



フィラデルフィア日米協会

JAPAN AMERICA SOCIETY
OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA

2025 ANNUAL REPORT





WHO WE ARE

JASGP is a private nonprofit organization that has inspired mutual curiosity, understanding, and collaboration between Japan and Philadelphia for more than 30 years through art, business, and culture. We operate: Shofuso Japanese Cultural Center hosting over 30,000 visitors annually; produce the Subaru Cherry Blossom Festival with over 25,000 attendees; present a US-Japan Business and Public Policy Series; and provide Japanese arts, business, and cultural educational programming for all ages.

MISSION

JASGP inspires mutual curiosity, understanding, and collaboration between Japan and the Philadelphia region.

VISION

Vibrant connections
Philadelphia Japan
Transforming our worlds

PROGRAM AREAS

- Shofuso Japanese Cultural Center
- Subaru Cherry Blossom Festival
- US-Japan Business & Public Policy Series
- Japanese arts, business, and cultural programs



OFFICE ADDRESS

JASGP has a new office in Center City Philadelphia.

901 Market Street
Suite 3020, Office #66
Philadelphia, PA 19107

(267) 237-3550
info@japanphilly.org



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EXECUTIVE REPORT

Dear Fellow Members of the Japan America Society of Greater Philadelphia,

On behalf of our board of directors and management of the Japan America Society of Greater Philadelphia, I want to thank you for your interest, involvement and ongoing support of JASGP. In terms of staff size and resources, we are a relatively small institution, yet I believe that we punch well above our weight class in terms of the range, quality and distinctiveness of the programs we offer to the residents of greater Philadelphia.

This past year, the area surrounding Shofuso in Fairmount Park was ranked by travel resource Voyage Around as the 4th best place in the United States to enjoy cherry blossom trees. Shofuso is also at the epicenter of our signature event - the annual **Subaru Cherry Blossom Festival of Greater Philadelphia** and this year's event was one of our best ever, attracting over 25,000 happy attendees to Fairmount Park.

JASGP continued to expand our business programming during 2025 with two events, both focused on "innovation" in their sectors.

- In February, **Food Innovation – the Intersection of Tradition and Modernity** featured presenters who shared their insights and research into the fascinating future of food and flavor.
- In October, the **2nd Annual Life Sciences Dialogue - Innovation & Breakthroughs** was held with conference partners Jefferson Japan Center at Thomas Jefferson University and the City of Kobe.

2025 was also a year of JASGP shared the spotlight with celebrated Japanese masters across a wide range of artistic disciplines.

- In April, JASGP was one of the sponsors of the 2025 Louis I. Kahn award ceremony, honoring world-renowned Japanese architect **Kengo Kuma**. We were delighted when Kuma-san expressed interest in visiting Shofuso!
- Then, in May JASGP hosted the unveiling of a special work by master calligrapher, **Ebihara Rogen** at the Philadelphia Independence Visitor Center.
- In June **Joe Hisaishi**, the globally celebrated Japanese composer, conductor and pianist, conducted the first of two concert series in Philadelphia. JASGP members were thrilled with the opportunity meet and engage with this extraordinary musical artist, revered for his enchanting scores for more than 100 films, including those of animator Hayao Miyazaki and Studio Ghibli.
- In September, JASGP met with the internationally acclaimed Japanese architects **Takaharu and Yui Tezuka of Tezuka Architects**, in town for a talk at the University of Pennsylvania.
- Then, in October JASGP welcomed Rakugo master **Ryūtei Saryū** for engaging workshops and performances of this traditional art of Japanese storytelling.






In 2025 JASGP also introduced warmly received new programs:

- In September JASGP held its first **Aki Matsuri Fall Festival** at Ardmore's Schauffele Plaza. The festival was an immediate success, with rave reviews praising its authentic atmosphere.
- The relaunch of the **Japanese Conversation Club**, led with infectious enthusiasm by Yuka Usami, was another crowd favorite. Generally held at Shofuso on the last Wednesday of each month, the club warmly welcomed learners of all levels to practice conversational Japanese together.



