empowering our community
In 2019, Little Tokyo Service Center empowered our community.

Our social services department tackled the challenges faced by seniors living alone and the difficulties endured by families struggling with mental illness. By providing comprehensive services, we interrupt the cycles of poverty, domestic abuse and unemployment.

In 2019, we made a push to bring the Terasaki Budoakan to fruition – it will be a “home court” for all, reconnect families with Little Tokyo, and provide programs for local low-income youth and seniors. We worked with artists and cultural partners to find innovative ways to empower and preserve Little Tokyo. We helped legacy businesses and new entrepreneurs keep Little Tokyo culturally and economically vibrant.

To counter the housing crisis, we’re adding more than 400 units of affordable housing in Little Tokyo and beyond. We purchased the former Umeya Rice Cake Company property and will build 120-150 units of housing there. We made progress on our Santa Monica/Vermont project, which will feature 160-200 units of housing, with commercial and social service spaces. Finally, the City Council approved a new lease for our partnership with the Go For Broke National Education Center to develop housing on the First Street North block of Little Tokyo. All of these projects will include many units for formerly homeless individuals with wrap-around services.

Lastly, we cannot look back at 2019 without remembering the loss of our Executive Director, Dean Matsubayashi. His life was cut short, but he accomplished so much for LTSC, Little Tokyo, Los Angeles, and communities of color across the country. Dean’s legacy lives on in our hearts and in the work we do every day toward providing hope, creating opportunities, and empowering our community.

Thank you for supporting our work. Please enjoy the highlights and stories from the past year.
Budokan Topping Off
Long-time Terasaki Budokan supporters celebrated and signed their names on the highest beam before it was set in place. The grand opening celebration will be soon.

College-Bound Youth Group Members
All ten high school seniors in the LTSC Youth Group graduated and became first-generation college students. We applaud their hard work and achievements.

Small Business Workshops
Nearly 300 entrepreneurs attended 50 small business workshops to learn about bookkeeping, social media marketing, finance and community engagement.

Changing Tides Conference
Changing Tides’ inaugural Making Waves Mental Health Conference brought the Asian Pacific Islander community together to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health.

Artist Residency
Five artists critiqued L.A.’s cycles of displacement and envisioned Little Tokyo’s future through a series of free community events and workshops.

Affordable Housing
LTSC acquired the former Umeya Rice Cake Co. property in Little Tokyo and will continue its community-serving history by developing it into affordable housing.

Parenting Workshops
Angelina Preschool hosted trauma-informed, nonviolent parenting workshops to help Spanish-speaking parents address stigmas and stereotypes surrounding parenting.

Free Tax Preparation
Fourteen IRS certified volunteers helped over 300 low-income taxpayers claim $272,339 in refunds through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program.

FEL 5-Year Anniversary
Far East Lounge celebrated five years of promoting wellness and combating social isolation with a gathering space and activities for seniors.

Keiro Partnership Impact
Together, LTSC and Keiro are helping clients with emergency needs, supporting family caregivers, and engaging seniors at Far East Lounge.

empowering our community

2019 highlights
**Expenses**

- Community Economic Development $3,255,645 (31%)
- Children and Family Services $2,511,649 (24%)
- Fiscal-Sponsored $1,778,264 (17%)
- Social Services $1,606,245 (15%)
- Administration $834,268 (8%)
- Development $521,462 (5%)

*Based on pre-audit financial statement

**Revenue**

- Grants $10,135,689 (63%)
- Cash Contributions $2,058,859 (13%)
- Fees for Service $1,799,254 (11%)
- Special Events $679,771 (4%)
- Real Estate Activities $562,015 (4%)
- Other Revenue $468,232 (3%)
- Reimbursed Costs $347,382 (2%)
- In-kind Contributions $62,242 (0%)

**Statement of activities by the numbers**

**Childcare and Early Education**
- 350 Children served through Angelina Preschool
- 121 Children served have limited English skills
- 37 Children graduated from Angelina Preschool to kindergarten this year

