The 2013 Cherry Blossom Festival has successfully come to an end. I would like to first thank all of you for participating in this year’s festival amid the echoes of the many diverse Centennial events of last year.

As you know, the JCAW and the JCAW Foundation, with your assistance, have advanced five Cherry Blossom Centennial Commemoration Projects. Some of these projects will not be completed in just one year and will need to be carried out over the medium and long term. Below we will report on the current status of each of the projects.

Cherry blossoms are a symbol of the friendship between the U.S. and Japan. Last year’s Centennial was one milestone, and now this year begins anew another 100 years of U.S.-Japan relations. With your continued assistance, we will seek to achieve the flowering of many more cherry blossoms. The lyrics of the children’s song, “Old Man Bloom,” include the following: “In the field out back, Pochi the dog barks. The honest old man digs, and out flow the gold coins.” I ask for your continued support and cooperation so that the JCAW can achieve a flow of treasure in U.S.-Japan relations as the JCAW takes on the role of Old Man Bloom.

Takashi Ohde
JCAW Foundation President
Reports on Individual Projects

- **Japanese Language Education Support (Status: In Progress)**
  

  The education of Japanese-speaking Americans is an extremely important issue for nurturing the next generation of individuals who will take on the responsibility for U.S.-Japan relations and strengthening the foundation of the US-Japan partnership. With this in mind, we decided to establish multiple projects that together form a single sequence. By supporting Japanese education in the U.S. in various ways, we seek to have young Americans learn about Japan and its culture, foster interest in Japanese language study, and ultimately provide them with opportunities to consider careers that utilize their Japanese language skills. We will now report on the current status of each of the four projects.

  (1) **Sakura Grant**

  The purpose of the Sakura Grant Program is to support Japanese language and Japanese cultural education in public, private, charter, and magnet schools at the K-12 level in the Washington, DC area (Washington, DC, Maryland, Virginia, and Delaware) and in the New York area (New York, Connecticut, and New Jersey). The grants were awarded last October to 31 schools.

  As a part of this project, the JCAW Foundation is visiting the schools to which the grants have been awarded. The purpose of these visits is to enable the members of the Foundation to speak with school officials and Japanese language teachers to learn how the grants will be put to use, and to discuss how to improve their systems. In this newsletter, we have outlined the current status of the grant usage for the Washington Japanese Heritage Center and Eleanor Roosevelt High School.

  (a) **Washington Japanese Heritage Center (Bethesda, Maryland)**

  - The Washington Japanese Heritage Center was created in response to the needs of parents who have no immediate plans to return to Japan but still wish to have their children learn the Japanese language and culture. Classes are conducted in Japanese every Saturday. There are eight classes divided
according to the level of student proficiency, and currently approximately ninety students attend these classes.

- Five iPads were purchased for the classes with Sakura Grant funds. With applications for studying kanji installed, the iPads are lent to students of the “Challenge Class” to study at home with the requirement that they take the Kanji Aptitude Test in June. In this application, images appear on the screen and are meant to encourage image association with each kanji character. Students enjoy this game-like approach.

- We felt that the Sakura Grant funds are being used very effectively at this Center. School officials were very appreciative, saying that “Thanks to the grant, we were able to utilize a new kind of studying.” Their future issues are increasing the number of iPads available to the students, and finding better educational materials for 3rd and 4th graders.


(b) Eleanor Roosevelt High School (Greenbelt, Maryland)

- Eleanor Roosevelt High School in Maryland has been a sister school through the sister prefecture program of Yokohama Suiran High School in Kanagawa since 1982. The Sakura Grant has been used to further the annual high school student exchange program. Every year, 20 to 30 students and teachers visit each other’s school and spend about a week
taking classes, engaging in outdoor activities, and participating in a homestay program.

- The JCAW Foundation was invited to attend the exchange program welcome ceremony at the high school in March 2013. About 300 students gathered in the auditorium, with students from both schools performing plays, dance numbers, and music. According to the principal and a foreign language teacher, Japanese language is very popular among the foreign language curricula available at Eleanor Roosevelt High.

