



Study Japanese in Arlington 2021 Annual Report

Annual Report Fiscal Year 2021
(with Background on FY 2019 & FY 2020)

November 1, 2021



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Introduction

Study Japanese in Arlington (SJA) was founded to promote and support the study of the Japanese language and Japanese culture by students of all ages in Arlington, Virginia and the greater Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.

Fiscal Year 2021 (July 2020-July 2021) marked SJA's third year as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, following its founding in September 2018. This is the first annual report SJA has issued. Therefore, this report will include a summary of activities from the first two fiscal years. We, the SJA Board, have prepared this report to reflect on the past three years and share SJA's activities to date, as well as successes and challenges faced since its inception. We hope that this report is useful to our stakeholders, including donors and volunteers.

Looking towards the future, we are creating a 3-year strategic plan that will focus our activities on supporting the huge increase in APS students taking Japanese, now over 160, compared to 53 in the 2017-18 school year when SJA was founded. Also, rather than hosting a large Japan Day event every year, we will host seasonal cultural events and continue our language and culture classes (e.g., origami) both online and in-person. Through the Arlington-Setagaya Partnership Committee that SJA helped to develop, we will also support regular online and in-person exchanges with youth and adults in Setagaya City, one of Tokyo's 23 wards. The Arlington Career Center also has a sister school relationship with Tokyo Engei (Horticultural) High School in Setagaya. We appreciate your interest in and support for any of our activities.

Sincerely,

SJA Board Members, 2021-2022



Key Highlights of FY 2021 (July 2020-June 2021)

SJA faced a unique year, as it was forced to shift all activities from in-person to virtual due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This was particularly difficult after we saw a rapid expansion of activities in the first two years supported by many volunteers. However, SJA managed this transition and continued to offer our activities virtually, such as origami and Japanese language classes for youth and adults. SJA is now offering some outdoor in-person activities.

Events and Outreach

Japan Day: Our signature Japan Day event, started in 2019, attracted nearly 1,000 guests and volunteers was expected to continue as an annual event. However, the pandemic forced SJA to cancel Japan Day 2020, scheduled for March 2020. This was a painful experience, particularly after the SJA Board members and volunteers had invested many hours and made tremendous efforts to ensure a successful event.



- 1. SJA offered a first ever virtual Japan Day 2021, held on March 27 and 28, 2021.** SJA is proud to report that 472 people registered and 277 people participated in Japan Day 2021, despite uncertain estimates of interest. It offered twelve arts and cultural activities including a Mari Kondo workshop, Japanese cooking, flower arrangement (ikebana), tea ceremony, calligraphy, Japanese arts, an anime watch party, origami class, Smash Bros Tournament, trivia competition, and introduction to Setagaya City in Tokyo (where Engei High School has been a sister high school to the Arlington Career Center since 2018). The cooking class reached its maximum registration capacity of 100, as did the origami class (max 60), and the flower arrangement class (max 10). Almost all of the registered participants attended the flower arrangement class, while attendance was 70-75% of those registered for the Setagaya Open House, Smash Bros Tournament, calligraphy, and tea ceremony classes. The anime watch party attendance saw only 30% attendance, despite requests for more such anime watch parties in the post-event feedback. The evening time for the anime watch party may have conflicted with other activities for many middle and high school students, the main target audience.
- 2. Japan Day 2021 participants provided positive feedback.** Of the 40% of participants who provided feedback, more than 95% of respondents were either very satisfied or satisfied with the activities they participated. The respondents requested more anime/manga events and Japanese arts and culture activities. Geographically, about 50% of respondents participated from Arlington and around 30% from the metropolitan DC area. 60% of respondents were adults (who often participated with elementary level or younger children) and 20% were middle or high school students.
- 3. Encouragingly, about 50% of respondents are interested in learning the Japanese language.** Of those who expressed an interest in learning the Japanese language, about 60% expressed an interest in the SJA's free Japanese language class for adults, 32% in Arlington Community Learning Japanese language classes taught by SJA members, and 25% in SJA's free Japanese language class for youth. Youth were also interested in learning Japanese at APS middle and high schools and Arlington County's Youth Enrichment Program (YEP), in both cases, around 15% of respondents expressing interest in each.

