Little Tokyo Service Center

2025 Annual Report

Little Tokyo
Service Center

HOW WE HELP COMMUNITIES

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.

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

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

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

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

Building Affordable Housing
Facing LA's housing crisis, LTSC puts affordable housing within reach for Angelenos.

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

Featured on the cover: Samson and his dog, U'ilani, moved into LTSC's Umeya Apartments after experiencing years of homelessness in Skid Row. *Credit: Thayu Photo LLC*

Leadership Transitions

In Fall 2026, **Takao "Tak" Suzuki** will become the sole Executive Director, continuing his 26-year tenure with the organization. LTSC expresses appreciation and a fond farewell to **Peter Gee,** who served as Co-Executive Director with Suzuki since 2024, advancing LTSC's mission and addressing critical needs during an uncertain time. LTSC also welcomed **Noelle Ito** as its Deputy Executive Director in April 2026. In this role, she leads development, communications, external relations, and other strategic priorities.

"The Board is excited for Tak as he steps into the Executive Director role with his vision and leadership. His 26 years with LTSC speak to his deep commitment to our mission and community. We extend our deepest gratitude to Peter for his dedication and the many contributions he made during his tenure as Co-Executive Director."

Claire Kitayama
President, LTSC
Board of Directors

"It has been an extremely meaningful time for me personally and professionally to serve at LTSC. I am especially proud of LTSC being a "leaderful" organization that will carry this work forward. For more than 45 years, LTSC has been a trusted community anchor, and I have every confidence it remains in excellent hands under Tak's leadership."

Peter Gee
Outgoing LTSC
Co-Executive Director

"I am honored to step into this role and carry LTSC forward as Executive Director. Every day, I am inspired by the staff, clients, partners, and community members who bring our mission to life. I look forward to continuing that work, serving our clients and community, and addressing their most pressing needs."

Takao Suzuki
LTSC Co-Executive
Director and Incoming
Executive Director

"After 17 years in the private and public sectors, I'm excited for my return to LTSC with new skills, a deeper perspective, and the same gratitude I have always felt for the community that made me who I am. This work is deeply personal — and I look forward to what's ahead!"

Noelle Ito
LTSC Deputy
Executive Director

45 Years of Positive Change

THEN

3 founding staff members:
Yasuko Sakamoto, Bill Watanabe, and Evelyn Yoshimura

1 neighborhood served:
Little Tokyo

1 client population:
The Japanese-American community

NOW

120+ staff members
In 3 offices

10+ neighborhoods served:
Across the Greater LA area

Services provided in 5+ languages:
Including English, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, and Chinese

1980

Founded by Japanese American activists to provide culturally sensitive services to Little Tokyo and Southern California's Japanese American community.

1987

Formed an affordable housing committee to fight the demolition of low-income housing during Downtown LA's Urban Renewal efforts.

1991

Rehabilitated the San Pedro Firm Building, saving it from City-ordered demolition and launching LTSC's community development work. Started the Alzheimer's Caregivers Support Group.

1996

Completed Casa Heiwa, LTSC's first new affordable housing project.

1998

Converted a vacant historic church into the Union Center for the Arts, drawing 30,000+ visitors annually.

2002

Launched Kosumosu Transitional Housing, providing supportive housing for 28 domestic violence survivors and their families.

2003

Renovated the historic Far East Building into affordable housing, a community computer lab, and retail space.

2014

Opened Far East Lounge, a gathering and wellness space for Little Tokyo seniors.

2016

Opened our South Bay office, expanding our geographic service provision.

2020

Launched Little Tokyo Eats, creating subsidized meals to support small businesses and seniors during COVID-19.

2022

Terasaki Budokan opens to the public as a hub for youth and senior programs and community recreation.

2024

Broke ground on Go For Broke Plaza & First Street North Residences, one of LA's largest 100% affordable housing developments.

How Ten Years of Stability Transformed a Family

"If I needed help today, I have a list of people that I could call and know for sure that they'd be there for my family and me."

Jayden, LTSC resident

>>10 years ago, a newly single mom with two young sons moved into LTSC's Casa Heiwa apartments seeking a fresh start. For her, finding affordable housing with built-in services was a big win for her family's future. But for her 6-year-old son Jayden, being the new kid in the building was an intimidating change.

