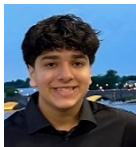


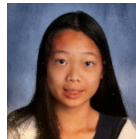
Award Winners



Kazushi Kousaka: Kazushi is a sophomore boarding student at Choate Rosemary Hall. A writer and athlete, he serves as a copy editor for *The Choate News*. He also competes in varsity diving and volleyball. Interested in scientific innovation and environmental sustainability, he will join Choate's signature environmental immersion program next year.



Amin Nasari: Amin is a junior at Hicksville High School. He is passionate about the intersection of health and AI, with a focus on how technology can improve patient care. In his free time, he enjoys playing the trumpet, weightlifting, and cooking. He hopes to pursue a career in biomedical engineering.



Erika Kawakami: Erika is a junior at Jericho High School. She is involved in her school's Mathletes and coding clubs and serves as a co-captain of the Varsity Track and Field team. In her free time, she enjoys reading historical fiction books.



Naomi Kirkup: Naomi is a senior at Stony Brook University, majoring in Asian and Asian American Studies. She looks forward to continuing her studies of Sufi philosophy and other great traditions next fall at the University of Virginia's Masters program. Currently, she is researching the devotional paths of Sufism and the Bhakti movement.



Skyler Ogonowski: Skyler is a senior at Rocky Point High School. She attended the Japanese Weekend School of New York for 12 years and graduated this past March. Her goal is to become a high school history teacher.



Afnan Joarder: Afnan Joarder is a senior at The Bronx High School of Science. He has a passion for music and 3D printing. When not in school, he can be found at the MET Museum, appreciating historic artwork. Afnan plans on pursuing a career as a successful neurosurgeon in the future.



Wynn Ng: Wynn is a freshman at Stony Brook University, pursuing a Bachelor's of Science in Psychology. Passionate about improving accessibility to mental health services, they are involved in AAPI and psychology student organizations. In their free time, they enjoy crafting and reading. Wynn aspires to a career as a clinical psychologist.



Siena Ruske: Siena is a junior at The Bronx High School of Science. She has been playing the violin since she was four, participates in congressional debate, and loves to spend time at the beach or with her friends. Her goal is to pursue a career in the field of neuroscience research.

Honorary Judges: Mikio Mori, Ambassador and Consul General of Japan in New York
Isao Kobayashi, President and C.E.O., Canon U.S.A., Inc.

JCSB Board Member in Charge: Yoko Ojima

Canon U.S.A. Liaison: Keiko Shinki

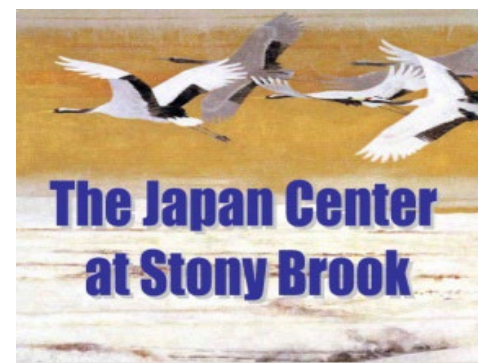
Organizing Committee: Eriko Sato (Chair), Sachiko Murata (Chief Judge), Roxanne Brockner, Carolyn Brooks, Kristina Chambers, Evelyn Cruise, Mary Diaz, Marlene Dubois, Yasuko Fujita, MaryAnn Hannon, Feng-Qian Li, Ayaka Mayo, Jane McNulty, Patricia Marinaccio, Hiroko Matsuzaki, Eva Nagase, Chikako Nakamura, Atsuko Oyama, Mitsuko Post, Gerard Senese, Theresa Spadola, and Yvette Vetro

20th Annual Japan Center Essay Competition

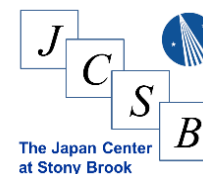
Sponsored by
Canon U.S.A.

