

Japan America Society of Minnesota



通 信

The Tsūshin is a membership publication of the Japan America Society of Minnesota

July 2017 VOL. 26, No. 7

Senri Oe Puts the Jazz in JASM !



Senri-san performing at Sundin Hall

On June 7th at Sundin Music Hall in Hamline University Senri Oe played several of his original compositions as well as several takes on age-old music to great success.

People began arriving to the event around 6:30pm, and joined their fellow concert-goers in conversation in anticipation of the event. The doors opened at 7:00 and the prime seats were rapidly filled up. Senri-san came onstage at 7:30 to great applause and began playing the solo piano versions of some of his songs from his most recent album, *Answer July*.

Senri-san, in addition to his musical performance, also presented himself to the audience as an actor, teacher, and even comedian. Senri-san played a variety of his personally composed songs, both from his most recent album and his previous albums. In-between songs, Senri-san told stories of his journey from being a popstar over in Japan to leaving everything and coming to the United States to study Jazz music. One particular highlight was when Senri-san started to compare the sounds of what could be called "pop piano" with "Jazz piano." This part of the performance was both humorous for all and nostalgic for many of the older members of the audience who were big fans of Senri-san during his career as a pop musician. **-Continued on Page 5**

Ambassador Kenichiro Sasae Invited to Speak at Special Banquet Dinner, September 14th



Ambassador Kenichiro Sasae

JASM is very pleased to announce that His Excellency Kenichiro Sasae, the Ambassador of Japan to the United States, will be the keynote speaker at a special banquet hosted by the Japan America Society of Minnesota to welcome him to Minneapolis.

Ambassador Sasae assumed his post in Washington, D.C. in 2012. Prior to his appointment as Ambassador to the U.S., Ambassador Sasae was the Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, the highest ranking civil servant in the Foreign Ministry of Japan. His distinguished career of more than 40 years with the Foreign Ministry began in 1974, and has included postings in Washington, D.C., London, and the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations and International Organizations in Geneva, Switzerland.

On September 14, Ambassador Sasae will also meet with the Honorable Walter Mondale, the 42nd Vice President of the United States and 24th United States Ambassador to Japan, and the Honorary Chairman of JASM. Later in the day, JASM will be hosting a banquet welcoming Ambassador Sasae on his first official visit to the state of Minnesota. This event will also celebrate the 45th anniversary of the founding of the Japan America Society of Minnesota. Tickets for this event will be available online soon. JASM urges its members to not miss this special opportunity to meet the highest ranking Japanese government official to the United States. Let us use this opportunity to show Ambassador Sasae that the state of Minnesota is welcoming and hospitable to the people of Japan. JASM believes that our members will be more than able to show Ambassador Sasae the meaning of "Minnesota nice."

Letter From the President



Mark Blehert
JASM President

Dear JASM Members and Friends,

I don't know about you, but I have been tapping my toes and humming a tune ever since attending JASM's Harukaze concert featuring J-Pop legend turned jazz pianist, Senri Oe. Oe San dazzled the audience with his superb musicianship and friendly banter between songs. Not only is Oe San an outstanding musician but also a really, really nice guy! After the concert, Oe San remained in the foyer to greet every attendee, pose for pictures and autograph copies of his latest CD, Answer July. This was Oe San's first trip to Minnesota, but hopefully not his last! Much thanks to Rio Saito and all the sponsors and volunteers who made another fantastic Harukaze concert a reality.

You will want to save the date for some amazing upcoming events, meant to provide an in depth update on the on current state of Japan and its key partnership with the USA. The first of these events is the NAJAS/KKC Business Speakers Series (Friday, July 21 starting at 11:30am). This program is brought to us by the National Association of Japan America Societies, of which JASM is a proud, longtime member and the Keizai Koho Center (KKC). The KKC is a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote communication between the Japanese business community and the societies in which they operate. This will be a lunchtime forum featuring two speakers with a wealth of practical knowledge about the Japan – America business relationship.

