



# JASH Newsflash

A Summary of Recent Events of the Japan-America Society of Hawaii

Spring 2021

## JASH Virtual Shinnenkai

The Japan-America Society of Hawaii (JASH) celebrated the start of 2021 with a new spin on our annual New Year's Reception. In adherence with public health guidelines, we traded out our beloved evening event and instead gathered via Zoom for a night of international entertainment and the chance to virtually reconnect with all of our members on January 27, 2021. Our emcees were JASH Board Directors Mr. John Rankin and Mr. Tyler Hiranaka.

The evening began with an informal networking session held through Zoom breakout rooms. As everyone was returning to the main room for the start of the program, they were treated to the intense and exciting rhythms from taiko group Dragon Beat to kick off the reception.



JASH was honored to share special new year's video messages from Governor David Ige and Mrs. Dawn Amano-Ige and also Mayor Rick Blangiardi. Then, as is our tradition, Consul General Yutaka Aoki joined JASH President Reyna Kaneko, JASH Chair Steve Sombrero, and JASH Vice Chair Alex Jampel in a socially-distanced *kagami wari* and *kanpai* toast.

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## President's Message

Aloha JASH Ohana!

As I write this, the cherry blossoms have bloomed all over Japan, signifying that we are into the Spring. It's *sakura* season, time for *Hanami!* Cherry blossoms signify a time of renewal, a fresh start, a sentiment we all share as we put a challenging year behind us and look forward with optimism and hope.



Our JASH office was gifted with *sakura* that bloomed beautifully which put smiles on our faces and lifted our spirits.

While JASH had a very full first three months of 2021, we are looking forward to soon being able to see everyone in person again. *Sakura* also symbolize the fleeting nature of life, and with their short but oh so beautiful life, remind us to live each moment beautifully, to strive for peace and harmony. This is our wish for you and for the world.

Kansha, Reyna

## Japan U.S. Military (JUMP) Program



Top L-R: Vice Adm. Yoji Koda (Ret.), Adm. Philip Davidson, JASH Immediate Past Chair Sal Miwa, Consul General Yutaka Aoki, JASH President Reyna Kaneko, Sasakawa USA President Satohiro Akimoto, JASH Director Barbara Tanabe, and NAJAS President Peter Kelley

On Tuesday, February 16, 2021, JASH hosted this year's Japan U.S. Military Program (JUMP) Honolulu as a Zoom Webinar. Thanks to the generous support of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA and the National Association of Japan-America Societies, the event was free and open to the public.

For this year's program, we were honored to have keynote speakers Admiral Philip Davidson, 25th Commander of the United States Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) and Vice Admiral Yoji Koda, former Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) Commander in Chief, Self-Defense Fleet (Ret.) touch on this year's theme of

"History, Current Challenges, and Opportunities." The program was moderated by Ms. Barbara Tanabe, owner and founder of Ho'akea Communications, LLC and JASH Board Director. Opening remarks were delivered by Mr. Peter Kelley, President of the National Association of Japan-America Societies and Mr. Satohiro Akimoto, Chairman of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA. We also welcomed remarks by Consul General Yutaka Aoki, Consul General of Japan in Honolulu.

Speaking on the recent history of U.S.-Japan military relations, Vice Admiral Koda shared his memories of receiving news of the September 11 attacks while attending a joint meeting in Pearl Harbor between the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force and the U.S. Pacific Fleet. Later that month, Vice Admiral Koda recalled leading the operation to escort the U.S.S. Kitty Hawk safely out of Tokyo Bay. His actions to support the U.S. forces resulted in major criticism from various political parties and the media, but according to Vice Admiral Koda, thanks to one phone call from then President George W. Bush to Prime Minister Koizumi, his career in the JMSDF was saved.

Admiral Davidson spoke on the current challenges and opportunities between U.S. and

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## Japan Currents



Our annual Japan Currents event took place virtually via Zoom on Wednesday, February 24, 2021. For this year's talks, experts from the U.S. and Japan shared their country's experiences, policies, and plans moving forward on the topic of "COVID-19 Recovery: Public Health and the Resumption of Travel." Thanks to the generous support of the Embassy of Japan in Washington, D.C. and the National Association of Japan-America Societies, the program was free and open to the public.

