



# LITTLE TOKYO

## BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

A COMMUNITY BENEFIT PROGRAM OF THE LITTLE TOKYO BUSINESS ASSOCIATION  
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



The Little Tokyo/Arts District Station as it looked in March.

## New Little Tokyo Arts District Station Taking Shape

Train testing for the Regional Connector has been taking place since February, a sign that the light rail line is inching closer to opening. Still, a spokesperson for Metro will only say that "the Regional Connector will open later this year."

Meanwhile, adjustments are being made to the A, E and L Line (Blue, Expo, Gold) schedules. Under the new schedules, the last trains of the night will be leaving earlier than they currently do. Via a new tunnel with three underground stations in downtown Los Angeles, the project is tying together the new A and E Lines. The new A Line will run north-south between Azusa and Long Beach and connect Union Station and the Little Tokyo/Arts District Station, while the new E Line will run east-west between East LA and Santa Monica.

## Al Fresco Dining Returns to Little Tokyo

Nine restaurants on the northside of East First Street will once again be able to offer outdoor (al fresco)

dining starting in early May. Although outdoor table service had been offered beginning in August 2020, the installation of a bike lane last year necessitated the removal of the streetside tables. A more permanent outdoor installation is planned in the near future. The return of al fresco dining is the result of a coordinated effort between Council District 14, Los Angeles Department of Transportation, Fugetsudo's Brian Kito, transportation specialist James Okazaki, and Little Tokyo Business Association.



Volunteers participating in last year's Little Tokyo Sparkle pose in front of Nancy Kikuchi's "Home is Little Tokyo" mural.

## 2023 Little Tokyo Sparkle Set for May 20

Planning has begun for Little Tokyo Sparkle, a community wide cleanup event that is scheduled for Saturday morning, May 20, starting at 9 a.m., according to chief organizer Stephen Nagano. The annual event is a collaboration of more than 20 community organizations and businesses with support from Council District 14 and the Little Tokyo Public Safety Association. Nearly 400 volunteers participated last year. Information on how and where to sign up will be issued in the coming days.



Gearing up for this year's Nisei Week Festival are (from left to right) Amanda Hiraishi, Faith Nishimura, Maile Yanguas, Juli Yoshinaga, Jaime Hasama, Kristine Yada, Audrey Nakaoka, and Lorie Meza.

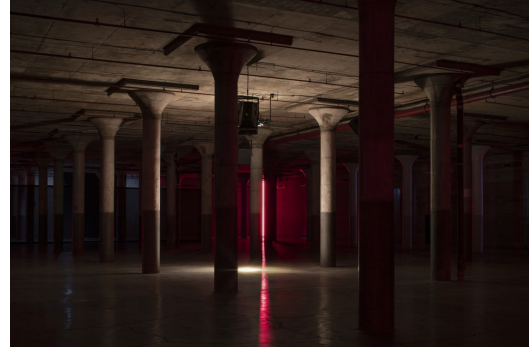
## Nisei Week Due to Arrive August 12-20

A luau held in the main hall of Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Church helped kick off preparations for the 2023 Nisei Week Festival, which will include a parade, coronation of the new queen and court, cultural displays, awards dinner, and Pioneer luncheon. Juli Yoshinaga and Jaime Hasama co-chaired the luau and emceed the program of Hawaiian dancers and musicians. [Click here](#) for more information about Nisei Week, one of L.A. longest-running cultural celebrations.

## Now Featured at Geffen Contemporary at MOCA

Carl Craig draws on his 30-year career as an

international touring DJ as he guides visitors sonically through a club night from his perspective as a DJ. Originally commissioned by the DiaArt Foundation, Craig's soundscape envelops the visitors in Party/After Party, which also honors the Black pioneers of techno and electronic music. [Learn more.](#)



Carl Craig: Party/After Party

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## Little Tokyo Icons Honored by LTBA



Kenji Suzuki  
Suehiro Restaurant

Kenji Suzuki is the owner of Suehiro Café, a legendary restaurant founded and operated by his mother, Junko Suzuki. As a youngster, he was taught the importance of quality products and courteous service. His restaurant, which has been serving Japanese comfort food since 1972, marked its 50th anniversary last year. Suzuki helped lead the business through its most challenging period during the pandemic and today Suehiro Café remains one of Little Tokyo's most popular dining spots.

In May 2021, the restaurant was one of 25 historic places nationwide awarded \$40,000 grants from a program funded by American Express and the National Trust for Historic Preservation.



Carol Tanita  
Manager, Rafu Bussan

Carol Tanita, manager of Rafu Bussan gift shop, grew up around Little Tokyo and remembers visiting Rafu Bussan as a child. She earned a master's degree in education, but a love of Japanese arts and culture drew her to the retail business. She was hired by Rafu Bussan and has worked for the store for more than 30 years. Recognizing that community organizations often need ways to fund worthy programs, Tanita began organizing dance parties in the Japanese American community to raise money for nonprofits. Applying the knowledge that she acquired as a member of the Parent-Teacher Association and finance chair of the Boy Scouts Council, she organized one of her first fundraising dance in 2000.

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## You Can Help Preserve Little Tokyo's Legacy

Support community benefit programs through the Little Tokyo Legacy Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to the betterment of Little Tokyo. These programs include:

- **Legacy Business Incentives** - working to help retain businesses that are the cultural core of our community.

- **Helping Children Experiencing Homelessness** - an annual event designed to raise awareness about the impacts of widespread homelessness on young children and teens.
- **Animal Rescue** - helping to find forever homes for abandoned pets.



**Little Tokyo Legacy Foundation**  
Let's Make it Better

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## **STASH IT / DON'T FLASH IT**

### Avoid Car Break-ins Before They Happen

If you must leave valuables in your vehicle, put them in the trunk **BEFORE** you arrive at your destination. This will avoid the possibility of someone seeing you with your valuables and breaking into your trunk.

The Little Tokyo BID extends a big thank you to the Arts District L.A. BID for providing "Stash It / Don't Flash It" signs to remind motorists to remove (or at least hide) valuables from their cars.

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## How to File a Police Report

We all hope nothing bad ever happens, but if you are the victim of a crime, we encourage you to file a police report. [Click here](#) to learn how to report a crime online. You can report such crimes as hit-and-run, identity theft, harassing phone calls, theft from vehicle, vandalism, and illegal drug activity. For non-emergencies that require a police response, dial (877) 275-5273. In case of an emergency, dial 9-1-1.

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**Little Tokyo BID Safety Patrol**  
**(424) 335-3448**

**For Graffiti Removal, Bulky Item Pickup and other City services**  
**Dial 3-1-1 or Call (213) 473-3231**

**Little Tokyo BID Helpline**  
Phone (213) 880-6875 ~ [board@visitlittletokyo.com](mailto:board@visitlittletokyo.com)

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