

# ESGVJCC

## newsette

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ESGVJCC

## 2025 INSTALLATION BANQUET



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*Submitted by Dai Davila, Events Coordinator*

The East San Gabriel Valley Japanese Community Center warmly invites you to our 2025 Installation Banquet, an evening of reflection, gratitude, and community, on Saturday, February 8 from 6pm to 8pm in the ESGVJCC Gymnasium. This year, we celebrate with the theme *Hitotsu no Kizuna*—One Bond, honoring the strength and unity that define our Center and connect us all.

As we gather to install our 2025 Board of Directors, we look back on a fulfilling 2024, a year filled with events, programs, and the heartfelt efforts from our members, volunteers, and staff. Together, we have fostered an inclusive space for learning, celebration, and connection, enriching the lives of all who pass through our doors.

Please join us for an evening of recognition and connection as we embark on another year of shared purpose. Tickets are \$45 per person or \$350 for a table of eight. To reserve your spot, please contact Events Coordinator, Dai Davila at (626) 960-2566 or [ddavila@esgvjcc.org](mailto:ddavila@esgvjcc.org). ■



# 2025 ESGVJCC

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Executive Assistant

Tina Asano

Program Director, Youth Services

Melissa Kozono

Program Director, Senior Services

Tony Tang

Marketing Coordinator

Mary Nagakawa

Events Coordinator

Dai Davila

Office Manager

Scott Kawachi

# MESSAGE FROM THE ESGVJCC

TIM ITATANI, 2025 ESGVJCC PRESIDENT

Dear Members:

Akemashite Omedetō Gozaimasu to all our Members and your families! I hope 2025 brings prosperity and good health to each and every one of you. A heartfelt thank you to all our ESGVJCC donors, sponsors, and volunteers for your unwavering support over the years. We look forward to continuing this tremendous partnership into 2025.

To our dedicated ESGVJCC staff members, Kokoro no Sato teachers, and ClubGenki staff, thank you for everything you've done and will continue to do in 2025 to improve the lives of our children and seniors. I am incredibly proud of the reputation and legacy you've helped establish for the ESGVJCC.



*We are preparing for our 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration in 2026—a major milestone for the Center.*



*This achievement not only reflects our history, but also our commitment to a clear and sustainable vision that will ensure the next 75 years.*

Looking ahead to 2025, our vision is to fill our Kokoro no Sato Child Care Center and ClubGenki Senior Adult Day Program to full capacity, ensuring that all families who need these vital services are supported. Once we achieve this goal, our next focus will be to expand beyond our current walls to increase the capacity of our programs.

I'm also excited to announce the construction of a permanent patio in the area where we currently store our BBQ equipment. This new space will include shading options for sunny days, fans and lighting, and picnic-style tables where members can relax, enjoy meals, or socialize while waiting for kids to finish their activities in the gym or participate in events like Sabers, judo, and karate.

In addition, we are preparing for our 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration in 2026—a major milestone for the Center. This achievement not only reflects our history, but also our commitment to a clear and sustainable vision that will ensure the next 75 years. Stay tuned for more details and updates on our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations in the coming months.

As I begin my 7<sup>th</sup> term as President, I continue to be deeply inspired by the commitment and dedication shown by our members and volunteers. Your passion for the ESGVJCC and its programs is truly remarkable, and I am grateful for your support throughout the year.

Thank you and Happy New Year!

Sincerely,

Tim T. Itatani

President, ESGVJCC Board of Directors

## ESGVJCC EVENTS

## 2025 CALENDAR

Submitted by Mary Nagakawa, Marketing Coordinator

Mark your calendars with these important dates and stay up-to-date with everything happening throughout the year!

You can always find our full event calendar on Page 4 of the Newsette or online at [esgvjcc.org/calendar-of-events](http://esgvjcc.org/calendar-of-events).

