



# California Civil Liberties Projects Announced

*Twenty-three California projects funded – focusing on the Japanese American WWII experience to the present day*

For Immediate Release: June 8, 2020

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**Sacramento, Calif.** – Nearly two dozen projects across the state involving multiple cultural communities and age groups have received \$1.1 million in grants from the California State Library to educate Californians about their civil liberties.

The Civil Liberties Public Education program was created in 1998 to use the incarceration of US citizens of Japanese American ancestry during World War II as a springboard to understanding Californians’ civil liberties and the impact of those liberties being usurped.

“Fear and bigotry were the root cause of internment in World War II. Both are still around,” said Greg Lucas, California’s state librarian. “Better understanding past mistakes and connecting them with current events helps make sure we remember we’re always stronger together.”

“Civil Liberties projects can play an active role in meaningful learning and discussion about the issues – and results of the past two years of funding for this program are available online for all to use and learn from.”

The current round of grants is the final of a series funded through a three-year, one-time allocation of \$3 million in the budget approved in June 2017.

Previous projects funded by the program can serve as educational tools. Among past projects funded through the program are [an interactive online experience of the hardships and decisions for Japanese Americans during World War II](#), [documentaries](#) and [podcasts](#) from [public broadcasting organizations](#) and [nonprofits](#), to [performing and visual arts programming](#), to [teacher’s guides and lesson suggestions](#) with [primary source materials](#) and articles. There’s a Science, Technology, Engineering, Math [project involving Minecraft](#). A comprehensive list is available on the [California Civil Liberties program website](#).

## **History of the California Civil Liberties Program**

Prior to World War II, California was home to more Japanese Americans than any other state. In the wake of Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, wartime hysteria led to President Franklin Roosevelt’s signing of Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942, which put more than 120,000 Japanese Americans into relocation camps for more than 18 months.

When the state Legislature created the California Civil Liberties Public Education program in 1998 it said the program’s purpose was “to sponsor public educational activities and development of educational materials to ensure that the events surrounding the exclusion, forced removal, and internment of civilians and permanent resident aliens of Japanese ancestry will be remembered so that the causes and circumstance of this and similar events may be illuminated and understood.”

Members of the media may contact Alex Vassar at [alex.vassar@library.ca.gov](mailto:alex.vassar@library.ca.gov). A list of funded projects follows. The State Library website is at [www.library.ca.gov](http://www.library.ca.gov).

# End of Press Release #

## List of funded Projects

### California Lutheran University, Thousand Oaks

*Community Project*

\$29,826.00

“In Your Own Backyard: Civil Liberties Then and Now ” will offer secondary teachers and their students a way to make the issues of civil liberties and violations a part of their own experience by having them walk and observe the places where events happened. Rather than just reading about events in a book or online, a series of lessons and the accompanying opportunities to visit these places will allow students to discover that “history” and a denial of civil liberties is not something that happens “over there” but something that has taken place “in your own backyard.”

### Celadon Inc (Celadon Arts), Monterey

*Community Project*

\$25,165.00

*Breaking Silence, Legacy of Incarceration* includes the work of seven Sansei artists and serves as a catalyst to create social awareness and change surrounding the issues caused by the incarceration of Japanese American citizens during WWII. The exhibition highlights this succeeding generation of artists to share personal expressions of their emotions and insights, and the reluctant, deep collective acceptance of incarceration, often left unexpressed by their parents and grandparents. *Breaking Silence, Legacy of Incarceration* will involve the community through talks, workshops, and Day of Remembrance activities, as well as a website and catalog.

### Chinese for Affirmative Action (Asian Americans for Civil Rights and Equality), San Francisco

*Public Media*

\$55,000.00

Miko Lee, creator of the “Expanding Narratives” project and a producer for APEX Express (Pacifica Radio, KPFA), will create seven interview-based radio episodes on the internment of Japanese Americans, linking these experience to contemporary civil liberties issues. Segments will counter historical misconceptions around the exclusion and detention of Japanese Americans and will include stories from former detainees who are aging, but still with us to offer first person accounts. Miko will excerpt shorter files as downloadable resources for educators, and project partners will help produce workshops and curriculum guides with accessible lessons for different types of learners.