Looking Forward

2026 promises to be a particularly exciting year. In addition to the 2026 Subaru Cherry Blossom Festival on March 28~29, key events include:

- **PHLY250 Sakura** – together with PHLY we will celebrate the completion of the planting of 250 trees in this special campaign, sponsored by the PHLY Foundation
- **Sakura Centennial** – 2026 marks the 100th anniversary of the original gift of 1,600 flowering trees from the Japanese government to Philadelphia, so special activities are being planned to commemorate this milestone!
- **250th Centennial District Celebration** – JASGP & Shofuso are key partners in special activities planned for June 2026 as part of Philadelphia's semiquincentennial celebrations.
- **Shofuso Heritage Campaign** – We are launching a special multi-year capital campaign to address critical preservation needs for the cultural treasure that is Shofuso, while also strengthening our organizational facilities and capabilities for the future. We invite you to join us in supporting this vital campaign—an investment in our shared legacy and collective future.
- **40th Anniversary of Kobe, Japan and Philadelphia as Sister Cities** –We will be welcoming Kobe City officials to Philadelphia to jointly celebrate this milestone year.
- **2026 Japan-US Grass Roots Summit** – In October, Philadelphia will be the host of the 33rd an annual gathering of Japanese and American citizens, who alternately travel across the Pacific to celebrate the historic friendship between Nakahama Manjiro and Captain William Whitfield from the 1840s. This people-to-people international exchange comes to life through the homestay experience, as local hosts welcome guests from across the ocean in the spirit of genuine omotenashi—hospitality rooted in open-hearted friendship.

All of these are made possible by you – our members, our sponsors and generous donors. On behalf of the Board of Directors of JASGP, I would like to thank you for your involvement and your generous support. We look forward to working with you to make 2026 an even more interesting and engaging year for JASGP.

Yoroshiku onegaishimasu
Kind Regards,

Jorge A. Leon

Jorge A. Leon. Board President

PROGRAMS

Attendance Numbers

31,000
Visitors to Shofuso

25,000
Cherry Blossom Festival

4,000
JASGP Events & Programs

Total Events and Programs: 113



Classes and Workshops include Japanese Language classes, Conversation Club and Rakugo Workshops

JASGP Partners with Business, Arts and Cultural Institutions to offer JASGP members free or discounted entry to special events, as well as two annual Business and Public Policy programs.

PECO Powering the Arts Grant supports the Japanese Arts & Culture Outreach to West Philadelphia Schools Program that provides educational group tours for K-12 students.

Special Events held at Shofuso including performances, festivals, holidays, exhibitions, members only nights, as well as arts and cultural demonstrations such as tea ceremony

Promotional Events are relevent Japanese Arts, Culture and Business programs hosted by Philadelphia area instituions that JASGP shares with our Community

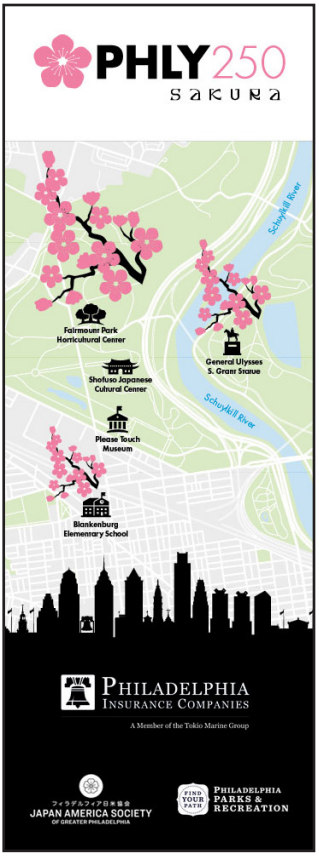
Group Tours and Rentals



Tea Ceremony: 249 Attendees

Urasenke Tea School
6 Tea Demonstrations

Omotesenke Tea School
4 Thick Tea and 4 Thin Tea Demonstrations



GOAL: 250 CHERRY TREES
Trees Planted in 2025: 107
Total Planted since 2023: 237
Final Planting in Spring 2026

Business Programs: 100+ Attendees





2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

















































2025 FESTIVAL RECAP

Subaru Cherry Blossom Festival

2025's festival was graced by a stunning display of the cherry trees at peak bloom, a truly magnificent experience. The entertainment was expanded to four stages, the vendor fair was the largest to date and with all of the additional activities offered Philadelphia has truly become one of the top Cherry Blossom Festivals in the nation. This year also marked the return of ticketed entry for the first time since Covid. The response was very positive from attendees who felt the festival was well worth the admission fee, (at times the line for admission wrapped around the block!) and the funds raised have allowed us to continue offering world-class programming to our community.





Aki Matsuri Fall Festival

JASGP would like to thank everyone for making our first Aki Matsuri Fall Festival such a big success! In Japan, these local festivals are a way for the community to come together and celebrate, and we are greatful that so many of you came out to have fun with us at our first event in Ardmore. We are looking forward to seeing you again next year, as we continue to find new ways to fulfill our mission to foster connections between Japan and the Greater Philadelphia region.





BUSINESS PROGRAMS

JASGP is proud to bring back our Business and Public Policy Programs as part of mission to support our business community. Starting in 2024 with our first Life Sciences Dialogue event, we have continued offering special programs as well as taking part in networking events offered by partner organizations.