Jayden remembers hiding behind his mom whenever someone tried to talk to him. In LTSC's after-school program, he was quiet and shy around the other kids. But over time, as staff got to know Jayden and his family better, Jayden began to open up. He started making friends in the building, saying 'yes' to opportunities, and getting more involved in the community. He became the first to speak up. He took on leadership positions. He'd lose his voice on field trips to sporting events. "LTSC programs are a great place to make new friends, and they open your eyes to new stuff," said Jayden. "I've told other people about the after-school program because it has helped me, and I wanted to help other people."

Now a sophomore in high school, Jayden has completed LTSC's Youth Leader Internship and is an active member of LTSC's Teen Group. No longer the shy kid he was 10 years ago, he travels up and down the floors of Casa Heiwa with ease, knocking on doors to encourage residents to vote in elections or inviting them to community events. He even aspires to become an actor after graduating from college. Jayden is most proud of his ability to walk up to anyone and make new friends, just as other kids befriended him when he first moved in.

From a single mom starting over to a stable home with two college-bound sons, Jayden's family is one of many that have transformed inside Casa Heiwa's walls. "If I needed help today, I have a list of people that I could call and know for sure that they'd be there for my family and me."

Pictured top left: *LTSC's Teen Group visited Big Bear for a leadership retreat. It was some of the teens' first time seeing snow!*

Pictured top right: *Jayden and his peers complete an activity during LTSC's Mi CASA after school program.*

Pictured bottom right: *As a Little Tokyo resident, young Jayden spoke up about what he wanted for his neighborhood's future.*

Watch Jayden's acting debut in LTSC's social services PSA video on YouTube!

>> On a spring evening in the heart of Little Tokyo, 14-month-old Noa toddles across the gym floor after a bouncing basketball, flanked by her grandpa (Dan) and dad (Darin) to keep her balance. This heartwarming scene is 30+ years in the making – from a far-fetched dream of a recreation center in Little Tokyo to Terasaki Budokan now serving over 90,000 visitors annually. Dan and Darin Nakauchi have a lot to do with that.

After coming up through the Japanese American (JA) basketball leagues, Dan served as commissioner of the Pasadena Bruins basketball organization for 20 years, devoted to its sustainability with his son, Darin, in mind. "JA basketball gives kids with similar backgrounds and interests an opportunity to come together," Dan explained. Darin added, "I owe a lot to JA basketball. It not only taught me about JA history, but life skills like teamwork, leadership, and commitment."

For many JA families like the Nakauchis, JA basketball is a central cog for building community and sustaining culture. So when Little Tokyo Service Center (LTSC) proposed building Terasaki

Pictured left: *Noa explores Terasaki Budokan, a LTSC community facility her grandpa and dad are deeply involved with.*

Pictured right: *Three generations of Terasaki Budokan supporters (from left to right: Dan, Noa, and Darin).*

A Three-Generation Legacy at Terasaki Budokan

"I hope eventually Budokan becomes a historical landmark. It really is something special."

Dan Nakauchi, Budokan supporter

Budokan in the 1990s (then called the Little Tokyo Rec Center), Dan secured a significant donation on behalf of the Pasadena Bruins.

After decades of work by hundreds of supporters like the Nakauchis, Terasaki Budokan opened in 2020. 5 years later, hundreds of thousands of visitors have used the community facility for sports, events, and more. Dan has since retired from his commissioner role, but Darin follows in his footsteps, leading a youth program at Budokan called Budokan Basketball Academy. In a few years, Darin's daughter Noa will be old enough to join the Academy. "It's surreal to be part of something my dad helped create," said Darin. "I can't wait for my daughter to be part of it too."

Darin watches Noa giggle as she pushes a basketball across the court to her grandpa. It's the moment Budokan was built for, and a beautiful example of how this 'Home Court For All' will serve the community for generations to come.

Thirty Years of Ramen and Resilience

>> When Ryusei and Yudai were kids running around their father's ramen shop on First Street, Little Tokyo Service Center (LTSC) was already involved. From the very beginning, LTSC's Small Business Program helped Mr. Ramen find its footing in Little Tokyo. The late Nancy Kikuchi (LTSC staff) assisted with everything from financial education to community engagement, even supporting Ryusei and Yudai's mom when she got sick.

