

# Japan-America Society of Oregon

2020 Annual Report

## *Our mission is ...*

to support business and develop community by strengthening the US-Japan relationship.

We focus on and represent the relationship in Oregon and Southwest Washington.

Our programming can extend beyond our region.

## *JASO is ...*

a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, established in 1907.

the 3<sup>rd</sup> oldest among 37 Japan America Societies nationwide.

an idea that in a grassroots effort, we as individuals can come together and make a difference.

## *JASO has ...*

a membership of around 130 organizations and 300 individuals. More than 800 persons are members of JASO as individuals or through their organizations.

9 main committees under a Board of Directors and Executive Committee, comprising 150 volunteers, who plan and implement our programs in Business, Education and Culture.

2 full-time and 1 part-time staff.

## **Executive Summary**

Our goal in 2020 quickly became staying safe, caring for those close to us, caring for our community, and being as active as possible in creating (virtual) places to gather, learn, connect, and support each other.

2020 will always be the year of Covid, and like many organizations we restricted operations from mid-March to the end of April as we reoriented to the new world. We had enjoyed a series of successful, growing events in January and February, and from early May we restarted at full speed. Fortunately, we were able to adapt a lot of our programming to be available and shared online. The online world also offered new opportunity, particularly in respect to direct connectivity to Japan. We took full advantage, welcoming Japan residents to events, visiting Japan businesses via video in real time, and bringing college students from Oregon and Toyama together to hang out. A combination of generous individual and corporate support, plus government help and internal resource management, allowed us to adjust and make all our events free of charge to members (often non-members too), and still report a successful year financially.



Graham Morris  
Executive Director

## Business

In our *Business Speaker Series* we discussed the comparative management of the US and Japan economies through Covid with Hiro Ito, Chair of the Economics Department at Portland State University; learned how Columbia Sportswear has adapted to Covid with President Tim Boyle and Japan President Massimo Lazzari; were inspired in conversation with the ever-ebullient Yoshida Sauce owner Junki Yoshida, and focused on the US-China-Japan economic triangle with Professor Shujiro Urata from Waseda University. In our year-end gathering, ZGF architects led us through a dozen community development projects they have undertaken in Japan, bringing Portland sensibility to drive Japanese city design.



JASO members also got to connect virtually to events from other Japan America Societies nationally, from Covid economics to geopolitics, diplomacy in SE Asia, the growth of anime, and PPP compliance and DEI for Japanese companies.

JASO also kept local Japanese businesses informed of PPP requirements and opportunities, assisted in business recruitment activities, and fielded questions and gave support to business requests through the year.



The *Women's Leadership Council* created and hosted 200 attendees for lunch, listening to leadership lessons from Miki Ebara, Executive Producer from NHK World, Julia Wada, Senior VP at Toyota USA, and ex-Nike Skateboard GM turned entrepreneur Melanie Strong.

*JASO NEXT* is our growing Young Professionals group. They hosted five different networking events, culminating in a virtual sake-tasting led by SakéOne, Oregon's premier sake brewery.

*Japanese Language Classes for Business Purposes* thrived with the move to Zoom, where the disappointment of not seeing each other or sensei in person, was trumped by not having to beat the traffic into downtown Portland to get to class. We hosted three 8-week terms in January, April and September, with opportunities for students at the beginner, improver, intermediate and advanced levels. We also started offering private one-on-one classes.

As membership benefits we hosted *free cross-cultural workshops* – how Americans and Japanese employees can become more successful by better understanding the cultural identities that drive individuals in the workplace and corporate behaviors; and for all we hosted a *new-member orientation* where newcomers could meet Board and committee members.

## Education

In late February we hosted an expanded **4<sup>th</sup> Pacific Northwest Japan Bowl** with over 60 high school students and 20 teams from schools in Oregon and Washington, including three student levels for the first time. Winners from Kamiak HS in Washington and Westview HS in Beaverton represented our region at the online National Bowl in May.