Innovating at the Intersection of Tradition and Modernity: The Future of Food and Flavor

The first program in 2025 featured an engaging panel discussion that explored how Japanese innovation is shaping the future of food while honoring the traditions that define culinary excellence. Topics covered sustainable agriculture, the science of taste and flavor, entrepreneurship in the food industry, and the global expansion of Japanese cuisine. The event provided insights, inspiration, and a taste of the future.

2nd Annual JASGP Life Sciences Dialogue: Innovation and Breakthroughs

This highly successful event was an exploration of how Japanese life science and health tech innovations are entering the American market. From regenerative medicine to advanced robotics and generative AI, the speakers shared insights and lessons learned in navigating the opportunities and challenges of bringing breakthrough technologies from Japan to the world.

BUSINESS PROGRAM SPONSORS & PARTNERS

Asian American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Philadelphia
British American Business Council of Philadelphia
City of Kobe
Embassy of Japan
French American Chamber of Commerce Philadelphia
Fisher Phillips
National Association of Japan-America Societies (NAJAS)
Thomas Jefferson University



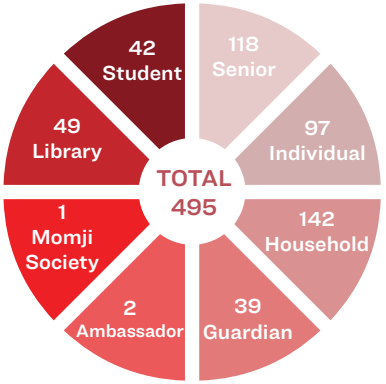




MEMBERSHIP



INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS



In Memorium

We would to recognize three former JASGP board members and two key leaders of the tea community who have passed away since our last Annual Report.



Miller Parker was a CEO of the Philadelphia Business and Technology Center, a real estate developer and a television and radio producer. He served as Vice President of the JASGP Board. He could be counted upon for his kindness, engagement and sound judgment



Former JASGP board President and GSK executive and SR One founder Peter A. Sears passed away in 2023. He served as JASGP board president for 15 years and played an instrumental role in establishing close relationships between JASGP and the region's bio-pharma industry.



Peter Benoliel, Chairman Emeritus of Quaker Chemical, was one of the JASGP founding members in 1994 - and a leader and contributor to JASGP for decades as well as being on the Board of Advisors.



Kejiroh Yama-guchi was a force in Philadelphia's tea practice community for more than a decade. As a volunteer at tea gatherings and demonstrations, and also as a voice of moderation and common sense on the JASGP Board, he will be missed deeply across the tea community of Philadelphia.



Theresa "Terry" Yoshida Sherwin was admired and beloved for her gentle manner and caring ways as an inspiring educator and leader. Terry was an important force behind the development the Chado Urasenke Tankokai tea organization in Philadelphia. She will be greatly missed by JASGP and so many in our community.

2023 - 2024 FINANCIALS

2023 - 2024 Financial Statements - Balance Sheet

	(Audited) 2023	(Audited) 2024
Current Assets		
Checking/Savings	51,402	42,093
Accounts Receivable	71,336	27,245
Other Current Assets	36,557	45,8736
Total Current Assets	156,997	528,074
Total Fixed Assets	9,562	4,065
TOTAL ASSETS	203,116	532,139
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	44,117	10,073
Credit Cards	71,751	25,021
Other Current Liabilities	23,959	37,605
Total Current Liabilities	139,827	72,700
Equity	91,697	459,439
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	231,524	532,139

JASGP continues to seek multi-year grants and sponsorships to ensure long-term success and sustainability.



2024-2025 SPONSORS, PARTNERS & FUNDERS

Corporate and Institutional Sponsors

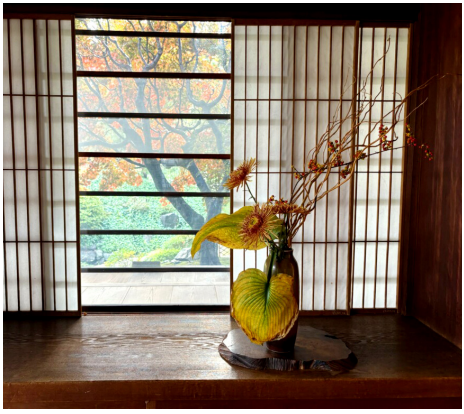
Subaru of America
Philadelphia Insurance Companies
Sekisui America Corporation
Center for East Asian Studies, Univ. of Pennsylvania
Fairmount Park Conservancy
The Fallser Club
Fisher Phillips
Holt
KPMG
Maido!
Mentholatum
Nissin
Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission
Philadelphia Parks and Recreation
Philadelphia Visitors Center Corporation
Philly PHLASH
Temple University Japan Campus