- Japanese language education in the U.S. will likely have to compete with other languages. Thus, this kind of “live exchange” between high school students during their formative years will have a significant impact. We believe the use of the Sakura Grant to support this exchange will be very effective in advancing Japanese language education in the U.S.

We plan to continue the Sakura Grant application process for five years through 2016, and we are preparing to accept applications for this year’s grants. We have received much gratitude from officials and teachers from schools that were awarded grants last year, and we intend to award grants on the same scale this year as well. In future newsletters, we would like to include feedback from school personnel of grant awardees, as well as the names of schools who win the grant this year and their intended uses.

(2) Japan-America Society’s “Sakura Matsuri” Language Tent

The Japan-America Society of Washington, DC (JASW) set up a “Let’s Learn Japanese – Nihongo Dekimasu!” tent as part of the Cherry Blossom (Sakura) Street Festival on April 13th. This was the second consecutive year that we participated. In the tent, volunteers wearing t-shirts reading “Nihongo Dekimasu (I Can Speak Japanese)” taught visitors about hiragana, katakana, kanji, calligraphy and Japanese games, enabling them to experience first-hand the fascinating aspects of the Japanese language.

Again this year, volunteers energetically engaged visitors, and the tent was packed all day long. With the lovely weather, the festival itself was extremely crowded, but the Language Tent especially stood out as an attraction dedicated to Japanese language education, and was attended by nearly 1,500 people. In addition, there was a long line at the lottery draw for free JASW Japanese classes with 370 people participating in the drawing.
The Language tent seems to have become a distinctive part of the Sakura Matsuri Street Festival. We plan to continue the Language Tent at next year’s festival and beyond, enabling more people to deepen their interest in and understanding of the Japanese language.

(3) Japanese Language Education Symposium, Seminar

On April 7th of last year, with the goal of promoting networking and information exchange between Japanese language students, Japanese language teachers, and Japanese corporations, we hosted the “Global Opportunities through Japanese Language” symposium. Participants expressed appreciation and asked that the seminar continue to be held regularly. Currently, we are exploring further ideas on what types of events would best promote continued information exchange between these participants.
Tidal Basin Landscape Enhancement (Status: In Progress)

http://www.jcawf.org/japanese/program/cherry_blossom_centennial/landscape_enhancing/

At the Tidal Basin, where beautiful cherry blossoms bloom every year, some of the original cherry blossom trees gifted by Japan in 1912 can still be seen. The JCAW Foundation has provided financial support for the Tidal Basin Landscape Enhancement Project, initiated by the Government of Japan and the Japanese Embassy, and managed by the National Park Service and the Trust for the National Mall (TFNM). As of April of this year, the basic design and procurement of some of the building materials have been completed, and now all that is left is to wait for the construction to begin.

On April 7th, as one of the main events of the National Cherry Blossom Festival, the Japanese Lantern Lighting Ceremony, sponsored by the National Conference of State Societies, was held. Japanese Ambassador Kenichiro Sasae, National Park Service Superintendent Robert Vogel, TFNM President Caroline Cunningham, and JCAW President, Tsunehiko Yanagihara were in attendance to perform the groundbreaking ceremony wishing for a successful project. The ceremony was harmonious, surrounded by the cherry blossom trees in full bloom as if they had been waiting for this day, and the smiles of the Cherry Blossom Princesses from the U.S. and Japan. During the ceremony, plans were unveiled to create a Japanese style landscape by the Tidal Basin which will include a walking path around the original cherry trees and stones around the lantern donated by Japan in 1954.

Construction for this Landscape Enhancement Project is scheduled to begin this summer. Next spring during the cherry blossom season, the newly designed Tidal Basin should captivate cherry blossom fans even more.

