

KeiroConnect



Itadakimasu!

How food brings together
Our Community





MAY 2023

A SWEET TREAT AT LOCAL SENIOR RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES

Keiro celebrated Older Americans Month and National Nursing Home Week by hosting live entertainment and desserts at local senior residential facilities, including our former facilities. Keiro is proud to support and celebrate the efforts of their staff in providing care to Our Community's older adults.



Use your smartphone camera or a QR code scanning mobile application to read the full versions of the articles throughout this publication!



Beverly Ito

Beverly Ito
President & CEO

Welcome!

A MESSAGE FROM KEIRO PRESIDENT & CEO

In Our Community, food has long brought people together. Potlucks, a conversation over a meal, or cooking a dish with loved ones can connect people of all ages. For older adults in particular, access to culturally familiar foods in welcoming settings can bring comfort throughout the aging journey.

Over the past seven years, particularly during the pandemic, Keiro has supported senior lunch and food delivery programs through our network of community partners, grant recipients, and local senior residential facilities, to ensure that older adults have access to nutritious meals. These vital lifelines to our community hubs promote health, wellness, and especially connection – with the delivery drivers, cooks and dietary staff, volunteers, and others. We are grateful for all the organizations that help Keiro extend our reach into neighborhoods from Orange County up to Ventura County, supporting our mission to enhance the quality of senior life in Our Community.

We hope you enjoy this edition of Keiro Connect, which explores how food plays an integral part in quality of life.

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私たちのコミュニティでは、常に「食」が人々を結びつけてきました。ポットラック、食事を囲んだ会話、大切な人とのクッキングは、あらゆる年齢層の人々とのつながりを深めます。特に高齢者が年を重ねていく中、文化的に馴染みある食事を居心地の良い場所で食べることは安らぎにつながることでしょう。当冊子では「食」が生活の質に如何に重要な役割を果たすかを掘りさげてみました。

過去7年間、特にパンデミック時においてもKeiroは、高齢者に栄養価の高い食事が届くよう、コミュニティ・パートナー、助成金受領団体、地域の高齢者住宅施設を通じて、シニアランチや配食プログラム等の支援をして参りました。地域の拠点であるこれらの肝要なライフラインは高齢者の健康とウェルネス、そして特に配達ドライバー、調理師、ボランティアの方々とのつながりも促進させます。オレンジ郡からベンチュラ郡に至るコミュニティの高齢者の生活の質を高めるといふKeiroのミッションを地域社会で支えてくださる、すべての団体の皆様に心より感謝申し上げます。

ベバリ・イトウ
代表兼CEO



A Lesson of Cooking and Connection

Whether making a recipe that has been passed down in your family, trying new foods together, or simply sitting down to enjoy a meal with your loved ones, food never fails to connect us with each other. Conversations over food or while cooking together can help deepen connections and strengthen relationships, even among family members. Keiro invited Jeannie and her grandson, Acen, to participate in a cooking video together and share how food continues to bring together people of all ages.

Taking it Step by Step

Jeannie and Acen decided to cook Acen's favorite dishes: cucumber salad and Spam musubi. While cooking, Jeannie and Acen engaged in small talk about various topics such as Acen going to middle school, their favorite foods, and how Acen trades his Spam musubis with his friends at lunch. "Sometimes they have stuff I like, and [they may] have stuff I like. It is pretty funny!"

Jeannie would walk Acen through the recipes while passing the reins onto him to cut, pour, and mix the ingredients.

Showing Their Grandchildren the Ropes

More than anything, Jeannie enjoys sharing recipes with all of her grandchildren by teaching them hands-on cooking skills as they help her prepare the food. "Acen didn't help [me cook] in the beginning, it was always the girls. And now that the girls are busy with high school and middle school homework, he has become my assistant in the kitchen," Jeannie shared.

What Jeannie enjoys most about cooking with her grandchildren is that they can share and experience Japanese and Japanese American culture through food. "I remember being embarrassed

"I think the [best] memories that we make over food are [because of] the people that we are with. The people make it memorable."

