



Community Impact Report

2024

A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

What an incredible year it's been! Thanks to your support, we've continued to celebrate, share, and grow the spirit of Japanese and Japanese American (JA) culture in ways that brought joy, connection, and meaning to so many.

This year we did something brand new and unique: our very first **Spirit of Japan Denver** event! Sold out crowds were buzzing with energy as they savored Japanese street and festival food, sipped curated Japanese spirits, and took in the vibrant atmosphere. It was a beautiful reminder of how powerful cultural celebration can be when we gather as a community.



We marked a true milestone with the **50th Annual Denver Cherry Blossom Festival**, which we again co-presented with Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple (TSDBT). With an estimated 30K-35K attendees, Sakura Square was alive with Japanese and JA sights, sounds, and flavors. It was a joyful showcase of heritage, creativity, and community spirit.

Our passion for passing on cultural knowledge to the next generation was stronger than ever. **Chibi no Gakkō** welcomed a record-breaking 42 students in 2024! Go For Broke National Education Center accepted three Denver candidates into their **National Torchbearer Program** centered around civic dialogue and community building, and four Colorado middle-schoolers attended **Yo! Camp** based in Southern California. We couldn't be more excited about the future that all of these groups represent.

Throughout the year, we also made cultural connections through our **Card Making Class**, where participants learned Japanese techniques in a warm, creative setting. The **Nikkei Treasures** pop-up at Sakura Square (in partnership with TSDBT) offered new and gently used Japanese items for sale, raising funds to support the redevelopment of this cherished community space.

Of course, none of this would be possible without you: our donors, volunteers, sponsors, members, and friends. Your generosity and commitment fuel everything we do. Together, we're not just preserving culture, we're building a more resilient, equitable, and compassionate community.

Thank you for being part of this journey. I can't wait to see where we go next!

With heartfelt gratitude,

Stacey I. Shigaya

NEW PROGRAMMING



The inaugural **Spirit of Japan Denver**, presented by **Sakura Foundation** and **Japan Taste Marketing**, was a vibrant celebration of Japanese culture centered around food and spirits. Held at Sakura Square on **August 23, 24, & 25, 2024**, this event brought together vendors who showcased both traditional and contemporary aspects of Japanese cuisine and spirits. It provided guests with a unique opportunity to savor authentic Japanese dishes and alcoholic beverages which make up the rich diversity of Japan's culinary landscape.

 **4 SOLD OUT SESSIONS**

5,100 ATTENDEES 

 **60+ SPIRIT BRANDS**

13 FOOD VENDORS 

 **\$10K+ AVG PER BOOTH REVENUE**

SOCIAL MEDIA STATS

26
INFLUENCERS
1.2M
IMPRESSIONS
560
PROMO CODE
REDEMPTIONS



DATES FOR THE NEXT SOJ EVENT:
SEPTEMBER 12-14, 2025



CONTINUING PROGRAMMING



The 50th Annual Denver Cherry Blossom Festival (DCBF) was an unforgettable celebration of Japanese and JA heritage and culture, lighting up Sakura Square on **June 22 & 23, 2024!** As it has been from the beginning, the festival was free and open to the public.

The festival had a diverse array of marketplace vendors offering unique merchandise, tasty treats, and beverages which paired beautifully with the exciting live stage performances.

Many thanks to our co-presenter, Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple, for their ongoing dedication to this cherished festival!

Financials

\$73,804

FESTIVAL EXPENSES

\$75,575 in 2023; \$60,410 in 2022

\$104,241

GROSS FESTIVAL INCOME:

\$57,000

Donations, Sponsorships, Grants

in line with 2023

\$47,241

*Revenue from Vendor Fees, Merch Sales, Beverages & Beer

\$5,768 less than in 2023

Net Profits

2023
\$34,735

2022
\$31,496

2024
\$30,436*



* Fukubukuro Bags were not offered in 2024. This initiative was started in 2021 when it became clear that it was still not safe to hold the festival that year. The bags were filled with DCBF-branded bento boxes and Japanese-themed donations & goodies.

