



JSS NEWS

2009

WINTER /
SPRING

J a p a n e s e S o c i a l S e r v i c e s

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Message from the President

By Takeo Maekawa,

In reviewing the year 2008, one item requiring special mention must be the financial meltdown in the United States that became pronounced in the summer and which led to the present global depression. Not being an expert, it isn't easy to grasp the details of what brought this about. It seems certain however that this situation has influenced the sudden drop in the general public's motivation to spend resulting in goods not being purchased. Economic vicious cycle appears to have begun and the light at the end of the tunnel will most likely not be seen for some time.

Since its inception as JFS over twenty years ago and through the changes made from time to time, JSS has continued its operation. What made this possible was the monetary, material and psychological supports of the community.

Recently, JSS had a substantial donation from a philanthropist who strongly wishes to remain anonymous. He has been doing so for the past several years. It is said that there is a concept of "hidden virtue" in Buddhist thought. My interpretation is that when performing a virtuous deed, if others know what you have done, it no longer is a virtue. It is very gratifying to realize that there are many in the community who are "accumulating virtue" through JSS activities while remaining unknown to others.

In going through our records, many names of individuals and organizations that have supported us are found.. Indeed, to realize that there are so many within the community that have contributed to our activities makes us feel very proud. At the same time, it makes us realize that we must endeavour to do the best we can for the community.

As mentioned above, global economic difficulties are predicted for this year. Under the circumstances, we seek your assistance in making our presence and our activities known to your friends and relatives. It will enable us to increase the number of supporters in order to continue the work we do.

The 9th Holiday Drive that took place at the end of last year was successfully completed. Part of the proceeds of the Joy of Christmas Concert sponsored by the Inter-Church Japanese Churches Council, goods donated by organizations including Japanese companies and gifts from many individuals were delivered with the help of many volunteers. The gifts were delivered to approximately 30 families consisting of 67 individuals in our community. May we thank you sincerely for your co-operation.



Can we be of assistance?
If so, please visit us!

JSS is a non-profit, charitable organization providing bilingual, professional social services to the Japanese ethno-cultural community.

OUR SERVICES

- ◆ Counselling, Referral and Advocacy
- ◆ Community Information
- ◆ Educational and Preventative programs
- ◆ Toronto Safety Report



International Marriage (Kokusai Kekkon) Workshop Report

Koko Kikuchi
Japanese Social Services

JSS has seen an increasing demand in counselling related to cross-nationality marriages. Cross-nationality couples encounter difficulties due to language barriers and varying customs. Differences in values may be exacerbated in situations involving the children's education, discipline or interaction with in-laws. JSS is aware that these problems are usually combined with the challenges of adapting as an immigrant to a new social environment. It is a daunting task for Japanese newcomers to raise a family, while struggling to master an unfamiliar language, and dealing with the feeling of isolation which comes from not being able to fully participate in their non-Japanese partner's friends, family circles and general society.

Goals of the Workshop were; 1) to help the participants come to an understanding of the nature of their problems, 2) by analyzing the case studies and engaging in discussions, the participants to be able to see a positive path in order to deal with their problems, 3) and finally to come up with solutions to participants' own problems.

The workshops were conducted in Japanese by panelists who all have, themselves, experience with Kokusai Kekkon. This was a closed workshop to make sure that the participants privacy was fully protected. The workshop was divided into four sessions.

Session 1: "International Marriage in Canada: the facts"

Momo Kano Podolsky, one of the panelists, talked about the facts and the background of Japanese international marriage in Japan and in Canada using power point from a statistical point of view and based on her own research.

Session 2: "Is this due to International Marriage?"

Participants placed their "Post-it" notes which they wrote the issues according to the category of marriage issues on the blank paper posted on the wall. After all the notes were placed, everyone discussed about the written issues and to which category those issues should belong.

Session 3: "Now, I know Why – analyzing marriage issues"

Four different "case studies of marriage issues" were introduced to the participants. They had to analyze the problems on each case and give advice to the participants. This exercise gave them an opportunity to objectify their own marriage issues.

Session 4: "International Marriage: My Case."

In the last session, participants were encourage to speak about what they had learned from the last three sessions and what they were thinking of doing to improve their situation. The panelists, also, talked about what they had learned and gave some advice to the participants.

