



April 2019

From Executive Director Tom Ikeda

Dear Friends,

This is the moment for the Japanese American community to take a stand.

On March 30, Japanese Americans from all over the country gathered in Dilley, Texas to hang 25,000 handmade origami cranes on barbed wire fences surrounding the largest family detention site in the United States. With taiko drums and chants of "Kodomo no tame ni! Nuestros niños, set them free!" (For the sake of the children! Our children, set them free!), they raised their voices in support of the 2,000 refugee women and children confined in this family prison on the southern border. Many of these Japanese American protesters then spent the rest of the week handing out backpacks to migrants released from the Dilley detention facility, meeting with undocumented organizers at the border, and speaking out against anti-immigrant bill [SB-4](#).

Especially moving to me was that several Japanese Americans who were children incarcerated at the nearby Crystal City prison camp during World War II were there to show their support to the imprisoned women and children. I find myself returning to the words of Satsuki Ina, who was born in Tule Lake and later spent part of her childhood in Crystal City (and who I had the pleasure of interviewing last month): "Americans turned their backs on us as we disappeared. Nobody marched for us, nobody protested, but today we bring our voices, our drums, our tsuru spirit to speak out against unjust mass incarceration."

I have so much praise and admiration for the participants and organizers of this gathering. In today's climate of fear and hate, we need this kind of compassionate leadership more than ever.

In solidarity,
Tom

Densho's Dispatch from #TsuruForSolidarity
at the Texas Border



Densho Communications and Public Engagement Director Natasha Varner traveled to Texas for last week's TsuruForSolidarity action and wrote about it for PRI's The World:

Outside a detention facility on the US-Mexico border, a group of Japanese Americans have strung together a chain of more than 25,000 origami cranes. They wear T-shirts and wave banners that say "Stop repeating history!" This group of Japanese Americans — survivors of WWII incarceration camps and their descendants — have a message: "Not OK then, not OK now!"

>> [Read more at PRI.org](#)

>> [See photos from the pilgrimage and protest.](#)

Meet Our Artists Initiative Winners!



We're pleased to introduce the two artists who will receive 2019 Densho Artists Initiative funding! Out of a wide selection of gifted artists and their powerful proposals, Brynn Saito and Mari Shibuya submitted ideas that we felt had the greatest potential to provoke important dialogues about trauma, healing, and the legacy of Japanese American WWII incarceration as it relates to contemporary injustices. We are also pleased to share that we were able to give several additional artists smaller grants, and we'll be sharing their work throughout the year.

>> [Read more about Brynn and Mari's projects.](#)

A call to Seattle-Area Nisei, Sansei, Yonsei, and Gosei

Mari Shibuya invites you to join in an intergenerational dialogue exploring the rippling impact of Japanese American WWII incarceration on the lived experience and cultural narrative of being Japanese American. Through storytelling, collaborative dialogue, and creativity, Mari will lead participants to explore the intersections of our stories and translate this into a public artwork. Three sessions will occur on select Sunday afternoons in May and June. Exact details are forthcoming.

>> Contact Mari if you would like to join the process: theartofmarishibuya@gmail.com

Opportunities to Engage with Densho in California, Seattle, and Heart Mountain!

Los Angeles, April 11 & 12

A Densho team will be traveling to Los Angeles this week to share our plans to keep the WWII Japanese American story alive. Founding Executive Director **Tom Ikeda** will present the possibilities available with an online resource—and ask to hear your ideas!

If you would like to attend either of these events, please RSVP to danielle.higa@densho.org. We look forward to seeing you!

Thursday, April 11, 4:00-5:30 pm at the Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute (1964 W 162nd Street, Gardena, CA 90247)

Friday, April 12, 12:00-1:30 pm at the Social Hall @ East San Gabriel Valley Japanese Community Center (1203 West Puente Avenue, West Covina, CA 91790)

San Francisco, April 13



Traces of America's dark history still haunt us today. Join us as we confront this haunting through art and conversation. The program will feature a screening of **Daryn Wakasa's** short horror film, *SEPPUKU* (2017), which treats the lingering effects of the World War II incarceration of Japanese Americans as a form of intergenerational haunting. Poet **Melissa Bennett** will share writing that explores the painful resonances of the boarding school and mental health systems that separate Native people from their culture, home land, language, faith, family, and community.

Wakasa and Bennett will then discuss their work in conversation, exploring overlaps in Japanese American and Indigenous history, and creative possibilities for healing in community, moderated by Densho's **Natasha Varner**. This event will be followed by a short convivial gathering in order to create additional space for conversation and connection.

Saturday, April 13, 4:00-6:00 pm at The Presidio (100 Montgomery Street, San Francisco, CA 94129)

Co-presented by [Then They Came for Me](#) and Densho.

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

Seattle, May 18

A banner for a workshop titled "EXAMINING RACE & DISCRIMINATION THROUGH ORAL HISTORY". The banner features a blue background with white text. Below the title, it says "A FREE WORKSHOP FOR SECONDARY TEACHERS OF SOCIAL STUDIES AND ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS". On the right side of the banner, there is the Densho logo, which consists of three concentric circles and the text "DENSHO" above "densho.org". The background of the banner shows a group of people in a workshop setting.

EXAMINING RACE & DISCRIMINATION THROUGH ORAL HISTORY

**A FREE WORKSHOP FOR SECONDARY TEACHERS OF
SOCIAL STUDIES AND ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS**



Teachers will gain strategies, terminology, and frameworks to lead these important conversations in the classroom. Engaged learning techniques such as Harvard Project Zero Thinking Routines be will be used to help teachers work with students to think critically about these topics.

The workshop will center around stories of discrimination as told by Japanese American and African American oral history narrators. Their stories will be framed within a larger historical and contemporary context in order to show how structural racism impacts individual lives.

Attendees will receive a \$100 stipend. They will also come away with instructional activities they can incorporate into teaching right away. Professional development credit is available.

Saturday, May 18 from 8:30 am - 3:00 pm, John Stanford Center for Educational Excellence (2445 3rd Ave S, Seattle, Room 2700)

>> [Register.](#)

>> [Download a flyer and help us spread the word](#)

This opportunity is made possible by the Kip Tokuda Memorial Civil Liberties Public Education Program.

Heart Mountain Pilgrimage, July 24

BE YOUR FAMILY'S HISTORY KEEPER

*Workshop with Densho Digital Archivist
Caitlin Oiye Coon and other Densho Staff
at the 2019 Heart Mountain Pilgrimage.*



Join Densho for a workshop that will equip you with tools for keeping your family's incarceration story alive for future generations. You will learn how to create your own in-home archive, including how to organize, digitize, safeguard historical materials, and collect oral histories. There will be opportunities to learn techniques through hands-on activities and you are invited to bring up to five items that Densho staff will digitize on the spot for you.

This is a pre-pilgrimage event for the annual [Heart Mountain Pilgrimage](#). Space is limited so contact Dakota Russel today if you're interested: dakota@heartmountain.org or 307-754-8000, ext. 103.

>> [Learn more about the Pilgrimage and register.](#)

Look for Densho staff on the programs for the 2019 [Rohwer](#) and [Minidoka](#) pilgrimages too!

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