**Affordable Housing**
- 400+ Units of affordable and permanent supportive housing in predevelopment
- 997 Affordable housing units to date
- 250 Million + invested in housing over the years

**Social Services**
- 5,380 Instances of senior client support
- 6,212 Mental health service, care management, and domestic violence support hours
- 4,300 Contacts reached through workshops, support groups, and events

**Youth Programs for LTSC Residents**
- 70 Students helped by Casa Hires and Angelina Mentoring Program (CHAMPs)
- 130 Students enrolled in after-school and summer programming
- 100% of LTSC Youth Group high school seniors became first-generation college students

**Far East Lounge**
- 4,049 Attendees
- 1,887 Hours of volunteer-led classes
- 90% of participants report improvement in their physical health

**Revenue**

- Grants $10,135,689 (63%)
- Cash Contributions $2,058,859 (13%)
- Fees for Service $1,799,254 (11%)
- Special Events $679,771 (4%)
- Real Estate Activities $562,015 (4%)
- Other Revenue $468,232 (3%)
- Reimbursed Costs $347,382 (2%)
- In-kind Contributions $62,242 (0%)

*Based on pre-audit financial statement

**Donor impact**

- "Because of your support, LTSC continues to build and preserve affordable homes and neighborhood-serving spaces that keep Little Tokyo and other historically disenfranchised communities in place."
  -- Debbie Chen, LTSC Project Manager

- "Your donations help Far East Lounge provide seniors free tai chi lessons to stay mentally and physically balanced. Far East Lounge’s programming keeps seniors active and combats isolation and loneliness."
  -- Kathy Masaoka, LTSC Board Member

- "Our generous donors supported Changing Tides in exploring mental health in our community through art, stories, and heartwarming conversations. Thank you for helping reduce the stigma surrounding mental health!"
  -- Moet Kurataka, Changing Tides Crew

- "Our supporters enable LTSC to provide parenting workshops for our low-income families, supplies for the young learners at Angelina Preschool, and professional development opportunities for our outstanding teachers."
  -- Nicole Lopez, LTSC Director of Child Development
Darin Maki’s roots in Little Tokyo run deep. His great-grandmother operated a restaurant on First and San Pedro streets, and his grandmother worked at the historic Umeya Rice Cake Co; and now, Darin’s CRFT by Maki store is the newest storefront to open its doors on Little Tokyo’s historic First Street.

Darin had just launched the Japanese-inspired clothing brand, CRFT by Maki, online when he ran into LTSC small business counselor, Mariko Lochridge. Impressed by Darin’s background and the strength of his brand, Mariko encouraged the designer to apply for LTSC’s Entrepreneur-in-Residence program.

As one of five entrepreneurs accepted into the program, Darin completed 15 workshops on topics ranging from loan financing to public relations along with 24 one-on-one business counseling sessions. The program culminated in a four-day pop-up retail experience and over 650 people visiting Darin’s temporary shop.

Because of his pop-up success, Darin was offered a permanent brick and mortar retail location for CRFT by Maki at the LTSC-owned storefront formerly known as 341 FSN. “I can’t thank Mariko and LTSC enough. I hope for longevity and that the store will spark more interest in Little Tokyo and Japanese culture,” said Darin.

LTSC takes pride in working with business owners like Darin. Not only do entrepreneurs benefit from our efforts, but Little Tokyo gains by increasing the number of locally owned businesses, helping to create a vibrant and economically healthy community.

“Little Tokyo is important to me because it’s home — our home. We cannot lose anymore Japantowns so we all have to do our part to preserve and educate.”

— Darin Maki
This wasn’t the first time she found herself without a home. As a child in Japan during WWII, bombings left her family homeless and living on the streets. At the time, her parents emphasized being strong; asking for help was a sign of weakness. With these childhood memories, she believed there was no choice but to live on the streets and personally rectify the situation.

