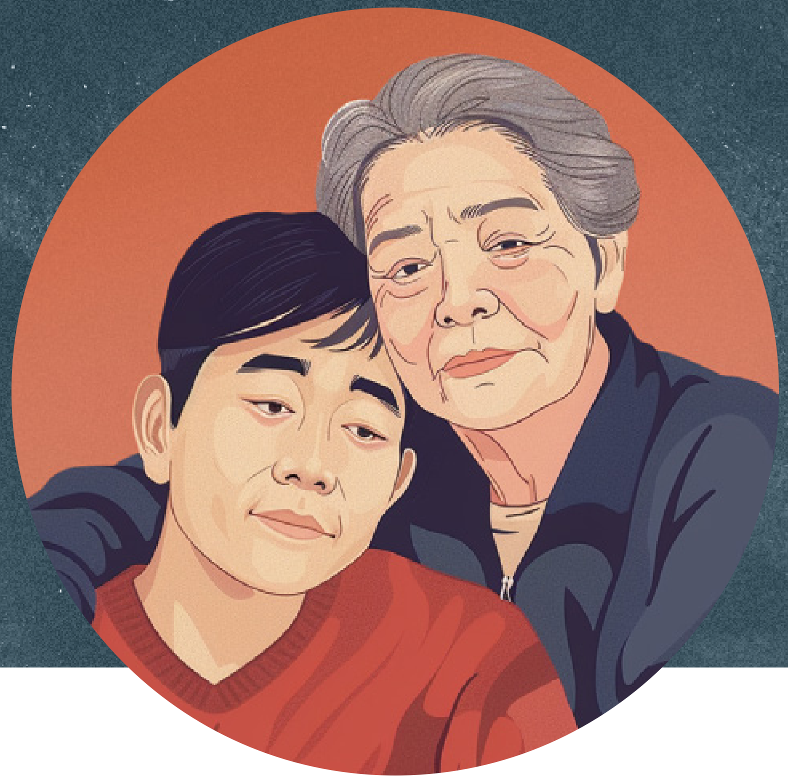
To paint a picture of the wide range of caregiver perspectives, a panel of family caregivers and community members, Alan, Nancy, and Viva, shared their candid stories and lessons learned from their unique journeys. From navigating different levels of care to coordinating among family members and health care providers, it is apparent that each person, regardless of their experiences, faced distinct realities and challenges as a family caregiver.

TAKEAWAY #4: Caregiving & End of Life Challenges can be Unexpected

Estate Attorney Wilbur Gin walked through best practices and proactive planning strategies that can help families feel confident and prepared even when faced with the unexpected realities of caregiving and end-of-life decisions amid challenges like family disagreements or sudden health decline. He explained how estate planning tools can support caregivers in real-life situations, highlighted common legal and logistical pitfalls in caregiving and end-of-life planning, and offered ways to gain confidence when initiating conversations with loved ones about estate planning.

For more information about Keiro's next Caregiver Conference, visit keiro.org/CC.

Managing the Mental Load as a Parent Caregiver



Names of the individuals in this article have been changed for privacy.

Yoko was born in Japan and moved to the U.S. after marrying an American. She experienced significant emotional and financial abuse by her husband, and she lacked a strong support system in different aspects of her life. Because of this and the ongoing abuse from her husband, her son Minato's developmental disabilities were not recognized until he was in elementary school. Due to the extra support that her son needed throughout his life, Yoko faced many difficult challenges as the primary caregiver for her son.

However, Yoko is not the only one in these shoes. Caregiving for adult children is often challenging, particularly for older parents who may be starting to experience a decline in their own health and wellbeing. Nearly one million households in the U.S. are of aging parents caring for both their adult children with disabilities and themselves (Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, 2021-2022).

Little Tokyo
Service Center

Keiro's partnership with Little Tokyo Service Center (LTSC) has made mental health services more accessible for older adults in the Japanese American and Japanese community. Countless individuals, like Yoko, have benefited from this culturally sensitive support.