Education

- SJA Language Classes:** Since its inception, SJA has focused on offering Japanese classes for youth and adults, **free of charge, in the Arlington Central Library on Sundays.** These have been offered once or twice monthly depending on the season and have been well-attended, usually reaching near full capacity with 10-15 students. Each class session has an average of 5 volunteers who are native Japanese speakers or advanced speakers with teaching experience. After a four-month pause from March through June 2020 due to the pandemic, the SJA Board decided to offer virtual language and culture classes starting in July 2020. Although SJA volunteers who teach Japanese classes through Arlington Community Learning (ACL, the adult education division of Arlington Public Schools) were experienced in teaching online, none of our volunteers had experience teaching children in virtual lessons.
- In Fall 2020, SJA launched beginner Japanese classes for youth using the anime series *Mitsuboshi Colors*.** Anime is very popular among children and youth, and the classes were well attended. SJA also launched a non-beginner adult newspaper reading and discussion class using NHK's Easy Japanese News website, which attracted regularly 2-4 students. SJA volunteers continued teaching a range of Japanese classes through ACL. Further, certified and experienced SJA board members started offering virtual Japanese Language and Culture classes through the Arlington's Youth Education Program (YEP) starting in Fall 2020. These courses continued for a spring term from February-May 2021, with some offered in Summer 2021.
- Origami classes.** Origami classes have been popular at various Japanese cultural events, including SJA's Japan Day 2021 and the Japan Bowl organized by JASWDC. SJA continued to offer free monthly virtual origami workshops throughout FY 2021, usually attended by 5-10 adults and children. Further, ACL developed a virtual after-school Youth Education Program in School Year (SY) 2020-21, and SJA offered week-long origami classes for Spring Break and Summer Break camps. These programs were taught by Taro's Origami Studio-certified artists. SJA sponsored two volunteers in becoming certified artists, and two volunteers became certified origami teachers (see tarosorigami.com for more information).



SJA JAPANESE ZOOM CLASSES SPRING 2021
アーリントンで日本語を学ぼう

Please register at the link below. We will send the zoom link out later. It's free!

Children/Youth
2/28, 3/14, 4/11, 5/16 Sun @ 5-5:50 pm
<https://tinyurl.com/5Ayouth2021Spring>

Adult (beginner)
2/28, 3/14, 4/11, 4/25, 5/9, 5/23 Sun @ 7-8 pm
<https://tinyurl.com/5JAAdultB2021Spring>

Adult (Japanese News Discussion)
2/21, 3/21, 4/18, 5/16 Sun @ 7-8 pm
<https://tinyurl.com/5JAAdultNB2021Spring>

Study Japanese in Arlington
sja2018sja@gmail.com
<https://sjastudy.org/>
<https://www.facebook.com/sja2018sja/>



Advocacy

1. **A critical SJA goal is to support the youth in Arlington who wish to study Japanese.** SJA started as Save Japanese in Arlington in May 2018, after the Arlington Public Schools system (APS) announced its intention to consolidate and phase out the Japanese language program. Students in Arlington led a grassroots campaign (supported by the greater DC area Japan-related communities), organized a petition, and appealed the decision at the school board meeting. As a result, APS reversed its decision and saved the Japanese program at its high schools.
2. **SJA is pleased to observe the increased enrollment in the APS Japanese program over the past three years.** We believe that SJA contributed to this expansion. Enrollment in Japanese I, II, and III has nearly tripled since SJA started in 2018, from just over 50 students in 2017-18 to more than 160 students in 2020-21. The 2020-21 enrollment is the highest ever since APS began offering Japanese language classes two decades ago. SJA is also pleased that APS hired a second Japanese language teacher in Summer 2021 to meet the increased demand in SY 2021-22, enabling all interested students at Wakefield, Washington-Liberty, and Yorktown High Schools to pursue Japanese language study.

FREE WEBINAR!

AP JAPANESE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE EXAM

Open to high school students in DMV area (DC/ MD/VA)

 **SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17TH**
7:00 PM TO 8:00 PM

Japanese AP exam date: May 5, 2021
Application deadline: Fall 2020

Learn about the Japanese AP exam from local expert Otani sensei (TJ High School, Japanese AP teacher)

Sign-up deadline: Oct 10
We'll send you the Zoom link after receiving your registration.

