



JSS NEWS

Official Newsletter of Japanese Social Services

We have quite a lot on the agenda now that the weather is improving.

By David Ikeda

Spring is finally here and we have quite a lot on the agenda now that the weather is improving.

First, our Holiday Drive was a great success. JSS made the Christmas season a little brighter for 29 families or 64 individuals with gifts of toys, food and clothing. The gifts as you know are all provided by the wonderful members of our community who deposited the gift items in the donation boxes set up in all of our partner churches and organizations who have always placed them in prominent locations in their buildings.

I must also thank the churches that participated in the Joy of Christmas Concert. We raised over a thousand dollars from this one event. Also, our staff and I had a great time. I would also like to thank the Toronto Buddhist Church for making a generous and unannounced donation of \$2,500 and the NJCA (The New Japanese Canadian Association) for its generous gift of \$3,000. As well I would like to acknowledge the generosity of our private donors like board member and fund raising chair Junko Yamamoto for her and her husband Sam's donation of \$10,000 as well as volunteer Tak Yoshida who donated \$1,000. Tak san cooked for our annual volunteer

appreciation day. Needless to say it was the first time in JSS history that we had an event where we rented a room, provided lunch at no charge to our volunteers, gave them a small gift and still made a profit.

Upcoming programs include the Single Mothers' Support Group. This is quite a successful program whereby Japanese-speaking mothers raising children on their own or preparing to separate with their partners meet once a month to discuss and offer each other support. JSS also provides practical support such as specialists and speakers on such topics as employment and law. Mrs. Eiko Mernaugh generously funds this much-needed activity while the JCCC offers us space for the childcare services.

Also coming up is our Annual General Meeting set for Thursday, May 14, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. at the JCCC. The room has yet to be determined but signs will be posted. If you are a member and if you can, please join us. As has been tradition, the board members will provide refreshments or a light dinner. The most interesting presentation will be by our counsellor Mr. Kuge.

Honestly I do not remember a

time when we had so many difficult counselling cases converging at the same time. Our staff has been working much overtime helping clients in cases involving attempted suicide and an unfortunate large increase in victims of domestic violence.

The 48 cases of domestic violence that was reported in the last Counsellor's Corner in JSS Online which was written in November has been revised upward to 55 for the year ending on December 31st. This is a big increase. The number of Japanese speaking people is so small that 55 cases in just one year is devastating. And for an agency as small as JSS, increases in these sorts of cases involve a lot of work, time and compassion on the part of our counseling staff. But then again that is why we are here. So we do what we can.

If you can, please consider making a donation or helping us in some other way such as volunteering in one of our programs. Our counsellors are doing very important work, although regarding domestic violence we are only helping a small portion of the woman and children who are the victims of it. After all, we only help those who call us. It is an unsettling thought but if you identify as being of Japanese origin, speak Japanese as your mother tongue and are involved in activities in the Japanese speaking community, chances are high that you know at least one of those victims. It is a certainty that you have met one of them.

Toke and His Team to Raise Money at Toronto Challenge

By David Ikeda

The Toronto Challenge is set for Sunday, June 14 at 9:00 a.m. and JSS is once again participating as one of the registered community partners. The annual event is in its 24th year and is one of our most important fundraisers. Last year JSS raised around 21,000 dollars from this one event alone.

As most of you already know, the vast majority of that money was raised by one man, 88 year old board member Tokugi "Toke" Suyama. Mr. Suyama has been participating in the Toronto Challenge for many years. Also joining him will be JSS supporter and friend 91 year old Mr. Mits Ito.

This year's walk or run-a-thon will start rain or shine at 9:00 am. For those of you who do not know, the Toronto Challenge is an official fund raising event run by the City of Toronto for community groups like ours that help seniors and provide services for those in need. The event comprises a 5 km run, a 5 km walk and a 1 km walk through downtown Toronto, starting at Metro Hall. Participants will do one of the aforementioned races.

Walkers like Toke-san, in the days preceding the race will ask for pledges of money for JSS for participating and

completing the event from members of our community.

If you want to sponsor Toke-san or any of our other "walkers," please make your cheques payable to Japanese Social Services and mail them to our address. Make it clear in the memo on the cheque that the funds are for The Toronto Challenge. JSS like in all previous years will report the funds collected to the City and issue you a tax receipt.

Better still, if you want to participate, please enter and

fill out a registration form. The cost of participating is a small fee of \$20 for an adults and \$10 for children and seniors. Again please make it clear that you are raising funds for JSS. Our address, postal code and telephone number can be seen in this Newsletter. The forms and information about the walk or run can be found on the Toronto Challenge website at: www.toronto.ca/challenge. Once again, thanks for your support.

There's a lot more information on the web. Check us out at: www.jss.ca and on Facebook (as Japanese Social Services)

Read the JSS blog at: www.jss.ca/blog

It is a great source of opinion and information written by experienced members, supporters and concerned persons. Our members are encouraged to contribute.

JSS News Acknowledgements

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