



Japan America Society of St. Louis, Inc.
c/o International Studies and Programs
University of Missouri–St. Louis
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Japan America Society Annual Report 2015

Submitted by Chikako Usui

January 14, 2016

The Japan-America Society of Saint Louis (JASSTL) was founded in 1967 with the mission **to promote mutual understanding between the peoples of Japan and the United States and** deepen friendship between the two countries. The Society is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization and is an all-volunteer society governed by 20+ elected members of the Board. The International Studies and Programs (ISP) at University of Missouri-St. Louis (Dr. Joel Glassman, JASSTL Executive Director, ISP Director & Associate Provost of Academic Affairs at UM-St. Louis) provides office space and operational support to JASSTL.

JASSTL serves as the major information clearing house in the St. Louis Metropolitan Community. The Society receives and answers 150 inquiries about Japan in a given year. In addition, the Society receives requests for lectures, authentic cultural activities, and programs from local libraries, schools and other organizations. Our website management has become critical in maintaining effective electronic access points and timely dissemination of information and services.

JASSTL actively support the St. Louis Japanese Language School by hosting the annual fundraising golf tournament. JASSTL has made donations every year since 1998 (over \$55,000).

We now offer **nine annual programs** each calendar year. They are scheduled throughout the year, providing business/economic forum, cultural, and social programs:

- ✚ January - New year's celebration (added in 2012)
- ✚ February/March - Japan Update (introduced in 2015)
- ✚ May - Japanese Cultural presentations at the Missouri History Museum (introduced in 2013)
- ✚ August/September - St. Louis Ishinomaki Friendship Program (introduced in 2013)
- ✚ August/September - Japanese festival at the Missouri Botanical Garden
- ✚ September - Fund-raising golf tournament
- ✚ September/October - Shibusawa-Arai Japanese Studies Lecture
- ✚ November - Annual Dinner/General Meeting
- ✚ December - JAS Night at the Ballet (The Nutcracker) (added in 2011)

The St. Louis/Ishinomaki Friendship Program is a new educational exchange program. We were one of only four Japan America Societies in the U.S. that won the \$60,000 award for 2013 and 2014 from the U.S.-Japan Council's TOMODACHI (coordinated by the National Association of Japan America Societies). Despite graduated funding decreases to \$10,000 in 2015, the Society met the target budget, thanks to the contributions from local Japan related organizations and the members of the Board. Efforts invested in the past years came to fruition this summer: previous host families, students who traveled to Ishinomaki last year, and volunteers from both years rededicated themselves to this year's program and strengthened their relationship to Japan. Moving forward, JASSTL has received **additional funding for 2016 and 2017 at \$11,000 per year.** This funding will allow us to assess its impact on JASSTL as well as better calibrate our ability to continue it as a self-sustaining program.

We have expanded our cultural/educational programs in the past five years in an effort to improve our visibility in the community: A cultural presentation at the Missouri History Museum (offered in May) and TOMODACHI Yukata show and a new show on Kimono, both held at annual Japanese festival. These programs attract a large audience. Our challenge is to use these events more effectively for membership recruitment and/or branding.

We have revived a business/economic program by bringing high-profile speakers and attracting larger audiences. The list includes:

- ✚ 2011 - "Japan's Pharmaceutical Market" by Harrison Cook from Eli Lilly, funded by the Japan Foundation/CGP (\$1,000) and held at University of Missouri-St. Louis
- ✚ 2013 - "Resetting US Policy in Asia" by Glenn Fukushima, funded by the Japan Foundation/CGP (\$1,500) and held at University of Missouri-St. Louis
- ✚ 2014 - "Japan's Global Strategies in the 21st Century" by Takashi Hatchoji from Hitachi USA & William Farrell, funded by the Keizai Koho Center of Keidanren (\$5,000) and held at University of Missouri-St. Louis
- ✚ 2014 - "Is Japan's Recovery for Real?" by Ambassador Shimanouchi and his U.S. tour team with Sushi Reception, funded the Japanese Prime Minister's Office and coordinated by the Consulate General of Japan in Chicago (\$7,000) and held at Boeing Institute of International Business, Saint Louis University
- ✚ 2015 - "Japan Update: Japan's Visions in Asia" funded by Sasakawa Peace Foundation (\$20,000): Luncheon program with Ambassador Ira Shapiro, held at Ritz Carlton and the Panel (featuring Ambassador Ira Shapiro, Masami Doi, Dr. Ulrike Shaede, and Brian Josephson) & Sushi Reception, held at Boeing Institute of International Business, Saint Louis University
- ✚ 2016 - "Japan Update: History and Innovations in Beer and Sake" with Panel discussions (featuring Katushiko Miyasaka and Timothy Sullivan), Beer & Sake Tasting, and Sushi Reception, funded by Sasakawa Peace Foundation (\$10,000) for Urban Chestnut on February 17

As we start the run up to our 50th anniversary in 2017, we secured two new grants this year. One is "JAS Initiative grant" from the Japan Foundation/CGP (\$28,000), and the other, "All Volunteer Administrative Support grant" from the Japan US Friendship Commission (\$5,000). Our goals are to strengthen our organizational effectiveness. Chip Meyer, our new Project Manager, facilitates the strategic planning

process and the development of our website design and membership management. We hired Lynch Bryan Consulting to guide us through the strategic planning preparation in May and July and retreat in August. These meetings provided an opportunity to learn and relearn the structure, operations, and mission of the Society. This shared experience strengthened the board as a whole. **We identified 6 Areas of Strategic Focus and are developing concrete goals and strategies in each strategic focus area. These planning efforts will be integrated to our board meetings. The final product will have impacts on event development, scheduling, targeting, and marketing.**

We are waiting to hear from the Japan Foundation/CGP for the Year 2 strategic planning funding (\$32,000). If awarded, we will focus on capacity building efforts in 2016. Our goal is to bring JASSTL to the next level by turning our efforts to fundraising. We will recruit new corporate and general (individual or family) members and re-engage former members. Our goal is to raise \$16,000, which we need to manage grants and expand programming, marketing, and membership efforts.

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