Facing Challenges and Concerns

When Minato was in middle school and high school, he was placed in special education classes, where he experienced bullying but did not receive the appropriate support. At the time, "[my son] told the school [about the bullying], but they said he was making it up… I didn't know what to do and thought it was him being a teenager," Yoko explained. Minato's challenges with bullying and lack of support continued after high school as he tried job training at the local Regional Center for the Developmentally Disabled. Despite multiple employment attempts over the years, he struggled to find a job and adapt socially, ultimately placing a lot of blame on Yoko.

At Minato's request, Yoko considered moving to another state on multiple occasions. However, she was conflicted and concerned about losing the benefits and service support they had in California. Her friends expressed concerns about Minato's behaviors and suggested putting him in a group home, as they were afraid of what might happen to Yoko due to the stress of caring for Minato.

Seeking Support

Feeling overwhelmed, in 2021, Yoko saw an advertisement for LTSC's mental health services, which are provided through a partnership with Keiro. At the time, her son was unemployed and socially isolated, and she was struggling as well. "I just thought it would be good to talk to someone about this situation [in Japanese], just to have someone listen… It's something you can't talk to your friends about," Yoko explained.

For the next four years, Yoko had regular counseling sessions with LTSC staff and shared, "Little by little, I felt like I could keep on living after talking to [LTSC]." She was able to gradually build up confidence in herself, recognizing the challenges she faced and not being ashamed to name them. She also learned about available resources and proactively sought support.

Yoko would like Minato to be more independent, but acknowledges that this will be a difficult task. She explained that during her counseling sessions, she was able to express her concerns about her son and how their situation had been affecting her. Yoko was given helpful skills to cope with these challenges, and she worked on improving her relationship with her son. Since then, Minato has been going to the gym, has sought help from the Regional Center for the Developmentally Disabled, and expressed gratitude to Yoko for their meals.

"One Step at a Time…"

Although planning for one's own future care needs as one ages is difficult enough, advance care planning for one's adult children with disabilities, especially if they cannot care for themselves, is an added challenge. People with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities, whether they are born with or acquire them, are living longer than ever before due to medical advances and improved community support systems. For example, the average life expectancy of a baby born with Down syndrome has more than doubled from 26 years in 1950 to 53 years in 2010 (Down Syndrome Population, 2024). Life expectancy for those with cerebral palsy, spina bifida, autism spectrum disorder, and other types of developmental and intellectual disabilities has also increased significantly over the decades.

Being a life-long caregiver can take a physical, emotional, social, and financial toll on one's quality of life, and caring for yourself and your adult child can seem insurmountable at times. But when situations get tough, Yoko has been able to apply the lessons and skills she learned in therapy to various aspects of her life.

Now in her late 60s, Yoko works part-time at a market and is an In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) caregiver for her son. She also has several chronic health conditions, including diabetes, high blood pressure, inflammation, and poor vision. Although she is uncertain about her future, she knows it is essential to take care of herself as well. Yoko is very grateful to the LTSC staff, especially her counselor, for all of the support that she received. She advised others, "Instead of worrying about [the problem] on your own, it is better to call and talk to a professional for their advice. Even if the problem isn't solved, you may feel better."

日本語の記事は、keiro.org/jp/newsをご覧ください。

Upcoming Quality of Life Classes

Discover a range of educational wellness programs designed to enhance the quality of life for older adults through engaging classes, interactive discussions, and expert guest speakers.

All classes will be hosted virtually through Zoom. To register, visit ***keiro.org/qol****.*

December 2025

Nutritious Holiday Treats
with Mary Ellen Wong
Thursday, December 4, 2:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Ozoni Variations Across Japan
Thursday, December 18, 2:00 - 3:00 p.m.

February 2026

Fermented Foundations: Miso & Koji
with Marukome USA, Inc.
Thursday, February 5, 2:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Caregiver Connections:
Finding Support & Community
Thursday, February 26, 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

The Price is Right: Caregiving Edition

When considering caregiving services, people often focus on the financial and physical toll. However, there are usually misconceptions about the actual cost, and families are caught off guard when the care is actually needed. Whether it's hiring in-home care, moving into an assisted living facility, or providing around-the-clock support for a loved one with complex medical needs, the expenses can quickly add up.

Do you know the cost of care for each of these scenarios? Fill in your guess below:

Scenario 1: Staying at Home, but Needing Help

Mrs. Aoki, age 78, lives alone and wants to maintain her independence. However, her children worry about her safety after a few minor falls, and they decided to hire a home health aide to assist with meal preparation, bathing, and managing her daily medications.