## EVENTS IN 2025

**FEB 8** | INSTALLATION BANQUET



**MAY 18** | SCHOLARSHIP LUNCHEON



**MAR 15** | CAREGIVER CONFERENCE



**MAY 31** | HEALTH FAIR



**APR 6** | SPRING CLEAN-UP



**JUN 28** | WCBT OBON



**APR 26** | CHERRY BLOSSOM FEST

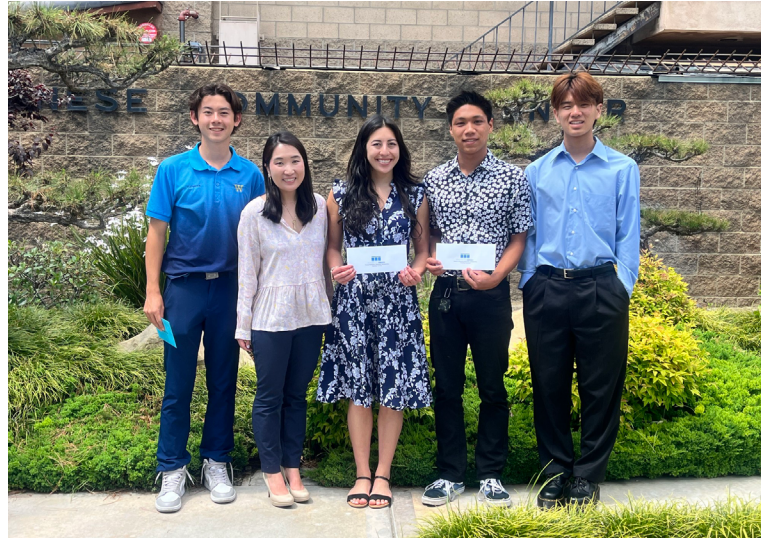


**SEP 14** | KEIRO NO HI



## ESGVJCC YOUTH PROGRAMS

## 2025 NIKKEI YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM



Submitted by Melissa Kozono, Program Director of Youth Services

Attention all ESGVJCC high school seniors and college undergrad or graduate students! Before school gets any busier, take some time to check out the Nikkei Youth Scholarship Program! You can apply for up to 3 scholarships and there are scholarships ranging from \$500 to \$2,000! Check out all the available scholarships below and visit [esgvjcc.org/youth-programs](http://esgvjcc.org/youth-programs) to access the Google Form applications and view all the requirements!

We will also be having 2 virtual workshops where we will go over the application process with you and answer any questions you may have. The workshops will take place on Wednesday, February 5 at 7:30pm and Wednesday, March 19 at 7:30pm via Zoom.

Also this year, we will be offering an Early Review Period. All applications submitted by March 31 will be reviewed and given feedback and allowed to re-submit any changes/missing documents. Any applications received after March 31 will not be reviewed until after the deadline.

**High School Scholarships**

- JACL-San Gabriel Valley Chapter - \$1,000
- Reiko & Edward Moreno Memorial Scholarship - \$1,000
- Harold & Elizabeth Itatani Family Scholarship - \$2,000
- ESGVJCC Board of Directors Scholarship - \$1,000
- Sabers/Saberettes Michael T. Miyamoto Memorial Scholarship - one \$1,000 and one \$500
- Myose/Nakatani Memorial Scholarship - \$2,000

**College Scholarships**

- Jon Shirota Memorial Scholarship - \$1,500
- Kusuda Memorial Scholarship - \$1,000
- Myose/Nakatani Memorial Scholarship - \$2,000

Applications are due on Monday, April 14 and winners will be notified in early May. Winners will then be awarded at the Scholarship Luncheon on Sunday, May 18 at 1pm at the ESGVJCC.

If you have any questions regarding any of the scholarships, application process, or workshops, please email Executive Director, Pearl Omiya at [pomiya@esgvjcc.org](mailto:pomiya@esgvjcc.org). ■

For detailed event information and sponsorship and vendor opportunities, visit our Calendar of Events webpage. ■

# 2025 EVENTS

## FEBRUARY 8

### INSTALLATION BANQUET

Celebrate all of our accomplishments of 2024 and as we install the 2025 Board of Directors.

## APRIL 26

### CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

ESGVJCC showcases and promotes the Japanese culture with cultural performances.

## MAY 31

### HEALTH FAIR

A free, public health fair for the community—screenings, resource fair, and more.

## JUNE 28

### WCBT OBON

West Covina Buddhist Temple's annual festival honoring the spirits of our ancestors and loved ones.

## JULY 14-18

### MEMBER APPRECIATION WEEK

A week to recognize and celebrate ESGVJCC Members.

## SEPTEMBER 14

### KEIRO NO HI

A celebratory day for our seniors who continue to be the foundation of the ESGVJCC.

## OCTOBER 4

### AKIMATSURI FESTIVAL

ESGVJCC showcases its organizations with vivid exhibits, exciting performances, and delicious food!

## TBD

### AKIMATSURI GOLF TOURNAMENT

Fundraiser event: Golfers! Come support the ESGVJCC!

## OCTOBER 17

### TRUNK OR TREAT/BOOK FAIR

Family fun event with trick or treating, crafts, games, and food!

## NOVEMBER 9

### VETERANS DAY

A day where we honor and pay tribute to the veterans who protect our country and freedom.



# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EDISON SUPPORTS ESGVJCC

The ESGVJCC was awarded \$5,000 to distribute information to our membership on wildfire safety. Throughout the year, you will see SCE articles, social media posts, and various information distributed at events. ■



## STAY SAFE AROUND ELECTRICITY

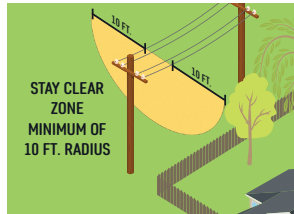


### DOWNED WIRES — STAY 100 FEET AWAY AND CALL 911:

Dangerous weather can cause power lines to fall. Water conducts electricity — do not touch or step in water near a downed wire and do not approach anyone in contact with it, the area might be electrified. **Call 911** and inform the operator it's an electrical emergency.



**TRIMMING TREES? CALL SCE FIRST:** SCE works to keep trees and vegetation away from electrical equipment to ensure safety. Never attempt to trim or remove trees near power lines and avoid hiring anyone to do the same. SCE's "make-safe" program partially removes trees so others can safely prune or remove them. Before trimming trees around power lines, call SCE at **1-800-611-1911** to learn the safest way to proceed.



**LOOK UP, LOOK OUT:** Always be aware of overhead power lines. Stay at least 10 feet away and never touch or approach them. Any contact with power lines can seriously hurt or even kill you. Whether you're skimming the pool, helping a child fly a kite or positioning a ladder against the house, keep everything and everybody far away from overhead lines. Call SCE at **1-800-611-1911** to verify voltages and determine required safety clearances.



**UNDERGROUND POWER LINES: Call 811 before digging!** If you are planting new vegetation such as trees or shrubs, or installing a new fence, always **call 811 before digging**. This free service will make sure underground utility lines will be marked and can be avoided for everyone's safety.



**METALLIC BALLOONS:** Big or small, metallic balloons should always be tied to a weight and never released outside. Metallic balloons can cause outages if they come into contact with overhead power lines. Do not attempt to retrieve any object tangled in overhead power lines — stay away and call SCE immediately at **1-800-611-1911**.

FOR MORE INFORMATION,  
PLEASE VISIT [SCE.COM/STAYSAFE](https://www.sce.com/staysafe)

Stay Connected With Us [f SCE](https://www.facebook.com/SCE) [@SCE](https://www.instagram.com/SCE) [@SCE](https://www.tiktok.com/@SCE)

## AUTOMATIC MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

If you would like to have your ESGVJCC Membership automatically renewed, please contact Pearl Omiya at [pomiya@esgvjcc.org](mailto:pomiya@esgvjcc.org) or visit [esgvjcc.org](https://www.esgvjcc.org) and fill out the Recurring Credit Card Payment Authorization form.

## ESGVJCC YOUTH PROGRAMS

# 2025 STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM

*Submitted by Melissa Kozono, Program Director of Youth Services*

Interested in traveling to Japan this summer? The ESGVJCC will be visiting our sister city of Ohtawara, Japan from June 22 -July 1! The Student Exchange Program was created to provide a cultural exchange for students in both Japan and the United States. Here are two reflections from past participants of the program and the impact that this experience has had for them!



### **Collin Fong, 2023 Student Exchange Program Participant**

I did something I had never done before. I went to Japan by myself and lived with strangers. Joining the exchange program was one of the best decisions I have ever made. When my mom first told me that I would be going to Japan and staying with a family that I did not know, I was pretty nervous. But when I arrived at the first meeting, I knew I didn't have to worry. Although I knew very minimal Japanese, that wasn't a problem because my host family knew a little English as well. Living with my host family in Ohtawara was awesome. We created a bond that we will remember forever. We still keep in touch by email or the LINE app. We're currently planning to go visit them later this year.

The city of Ohtawara did so much for the program and the students. From the gifts, to transportation, and translators, it gave us a trip that we will never forget. I even made bonds with the translators, and they were super nice and funny. My friend and I did everything with the translators, from going into a haunted house to entering a maze. It was really fun. I met so many great people while on the trip, and I was really happy to meet them.

One of the many activities I loved was visiting a junior high school. It's crazy to see the students still going to school in the summer. The students and teachers were really welcoming and generous. It was very interesting to see how Japanese school lunch was different from American school food. I loved how we got to play games, make matcha, and spend time with the students. My host family also sent me a picture of myself in the local city newspaper. Another activity that I enjoyed was indigo dyeing. It is where you tie rubber bands and marbles into a piece of cloth and then dunk it into indigo dye to make a design to hang.