Speaking on public health, we welcomed Lt. Gov. Josh Green, physician and 14th Lieutenant Governor of Hawaii, and Dr. Norio Ohmagari, director of AMR Clinical Reference Center and Director of Disease Control and Prevention Center of National Center for Global Health and Medicine (NCGM) in Japan.

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## 2021 Shinnenkai

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Attendees were then treated to a special lesson on the different sake classifications by sake sommelier Keith Nakaganeku of The Cherry Co. Following the ceremony, attendees were invited to share their favorite JASH memories. While many loved our social and networking events like Taste of JASH and JASH 5:01s, others fondly recalled their time volunteering for our educational programs such as the Japan Wizards Competition. We share your excitement and cannot wait until we can meet you all in person again.



The evening concluded with a performance of "Tawaratsumiuta" by Shouju Madoka and Anju Madoka of the Madoka no Kai Japanese traditional folk song

school, followed by another exhilarating piece by Dragon Beat.



Mahalo to everyone who made our virtual New Year's Reception possible, including Governor and Mrs. Ige, Mayor Blangiardi, Consul General Aoki, Mr. Keith Nakaganeku, Madoka no Kai's Shouju and Anju Madoka, and Dragon Beat. We also extend our warmest thanks to all of you, our members, for your continued support of the Japan-America Society of Hawaii.

## Japan Currents



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Presenting the latest information on the resumption of travel, we welcomed Mr. John De Fries, president and chief executive officer of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA), and Mr. Eric Takahata, managing director of Hawai'i Tourism Japan (HTJ). The program was moderated by Ms. Barbara Tanabe, owner and founder of Ho'akea Communications, LLC (a public affairs company) and JASH board director.

Dr. Ohmagari and Lt. Gov. Green both began by describing the development of the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures taken by their respective governments to contain the spread. Although there were differences with regards to the extent the two governments could enact and enforce shutdown policies, both economies were strained as the number of infections quickly climbed and struggled to decline.

Looking optimistically to the upcoming

months, Lt. Gov. Green shared the results to date of Hawaii's COVID-19 vaccination program, which was already well on its way through vaccinating healthcare workers, teachers, other essential workers, and the elderly. At the time of this Japan Currents, Japan had just only started rolling out vaccines, starting with essential healthcare workers. Dr. Ohmagari stressed the importance of providing the public with accurate and unbiased information about vaccines in order to quell the spread of misinformation and negative views towards vaccination. Both Lt. Gov. Green and Dr. Ohmagari are excited for when Hawaii and Japan can again welcome international travel, but stressed the importance of prioritizing the domestic public health environment.

Mr. De Fries and Mr. Takahata both spoke on the impact of COVID-19 to the tourism industry in Hawaii, comparing data from 2019 to the present. Mr. De Fries spoke specifically on the local collapse of the industry and the difficulties faced by the Hawaii Tourism Authority, but also touched on their optimism for the third and fourth quarters of 2021. On reimagining responsible and regenerative tourism, he stressed the importance of finding balance between maintaining both the environment and the economy through a "Mālama Mindset." Mr. Takahata presented

## JUMP Program

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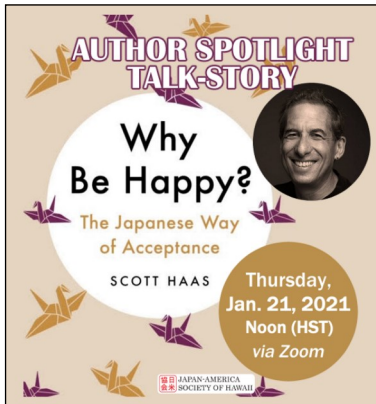
Japanese forces. "The U.S.-Japan Alliance is the most important bilateral relationship for the United States in the 21st century," Admiral Davidson asserted, "and I would submit that it is also the most important bilateral relationship for Japan in the 21st century as well." Optimistic about the relationship under President Biden's and Prime Minister Suga's administrations, he believes that our strong, long-standing U.S.-Japan relations are key for a free and safe Indo-Pacific region. Numerous bilateral exercises and joint development between Japan and the U.S. are regularly conducted, and together our two countries are seeking additional opportunities with like-minded nations.