Home Health Aid
(44 hours/week):
$__________ per year

Scenario 2: Part-Time Social & Wellness Support

Mr. Yoshida, age 82, lives with his daughter, who works full-time. To ensure he gets social interaction, supervision, and meals during the day, he enrolls in an adult day program and attends five days a week.

Adult Day Care
(5 days/week):
$__________ per year

Scenario 3: A New Home with Full Support

Mrs. Sato, age 85, requires assistance with daily tasks, including personal care, meal preparation, housekeeping, and general health monitoring. She moves into a private room at an assisted living community, where this support is available on a full-time basis.

Assisted Living
(private room, 12 months):
$__________ per year

Care costs in California range from $23,400 to nearly $90,000 per year, depending on the type and level of support required. Families who plan ahead can compare options, gather required documentation, and prepare for the realities of caregiving.

All care costs presented in this article are sourced from *Genworth and CareScout, 2024*.

Answers: Scenario 1: $89,232 | Scenario 2: $23,400 | Scenario 3: $88,200

Helping Loved Ones Prepare for Assisted Living

Caregiving often requires making difficult decisions. One of the most challenging moments families face is recognizing when a loved one may no longer be able to live safely at home. The transition to an assisted living community or board and care home can be emotionally and financially challenging for everyone involved, but with preparation, families can reduce stress and ensure their loved one has the support they need.

Admissions into assisted living communities can be unpredictable, depending on factors such as room availability, finding the right facility, and other considerations. It is essential to begin preparing before the need becomes urgent.

Here are a few tips to help families plan and make the process smoother and less overwhelming:

Start with Conversations and Care Planning

Begin the conversation with your loved one about future care needs. Meet with their primary care provider to discuss next steps, complete any required documents, and review important health records or directives together.

Gather Important Documentation

Having paperwork organized in advance prevents delays during the admission process. Commonly required items include:

- LIC 602/Physician's Report for Community Care Facilities
- Tuberculosis (TB) test results (within the last six months)
- Vaccination records
- Medication list
- Valid identification - e.g. driver's license, passport, etc.
- Insurance cards - e.g. medical, prescription, dental, Medicare, or Veterans Affairs (VA)
- Advance Health Care Directive/Durable Power of Attorney (DPOA) for health
- Durable Power of Attorney (DPOA) for finance
- Physician's Order for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST)

Clarify Roles and Responsibilities

Ensure that your loved one's support system understands their respective roles, whether serving as an emergency contact, health representative, or financial decision-maker.

Plan for Logistics

If the individual is relocating from out of state, coordinate moving dates with insurance transitions and establish care with a new primary care physician to avoid gaps in coverage.

Know What Matters to You

When exploring options, decide what is most important, such as location to your loved one's support system, facility/room size, level of care, social opportunities, and amenities, to help guide your search.

While the decision to move a loved one is never easy, preparing early provides peace of mind. With Keiro Kikyo Home opening in the future, families who begin organizing now will be ready to take the next step when the time comes. Stay connected with Keiro for updates on Keiro Kikyo Home and to learn more about our programs and resources to promote aging with confidence and living with vitality.

For more information, email contact@keiro.org.

Keiro
Kikyo Home™

Becky's Path to Caregiving with Confidence

Becky is no stranger to caregiving, as both she and her mother, Dorothy, cared for her father until his passing at home. When she received a call that Dorothy had fallen and was in the hospital, Becky was determined "to do everything possible so that [my mother] was comfortable in her own home as she aged." Reflecting on her caregiving journey, Becky can now say that she was able to achieve that goal up until Dorothy's passing, thanks in part to Iyashi Care.

Different Than Hospice

While Dorothy was rehabilitating from her fall at a skilled nursing facility, one of Becky's friends suggested she look into Iyashi Care — their family had used the program and found it very helpful. Becky's initial, though common, perception of palliative care was that it "was almost like hospice." With this preconceived notion of palliative care, she was unsure if it would be a good fit for her mother since Dorothy was still relatively healthy. Becky attended a community Iyashi Care presentation to learn more, but did not enroll Dorothy immediately.