On September 14th, JASM is honored to be hosting a visit from the Japanese Ambassador to the USA, Kenichiro Sasae. Ambassador Sasae will be amongst the highest ranking Japanese government officials to *ever* visit Minnesota! The Emperor and Empress have not responded to our inquiries, but we will keep calling and knocking on the Palace door... Protectionism is on the rise in the USA while the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) has fallen. How will this affect our relationship with Japan and the future of the US role in the Asia-Pacific region? I cannot think of a better source to receive a briefing on these topics than the Japanese Ambassador to the USA! Ambassador Sasae will be the keynote speaker at a grassroots event open to anyone in the community who values the longstanding, mutually beneficial Japan - Minnesota relationship. We want to impress upon Ambassador Sasae the importance of Japan to the social and economic fabric of Minnesota.

Please visit www.mn-japan.org to make your reservations for these unique events. Of course the Como Park Lantern Lighting Festival is also right around the corner in August...

Finally, a heartfelt congratulation to Mr. Takuzo Ishida who has been awarded the 'Order of the Rising Sun - Gold Rays with Rosette' by the Government of Japan. We are all indebted to Ishida San for the services he provides to JASM and the community. A past JASM President, Ishida San continues to nurture the organization like one of his prized Bonsai. He is an inspiration to us all!

See you at an upcoming event!

Marc Blehert

SPNSCC Cherry Blossom Celebration

On June 3rd the Saint Paul-Nagasaki Sister City Committee (SPNSCC) hosted a Cherry Blossom Celebration marking the 5th anniversary of Japan's gift of trees to St. Paul. In 2012, Japan gifted 20 Cherry Trees to Como Park in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the original 3,000 trees given to Washington D.C., in 1912. St. Paul was one of 20 cities throughout the United States to receive trees and was chosen due to its strong



Sansei Yonsei Kai
Dancers (Cherry Trees
in Background)



Harisen Daiko

relations with Japan and St. Paul's status as a sister city to Nagasaki since 1955.

The event featured performances by the Sansei Yonsei Kai dancers, Harisen Daiko, and a traditional flute performance. The event also featured several speakers, including representatives from the Consulate, the city of St. Paul, and the Nagasaki-St. Paul Sister City Committee.

There were many different types of crafts and games including watercolor painting and fishing as well as snacks (a popular choice being a selection of flavored Pocky). The event was well-attended by Minnesota residents and represents a prime example of the kind of intercultural communication and exchange which JASM wishes to spread throughout Minnesota.

Membership News

Thanks to the following

Renewing JASM Member:

Chiemi & Micah Bly, Chris & Ben van Lierop,
Miyuki & Mitch Baron, Suzuko Erickson, Elfrieda Hintz, Steven Ray,
Kyoko Haines, Kay Thomas,
Deborah Hanson, Kazue Amey, Noriko Sugata,
Hiromi Mizuno, Helen Truax, Kaye Matsumoto,
Hisako Eppen, Richard Stahl, Tom & Jeanne Tamura,
Tony Taniguchi, Jack & Karen Sattel, Gloria Kumagai,
Naomi Fujioka, Eric Larsen, James & Eiko Hoffman,
Jonathan Wiese, Marc Blehert, Donald & Kyoko Klein,
Diane Carter, Mei Aoyama, Barbara Shields, Jay Ihlenfeld,
Linda van Dooijerweert, Sachiya & Hitomi Isomura,
Hiroshi & Eriko Nakato, Yoriko Price, Akiko & Scott Kilau, Hisako
Bickner, Todd Zaun, Joshua Blaeser,
Michael & Yoshie Babcock, Lisa Shakerin, Setsuko Dulski, Takehito &
Richiko Kamata, William Paterson, Charles Breer, Mark Schmitt, Yoko
Uchiya, Jonathan Dane, John Reinartz, Richard Telke, Elyssa Mason,
Mark Savin, Jennifer Erickson, Derek Lehmberg, Shirley Huskins, Shizu-
ko Koizumi, Daniel Rolf, Nobby & Megan Hashizume, Colin & Nell
Wirth, Keith Vargo, Michiko Burke, Dina Blumenfeld, Shuzo Murakami,
Masanao & Theresa Takahashi, Tamara Sprinkle, Sanae Tomita,
Matthew & Michelle Welch, Chieko Millard

Thanks to the following

New JASM Member:

Kenichi Tazawa, Patrick & Megan LaPoint, Joe Cassell,
Diane Dettmann, Eugene Gullingsrud, Ai Soundara

Thanks to the following

Renewing JASM Corporate Members:

Anime Twin Cities, Inc.
3M Company

NAJAS/KKC Business Speaker Series: Japan Still Matters.

