



# LITTLE TOKYO

## BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

A PROGRAM MANAGED BY THE LITTLE TOKYO BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

### A Message from LTBA President David Ikegami

During the recent 120th anniversary observance of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce of So. Calif., I reflected on the history of JCCSC and how it is interlaced with LTBA's own history. That kinship continues to this day, connected by our shared cultural values, our devotion to the Nikkei community, and a sense of duty to honor our ties with Japan.



Our organizations also share a commitment to responsible stewardship and a willingness to change when change is needed. With this in mind, the LTBA board of directors embarked on a three-year journey to build a Business Improvement District capable of meeting the challenges we face in the years ahead. We made the conscious decision to reclaim tacit jurisdiction over property that Little Tokyo lost in the 1950s when the City built Parker Center and expanded the Civic Center.

Little Tokyo is a vibrant community with a rich history and an exciting future. We will look forward to what the new year brings and pledge to listen to community concerns as we address this future together.

## Little Tokyo: Something for Everyone From Michelin Stars to Hot Dog on a Stick

Our community is fortunate to have a full range of dining establishments, including six restaurants recognized by the Michelin Guide: **Sushi Kaneyoshi**, **Restaurant Ki**, **Bar Kawa**, **Sushi Takeda**, **Marugame Monzo**, and **Cali Chilli**. From artisan ramen to gourmet onigiri to designer pastries to L.A.'s craziest corn dogs, we're proud of them all.

**Sushi Kaneyoshi's** sushi creations, **Restaurant Ki's** Korean delicacies, and **Bar Kawa's** rare whiskeys can all be found in the ethereal setting hidden below the Kajima Building, 111 S. San Pedro St.



**Sushi Takeda**, known for its lunch omakase, is located on the third floor of Weller Court above Marukai Market. Chef Hide Takeda also offers two dinner seatings.

**Marugame Monzo**, famous for its fresh-made thick noodles, is at 329 E.1st St.

**Cali Chilli**. Chef Mural Manjunath replicated his award-winning Long Beach establishment on the ground floor of the AVA Apartment Building, 2nd & Los Angeles St. Don't be deterred by its location next to the 7-Eleven. Chef Manjunath's modern take on Indian cuisine has earned him four consecutive Michelin stars.

*Did someone mention hot dogs? When craving simpler dishes, try **Two Hands Hot Dogs** in Japanese Village Plaza or **Smile Dogs** in the Little Tokyo Marketplace, 333 S. Alameda*

# Upcoming Little Tokyo Events

**Dec. 9 - NIKKEI UNCOVERED, A Poetry Column**, curated and hosted by tracy kato-kiriyama for Discover Nikkei featuring poets Aaron Caycedo-Kimura, Erica Isomura, and Syd Westley. [Online only](#). Register [here](#) to receive link.

**Dec. 11 - DAIMATSU - Live Electronic Music by Carl Stone**, TWCCC Japanese Garden, 244 S. San Pedro St., 7 - 8:30 pm, [Tickets](#) \$15+transaction fee.

**Dec. 13, 20, 27 - Little Tokyo Farmers Market**, Isamu Noguchi Plaza, 244 S. San Pedro St., 9 am-2 pm.

**Dec. 20 & 21 - Shogun Santa and LAPD Toy Drive**, Japanese Village Plaza,

**Jan. 1, 2026 - OSHOGATSU (New Year Celebration)** - Japanese Chamber of Commerce of So. Calif. brings in the Year of the Horse with activities in two Little Tokyo locations - Weller Court (10:50 am - 3:40 pm) and Japanese Village Plaza (11 am - 4:10 pm). Cultural activities for the entire family, food, and entertainment.



**MEET SHOGUN SANTA**  
Japanese Village Plaza  
Little Tokyo  
**Saturday, December 20, 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.**  
**Sunday, December 21, 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.**  
Take a free photo with Shogun Santa using your cell phone or camera.