After bringing Dorothy home and understanding her care needs, Becky decided to reach out to Iyashi Care. She recalled, "I think mentally and emotionally, it was really hard caring for my dad because I didn't have the professional backup… I didn't have an outlet or place to call [for support at the time]."

A Memorable First Doctor's Visit

Dorothy's initial visit with Dr. Yuichi Edwin Yanami, the Iyashi Care physician, was at her home. Becky got her first surprise when Dr. Yanami stayed for nearly an hour — not the 10- or 15-minute appointments she was used to. She shared, "We were in the living room, and [Dr. Yanami] was talking to my mom… trying to get a sense of who she was and what she liked to do."

Becky's second surprise was when Dr. Yanami commented that their last name was Okinawan, and asked if Dorothy liked Okinawan music. After a quick trip to his car, he came back with a *sanshin* — a traditional Okinawan instrument — and asked Dorothy to pick some of her favorite songs for them to sing. This first visit went a long way in establishing trust between Dorothy, Becky, and the Iyashi Care team.

Unmatched Support for the Family

Becky noted that the house visits and 24/7 access to the Iyashi Care team were particularly beneficial. In contrast with Dorothy's usual vibrant, sharp, and active personality, she began to experience changes in her mobility, appetite, mood, and routine. Becky knew she was able to call the team to ask if she should be concerned or not, and received advice on how to adapt. "[Access to the team] took a tremendous amount of pressure off of guessing," she explained.

Additionally, three generations of the family shared the responsibility of caring for Dorothy — including grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Dr. Yanami and Kanako Fukuyama, the Iyashi Care social worker, met with the family to explain, in age-appropriate ways, what to expect and encouraged them to call the team with questions or concerns. For Becky, the inclusion of the whole family throughout Dorothy's time enrolled in Iyashi Care was helpful because they, including the younger great-grandchildren, were not as afraid when she declined and eventually went on hospice.

Caring for the Caregiver

"I was floored when every month I got a call, and I'd be ready to answer, 'Oh, mom is doing okay, this is what she is eating.' And [the Iyashi Care team] would say, 'We're not calling for your mom, we're calling for you. How are you doing?'" Becky said.

Support for the family caregivers' wellbeing is a key component of Iyashi Care, since they may often neglect their own quality of life. According to *AARP's Caregiving in the US 2025 report*, one in five caregivers report poor health, and nearly two-thirds experience moderate or high emotional stress. The team encourages self-care and provides validation, education, and counseling.

At the urging of Dr. Yanami and Kanako, Becky eventually made time for herself without feeling guilty, taking piano lessons and occasionally going to Disneyland with friends who were also caregivers. She explained, "You need that time to destress and decompress because you may feel like you're doing okay, but you don't realize how constantly your [loved ones] are on your mind."

A Call to All Caregivers

Becky encourages all family caregivers to look after themselves, in addition to their loved ones — including making time for their hobbies and not feeling guilty about asking for help. With both of her parents now gone, she is also starting to think about planning for her own care needs as she ages — something she wants to remind current, past, and future caregivers not to forget about.

"Iyashi Care eliminated a lot of that frustration and anxiety for [us]," Becky said, "I think I would have gone nuts if I didn't have the support of the Iyashi Care team."

For more information about Iyashi Care, contact us at **213.873.5791** or **programs@keiro.org**.

IYASHI 癒 CARE.

Stuck in the Middle: A Sandwich Generation Caregiver Perspective

According to *AARP's Caregiving in the US 2025 report*, unpaid family caregivers provide an average of 27 hours of care each week, and one in four caregivers provides over 40 hours of support each week — equivalent to working a full-time job. Caring for a loved one comes with challenges and is a difficult responsibility. The financial and emotional burdens that come with caregiving can be even more challenging for those who are sandwich generation caregivers — those caring for both aging parents and their own children at the same time. Nearly one in three caregivers today are in this dual role, often managing very different sets of needs across generations.

Keiro spoke with Lisa, a sandwich generation caregiver who works full-time while primarily caring for her adult sons and sharing care responsibilities for her aging parents with her sister and nephew. Her story highlights the weight of caregiving, the daily juggling act, and the importance of seeking support.

