

February 2019

From Executive Director Tom Ikeda

Dear Friends,

As we approach another Day of Remembrance, we are surrounded by reminders that in order to understand our present, we must know our past.

When I visit classrooms to speak to students, something I often say is that the WWII roundup and incarceration of Japanese Americans did not happen overnight. There were warning signs in the decades that preceded it—alien land laws, immigration bans, political propaganda. As keepers of this history, we know what happens when we allow our country to make decisions based in fear and hate. We know where this path leads. And because we know, we have a responsibility to act.

As I write this message, there are close to 50,000 immigrants incarcerated in government-run detention centers, many of them children and families—the highest numbers since Japanese American incarceration during WWII. Thousands more families remain separated by the Muslim Ban, the newly militarized border, prisons, deportations, and more.

At Densho, we believe this political moment requires a shift from conversation to action. We will continue to tell the Japanese American story, to educate current and future generations about our past, to provide the knowledge and tools to create a more just world. But we must also mobilize individuals to be the allies Japanese Americans needed in 1942. That's why we've spent the last year marching, speaking out at rallies, penning op-eds and open letters, organizing letter-writing campaigns, and holding public discussions.

And we are honored to be part of a groundswell of Japanese American activists, artists, and engaged citizens pouring their hearts into this work. We remain committed to fighting back against these reincarnations of our painful past—and this DOR I ask that you pledge to join us as we continue that fight.

Tom



We're thrilled to announce that we are continuing and expanding the artists initiative we launched in 2018! We invite proposals from US-based artists for works that further education and understanding of WWII Japanese American incarceration history. Projects may include, but are not limited to, film, public art, graphic art, written word, dance, music, and performance. **Deadline to apply: February 28, 2019.**

Proposed projects should do at least one of the following:

- promote education about Japanese American WWII incarceration
- connect Japanese American WWII incarceration history to current instances of racial injustice and inequity
- foster healing and dialogue around historical and intergenerational trauma

>> [Learn more and apply.](#)



Blog Highlight: My Kimono is Not Your Couture

Items called "kimono" are having a moment in the fashion world. But as guest blogger Emi Ito points out, this trend revolves around appropriation and erasure of histories that are both deeply personal and extremely political.

>> [Read more.](#)



Oral History Spotlight: Michiko Frances Chikahisa

Michiko Frances Chikahisa grew up in Los Angeles and was incarcerated with her family at the Rohwer concentration camp in Arkansas during WWII, when she was a teenager. In this clip she talks about her first experiences with dating in camp, and the Nisei soldiers who would take a break from training at nearby Camp Shelby to visit Rohwer for dancing and social activities.

>> [Watch now.](#)

Bystander training focuses on countering hate with solidarity

Posted on Feb 4, 2019 by Ryan Phelan



On February 19, Densho will commemorate the anniversary of EO 9066 with a bystander intervention training, produced in partnership with CAIR Washington. "We see this bystander training as a way to be better allies to the Muslim community, as well as other racial, ethnic and religious minorities," Tom Ikeda told the *The Seattle Globalist*

>> [Read more.](#)

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OHR Conversations: Densho

In this installment of Oral History Review's OHR Conversations, Editorial Assistant Nicole Strunk interviews Tom Ikeda, the founder and executive director of Densho. Together they discuss how the oral history project approaches saving the testimonies and experiences of incarcerated Japanese Americans during World War II.

>> [Listen to the interview.](#)

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