After several days on the streets, she remembered that a friend, whom she knew through a seniors group, told her to contact LTSC if she ever needed help. After hearing her story, LTSC’s social workers assured her there was nothing to be ashamed of. She cried in relief.

To get her off the streets, LTSC arranged a two-day hotel stay using funds from Keiro’s Client Assistance Fund. LTSC staff personally walked her to the hotel. As well, they encouraged her to contact friends and arrange a temporary stay, as they started the process of finding her safe, permanent housing.

Many older adults lack a strong support network and need help navigating a complex web of resources and services. LTSC provides compassionate and comprehensive care plans for each individual—helping them flourish and age with dignity.

“LTSC offers a safety net of services to those in need. We strive to create transformative changes and an improved quality of life for those we serve.”

— Margaret Shimada, Director of Social Services
Children of color in lower income families can face strong headwinds on the path to college. LTSC’s Resident Services staff, Nancy Alcaraz and Gilda Hernandez, recognize these challenges and help steer teens in the right direction with the LTSC Youth Group. “The group stemmed from the youth’s desire to have a space of their own to socialize with their peers and receive more individualized support that they are not provided at school,” said Nancy.

The youth group is comprised of high school-aged students living in LTSC’s affordable housing, like Katone Scott, and those in the community, like Joselyn Arenas. Joselyn joined the group at the urging of her friend and classmate, Katone, who explained Joselyn would have access to tutors, mentors and homework assistance.

Unfamiliar with LTSC, Joselyn’s parents were initially hesitant to let her participate. Nancy and Gilda took the time to meet with Joselyn’s parents, explaining the support they provide each teen. As Joselyn continued to attend the youth group, her parents saw a positive change in her character, her school work, and her confidence.

In 2019, the youth group attended an out-of-state leadership program, developed a community project, and attended a three-day college prep workshop. “The workshop taught me about the admissions process and how to apply for student aid. I was really happy about that because I needed help,” expressed Joselyn.

Equipped with the proper tools and her own hard work, Joselyn graduated from high school and was accepted into the psychology program at Cal State University, Los Angeles. She, along with nine of her fellow youth group members, all became first-generation college students.

Now in college, Joselyn continues to participate in the youth group and has become a mentor to others. “I enjoy my continued involvement with the LTSC Youth Group,” Joselyn reflected. “From the social events to the mentoring, the group helped me tremendously. and I want to give back.”

“The LTSC Youth Group helped me tremendously, and I want to give back.”
– Joselyn Arenas
building a vibrant community through inclusivity and the arts

When LTSC held its inaugural +LAB Artist Residency program in 2018, four artists were invited to live and work in Little Tokyo and find imaginative new ways to empower the community. When the residency was over, one artist stayed, and what began as a temporary residency became a long-term commitment to the neighborhood.

Born in Tokyo to a family of calligraphers, Kuniharu Yoshida moved to Los Angeles with hopes of becoming a hip-hop dancer. Through an artist friend, he learned about LTSC’s +LAB Artist Residency, he applied and was accepted. For the residency, Kuniharu held calligraphy workshops for seniors, not only to teach them the basics of calligraphy but as a way to reduce social isolation while increasing their creativity and community engagement. Also, he made a short film and held street performances to create awareness about the legacy of displacement in Little Tokyo, and the importance of community self-determination.

Following the completion of the residency, Kuniharu decided to continue living in the neighborhood and make art with community members because “they welcomed me and appreciated my art, so I wanted to give back to Little Tokyo,” said Kuniharu. He found a home in one of LTSC’s Little Tokyo housing units and became even more involved. Kuniharu took a board member position on the city-run Arts District and Little Tokyo Neighborhood Council (formerly known as the Historic Cultural Neighborhood Council) to make decisions that help guide the future of Little Tokyo. Additionally, he helped produce promotional materials for Terasaki Budokan and continues to teach the calligraphy classes, which he started during his residency.

Kuniharu is grateful not only for what he has gained but also for what LTSC has given to others: “Organizations like LTSC allow everyone to change their lives; I’m an example of that.” LTSC hopes all the individuals we work with will be inspired, just like Kuniharu, to give back and enrich the community.