2024 DENVER CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL PARTNERS

Asian Avenue Magazine | City & County of Denver | Group Project | Hensel Phelps | Jagged Mountain Craft Brewery
JFC International | MEP Commissioning | Pacific Mercantile | Republic Services | Rocky Mountain Bottle Company
Sakura Square LLC | Solera Apartments | Sunshine Productions LLC

CO-PRESENTERS



MEDIA SPONSOR



PLATINUM SPONSORS



GOLD SPONSORS



SILVER SPONSORS

Asahi Beer
Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck
ECO Products
Eldorado Natural Spring Water
FirstBank
SumUp

COMMUNITY SPONSORS

Asian Chamber of Commerce
Gail & Robert Ida
MEP Commissioning
Western Sugar
Petrocco Farms
Sharon Brooks

SHAPING THE FUTURE THROUGH PROGRAMMING

TORCHBEARERS

The Go For Broke National Education Center's **National Torchbearer Program** fosters the spirit of courage, sacrifice, and civic responsibility by engaging young leaders in meaningful dialogue and social issues. Launched in 2022, the program brings together diverse participants to explore topics of privilege, discrimination, and community building.



In 2024, Torchbearers convened 27 Fellows from across the country, including four from Denver: Kendall Kunitake, Tiffany Lin, Sara Ozawa, and Brent Sabati. The program began with a gathering at Little Tokyo in Los Angeles, where participants discussed issues such as the unhoused, migration, and how to navigate difficult conversations. The second convening took place in Denver in October, where Fellows explored Colorado's Japanese American history, visited significant sites such as Sakura Square and the Nisei Veterans Memorial at Fairmount Cemetery, and engaged in discussions on gun control, immigration, and the political climate.



YO! CAMP



Sakura Foundation was excited to continue its partnership with **Yo! Camp**, a week-long summer camp in Calabasas, CA that connects middle schoolers from Southern California, Chicago, Denver, and Seattle through engaging team-based activities. The camp provides a fun and safe environment for students of all backgrounds and ethnicities to experience Japanese/JA culture.

In its second year of participation, Sakura Foundation supported two counselors and four campers from Denver. With a total attendance of 140 campers, Yo! Camp continues to provide an unforgettable experience that fosters community, cultural learning, and lifelong friendships and memories.

SHAPING THE FUTURE THROUGH PROGRAMMING

Chibi no Gakkō



Chibi no Gakkō is a JA culture and heritage program that offers first through eighth graders a hands-on opportunity to explore the JA experience. Held every-other year, Chibi welcomed a **record-high 42 students** in its second session since partnering with Sakura Foundation. This milestone reflects the growing enthusiasm for cultural education and community connection among young participants from all walks of life.

Students were engaged in activities such as discovering their family and JA history, cooking Japanese cuisine, playing traditional games, learning dances and songs, and creating Japanese arts and crafts. High school students who completed the program returned as mentors, fostering leadership and community engagement. Lead teachers of Chibi are certified by the State of Colorado and generously volunteer their immense talents and time to the program.

2024 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



Aya Kawanabe

TRI- STATE/DENVER BUDDHIST TEMPLE /
SAKURA FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP

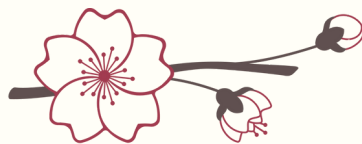


Milo deMars



Ellery Hora

SAKURA FOUNDATION
COMMUNITY SCHOLARSHIP



MIRAI GENERATIONS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

The **Mirai Generations Leadership Program (MGLP)** empowers young professionals to connect, inspire, and take action within the JA community. Through engagement with community leaders, participants develop leadership skills, cultural awareness, and a deeper understanding of their role in sustaining and enriching the JA community.