<https://tinyurl.com/APJP2020>

Study Japanese in Arlington
sja2018sja@gmail.com
<https://sjastudy.org/>



Fundraising

1. **SJA successfully proposed an FY 2021 grant to Arlington Arts.** The Arlington Arts grant was used for the virtual Japan Day event in March 2021. Since then, SJA has been hosting seasonal in-person cultural events. In FY 2018-19, SJA received grant support from the Japan Foundation, the Japanese Embassy, and the JCAW ((Japan Commerce Association of Washington, DC) Foundation for its kickoff Japan Day event in March 2019. Many SJA volunteers also assist in or attend the National Cherry Blossom Festival (NCBF), although it was canceled in 2020. There is discussion over holding live NCBF events in Arlington starting in 2022 with the Amazon HQ2 move, and so we hope to continue our spring activities.



SJA'S HANDMADE ORIAMI CRAFTS

HOLIDAY BAZAAR

SATURDAY
7
10 TO 4

Find perfect gifts for special someone & Come support SJA!
Location: Washington-Liberty High School



BECOME VOLUNTEER

History of SJA: A Three-Year Retrospective

This first annual report will include a three-year retrospective of SJA, and summarize the main activities and developments of SJA over the first three years.

SJA's Founding Period: Spring and Summer 2018

In March 2018, APS announced its plan to stop offering Japanese and German classes at local high schools. APS planned to phase out the Japanese program by stopping Japanese I in SY 2018-19 and consolidating Japanese II and III at the Arlington Career Center (ACC). The latter change would require all students taking Japanese language classes to travel to ACC, creating unnecessary schedule and time pressure on students. By May 2018, a group of students studying Japanese language at APS, their parents, and supporters in the greater DC area came together to oppose APS's decision to curtail the Japanese program at its high schools. More than 1,500 people signed the petition, and several students spoke at the APS Board of Education's meeting in May 2018. The students and key adult sponsors launched a group called "Save Japanese in Arlington." As a result, Japanese classes have been continued at three high schools that offered them. At a celebration event in June 2018, some youth and adults wanted to keep meeting to support Japanese language students by offering free Japanese classes at the Arlington Central Library that summer. The group set up a Japanese cultural booth at the Arlington County Fair in August 2018 to promote Japanese arts and culture, including craft items, and to advertise the free Japanese language classes planned in Fall 2019.

Subsequently, in late August 2018 a group of ten adults and two youth met to form "Study Japanese in Arlington" as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. This nonprofit status enabled SJA to receive up to a \$25,000 grant from the Japanese Embassy through the Mid-Atlantic Association of Teachers of Japanese to host a first-time, large-scale Japanese cultural event, which became Japan Day by March 2019. SJA also received smaller grants from the the JCAW Foundation, Japan Foundation and Arlington Arts Association of the Arlington Community Foundation. Incorporating as a nonprofit organization further enabled SJA to receive local donations.



Highlights of SJA's First Fiscal Year: July 2018 to June 2019

Education: Building on the momentum in founding the SJA and in support of youth and adults in learning Japanese language and culture, SJA began offering beginner-level Japanese language classes to youth and adults. These classes were offered twice per month in the Arlington Central Library on Sunday late afternoons. To motivate and attract adult volunteers who speak Japanese, SJA separated its language exchanges into beginner through advanced levels, with the latter intended for those able to read and discuss newspaper articles in both English and Japanese. Starting January 2019, SJA added a non-beginner adult class and Arlington Community Learning classes to its roster. Further, SJA organized informational events and offered tutoring to help youth heritage language learners prepare for the Advanced Placement Japanese test.

Japan Day: SJA held its first successful Japan Day event in March 2019 at the Arlington Career Center (ACC). The event offered cultural performances, such as Okinawan drumming and Japanese folk dance, and hands-on workshops, including origami and tea ceremony. Almost 1,000 people participated in the event, including 250 local artists and volunteers from the Japanese community. Furthermore, a delegation of teachers, students, and alumni of Tokyo Toritsu Engei (Metropolitan Horticultural) High School, a sister school of Arlington Career Center and Technical High School as of 2018, attended Japan Day and stayed with SJA volunteers. The event was made possible by grants and donations from the Japanese Embassy and the Japan Foundation. The incredible success of this event encouraged SJA to apply for grants from other sources, including the Arlington Arts Association.



Highlights of SJA's Second Fiscal Year: July 2019 to June 2020

Origami: In its second year, SJA launched an after-school origami enrichment program at Arlington Traditional School (ATS). ATS students participated in the fall session and learned to make animals, flowers, and seasonal ornaments by folding paper.

