

# CHICAGO OKINAWA KENJINKAI

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P.O Box 94  
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[www.chicagookinawakenjinkai.com](http://www.chicagookinawakenjinkai.com)



Spring 2023

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Chicago Okinawa Newsletter

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Photos: Milton Uehara, Linda Everitt



# Chicago Okinawa Kenjinkai News Letter

Spring 2023



## President's Message



Linda Asato, President

Happy New Year to All! Welcome the Year of the Rabbit!! And a big welcome to our new members!!

As we begin 2023, there is a good feeling of hope and optimism in the air. Covid-19 is subsiding and many people feel confident to go out and about with their lives just like in pre-pandemic times. We hope that all our members and friends survived the pandemic and are doing well. In October, the 7th Uchinanchu Taikai Festival was held in Naha, Okinawa and attended by several Chicago members.

The festival began with a Grand Parade down Kokusai Dori, the main street in Naha with participants from all over the world in attendance. Several events were held during the 4 day celebration and on the last day, the Closing Ceremony featured the exciting performances of Begin and Diamantes from South America. For many of us, it was a great opportunity to meet new friends and connect with our relatives again after a three year delay. It was a truly memorable experience for all of us.

Our annual new year's party has been renamed, "Spring Celebration Party" and will be held on Sat., April 1st at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Chicago. We encourage everyone to come out for an enjoyable afternoon of fellowship and delicious foods prepared by our members. This is a wonderful chance to meet some of the newest members who joined last year. If possible, please volunteer for a few hours. Hope to see all of you!

---Linda Asato, President



Chicago Okinawa Kenjinkai members at the Taikai parade on Kokusai dori



# 2023 SPRING CELEBRATION PARTY!

(Formerly New Year's Party)



**Date:** Saturday, April 1st, 2023

**Location:** St. Paul Lutheran Church  
5650 N. Canfield Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60631

**Time:** Doors open at 11:00am

**Lunch:** 12 noon

**Cost:** Members – Free

Guests: \$10 per person

## Party Highlights include:

- \*Raffle prizes
- \* 50/50 Raffle
- \* Pot Luck Lunch and Dessert Buffet - please bring a dish!
- \*Hot and cold beverages will be provided.
- \*Entertainment featuring Eisa taiko, Okinawan music and Karate



## GUEST PERFORMANCE

Uezu Yasuhide

Professional Creative Eisa Dance Performer

Yuiden Choreographer Director

Friend of Chicago Kenjinkai and ChimuDonDon Dance Groups





# 2022 7th Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival

In October, the 7th Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival was held with over 8,000 participants from around the world in attendance. The four-day festivities featured a magnificent demonstration of Okinawan traditions through opening and closing ceremonies, street parades, stage shows, conferences and exhibits. The Chicago Okinawa Kenjinkai was well represented with over 33 members participating. Here are some photos from the events:



For more photos and video, check our website, [www.chicagookinawakenjinkai.com](http://www.chicagookinawakenjinkai.com) For a link to the Festival website: [www.wuf2022.jp](http://www.wuf2022.jp).

## Junior Study Program in Okinawa

The Okinawan government is now accepting applications for the 2023 Junior Study Program for Overseas Participants and Overseas Youth Leader. This year the program is a combination of online and in-person format starting in July and is available for youth of Okinawan descent interested in developing an understanding of their Okinawan roots and desire to broaden one's international outlook. The program will teach Okinawan history and culture while interacting with similar age groups from around the world. The deadline to submit applications is

**March 31, 2023.** If you or anyone you know are interested, please contact Linda Asato at Cell: 773-593-4009 or Email: [chicagookiken@gmail.com](mailto:chicagookiken@gmail.com).





# Welcome New Members!

We want to welcome several new members to our Kenjinkai. A total of 32 families joined in 2022. We hope they will take advantage of the many benefits our organization offers. The following list indicates members who joined since July 2022.

Mika Borgwardt  
Alexandria Cooper  
Betty DeAvila  
Martha Hamilton  
Eileen Herbert  
Sadame Kanazawa

Debra Kopsky  
Donna Lin  
Shizuko Miller  
Josh Modjeska  
Satsuki Morgan  
Takemitsu Nakama

Izumi Ohashi  
June Oshiro  
Megumi Potter  
Shino Sekimoto  
Yuko Tabuchi-Yang

## Requesting Your Support...

Thank you to our members who generously contribute to our organization year-in and year-out. We are grateful that you have entrusted us to carry on with the traditions and spirit of Okinawa in the Chicago area. As a small organization, we rely on individuals and members to sustain and continue our work. We hope you will consider the many ways you can show your support for our annual scholarships, events and cultural lessons.