## Shogun Santa, LAPD Team Up for Toy Drive

Shogun Santa teams up with the Los Angeles Police Department to collect toys for children in need. Bring an unwrapped toy to Japanese Village Plaza when you visit Shogun-san on Saturday, Dec. 20 or Sunday, Dec. 21, between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m.

As always, photos with Shogun Santa are free of charge when you use your cell phone or camera to take the picture. Bring the family. Call your friends. Explore Little Tokyo shops and restaurants for a perfect way to enjoy the holidays.

### History of Shogun Santa:

In November 1986, the late Korean American architect David Hyun, who designed and built Japanese Village Plaza, organized the first "Children of the World" Parade. Shogun Santa was portrayed by Hyun.

## Little Tokyo-Based Organizations Mark Major Milestones



Congratulations to the Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Southern California (JCCSC), which observed its 120-year legacy Oct. 5 at Alhambra's Almansor Court.

Established in 1905, the Los Angeles Japanese Association served the needs of the growing immigrant population which faced discriminatory laws such as the 1913 Alien Land Law and 1924 Immigration Act which prevented immigration from Asian countries.

After World War II ended, Japanese Americans were being released from concentration camps and began to resettle in Southern California. By 1949, the Los Angeles Japanese Association had been re-established and merged with the Little Tokyo Business Association (LTBA), eventually evolving into the Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Southern California still active today.

East West Players, the nation's largest and longest-running theater company, is celebrating its 60th anniversary.

Originally located in the Silver Lake area east of Hollywood, EWP was founded in 1965 by a small group of Asian Americans determined to change the entertainment industry's restrictive mindset toward non-white actors.

In 1998, the company moved from its 99-seat theater to Little Tokyo, where the former Union Church site was renovated by the Little Tokyo Service Center. The property became the Union Center for the Arts and EWP's new home.

Today, the 240-seat David Henry Hwang Theater showcases the people, plays, and artistry that have come to define the Asian American theatrical scene in the United States.



## Every Day is "Respect for the Aged" Day in Little Tokyo

Every September, both in Japan and in Little Tokyo, one day is devoted to honoring our elders. With approximately 1,000 seniors residing in Little Tokyo, Keiro no Hi (Respect for the Aged Day) is a major celebration involving multiple sectors of the Japanese American community, including preschoolers, college students, musical groups, and volunteers from nonprofit organizations.

This year, Keiro no Hi was held on Sept. 13, at Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, featuring entertainment by the Nishi Hongwanji Child Development Center, JACCC ukelele group, Asian Persuasion band, and others.. Seniors were also treated to bento lunch, carnival games, a mochi-making demonstration by Fugetsu-do, origami instructions, and an array of artisan booths.

Host organization, Keiro, pioneered the concept of culturally-tailored senior care. Since deciding to sell their flagship facility in Boyle Heights in 2015, Keiro leadership, who in recent years have helped support nonprofits that provide senior services, surprised Keiro no Hi attendees by announcing plans to build a new board-and-care facility in Torrance.

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## Hello Kitty Warms Children's Hearts at Benefit Event

Approximately 250 unhoused children and their parents were guests at the sixth annual Children's Party hosted by the Little Tokyo Business