My only complaint was that the trip was way too short. There's so much to do in the city of Ohtawara, and we only did half the things because we only had seven days. This trip has changed my perspective of school and not to complain because students in Japan only get a 2 week break from school in the summer and we get a 2 month break. Also, I have changed my goal after this trip to go back to Japan and visit Ohtawara. These seven days were one of the best seven days of my life, and I would definitely recommend it to anyone who is considering this program.

If you are interested in applying for the 2025 Student Exchange Program, please go to [esgvjcc.org](http://esgvjcc.org) or contact the ESGVJCC Office at (626) 960-2566. Informational meetings will be held on January 18 and February 22 at 1pm, and the application deadline is March 25. ■



### **Jesse Wong, 2023 Student Exchange Program Participant**

I have always been interested in traveling to Japan for as long as I can remember. I used to imagine all the different things I would do there and all the things I could learn about. On July 22, 2023 my dream of traveling to Japan had finally come true. I got the chance to participate in a student exchange program and stay there for 8 whole days! I was ecstatic when I first heard about the program and even more so when I had been accepted to go.

The days leading up to the trip were not the easiest, such as writing and saying our introductions in Japanese, illustrating a story, and narrating it in Japanese. However, it was all worth it and as the day of departure grew closer, I became more and more excited. After the long 12 hour flight, I finally arrived in Japan with my group. It was nerve-wracking to say the least, but I still looked forward to meeting my host family! I thought it was going to be a very awkward 8 days with them because I'm not the most social person, however, they were very warm and welcoming. I could tell that they wanted me to have a great experience. I felt bad because I didn't know how to speak much Japanese with them, and I appreciated the fact that they spoke English to me. As I spent more and more time with my host family, I grew closer with them. We played games, ate together, and they got to know more about me and American culture.

The weekdays traveling with the other kids were very fun as well. We visited many shrines, some museums, a school, and learned some history of Japan and its culture. My favorite place was definitely Edo Land because I was able to get souvenirs for my host family and my friends back home. At the farewell party, it was a fun but sad evening. It felt like the days had gone by too fast and I didn't want to leave yet. The mayor of Ohtawara and the city hall workers were so kind and made sure we had a fun trip. I'm so glad we threw that amazing farewell party for them. The day we said our goodbyes to our host families was more heartfelt than I anticipated. I didn't think it would be so sentimental and I really want to travel back to Ohtawara just to see them again.

Overall, this experience was unforgettable, and I am certain that this was the best trip I have ever been on. I'm so grateful for having this once in a lifetime opportunity and I look forward to hosting next year! I hope to give them a wonderful experience in America as my host family did with me.

ESGVJCC

# HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM THE ESGVJCC STAFF!

Submitted by ESGVJCC Staff



## Pearl Omiya

Executive Director

Akemashite omedeto gozaimasu. Kotoshi mo yoroshiku onegaishimasu. Happy New Year everyone! I can't believe it's 2025 already! As I enter my 20th year here at the ESGVJCC, I look forward to both the new opportunities and the challenges that this year may bring. I am so grateful that I can continue to grow and learn in this position and I thank everyone for their continued support for not only me, but also for our fantastic staff and our committed Board of Directors.

During our holiday break, our family spent the time at home settling in after a four month renovation. Daisuke, who is a 13 year old teenager now, is going to soon finish up middle school and enter high school next year. Daisuke is active in his middle school having the opportunity to perform at city events and even Disneyland next year. Taiki, who is now 11 years old, joined his first ever overnight swim camp at USC this past summer as well as the overnight science school in Wrightwood. He also graduated elementary school and is now a middle school-er. All three of our kids are still participating in club swimming at Brea Aquatics. It's a big time commitment but we love to see how much they improve at each monthly swim meet. Taiki aged up to an older division and is challenging himself to reach the new time standards so he can continue to enter the competitive elite meets throughout Southern California. Ayumi, who is 8 years old now, has been leaning into basketball joining a local league in West Covina to get more practice and game time. The kids remain active at the ESGVJCC, of course, Ayumi is still in Japanese classical dance with Taiki. Daisuke has been in karate now since May of 2021 and has risen to the rank of blue belt. All three of them are in Sabers basketball and still really love playing the game with their teams.

Having my children involved in so many programs at the Center has really given them not only a greater appreciation of their Japanese culture, but also a deeper sense of community.

I hope this runs true with all of the children who enter through our gates.