Japanese Culture: SJA started livestreaming tea ceremonies for youth and adults on Sundays via Facebook, as well as short calligraphy classes and a virtual Zen meditation class.

Education: SJA offered beginner Japanese language classes for youth and adults at the Arlington Central Library until March 2020, and virtually from June 2020. In-person classes at the library, started in Fall 2018, were paused in March 2020 due to the pandemic; in June 2020, SJA moved these classes online.

Exchange Events: SJA volunteers continue to invest their time in facilitating a range of exchange events and programs. These include a visit by Japanese middle and high school students sponsored by a regional newspaper for a visit to New York City and Washington, D.C. in the summers of 2018 and 2019. We have hosted information sessions by Japanese universities seeking to recruit high school students in the DC area. Further, SJA volunteers visited Engei High School in Setagaya, Tokyo to support strengthening the sister school relationship between ACC and Engei. Photos of SJA's exchange events and information about our past outreach activities are available at sjastudy.org/community-outreach/.





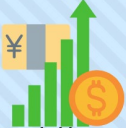

From an Outreach Committee Project to a New Organization: The Setagaya Partnership Committee of the Arlington Sister City Association in 2020 and 2021

The Setagaya Partnership Committee began with SJA board members and volunteers experimenting with an “online homestay” for youth in July 2020. While stuck at home due to the pandemic, youth from Arlington and the greater DC area were matched with youth from Setagaya and the greater Tokyo area for a virtual hour of small group language exchange. The youth exchanged stories about their families, hobbies, schools, and other topics. Bilingual adults facilitated these discussions when necessary. Given the success with the online homestay language exchange in Summer 2020, it was continued as a regular monthly gathering on Saturday evening in Arlington (Sunday morning in Setagaya). The language exchange was youth-led, with youth selecting themes and preparing quizzes and presentations. The monthly exchanges have continued for over a year to date since Summer 2020.



Positive relations developed between the two cities. In Fall 2020, the Arlington Sister City Association (ASCA) and Arlington County Board approved the initiative to prepare to request a friendship agreement between Arlington and Setagaya City.

ASCA approved the formation of the Setagaya Committee. Two members from the Setagaya Committee can serve on the ASCA Board. Three SJA Board members joined ASCA along with a few other volunteers. A group of adults in Arlington and Setagaya have been regularly meeting online every month or two to develop plans for a sister city agreement, propose activities, and publicize the sister city relationship, among other items. This ASCA preparatory committee is on pause for a year or two until we can ensure that Setagaya City’s mayor will sign a friendship agreement with Arlington County.

	setagaya	arlington
 Area	22 mi ²	26 mi ²
 Population	920,000	240,000
 Household Income	Top 7 in Japan	Top 5 in US
 Education Level	Top 2 in Tokyo	Top 5 in US

The Setagaya Committee was organizationally separated from SJA in summer 2021 due to its need as a formal ASCA committee to be financially separate from the SJA. The Setagaya Committee will take lead in supporting the ACC-Engel HS sister school relationship. SJA will continue to support the emerging partnership between Arlington County and Setagaya City as well as possibly hosting exchanges with youth from other cities in Japan.

Organization and committee structure of SJA

1. **The SJA board consists of up to 12 members, with 2 or more positions designated for youth in Arlington high schools who study Japanese.** The board members are volunteers brought together by their common interest of promoting Japanese language and culture in Arlington and broader metropolitan Washington, D.C. area. The Board presents a diverse mix of backgrounds, both in ethnicities and in skills and competencies. Members include native Japanese, Japanese-Americans, and non-Japanese Americans. Their career backgrounds span fields such as media, law, education, banking, business, accounting, and human resources. SJA has had three youth board members for the past two years. Youth board members have gone on to college in Japan or studied Japanese at college in the United States. Appendix B lists the present and past board members and executive committee members of the SJA in recognition of their service.
2. **SJA has an active committee structure and SJA's activities are carried out by the appropriate committees.**

The **Executive Committee** consists of the President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. The by-laws establish the Executive Committee and the **Finance Committee** as permanent committees. The rest are ad hoc committees created by the board. Ad hoc committees have been renamed over the years, but they have maintained similar functions as their activities have developed.