In past years, JASH has collaborated with the Consulate General of Japan in Honolulu to invite service members from the U.S. and Japan to the Consulate for an afternoon of keynote talks and networking. Although we were unable to gather with everyone in-person this year, we are grateful that we were able to virtually connect with everyone and learn from our incredible speakers.

The Japan U.S. Military Program (JUMP) connects past and present service members, families, and government civilians who have served in Japan through social networks and grassroots events. JUMP is the only national program to do so, providing a powerful foundation for sustaining the alliance between the U.S. and Japan. To learn more about JUMP, visit <https://www.jumprogram.org/>.

the recent Japanese market conditions, and what to expect in the upcoming months with regards to their vaccination rollout and Olympic games. Hawaii Tourism Japan and the Japanese Association of Travel Agents (JATA) are both optimistic for the latter half of 2021, with JATA working with the Japanese government to waive Japan's 14-day quarantine for returning travelers for select locations, such as Hawaii. Both Mr. De Fries and Mr. Takahata also discussed the importance of balancing the return of tourism with the needs of Hawaii residents and protection of the environment. JASH extends another warm Mahalo to our guest speakers for sharing their expertise, insights, and time with us.

## Why Be Happy? With Dr. Scott Haas



On Thursday, January 21, 2021, JASH hosted a Talk-Story with Dr. Scott Haas regarding his book “*Why Be Happy? The Japanese Way of Acceptance*.” Dr. Haas started off with the origins of his interest through watching Akira Kurosawa’s *Rashomon*. The movie depicted the viewpoints of multiple characters and each of their viewpoints being given validity by the narrator. From this, he pursued this interest in books by Japanese authors and was able to note the difference from Western literature.

JASH is pleased to announce the selection of four Junior Ambassadors (JAs) to represent JASH and Hawaii at the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Asian-Pacific Children’s Convention (APCC). Last year’s 2020 program was unfortunately cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For the 33<sup>rd</sup> convention, the APCC recently announced that the summer program will go virtual via Zoom over a series of weekend workshops in the fall.

The APCC is a cultural exchange program that deepens participant’s appreciation for the cultures of other nations and regions, and promotes mutual understanding and friendship, nurtures international awareness in young people, and works towards world peace and co-existence. It is hoped that the JAs will build an international network of friends. Typically, the homestay and global camp is held in Fukuoka, Japan, where the students meet over 200 fellow Junior Ambassadors from 40 countries and cities in the Asia-Pacific region in a global youth camp.

For 2021, the APCC generously invited the 2020 delegations to participate in this year’s

In 2002, he was writing about food and chef Daniel Boulud invited him as a guest to a 5-day event in Japan for the movie opening of *Lost in Translation*. He described it as everything being familiar and foreign, while there were familiar Western elements present, there are many things that he’s continued to learn through his approximately 29 visits to Japan.

One of the concepts he went over in this session was *ukeireru*. *Ukeireru* can compound to acceptance but Dr. Haas resonated with the definition “to accept something gently, fun to imagine inside oneself, accepting reality” from the perspective of a mother with a child. As an example, he focused on himself as a father, to accept them for who they are and help socialize them and to love them without equivocation. He applies this mindset to not just his family but also his work, where he has used it to help navigate social situations to try and understand others and to “lower the temperature” of the situation.

He also went over the concept of *sumimasen*, which was defined as being equivalent to “I apologize for making my needs more important than what you were doing.” He was able to explain the disarming effect of apology particularly in the States, by showing them respect with an apology it helps to alleviate the tension of situations.

The last concept he went over was *mindfulness*, a concept found in many of the forms of spirituality found in Japan. Some of the things to keep in mind to maintain mindfulness are that the situation is temporary and that change is constantly occurring. Dr. Haas also made the point that if the situation is stressful, you don’t have to respond to it in a stressful way; to be able to accept the situation and have self-awareness of the people around you.

Thank you to Dr. Haas for taking the time out of his schedule to join our audience for this discussion. If you would like to watch the full Talk-Story segment, please [click here](#) to watch it on the [Japan-America Society of Hawaii YouTube channel](#).

## 2021 APCC Delegates Selected



events as our 2021 Junior Ambassadors. Three of our 2020 JAs accepted the invitation to continue training with us as representatives of JASH and Hawaii. To complete our delegation, in January 2021 we selected one new JA following a competitive application and virtual interview process.