- Jeannie

taking *nigiris* for lunch, but my grandkids don't mind it at all," said Jeannie.

Making Memories Over Food

Acen asked his grandma, "What's your favorite family memory over cooking or food?" Jeannie said that although it is difficult to choose because they cook together so often, she would say that her best memories surrounding food with family are during New Year's because they cook many types of dishes that they would not normally eat year-round.

When Jeannie returned the question to Acen, he reflected on a past trip to Hawaii that they took as a family with his cousins from out of state who they

don't see as often. He shared, "I think it is really fun eating with [my cousins]."

Jeannie also shared, "I think the [best] memories that we make over food are [because of] the people that we are with. The people make it memorable."

Both Acen and Jeannie agreed that they both had a great time cooking together. Acen said, "The Spam musubis are fun to make and eat, as well as the cucumber salad." Jeannie replied, "Let's hope that we get to do this more often!"

For the full article and to watch Jeannie and Acen's cooking video, scan the QR code or visit keiro.org/news.





Meal Modifications and Iyashi Care

IYASHI  CARE

Being able to eat foods you enjoy is key to good quality of life, but for those with serious or chronic illnesses, diet modifications are often necessary to better manage health conditions. In such situations, Dr. Yuichi Edwin Yanami, Iyashi Care’s lead physician, shared that the Iyashi Care team can help by working with the patients and families on dietary modifications, and then periodically check in and readjust as needed.

Below are a couple common scenarios where the team can assist:

Safely Swallowing Liquids

According to Dr. Yanami, swallowing safety for liquids is critical. To address choking risk, the team may recommend a thickening liquid.

No Appetite

When calorie intake is a priority compared to controlling blood sugar or blood pressure levels, the team may recommend allowing the patient to eat what they prefer. While it is difficult to modify a Japanese diet to have less sodium, the team will discuss with the family and monitor sodium levels if the patient prefers this.

When a patient’s diet may need to be modified, the team works with the patient and their family to ensure that these changes align with the patient’s goals of care. Dr. Yanami explained, “Ultimately, we want to ensure that the patient has the best quality of life possible. That involves having a good balance — the patient eating their favorite foods, in moderation, while maintaining a nutritious diet; and discussing feasible and reasonable suggestions with the family.”

Note: Everyone’s situation is different - please talk to your health care provider before making any dietary or medication changes. This article is not intended for individuals to self-assess care for themselves or their loved ones.

For the full article and more scenarios, visit keiro.org/news or scan the QR code.



こちらの記事の日本語版は keiro.org/jp/news よりご覧ください。

For more information about Iyashi Care, contact us at

213.873.5791
programs@keiro.org



Connie with community members during a Dining with Dharma delivery



Stronger Community Ties Through Front Porch Deliveries

West Los Angeles Buddhist Temple

As coordinator for a Keiro-funded grant program, Connie organizes the Dining with the Dharma and 80+ Care Package programs at the West Los Angeles Buddhist Temple.

Based on concerns for older isolated members without access to technology, the temple came up with their Dining with the Dharma program. They distributed 14-inch digital photo frames, temple service videos on a flash drive, and instructions on how to use the frame in both English and Japanese. They also delivered bento and provided social check-ins with members on a weekly basis.

At the end of 2021, a *mochi* delivery to homebound older adults inspired them to start the 80+ Care Package program, which delivers meals and check-ins for those age 80 and older every other month. Meals remain a key part of the two programs. Connie added, “Everyone loves to eat, and that always brings people together.”

One of the biggest impacts Connie saw was that there are more genuine connections amongst the *sangha*. “Before the pandemic, the older members would keep to themselves at church. [For the deliveries,] I tried to assign the same group of members to each volunteer driver, for them to build rapport.”

Connie and her team continue to think of other ideas to support their older members. “If we come up with something else, Keiro will be the first to know!” she exclaimed.

For the full article, scan the QR code or visit keiro.org/news.



