

March 2020

From Executive Director Tom Ikeda

Dear friends,

Life in Seattle and across our country has been upended by COVID19 in the past few weeks. Events and travel plans have been cancelled, schools have closed, businesses and restaurants have shuttered. Thousands of workers — including the majority of the Densho staff — have shifted to a remote work model for the foreseeable future. We're taking these drastic measures in hopes of quelling the spread of this virus, and I know many of us are grappling with fear, uncertainty, and the depressive effects of being isolated from our communities.

In the face of this, I just read the following words, "*We're all better off when we're all better off.*" Eric Liu, founder of Citizen University, wrote these words to remind us that during these difficult times our communities are only as healthy as our least healthy members. It is a reminder to keep our elders safe, healthy, and to help lift their spirits by staying in regular contact — even if just by phone or writing a letter.

We also cannot forget about incarcerated immigrants and individuals uniquely at risk today. In a [March 12 press release](#), Detention Watch Network executive director Silky Shah warned that:

"The threat of a coronavirus outbreak in immigration detention facilities is imminent and the government needs to act immediately by releasing people from detention. Lives are already at risk in detention, and with the spread of coronavirus, people are sitting ducks in a system notorious for its fatally flawed medical care."

During WWII, Japanese Americans were at risk and died while incarcerated in close quarters with unsanitary conditions and outbreaks of measles, tuberculosis, polio, and flu. [Health care in these concentration camps](#) that held Japanese Americans was sub-standard. This is also true with the detention centers holding immigrants today. I agree with Silky that these detainees need to be released immediately. Government leaders have restricted travel and shut down schools to protect people during this crisis. They can also immediately release these individuals for humanitarian purposes from this unnecessary confinement. It is the right thing to do.

As always, please reach out to me at tom.ikeda@densho.org if you have thoughts you want to share.

In gratitude,

Densho in the News: Days of Remembrance, Days of Action



On February 23rd, several hundred gathered outside the gates of the Northwest Detention Center to demand the site's closure. We also rallied at Bellevue College after Erin Shigaki's DOR mural was defaced, and we provided research and commentary in opposition to the planned relocation of our local National Archives and Records Administration site. Read more:

["Day of Remembrance, Day of Action" in Tacoma draws multigenerational, multiethnic crowd, International Examiner](#)

[Crowd remembers Japanese incarceration at immigrant detention center in Tacoma, KNKX](#)

[Bellevue's anti-Japanese history 'censored' at city-run arts festival, artists say Crosscut](#)

[Photo Essay of the February 23 Day of Remembrance, Day of Action, Densho Blog](#)

[Washington AG says legal action possible over closure of Seattle's national archives KING 5 News](#)



Save the date for Densho Dinner 2020!

As we all do our part to keep ourselves and our community safe and healthy, we are looking forward to a time when we can come together again. We hope you'll join us by attending the annual Densho Dinner on **October 24**. This event is open

to all — not just our Pacific Northwest community — and we hope you'll plan to join us for an evening of inspiration and healing.

October 24, 2020

5:00-6:30 PM Sushi & Sake Reception and Silent Auction

6:30-9:00 PM Dinner Program

Meydenbauer Center, Bellevue

Ticket Price: \$125 (Fair market value of a ticket is \$75)

Dress Code: Cocktail Attire

>> Keep an eye on [the Densho Dinner page](#); we'll be adding program updates and more information soon!



Oral History Spotlight: Nobu Suzuki

After the outbreak of World War II, Nobu Suzuki assisted Japanese Americans who had lost their jobs and helped those who wanted to move inland to avoid the mass incarceration. Her husband was a doctor before World War II, and in this clip, Nobu talks about difficulties trying to obtain typhoid fever shots for the Japanese American community as they were being sent to concentration camps.

>> [Watch the clip.](#)



Blog Highlight: The Nisei Women Who Fought—and Won—an Early Redress Battle in Seattle

In February 1942, the Seattle School Board accepted the forced resignations of 27 Nisei women working as clerks for the school district. As one of the women later said, “the very school system which taught us about democracy, liberty, and justice for all, failed to support the Americans of Japanese ancestry against the mass deprivation of rights of citizens.”

But four decades later, those women fought for, and won, a resolution to apologize and compensate them for their wartime dismissal. It was a small but powerful early victory for the Japanese American redress movement — and an indication of more to come.

>> [Read more.](#)



Blog Highlight: So Who is Miller Freeman Anyway?

Last month, a Bellevue College administrator defaced the text of a mural by Erin Shigaki that called attention to the role of Miller Freeman in agitating against Japanese Americans. Densho executive director Tom Ikeda takes a close look at who Miller Freeman was, and why some prefer to keep this

history hidden.

>> [Read more.](#)



Postponed: Tsuru for Solidarity Pilgrimage

Statement from Tsuru for Solidarity: Due to COVID-19, for health and safety reasons, we have made the difficult decision to postpone the National Pilgrimage to Close the Camps in Washington, D.C. Postponement does not mean we will fall silent. Prison camps are places where people are acutely vulnerable to health complications and disease outbreaks. **The dates we had planned to march in DC, June 5-6, 2020, will be a national weekend of physically distanced but socially unified Tsuru for Solidarity actions across the country.**

>> [Read more.](#)



Postponed: Densho Community Night at Super Six

In light of current events, our March 19th community night fundraiser at Super Six will be postponed. We look forward to connecting with you all once it's safe for us to do so. In the meantime, [Super Six remains open for pick-up and delivery](#) in the Seattle area so we encourage you to show them the support they plan to show us in the near future.

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