Our goal in 2025 is to continue to provide more opportunities for youth to develop their skills and learn about Japanese culture. We hope we can offer more traditional Japanese arts classes while also providing more recreational classes so everyone can stay healthy. Wishing all of you the very best in 2025!! ■

## Tina Asano

Executive Assistant

Each year at the ESGVJCC brings both excitement and challenges, and this year is no different. When I first started working at the Center 13 years ago, the environment was relaxed, but as the ESGVJCC grew—especially with the opening of Kokoro no Sato Infant Care—the pace began to accelerate. Today, in addition to child care, we have ClubGenkki for seniors, where I enjoy engaging in conversations about their rich histories. It's truly fulfilling to see the Center continue to grow, welcoming new members and gaining momentum along the way. I am deeply grateful for the friendships I've formed, the programs that consistently support the ESGVJCC, and the wonderful members whose commitment and dedication make all of this possible. A heartfelt thank you to our ESGVJCC team for your relentless pursuit of excellence. Wishing everyone a very Happy New Year! ■

## Melissa Kozono

Program Director of Youth Services

あけましておめでとうございます。 Akemashite Omedetou Gozaimasu! Happy New Year everyone! I hope you all had a wonderful holiday season! 2024 was definitely a busy year with a lot of traveling and special moments for me personally. I finally got to take my husband to Japan for his first time after our initial trip in 2020 was canceled. This trip was also made special because it was also with my childhood best friend and her husband, and we got to explore Japan together! I also got to celebrate another close friend's wedding in Hawaii right before our busy summer youth programming. 2024 was also a year of preparation and changes. We moved to a new place in anticipation of starting our family and have spent this holiday break preparing for the arrival of our first child in the beginning of 2025. I know 2025 will bring so many new experiences and challenges as I navigate becoming a first time parent and continue to work for this community that I love so much. I'm so excited to be able to provide wonderful opportunities for my daughter and the younger generations to learn and experience the Japanese culture and heritage and be a part of our community. Wishing everyone in our ESGVJCC Family a safe, healthy, and happy new year! ことしもよろしくおねがいします。 Kotoshi mo yoroshiku onegaishimasu! ■

## Tony Tang

Program Director of Senior Services

This year has been a year of growth, especially stepping into a Director role. I am grateful to be in this position to continuously impact the community in the most positive way possible and this year has been quite fulfilling for me. I hope you all have a fantastic holiday season and a happy New Year! ■

## Mary Nagakawa

Marketing Coordinator

Happy 2025, everyone! I hope you all had the chance to spend meaningful time with loved ones, catch up on rest, and just enjoy the holiday season. As my parents grow older, I'm truly cherishing every moment I have with them—and with our crazy orange cat, Giallo, who was actually found at the ESGVJCC in 2023! I never thought I'd be a cat person, but G has really melted all of our hearts and made himself comfortable at home. To celebrate the new year, I made a quick trip up to San Francisco to visit my cousin and friends, which was a refreshing change of scenery. As we step into this new year, I hope that we'll all continue to show up for one another and take care of each other because community is everything! I hope 2025 brings us all an abundance of love, gentleness, and the positive change we long to see in the world. ■

## Dai Davila

Events Coordinator

Happy New Year, ESGVJCC family! I hope the start of 2025 finds you all healthy, happy, and excited for what's to come. I just returned from a trip to Japan, where I had the joy of spending the holiday with my mother and family. It was a wonderful time to reconnect, recharge, and embrace the traditions that mean so much to me. Coming back, I feel refreshed and even more inspired to bring that spirit of togetherness to our community here. This year, we have so many exciting events and programs lined up, each designed to bring us closer together and celebrate the vibrant culture we share. Our events are getting bigger and better, with new activities and opportunities for everyone to get involved. Whether it's cultural celebrations, workshops, or community gatherings, there's something for everyone to enjoy. I truly hope you'll join us—whether it's to volunteer, participate, or simply enjoy the festivities with family and friends. Thank you for being such an important part of ESGVJCC. I can't wait to see what this year brings for us all. Here's to a year filled with joy, connection, and shared traditions! ■

## Scott Kawachi

Office Manager

あけましておめでとうございます! Happy New Year! I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season! Since joining ESGVJCC in mid-October, it has been such a rewarding experience, and I already feel like part of the ESGVJCC Ohana, Kazoku or Family. I want to sincerely thank each and every one of you for the warm welcomes and kindness you've shown me these past few months. Looking ahead to 2025, I'm excited for the continued growth of our community, and I can't wait to see what the future holds! Wishing you all a prosperous and fulfilling New Year! ■

## ESGVJCC

# CELEBRATING OSHOGATSU AROUND THE ESGVJCC

Submitted by Mary Nagakawa, Marketing Coordinator

On December 29, the ESGVJCC participated in the OCO annual Mochitsuki Taikai, where we joined our fellow Japanese American organizations to pound mochi and usher in good luck for the new year. Thank you to everyone who braved the early morning hours and chilly weather to help with the mochi display contest!



