

EAST SAN GABRIEL VALLEY
JAPANESE COMMUNITY CENTER **ESGVJCC**

41ST Annual Queen Coronation

Sunday, April 16, 2023
The Sugimoto Family Social Hall





PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

TIM ITATANI | ESGVJCC PRESIDENT

Oh behalf of the East San Gabriel Valley Japanese Community Center, its Board of Directors, Staff, its Queen Committee and the many volunteers, welcome to our 2023 ESGVJCC Queen Coronation.

This year we have the privilege of crowning Ms. Sara Emiko Kubo as our 2023 ESGVJCC Queen. Sara will be representing our Center and all our organizations and members in our community events and public appearances throughout this upcoming year, than in August will represent ESGVJCC in the upcoming 81st Annual Nisei Week Festival.

I would also like to personally thank our 2022 ESGVJCC Queen Amanda Hiraishi, who represented our organization with so much class and dignity and I'm very proud of how much she has grown from the experience. You are a true example of the best of the best of our younger generation. I look forward to your continued support of ESGVJCC in the future.

To our ESGVJCC Queen Committee; Melissa Kozono, Michi Lew, Kelly Sera, Kiyomi Takemoto, Emily Ishida, Susie Kozono, and Grace Richardson, thank you for taking the time and effort to make sure Sara is ready for all the future challenges that await her in this upcoming year.

We are fortunate to have Sara Kubo represent ESGVJCC in 2023. We know that she will do a great job.

Regards,
Tim T. itatani
President, ESGVJCC Board of Directors



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

PEARL OMIYA | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The tradition of the ESGVJCC Queen's Pageant is both long and rich. In 1968, Dawn Shinmoto was named as the Citrus Valley Optimist Club Queen. Thirteen girls followed her footsteps, with three becoming the Nisei Week Queen – Cheryl

Kawakami (1973), Elisa Akemi Cuthbert (1974) and Loris Kurashige (1977).

In 1982, the East San Gabriel Valley Japanese Community Center became the official sponsor of these past queens and a new title was born. Janet Midori Barnes become the first ESGVJCC Queen in 1982 and was crowned Nisei Week Queen as well. Since then, many of the girls have gone to become Nisei Week Queen - Karen Mieko Uchizono (1988), Mutsuko Suzanne Sata (1991), Noami Ono (1993), Joann Yumi Shin (1996), Tricia Sumiko Tanaka (2000), and Nicole Miyako Cherry (2003), representing not only East San Gabriel Valley Japanese Community Center but also the Japanese American community.

To the past 40 women to represent the Community Center, thank you. We look forward to continuing this tradition for many more years. We have been so lucky to have such talented and accomplished young women represent our Community Center year after year. Though I am no longer on the Queens committee, I know that it is in great hands with Melissa and Michi. I have seen the tremendous amount of time, effort, and intense training and event schedule that our candidates have taken on and how much time and effort our trainers and committee give each and every year.

I am excited to see Sara Kubo have the opportunity to be our ESGVJCC Queen. She was a tremendous asset as our summer intern in 2019 and our ESGVJCC 1 st Princess last year. This year is a continuation of her deep involvement and commitment to the Center like it has been for many others who have come before her. Thank you to all those who attended today to support her in her journey and for all those who continue to support the East San Gabriel Valley Japanese Community Center.

CORONATION PROGRAM

QUEENS COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Melissa Kozono
Michi Lew

WELCOME

Tim Itatani | 2023 ESGVJCC President

SPEECH PRESENTATION

Sara Emiko Kubo | 2023 ESGVJCC Queen

CROWNING

Sara Emiko Kubo | 2023 ESGVJCC Queen

CORONATION PLANNING COMMITTEE

CORONATION CONTRIBUTION

Queens Committee, Joy Kitaura, Lonin Lew,
Susie Kozono, Dawn Sera, and Margi Takemoto

ESGVJCC QUEENS INSTRUCTORS

Melissa Kozono, Craig Ishii

ESGVJCC QUEENS COMMITTEE

Melissa Kozono, Michi Lew, Grace Richardson,
Susie Kozono, Kelly Sera, Emily Ishida, Kiyomi Takemoto