Awards Ceremony

Sunday, May 4, 2025
Charles B. Wang Center
Stony Brook University



Canon



stonybrook.edu/japancenter

20th JCSB Essay Competition Awards Ceremony

2 pm – 3 pm (Lecture Hall 1)

Opening Remarks:

Eriko Sato, Chair, JCSB Essay Competition, Executive Director for General Affairs, JCSB

Greetings:

Iwao Ojima, President and Chair of the Board, JCSB

Kiyoshi Oka, Executive Vice President and General Manager, Marketing Strategy Unit, Canon U.S.A., Inc.

Makiko Ai, Director, Japan Information Center, Deputy Consul General, Consulate General of Japan in New York

Award Presentation:

High School Division Best Essay Award

1st Place Best Essay Award -- “Daijoubu: Powerful Call for Unity” by Kazushi Kousaka (Choate Rosemary Hall) -- \$3,000 and EOS R10 RF-S18-45 mm F4.5-6.3 IS STM Lens Kit

2nd Place Best Essay Award -- “Between Water and Stone: A Journey of Ritual and Reflection” by Amin Nasari (Hicksville High School) -- \$2,000 and EOS R100 RF-S18-45 mm F4.5-6.3 IS STM Lens Kit + PIXMA TS8820

3rd Place Best Essay Award -- “Echoes from Hibakusha” by Erika Kawakami (Jericho High School) -- \$1,000 and EOS R100 RF-S18-45 mm F4.5-6.3 IS STM Lens Kit

College Division Best Essay Award

“Amaterasu’s Mirror of Ecstasy: A Brief Encounter with Japanese Shamanism and Shintoism” by Naomi Kirkup (Stony Brook University) -- \$3,000 and EOS R10 RF-S18-45 mm F4.5-6.3 IS STM Lens Kit

Uchida Memorial Award

“Embracing Half-Moon Cookies” by Skyler Ogonowski (Rocky Point High School) -- \$1,000 and EOS R100 RF-S18-45 mm F4.5-6.3 IS STM Lens Kit

Special Award (Alphabetically ordered by last name)

Each recipient will receive -- \$500 and SELPHY QX20 Compact Photo Printer + SELPHY Color Ink/Label Set XC-20L + SELPHY Color Ink/Label XS-20L Set

- “The Show That Turned My Dreams into Reality” by Afnan Joarder (The Bronx High School of Science)
- “Between the Folds: The Life Lessons Found in Origami” by Wynn Ng (Stony Brook University)
- “Shinobu: A Story of Perseverance” by Siena Ruske (The Bronx High School of Science)

Consul General of Japan Special Award

“Daijoubu: Powerful Call for Unity” by Kazushi Kousaka

Essay Presentations by Awardees:

- “The Show That Turned My Dreams into Reality” by Afnan Joarder (The Bronx High School of Science)
- “Between the Folds: The Life Lessons Found in Origami” by Wynn Ng (Stony Brook University)
- “Shinobu: A Story of Perseverance” by Siena Ruske (The Bronx High School of Science)
- “Embracing Half-Moon Cookies” by Skyler Ogonowski (Rocky Point High School)
- “Amaterasu’s Mirror of Ecstasy: A Brief Encounter with Japanese Shamanism and Shintoism” by Naomi Kirkup (Stony Brook University)
- “Echoes from Hibakusha” by Erika Kawakami (Jericho High School)
- “Between Water and Stone: A Journey of Ritual and Reflection” by Amin Nasari (Hicksville High School)
- “Daijoubu: Powerful Call for Unity” by Kazushi Kousaka (Choate Rosemary Hall)

Closing Remarks: Eriko Sato

Uchida Memorial Award

Mr. Kinya Uchida’s warm support was instrumental in launching the JCSB Essay Competition sponsored by Canon U.S.A. in 2005, to which JCSB is deeply grateful. The JCSB instituted the Uchida Memorial Award in honor of the late Mr. Uchida in 2013.



Reception and Raffle

3 pm – 5 pm (Theater Lobby)

Raffle prizes include:

1. IVY 2 Mini Photo Printer (Blush Pink) & ZINK Photo Paper Pack (20 Sheets)
2. IVY 2 Mini Photo Printer (Pure White) & ZINK Pre Cut Circle Sticker Pack



Support the JCSB: “Stony Brook Foundation #298650”