



**The Japanese American Service Committee  
Serve, Preserve, Grow Campaign  
Case For Support**

As guardians of Japanese American culture, we are called to serve our community with great care and integrity. Our history is made up of an invaluable collection of knowledge and wisdom. It is a record of our ancestors' stories and experiences, the lessons of our history, and the values that have shaped our culture. It is the very fabric of our society. When we preserve the past, we are not just preserving history, we are also preserving the potential for the future.

The Serve, Preserve, Grow Campaign is the Japanese American Service Committee's (JASC) special fundraising effort to support our potential for the future. Through the campaign, we seek to raise financial resources to renovate our new building, expand our services, and secure our place in history.

**JASC History**

The Japanese American community has played an active role in the development of the United States for over 150 years. It is the unique charge of JASC to preserve the community's rich heritage and traditions for future generations while simultaneously providing critical social and cultural services to all. As we prepare for JASC's future, we must first recognize the moments that shaped our present -

1946 – JASC was founded as the Chicago Resettlers Committee to assist Japanese individuals who were incarcerated during WWII and who then relocated to Chicago after the war. The organization provided access to employment, housing, counseling, and to ease their adjustment to a new community.

1954 – The organization changed its name to the Japanese American Service Committee, acknowledging that the Japanese American immigrants had fully resettled and were putting down roots in Chicago.

1960 – During the 1960s, JASC reevaluated its priorities and established its flagship Older Adult Day and Home Support Services, as well as various community-wide programs and arts and culture events. It moved to its current facility located at 4427 N. Clark Street in 1969.

1980 – Sensing a need for housing assistance for aging Japanese Americans, JASC opened a 200-unit congregate housing unit dubbed the Heiwa (Peace) Terrace. Heiwa Terrace remains open today under the operation of the JASC Housing Corporation.

2022– After decades of growth and recognizing the evolving needs of the Midwest's multicultural communities, JASC purchases its forever home at 5700 N. Lincoln Ave in Chicago. This facility will increase JASC's capacity to provide existing and new programs and services, cultivate a welcoming community space, and expand The Legacy Center; its archive of Japanese American artifacts.

JASC has evolved into an organization that serves people of all ages, races, and ethnicities from a foundation of Japanese American values. The core of JASC's mission is to preserve and raise awareness of Japanese American culture and heritage and promote the physical and spiritual well-being of Japanese Americans and the greater multicultural community in the Midwest.



## **Serve, Preserve, Grow Campaign**

The Serve, Preserve, Grow Campaign will:

- Establish JASC as a “Chicago destination center” with a facility that is conducive to hosting a variety of highly professional programs, services, and events to serve our multicultural community and share the unique Japanese American history.
- Allow us to increase our reach to the dispersed Japanese American population across the Midwest, providing broader services and coordinating with other organizations to share resources and consolidate efforts.
- Increase our capacity to serve as a convener for all Japanese American community organizations, establishing a common purpose and opportunities for collaboration.
- Enhance and grow our social services.

The new facility and support sought through the Serve, Preserve, Grow Campaign will provide resources to ensure that we are able to continue to serve individuals and our community, preserve our culture and history, and grow our impact.

### **Serve**

As mentioned earlier, JASC was originally founded to support the needs of Japanese immigrants providing information and referrals to necessary services such as employment, housing, counseling, and mass naturalization classes. Although its purpose has evolved, it remains grounded in providing social and cultural services that are designed for everybody while at the same time being responsible for meeting the needs of Japanese Americans.

Today JASC offers a variety of social and cultural services tailored to the needs of both the young and aging members of our community. With a large segment of the population aging, JASC identified a need for providing services that support aging adults in maintaining a high quality of life. We care for these aging members of our community through our Adult Day Services (ADS) and Home Support Services (HSS) programs. The goal of these two programs is to support aging adults with maintaining their independence and quality of life.

The ADS program operates on-site daily activities Monday - Friday from 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM for older adults. The ADS program provides clients with daily supervision in a safe and stimulating environment, out-of-the-house activities, educational workshops, and health screenings in a social, caring, and medically supervised environment. Through the ADS program, we also provide transportation to and from the center on a wheelchair lift-equipped van for clients within a designated parameter.

The HSS program has over 75 Homemakers out in the community who provide individualized services depending on the client’s needs, including basic housekeeping, meal preparation, grocery shopping, medication reminder check-ins, transportation services, personal care, temporary assistance after hospitalization, and so much more. These programs not only provide aging adults with essential services, social connections, and a sense of belonging but also alleviate some stress for the family members caring for them.

For young people we provide our Youth Volunteer Program offering leadership and volunteer opportunities to help foster and empower the next generation of leaders. JASC also provides annual



scholarships to hardworking high school and college students. JASC has stewarded over 140 scholarships totaling \$230,000+ over the past 25 years, supporting students in such pursuits as attending nursing school, studying to become a pediatrician, and starting a music-focused nonprofit.

