

CHICAGO OKINAWA KENJINKAI NEWS LETTER

Summer 2023



President's Message

Happy Summer to all our members and friends!!



Linda Asato, President

A flurry of activity is expected this summer as more and more people decide to fly, drive or cruise on down to their favorite vacation destinations. Closer to home, many events have been planned for Chicago's lakefront area including the spectacular Fourth of July fireworks, our very first Nascar car race in Grant Park, and the Taste of Chicago Festival in September.

If you are in town, please plan on attending our annual picnic at the end of July for a relaxing afternoon of food and fellowship. The picnic is a great opportunity to meet and greet other members who are new or who come from great distances to attend. Once again, bento box lunches will be available to order and will be prepared by Kurumaya Restaurant. Bento boxes are available for only \$5 for those who volunteer.

In April, we had a great turnout at the Spring Celebration party where the great talent from Okinawa, Yasuhide Uezu performed a special rendition of Eisa taiko and the Shishimai Lion Dance with our Sanshin and dance groups. The Pot Luck buffet was delicious, as always, with so many dishes prepared by our members. The party ended with a grand finale as the audience danced to the fast and lively melodies.

Finally, congratulations to Rio Kadono, our well-deserved 2023 scholarship recipient, who will be attending the University of Cincinnati in the fall and who has helped the Kenjinkai at numerous events in the past several years.

Have a wonderful summer everyone!

---Linda Asato, President



Members and guests enjoying the Spring Celebration Party in April.

ANNUAL PICNIC

Bunker Hill Grove No. 6, Niles IL

Sat., July. 29, 2023. 11:30 am – 4pm



- Raffle with great prizes
- 50/50 Raffle with cash prize
- Bingo and Children's games
- Bring your summer vegetables to share
- Guest fee is \$5 per person

BENTO LUNCHBOX ORDER

Bento Lunchbox is available at \$10 each, members and guests

Only \$5 for volunteers approved by officers. We encourage members to volunteer.

Select from:

- Tonkatsu
- Salmon
- Chicken Karaage
- Tofu and vegetables
(vegetarian option)

Place your order by Wed., July 19th

Please pay by cash or check at the picnic.

How to order:

Email: chicagookiken@gmail.com

Or

Phone: 773-593-4009 Linda Asato

How to get there....



Between Touhy Ave. and Devon Ave.;
between Milwaukee Ave. and Caldwell Ave.

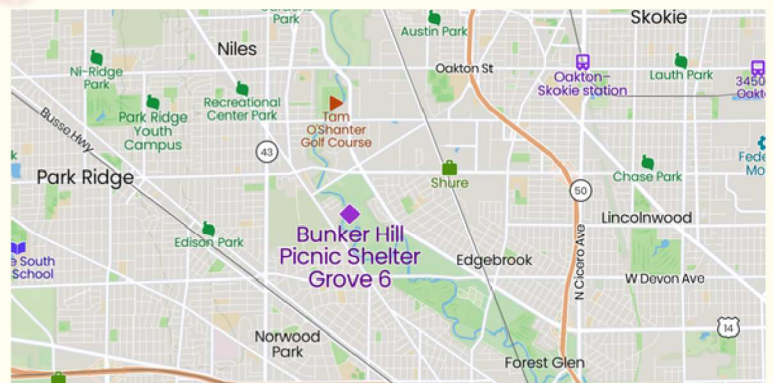
Website: Bunker Hill Fpdcc



Salmon Bento



Tonkatsu Bento



Additional guidelines:

- There will be no potluck or food sharing. Please bring food for yourself or family or preorder a Bento Lunch.
- Soda and water will be provided
- Bring folding chairs, bench seating is limited.

2023 SPRING CELEBRATION PARTY

Once again, the Spring Celebration party was held at St. Paul Church in Chicago. It was well attended by our members and guests who came out to see their friends and to enjoy a lunch buffet followed by an array of performances energized by our special guest, Yasuhide Uezu from Okinawa.

Several prominent members of the Chicago Japanese community celebrated with us and enjoyed the afternoon as well. It was great to see so many of you in person and to meet some of our newest members who joined in the last year or so.

We all enjoyed the variety of Okinawan and American dishes brought by our members and the fabulous desserts that pleased everyone.

Thanks again to all the hard-working volunteers who came early to setup and cleanup and to all the ladies in the kitchen who worked to ensure the abundance of food and drinks at the buffet table.



Ikuko Nichols receiving an award in recognition for her contributions



Consul General Tajima



Banquet hall at St. Paul's church



Consul General Tajima with officers and several Chicago Asian community leaders

Summer 2023

We invited special guest performer, Yasuhide Uezu of Uruma City, Okinawa, to perform some of his latest dance creations for us. He gladly accepted and in a short amount of time, put together a dynamic program together with our Sanshin group and Chimu don don Eisa taiko drummers.