2022-2023 Grants Program Recipients

Congratulations to all the recipient organizations of the 2022-2023 cycle of Keiro’s Grants Program! Keiro looks forward to working with all 32 organizations to enhance quality of life for older adults and caregivers in Our Community.

Recipients listed in alphabetical order:

- Cerritos Baptist Church
- CharanPoran USA, Inc.
- Chatsworth West United Methodist Church
- Continuing Education for the Nikkei Widowed, Inc.
- East San Gabriel Valley Japanese Community Center
- First Presbyterian Church Altadena
- Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute
- Hearts of Lavender
- Japanese American Centenarian Spirit
- Japanese American Christian Chapel
- Leisure Club at ESGVJCC
- Little Tokyo Nutrition Services
- Long Beach Buddhist Church
- Long Beach Japanese Cultural Center
- Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple BWA
- Los Angeles Men’s Glee Club
- Makoto Taiko
- NALC USA
- Orange County Buddhist Church
- Orange County Japanese American Association
- Oxnard Buddhist Temple
- Pasadena Buddhist Temple
- Pasadena Nikkei Seniors
- Sakura Chorus
- San Fernando Valley Japanese American Community Center
- Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple
- Venice Japanese Community Center
- Ventura County Japanese American Citizens League
- Visual Communications
- West Los Angeles Buddhist Temple
- West Los Angeles United Methodist Church
- Zenshuji Soto Mission

For more information, visit keiro.org/news.

Phyllis and her husband, Eugene, at Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple Obon Festival (2015)



Obon Festival Spotlight: The Joys of Volunteering

It takes a village to host an Obon Festival, and many festival attendees may not realize the behind-the-scenes contributions made by volunteers. Keiro interviewed Phyllis, 71, who has been volunteering at Obon food booths at Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple for close to 30 years, and continues to find great joy in serving her temple community.

From Taking on One Shift to Becoming Co-Chair

Phyllis has been an active member of the temple since the mid-1990s and is a member of the temple's Fujinkai, or Buddhist Women's Association. The Fujinkai has played a key role in the food booths at the temple's Obon Festival, leading the wonton booth for many years. Although Phyllis initially signed up for a shift or two to work in the booth on the day of the Festival, she gradually became more involved and eventually moved into the role of the wonton booth co-chair.

All Hands on Deck for the Big Weekend

Although the Fujinkai has not led the wonton booth in recent years, Phyllis shared that preparation begins months before. The wonton *gu*, or meat and vegetable mixture, is typically prepared beforehand, and all of the wontons are folded early in the morning on the days of the Obon Festival by a large group of volunteers.



Once the Obon Festival starts, volunteers take their shifts for their assigned positions. "No matter how we try to organize it efficiently, there is always a line for wontons!" Phyllis said. In 2019, the temple sold over 7,000 wontons in just two days!

Expressing Gratitude through Volunteering

After 30 years, Phyllis reflected on why she continues to come back each year. "I want to show my appreciation to the ladies who have been doing this 10 years longer than I have... We look to the ladies before us and how hard they worked, and we want to work hard, too."

She shared that volunteering in the community does give her a reason to wake up in the morning every day. "My daughter asked me recently, 'Do you like being crazy busy all the time?' I told her, 'I don't really like being crazy busy, but it gives me a purpose in life.'"

Phyllis expressed deep admiration for all of the hard working people at the temple who continue to make it such an open and family-oriented community.

For the full article, scan the QR code or visit keiro.org/news.

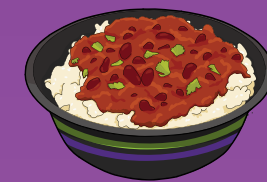


THIS OR THAT:

Which Obon Food do you Prefer to Share?

Aside from the dancing and game booths, food is one of the most anticipated parts of Obon Festivals! This summer, go to your local Obon Festival to share these meals with family and friends and discuss which obon food you like the most!