After our holiday break, we dove right into two days of Winter Camp Chibikko, where campers had the opportunity to learn about Japanese New Year traditions and celebrate the Year of the Snake through engaging workshops, hands-on activities, and delicious food. Our ClubGenki seniors also embraced the holiday spirit by crafting their own kadomatsu and ema. They even tried their luck by drawing omikuji to see what fortunes the New Year had in store!



Here's to a year filled with health, good fortune, and many wonderful memories at the ESGVJCC in 2025! ■

# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

## Kokoro Summer Fun Club



### Annual | ESGVJCC

Introducing the Summer Fun Club! This daycare program is geared towards elementary students in K-5th Grade and will take place in June, July, and August. There will be outdoor play, arts and crafts, music, Japanese lessons, games, fun! Register with Executive Director Pearl Omiya at [pomiya@esgvjcc.org](mailto:pomiya@esgvjcc.org).

## Samurai Film Screenings



### Monthly | Sugimoto Family Social Hall

Join us as we explore the world of samurai in ancient Japan with our awesome film host and curator Bob Leong. Screenings are held every last Sunday of the month at 1pm in person and virtually through Zoom. RSVP with our Office Manager Scott at [skawachi@esgvjcc.org](mailto:skawachi@esgvjcc.org).

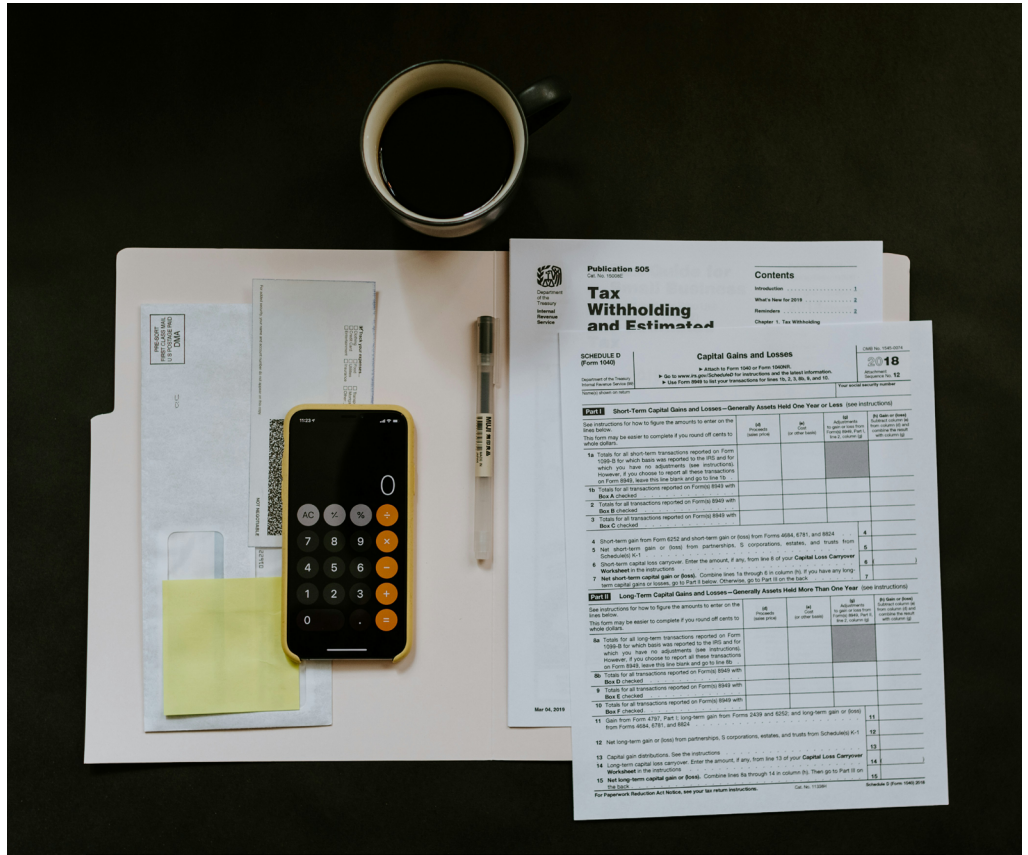
## West Covina Buddhist Temple



### Weekly | Sugimoto Family Social Hall

Interested in learning about Buddhism? WCBT offers Sunday services, Shōtsuki services, and Howakai services on Thursdays at the ESGVJCC. If you have any question or would like to visit our temple, please contact [wcbt.livingdharma@gmail.com](mailto:wcbt.livingdharma@gmail.com).