While JASC's services are open to all, many of our constituents identify as Japanese Americans. Illinois is within the top ten states with the largest Japanese American population, with Chicago ranking within the top ten metropolitan areas with over 24,000 individuals. We provide services to meet the specific needs of our Japanese American clients such as translation services, social gatherings conducted in Japanese for older adults to converse in their native language, Japanese language classes for all ages, and Japanese art and cultural classes.

### **Preserve**

It's important to note that, as part of the forced resettlement, the government pressured Japanese Americans to shed their original identities and assimilate. As a result, aspects of the culture have faded, and many in the younger generation are unaware of their complex past and valuable traditions. JASC's mission is to preserve the unique Japanese American heritage and traditions so that later generations will have the opportunity to experience Japanese American culture firsthand. JASC serves as an advocate, partner, and support system to this cultural community.

JASC offers programs for people of all ages focused on sharing Japanese American identity, culture, and language including Tampopo (a program that exposes preschool-aged children to Japanese language and culture), Donguri Kai (Japanese language and culture classes for elementary-aged students), Ikebana (flower arranging classes), calligraphy workshops, and various other cooking and art classes. JASC's community events, like the Holiday Delight and Kodomo Matsuri celebration, Soup and Rice, along with co-sponsored events such as Kagami-Biraki, Day of Remembrance, and the Japanese community picnic provide opportunities for knowledge sharing and intergenerational connections. JASC has also established deep partnerships with other organizations serving Japanese and other Asian Americans across Chicago, including the Chicago Japanese American Council, Pan-American Voter Empowerment Coalition, Tohkon Judo Academy, and Stir Friday Night! an Asian American improv troupe. Our partners greatly broaden the services, programs and events JASC is able to offer and we are looking forward to the new facility which will have space that will provide our partners with more opportunities for on-site collaborations.

JASC also houses the Legacy Center, a treasure trove of materials that reflect the history of Chicago's Japanese American community. For nearly 25 years, the Legacy Center has collected books, documents, photographs, audiovisual items, artifacts, and ephemera that provide a window into the experiences of Japanese American families, individuals, organizations, and businesses from the late 19th century to the present day, with a particular focus on WWII incarceration and resettlement in Chicago. Today, the Legacy Center is the Chicago area's only publicly accessible, professionally managed, community-based archives specializing in Japanese American history. With approximately 900 linear feet of archival collections and 1200 books, we are trusted by community members as a reliable, responsible, trustworthy place to deposit their families' historic materials and are valued by educators and researchers as a crucial source of information and assistance.



## **Grow**

The Board and senior leadership recognized that in order for JASC to continue its work and secure its future, the organization needed to find a more appropriate facility to support its mission and demand for services. JASC has long outgrown its current 1960s-era facility due to its lack of appropriate, usable, and sufficient space and antiquated infrastructure. The JASC Board sought to find a new building that will serve as a destination and community center with a design that showcases Japanese culture, tradition, and community. After an extensive search, our new forever home at 5700 N. Lincoln Ave in Chicago was purchased in 2022 and is located 2.9 miles from our current facility. Once the renovations are complete, the new facility will provide more flexible, usable space, increased technological capabilities, and proper, safe storage for The Legacy Center's valuables, artifacts, and scholarly research. JASC's forever home will allow us to expand operations by giving us the resources to 1) serve more aging adults through our Adult Day Services program – doubling our capacity to 60 individuals; 2) offer virtual services to reach larger numbers of dispersed Japanese Americans; 3) provide more social-cultural services for younger generations; 4) facilitate new lasting partnerships with other like-minded organizations; and 5) allow The Legacy Center to accommodate an increased number of academic research requests and expand its past initiatives, including the Oral History Project (which compiles interviews from community members about incarceration and resettlement) and the Summer Internship Program (where participants learn about archival research, narrative structure and storytelling, and audiovisual production).

## **Timeline and Fundraising**

To realize the full potential of our new forever home, JASC is in the process of extensively redesigning and renovating the existing building, as well as purchasing furniture and equipment. We are working with a highly recommended design and construction team made up of METIS Design, CDI Construction and Colliers. The renovation is in process and is expected to conclude in the fall of 2024.

We launched the Serve, Preserve, Grow Campaign to raise funds to help cover the cost of the renovations to the new building and the expenses related to the program expansion enabled by the new facility. The total cost of this investment in JASC's future is approximately \$10 million. 5700 N. Lincoln was purchased for \$2.2 million. The renovations will cost \$7.8 million. JASC sold the Clark Street building for \$3.3 million and raised through major planned gifts and investments an additional \$2.7 million. The Board of Directors authorized launching the Serve, Preserve, Grow Campaign in 2023 for JASC to raise the remaining \$4 million from various philanthropic and private sources. Any additional funds raised through the Serve, Preserve, Grow Campaign will be used to support expenses related to program expansion. To date, the Serve, Preserve, Grow Campaign has raised over \$3 million, leaving approximately \$1 million left to raise.

With your support of the Serve, Preserve, Grow Campaign we can grow our capacity to serve, and ensure that our history is preserved and continues to inspire future generations. Thank you for considering a contribution to JASC's Serve, Preserve, Grow Campaign. Please contact Mike Takada or Deborah Schwan should you have any questions or are interested in making a gift to the Campaign.