



NY & Vicinity Region Quarterly Newsletter

JULY 2024



EVENT RECAP: JUNE

An afternoon of ramen: A delicious tour of Sun Noodle's factory in New Jersey

On June 8, the USJC New York Region members were treated to a rare behind-the-scenes visit to Sun Noodle's factory in New Jersey.

Since 1981, Sun Noodle has been producing restaurant-quality fresh noodles and ramen kits, available at local restaurants, supermarkets, and specialty stores worldwide. With factories in Hawaii, California, New Jersey and, as of this year, the Netherlands, Sun Noodle brings passion, joy, and the aloha spirit to strengthen U.S.-Japan ties through the love for ramen and Japanese cuisine.

USJC members and their families enjoyed a presentation on the company's history, learning about the challenges and rewards of running

a family business, as well as the evolution of ramen as a food category and its tremendous rise in popularity across the globe. Members then embarked on a factory tour to see the facilities and observe the noodle-making machines in action.

The last stop on the tour was dinner in the Lower East Side at Ivan Ramen, a longtime customer and fan of Sun Noodle. Participants enjoyed a delicious dinner of creative ramen dishes as they reflected on all that they had seen that afternoon.

"The Sun Noodle tour was flawlessly organized from start to finish. It offered insights into the family business's success through engaging discussions with the CEO and a ground-floor look



at the entire manufacturing process,” mused Council Leader Marc Iyeki. “A truly delightful experience, topped off with a curated dinner at the renowned Ivan Ramen.” Council Leader Ichun Lai agrees: “What a unique USJC experience– celebrating together the accomplishments of a member while learning first-hand the business behind the Japanese comfort food we love.”

At departure, guests were treated to a final surprise of a freezer bag full of Sun Noodle craft noodles to make at home, as well as a copy of Chef Ivan’s cookbook, which documents his ramen journey and includes recipes.

A great heartfelt thank you to [Kenshiro Uki](#) (ELP '14) and [Hisae Uki](#) (ELP '18) for generously sponsoring the event from the factory visit to dinner, and special thanks to Council Leader [Darin Arita](#) for his key role in organizing such a special event.



EVENT RECAP: APRIL

No-host dinner and a warm welcome for new President and CEO Audrey Yamamoto

On April 12th, members of the New York Region gathered for a no-host dinner at Hakka Cuisine in Chinatown, and welcomed the newly appointed President and CEO, **Audrey Yamamoto** as the guest of honor.

The evening began with a warm and engaging introduction by Audrey as she shared insights into her prior involvement with the council as a 2023 JALD member, and discussed her vision for upholding the council's legacy while introducing innovative leadership strategies.

The event provided an excellent opportunity for regional members, sponsors, and potential new members to network while enjoying a selection of delicious dishes.

Special thanks to Council Leaders **Darin Arita** and **Marc Iyeki** for their pivotal roles in organizing a successful evening.



EVENT RECAP: MARCH

Young professionals gather for a “U40 Night Out”

On March 21st, the young professionals of the New York region hosted “U40 Night Out,” a festive evening that brought together young professionals and the “under 40” crowd from USJC and the greater Japanese-American community.

Guests gathered at BBF, a Japanese cafe and sake bar in the Lower East Side, and mingled over delicious izakaya bites, craft cocktails and a live DJ spinning J-pop-inspired playlists throughout the night.

This was the first U40 event in the region since before the pandemic, and the energy in the room was a clear indicator that enthusiasm for the U40 community and interest in future events remain strong. Thank you to Associate members [Eiko Okamoto](#) and [Mari Iwahara](#) for organizing this event!



EVENT RECAP: FEBRUARY

Where we started: Kicking off the year with Setsubun Soiree

Back by popular demand— On February 5th, the USJC New York Regional Committee orchestrated the second annual Setsubun Soirée at Tenri Cultural Institute in downtown New York. The celebration was the first regional event of the year, aimed at “warding off demons and ushering in good fortune.”

In attendance were members, non-member family and friends, sponsors, and esteemed guest Mr. Akira Endo (Consulate General of Japan, New York). Mr. Endo delivered opening remarks on the significance of *setsubun* and the meaning of celebrating the beginning of spring.

USJC Council Leaders [Spark Nakamura](#) and [Darin Arita](#) then surprised the crowd by dressing up as blue and red *onis* (Japanese demons), and performed the traditional “*oni wa soto*” and “*fuku wa uchi*” ritual. Attendees enthusiastically participated by tossing roasted beans at the two *onis*, symbolizing a collective wish for luck in the year 2024.

Following the vibrant celebration, members seemed greatly energized by the community spirit and showed enthusiasm for future events, sharing ideas and suggestions with one another.

The U.S.-Japan Council would like to thank Council Leaders [Spark Nakamura](#) and [Julie Azuma](#) for spearheading this event in collaboration with other dedicated committee members.