The Emotional Weight of Caregiving

Caregivers often experience guilt and regret along their journey. Lisa shared that when her sons, who have developmental disabilities, were younger, she struggled to advocate for them when they were having difficulties in school. "I felt very guilty… for not having done more when they were little," she reflected. Cultural norms about respecting authority influenced her reluctance to challenge institutions, "I wasn't assertive enough to push for [certain accessibility resources and services] for my kids."

This mix of cultural values like *enryo* (restraint) and *gaman* (perseverance), while keeping up with caregiving responsibilities, made navigating systems like schools, hospitals, and other services tedious and even more isolating. Lisa further explained that meeting her sons' needs required experimenting with therapies and programs that were not covered by insurance or provided by schools. The reality for many caregivers is that finding adequate support often involves trial and error as well as a heavy financial burden.

Balancing Care Across Generations

While taking care of her parents presents a lighter load thanks to her sister and nephew, who are their primary caregivers, the responsibility is ever-present. Lisa's sister supports by preparing meals, managing medications, and taking their parents to doctor appointments. Lisa shared, "Normally, I'll call [or visit them] just to see if I can help out with anything they may need."

Additionally, Lisa mentioned that she monitors both parents' glucose levels as a way to supplement the care they receive from her sister and nephew. Lisa's sons' needs, however, are ongoing and complex — spanning academics, emotional health, and daily living. This creates a very different set of demands compared to caring for older adults. Many sandwich generation caregivers face the same reality: two generations, both needing care, but in very different ways.

Finding Community and Support

Despite these difficulties, Lisa stressed the value of connection with others. She participates in a caregiver club, learning from older peers in unique and personal care situations. "There are always hardships for all of us, and it's hard at any level when you start caregiving. However, it's really just talking to people… I'm learning from these other [caregivers] about how they're caring for their spouse." Lisa reflected on these learning points and noted, "Okay, I should expect this [with my parents]."

Support groups, advocacy organizations, and community programs provide both practical knowledge and emotional encouragement. Even when caregiving feels isolating, these connections remind caregivers that there are others out there on similar paths.

Difficult Realities and Hope

Lisa's experience reflects the diverse challenges that many sandwich generation caregivers face: emotional strain, financial burdens, and the challenge of balancing the needs of multiple generations. However, her story also highlights perseverance, connection, and the reminder that support and resources are out there. Caregivers do not have to navigate this path alone — community networks, peer support, and advocacy groups can help lighten the load.

Keiro remains committed to supporting caregivers through programs such as its annual Caregiver Conferences, educational workshops, and caregiver support group facilitator training sessions, which are set to launch in 2026. Stay connected with Keiro to learn about upcoming caregiver programs and resources.

SEPTEMBER 15, 2025

KEIRO NO HI FESTIVAL

Keiro hosted its eighth annual Keiro no Hi Festival at Los Angeles Hompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple (Nishi). Over 600 attendees and volunteers enjoyed live entertainment and demonstrations, bento lunch, festival games, crafts, a photo booth, and time with family and friends.

"I have known about this festival, but this is my first time here. I think it is so neat. The taiko performance was probably my favorite part because it was fun and exciting. I will definitely come back next year!" - Alex

To view more highlights of the festival visit **keiro.org/news**.

Support Keiro Today!

Keiro provides a variety of culturally-sensitive services and programs and is adapting to meet the current community needs. However, we cannot do it alone! Your contribution supports much-needed services and resources for older adults and caregivers.

Make a gift today by visiting **keiro.org/support** or by using the envelope provided in this publication.

Keiro

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GENKI LIVING
WORKSHOPS

Keiro's Genki Living Workshops empower older adults to embrace active aging by introducing accessible hobbies and activities that promote health, wellness, and social connection. Join us in 2026 for our exciting lineup of new workshops!

GARDENING

January 31, 2026 | Tanaka Farms | **Register Today!**

COOKING | March 2026
WALKING | Coming Soon
ARTS & CRAFTS | Coming Soon

More information: keiro.org/glw

Caregiver Conference

Sunday, April 19, 2026
Venice Japanese Community Center

Registration Opens: Monday, February 9, 2026

More information: keiro.org/CC

Fall 2026 – Location to be announced