We had to move our college **Toyama Cup** speech contest to November and recreate it online. Our winner Rei Takahashi from Willamette University will get to travel to Toyama-ken once international travel begins again.

Our **Japan on the Road** educational classroom trips to elementary schools had started strongly as always, but quickly closed for the school year. With review, and a passion to continue to reach third graders, our team created their first ever 15-minute online video and associated teachers' guide. Teachers also proved difficult to connect with as they worked through how and what to teach in their classrooms. But by November we were talking effectively again, with virtual visits restarting in December.

## Culture



Our supremely enjoyable and delicious **shinnenkai** included performances, traditional foods from Chef Naoko paired with a variety of sakes from SakéOne, plus fukubukuro and fun activities to kick off the year. Then, the culture team moved online and experimented with a Netflix **movie night** and cultural event on Facebook Live. Our summer **Japanese Beer Garden** has always been a highlight of this committee's work, so it was with a little trepidation that we logged on. No worries, the team pulling of a stunning event as we visited three different breweries and bars in Japan that specialize in Oregon craft beer, while also sampling from our own homes!

## Community

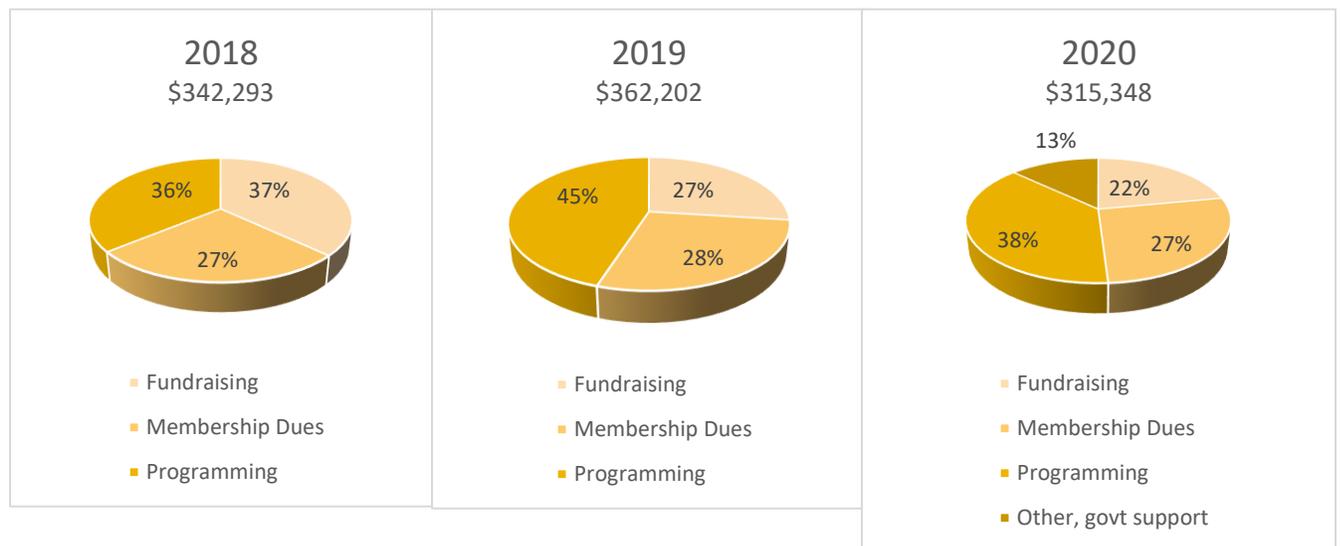
Oregon and Southwest Washington are fortunate to have a vibrant scene of Japan-related community groups, organizations, facilities, eateries, cultural artists, education institutions and a historic foundation. We work year-round supporting and creating awareness of their work, events, and celebrations. In addition, our **tomodachi-kai** community meets regularly and explores different elements, also making the move online.

