



Lauryn Murata

**Lauryn Murata** graduated from Torrance High School. She will be attending San Francisco State University majoring in pre-kinesiology.

My name is Lauryn Murata and I am currently a senior at Torrance High School. To me, being a part of the Japanese community doesn't mean just eating the food and occasionally attending the events and/or the national holidays.

Being a part of the community is giving back and making sure that the next generation feels safe and at home as I did. To give back to my community, I was a part of organizations such as Sansei baseball, Hollywood Dodgers and F.O.R basketball, and the Greater Los Angeles Girl Scouts. While in those organizations, I volunteered at the Sansei Skills Competition, coached multiple years for the F.O.R. Double Dribble, and ran booths, bussed tables,

set up/cleaned up, and made food at the Gardena Buddhist Church for Fujimatsuri and Obon. Aside from these organizations, I also volunteered at Torrance Memorial Medical Center in Escort Services and was an active member as well as Treasurer for the Torrance Community Kiwanis Key Club.

Volunteering with children of all different backgrounds influenced my career choice as a Pediatric Physical Therapist. The feeling of knowing how I made their days better really pushed me into pursuing a career where I can change a child's life forever. In addition to volunteering, I also love reading, swimming, spending time with family/friends, and cooking/baking.

A major role model in my life is my Oba-chan, Keiko Kamikawa. Despite not being born in America and having to face the challenges and hardships of moving to a foreign country, she never failed to smile and make sure that her whole family was happy before herself. Growing up, I looked up to her selflessness and hard work every single day against the obstacles made me realize how much my community supported my family growing up. This pushed me into giving back to the community at every chance I came across. Giving back the happiness and opportunities that I was given, it gives me just as much, if not more happiness and purpose. By being surrounded by my Japanese heritage and community, I can confidently say that I have become a much harder worker and someone that I am proud of.

2021 update:

Starting my college journey online and at home was definitely not what I had hoped for, but it was a learning experience nonetheless. In the beginning, it was hard to remain motivated sitting at home in one spot all day staring at a screen. It almost felt like our senior year of high school where we went online for the tail end of it, so the 'I'm an official college student' hadn't really hit me yet. Staying motivated and maintaining a healthy mental health mindset was almost as hard as the curriculum. So for me personally, this pandemic has taught me the importance of community and social interaction. While adjusting to the new way of learning, I didn't prioritize reaching out to classmates, talking to my professors, and just interacting in general. Learning in 2020 was a rollercoaster of emotion and wondering if I would ever see the campus, but luckily this fall I can! I plan to take what I learned while doing distanced learning both socially and academically to prioritize my education and my mental health in a 'work/play balance' in my life.

GLA October 2021 newsletter:

### **JACL Speaker at Nikkei Student Union, San Francisco State University**

Lauryn Murata is one of GLA's 2020 scholarship recipients.

Lauryn is the Cultural Coordinator for the Nikkei Student Union at San Francisco State University.

Lauryn inquired about a guest speaker from JACL for a NSU program on September 21. Haruka Roudebush appeared in person to be the speaker. Haruka is the Senior Programs Manager at the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California. He was formerly the JACL Vice President for Membership.

Lauryn reports, "The presentation at the meeting went extremely well! Haruka did an amazing job breaking down the different levels of JACL and its history to our members."

Lauryn: Here is a bit about NSU:

Nikkei Student Union, or NSU is an organization devoted to promoting, preserving, and educating college-aged youth about the history and culture of Japanese Americans. We are a safe space for anyone who is interested in learning more about the Japanese American narrative through social and community events, lessons, and volunteer opportunities. Our primary goals are to connect with other on-campus organizations through social events, serve the JA community in the bay area through community service, encourage and promote academic excellence through members, and encourage unity between Japanese Americans and non-Japanese Americans.

Every other week we hold meetings where we teach various lessons about JA culture to our members. Alongside teaching lessons, we also plan to work closely with JACL and the Japantown here in San Francisco to further educate those about JA history, culture, etc. and be leadership examples to future generations. As a club, we hope to help the JA community in every way we can and we look forward to what the future has in store.

Lauryn is a sophomore studying pre-kinesiology at San Francisco State University.