On Friday, July 21st JASM, in partnership with the National Association of Japan America Societies and the Keizai Koho Center, will be hosting a Business Speaker Series titled "Japan Still Matters."

Recently the business and trade relations with Japan have become more uncertain, in part due to the failure of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), creating a need for new and revitalized trade relations with Japan. As both markets strive to compete on the global stage, it becomes imperative that we look into deepening the relations between our two countries and how it will come to affect future trade between Japan, America, and Eastern Asia in general. Towards this end, two speakers have been invited, one from Sumitomo Chemical Company, and the other from the Council on Foreign Relations.



Ray Nishimoto:

Representative Director and Senior Managing Executive Officer of Sumitomo Chemical Company, Limited since 2015, Mr. Nishimoto joined Sumitomo Chemical in 1980 and has more than 20 years of executive management experience and expertise in health and crop sciences. In 2012 Sumitomo Chemical bought, and now owns its 86.5%, Minnesota-based insect-control company MGK, which sells its products in more than 60 countries.



Sheila Smith:

As a Senior fellow for Japan Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, Sheila Smith is an expert on Japanese politics and foreign policy. She is the author of *Intimate Rivals: Japanese Domestic Politics and a Rising China* and *Japan's New Politics and the U.S.-Japan Alliance*. She has also been a visiting researcher at the University of Tokyo and the University of the Ryukyus. Currently Sheila Smith is researching the effects of geostrategic change in Asia on Japan's strategic choices.

Location:

Radisson Blu, Minneapolis

Bergen One Room

35 South Seventh Street, Minneapolis, MN 55402\

Registration: **11:30 am**

Program: **12:00 pm-1:30 pm**

Tickets:

JASM Member: **\$30.00**

Non-Member: **\$35.00**

Student: **\$15.00**



Partial funding is provided by the
Keizai Koho Center and the
National Association of the Japan
America Societies



*Please thank our members with
your support!*

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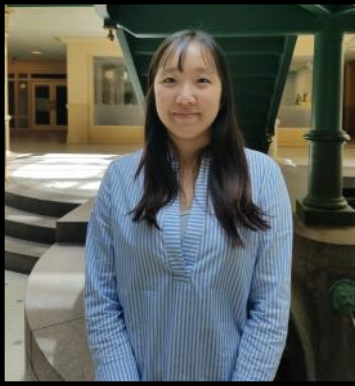
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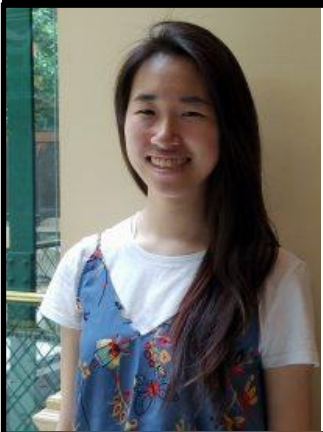
New JASM Intern: Eva Yau



Hello, my name is Eva Yau and I am currently majoring in Japanese and minoring in Urban Studies at the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities. The reason I chose Japanese as my major because I am highly interested in the Japanese culture and language. I

believe we can learn a thing or two from Japan and vice versa thus the "bridge" JASM serves as will definitely be of useful help. In my free time I enjoy watching Japanese dramas, listening to Japanese music, and occasionally read some Japanese novels and manga. I am extremely grateful for this opportunity to work as the new Membership Coordinator for JASM. I have received excellent training from the previous Membership Coordinator, Hafid, and I hope to continue his legacy. 頑張ります

New JASM Intern: Maaya Kanari



Hello, my name is Maaya Kanari and I am the Cultural Affairs Coordinator for JASM this summer. I came from Nara, Japan for a year-long study abroad program at the University of Minnesota to learn academics and cross-cultural communication. I joined JASM in this position in May, and my time here with the wonderful interns and

Ben-san has been challenging but valuable. I am excited to learn about different cultures and places that I did not experience when I was young. The first time I traveled on my own, I took a plane by myself was when I was 6 years old visiting my relatives in Yokohama. Coming to the United States has helped me find so many opportunities that I did not even imagine before, such as working with JASM to welcome Oe Senri-san, who is the artist my mother has liked for a long time. I hope to contribute to JASM by providing new thoughts and a Japanese perspective. I am looking forward to seeing you at upcoming JASM events!