I would like to take this opportunity to once again express my gratitude to all of those who have helped advance this project.
Nationwide Cherry Blossom Tree Planting Project (Status: In Progress)

http://www.jcawf.org/japanese/program/cherry_blossom_centennial/tree_planting/

This project was begun with the purpose of broadening the Cherry Blossom Centennial events to other areas across the country beyond Washington, DC. In support of an initiative begun by the Japanese Embassy, and with the cooperation of U.S. tree-planting organizations, the Foundation has awarded grants for planting cherry trees to 15 cities (as of April of this year).
Four additional organizations also are under consideration (please see below). Cherry blossom trees have been planted in landmark areas (state capitols, city halls, main thoroughfares) proposed by each group in each city, as well as on university campuses and other educational facilities. Their numbers will continue to increase.

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<td>Metro Parks Tacoma</td>
<td>Dayton Foundation</td>
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<td>Japan-America Society of Greater Detroit and Windsor</td>
<td>Blackstone Valley Tourism Council</td>
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<td>Iowa Sister States</td>
<td>Lansing Regional Sister Cities Commission</td>
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<td>Blackstone Valley Tourism Council Inc.</td>
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<td>Japan America Society of Kentucky</td>
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<td>New Heritage Theatre Group</td>
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<td>University of Washington Foundation</td>
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<td>Olympia-Kato Sister City Association</td>
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<td>Seattle Cherry Blossom &amp; Japanese Cultural Committee</td>
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<td>Hawaii Japanese Center</td>
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<td>The University of West Florida</td>
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- **Cultural Exchange Project (Status: In Progress)**
  

  The National Cherry Blossom Festival, one of the largest events in the U.S. was once again held in Washington, DC (March 20 – April 14) this spring which was the 101st anniversary of the gift of the cherry blossom trees from Japan. During the festival, tea ceremony, flower arrangement, and other forms of traditional Japanese culture were introduced. Famous Japanese artists gave drum, jazz, classical, and rock performances. Japanese food booths were also set up. Over 1,000,000 festival attendees thus were able to experience various forms of Japanese culture. At the National Cherry Blossom Festival Parade which is one of the Festival’s main events, ladies selected as Cherry Blossom Princesses from across the U.S. and from neighboring countries appeared in kimonos, and the beauty of Japan was conveyed with traditional Japanese music playing in the background. These images were broadcast on television, resulting in effective promotion of Japanese culture. The Foundation donated to the National Cherry Blossom Foundation (NCBF) and the National Conference of State Societies (NCSS) in support of the National Cherry Blossom Festival.
US-Japan Intellectual Exchange Support (Status: Completed)

http://www.jcawf.org/japanese/program/cherry_blossom_centennial/intellectual_exchange/

With cooperation from the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation, and with the objective of establishing a future vision for U.S.-Japan relations, this project involved the creation of the “Mansfield Task Force for Shared Advancement and Prosperity” (“Task Force”) centered on a new generation of American experts on Japan from industry, government, and academia.

On June 6th of last year, the Task Force held an “Interim Presentation” on Capitol Hill giving an outline of its vision for U.S.-Japan relations. The Task Force’s vision was organized into a proposal entitled “Crafting a Contemporary U.S.-Japan Vision,” and last November the proposal was presented in both Japanese and English. The proposal discussed “taking advanced and strategic measures to make the economies of Japan and the U.S. stronger and more vibrant,” and each of the 7 members of the Task Force included his or her specific proposal.


From November 29th to December 5th of last year, the Task Force delegation (including former U.S. Ambassador to Japan, Thomas Schieffer) visited Sapporo, Sendai, Nagoya, Osaka, Kyoto, and Kumamoto to present this proposal. In each city, the Task Force held discussions with political and business leaders and with the media through open seminars at universities where they engaged in lively and constructive debates on the future of U.S.-Japan relations.

See the Mansfield Foundation Task Force Website:

At the end of last year, with the completion of the proposal and the presentations held in Washington, DC and around Japan, this project supporting the next generation of Japan research experts came to a successful conclusion.

Thanks to all of your efforts, the U.S.-Japan Intellectual Exchange Support portion of the Cherry Blossom Centennial Project has concluded. However, the “seeds” we have sown inspired by the “cherry blossoms” have begun to grow and steadily continue their development. The Foundation intends to continue to explore ways in which we can nurture them.