“Organizations like LTSC allow everyone to change their lives; I’m an example of that.”
— Kuniharu Yoshida
When she moved into Kosumosu — LTSC’s transitional shelter for survivors of domestic violence — Kanako* was ready for a fresh start. She told an LTSC social worker, “Every time he yelled that I was useless, threatened to take away my children and pushed me down, I felt numb. I thought shikata ga nai (it can’t be helped)... I didn’t understand that I was a victim of domestic violence.”

Originally from Japan, Kanako married her husband, Josh* in the U.S., and soon after they had two children. When Josh had trouble keeping a job, their finances quickly unraveled and the family moved into a homeless shelter. Eventually Josh left the shelter, leaving Kanako to raise their two small children alone.

When Kanako’s case manager at the homeless shelter approached LTSC to inquire about housing, LTSC helped her apply for a unit at Kosumosu. There, Kanako was provided counseling services and educational workshops so she and her children could start healing from their emotional wounds. “Thanks to the counselors and social workers, I now understand how important self-care is,” Kanako reflected. “I also learned that it’s okay to ask for help.”

At Kosumosu, staff focus on both the current state of their clients and their long-term well-being. Kanako took advantage of many of the workshops and programs offered. She was able to secure permanent housing for her family and is now gainfully employed.

LTSC empowered Kanako to build a healthy, independent, violence-free life for her and her children, and enabled her to pursue her dream of higher education. Kanako recently completed a college application, writing down her home address for the first time. Such a simple act, but one filled with pride.

*Names in the article have been changed to protect the privacy of the individuals.

“Kosumosu provides women and their children, who are survivors of domestic violence, a place to start over. I admire [the residents’] courage, tenacity, and resilience.”

— Marsha Watanabe
thank you

A very special thanks to LTSC’s supporters

Alan and Yvonne Nishio

Michael Komai

Yukio and Lilian Kawaratani

Federal Home Loan Bank

Edison International

BBVA Compass

Carole Zaima

SoCalGas

Society for the Promotion of Japanese Animation

Jerry Fukui

Bank of America Charitable Foundation

Akira Fujimoto

Anonymous

Variety The Children’s Charity of Southern California

Dr. and Mrs. Iwao G. Kondo

Sheldon and Naomi Kawahara

Carol Amao-Takafuji

Grant Sunoo and Emily Mayeda

Chiyoko Sunabe

Ken Kageyama

Thomas Hei

Gayle and Craig Wong

Kiyohara & Takahashi, CPAs

Drs. Jason and Janice Yamada Family Foundation

Stephanie Matsunaga

Steve Ogasa

2019 annual report

LITTLE TOKYO SERVICE CENTER
how we help communities

### Strengthening Little Tokyo
LTSC provides vital community services that preserve Little Tokyo’s cultural roots and build a more sustainable neighborhood for future generations.

### Nurturing Families
LTSC keeps families strong by offering childcare, youth, and other programs.

### Helping Seniors
LTSC offers an array of services to promote mental health and wellness for seniors in Little Tokyo and beyond.

### Building Affordable Housing
Facing LA’s housing crisis, LTSC builds and acquires property for rehabilitation to put affordable housing within reach for Angelenos.

### Assisting People in Need
LTSC is a one-stop service center with multilingual assistance for those in need.

### Supporting Small Businesses
Along with key partners, LTSC helps provide assistance to small businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs in Little Tokyo and throughout Los Angeles County.

Little Tokyo Service Center is a social service and community development organization that improves the lives of individuals and families and promotes the rich heritage of Southern California’s ethnic communities.

Front cover and featured story photography by Zen Sekizawa
LITTLE TOKYO SERVICE CENTER’S
40TH ANNIVERSARY
DINNER & CELEBRATION
October 10, 2020 • 6:00 PM
J.W. Marriott at L.A. Live

For more info: www.LTSC.org/40thAnniversary