ESGVJCC QUEENS LEGACY PROGRAM

CROWN

Melissa Kozono - 2014 Queen

SASH

Sarah Mercado - 2012 Queen

ESGVJCC POLO & HAIR STYLIST

Michi Lew - 2011 Queen

FLOWERS

Joann Cordeiro - 1996 Queen

ESGVJCC QUEENS TREASURE CHEST

AIRFARE TO 2024 HAWAII CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

Sandy Itatani

MONETARY GIFT

East San Gabriel Valley Japanese Community Center

PASSING THE TORCH

AMANDA AKIKO HIRAISHI
2022 ESGVJCC QUEEN
2022 NISEI WEEK PRINCESS



It has been an immense honor and privilege to have had the opportunity to represent the East San Gabriel Valley Japanese Community Center as the 2022 ESGVJCC Queen, and serve as a 2022 Nisei Week Princess. As I reflect back on the past year, I am humbled by the generosity, support, and love that I have received.

From playing basketball as a Saberette, to learning Japanese language and culture through the Gakuen, to volunteering at Camp Chibikko, and serving through the Nikkei Youth Organization, I truly feel that I have been a beneficiary of the abundance that comes out of the Center through its pillars of culture, family, and community. For that, I will be forever grateful.

I have heard from past Queens that it would be an experience of a lifetime, but nothing could prepare me for the kind of impact that this journey has had on my life. From learning how to put on a yukata, to meeting prominent figures within the Japanese American community, and verbalizing my thoughts and feelings about my Japanese American experience, I have been able to clarify my own identity within this space. Prior to this, I had only experienced the Japanese American community within the Center and at basketball tournaments with people my own age. However, seeing people stay after events to help clean up or hearing others say shoyu instead of soy sauce, are little parts of my experience that really made my heart brim with happiness and familiarity. Through this experience, I have had a shift in perspective and confidence. Whenever I feel that a situation is challenging or risky, rather than just avoiding it in its entirety, I now face the challenge head on, knowing that I have the skills and capabilities to achieve more than I give myself credit for.

I want to sincerely thank everyone who has supported me on my journey. Thank you to my cheerleaders- my sister Kristina, my mom, and my dad. I admire your love, involvement, and dedication to the Center, and hope to continue it for many years to come. Sara, thank you for standing alongside me in representing the ESGVJCC, and for all the laughs and memories. Thank you to Tim and Sandy, Pearl, Melissa, Michi, Kelly, Kiyomi, all the past queens, the Queens Committee, ESGVJCC Board, Gakuen Board, volunteers, and the rest of the ESGVJCC family for supporting me all throughout my years with the Center. You have guided me throughout this journey and equipped me with the tools that I will continue to use as I move forward. Last, but certainly not least, thank you to the greater Japanese American community, of whom I have been able to build connections with through the many events this past year. As the community is able to slowly emerge from the difficult times of the pandemic, I have truly been able to be a witness to the tenacity and support of the expansive Japanese American community. I can't stop smiling when I think about all of the friends, Nisei Week sisters, amazing Japanese American community members, and lifelong connections that I have been able to build.

To have been able to represent the ESGVJCC and the Southern California Japanese American community for the past year in this type of capacity, is one that I will cherish forever. To be able to represent our community center, that I call my second home, is an honor like no other. Having been able to stand alongside Sara this past year, I know she will do an absolutely amazing job representing our Center! Congratulations!

With immense gratitude and love,
Amanda Akiko Hiraishi || 2022 ESGVJCC Queen

2023 ESGVJCC QUEEN



SARA EMIKO KUBO
2023 ESGVJCC QUEEN + NISEI WEEK
CANDIDATE

Sara Emiko Kubo is the 2nd eldest daughter of Daniel & Holly Kubo and currently resides in Temple City. She is 25 years old and graduated from California State University, Fullerton with a Bachelor of Arts in International Business. She currently works for Motiv Space Systems as a Production Control Lead. In her free time, she enjoys playing taiko, practicing digital photography and volunteering with the Nikkei Rising committee.

