



# LITTLE TOKYO

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

A COMMUNITY BENEFIT PROGRAM OF THE LITTLE TOKYO BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

## It's Baseball Season in Little Tokyo



### Shohei Ohtani Mural Becomes Instant Landmark

News media from Los Angeles to Japan assembled in Little Tokyo on March 27 for the unveiling of the latest work by one of L.A.'s most notable muralists Robert Vargas. Little Tokyo was awash with Dodger shirts, hats, and hometown spirit as baseball fans poured onto First St. to watch the dramatic unveiling.

Since the unveiling, foot traffic has increased dramatically across the street from the mural. The 150 feet tall x 60 feet wide art piece is best seen from a distance. Visitors stop to take photos or scan the QR code that allows the viewer to see an animated version of Ohtani swing his bat.

Vargas used a four-inch brush to create the mural. He paints freehand without grids, stencils, or projections. He collaborated with Akira Minamiura, president, Kintetsu Enterprises Corp. of America and Miyako Hotel general manager Akira Yuhara to create the plan for the mural on east-facing wall of the hotel. The mural can be seen from Boyle Heights to the east, where the artist was born, and from just about anywhere in Little Tokyo.

In his remarks, Little Tokyo Business Association president David Ikegami said, "We're here today to recognize magnificence. The talent of a great athlete. The generosity of a great hotel and the company that built this hotel. (the gift of a great artist who has been able to remind us of the need for unity in a mural that came from his heart to this wall.)"

## Congratulations, Robert!

Celebrating the mural's completion are Alan Kumamoto, Irene Simonian, Joanne Kumamoto, David Ikegami, mural artist Robert Vargas, Ellen Endo, and Glenn Osaki.



## JAPANESE VILLAGE VIBING WITH DEEJAY D::DOUBLE with DeeJay D::Double

Deejay D::Double brings his unique music style to Little Tokyo to perform live in Japanese Village Plaza this afternoon from 3 p.m. - 6 p.m. Sundown Sounds is presented by the TCG Collective and 42nd Parallel in cooperation with the Little Tokyo Business Association. This event is free of charge for Little Tokyo visitors. D::Double is a familiar figure in the L.A. music scene and has also performed in Chicago and Las Vegas.

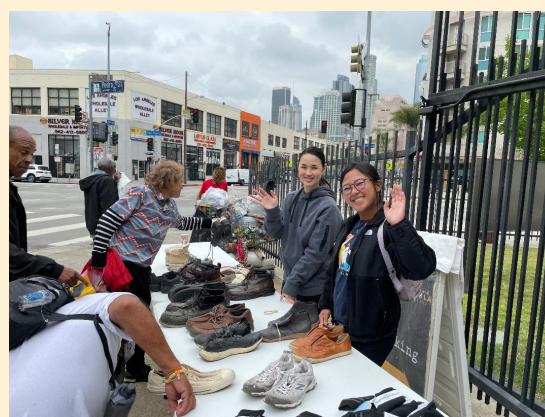
## Community Care Day Adds Dental Services for Unhoused



Pastor Ruben Nuno of the Union Church of Los Angeles (kneeling, front row) joins with the USC Ostrow School of Dentistry students in serving the unhoused population in neighboring Skid Row. In total, 25 dental students and teaching staff took part in the May 4 Community Care Day, a program that began as an idea that Pastor Ruben brought to the Little Tokyo Business Association a year and a half ago. The program is coordinated by the LTBA Foundation and Bee a Little Better in partnership with Union Church, Centenary United Methodist Church, Shelter Partnerships, Crysallis, Project Ropa, Shoes for the Homeless, Westwood Presbyterian Church, API Rise, L.A. Department of Sanitation, Nisei Week, and City Council District 14. The event, held quarterly, also provides mobile showers, medical services, dental hygiene kits, food, and clothing.

### **Cinderellas in Reverse: Giving Shoes to Others**

Members of the Nisei Week 2023 court of princesses Sara Emiko Kubo (in grey sweater) and Kamala Higashiyama hand out shoes for the unhoused, most of whom live in neighboring Skid Row.



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## **Reaffirming Our Goals and Looking to the Future**

As I begin my third year as president of the Little Tokyo Business Association, I am renewing my commitment to remain focused on LTBA's mission to work for the betterment of our community. That means doing our best to keep Little Tokyo safe and clean; that we promote our businesses, especially small businesses, and provide technical support; that we support our charitable organizations; and keep our government representatives abreast of this community's needs. At the same time, we

must honor and preserve Little Tokyo's history and cultural identity while celebrating its diversity.

It's a tall order for any organization, which is why we have dedicated more than a year to working on a plan that best suits this community. The fact is our community is growing and changing. We need to expand our safety program to 24/7 service. With more visitors often comes more litter. Emptying trash containers three times a week isn't enough. We need to be able to respond to calls for cleanup daily, and we need graffiti abatement.



In late January, we mailed information packets to approximately 900 Little Tokyo property owners. If you haven't returned your signed petition, it's not too late. If you have questions, let us know. [Click here](#) to read the full Management District Plan. Let's work together to make Little Tokyo the best it can be.

-- *David Ikegami*

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The Little Tokyo Business Association celebrated the 65th anniversary of its founding in 1959 by installing the 2024 Board of Directors at the Miyako Hotel. Pictured are (front row, left) Masao Mike Okamoto, Haru Takehana, LTBA president David Ikegami, Ellen Endo, Kitty Sankey, and Sheri Kanesaka, and (back row, left) Akira Yuhara, Nancy Takayama, Irene Tsukada Simonian, Yuriko Shikai, Joanne Kumamoto, Tamako Henken, Sylvia Ena, Jan Fukushara, Mark Kawa, and Yoko Kawaguchi.

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## Let There Be Light in Frances Hashimoto Plaza



Metro and the City of Los Angeles have completed refurbishing Hashimoto Plaza with the installation of new light poles. Previously, the project saw new pavers, new paint on the Azusa Street wall, and repainted stanchions. On hand to inspect the project results were: Jane Matsumoto, left, Kristin Fukushima, Masami Fukuhara, Bill Watanabe, James Okazaki, Patricia Wyatt, Midori Tachibana. Seated in front: Alan Kumamoto, left, Yukio Kawatani, and Joanne Kumamoto.

## 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.



## 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  
(213) 880-6875**

**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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Little Tokyo Business Association | 250 E. 1st Street Suite 201 | Los Angeles, CA 90012 US

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