Here are some examples of how you can help:

Membership renewal

Donations or gifts

Volunteering at events

Ad sponsorship in programs or newsletters

Your support is welcome and contributes to the strength of our organization. The Chicago Okinawa Kenjinkai is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and financial contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Please contact Linda Asato at Cell: 773-593-4009 or Email: [chicagookiken@gmail.com](mailto:chicagookiken@gmail.com) to see how you can help. Thank you very much!

### MEET THE CHICAGO OKINAWA KENJINKAI OFFICERS



PRESIDENT: Linda Asato  
773-593-4009  
[lhasato1@gmail.com](mailto:lhasato1@gmail.com)



VICE PRESIDENT: Minorori Yamaki  
[yamakimr1@hotmail.com](mailto:yamakimr1@hotmail.com)



SECRETARY: Doris Uehara  
847-340-0435  
[doris.uehara@kintetsu.com](mailto:doris.uehara@kintetsu.com)



TREASURER/  
GOODWILL AMBASSADOR  
Michiko Ishikawa  
[Mishikawa601@gmail.com](mailto:Mishikawa601@gmail.com)



GOODWILL AMBASSADOR  
Yujiro Uza 972-351-6405  
[uzadojo@yahoo.com](mailto:uzadojo@yahoo.com)

### MEET THE PERFORMANCE GROUP LEADERS



Eisa Taiko and Okinawan Dance  
Mitsue Koch 773-706-0813  
[mk51@att.net](mailto:mk51@att.net)



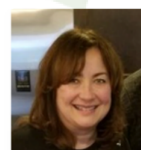
Chicago Okinawa Karate  
Yujiro Uza 972-351-6405  
[uzadojo@yahoo.com](mailto:uzadojo@yahoo.com)



Okinawan Sanshin  
Mayumi Seino 630-303-7005  
[mseino@hotmail.com](mailto:mseino@hotmail.com)



Ukulele Group  
Kathy Serikaku 630-213-4343  
or  
Linda Asato 773-593-4009



Performance Group Contact  
Kathy Nichols  
[kathleen\\_nichols@hotmail.com](mailto:kathleen_nichols@hotmail.com)



FINANCIAL REPORT YEAR 2022			
	EXPENSE	INCOME	BALANCE
<b>PREVIOUS BALANCE(as of 12/31/2021)</b>			<b>\$ 10,719.86</b>
Membership Fee Paid( Single 64 & Family 73)*		\$ 2,785.00	\$ 13,504.86
Donations from Members**		\$ 4,450.00	\$ 17,954.86
Income from 2021 - Yuiden's Ad		\$ 400.00	\$ 18,354.86
Expense from Yuiden 2021 - Uezu san Fee	\$ 500.00		\$ 17,854.86
Transfer Funds from Matsuri Taiko		\$ 2,658.77	\$ 20,513.63
2022 Scholarships	\$ 2,000.00		\$ 18,513.63
New Years Party Income ( Sale from Tickets)		\$ 575.00	\$ 19,088.63
New years Party Exp- Prize, Food, Drinks, Photo & Misc	\$ 2,279.91		\$ 16,808.72
2022 Picnic Bento Sales \$1,760,Raffle Sale \$ 627 & Farmers Goods \$139		\$ 1,808.00	\$ 18,616.72
2022 Picnics Expenses ( Bento, Prize, Drinks, Ice Cream & Insurance )	\$ 3,987.28		\$ 14,629.44
Cooking Class Income 26 X \$15		\$ 390.00	\$ 15,019.44
Cooking Class Expense ( Food items, Rental Facilities)	\$ 589.83		\$ 14,429.61
Flea Market Sales Items		\$ 465.00	\$ 14,894.61
280 T-shirts & Backpack Cost	\$ 3,107.36		\$ 11,787.25
Sales of 183 T-Shirts & 59 Backpacks		\$ 2,990.00	\$ 14,777.25
2022 World Uchinanchu Day-Expenses with Gov Official	\$ 195.91		\$ 14,581.34
2022 Total Administration Expenses,( 2 News Letter, Postage, Meeting Exp, Website fee , Public Storage fee , Paypal fee & PO Boxes fee)	\$ 2,330.03		\$ 12,251.31
Equipment Purchased- Table, 2 Tents , New Banner & Piping	\$ 362.78		\$ 11,888.53
Donation to CJC	\$ 30.00		\$ 11,858.53
Obituary Donation to Mrs. Kazumi Blachman	\$ 100.00		\$ 11,758.53
State of IL Atty General Annual Report	\$ 411.00		\$ 11,347.53
2023 Picnic Permit Deposit	\$ 200.00		\$ 11,147.53
Other Rental Equipment Income		\$ 40.00	\$ 11,187.53
JACL 2023 Gala Fee (reimbursed in 2023)	\$ 440.00		\$ 10,747.53
<b>AS of 12/31/2022 Bank Statement Balance</b>			<b>\$ 10,747.53</b>