Background: Yasuhide Uezu is the President of the Okinawan Eisa team, "Legend of the Dragon King". His creative Eisa team in Okinawa, evokes the heroic Ryukyu dances based on the ancient Ryukyu dynasty tradition. They incorporate new interpretations of Shishimai, taiko drums, music and banners into their choreography. He is well known in Okinawa and throughout mainland Japan and is considered to be one of the top Eisa taiko performers in the world today. We are truly grateful to him for bringing Okinawan traditions to Chicago.



Yasuhide Uezu (center) performing with Chimu Don Don Eisa team.



Yasuhide Uezu jumping mid-air together with the Chimu Don Don Eisa members



Uezu-san dancing with a special Shishimai Lion that he brought from Okinawa



Sanshin group performing a medley of Okinawan songs



Ryubu dancers performing Kai no Hatuma



Ryubu dancers performing Kagiadefu



Karate group with Uza sensei



Ukulele group performers

2023 Kenjinkai Scholarship Winner

Rio Kadono



Congratulations to Rio Kadono, our 2023 Scholarship winner!

Rio graduated from New Trier High School and will be attending the University of Cincinnati with a major in Health Sciences. He has numerous talents but for us, he was most helpful in taking videos of several Kenjinkai events and assisted in the production of the Yuiden video. In addition, he set up and cleaned up after some of our major performances and the cooking classes. His family has been actively involved with Kenjinkai performances including the Shishimai and classical Okinawan dances. We wish him the best as he pursues his academic goals. You can view Rio's essay from our website!



Okinawan Language or Uchinaaguchi videos

For those of you interested in learning the Okinawan Hogen language or Uchinaaguchi, Sid Kobashigawa of Honolulu Hawaii has produced a series of Okinawan language (Uchinaaguchi) videos on YouTube called Uchinaguchi Study Group. The link below is a YouTube chart-list of 51 Uchinaaguchi lesson videos. that Sidney has produced so far.

Click on below link. Then click on any video in this chart-list you are interested in:

<https://www.youtube.com/@uchinaguchistudygroupokina9184/videos>

If you find Sidney's Uchinaaguchi lesson videos to be of value, please copy/save and share this link with everyone you know who are interested in learning Uchinaaguchi.

Okinawan Cooking Class

An Okinawan cooking class was held on June 24th at the Cooking Skills Academy in Itasca. This class was funded by a special grant from the Okinawan government and led by Michiko Ishikawa, our Goodwill Ambassador and Chef Alex Keeney. They demonstrated three popular dishes, Bittermelon (goya) stir-fry, Jimami tofu, and Soki Soba noodles with ribs. A total of 30 members and guests attended the two-hour session, and enjoyed a light lunch afterwards. The classroom was set up so that each person cooked using stovetops provided at each table and with ingredients prepared ahead of time. We are deeply grateful to Michiko Ishikawa and the Okinawan government for the opportunity to share Okinawan cuisine with our members in Chicago. Stay tuned for the next upcoming class.





Membership Dues



Family: \$25. Individual: \$15

Once again, we are collecting membership dues for 2023. We would like to remind everyone that we are a non-profit 501(c)3 organization and your donations are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law. We will issue a receipt for donations \$100 and over upon request.

Membership benefits include:

- ★ Spring and Autumn Newsletters
- ★ Free admission to annual New Year's Party with Pot Luck buffet lunch
- ★ Free admission to summer picnic and discount on bento lunchbox
- ★ Opportunities to apply to \$1000 Scholarship program and Junior Study Abroad
- ★ Opportunity to be a part of the Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival in Okinawa
- ★ Free Okinawan traditional dance and sanshin lessons
- ★ Member's Directory.

****Please note that we will accept membership forms and fees at the picnic. We encourage any members who haven't paid yet for 2023 to please do so at the picnic or by mail or by Paypal.**

After receiving all membership fees, we will begin to remove names from our membership list of those who have not paid within the last three years (since 2020).

Thank you for your cooperation.

MEET THE CHICAGO OKINAWA KENJINKAI OFFICERS



PRESIDENT: Linda Asato
773-593-4009
lhasato1@gmail.com



VICE PRESIDENT: Minori Yamaki
yamakimr1@hotmail.com

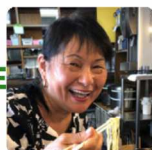


SECRETARY: Doris Uehara
847-340-0435
ueharadoris@gmail.com



TREASURER: Michiko Ishikawa
GOODWILL AMBASSADOR
Mishikawa817@gmail.com

MEET THE PERFORMANCE GROUP LEADERS



Eisa Taiko and Okinawan Dance
Mitsue Koch 773-706-0813
mk51@att.net



Chicago Okinawa Karate Y
GOODWILL AMBASSADOR
Yujiro Uza 972-351-6405
uzadojo@yahoo.com



Okinawan Sanshin
Mayumi Seino 630-303-7005
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

CHICAGO
OKINAWA KENJINKAI

P.O Box 94
Elk Grove Village, IL 60009

www.chicagookinawakenjinkai.com

St. Matthew's Lutheran Church and Japanese Preschool
stmatthews.ws Niles, IL seimataiyouchien.com

