
^PRESS RELEASE

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ORGANIZATION

Cherry Blossom Festival So CA/RyOMA
686 S. Arroyo Parkway, #221, Pasadena, CA 91105

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**Celebrate Spring at the
2007 CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**
www.cherryblossomfestivalsocal.org

Date: Saturday, March 31, 2007: 11 am – 9 pm - Sunday, April 1, 2007: 11 am – 5 pm

Location: Japanese American Cultural & Community Center
244 S. San Pedro Street, Los Angeles 90012

Entrance: FREE

Named as the #1 Pick of the “Five Worth the Drive” by the Automobile Club of Southern California’s Westways Magazine - March/April 2007 Issue.

EVENT OVERVIEW:

The 6th Annual Cherry Blossom Festival will be on March 31st & April 1st moving from its former location in Pasadena to the streets of Little Tokyo in downtown Los Angeles. This event is produced by RYOMA, founded in 2002 for the purpose of administering cultural events to bridge generations and expose the mainstream population to various diverse cultural arts.

The event celebrates its 6th year and has become one of the most impressive multi-cultural events in southern California. In 2006, even with torrential rains on Saturday, attendance was still at over 10,000 people and we anticipate with the strong support of the Los Angeles community, that we can grow our attendance to 20,000.

The Cherry Blossom Festival is produced by a 100% volunteer team and underwritten by private donations and sponsorships. WOW! Productions is the pro-bono festival producer. Entrance is provided free to all attendees.

- **Main Stage:** The main stage will serve as the focal point for the ever popular Annual Runway Fashion Show on Sunday and our first Kimono Fashion Show on Saturday. It also includes main stage productions which includes cultural performances of Taiko, Japanese dancing, Japanese Artist group P.O.E. as well as our Awards Presentations.. The 2007 Cherry Blossom Festival will launch its first Show on the Plaza “Hello Little Tokyo” on Saturday evening at 6:30 pm which spotlights the history of the Little Tokyo district of downtown Los Angeles through stories, song and dance. Directed by Actor Rodney Kageyama performances include Makena-Toast Tajiri & Siena Lee, Ryuku Koku Matsuri Taiko and featuring Gankyo Nakamura (Shochiku Grand Kabuki) performing “Kai no Zanei”.
- **Opening Ceremony** is on Sat. at 11 am with opening toast by Consul General of Japan Kazuo Kodama.
- **Special Recognitions:** The Cherry Blossom Festival So CA will continue its Award Recognitions: Teachers Making a Difference Awards, the Senator Daniel Inouye Cherry Blossom Leadership Awards, Community Service Recognition and the George Kiriyama Educational Excellence Award which promotes education and mentorship of Asian American issues in the development of leaders honors Alan Nishio. 2007 Leadership Award honorees include: Commander Terry Hara; Jerry Fukui; Japanese American National Museum and the Rafu Shimpo. Also being honored is the Japanese American Cultural & Community Center with a Special Blossom Award. Saturday starting at 12:30 p.m.
- **Cultural Pavilion:** Stone Ishimaru displays his photograph document of 10 internment camps and Santa Anita Assembly Center, exhibits by the Japanese American National Museum, Kimekomi Dolls, Sashiko, Shibori and the Marital Arts History Museum, the first of its kind in the world. Origami Magic with Michael, Joe & Yami.

- **Ondo Dancing-** Festival attendees are invited to join the San Fernando Valley Japanese American Community Center Dancers (SFVJACC) and the Japanese American National Museum (JANM) Dancers in “*Dancing on San Pedro Street*” on Sun. at 2pm
- **Runway & Kimono Fashion Show:** The 2006 Fashions included designers Sue Wong, Citron, Jimmy Au’s for Men 5’8” and Under, Plum Pudding – Fashions are showcased for women, men and children. Models are from the community, with participation from Nisei Week and Miss Chinatown. The Fashion Show has become a favorite of the Festival! – Sunday at 3pm
Maruachi USA will present the Festival’s first Kimono Show on Saturday at 3pm
- **Martial Arts Arena:** An annual favorite with attendees is the two-day nonstop martial arts performances throughout the festival capturing the skills of a variety of martial arts performances.
- **Hawaiian Village:** This area is an event on its own! Attendees have the opportunity to understand the culture of Hawaii as they participate in lei making demonstrations and hula dancing and experience a unique selection of crafters and entertainment – a true Polynesian experience!
- **FamilyFun Fest Area:** What would a festival be without a cultural story teller provided by actors of the SAG Foundation’s BookPals, and an expanded kids craft area with a variety of free interactive crafts which in 2006 included: *Mini Stars, Fortune Cookies, Paper Dolls, Fish Kite, Fanss & Origami*, community organizations, inflatable games and much more. This Family Fun Fest will provide entertainment with a solid family focus - a community event with social responsibility. Family is a critical component to any community! And the Festival will once again have its popular fundraiser – where attendees make their own colorful and creative Cherry Blossom Mad Hatter Hat.
- **Craft, Food Court & Corporate/Commercial Vendors:** For the 2007 Cherry Blossom Festival, organizers have assembled a variety of 90 Japanese, Asian, Hawaiian and general crafters and vendors ensuring attendees have numerous choices of food from the Food Court and opportunities from a variety of craft and corporate/commercial vendors.