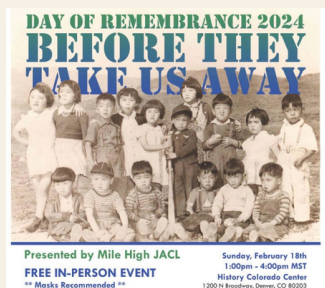
Offered every-other year, MGLP fosters lifelong connections among alumni, mentors, and peers while encouraging participants to contribute their time, ideas, and enthusiasm to JA initiatives. By building a strong leadership pipeline, the program ensures continued growth and engagement in the community for future generations. We look forward to welcoming a new MGLP class in 2025!

A RECAP OF SAKURA FOUNDATION AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

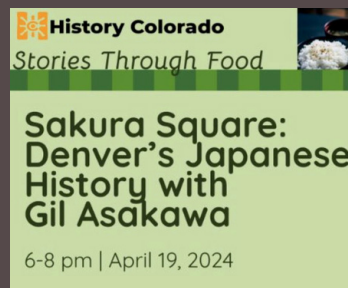
EVENTS PRESENTED



GRANT AWARDEE



SPONSORED EVENTS



DONATIONS MADE



2024 FINANCIALS

REVENUE

Contributions	\$35,712.84
Grants-unrestricted	\$9,000.00
Grants-restricted	\$500.00
Program Services	\$461,142.31
Investments	\$-186,194.55
Income	<u>\$1,300.00</u>
Total Revenue	\$321,460.60

EXPENDITURES

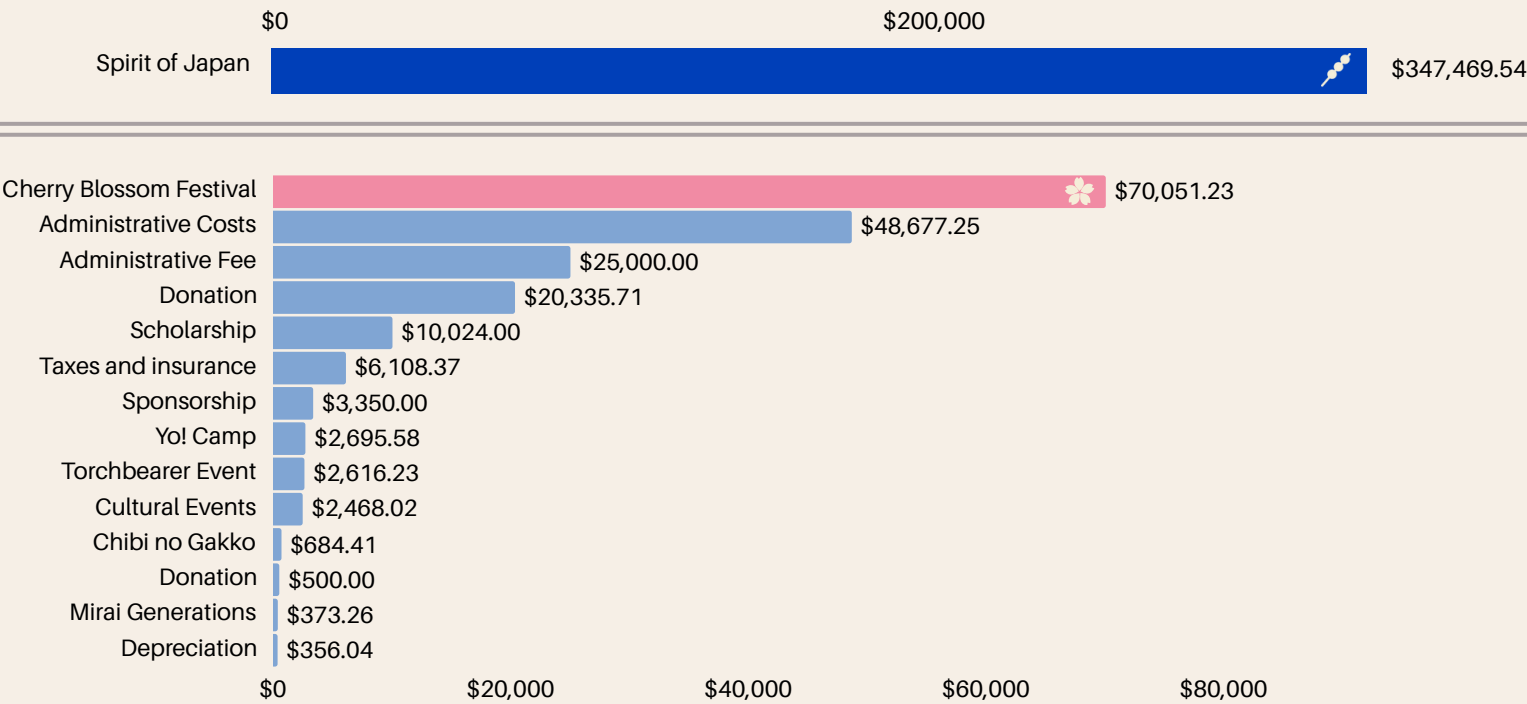
Program Services	\$466,729.98
Administrative	\$48,677.25
Administrative Fee to Denver Foundation	\$25,000.00
Depreciation	\$356.04
Taxes and insurance	<u>\$6,108.37</u>
Total Expenditures	\$546,871.64