After each session, the participants were given an opportunity to evaluate the workshop. The average score for the entire workshop was 4.6 in the scale of 1(poor) to 5 (excellent) Here are some of the comments they made about the workshop:

"It was a much richer program than I anticipated. Now I have a sense of fulfillment and achievement."

"It was very useful to learn from other people's experiences."

"I found how I could make an effort to solve my own issues."

"This workshop was very valuable not only for me but my family and the community at large."

"My issues became much more clearer to me to understand than before."

"This program should be continued for the community."

"I feel that my tangled issues became untangled."

"I kept my issues to myself because it was too complicated to explain to other people. However, thanks to this program, I could share my problems with others and find direction to make my situation better."

"I was lonely and felt isolated. But, by participating in this workshop, I had a chance to make new friends who are experiencing similar problems. I was given courage by my new friends to talk about my own issues and my solutions to them. I do not feel isolated anymore."

All the participants expressed their wish that JSS should continue these kinds of workshop. Some panelists suggested having a workshop to review "Personal History" or "Personal Path". Another suggestion was to hold open seminars for anybody who are interested in International Marriage.

Finally, on behalf of JSS, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the following organizations for their generous support.

National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC), Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre (JCCC)
Ikebata Nursery School



On Counselling

Although we often hear the word "counselling" nowadays, I feel that not so many people can explain what exactly "counselling" is. In this article I would like to describe the counselling service that JSS offers mainly to the Japanese community in Toronto.

JSS Counselling is:

[Client-centered]

Contrary to popular belief, counsellors do not give advice to their clients in most cases. Actually most counsellors would try to avoid being mere advice-givers for their clients. Rather, the roles of a counsellor are to help clients see their issues more clearly, to help them explore different options and to help them find practical solutions available for them. The counselling relationship is based on the needs of the client, as well as on belief that each client is the best expert of her/himself.

[A combination of social work and personal counselling]

JSS combines "social work" that focuses on helping clients function in wider society and "personal counselling" that focuses on helping clients to develop self-awareness on a personal level. In order to provide personal counselling for Japanese community, JSS counsellors have extensive knowledge and experience with Japanese culture.

[Cooperative]

In counselling sessions, a counsellor helps her/his client talk about her/his issues and feelings in a comfortable manner and listens very carefully to what she/he says. By doing so, a counsellor and the client cooperatively figure out what action the client can take to improve his/her situation. A professional counsellor is trained to stay unbiased and non-judgmental in order to see the client's issues objectively as well as empathetically.

[Confidential]

All staff and volunteers sign an Oath of Confidentiality stipulating that they cannot release any information regarding clients or the operation of the agency. A counsellor will always ask for the client's permission in writing before disclosing personal information to a third party.

Counselling is useful when:

- You feel overwhelmed and unable to cope with daily living ;
- You want to change but don't know where to begin; and
- You want to talk to someone who is objective and supportive.

It has been two years since I started working at JSS. In the two years, I dealt with a lot of clients for diverse reasons. I'd like to try my best to keep providing quality counselling service for people who request it and/or who are referred by other agencies, their family members and/or friends.

Takanori Kuge (JSS Counsellor)
M.Ed Counselling / Canadian Certified Counsellor

Report from Holiday Drive Program

I would like to take this opportunity to inform you that we have successfully completed our 9th Holiday Drive Program in 2008. We delivered the gifts to 30 families (28 families in GTA and 2 families outside of GTA), 67 individuals this year. It involves detailed and intensive work but over 20 volunteers helped us in organizing, sorting, and delivering the gifts to fulfill this program. Moreover, we conducted a survey from the participants to find out the effectiveness of the program. 6 out of 30 families replied. In the responses, they were all very happy and appreciative of the program. I was very pleased to hear their children being so happy to receive their gifts. They would like to participate in the program next year. Through these responses, I feel that Holiday Drive Program achieved its goal and purpose of sharing joy and kindness with others.

Michi Chun (Social Work Student on practicum)

JAPANESE SOCIAL SERVICES

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

What: Members and friends of JSS are cordially invited to attend our AGM

When: Thursday May 28, 2009

Time: 6:00pm -Business
6:45pm -Volunteer Appreciation
-Light Refreshments

Where: JCCC, 6 Garamond Court, Don Mills