### Densho, Seattle/Los Angeles

*Community Project*

\$30,000.00

Densho will conduct, preserve, and web-host fifteen video life histories of Japanese Americans with a continued focus on the immediate post-concentration camp experience in California, capturing both rural and urban experiences as well as life in hostels and trailer camps. The downloadable interviews—which will be transcribed, indexed, and segmented—will be available online as part of the Densho Digital Repository. Densho will also conduct public programs involving communities in the Los Angeles and Sacramento areas. The programs will highlight some of the interviews and feature commentary by scholars who have studied this time period.

### **Heritage Future / 1888 Center, Orange**

*Public Media*

\$40,650.00

Chapters from Heritage Future is a five-part Creative + Cultural Podcast series dedicated to stories surrounding the exclusion, forced removal, and internment of Japanese-Americans. The program also parallels a narrative thread through Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). The 2020 Chapters series increases the scope of the previous years' coverage from a single county (Orange) to the entire State of California. These outreach efforts through the audio medium including new partners and continued documentation of the events surrounding the Japanese American experience during World War II and its parallels and connections to current events.

### **Hollister Youth Alliance (Youth Alliance), Hollister**

*Community Project*

\$30,000.00

The Youth Alliance's "25 Year Oral History Project" will involve community youth in direct interviews and audio/video recording/podcasts of oral histories from multi-cultural community elders. Components will include the twenty-five year history of Youth Alliance providing innovative and culturally relevant services that strengthen and enrich rural Latino and Native American youth and families in the communities of Hollister, Gilroy and Morgan Hill, California. Outreach will continue through Youth Alliance programs, located at 20 school and community sites in San Benito and South Santa Clara counties and serving 8,500 youth and families. Goals include using strength-based, family centered and culturally sensitive practices to support youth.

### **Inner City Youth Orchestra of Los Angeles (ICYOLA), Los Angeles**

*Community Project*

\$30,000.00

The Inner City Youth Orchestra of Los Angeles will commission the composition and launch the world premiere performance of a new piece of music for chorus and orchestra that memorializes the genocide and internment of Native-Americans, the slavery of African-Americans, the internment of Japanese-Americans, the disparagement of Latino-Americans, and the challenges of present day refugees who seek entry into the United States, and who, in some cases, are held in cages. The world premiere performance will take place at the California African-American Museum at the opening of an exhibit of artifacts that speak to all of these events in the American experience.

### **Japanese American Museum of San Jose (JAMsj), San Jose**

*Community Project*

\$30,000.00

The Japanese American Museum of San Jose will create a scale model of an Internment Camp block showing twelve barracks surrounding the block mess hall, toilets, showers and laundry buildings with partial interiors of the structures. It will be displayed at the Japanese American Museum of San Jose as part of their larger Internment Exhibit and be provided to members of the public and visiting school groups. The scale model will provide a 3-Dimensional impact, unavailable from photographs, of camp living to visitors and student groups and used by docents to help explain the Internment. The model will also be a basis for potential future augmented reality (AR) projects to increase its impact through linked video and documents.

### **Japanese American National Museum (as fiscal sponsor for the Stanley Hayami's Diary Project), Los Angeles**

*Education*

\$100,000.00

The Japanese American National Museum partners will implement the final phase of the Stanley Hayami Diary Project. Titled *A Life in Pieces: The Diary and Letters of Stanley Hayami*, this immersive and interactive exhibition will share a young Japanese American

boys' journey — from his home in the San Gabriel Valley, to life in concentration camp and then to his service in the military — through letters, journal entries, and personal artworks. Visitors will experience a deeply engaging exhibition where the room is transformed and images from Stanley's diary will come to life through virtual reality (VR) headsets. Onsite at JANM beginning in Spring 2020, this exhibition will provide multiple educational and public programming – both onsite and outside of Little Tokyo.

### **Japanese American National Museum (Youth Clubs Exhibit), Los Angeles**

*Community Project*

\$30,000.00

During World War II, over 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry were unjustly incarcerated in American concentration camps. Approximately one-third were children. Despite the abrupt disruption to their childhoods, young people drew upon their own resilience and creativity to forge a new world for themselves. The Japanese American National Museum will present an exhibition dedicated to the many youth clubs in America's concentration camps, which will share first-person insight into the resilience and ingenuity of young Americans who had little control over their circumstances.