# KONDO WEALTH ADVISORS IRS ANNOUNCES 2025 CAPITAL GAINS THRESHOLDS



Submitted by Akemi Dalvi, CPA/PFS, CFP

The IRS recently announced the new income thresholds, tax rates, and inflation adjustments applicable to long-term capital gains for the new year. These changes will be effective in 2025, which means they will affect the tax return you file in early 2026.

When you sell investments in a non-retirement account for a profit, you often have to pay capital gains taxes on the difference between the purchase price and the appreciated value. Federal long-term capital gains tax rates have remained unchanged at 0%, 15% and 20%, based on your taxable income. However, the applicable income tied to those tax tiers has increased by about 2.8% across all tax brackets compared to 2024. In other words, you could end up paying less capital gains taxes in 2025 if you were at the top or bottom of a tax tier.

For example, let's look at a married couple filing jointly who might have been in the top 20% capital gains rate under the 2024 tax rule. Under the new capital gains tax rate income thresholds, they might have an additional \$16,300 of capital gains appreciation that can now qualify to be taxed at the lower 15% tax bracket in 2025.

The adjustment also benefits tax filers on the lower end of the tax brackets. A married couple filing jointly can now realize up to \$2,650 more in capital gains at the 0% rate in 2025 when compared to 2024. Therefore, if your annual income varies, you might want to consider realizing long-term capital gains in a year that your taxable income is in the 0% threshold.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, consistent with prior years, donating appreciated assets such as stocks to a qualified non-profit organization may also qualify for zero-tax treatment. The capital gains income thresholds accompany several other annual inflation adjusted updates for the 2025 year, including the federal income tax brackets, and the standard deduction amount. Before selling or donating any appreciated investments, consult your CPA first to ensure you are considering all taxable sources of income appropriately.

*The opinions expressed above are solely those of Kondo Wealth Advisors, Inc., (626-449-7783 [info@kondowealthadvisors.com](mailto:info@kondowealthadvisors.com)) a Registered Investment Advisor in the state of California. Neither Kondo Wealth Advisors, Inc. nor its representatives provide legal, tax or accounting advice.*

Sources:  
<sup>1</sup> <https://www.kiplinger.com/taxes/new-irs-long-term-capital-gains-tax-thresholds>

# BUNKA ISAN

Submitted by Robert Fumio Leong, Host of the ESGVJCC Samurai Film Series



## Hebi-doshi The Year of the Snake

In the third to fourth century, the Japanese adopted the Chinese Zodiac System which represented different 12-year cycles. Originally, the system was a set of characters standing for twelve numbers but eventually the numbers evolved into a set of animals. The Japanese system animals, referred to as “eto” are rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog, and wild boar. In the Chinese System, there is a pig instead of a boar. The system is also referred to as “juunishi” (the twelve branches or signs).

Each 12-year animal cycle is also associated with Phases or Steps of the Five Elements—Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water. The complete celestial cycle of Phases and Years is 60 years. A 60th year birthday, the “Kanreki”, is an important point in a person’s life, because five cycles of the juunishi have been completed and the person is considered “reborn”. Traditionally, the person celebrating Kanreki dresses as an “aka-chan” the little red-one; the red clothing stands for the return to childhood and a fresh start. While thorough cleaning of the house is indispensable for properly and respectfully welcoming Toshigami and receiving his gift of happiness and good fortune, you must also remember the warning from the old proverb: “Ganjitsu no asa wa shitsunai wo hakanu mono.” It means, “On New Year’s morning, one should not clean indoors.” This comes from the old belief that cleaning on New Year’s Day “sweeps” away Good Fortune.

### 干支 (eto) / Japanese zodiac signs

					
子 ne	丑 ushi	虎 tora	卯 u	辰 tatsu	巳 mi
					
午 uma	未 hitsuji	申 saru	酉 tori	戌 inu	亥 i

*The Snake Year Eto Kanji is called “mi” but “hebi” is used even though it refers to all snakes.*

Now we are in the Wood Element phase, and 2025 is the Year of the Wood Snake. The New Year based on the western calendar was adopted in Japan in 1873; before that the ancient Chinese Lunar Year calendar had been used in which the new year starts on January 29, 2025.

According to Chinese and Japanese Zodiacal Astrology, a person born in the Year of the Snake has wisdom and logic; such a person may have inspired the old saying, Yabu-hebi, which is short for, Yabu o tsusuite hebi o dasu, which means “Poking a bush and forcing out a snake.” In other words, “let well enough alone or you may stir up a hornet’s nest.”

