



LITTLE TOKYO

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

a program of the Little Tokyo Business Association

Bunkado Site Takes Its Place in History



There were about 70 Japanese living in Los Angeles in 1884 when Hamanosuke "Charles" Sugita decided to open his small restaurant at 340 E. 1st St., unaware that it would become the nucleus of Little Tokyo. Today, Bunkado gift shop occupies that historic location and is celebrating its 75th anniversary as one of Little Tokyo's most venerable businesses.

Irene Tsukada Simonian is the third-generation to operate the family business. Bunkado offers a full array of Japanese gift items, stationery, kitchenware, kimono and kokeshi dolls, maneki neko (lucky cats), hats, T-shirts, and supplies for traditional ikebana flower arrangements, tea ceremony, calligraphy, Buddhist altar accessories, and more. Simonian is also chair of the Little Tokyo Community Council.

On May 16, the Little Tokyo Historical Society, with support from Los Angeles City Councilmember Kevin de Leon, successfully secured historic/cultural landmark designation for the site.



Anime Expo Roars Back After Two-Year Absence

Returning to the Los Angeles Convention Center after a two-year absence due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Anime Expo 2022 saw attendance numbers return to pre-pandemic levels .

Little Tokyo saw a dramatic increase in the number of visitors over the July 1-4 holiday weekend thanks, in part, to the free shuttle bus service provided between Little Tokyo and the Convention Center.

The Little Tokyo Business Association coordinated the shuttle service, made possible with funding from the L.A. County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) and sponsors Manufacturers Bank and beverage company Drunk Fruit.

Twenty-seven Little Tokyo businesses participated in the Expo-related promotional campaign that included giving away *uchiwa* (stick fans) and coasters bearing anime images.

Among the 22 participating businesses were Koraku restaurant), Pop Killer, TOT, Mr. Ramen, Bunkado, Suehiro, Daikokuya, My Ramen Bar, Hachioji, Ramen Tamon, Oujya Café Dulce, Yamazaki Bakery, Mokuyobi, Tanota, Chinchikurin, Men-oh, AnimeJungle 1st, Q-Pop, World-8, Dreamland, PhoEver, Korean Cosmetics, and Dreamland Maids Cafe.

The Society for the Promotion of Japanese Animation (SPJA) chose the Japanese American Cultural & Community Center as its 2022 charity partner. Meanwhile, the Little Tokyo Historical Society presented two panel discussions during the Expo, covering Little Tokyo's past and present and promoting the book, *A Rebel's Outcry*.



Cosplayers wait in front of the Miyako Hotel prior to boarding the LTBA/Metro shuttle service to the Anime Expo.



Uchiwa (stick fans) featuring these characters were given away to Little Tokyo customers.



Boarding the shuttle in Little Tokyo to the Convention Center.

Anime-Inspired Cafe Pops Up in Little Tokyo

Decorated with *kawaii* (cute) images and offering a menu of popular entrees, desserts, and beverages, the anime-inspired Dreamland Maid Cafe has opened in Little Tokyo.

The popup restaurant, which also features live performances, can be found in the Anime Jungle corridor, 319 E. 2nd St.

For more information, visit the cafe's website:

<https://www.dreamlandmaidcafe.com/>



Legacy Foundation Marks 2nd Year

The Little Tokyo Legacy Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to the betterment of Little Tokyo and the wellbeing of its residents, merchants, visitors, and workers, has completed its second year of operation under president Joanne Kumamoto,

LTLF has received support from the Hollywood Buddhist Church, Arts District Little Tokyo Neighborhood Council, and private individual donors. Recent projects include the purchase of safety equipment and iPads for Little Tokyo Business Improvement District safety ambassadors and enhanced lighting for Hashimoto Plaza. In September, the Foundation will hold its third annual party for Children Experiencing Homelessness in partnership with Worthy of Love (WOL), which currently serves five family shelters in Los Angeles County and Houston, Texas.

Donations are tax deductible to extent allowable by law. You can click the **Donate!** button below or mail a check to the Little Tokyo Legacy Foundation, 250 E. 1st Street, #201, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Call (213) 880-6875 with any questions.

Donate!



Little Tokyo Legacy Foundation
Let's Make it Better

COVID-19 UPDATES



Telebriefing for Businesses & Retail

(including Food Retail/Production)

WHEN: Thursday, July 21 - 11:00 am - 12:00 noon

WHERE: Telephone Call-in: 844-291-4185 - Access Code: 8268670

Participants are strongly urged to call in 15 minutes prior to the start time of the call to check-in.