### **Fred T. Korematsu Institute (Korematsu Institute), San Francisco**

*Education*

\$100,000.00

The Korematsu Institute will complete the final phases of its larger project to remaster and update *Of Civil Wrongs and Rights: The Fred Korematsu Story*, so the two-time Emmy-award-winning documentary educates a new generation about the WWII Japanese American incarceration and related civil liberties challenges today. The film's director will re-edit the film in Ultra High Definition (UHD) 4K and add material linking Korematsu's story with current civil rights violations and other populations' experiences. The finished film will reach the broadest-possible audience through educational and public library streaming platforms like Kanopy and other streaming platforms like Netflix and Amazon. The Korematsu Institute will also connect educators with complementary curricula online.

### **KVIE Inc., Sacramento**

*Public Media*

\$100,000.00

*Before They Take Us Away* (working title) is an original documentary feature film that captures the stories of Japanese Americans whose families "voluntarily" evacuated from California upon the issuance of Executive Order 9066 in early 1942. Approximately 5,000 Japanese Americans escaped being incarcerated in concentration camps by self-evacuating, but faced their own unique challenges as they attempted to resettle in often remote, unforgiving landscapes and battled poverty, hunger, hostility and racial violence. *Before They Take Us Away* is the first feature documentary to chronicle this largely unknown chapter in the Japanese American experience and in US history.

### **L.A. Theatre Works, Venice**

*Public Media*

\$86,781.00

L.A. Theatre Works will commission, produce and broadcast a new play about the Northern California branch of the American Civil Liberties Union which, under the leadership of Ernest Besig, joined with Fred Korematsu to challenge the Internment Order despite immense opposition from within and outside the ACLU. The play will be professionally recorded and broadcast on our national radio show, and digitally preserved for streaming and download through the LA Theatre Works website. LA Theatre Works will foster public discussion through recorded interviews with civil rights attorneys, legal historians and others; social media engagement; and creation of discussion guides for students and community groups.

### **Mission Viejo Library, Mission Viejo**

*Community Project*

\$7,025.00

The *Reach of Civil Liberties Project* at the Mission Viejo Library will include two main components; a gallery exhibit and a film screening with panel discussion. The purpose of this project is to increase public awareness surrounding the importance of protecting civil

liberties and the lasting impact, both direct and indirect, of civil liberty violations on communities in America. It will focus primarily on the Japanese American experience during World War II and the aftermath. *Reach of Civil Liberties* will draw parallels between other community groups and experiences, both modern and historical.

### **Monterey History and Art Association, Monterey**

*Public Media*

\$80,000.00

To confront racism against Japanese Americans in the 1940's, a group of women activists garnered support from John Steinbeck and the broader community of Monterey, California. The documentary *Enduring Democracy: The Monterey Petition* tells the story of the courage and compassion of Monterey residents as Japanese Americans return to their hometown after being released from incarceration in the Internment Camps. This story examines an organized protest against powerful attempts to discourage Japanese Americans from returning to the Monterey Bay communities. This full length documentary and the accompanying curriculum tell the story about the campaign to discourage Japanese Americans from returning to their hometowns at the end of World War II, and the courageous group of citizens who resisted this bigotry and publicly demanded "the Democratic Way of Life for All."

### **National Japanese American Historical Society (NJAHS), San Francisco**

*Community Project*

\$30,000.00

The National Japanese American Historical Society, Inc. (NJAHS), in collaboration with content experts in the Japanese American and academic communities, will plan and implement a statewide professional development series for teachers, and develop curriculum and classroom resources for elementary and secondary students entitled *We Are All Americans: Decision- Making by World War II Incarcerated Youth and Young Adults*. By educating teachers, they can in turn utilize the curriculum and classroom resources to engage students in a deeper understanding of the complexity of how one chooses to participate as a citizen or participant in this democracy.

### **Plaza de la Raza, Inc (Plaza de la Raza), Los Angeles**

*Community Project*

\$30,000.00

Plaza de la Raza will launch the Ralph Lazo Project, a collaborative research and theatre project involving local youth (12-18) at Plaza de la Raza who will research the story of Ralph Lazo, the young Chicano from Los Angeles who protested the internment of his Japanese American friends and volunteered to be sent to Manzanar during WWII, only to later join the army and fight in the Pacific. Students will research Lazo's story using partner resources. Components include participating in field trips, conducting of oral interviews with living survivors, creating an educational website, then writing their own play and dramatizing the story. The students and Plaza de la Raza will then present the play at venues throughout Southern California.