THE 2023
Cherry Blossom
FESTIVAL

A DAY OF TRADITIONAL JAPANESE CULTURE
FOOD • MUSIC • PERFORMANCES • VENDORS

FREE ADMISSION
APRIL 22, 2023 | 12PM - 6PM

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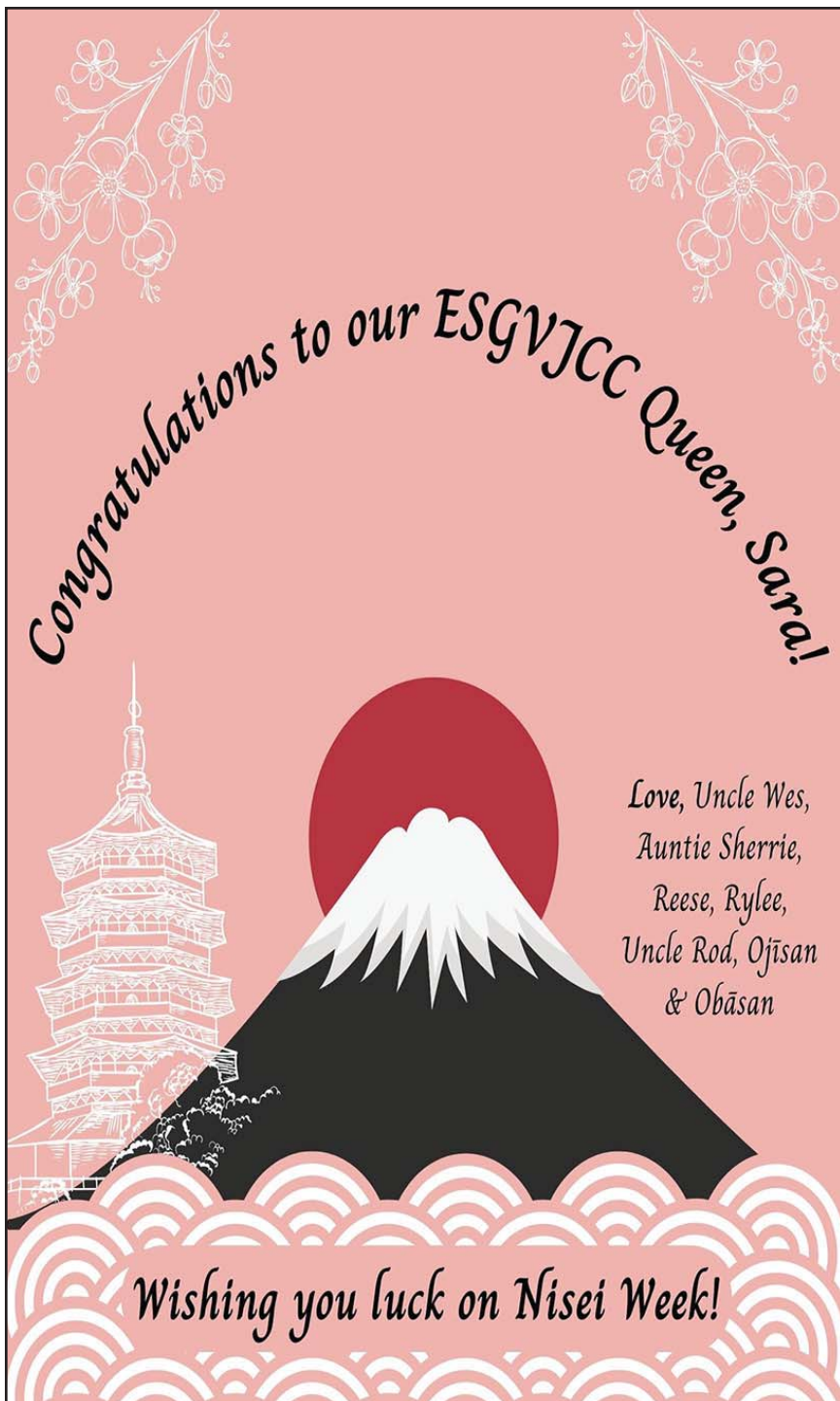
Join us for Sara's
1st official appearance
as the 2023 ESGVJCC
Queen!