For the next several months, the four Junior Ambassadors—two boys and two girls—will participate in a JASH-designed training program to broaden their horizons and prepare them for their cross-cultural experiences. It is our hope that our Ambassadors will mature into adults with a strong sense of social responsibility.

Our returning Junior Ambassadors are:

- Jacqueline Furuta, from Iolani School
- Loch Moorman, from Kainalu Elementary School

- Rhegen Villarimo, from Niu Valley Middle School

And new for 2021:

- Willa Stack, from Waikiki Elementary School



L-R: Rhegen Villarimo, Loch Moorman, Willa Stack, Sandy Takeda, and Jacqueline Furuta,

They will be accompanied in their virtual workshops by chaperone Sandy Takeda, who has been actively involved with the APCC since her children also participated in the program as JAs.

If you wish to know more about the APCC program, please visit the JASH website at <http://jashawaii.org/education/>, or contact Christianne Ono, APCC Program Coordinator at (808) 524-4450 or via [cono@jashawaii.org](mailto:cono@jashawaii.org).

### Momotaro Storygami

JASH, in collaboration with Moanalua High School Japanese Club, presented an interactive origami and storytelling program on Saturday, February 27, 2021 via Zoom. Over 25 attendees made an origami peach while listening to the story of *Momotaro* or "Peach Boy," a popular Japanese folktale read in both English and Japanese.

Moanalua High School Japanese Club President, Erick Huang, approached JASH after he and his fellow members attended the origami tutorial series that JASH presented last summer to organize a community event for keiki to keep them busy and learn something new during these challenging times.



Traditionally, JASH holds an annual gathering to celebrate Girls' Day, which is also known as Peach Festival, at the Japanese Consulate, but this year we were not able to gather together and celebrated peach blossom season with children in Hawaii and in Japan through this virtual gathering that combined storytelling and origami.

Japanese Club members met and practiced multiple times prior to the event and successfully led the Zoom session, creating the visuals, moderating the meeting, reading the story in English and Japanese, doing the translations between English and Japanese, and demonstrating the folding process step by step.

JASH would like to express a big MAHALO to Moanalua High School Japanese Club members and the club advisor, Ms. Jaimelyn Tateyama for planning and providing a fun and educational opportunity for our members and children.

### Tanna Dang—Viewing Every New Challenge as an Opportunity



L-R: Monchalee Ota and Tanna Dang

Tanna and her team became social media influencers overnight, learning how to take selfies of themselves modeling the new products for their website and Instagram. Through their hard work, Eden in Love would go on to have their most successful reinvented

Impressively, Eden in Love has also partnered with over 50 local and national non-profit organizations to give back to the community. Their largest project was adopting a village in Sri Lanka from 2012-2017 through Global Hope Network. Locally, they have supported the Oncology Department at Kapiolani Medical Center, Hawaiian Humane Society, and UH Marching Band to name a few. "On the surface we're a boutique. But beyond that, Eden in Love is our stage to speak to the world about causes that matter to us." (Source: [www.edeninlove.com/about/](http://www.edeninlove.com/about/))

Over the past year, JASH has welcomed women leaders throughout Hawaii to share their entrepreneurial journeys with our members and discuss how they've pivoted and adapted to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. For the fourth installment in our "Women Who Lead" series on March 18, 2021, we were honored to be joined by Ms. Tanna Dang, owner of local lifestyle boutique Eden in Love. The virtual talk-story was moderated by Ms. Monchalee Ota, owner of Nimbus Unlimited, LLC and JASH NexGen Advisory Member.

Black Friday sales to date, selling out of their exclusive sales passes in minutes.

However, their immense online success was not without hardships. Tanna worked tirelessly to insure she could keep her team together during the rocky months. There were numerous heated discussions, she confided, and many tears shed, but thanks to all of those challenges the Eden in Love Ohana has come out of the pandemic stronger than ever.

The pandemic has thrown innumerable challenges and struggles at small businesses, as retailers like Eden in Love were forced to shut their storefronts in the interest of everyone's health and safety.

Unable to display their merchandise in their brick and mortar stores in Oahu's South Shore Market and Las Vegas, Tanna Dang and her team were quick to reimagine how Eden in Love would launch into the world of online retail.

