

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**Japanese Business Community in Washington DC and New York
Together with Embassy of Japan
Carry Out Activities to Commemorate 2012 Japan-U.S. Cherry Blossom Centennial**

Washington, DC [March 1, 2012] -- In celebration of the historical 100th anniversary of the gift of cherry trees from the City of Tokyo, Japan to Washington, DC, Japanese business community in Washington DC and New York together with the Embassy of Japan proudly present numerous programs and projects this spring. The **Cherry Blossom Centennial Commemoration Project** reinforces ties between the United States and Japan through nationwide cherry blossom tree plantings, Tidal Basin landscape enhancement, future vision for Japan-U.S. relations, Japanese language education, and more.

Attention focused on relief efforts when Japan was hit by the earthquake on March 11, 2011. While rebuilding efforts continue, the Cherry Blossom Centennial Commemoration Project comes from the consensus of Japanese Business Community in Washington DC and New York that the earthquake demonstrated the importance for even stronger long-term Japan-U.S. relations. The activities below form a key part of the Japan-U.S. Cherry Blossom Centennial, designated as an official anniversary event by the Government of Japan, and are supported by the Japan Business Federation (KEIDANREN). The theme is "All Japan for All America," and programs help express Japan's heartfelt appreciation for US support during its devastating hour.

***Cherry Blossom Centennial Commemoration Project** is co-organized by the Japan Commerce Association of Washington DC and the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry of New York with the support of Embassy of Japan. All the official programs of the **Cherry Blossom Centennial Commemoration Project** are Sponsored by JCAW Foundation, as well as JCC Fund.*

2012 Japan-U.S. Cherry Blossom Centennial - Overview of Commemoration Activities

1. Promotion of Intellectual Exchanges Between the U.S. and Japan

Support the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation in Washington, D.C. for its projects on furthering U.S.-Japan relations. The Foundation advocates for young U.S.-Japan experts in government, academia and industry. It strives to establish policies that foster mutually beneficial relationships from a business and economic perspective. Since last fall, a group has started research, workshops, and has visited Japan where they studied and held discussion with government, academia and industry. During a conference on June 6, 2012, they will propose and discuss their vision of US-Japan future relationship.

2. Support for Japanese Language Education in the U.S.

Teaching Americans the Japanese Language is one of the most important foundations of the US-Japan relationship. Programs that focus on the merit of learning the Japanese language and promote the next generation's interest in Japan include:

1. Japanese Language Symposium (April 7): Japanese companies seek personnel including students who have studied Japanese and are interested in Japanese industry.
2. Support for the Japan Bowl (April 12-13): provide support for the Japanese Language Quiz Contest organized by The Japan-America Society of Washington DC, building a group of people who have a strong interest in Japan.
3. Sakura (Cherry Blossom) Grant: provide grants in response to proposals (from teachers and educational institutions) that focus on improving Japanese language education for elementary, middle and high school students in the public, as well as private schools in New York and Washington, DC areas.
4. The Japanese Language Tent for the Sakura Matsuri (April 14): set up a tent where Americans who are interested in Japan and the Japanese language can meet.

3. Landscape Enhancement in Tidal Basin

Support the Government of Japan's initiative to enhance the landscape at the Tidal Basin for the next generation, such as building a Japanese-style path where the original cherry trees gifted by Japan in 1912 are located. The project will fund the preparation and construction of the path, placing several boulders around the 300 year-old Japanese stone lantern, a gift from Japan in 1954, to create a Japanese atmosphere. The project will be launched this spring is to be completed by spring 2013.

4. Nationwide Cherry Blossom Tree Planting Initiative

Support a nationwide cherry blossom tree planting project, initiated by the Embassy and Consulates-General of Japan, to commemorate the 100th year anniversary across the U.S.. The initiative, in partnership with the nonprofit forest conservation organization American Forests, is to plant young cherry trees in symbolic areas in more than 30 cities across the U.S. (possible locations: local government, city halls, main streets, parks and universities and so on). Trees will also be planted at schools as part of an educational program. Organizations such as local Japan-America Societies, Japan-related festival steering committees and park authorities are also planning planting ceremonies and cultural events.

5. Support cultural exchange programs

In the spring of 2012, various Japanese cultural events, performances and exhibitions will take place in Washington, DC and its surrounding areas to celebrate the U.S.-Japan Cherry Blossom Centennial. JCC Fund and JCAW Foundation will sponsor those cultural exchange programs

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