



SFVJLI NEWSLETTER

サンフェルナンド バレー日本語学園

Happy New Year!

Hope everyone is having a great new year.

JLI started the year with a bang with our Second Annual Mochi Tsuki on January 7th (see article below). The San Fernando Valley Japanese American Community Center (“CC”) also had their New Year Party on this day in the Pioneer Building of the CC. Our Nymon class was invited to perform at the Party and they gave a great performance! Even though the young students had to wait for over an hour to perform and they appeared tired before going on the stage, once the show was on, they were ON!

The CC New Year party is generally attended by the older members of the CC. The entertainment usually consists of the dancing and/or singing from one of the CC organization. This year, the organizer of the Party, Paul Jonokuchi, changes it up a bit by asking younger entertainers, such as our school and the basketball organization of the CC, to perform. Our Nymon students did the same number that they performed at our Holiday Party and they sang so loud, the audio person had to lower the volume. I believe they woke up several party goers who were dozing, tired from the bento lunch and celebratory sake. After the party, several people approached me and told me how nice it was to see the young members of our community. I was very proud of our Nymon students to represent the energy and the “Genki” of the JLI. A big ARIGATO to Noriko Caudill Sensei, the Nymon students and their parents for staying late and giving us the opportunity to “show off” our school!

Friendly reminder of OUR New Year Party. It will be Saturday, February 4th, social hour starting at 5pm, the program starting at 6pm.
~ Kimi Chiba

Mochitsuki

On January 7th, the entire student body was treated to a Mochitsuki presentation--the making of rice patties. In the Japanese New Year or shogatsu, it is customary to make mochi or rice cakes. Once again, we are indebted to the Sakamoto/Takeshita families for coming out and giving us a demonstration of how to make the mochi.

Our wonderful PTA president, Kimi Chiba, washed and soaked 30 pounds of rice overnight. The next morning, Japanese school alumnae Michael Takeshita, Eddie Sakamoto and Bruce Sakamoto steamed the rice and put it through a special grinder. Each student took turns pounding the rice three times with a wooden mallet until it formed a sticky white mass. Aunties Sachi Sakamoto, Evelyn Motoyama and Linda Keiko Kuratomi pinched off balls of mochi and showed the students how to pull the outer edges of each rice patty inward to “make a belly button in the middle”, then “cover the belly button and flip it over and shape it” to form a nicely rounded patty. The students were able to sample their creations by adding toppings such as daikon oroshi (grated raddish) with shoyu (soy sauce), nori (seaweed), shoyu and sugar, or kinako (roasted soy bean) and sugar. The freshly-made warm mochi tasted so good!

We figured we made over 200 mochi. Many parents came out to join in the fun and taste the delicious mochi. What a wonderful tradition to ring in the new year!

See page 2 for pictures

~ Linda Miyamoto

PTA Board

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Mochitsuki



February

- 4 New Year's Party (at C.C. Hall)
- 11 PTA Monthly Meeting
- 18 No School (So. Cal Teacher's Meeting)

SFVJLI Teachers

Nyumon.....	Noriko Caudill	Teen/Adult 1.....	Yoko Wing
J1.....	Ayumi Inoue	Teen/Adult 2.....	Koji Wada
J2.....	Sachiko Liou	Teen/Adult 3A	Tsugako Tokumitsu
Advanced.....	Hitoshi Takakura	Teen/Adult 3B	Michiko Oga
Chief Coordinator/ Office Manager	Shige Kakinoki	Room Parent Coordinator.....	Lissette Scruggs

Osechi Ryori (New Year Dinner)



Japanese people eat Osechi Ryori for the first three days of January every year. Students of Japanese school may know that Ryori means dishes and cuisine. If it was used as a verb, it means cooking. What about the meaning of Osechi then? Kanji character for Osechi is 御節 and 御 is usually used to show respectfulness. That breaks down the word of Osechi into the base word of Sechi (節) which means season but in this Osechi context, it derives from the word Sechinichi (節日) meaning the day season changes. Change of the year is a significant event and it calls for a special food to celebrate and that is why Japanese people have Osechi Ryori for the New Year. It is somehow similar to the Thanksgiving dinner people share in honor of the year's crop in the United States. As a custom, Osechi is eaten for breakfast or brunch every day for three days. Each dish of Osechi has a meaning of well wishes.

It is fun to know the meaning of each traditional dish that you find in Jyubako (layered boxes treated with lacquer and gorgeously colored designs). Let's check them out.

