

## **Chiisai Shinbun 2022-1Q**

This is a quarterly newsletter of the Japan-America Society of Vermont, describing what we have accomplished during the first quarter of the year of 2022 (January, February and March.) and a forecast of our activities in near future.

As a result of the COVID pandemic we closed our activities. This year the situation was improved compared with two years ago. Yes, an Omicron or new variant virus pandemic began, but I hear that such variants are weaker than COVID 16. Mask mandates started to be removed here and there such as UVM or schools or even in airplanes.

This year July 3<sup>rd</sup> Independence Parade at Montpelier will take place. We at the JASV would like to participate if we have enough participants.

Also although we canceled our Matsuri in spring this year we are thinking of having Matsuri at a park in the fall. We are still working on it. A final decision will be made in June. Since Matsuri will be held outdoors, we don't have to worry about COVID too much.

On the other hand, a new disaster started this year. Russia started to invade Ukraine and is creating an unprecedented destruction and humanitarian disaster in Europe the worst since World War II. I watch TV every day praying that it will end as soon as possible. The world started to help Ukraine.

I believe that many of you started to help Ukraine. We at the JASV also would like to help them. Since we are not a wealthy organization, we would like to raise a fund for Ukraine by selling our toys, ornaments, Manga books, etc at the next Matsuri and donate all the proceeds. Thank you for your help!!!

### **1. Accomplishment during the First Quarter**

### **1-1. Japanese Language Class for Adults**

Three classes, Level-1, Level-3 and Level-4, started by Zoom from Feb 15 and will be ended Apr 27. Unfortunately we didn't have enough students for Level-2 so that we had to cancel the class. The JASV supported those three classes even though we had a total of \$250 tuition shortage. On the other hand a total of 14 students improved their Japanese language skills. The teacher is Ms. Linda Sukop. Thank you Ms. Linda Sukop!!!

There was an inquiry for JASV to structure on-line tuition payment by us having a PayPal account. We tried to work on it but concluded not to have the account since there are many fake claims out there.

### **1-2. Japanese Language Class for Children**

A Japanese beginner class started from April 2 and will end May 14. via Zoom by the instructor Ms. Maki Farnham. 5 students participated in the class. The class was arranged by Ms. Masako Carter. Thank you very much Maki-san and Masako-san.

## **2. Possible Event Near Future**

### **2-1. Participation in July 3<sup>rd</sup> Independence Parade**

This parade didn't take place for two years due to COVID. But finally they are planning to have it this year. We used to participate it for many years. Following are the photos of previous participation.

[http://jasv.org/v2/newsletter/Chiisai\\_Shimbun\\_19Fall.pdf](http://jasv.org/v2/newsletter/Chiisai_Shimbun_19Fall.pdf)

Although COVID pandemic isn't quite over an outdoor event is much safer than an indoor one. However there is still uncertainty and therefore the size of audience may be smaller than usual years. Usually there are 20 thousand people as audience.

We are participating for two reasons. One is to enjoy the holiday by the participation in celebrating American's independence day. The other is people's recognition of JASV.

The parade is about 40 minutes walk. It will start around 6:15 pm. All the parade participants must be in line by 6:00 pm or earlier. The people who

live around Burlington area may leave this area on to high-way 89 around 4:30 pm and get off at Montpelier exit, which will take 40 minutes. Then at the left side of the entrance to Montpelier city you will see the high school. You will park your car there (free) and walk to the line up place (about 30 minutes). So, you will be able to get to line up area by 5:45 pm at the latest. You will come back to your car by 7:00 pm. Then we will leave.

There are many entertainments in front of the State House. So, if you want to watch them before the parade, you may leave earlier. Or there are fireworks after parade. You may watch them at the State House.

If anyone who wants to participate from Burlington area I am happy to drive you. I have a SUV and drive up to 5 people. If you are interested in participating in the parade please let me know.

If we have more than 10 people's participation, I will register the JASV, otherwise we will not participate this year. (Masks are optional.)

#### **4. Matsuri (This Fall)**

The last Matsuri took place in 2019 at Saint Michael's College's Sports Center. Then we started to have COVID pandemic. And many things changed since then. The biggest problem for us became finding a venue. Saint Michael's College cannot help us to have it at their Ross Sports Center anymore. They suggested us to have it at the Champlain Fair Ground. It is too expensive and we cannot afford it. So, we started to look for a possible place for our venue.

As of today, Veterans Memorial Park in South Burlington is the best candidate for the venue. It has a nice stage with speaker and large parking lot. However, outdoor event is weather dependent. If it rains we cannot have it. Also the park is an open area. Consequently, we may have Matsuri as a free event (no entry fee). We don't charge booth participants and audience. Free!!! As its result booth participants need to bring their own tables and tents if needed. The audience must bring their own chairs or plastic sheets to sit down if needed.

Due to the free entry we at the JASV have no income from this event.

However, we have to pay some expenses such as venue cost to the city, advertisement (posters and their distribution), performers, etc. We are going to apply for a grant from Japan Foundation in New York. We received their support in the past and we need it again.

This is the first trial having Matsuri at a park. There may be unknown problems, but we will see what they are. Thank you for your support!!!

Toshi Saitoh  
JASV