137 Paid memberships in 2022



# 2022 DONATIONS

## Special Donations Over \$200

Michiko Ishikawa \$1000

Perry Higa \$400

Shinya Uehara \$200



## Donations - \$100 - \$200

Linda Asato, Jen and Joseph Benigno, Bryan and Celeste Berenz, Bob and TJ Coppoth, Tom and Nozomi Corrao, Bob Higa, Mary Kanashiro, Diotoko and Laura Kiam, Kimi Kimura, Shizuko Kindred, Kathy Nichols, Tomiko Schumaier, Linda and Michael Skurnak, Dennis and Ritsuko White

## Donations under \$100

Nathan and Mayumi Aaberg, Katherine Anamizu, Yusuke Arakaki, Anne Asato, Mark and Nichole Asato. Yoneko Berenz, Yoneko Cabel, Mika and James Cain, Ryuko and Paul Charapata, Hisako Cook, Chris Deiters, Paul and Tonko Doi, Linda Gold, Nobuko Gonzales, Katsuko Grigsby, Mike and Kathy Higa, Kazuko Hooten, Shinoko and Donald Janz, Sachiko and Thomas Lamb, Yoshie Nakasone-Patton, Edward and Ikuko Nichols, Naoko Puntillo, Paula Schmidling, Marlene Serikaku, Doris Uehara, Kumiko Walker, Wille and Juana Wong, Fred Yamanuha

## Misc. Donations of Goods and various food items at Picnic and Flea Market

Betty DeVila, Mitsue Koch, Tatsumi Dietz, Lisa Miller, Michiko Ishikawa, Nobuko Gonzales, Miko Gonzales Kumiko Walker, Naomi and Chuck Bowman, Kazuko Hooten, Ritsuko and Dennis White, Ikuko Nichols

Thank you everyone for your generous donations who contributed to our events!!

## In Memorial



**Gary Blachman**

### **Gary Blachman**

February 6, 1965 – October 29, 2022

Gary Blachman, 57 years old. Beloved husband of Kazumi, née Nakandakari; adoring father of Sean and Kai Blachman. Gary and his family split their time between Okinawa, Japan and Glenview, Illinois. He was a talented linguist and taught English in Japan for many years. He will be deeply missed by all whose lives he touched. Funeral service was held last November in Wilmette, IL.

# New Uchina Goodwill Ambassadors

We are pleased to announce two new Uchina Goodwill Ambassadors, Michiko Ishikawa and Yujiro Uza. They were selected by the Okinawan Government as our new Goodwill Ambassadors to promote awareness of Okinawan culture in the Chicago area. Michiko has been a member of our Kenjinkai for several years and serves as our treasurer. She has many ideas for fundraising and wants to play a more active role in attracting younger members to our organization.

Yujiro Uza, is a familiar face to many of our members. He is the director of the Shidokan Shorin Ryu Okinawa Karate Do in Arlington Heights and was a past Kenjinkai vice president. His wish is to keep the Okinawan traditions going and to promote discipline and self-awareness through karate in a healthy and positive way.

Congratulations to both of them for this great honor.



Michiko Ishikawa and Yujiro Uza receiving certificate from Vice Governor of Okinawa

## \$1000 KENJINKAI SCHOLARSHIP

We are offering a \$1000 scholarship to a qualified high school student who submits a complete application **by April 30th, 2023 deadline**. The successful applicant will be a senior who shows the most potential in helping us meet our goals of preserving the culture and traditions of Okinawa. Starting this year, an additional requirement will be to satisfy a minimum of 8 hours of community service which includes assisting the Kenjinkai with a variety of tasks at our annual events. A Community Service form is available on our website.

Applicants should be current high school seniors accepted to an undergraduate program at an accredited college or university. Students attending the first year of college will be considered only if there are no qualified high school seniors.

Details and applications are available on our website, [www.chicagookinawakenjinkai.com](http://www.chicagookinawakenjinkai.com) or from one of the officers. We encourage you to apply early – Good Luck!



# Distinguished Overseas Contributor Award

## Ikuko Nichols

Last October, a special Distinguished Contributor Award certificate and medal was given to Ikuko Nichols in recognition of her twelve years of service as our Uchina Goodwill Ambassador and her numerous contributions to promote Okinawan culture for the past thirty years. Governor Denny Tamaki presented the award at a special ceremony held in Okinawa.

