



National Association of Japanese Canadians

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE REPORT

Lorene Oikawa

Chair: Lorene Oikawa

NAJC Human Rights Committee Members: Naomi Katsumi (Ottawa) and Ren Ito (Toronto)

Highlights

- We are grateful for the work of committee members George Takashima (Lethbridge) and Fumi Torigai (Whitehorse) whose terms ended. We know they will be continuing to support human rights initiatives in their communities.
- We launched the NAJC HRC Speaker Series including the following speakers:
 - Japanese Canadian actors Yoshié Bancroft and Peter Shinkoda shared examples of discrimination and their experiences as racialized actors. Peter was chosen as a follow up to the positive response he received as a keynote speaker at the 2017 Ottawa NAJC Conference.
 - Itrath Syed is a Muslim, educator, activist, & commentator. Her PhD research involves an analysis of the ideological history of Islamophobia in Canada.
 - Canadian Race Relations Foundation chairperson Albert Lo.
- The 2018 Dr. Gordon Hirabayashi Human Rights Award was presented to Kay Kiyoshi Kato Shimizu in Oakville, Ontario. Mrs. Shimizu was the first Japanese Canadian social worker in the 1940s and assisted Japanese Canadians in Hastings Park during internment. She was also active in the Redress movement in Ottawa and Vancouver. The National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC) Dr. Gordon Hirabayashi Human Rights Award is presented every two years in recognition of an individual or organization contributing to the development or promotion of human rights and equality in Canada.
- Strengthening our connection with the Canadian Race Relations Foundation (CRRF) and working on anti-racism messaging.
- Developing messaging for social media.
- Prepared a human rights workshop for the 2018 Winnipeg NAJC Conference. Conference organizers set a human rights theme for the conference based on the 30th anniversary of Redress.
- Continuing to develop the NAJC Human Rights Committee network. The network was established to connect with Japanese Canadians and those interested in human rights across Canada. The connection supports the



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sharing of information about human rights, and identifying issues and trends in the communities.

- Spoke on 2018 International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and distributed a statement via e-news and social media.
- Prepared draft statements for NEB.
- Advocacy work involving the chopping down of historic cherry trees in Northern BC and a Japanese Canadian taiko group in an area of Japan without clean water because of the flooding.
- Support for Indigenous Peoples and racialized communities: statements on social media, and attendance at events.
- Amplifying the stories of injustice against Japanese Canadians and Japanese Americans and showing how it relates to today.
- Engaging with the community at events such as the NAJC booth at Powell Street Festival.