Call starts promptly.

CONTACT: LA County Department of Public Health | (213) 240-8144 | media@ph.lacounty.gov

[Click this link for more information:](#)

[07.21.22 Invite Coronavirus Telebriefing for Businesses & Retail \(incl. Food Retail & Production\).pdf](#)

City Announces Small Business Rental Assistance

Deadline is quickly approaching to apply for Round 2 of the City of LA's Small Business Rental Assistance Program, which will provide grants to eligible businesses located in the City that need financial assistance to aid in their recovery from COVID-19. Grants will be up to \$15,000 or six months of back rent, whichever is less. Applications are due by Wednesday, July 20.

The grant may be used for rent payments that are in arrears that were incurred on or after March 1, 2020 until May 1, 2022. To be eligible, businesses must be for-profit, operate and be located in a commercial storefront within Los Angeles city limits. Businesses must also provide lease agreements and proof confirming that back rent is owed. Application and additional details are available at <https://bit.ly/lasmallbizgrant> or visit <https://ewddlacity.com/index.php/recovery/rentassist>



JANM Presents Interactive *Be Here*

BeHere / 1942: A New Lens on the Japanese American Incarceration mobilizes a variety of media forms to let visitors engage in new ways with this dark historical moment.

Through careful curation of little-known photographs by Dorothea Lange and Russell Lee, visitors become photographers themselves, actually participating in the scene.

The exhibition inside JANM, presented through Oct. 9, is complemented by a groundbreaking public AR installation in the plaza between the museum's main campus and the historic Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple. A dedicated *BeHere / 1942* app allows visitors to step into the past and walk among those on the verge of leaving for the camps.



JACCC Welcomes Justin Klunk

JACCC's Aratani Theatre is the place to be on Saturday, July 23, 7 p.m. when saxophonist Justin Klunk brings his smooth jazz and hot grooves to Little Tokyo.

This musical event will benefit the Grateful Crane Ensemble and their Japanese American storytelling mission.

Also featured will be Cheesa and Annie Dignwall from RAINNE. Klunk is a Torrance-native and rising star. He and his band will be performing original melodies, R&B tunes, and two of Justin's recently released singles which have reached #1 and #2 on the smooth jazz charts.

[Click here](#) for ticket information.



Coming Soon from East West Players

Performances are set to begin in September for *The Great Jheri Curl Debate* by Inda Craig-Galván. Director is Scarlett Kim.

Performances begin Sept. 15.

In this production, Veralynn Jackson knows hair, her neighborhood, and that the invention of the Jheri Curl marks the end of the world. When she takes a job in Mr. Kim's Korean-owned Black beauty supply store, and the posters start talking to her, Veralynn might finally come to know her true calling.

The Great Jheri Curl Debate was developed in the East West Players' Writers Group and was a finalist for the 44th annual Bay Area Playwrights Festival.

Stash It / Don't Flash It

Avoid Car Break-ins Before They Happen

The number of thefts has steadily increased as COVID restrictions are lifted and visitors begin to return to Little Tokyo. Smash-and-grab thieves typically see something they like, and then break in and take it. To avoid being a victim, make sure your valuables are out of sight when you park your car. Never leave these things lying out on your seats, dashboard or floor:

If you must leave valuables in your vehicle, put them in the trunk BEFORE you arrive at your destination. This will avoid the possibility of someone seeing you with your valuables and breaking into your trunk.

The Little Tokyo BID extends a big thank you"to the Arts District L.A. BID for provided "Stash It / Don't Flash It" signs to remind motorists to remove valuables from their cars.



How to File a Police Report

We all hope nothing bad ever happens, but if you are the victim of a crime, we encourage you to file a police report. [Click here](#) to learn how to report a crime online. You can report such crimes as hit-and-run, identity theft, harassing phone calls, theft from vehicle, vandalism, and illegal drug activity. For non-emergencies that require a police response, dial (877) 275-5273. In case of an emergency, dial 9-1-1.

**Little Tokyo BID Safety Patrol
(213) 326-0636**

**For Graffiti Removal, Bulky Item Pickup and other City services
Dial 3-1-1 or Call (213) 473-3231**

Little Tokyo BID Helpline
Phone (213) 880-6875 ~ board@visitlittletokyo.com