- a. The **Education Committee** is the largest year-round committee. Formerly the Language Committee, it meets almost monthly to plan and evaluate SJA's language and culture classes and support.
- b. The **Japanese Language Advocacy Committee** was under the Education Committee, but has become a full committee given its importance to SJA's mission.
- c. The **Japan Day Committee** met regularly from December to April to plan and coordinate the event, and has since been renamed the **Event and Outreach Committee** given SJA's expanded range of events.
- d. The **Youth Committee** coordinates youth input for Japan Day and other programming. Youth Committee members also write posts for the SJA Youth Blogs, posted to the SJA website.
- e. The former **Recruitment Committee** was dissolved, with recruitment of volunteers integrated into the function of other committees.
- f. SJA has recently created an **IT and Communications Committee** to handle all of its growing online activities and communication needs. Over the past year, SJA has strengthened its committee structure as a way to recruit board members and leaders and to enable former volunteers and board members to stay involved when they leave the Arlington area. Appendix C lists the old and new committee structure.



Appendix A: Financial Report of Revenue and Expenses for FY 2020-21

Total Revenue	2,638.13		
		Grant from Arlington County Arts Association (for Japan Day 2021)	2,585.71
		General	52.42
			<hr/> 2,638.13
Total Expenses	2,667.67		
		Administrative expenses	465.74
		Japan Day 2020 (Special Event to Promote Japanese Language and Culture) (Credit due to cancellation of event)	(199.00)
		Japan Day 2021 (Special Event to Promote Japanese Language and Culture)	1,843.42
		Programming (General)	222.57
		Program (Origami Enrichment)	334.94
			<hr/> 2,667.67
Net Income	(29.54)		
<hr/>			
Bank Statement Ending Balance as of June 30, 2021			
	12,545.38		

Appendix B. SJA's Board and Executive Committee Members, FY 2018-22

FY 2018-19

President	Mine Sasaguri
Vice President	Miki Terasawa
Treasurer	Yuri Ellison
Secretary	Seiko Kyan-Reich
Members	Winnie Brent, Satoko Kajima-Best, John McLaughlin, Jack Nelson, Sabrina Nelson,

FY 2019-20

President	Mine Sasaguri
Vice President	Miki Terasawa
Treasurer	Yuri Ellison
Secretary	Seiko Kyan-Reich
Members	Sophia Field, Maya Green, Satoko Kajima-Best, John McLaughlin, Sabrina Nelson, Jennifer Swanson

FY 2020-21

President	Miki Terasawa
Vice President	Jennifer Swanson
Treasurer	Yuri Ellison
Secretary	Mine Sasaguri and Anna Fry
Members	Sophia Field, Junko Katada, John McLaughlin, Yoshimi Muto, Sabrina Nelson, Emiko Todoroki

FY 2021-22

President	Jennifer Swanson
Vice President	Emiko Todoroki
Treasurer	Yoko Scanlen
Secretary	John McLaughlin and Dylan Vasquez
Members	Anna Fry, Junko Katada, Yoshimi Muto, Sabrina Nelson, Alea Ortiguerra, Ninjin Purev-Erdene, Mine Sasaguri

Appendix C: SJA Committee Structure

Former (FY 2018-21)	Current (FY 2021-22)
Executive Committee	Executive Committee
Finance Committee	Finance Committee
	Fundraising Subcommittee
	Education Committee
Japanese Language Committee	Japanese Language Advocacy Committee
Program Advocacy Subcommittee	
Japan Day Committee	
Outreach Committee	Outreach and Events Committee
Youth Committee	Youth Committee
Recruitment Committee	IT and Communications Committee

Appendix D: Acknowledgement of SJA Grants and Donors, FY 2018-21

Organization	Purpose
Arlington County Arts	Grant for arts programs (2020 and 2021)
Japan Foundation Japan Foundation Los Angeles	Teaching Materials Japan Day 2021
Embassy of Japan JCAW (Japan Commerce Association of Washington, DC) Foundation Inc	Japan Day 2020 Japan Day 2020
JCAW (Japan Commerce Association of Washington, DC) Foundation Inc Embassy of Japan/MAATJ	Programming 2019 Japan Day 2019

The above grants ranged from \$1,000 to \$20,000 for a total of \$37,782.15. SJA wishes to thank our funders for their generosity.

SJA also wishes to thank the many donors who have attended our events and made cash donations or responded to our crowdfunding appeals.