Partners

America-Japan Societies of Japan
American Public Gardens Assn
Barnes Foundation, Phila.
Chado Philadelphia Urasenke
City of Kobe, Japan
City of Philadelphia
Fairmount Park Conservancy
Fleisher Art Memorial, Phila.
George Nakashima Woodworkers
Global Philadelphia
Greater Philadelphia Gardens
Ichifuji Kai Dance, NY
Independence Seaport Museum
Japanese American Citizens League (JACL)
Jefferson Japan Center, Phila.
John Manjiro Commemorative Center for Int'l Exchange (CIE), Japan
Morris Arboretum, Phila.
Nat'l Assn of Japan America Societies (NAJAS)
NBC10/Telemundo62
Phila Asian American Film Festival
Philadelphia International Airport
Philadelphia Museum of Art
Please Touch Museum, Phila.
Raymond Farm Center for Living Arts and Design, New Hope, PA
Rosenbach Library and Museum
State of Pennsylvania
Tamagawa University, Japan
Temple University
Temple University Japan Campus
University of Pennsylvania
West Park Cultural Center
Woodmere Museum of Art

Funders

Embassy of Japan
JA Community Foundation
Japan Foundation of New York
McLean Contributionship
National Association of Japan-America Societies (NAJAS)
PECO
Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency
Pennyslvania Council on the Arts
Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC)
Pew Center for Arts and Heritage
Philadelphia Cultural Fund



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Board Officers

President
Jorge Leon, Corporate Executive, Aozora Bank, Ltd.
Honorary Co-Chair
Dennis Morikawa, *Partner, Retired, Morgan Lewis & Bockius, LLP; Honorary Consul General of Japan in Philadelphia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan in New York*



Vice President
Ren Egawa, President & CEO, Rexcel Group LLC
Treasurer
Vincent Drozd, Audit Partner, Consumer Products, KPMG LLP
Secretary
Nan Sato, Special Counsel, Fisher Phillips, LLP; Co-Chair International Committee, and Managing Partner, Tokyo Office, Fisher Phillips

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Yuji Takahashi, Vice President, Operations & Corporate Liaison, Tokio Marine North America, Inc.
David Briel, Vice Secretary, Center for Direct Investment in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Frank Chance, PhD, Adjunct Professor, East Asian Studies, University of Pennsylvania
John Clayton, Jr., Director, Diversity Inclusion & Workforce Initiatives, Independence Blue Cross
Patrick Dailey, President, Tun Tavern Legacy Foundation
Frederick R. Dickinson, Professor of History and Director of the Center for East Asian Studies at the University of Pennsylvania
Bradley Edmister, Partner, Mergers & Acquisitions, Japan Practice, Hogan Lovells, New York, NY
Leo A. Holt, President, Holt Logistics
Yoichi Hori, Chairman & CEO, Subaru of America
William Lillis, President and CEO, AGC Chemicals Americas Inc.
Ian Moran, President, Sekisui America Corporation
Josh Onishi, President & CEO, JO Capital LLC
Louis Padulo, President Emeritus, University City Science Center
Matthew Wilson, Dean, Temple University Japan
Mirai Yasuyama, Project Manager, Sky Design Studio
Joseph Zuritsky, Chairman and CEO, Parkway Corporation

STAFF ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Jorge A. Leon
As outgoing President of the Board, there are several important people at JASGP that I'd like recognize and to thank:



Alexander "Sandy" Polyakov is JASGP's Garden Curator and Preservation Director and has been at JASGP since 2016. A true student of Japanese gardening, he travelled to Kyoto in Japan to further enhance his knowledge of Japanese garden design, care and maintenance.



Candice Graham is the multi-talented Shofuso Site Manager and is responsible for managing all aspects of Shofuso's day-to-day operations. She has been with JASGP since 2018. During this past year approximately/over 31,000 people visited Shofuso. I would note that Candice is also a highly skilled manga artist.



Program Manager Mike Lewis has been with JASGP for 7 years. He's responsible for programming and event planning at Shofuso but also plays many roles in our organization. Everyone loves working with Mike and he has also played an instrumental role in organizing our weekly planning meetings that we hold for our annual Subaru Cherry Blossom Festival.



Senior Director Theresa Carney joined JASGP in 2024 and has made an immediate and positive impact on our direction and the quality of our operations. With a JD/MBA, Theresa provides JASGP much depth in many critical areas. It is her kindness, levelheadedness and people skills which make her a true delight to work with and such a valuable leader within our organization.



JASGP Executive Director Kazumi Teune is a remarkable person and one of the finest people that I have ever met. She's both likeable and kind, yet manages to remain laser focused on the tasks. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with Kazumi these past 2 years and have appreciated her patience and guidance. Kazumi is a treasure and JASGP is a better organization because of her.

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