Hisako "Betty" Wendt Obituary



Hisako Wendt

JASM, with great sadness, presents this article from the Star Tribune: "Wendt, Hisako "Betty" Age 91, passed away May 29, 2017. Born March 21, 1926 in Nagano, Japan. She worked 27 years as a floral designer and 20 years as a Japanese dance instructor.

She was a loving wife and adoring mother to her two boys. Preceded in death by her parents; and siblings, Kimuyo, Terushige, Satoru, Shizuko, Tomiko, and Giichi. She is survived by her loving husband, Loren; sons, Dennis, and Robert (Doreen); and great-grandchildren, Laresa, Azriel, Myjah, and Pella Avent." A celebration of life was held on Thursday, June 8th at Boutwell's Landing Auditorium.

Hisako-sensei was the master instructor of the Mikaharu Kai Dance Troupe, a local Minnesota artistic group in the Twin Cities for 20 years. Ms. Wendt taught classical as well as festival dance to a generation of Minnesotans fascinated by Japanese traditional dance.

Como Park Obon Festival Volunteers Needed

We are looking for volunteers for this year's Obon Festival and would greatly appreciate your help in making it a success! This is a great opportunity for people who are interested in Japanese culture, meeting new people, and being part of a fun event. Volunteers are also compensated with free admission to the festival.



Lantern at Como Park 2016

The Obon Festival will occur on August 20th from 3:00 P.M. to 8:30 P.M. at the Como Park Zoo and Conservatory.

If you are interested in volunteering, please be sure to check your email in the coming weeks for a message relating to Obon Festival Volunteering; this message will include a form which you **must** fill out if you wish to volunteer.

Please visit our website or email us at jasm.interns@gmail.com to learn more!

Corporate Spotlight: Metropolitan Airports Commission



Created in 1943 by Minnesota state law, the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) is a public corporation providing coordinated aviation services throughout the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The MAC operates one of the largest airport systems in the nation, which

includes Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport and six regional airports. Together these airports help drive the region's economy and job growth while providing quick, easy access to destinations around the globe.

Since its foundation in 1943, the MAC, with its vision of providing the best airport experience to their customers in order to fulfill their mission of connecting its customers to the world, has worked tirelessly to expand and build up its 7 airport system, making it possible for many millions of passengers to travel across the globe and connect with the people and countries of the world.

The MAC handles over \$300 billion annually and oversees a staff of over 580 employees. On the highest level of the organization, the MAC chairman and 14 commissioners meet monthly to discuss the interest of the state and national communities pertaining to air travel in the metropolitan area.

JASM is very pleased to welcome Brian J. Peters and the rest of the MAC as a Corporate Sustaining Member.

Harukaze- Continued from Page 1

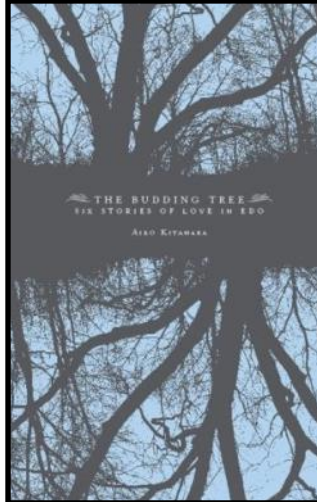


In a relatively last-minute setup, Senri san was joined onstage for a short cooperative

The Potash Twins Performing with Senri-san performance by the Potash Twins, jazz musicians of some renown who live in the Minneapolis area. The twins Adeev and Ezra, though not former pop-stars, have become successful jazz musicians in their own right, and provided their own unique style and flair to the performance that night.

After the impromptu jam-session, Senri-san finished up his set and then went to the foyer after the show to meet and greet the Harukaze attendees. The event was a great success and brought happiness and a good time to all who attended, with many positive reviews by attendees. JASM was honored to have Senri-san, an embodiment of a cultural bridge between Japan and America, and the Potash twins perform at Harukaze 2017.