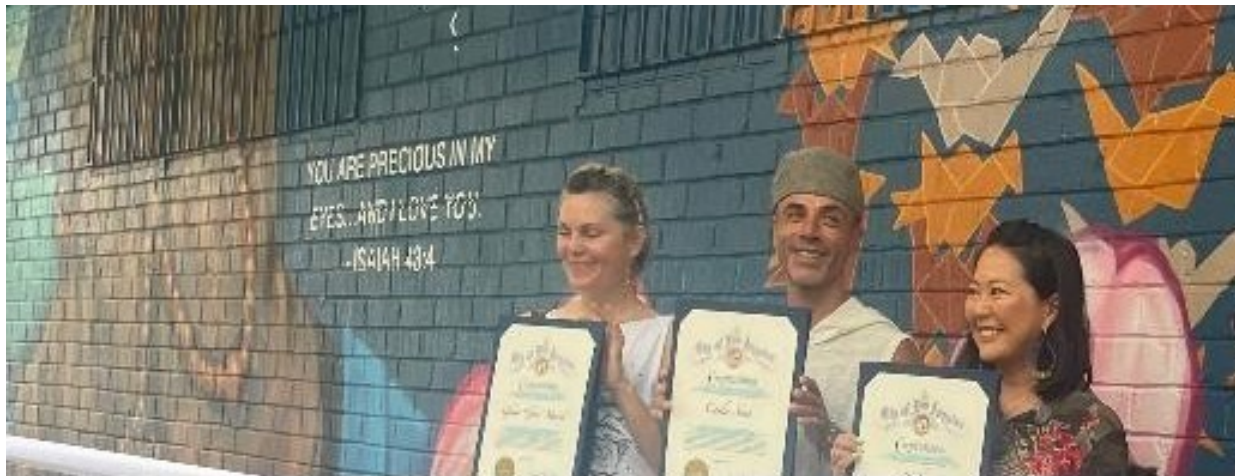
Association, Little Tokyo Legacy Foundation, Worthy of Love-L.A., and the Sanrio Corporation on Sept. 25.

Stage coordinator Wesley Nishinaka emceed the event, which was held at the Terasaki Budokan and included a special appearance by Sony Music recording artist and rapper BIA.

Among the entertainers donating their talents were Ryujin Taiko, Bando Hirohichiro, Cheryl Ikegami, Roc'co and the League of Clowns, and a deejay..



Little Tokyo Legacy Foundation president Sheri Kanesaka (left) shown here with Hello Kitty and planning committee members Kitty Sankey, Ellen Endo, and Jan Fukuhara.



Artist Erin Yoshi (right) stands in front of the mural she created depicting the 100-year history of St. Francis Xavier Chapel Japanese Catholic Center. She and her team members Carlos Sesa and Gloria "Glow" Muriel received certificates of recognition from L.A. City Councilmember Ysabel Jurado.

## Mural Traces 100+ years of Japanese Catholic Center History

The year was 1912. A Japanese immigrant living in Los Angeles sent a personal letter to Catholic Bishop Alexander Berlioz, MEP, of Hakodate, Japan, asking for permission to confess by mail because there was no Japanese speaking priest in California. At the time, there were around 10,000 persons of Japanese ancestry living in L.A. Bishop Berlioz sent Father Albert Breton to minister to the Japanese in California. Later, eight Catholic women arrived from Nagasaki to assist in the mission and became Maryknoll.

The Japanese Catholic community began to grow along with the Japanese American population. When the idea of creating a mural that would trace the church's 100-plus year history, artist Erin Yoshi accepted the challenge, knowing that the undertaking was much bigger than one church, one congregation. Her work mirrors the history of Japanese in America.

Maryknoll, now known as Saint Francis Xavier Chapel, Japanese Catholic Center, is memorialized as a visual tribute to history, painted on a fish packing warehouse wall at 2nd & Garey Sts. just northeast of the church. The project is a collaboration between the Saint Francis Xavier Chapel, Little Tokyo Business Association, Arts District Business Improvement District, Arts District/Little Tokyo Neighborhood Council, and former L.A. City Councilmember Kevin De Leon.

**TAKE IT WITH YOU, HIDE IT, OR LOSE IT**  
**PROTECT YOUR BELONGINGS**

**File a  
Police  
Report**

Little Tokyo is proud of its record as one of the safest urban communities in Los Angeles County. Unfortunately, vehicle break-ins still happen too often. Don't become a victim. If you have valuables in your car, take them with you, or hide them before you exit the car. In the event you are the victim of a crime, please report it to law enforcement.

[www.visitlittletokyo.org](http://www.visitlittletokyo.org)

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