To this day, Ryusei speaks of her with deep gratitude: "LTSC is like family. I count on them a lot. The name 'Nancy Kikuchi' is like an angel. She was the glue that held the community together."

When the brothers' father passed suddenly in 2020, they were thrust into an impossible situation — grieving while scrambling to save a 25-year family legacy during a global pandemic. LTSC's Small Business Program was quick to lend a hand, helping them navigate new sources of income and a successful ownership transfer so that Mr. Ramen could live on. "There are months that LTSC pretty much helped us pay the rent." As the COVID lockdown eased, LTSC Small Business Program Coordinator Mariko Lochridge rallied volunteers to rebuild Mr. Ramen's website and social media strategy, and drive customers through the door for their 30th anniversary.

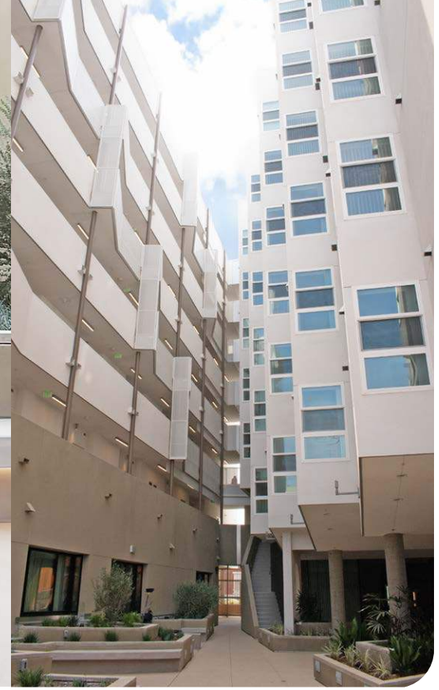
"If it wasn't for LTSC and people like Nancy Kikuchi, the small business community in Little Tokyo might have gone to shambles. They really bring us together, so we're really thankful to them."

Ryusei, Co-Owner of Mr. Ramen

"Every decade, it feels like LTSC has provided us with something different," Ryusei said. "First, it was about securing our footing and having an identity in Little Tokyo. Next, they helped me transition ownership after my father died. And then, it was trying to stay here during impossible times. I think it's important that a community takes care of its culture for the next generation, because if businesses like ours disappear, who carries on that legacy?" As Mr. Ramen enters its 33rd year, it's clear that LTSC doesn't just show up in a crisis. It shows up for decades.

Pictured left: *Ryusei (left) and Yudai (right) chat with customers at Mr. Ramen on First St. in Little Tokyo.*

Pictured right: *Ryusei's favorite menu item: Ramen Combo #6 with shoyu ramen, gyoza, and curry rice.*



From Surviving on the Street to Healing at Umeya

Pictured top left: *Samson meets with his on-site LTSC case manager, Carlos, at Umeya Apartments.*

Pictured top right: *Umeya Apartments opened in 2025, creating 175 permanent and affordable units.*

>> Samson never planned to leave Hawaii. Born and raised in Honolulu, he worked as a mover/cleaner in the tourism industry. But when COVID hit, his employment ended in a flash. "I was in the street. I didn't have anywhere to go, so I took my chances and came to LA to have a better life." Samson found employment as a mover/cleaner, but struggled to afford a bedroom in a Skid Row apartment. With careful budgeting and hard work, he made ends meet for a year. But an injury changed everything.

"One day I woke up and my right leg couldn't move. I got ready for work, I crawled to the door, but I couldn't stand. Two months later, I'm back in the streets."

The next few years, Samson cycled through living on the street, in shelters, and on friends' couches. Safety and survival were top of mind. He'd seen too many unhoused neighbors die on the street waiting for housing, and couldn't imagine a better future for himself.

A few blocks away on the border of Skid Row, LTSC was ramping up its homeless services in response to LA's housing and homelessness crisis. Through outreach, Carlos (LTSC Intensive Case Manager) connected with Samson and built a trusted relationship. Together, they met Samson's immediate needs like shelter and healthcare, and pursued long-term goals like permanent housing. Samson shared, "It's crazy to say that it was such a unique experience to be cared for. Carlos understands where I'm coming from and knows what I need, sometimes before I know I need it."