## Communications

We connect weekly to our database of 2,000 persons. Our web site at [jaso.org](http://jaso.org) received 13,718 visits in 2020. We are most active on social media on three platforms. Our [Facebook](#) page moved to 4,000 followers. We post there about 3 times weekly, with 50% being items from our members (82 total), 30% our items (51), and 20% various other. We [tweet](#) almost daily (328), with 80% being general US-Japan news, information and fun items. And we run a LinkedIn [JASO group](#) (328) where we post weekly, split evenly between JASO and member news.

## Financial Report

Total revenue dropped from 2019 to 2020 by 13% to \$315,348; and the balance between membership, fundraising, operational revenue and other sources shifted due to Covid. However, with a commensurate and managed drop in costs, JASO was able to report a year-end surplus.



## Contact Us

We have an office, but we're rarely there due to Covid. Office phones and mail are checked once each week. Email is best.

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For general information, [info@jaso.org](mailto:info@jaso.org) or (503) 552-8811.

## Membership

Organizations and individuals join us for many reasons. Most importantly, members invest in our mission. When combined with the passion of our volunteer groups, this funding powers all our programs. Additionally, members receive benefits: corporate listed [here](#), individual listed [here](#). Our major corporate members are:

### Diamond

Columbia Sportswear	Lane Powell	The Standard
Consular Office of Japan in Portland	SEH America	Yoshida Group
Deloitte	Shokookai of Portland	

### Platinum

Alterman Law Group	Kumoricon	Portland Coffee Roasters
Hitachi High-Tech	LegitScript	Portland General Electric
JETRO	Pacific Rim Martial Arts Academy	Portland Japanese Garden
KPMG	Port of Portland	Summit Properties

### Gold

Ajinomoto Windsor	Portland JACL	Tokyo Electron
Greater Portland Inc	Snow Peak	United Grain Corporation
JPMorgan	Sweet Onion Consulting	

### Silver

AGC Electronics America	Gerding Edlen	Made in Oregon	Temple University Japan
ANDEO Intl Homestays	Development	Moss Adams	Tokyo Ohka Kogyo
Buckley Law	In Line Commercial	NW Natural	Tracktown USA
Business Oregon	Construction	Pacific Dreams	Uwajimaya
City of Hillsboro	JAE Oregon	Perkins & Co	Wacom
Delta Air Lines	Japan Abacus Math	Portland State University	Yamasa Corporation
Dick's Auto Group	School	Prosper Portland	ZGF Architects
Epson Portland Inc.	K&L Gates	SakéOne	
Fujimi Corporation	Mackenzie.	Sapporo USA	

### Bronze

Barran Liebman	JellD	Oregon Department of	Orchards
Cable Huston	Kanematsu USA	Agriculture	Syun Izakaya
CDZ Collegium Musica	Kanto Corporation	Overseas Merchandise	The Bidwell Marriott
CH2M Hill	KBF CPAs	Inspection Co.	Portland
Chef Naoko Corporation	King Brewing Co. Ltd.	Oyatsupan	The International School
City of Beaverton	Kkobo LLC	PLACE	The Mark Spencer Hotel
City of Salem	Koji Osakaya Japanese	Prince Hotels USA	Tofugu
City of Tualatin	Restaurant	Rogue Ales & Spirits	Tokyo International
Denison Cellars	Kurotani	Seisuke Knife	University of America
Expeditors International	Live Your Colour	Sho Authentic Japanese	University of Oregon
Global Business Passport	Marukin	Cuisine	Center for Asian &
Hokusei North America	Mitsubishi Gas Chemical	Shoei Electronic	Pacific Studies
IMEX America	New Season Foods	Materials	US-J Connect
InSpec Group	Nippon Express USA	Sojitz Corporation	Vanport International
Inter-Pacific Consulting	Nippon Mektron	St.Cousair Oregon	Youi

### Copper

CREAW	Oya No Kai	Takohachi Taiko
Japanese Cool	Portland Taiko	Yuki Origami
Mitsu Yamazaki LLC	Sora Shodo	