Upcoming Events

Food as Medicine: Agricultural practices in the U.S. and our health

Saturday, July 20th

@ Orthopedic Movement Physical
Therapy (midtown)

2:30–4:30 pm (talk + tastings)
5:00- (optional no-host dinner)

*Join us for an insightful talk
followed by organic food tastings,
a special collaboration drink with
Ito En, and a no-host dinner!*

With a lack of transparency around agricultural practices in the U.S., consumers are increasingly weary of poor food quality that has adverse effects on their health and the environment. USJC Council Leader **Dr. Miho Urisaka** and her team at Cucumber Hill Farm will lead an informative talk on the state of U.S. agriculture, food, and our health, followed by healthy organic food tastings.

After the event, members are invited to gather for an optional no-host dinner at Shuya Ramen, featuring nitamago made with eggs from Cucumber Hill Farm.

USJC NEW YORK REGION PRESENTS:

Food as Medicine: Agricultural practices in the U.S. and our health

MEET THE SPEAKERS



Adam Starowicz



Miho Urisaka
PT, DPT, OCS, CSC I



Justin Baker

TIME: Saturday, July 20th, 2:30–4:30 PM
LOCATION: 315 Madison Ave, Suite 1200
followed by an optional no-host dinner at Shuya Ramen

About Cucumber Hill Farm:

Co-founded by Miho Urisaka, Cucumber Hill Farm is an independently run farm serving the Putnam Valley, NY area. Situated on a beautiful 10-acre plot, they use sustainable farming methods to provide food for the local community.

[RESERVE YOUR SPOT →](#)

Open to non-member family & friends!

Announcements

The Making of a Japanese North American Premiere + Director Q&A

Sunday July 21,
6:00pm screening

@ Japan Society
(333 E 47th St)

The Japan Society is hosting a screening of a documentary film by Tokyo-based USJC member [Ema Ryan Yamazaki](#). The film is titled *The Making of a Japanese*, and it follows students at a public elementary school in Japan over the course of one academic year, examining the formative qualities and values instilled in the young students.

The screening is being hosted at the Japan Society on Sunday, July 21, at 6:00 p.m., and will be followed by an in-person Q&A session with Ema. Tickets must be purchased in advanced (follow link to below). To learn more about Ema's background and career, you can read a New York Time profile of Ema here: [NYT profile](#).

[BUY TICKETS VIA JAPAN SOCIETY →](#)

About the film: Shot over the course of a single scholastic year, Ema Ryan Yamazaki's *The Making of a Japanese* concerns itself with the formative qualities and values instilled by the country's education system. Documenting first and sixth grade students in Tokyo suburb Tsukado, one of Japan's largest public elementary schools, this rare snapshot into the country's schools is full of revelations as it courses from one spring to the next. Yamazaki's intimate eye captures what it means to learn and become a member of Japanese society.

[Learn more >](#)



Announcements

Reminder: The deadline for applications for the Advanced Leaders Collective (ALC) is July 28th!

We are excited to invite you to apply to the Advanced Leaders Collective (ALC) as we build off of our successful launch in 2023. The application is currently open and will close on July 28, 2024.

The ALC by the U.S.-Japan Council is a program designed for mid-career professionals to foster authentic connections and explore their professional and personal journeys. It provides a supportive community for individuals to share inspirations, tackle challenges, and collaborate on impactful initiatives. The program features workshops, discussions, and networking opportunities, emphasizing the balance between work and life. It aims to create a vibrant network and a strong foundation for participants within the organization.

[LEARN MORE & APPLY →](#)



Regional ALC voices:

“I sought a supportive network as I transitioned from a structured role in an established company to the fast-paced world of startups and entrepreneurship. ALC offered exactly that, along with programming that helped me navigate my professional and personal priorities during this exciting, yet uncertain, time. The program connected me with a friendly group of accomplished professionals from a broad range of industries who were also embarking on new chapters.

But beyond professional connections, ALC fostered friendships built on shared experiences. And beyond ALC itself, I gained access to a wider network of rising and established professionals through well-planned interactions with members of JALD, ELP, and U40. It was more than professional development; it was a springboard to a truly enriching experience that continues even to this day.”

— Marc Iyeki

Announcements

Registration is open for the Annual Conference!

October 28-November 1, 2024
Tokyo, Japan



This year's conference, "Forging Our Future Together: The New Era of U.S.-Japan Relations," will focus on the leadership required to address the most pressing challenges and opportunities of our future, including: security, sustainability, innovation, economic security, empowering women and building a global workforce.

Following the public symposium, the 2024 Host Committee is set to host hands-on roundtable sessions and workshops featuring GX, DX, and AI innovators and businesses on Friday, November 1 at Deloitte Tohmatsu Innovation Park (note: registration is separate). The event will be followed by charitable entertainment and cuisine from Japanese regions that are striving to be role models for sustainability.

More info and registration link can be found [here](#). We look forward to seeing many of you there!

Do you have news, announcements, or stories that you'd like to share with the community?

Please email Susan McCormac (susan@japanculture-nyc.com) and Mari Iwahara (mari@sibling.info) with details so that we may include it in our next quarterly Regional Newsletter.