Until the next time. ■

## DONATIONS OPERATING FUND

Denise Akune	\$100	Robert & Nancy Leong	\$500
Anonymous	\$100	Aileen Maruki	\$100
Anonymous	\$5,000	Noriko Milman	\$50
Susan Arii	\$600	Ken Mitsunaga	\$200
Tina Asano	\$50	Jaclyn Miyamoto	\$300
Minerva Avila & James Toma	\$1,000	Allan & Barbara Mizuhara	\$25
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Tim & Sandy Itatani	\$100	Barbara Shiota	\$300
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Janet Kanemoto	\$200	Curt & Rebecca Tsujimoto	\$100
Leroy & Joyce Kawai	\$1,000	Hiroko Uesugi	\$100
Elaine Kimura	\$500	Thomas Umemoto	\$1,000
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Mickey Komai	\$200	Kathy & Gary Warth	\$1,000
Ralph Komai	\$500	Kazumi Williams	\$100
Daniel & Akiko Kubo	\$50	Jane Yamamoto	\$100
June Kuramoto	\$500	David Yamashita - Credit Union of Southern California	\$2,000
The Kuruma Family	\$2,000	Harry & Donna Yamashita	\$500
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Jennifer Lee & Danny Woo	\$100	Kazuo & Kary Yoshimizu	\$150
		Kathryn Yoshiwa	\$100

THANK YOU to everyone to contributed to our End of the Year donation campaign in December. With your help, we were able to surpass our goal and raised over \$25,000!

Your generous donations are crucial to keeping the ESGVJCC operational and will continue to help us keep membership and rental/usage fees affordable for everyone. ■

## 2025 KIBOU LEGACY CIRCLE



**Tim & Sandy Itatani**

**Mae & Ken Kimura**

**Glenn & Jean Nakatani**

**Grace Richardson**

**Barbara Shiota**

**George Sugimoto**

**In Memory of Nobue Puchalski**

In Japanese, the word Kibou means Hope. If one man and his hopes for the community to build what the ESGVJCC is today, imagine what we as a community could do for future generations. The Kibou Legacy Circle includes donors who give \$5,000 or more annually. These donors give back to help ensure that the Japanese American culture and traditions continue through the various ESGVJCC programs and classes offered here.

For more information on the Kibou Legacy Circle, contact Pearl Omiya at (626) 960-2566 or [pomiya@esgvjcc.org](mailto:pomiya@esgvjcc.org). ■



## Caregiver Conference

**SAN GABRIEL VALLEY**

Join us for a dynamic Caregiver Conference  
focused on *Building a Strong Care Foundation*  
through advance planning!

**Saturday, March 15, 2025**

**East San Gabriel Valley  
Japanese Community Center**

**10:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.**

Registration Opens: Monday, January 6, 2025

For more information, visit [keiro.org/CC25](http://keiro.org/CC25)

**Caregiver Conference South Bay - Coming Fall 2025**

Keiro. 

## 2025 INSTALLATION BANQUET

MEAL PREPARED BY CHEF RYO SATO

**SAT, FEB 8**  
6PM-8PM

**\$45 PER SEAT**  
OR \$350 FOR TABLE OF 8

**ESGVJCC GYMNASIUM**  
1203 W PUENTE AVE  
WEST COVINA, CA 91790

RSVP WITH EVENTS COORDINATOR, DAI DAVILA  
AT [DDAVILA@ESGVJCC.ORG](mailto:DDAVILA@ESGVJCC.ORG) OR (626) 960-2566.



## CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

APRIL 26, 2025  
2-7PM

FOOD | VENDORS | PERFORMANCES

**A CELEBRATION OF SPRING & JAPANESE  
CULTURE AT PLAZA WEST COVINA**

112 PLAZA DR  
WEST COVINA

FOR MORE INFO OR QUESTIONS, CONTACT EVENTS COORDINATOR  
DAI DAVILA AT [DDAVILA@ESGVJCC.ORG](mailto:DDAVILA@ESGVJCC.ORG) OR (626) 960-2566.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY: **ESGVJCC**



PLAZA  
WEST COVINA



EAST SAN GABRIEL VALLEY  
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## BRIDGING CULTURE, FAMILY, & COMMUNITY

# ESGVJCC

**Mission Statement** | The East San Gabriel Valley Japanese Community Center is a not for profit organization dedicated to foster and preserve the cultural heritage unique to Japanese American ancestry; and to serve the community through social services, artistic, recreational, and educational programs.

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