*NET REVENUE

-\$225,411.04

*As sole equity holder of Sakura Square LLC, revenues are reported using the equity method in which the investor holds significant influence but does not exercise full control over the entity it owns.

BREAKDOWN OF 2024 EXPENSES



OUR VALUED MEMBERS AND DONORS



MEMBERS AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2024



Al Kawakami
Alan Miyagishi
Alex Kimata
Andres Alers
Annie VanDan
Bob Fujimoto
Brent Sabati
Carin Chapman
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Catherine Ishida
Clarence Low
Cody Walizer
Courtney Ozaki
Crystal Himmel
David Witucki
Deb Maruyama
Debby Nozawa-Tanigawa
Drew Domoto
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Kayoko Morton
Keiko Ozaki
Kenzo Kawanabe
Kevin Yoshida
Kirk Horiuchi
Lauren Ishida
Leilani Rose
Linda Miyamoto
Maggie Miller
Marie Miller
May Bewley
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Tom Migaki
Tyler Nitta
Vickie Handler
Winrich Cruz



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Carrie Fiore
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ESX DEI Short Films LLC
Fay Matsukage

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Sharon Eshima
Sherri M Nitta
Stacey Shigaya
Steven P Szymanski
Stevie Lo
Thomas Migaki
Whitney Cogar
William Kitamura

ABOUT SAKURA FOUNDATION



The Mission of Sakura Foundation is to celebrate and share Japanese and Japanese American culture and heritage in order to promote a more compassionate, resilient, and equitable society.

Sakura Foundation is a Colorado nonprofit and supporting organization to The Denver Foundation. It is the sole owner of Sakura Square LLC, located in the heart of downtown Denver.



2025

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Joni Sakaguchi, President
Sachi Ishida, Vice President
Kelly Yamasaki, Secretary
Derek Okubo, Treasurer
Drew Domoto
DJ Ida
Cathy Ishida
Alex Kimata
Tom Migaki
Kara Miyagishima
Nick Moskevich
Sherri Nitta
Charles Ozaki
Brent Sabati
Gary Yamashita

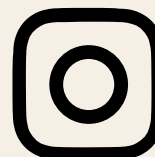
ADVISORY COUNCIL

Bob Fujimoto
Steve Nitta
Joe Ozaki
Richard Yoshida

MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

Stacey Shigaya, Executive Director
Steve Bernini, Program Associate
Tim Higashide, Executive Advisor
Junya Nakajima
Juri Levchuk

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