"It was such a unique experience to be cared for."

Samson, LTSC resident

In late 2025, Samson was one of the first residents to move into LTSC's Umeya Apartments*. Five years after leaving Hawaii, he finally has peace, safety, and autonomy. "The way I feel in Umeya, I've never felt anywhere. In a place like this, healing isn't just possible–you can have actual faith, not blind faith. When I look at Umeya and its model and the folks that I'm interacting with, it gives me so much hope. You can see yourself having good things."

**Located at the intersection of Little Tokyo and Skid Row, LTSC's Umeya Apartments redeveloped the Umeya Rice Cake Co. property into 175 deeply affordable and permanent supportive housing units with on-site case management services to help residents achieve stability and independence. This transit-oriented, mixed-use, LEED® Platinum-certified development has community, commercial, and service provider space, a courtyard, and a community-led mural by Skid Row artist, Showzart.*

Watch Samson's video on YouTube!

*"At first, we thought, 'We can't accept this help.' **But community matters.** Support from LTSC reminds us no one should face this alone."*

Eaton Fire survivor

Helping Eaton Fire Survivors on Their Own Terms

>> In the months following the devastating Eaton and Palisades/ Malibu Fires of early 2025, thousands of displaced survivors struggled to stabilize their lives. Grief, uncertainty, and an exhausting recovery process left many feeling skeptical or untrusting — and for a lot of Asian American survivors, asking for help didn't come naturally. Little Tokyo Service Center (LTSC) Disaster Case Management Program Director Jun Hori saw it firsthand: "Early on, when we would try to help Japanese fire survivors, they'd turn it down, saying, 'We're okay, there are other families that need more help than us.' Despite having tears in their eyes, they wouldn't accept assistance."

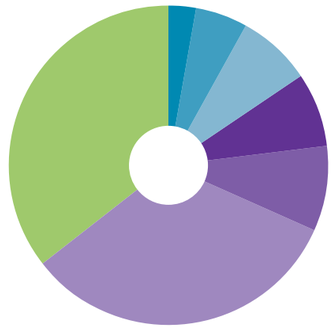
LTSC recognized that a different approach was needed — one that moved at the pace survivors were ready for. Understanding the cultural barriers that make asking for help difficult, LTSC participated in "tea times" with trusted community institutions, such as the Pasadena Japanese Cultural Institute, creating low-pressure spaces where survivors could share as much or as little as they wished. The goal was simple: to convey that when survivors felt ready to access resources like multilingual therapy or advice on rebuilding, LTSC would be there for them. As Jun put it, "Meeting people where they're at builds trust. Whether we reach 1 person or 10 people at an event, it could be the breakthrough that changes their life. It's worth it."

More than a year later, LTSC's patient, community-centered approach is paying off. Families who once felt alone in their recovery are now taking steps forward, guided by an LTSC team that stays with them every step of the way.

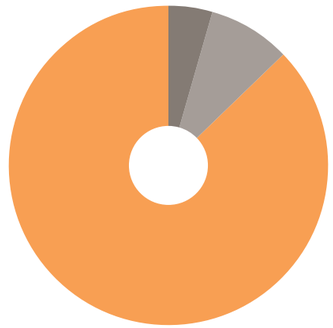
With LTSC's team of social workers, eviction prevention experts, and real estate project managers working alongside community partners such as Catholic Charities of California, Direct Relief, California Community Foundation, and Keiro, we remain committed for the long haul. Becuase when everything else is gone, knowing someone is in your corner can make all the difference.

Pictured left: *LTSC service program staff box meals for Eaton Fire survivors.*

Pictured right: *LTSC service program staff partnering with Habitat for Humanity for fire relief efforts.*



Fundraising Events	793,589
Real Estate Development and Operations	1,378,770
Contributions	1,935,093
Program Service Revenue	1,966,281
Investment and Other Income	2,214,830
Construction Grants (Non-Operating)	8,615,416
Grants	9,229,183