CHILI RICE

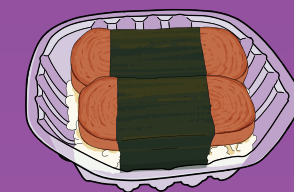


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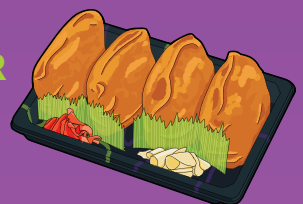


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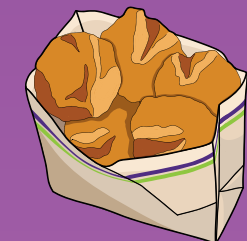


OR

INARI



**SATA ANDAGI/
DANGO**



OR

**SHAVED
ICE**



How Can I Make My Diet More Nutritious?

There are many ways that aging can impact our eating habits, but we can modify our diets to be balanced, nutritious, and delicious! Many of our favorite Japanese and Japanese American foods have hidden nutrients and vitamins that we may not even know are there. There are also alternative ways to make these meals even more nutritious:



Udon and Soba

What's in it?

Udon and soba are two common types of Japanese noodles that are served hot or cold in diluted *tsuyu* broth. Udon is a flour-based noodle and soba is a buckwheat-based noodle.

Alternative Ways to Make the Dish More Nutritious:

- Eating a variety of fruits and vegetables can improve the nutrient quality of food. Having 2-3 colors of vegetables in the noodles can make it more nutritious and visually dynamic!

The social aspect surrounding food is also a key ingredient in enhancing the ways that we enjoy eating. Sitting down for a meal with our family members, cooking a traditional family meal together, or delivering food and having a conversation can go a long way to make a meal more meaningful.

Thank you to Kristine Yada, MS, RDN, for providing information and insight for this article.

For the full article and additional dish alternatives, scan the QR code or visit keiro.org/news.



Curry

What's in it?

Stewed meat and vegetables seasoned with a blend of spices, commonly garam masala and a Japanese curry powder mix that consists of spices like turmeric, coriander, cumin, cloves, cardamom, cinnamon, and fenugreek.

Alternative Ways to Make the Dish More Nutritious:

- Add 1 cup of lentils to the dish to add fiber and protein
- Use curry as a "topping" to turn grilled vegetables into a meal
- Instead of using a store-bought roux or curry mix, make your own spice blend at home



ClubGenki Grand Opening Ceremony - May 3, 2023



Grand Opening of ClubGenki

A Senior Adult Day Program for Japanese American Older Adults

Keiro and the East San Gabriel Valley Japanese Community Center (ESGVJCC) announced the official opening of ClubGenki, a culturally-sensitive senior adult day program that seeks to enhance the quality of life for older adults aging at home.

ClubGenki will operate Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., with part-time options also available. The program will serve culturally-sensitive food, along with multiple activities stimulating both the brain and body.

Through a three-year, \$150,000 commitment from Keiro, the partnership has supported the ESGVJCC in expanding their existing senior programs to include a licensed adult day program for older adults age 55 and older.

For more information on or to enroll in ClubGenki, please visit esgvjcc.org/senior-adult-day-program.



ClubGenki
Senior Adult Day Program

日系高齢者向けデイプログラム「ClubGenki」グランドオープン

Keiroとイースト・サンゲールバレー日系コミュニティセンターは、在宅で生活し続ける高齢者の生活の質を高めることを目的とした、日系文化に配慮した英語での高齢者デイ・プログラム、ClubGenkiの正式オープンを発表した。ClubGenkiは、月曜から金曜、午前9時から午後5時まで運営され、パートタイムでの利用も可能。

ClubGenkiについての詳細、お申込はこちらから：
esgvjcc.org/senior-adult-day-program



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**SAVE
THE
DATE!**



Keiro no Hi

FESTIVAL

敬老の日フェスティバル

Saturday, September 17, 2023
Japanese American National Museum (JANM)

Join us for live entertainment featuring local older adult performers,
interactive activities, access to JANM exhibitions, food, and more!
Registration opens Monday, July 3, 2023.



Scan here
for more
information.



For more information: keiro.org/knh | 日本語はこちら: keiro.org/jp/knh