### **Public Media Group of Southern California (KCET), Burbank**

*Public Media*

\$100,000.00

KCET's original program *Lost LA* tells the often-forgotten stories of Los Angeles and Southern California. In partnership with the USC Libraries/LA as Subject Archives, KCET will create a broadcast documentary with supporting multi-platform content including online editorials, social media, and community engagement activities which will explore the changed environment Los Angeles' Japanese-American population faced in the years immediately following World War II. Premiering in Spring 2021, this episode will focus on the challenges Japanese-Americans encountered resettling in new neighborhoods after incarceration, and how on-going racism and lack of acceptance empowered the next generation of Asian-Americans to prioritize social justice.

### **Torrance Public Library, Torrance**

*Community Project*

\$5,982.00

The Torrance Public Library will create fifteen “Book Groups in a Box” and present three free public programs to celebrate diversity. The “Book Group in a Box” provides a person everything they need to run a book club. Each Box contains 10 copies of a book, professionally prepared discussion questions, and background information. The curated titles would showcase a range of experiences from the impact of the exclusion and detention of persons of Japanese ancestry during World War II to the continuing struggles of other populations in the U.S. on the basis of race or national origin.

### **The University Corporation (California State University, Northridge), Northridge**

*Education*

\$100,000.00

*World Remaking: Intergenerational Activism and Transformative Justice* focuses on the intersections between Japanese American WWII era incarceration and the struggles for transformative and reparative justice concerning incarceration, deportation, detention, and criminalization for some of the most underrepresented Asian Pacific Islander groups in Los Angeles and the San Fernando Valley including Pacific Islanders, Native Hawaiians, South East Asians, and Japanese Americans. Our yearlong program will address how storytelling, performance, and public dialogue between different generations of activists and communities generate new forms of political mobilization, collective healing, and transformative justice.

### **Visual Communications Media (Visual Communications), Los Angeles**

*Community Project*

\$29,569.00

“Revisiting: Robert Nakamura” will offer a long-overdue appreciation of the pivotal works of director Robert A. Nakamura — a key figure in the development of Asian Pacific American cinema. Complementary programs and activities tied to director Nakamura’s key works will be presented. Works include *Wataridori: Birds Of Passage* (1976) and *Hito Hata: Raise the Banner* (1980), both of which will be restored for public presentation. These presentations educate the public about the confinement experience and its aftermath in celebrating and interrogating the Japanese American experience during the 20th Century.

### **Visual Communications Media, Los Angeles ( fiscal sponsor for Wayne Collins documentary)**

*Community Project*

\$29,400.00

Filmmakers will produce a documentary about intrepid California attorney Wayne M. Collins. Collins fought tirelessly on behalf of Americans of Japanese ancestry during WWII by helping restore U.S. citizenship to 5,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry who renounced under duress as a result of the government's imposition of a "loyalty oath" while they were incarcerated and consequently held under martial law at the Tule Lake Segregation Center (with some deported to Japan). In his commitment to defending the rights of those forcefully detained, Collins also worked on behalf of others denied their Constitutional rights under Executive Order 9066. Influential cases that Collins worked on include those of Fred Korematsu and Mitsuye Endo, Japanese Americans who fought for their civil liberties after Executive Order 9066.

### **Yuba County Sutter County Regional Arts Council (Yuba Sutter Arts), Marysville**

*Community Project*

\$30,000.00

Through a multi-faceted, year-long series of events, exhibits and Day of Remembrance activities in February, Yuba Sutter Arts will help preserve and tell the stories of Japanese Americans who resided in Yuba, Sutter, Colusa and Butte counties, and were forcibly removed from their homes in 1942. Over 2,600 residents were briefly incarcerated locally in the Arboga Assembly Center near Marysville before being sent to more permanent camps. The project involves year-round displays and exhibits for the public. Displays will also be provided in classrooms for students with new online access to information

including firsthand accounts of what happened before, during and after the internment camp experience.

**About the State Library:** Founded in 1850, the California State Library has an extensive collection of documents from and about the state's rich history, ranging from books, maps, miners' diaries, newspapers, and periodicals to photographs, paintings and posters. The State Library also holds federal and state publications, is home to the Bernard E. Witkin State Law Library and the Braille and Talking Book Library, and serves as the lead state agency for library-related services throughout California. [State Library website](#)