Fundraising	872,008
Administrative	1,560,360
Program	16,477,141

1. During a turbulent political year, LTSC co-sponsored, spoke at, and participated in **5 community demonstrations** denouncing ICE actions, cuts to government funding, and more.
2. With support from the Korean American Community Foundation, LTSC provided case management to **320 clients in the Korean community** and reached **2,242 Korean speakers** through presentations on topics such as Medicare and Medi-Cal, mental health, identity theft, and dementia risks.
3. Through LTSC's longstanding partnership with **Keiro,** LTSC continues to provide ongoing mental health support and case management to **100+ Nikkei older adults,** and partnered to provide resources after the Eaton Fire.
4. Changing Tides launched a new **Forest Bathing series,** offering free monthly opportunities to experience guided relaxation in the outdoors.
5. Okaeri became **LTSC's newest program,** dedicated to supporting and empowering the Nikkei LGBTQ+ community.
6. LTSC opened **two award-winning affordable housing developments** (Santa Monica & Vermont and Umeya), providing 362 new affordable homes for over 600 people.
7. LTSC worked hand-in-hand with the Little Tokyo community to **design the open-air "Jackson Paseo"** of our affordable housing project, Go For Broke Plaza & First Street North Residences.
8. LTSC's volunteer "Small Biz Hype Squad" **secured a monumental marker** for Little Tokyo restaurant Kouraku, declaring it America's oldest ramen restaurant in operation.
9. LTSC homeless services staff **increased by 300%,** focusing on eviction prevention, street outreach, and intensive case management.
10. Terasaki Budokan, LTSC's multi-use community facility, **celebrated 5 years** of connecting youth, families, and seniors to Little Tokyo through recreation and cultural activities.
11. LTSC's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program **celebrated 10 years** of providing free tax prep services to local families and individuals with low incomes.
12. **LTSC was selected to manage** the Little Tokyo Community Impact Fund's first acquired property on First St. in Little Tokyo. LTCIF's ownership guarantees the community's self-determination.
13. LTSC's Child Development department implemented **evidence-based enrichment activities,** including live music and structured play, to support our students' learning and healthy development.

2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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2026 EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT

LTSC's Executive Management team is the collective leadership body that guides our work. This interdisciplinary team reflects our values and our approach to our mission: emphasizing teamwork and collaboration while staying connected to our frontline staff on the ground with the people and places we serve.

Peter Gee, Co-Executive Director (outgoing)
Takao Suzuki, Co-Executive Director (incoming Executive Director)
Noelle Ito, Deputy Executive Director
Bomee Kim Fain, Director of Finance
Grant Sunoo, Director of Community Building & Engagement

Ways to Give

If these stories moved you, please consider giving so we can continue to improve lives.

DONATE online at www.LTSC.org, by calling 213-473-1613, or by check made out to "LTSC" and mailed to Donations / Little Tokyo Service Center / 231 E. Third St, G-106 / Los Angeles, CA 90013. Donor advised fund and stock donations are also welcome.

VOLUNTEER with one of our programs! Make a difference in the lives of our clients and residents and positively impact the community. Opportunities range from one-time event help to providing ongoing support for various programs.

PLANNED GIVING is a way to support LTSC in the future by making arrangements now in your estate plan.

MATCHING GIFTS are made by thousands of companies that "match" employee charitable contributions and volunteer hours with corporate dollars. A corporate matching gift can double, or even triple, the impact of your personal contribution.

DONATING A VEHICLE is a convenient alternative to selling or trading. It's easy, free, tax-deductible, and the proceeds go directly to LTSC.

SHOP AT RALPHS and enroll in the Ralphs Community Contribution Program. A portion of your grocery bill supports LTSC's youth programs.

IN-KIND DONATIONS of items or professional services benefit our clients, and contributions to our annual silent auction help raise funds for LTSC.

Visit www.LTSC.org for more information

Donate to LTSC today >

A very special
THANK YOU
to LTSC's supporters for grants and donations received between January 1, 2025 and December 31, 2025.

Scan QR code to view a list of donors or visit www.LTSC.org/donorlist

Please contact **Emily Weaver** to request a printed copy of the donor list at **eweaver@LTSC.org or 213-473-1613.**

Scan Me

Little Tokyo
Service Center

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POSITIVE CHANGE FOR PEOPLE AND PLACES

231 E. 3rd St. # G106 Los Angeles, CA 90013

213-473-3030 **www.LTSC.org**