As a school teacher, Ms. Nichols taught Japanese language and Okinawan taiko to her young students. Over the years, she participated in many festivals exhibiting and demonstrating Okinawan goods, cuisine and culture to the greater Chicagoland community. Her drive and determination is admired by both students and members alike. Congratulations to Ikuko Nichols for a well-deserved honor! (Linda Asato)

新型コロナウイルスの影響が完全に掃られない中、第7回世界のウチナーンチュ大会が2022年10月31日から11月3日の期間中、沖縄県那覇市のセルラースタジアムパークで各世界からウチナーンチュが集まり、魂の祭典が開催され、海外、国内、県内を合わせて約8000人以上が参加して、言葉と世代の壁を乗り越え、ウチナーンチュの絆を深めた大会が開催されました。

祭典のイベントは、複数の場所で開催された中、10月31日に沖縄県市町村自治会館に於いて開催された海外功労者への賞状、次世代代表への認状、海外県人会長への感謝状、第7回大会認証ウチナー民間大使への認証状授与等を行う部屋にシカゴ沖縄県人会会長の安里リンダ、ウチナー民間大使に推薦された石川美智子、宇座雄二郎、海外功労者に推薦された私（ニコラス郁子）の4人が案内され、身に余るおもてなしと、賞状が授与されました。

夢にも思ってなかった私は、海外功労者に選ばれ、玉城デニー沖縄県知事から賞状を授与されました事をこの上もなく光栄に思いました。

私の12年間以上のウチナー民間大使として、沖縄県国際交流課、人材育成財団を基にした目的活動は、沖縄文化と繋がりを持ち、沖縄県とアメリカとの架け橋として活動しながら、長年、シカゴ沖縄県人会との関わりで活動が出来ました事は、みなさまの献身的なご協力がありました事に紙上を持って心より感謝申し上げます。と同時に、ウチナー民間大使のお役目を2022年をもって辞退しました事をお知らせ申し上げます。

ニコラス郁子





# 2022 Annual Picnic

Aug 6th was one of the hottest days of 2022 but it didn't stop us from having a great time at the annual kenjinkai picnic. The new location, Bunker Hill Grove in Niles, provided ample parking and actual bathroom facilities - no porta potty! Woohoo!!! 150 members and guests and lots of volunteers made this event a success.

For the first time there was full-on entertainment with Sanshin, Karate and Chimudondon as they rehearsed for their performance at the Chicago Cubs game the next day. Alas, their performance was canceled due to heavy rain but we were all treated to a live show at the picnic.

The bentos were ordered from Kurumaya Restaurant in Elk Grove Village, and members and guests offered positive reviews of the food. There were games for kids and everyone looked forward to the regular raffle which had many items from Okinawa thanks to Minori-san, who graciously picked up some items when she was there a few weeks prior to the event.

All in all, it was a nice get together for Kenjinkai and we are looking forward to seeing more people joining the festivities this year!

--- Doris Uehara







# A New Year to Learn a New Skill



We are very pleased to have performance groups lead by dedicated instructors who teach skills such as taiko drumming, sanshin music, karate, and ukulele. If you are curious to learn any of these arts, we encourage you to consider signing up now. Classes are free to members except for a nominal fee for karate. Please contact the leaders below to get started. Here's what our Kenjinkai offers:



## Taiko Drumming

★ Learn the dynamic skills of Okinawan Eisa taiko and dance to the beat and rhythm of Matsuri Daiko music. Our taiko group has been performing for festivals and events in the Midwest region for over 20 years. Contact Mitsue Koch at [mk51@att.net](mailto:mk51@att.net)

## Okinawan Sanshin

★ Learn the basic skills of Okinawan sanshin (shamisen) and play the traditional minyo songs of Okinawa. Beginners are welcome. Contact Mayumi Tonks at [mseino@hotmail.com](mailto:mseino@hotmail.com)



## Karate

★ Karate Instructor, Yujiro Uza, teaches karate skills at many levels on Saturdays in Arlington Hts. He welcomes anyone who wants to learn traditional Okinawan style karate. Beginners are welcome. Contact Yujiro Uza at [uzadojo@yahoo.com](mailto:uzadojo@yahoo.com)



## Okinawan Dance

★ If you admire the grace and beauty of Okinawan Ryubu or traditional dance, then take advantage of lessons taught by dance instructor, Mitsue Koch at: [mk51@att.net](mailto:mk51@att.net)





# WORLD UCHINANCHU TAIKAI 2022