EVENT GOALS:

1. As this is a free entrance event, the organizers strive to include a variety of socio-economic participants and attendees. The attendance base for the 2006 Festival reflects a diverse population. With support from the Councilwoman’s Jan Perry and her staff and the City of Los Angeles and the Little Tokyo Community, the 2007 Festival will build in an even more effective ‘demographic and statistical’ gathering component.
2. Bridge generations and expose the mainstream population to the Japanese and diverse Japanese American culture through understanding, teaching, educating and spectacular fun! And the celebration of Spring through Cherry Blossoms
3. Position the festival as a family event by including entertainment and participatory activities for all ages.
4. To build for the future by continuing to provide new event elements based on feedback from event attendees, sponsors, local businesses and the community.
5. Create a strong ‘travel destination’ event and provide additional economic growth to hotels, restaurants and places of interest to the Little Tokyo district of Los Angeles. Strive to create partnerships with organizations such as Museums and cultural organizations in the downtown and surrounding areas to increase awareness of these organizations and as well as create an opportunity to visit these locations through the Cherry Blossom Festival by attendees.
6. Raise funds toward purchase of Pink Cloud Cherry Trees to donate to the City of Los Angeles’ One Million Tree Initiative.

2007 GRAND HONORARY CHAIRS: **Kazuo Kodama**, Consul General of Japan in L.A.; **Kellye Nakahara Wallett**, Watercolor Artist/Actress – Festival Ambassador; **Daniel Inouye**, United States Senator - Hawaii

2007 HONORARY CHAIRS: **Chris Aihara**, Executive Director, Japanese American Cultural & Community Center; **Lucille Roybal-Allard**, Congresswoman, 34th Congressional District; **William J. Bratton**, Chief of Police, City of Los Angeles; **Senator Gilbert Cedillo**, California State Senator, Senate District 22; **John Chiang**, California State Controller; **Judy Chu, Ph.D.**, California State Board of Equalization; **Carolyn Crayton, CFE**,

Founder, Macon Georgia International Cherry Blossom Festival, President & CEO Emeritus; **Huell Howser**, Host of "California's Gold"; **Fabian Nunez**, Speaker of the House, State Assembly, 46th District, **Jan Perry**, Councilwoman, 9th District, City of Los Angeles; **Dr. Gordon & Joanne Sasaki**, Japanese American Medical Association; **Antonio R. Villaraigosa**, Mayor, City of Los Angeles, **Clarence Wong**, Proprietor, Japon Bistro, Pasadena

FESTIVAL EMCEES: Kathy Bee – Kamaka Brown – Rodney Kageyama

2007 TEACHERS MAKING A DIFFERENCE AWARDS

The festival celebrates the 3rd Annual “Teachers Making a Difference” Awards at the Cherry Blossom Festival and we are happy to announce the 2007 Honorees:

REGGIE BERRY – Goals For Life, Norwalk/La Mirada School District; EBONY BATISTE – 96th Street Elementary, Los Angeles; NANCY BULGIN – Temple City High School, Temple City; RAYCHELLE CADE – 42nd Street Elementary, Los Angeles; RALPH DURAN – San Miguel Avenue School, South Gate; SATOMI EZAKI – El Marino Language School, Culver City; IRENE GERMAINE - Nueva Vista Elementary, Bell; HARUYO GINNY KAJIWARA - Willard Elementary, Pasadena; CAPRICE LACY – Charles W. Barrett Elementary, Los Angeles; KATHRYN LOURY – Madison Elementary, Pasadena; JUN LUGUE – Muscatel Middle School, Rosemead; KIMIE MATSUMOTO – Southeast Japanese Language School & Los Alamitos High; LEONARD NARUMI – Schurr High School, Montebello; CHAD PRADO – traveling music teacher at 4 elementary school, Pasadena; JENNIFER SASAI – Walker Junior High, La Palma; ROBERT SORTINO – Cleveland Elementary, Pasadena; DOTTIE STALLWORTH – 74th Street School & Gifted Magnet; VERNITA SUTTON – Crenshaw High School, Los Angeles; ROSE TOYAMA – Martin Luther King Elementary, Los Angeles; SUZANNE YORK – Sierra Madre Elementary, Sierra Madre

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