Tom Haeg's Book Review:



The Budding Tree, Six Stories of Love in Edo; Aiko Kitahara, Dalkey Archive Press; Ian MacDonald translator; 170 pages.

"Even if you prune all the branches off a tree leaving just the trunk, new branches will start to bud..."

The Naoki-Prize winning author, Aiko Kitahara, brilliantly

recounts social, not political, events during the tumultuous end of the Edo Period (1600-1868) in a six-part, historical fiction focusing on the ordinary lives of six ordinary women in six seemingly unrelated stories. Or so it seems, ordinarily.

The link among the six protagonists is this: the struggle to survive with dignity without male companionship, husbands and fathers in a patriarchal society. They live independently, not by some artificially-imposed social or political agenda, but out of sheer necessity (see: *Unsinkable Molly Brown* for comparison). They use their wits and intuition to overcome life's struggles, mainly against ill-willed men, to find their esteemed place in society. Yet it would be unfair and somewhat myopic to facilely label this only as prototypal feminism. While there is some female companionship, it does not dominate. While filial piety is questioned, it is not rebuked. While some (okay, most) of the males are questionable, some (okay, a few) are not.

The Budding Tree's graceful writing style is intriguing and enjoyable. The dialogue is real (thank you Mr. MacDonald), the imagery is robust and the indefatigable attention to Edo period details is quite interesting. Kitahara doesn't force-feed the arbor metaphor, a challenged tree rising like a phoenix, but cleverly reserves reference to it until the last story. Very refreshing.

In addition to the Naoki Prize, Kitahara earned the Shincho Prize for New Writers in 1969 for *Mama wa shirannakatta yo* ("Mom Didn't Know"). And more. Many of her works have been adapted for Japanese television.

-Tom Haeg

Nihonjin Kai Yard Sale



Minnesota Japanese Nihonjin-kai was started in 2005 from voices of concern raised by Senior Japanese women in Minnesota's "End of their life environment". "We want our care to include Japanese language, food, and understanding of our feelings," we were told.

Several Japanese-American war-brides gathered at a restaurant. One said, "I applied for assistance, but was turned down because I have American citizenship. Someone asked Yoko to build a Japanese Senior Housing facility...that idea became the "Minnesota Nihonjin-kai. We do not live together, but we have meetings and enjoy being together". We operate with no funds and take on the challenge of providing a safe and comfortable place to meet. But How?! **Nihonjin-kai has No Membership Fee.** We created Funds by making handi-crafts to sell, for instance, Origami Greeting Cards, Personalized Book Mark, and collecting donations throughout the year to sell in our Yard Sale. We are doing great! Extra Money accumulated goes for the Afton River Cruise that will happen this year for 2 years in a row. Thank you Donors of Goods, Thank you 7:30AM – 9:00PM hard working Volunteers, Thank you all Minnesota Nihonjin-kai Families, Thank you for all shoppers and guests. We Love You All !!



Yoko Breckenridge
612-839-0008
Coldwell Banker Burnet



Join JASM's Online Fundraising Campaign!

The past 6 months have been a time of great change in America, making it even more clear that at this time in our nation, it is increasingly important to build international understanding and cross-cultural awareness. JASM is serving that role in Minnesota, and we want to provide events and activities that support the JASM mission. While membership dues are vital, additional donations are needed for JASM's growth and development.

You can help JASM meet its budget by contributing a donation during our mid-year fundraising drive. The money that you donate will be used to create and expand the many events which JASM puts on in order to build bridges and foster understanding and friendship between Japan and America, such as the Obon Festival, J-Quiz, and Shinnenkai.

Look for more information in the coming weeks leading up to the fundraising drive on July 17-21.

Email: jasm@us-japan.org or call: 612-627-9357

Bi-lingual Japanese English Secretary

sawai Join a growing generics pharmaceutical company!

UPSHER-SMITH

Partners in Health Since 1919

Upsher-Smith (www.upsher-smith.com) an almost 100 year old pharmaceutical company located in Maple Grove, MN, is hiring a bi-lingual Secretary (Administrative Assistant) to support the new owners and business leaders from Sawai (<https://www.sawai.co.jp/en/>) the largest pharmaceutical company in Japan.