Tanna was born an entrepreneur and is a shopkeeper at heart. From her start at The Wedding Cafe through to her current adventures with Eden in Love, she constantly sought new opportunities and ways to improve herself and her businesses with each new challenge that arose. When the pandemic began affecting Hawaii, it forced everyone to reevaluate their priorities. For Tanna, now she tries to focus more on having fun and enjoying her journey with her Eden family. You may just catch them riding their beach cruiser bikes through Ward after work.

JASH extends a warm Mahalo to Tanna Dang for sharing her inspiring story through the tough trials and lessons she learned over the rollercoaster of 2020. For more authentic lifestyle content, check out Eden in Love at Ward's South Shore Market, online at <https://edeninlove.com/>, or on Instagram @edeninloveboutique. To learn more about our "Women Who Lead" series, visit <https://www.jashawaii.org/women-who-lead>.





## Top High School Students Compete for Trips to Japan at the 18th Annual Japan Wizards Competition



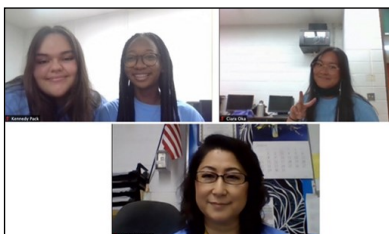
Congratulations to the 60 students who represented 14 high schools from Oahu, Hawaii and Maui at the 18th Annual JASH Japan Wizards Statewide Academic Team Competition (JWC)! Teams were comprised of three students each, with a total of 20 teams competing.

The student-teams were tested on their knowledge of various Japan-related topics such as art, culture and tradition, food, geography, history, Japan-U.S./Hawaii ties, literature, politics and government, sports, contemporary Japan, and of course language. Students were divided into two levels: Level A or Level B, depending on their current Japanese language level. Level A students were enrolled in Japanese I or II, and Level B students were enrolled in Japanese III or IV.

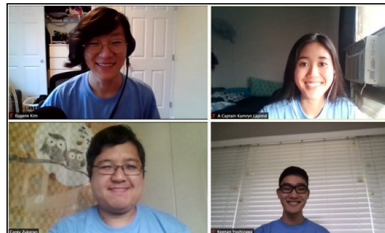
This year, the JWC was completely revamped to adhere to social distancing guidelines of the COVID-19 pandemic and took place in two rounds held virtually on separate days. The Preliminary Round took place between March 5 and 7, 2021 through an online quiz that each team member individually took. Individual test scores were combined towards the total team score to determine the teams that would advance to the Final Round of competition held virtually via Zoom on Sunday, March 14, 2021.

Each year, JASH awards trips to Japan to the top scoring public and private school teams in each level. We are pleased to announce the JWC Japan trip winners:

### Level A Hanalani Schools—Private



### Level A Mililani High School—Public



### Level B Hawaii Baptist Academy—Private



### Level B James Campbell High School—Public



**Hanalani Schools Level A** team was also awarded the Atsuhiko Tateuchi Memorial Award for Outstanding Scholarship and the International Christian University Special Award for achieving the highest score of the Finals.

In addition, **King Kekaulike High School Level B** team was awarded a trip to Japan donated by a retired public school teacher, who chooses to remain anonymous. The donor expressed how her former students benefited from the JASH Japan Wizards Competition and requested that a second public school from Level B travel to Japan.

### Level B Second Public High School King Kekaulike High School



Finally, JASH Board member and Youth Education Committee Chair Jean E. Rolles sponsored a sixth award for a trip to Japan in honor of her friend and fellow JASH Board member, Dr. Michael Leineweber, who passed away in 2014. Dr. Leineweber was a loyal supporter of JASH who strongly believed in the educational programs that JASH conducts, especially those programs that encouraged exchanges between people from Japan and Hawaii.

In his memory, Ms. Rolles sponsored a team chosen through a random drawing during the JWC awards ceremony. To qualify for this drawing, the team must have been in the top 10 scoring teams during the Preliminary Round of competition. The five teams who had already won Japan trips were not eligible for this drawing. The winner of the **Dr. Michael Leineweber award** was: **Kapolei High School Level A**.