海老 (えび)	Shrimp
数の子 (かずのこ)	Herring roe
栗 (くり) きんとん	Sweet chestnuts
黒豆 (くろまめ)	Black beans
紅白 (こうはく) かまぼこ	Red and white fish sausages
紅白 (こうはく) なます	Red and white pickled shredded carrots and Daikon radish
昆布巻き (こぶまき)	Bow-tied kelp
里芋 (さと芋)	Taro potatoes
田作り (たづくり)	Sardines
伊達巻 (だてまき)	Sponged egg roll
錦玉子 (にしきたまご)	Yellow and white strips of eggs
れんこん	Lotus roots

Shrimp	Shrimps look stooping, just like an old person with stooped posture. It is a symbol of long life together.
Herring roe	Many children and generations of prosperity
Sweet chestnuts	Good financial fortune and prosperity
Black beans	Hard worker, dedicated worker – beans in Japanese is Mame and the word Mame also means dedicated. Wishing you to be a dedicated worker, who works long hours under the sun and looks tanned (black).
Red and white fish sausages	Colors of red and white are used for happy occasions. Also, white fishes are very expensive in olden days and fish sausages were made of minced white fish. Good treat for the new year dinner.
Red and white pickled shredded carrots and Daikon radish	Colors of red and white for happy occasions and the stringy shape of carrots and radishes mimic the shape of Mizuhiki (red and white strings used for decoration in happy occasions).
Bow-tied kelp	Kelp in Japanese is Konbu and it resembles the sound of Yorokobu, meaning delighted. It is the symbol of wishes for the family's happiness and generations of prosperity.
Taro Potatoes	Taro potatoes grow many small potatoes underground. It is the symbol of many children and generations of prosperity.
Sardines	Sardines were used for fertilizer and became a symbol of abundant crop.
Sponged egg roll	Just as fish sausage, Sponged egg is made with minced white fish and has the color of yellow from mixing eggs. It has a gorgeous look of gold, which is worthy of offering to God. The rolled shape also ties it to the roll of Kimono fabric. It is the symbol that you will always be clothes and will enjoy prosperity.
Yellow and white strips of eggs	The color of yellow and white symbolize gold and silver. It is the symbol of treasures and wealth.
Lotus roots	Lotus roots have holes. It supports the wish to have a foresight.

Every New Year days, parents and grandparents would teach their children and grandchildren the meaning of the each dish they are eating at the table. The tradition of Osechi has passed on from a generation to a generation over hundreds of years. Even the child does not want to eat some of those dishes, parents will make him eat at least one bite of each item because he will be dedicated and healthy for the year if he eats one black bean saying “Mame de genkide” and he will also have many delightful occasions if he eats bow-tied kelp saying “Yorokonbu.” New year days are the days when family and friends spend quality time together and to be reminded of the national heritage.

YARD SALE

Dozens of local residents showed up for the annual fall SFVJLI yard sale on Saturday, November 5. A major fundraiser for our school, the yard sale collects items several months in advance and draws the attention of the surrounding community. This year's sale featured a boutique that included items such as jewelry, purses, and other unique gifts. Other items sold included books, VHS and DVD movie videos, clothing, games, toys, household appliances, dishware, and much more.

The yard sale raised a whopping \$1,260 for SFVJLI – a 40% increase from the previous year. We want to extend our deep appreciation to all those who donated toward the sale, its organizers, and to the parents and committed volunteers for their continued support.



Curry Rice Fundraiser



Pictures



CAR-POOL/RIDE-SHARING

Are you interested in car-pooling/ride-sharing?



With all that is going on in our lives, it is sometimes hard to arrange a drop-off/pick-up of our student(s) for Japanese School, isn't it? It may make sense to share the drop-off/pick-up duties with your fellow Japanese School families that may live close to you. We'll have a sign-up sheet in the media room for those who are interested. After we gather the information, we will share the information of those families that live close to you or on the way so that you could decide to share some of the drop-off/pick-up duties. This is strictly voluntary and the school or the PTA will not determine/enforce the ride-sharing decisions that are made among the families.

WAYS TO SUPPORT OUR SCHOOL



SFVJLI T-SHIRT SALE gray or black

Adult sizes **\$10** (orig \$15)
Youth sizes **\$10** (orig \$12)

Sizes from Youth SX to
Adult XXL

**Free surprise snack first
Saturday of each month for
students wearing school**



INTERNET FUNDRAISER

GoodSearch.com donates half its advertising revenue, a penny per search, to the charities its users designate.

GoodShop.com is an online shopping mall which donates up to 37% of each purchase to your favorite cause. Go to www.goodsearch.com and be sure to enter "San Fernando Valley Japanese Language Institute" (just enter "Japanese Institute" / "Japanese Language" and it will come up!) as the charity you want to support.

Or just click here - <http://www.goodsearch.com/?>



RECYCLE

Please continue to bring in recycling items to raise money for our school, especially the aluminum cans

Recycling items (aluminum cans, glass, #1 plastics) need to be turned in clean. Please rinse the items with water before you bring them in.

LET'S LEARN PIANO!

Accepting children and adults from beginners to advanced Hasunuma Piano Studios San Fernando Class at SFVJLI. Every Saturday after Japanese School Advanced Classroom
Contact Noriko Yamanaka 818-842-2795



TERRACYCLE



Bring empty drink pouches, all sizes of Frito-Lay chip bags, Nabisco/Keebler cookie packaging, Mars/Wrigley candy wrappers and Cadbury gum wrappers to school and put them in the Terracycling Bin, which will be located outside of the Nyumon classroom.

SNACK STAND

During each break, the snack stand tickets on sale for \$1.00 for \$1.10 worth of snacks.

Snack donations are welcome. (No gum.)