頑張ってね!

Congratulations, Sara!
You're a great
ambassador to the
community, best of
luck to you.

CRFT by Maki
341 E. 1st Street
Little Tokyo, Los Angeles



Congratulations to our ESGVJCC Queen, Sara!

*Love, Uncle Wes,
Auntie Sherrie,
Reese, Rylee,
Uncle Rod, Ojisan
& Obāsan*

Wishing you luck on Nisei Week!



As the active girlfriend of
Koby Konno, I as her
boyfriend am incredibly
excited to see Sara Kubo
representing the East San
Gabriel Valley Japanese
Community Center for Nisei
Week 2023! I hope everyone
can support her and I'll be
with her every step of the
way. I love you so much,
Sara!

For more details about Koby Konno please visit my
official Instagram at [kobywankenobi](#) or at
kobyhk@gmail.com



As an active alumnus at
CSUF Nikkei Student Union,
we as an organization are
incredibly excited to see Sara
Kubo representing the East
San Gabriel Valley Japanese
Community Center for Nisei
Week 2023! We hope
everyone can support her,
and we'll be with her every
step of the way. We love you
so much, Sara!

For more details about CSUF Nikkei Student Union
please visit our official Instagram at [csuf_nsu](#) or
contact Michelle Le at
csuf.nsu.president@gmail.com

THE LEGACY



Janet Midori Barnes
1982
Nisei Week Queen



Elva Tamashiro
1983
Nisei Week 1st Princess



Shelly Mizuhara
1984



Miyoko Chatel
1985
Nisei Week 1st Princess



Karen Kakuta
1986
Nisei Week Miss Tomodachi



Satomi Fukudome
1992
Nisei Week Miss Tomodachi



Naomi Ono
1993
Nisei Week Queen



Lisa Kinoshita-Chee
1994
Nisei Week Miss Tomodachi



Aileen Sato
1995
Nisei Week Miss Tomodachi



Joann Yumi Shin
1996
Nisei Week Queen



Dawn Kiko Mizuhara
2002



Nicole Miyako Cherry
2003
Nisei Week Queen



Jill Hiromi Igarashi
2004



Doreen Kimi Ogata
2005



Callen Harue Kitaura
2006



Sarah Michelle Fujimoto
2012



Jamie Tomiko Teragawa
2013



Melissa Sayuri Kozono
2014



Tamara Mieke Teragawa
2015



Heather Yoneko Iwata
2016



Julie Emiko Tsuneishi
1987



Karen Mieko Uchizono
1988
Nisei Week Queen



Jacqueline Michiko Borja
1989



Kathy Lyn Oshima
1990



Mutsuko Suzanne Sata
1991
Nisei Week Queen



Catherine Emiko Nakano
1997



Jennifer Okamura
1998



Alissa Hana Hiraga
1999



Tricia Sumiko Tanaka
2000
Nisei Week Queen



Silvia Masami Yoshimizu
2001
Nisei Week 1st Princess



Mandy Kusumoto
2007



Kimberly Midori Kitaura
2008
Nisei Week 1st Princess



Jennifer Yoko Akamine
2009



Kelli Toshiye Teragawa
2010
Nisei Week 1st Princess



Michi Renee Lew
2011



Kelly Akiko Sera
2017
Nisei Week Miss Tomodachi



Lauren Rei Miyamoto
2018



Emily Yuiko Ishida
2019



Kiyomi Arimitsu Takemoto
2020-2021
Nisei Week Miss Tomodachi



Amanda Akiko Hiraishi
2022



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1203 West Puente Avenue | West Covina, CA 91790
P 626.960.2566 F 626.960.0866 W esgvjcc.org

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