These six teams of three students and their advisors will travel to Japan when, of course, it is safe to travel again to experience firsthand what they studied in the classroom and through independent research.

Thank you to our title sponsor Hawaiian

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Ehime Maru Memorial Ceremony—20th Anniversary



On Tuesday, February 9, 2021, the Ehime Maru Memorial Association (EMMA) held a private remembrance ceremony for the 20th anniversary of the sinking of the Uwajima Fisheries High School training ship Ehime Maru at the Ehime Maru Memorial in Kaka’ako Waterfront Park. The Ehime Maru suffered the loss of nine lives, including four students, two teachers, and three crew members after it was unexpectedly struck by the USS Greeneville submarine.

Messages of remembrance from Consul General Yutaka Aoki, Governor David Ige, Governor Tokihiro Nakamura of Ehime Prefecture, Mayor Rick Blangiardi, and Mayor Fumiaki Okahara of Uwajima City were read during the private ceremony. In memory of the nine who were lost in the tragedy, wreaths and lei were offered to the memorial on behalf of the bereaved family members



and Ehime Prefecture and Uwajima City officials who were unable to travel to Honolulu due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In his message, as the representative of the bereaved families, Mr. Tatsuyoshi Mizuguchi expressed heartfelt gratitude to everyone in Hawaii who has treated them with care, compassion, respect, and with the aloha spirit over the past 20 years.

In closing, Mr. Ken Saiki, Director of the Ehime Maru Memorial Association ensured

that the association would continue to keep the memory of the nine souls alive in our hearts, and to care for the memorial so it remains a beautiful, fitting tribute to their legacy. Since its unveiling in 2002, Mr. Saiki has coordinated volunteers from local Japanese American community groups for weekly maintenance and cleaning of the memorial.

JASH serves as the Administrator of the Ehime Maru Memorial Association and works to preserve the memory of the lives lost in this tragic accident and to maintain the memorial in perpetuity.



Japan Wizards Competition

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Airlines and other major supporters – ABC Stores; Atsuhiko and Ina Goodwin Tateuchi Foundation; Freeman Foundation; Halekulani Corporation; International Christian University; The Japan Foundation, Los Angeles; Jean E. Rolles; License Academy; Temple University Japan Campus; and our anonymous donor – who through the JWC encourage high school students to study Japan and the many fascinating topics associated with it.

Also, a HUGE mahalo to the Competition Panel volunteers who helped the JWC run smoothly and also volunteered their Saturday a few weeks ago for a training session. Volunteers were from organizations that included the Japan Exchange and Teaching Alumni Association of Hawaii, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Kapiolani Community College, and Hawaii Tokai International College, just to name a few. Without their tremendous support, the JWC would not have been possible.

Welcome New JASH Corporate Member—SPRIX



Please join us in welcoming our newest corporate member, Sprix to the JASH Ohana! Sprix, an educational company based in Japan, aims to become the world’s number one company that combines education and IT. Founded in 1997 by President and Representative Director, Hiroyuki Tsuneishi, Sprix serves students around the world, including Japan, China, and now in Hawaii. Sprix most recently administered the International Basic Academic Achievement Test or “TOFAS” in both Japanese and English. The intention of the TOFAS is to help students evaluate and compare their essential academic ability in multiple countries, including Japan and the U.S.

"We, SPRIX, are a comprehensive education company whose main business is the operation of cram schools and the production of educational content in Japan," states Shuhei Umeda, director of the SPRIX Research Institute. "The place of establishment is Nagaoka City, a sister city of Honolulu City that holds a special place in our

heart. We have been working on providing teaching materials to some schools in Honolulu, and this time, it is regarded as the most important in the world from the research results. We will provide a test specializing in the learning element "basic academic ability" that we are studying in-depth. We want to use this as a starting point to deliver our educational services to the state of Hawaii and throughout the United States."

To learn more about TOFAS visit <https://tof.as.education/eng/>. For more about Sprix, visit <http://sprix.us/EN/>

JASH Newsflash

The Japan-America Society of Hawaii was founded in 1976 to promote understanding and friendship between the people of Japan and the United States through the special and unique perspective of Hawaii.

The JASH Newsflash newsletter is published quarterly. Visit our website at [www.jashawaii.org](http://www.jashawaii.org) for more information.