The Secretary/Administrative Assistant will have skills and experience in the following:

- Fluent in Japanese and English both
- Have thorough knowledge in living in the United States, especially in Minneapolis
- Understand Japanese culture to some extent (so communication with Japanese people goes smoothly)
- A high competence at dealing with office work (meetings, travel, correspondence, etc)

Please contact:
angela.blomquist@upsher-smith.com

Volunteer Host Family Sought for Japanese Student



CCI Greenheart, a nonprofit agency, is searching for a volunteer host family for Maya, a young lady from Japan. Maya would be arriving August 12th and stays an academic school year (through early June)

while attending the local public high school where her host family resides. She is 16 years old, and would be placed in the 11th grade. Maya loves to go shopping, swimming, softball, basketball, badminton, dancing, cooking, outdoor activities, photography, and guitar. She speaks English, has medical insurance, and her own spending money. A volunteer host family provides a room (may be shared), meals, and a caring environment for their student. For more information about becoming a host family for Maya, please contact Mary Armstrong at:

952-657-3406,

**www.ccigreenheart.org, or
armstrong.mary@mac.com**

Japan America Society Calendar

July

17th: Volunteer Pre-Event Rendezvous
21st: NAJAS/KKC Business Speaker Series

August

20th: Como Park Japanese Obon Festival-2017

*If you would like to let JASM know about an upcoming event, email us at jasm.interns@gmail.com

Japanese Speaking Club

The Japanese Speaking Club is an informal meeting place for those wishing to practice Japanese. We encourage those just beginning the language as well as native speakers to gather at the **Espresso Royale Café** in Downtown Minneapolis to meet new people, discuss experiences in Japan, or simply to speak Japanese. Come when you can, leave when you must.

Date/Time: Every Saturday at 3:00 p.m.

Place: Espresso Royale Café
1229 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55403



For more information, visit www.meetup.com and search for the key words "Japanese speaking club"

月例日本人会のお知らせ

毎月日本語図書館で日本人会の昼食会 (Monthly Nihonjin-kai) を行っています。電話などでお誘い合わせの上、お友達やお知り合いとご一緒においで下さい。可能の方はどうぞ料理を1品ご持参願います。ミネソタ州在住の日本人達で良い事を考え、ご馳走と日本語で楽しい時間を待ちましょう。

日程：毎月第2月曜日正午より

場所：日本語図書館

(4231 Bloomington Ave S., Minneapolis, MN 55407)

また、毎週土曜日午後2時から、日本語図書館のお手伝いしてくださる方の集まりがあります。是非ご参加ください。この図書館には、漫画や宗教誌約25000冊や約2500本のビデオDVDがあり、希望者にはセルフサービスで日本人会と同じく無料で貸出しています。お問い合わせは下記までどうぞ。

Yoko Breckenridge

Cell phone: (612) 839-0008 E-mail: Yoko@yoko4home.com

Nihonjin-kai monthly meeting on 2nd Monday, at noon, at 4231 Bloomington Ave S Minneapolis, MN 55407

Become a JASM Member online!

Support our mission and become a member!

1. Go to mn-japan.org
2. Click on 'Membership' at the top
3. Select your membership type and read the benefits and instructions.

You can also become a member using your smart phone!

Japan America Society of Minnesota

- Membership Application ○ Change of Address
- Tax-deductible Donation

Name _____

Name (2nd adult of a household membership) _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

ZIP _____

E-mail _____

Phone _____

I would like to make an additional tax-deductible donation of _____

Amount Enclosed: _____

(Please make checks payable to JASM)

Individual Membership

Patron.....\$1,000+
Sustaining.....\$500+
Contributing.....\$100+
Individual\$30
Student/Senior\$20
Household\$50
(2 adults plus children under 18)

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Japan America Society of Minnesota



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www.mn-japan.org

通信

Tsūshin
July 2017

The Japan America Society of Minnesota is a non-profit, non-political association engaged in bringing the peoples of Japan and the United States closer together in mutual understanding, respect, and cooperation. Through programs and interchange, it endeavors to promote an appreciation of cultural, educational, economic, public, and other affairs of interest to both peoples. Membership in the society is open to individuals, corporations, and other organizations interested in furthering its programs.

The Japan America Society of Minnesota is a member of the National Association of Japan-America Societies.

