

January 3, 2024

NALC Holland *Newsletter vol.14*



2023 was the year that people regained their active life after the COVID crisis. The activity in NALC Holland has returned to life as well and started growing again. Monthly potluck held at Headquarters and East division, MOKUYOU kai (Thursday meetings), Dance, Kids nursery, etc. And in October BUNKASAI held by JACOP ended with great success. Senior exchange meeting at Zonnehuis in Amstelveen started smoothly, and volunteer activities that can also contribute to the Dutch local community have begun to expand.

It is quite sad that Mrs. Osada, who was a board member, passed away in September. Mrs. Osada had been helping me through JCC ever since I moved to the Netherlands. Mrs. Osada gave us a lot of wisdom and torch a light to direction for solving problems, also during the preparation period for establishing NALC Holland and ever after till she passed away.

We have received messages in memory of Mrs. Osada. Please take a look at the following pages 2-4.

NALC Holland Chairman
Kuniharu Iwasaki

~~ In memory of Mrs. Ikuko Osada E. Kannan ~~

Mrs Osada's last words were, "Thank you. I'm fine. It is not true, anyway, thank you everyone. That's all. Yes. I'm fine." She remained positive until the last moment, leaving us behind and going far away. "Old soldiers just leave, right?" "No one knows what happens to their souls when they die, because there is no one who came back to this world to tell us. Anyway I will meet Mr. X and Mrs Z." After these words, she is gone.



She was a person who truly cared for her family and those around her until the very end, and she always provided her unique sense of harmony to those. "At the end of my life, if I am alone at home, my son would worry about me. Thus I prefer to go to Hospice" I was told that she does not want to have anything in her room at the hospice but I thought it would be too lonely so I brought some flowers like hydrangea and campanula to her room.



Mrs Osada made this origami crane when she was busy with the rehabilitation and gave it to her neighbor at the hospital. This neighbor was so impressed by how she folded the paper with her hands -which was out of control- that he took the crane with him when he departed to the heaven.

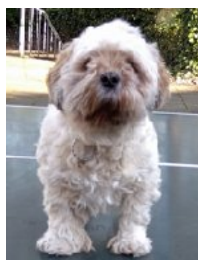
Until the very end, she kept a copy of Amstelveen local newspaper in August (discussing about charging fee to enter Sakura Park) by her bedside. We talked about that topic few times. Around that time, I received inquiries from the Japanese side and the embassy about the establishment of Sakura Park, so I spoke to Mrs. Osada who knew the detail. Mrs Osada was truly a walking dictionary about the Japanese society in Netherlands the last 35 years. I will think of her every time I will be at Sakura Park. Although she worked hard for 35 years as

the chief of the JCC secretariat, she did not take that job title and just continued to work hard.

The connection of Mrs Osada and me started when she was working for JCC. After her retirement I approached her asking help for NALC and Furusato House project. That made a strong connection between Mrs. Osada and me. I feel very lonely as she is not there anymore. But we must carry on her volunteer spirit. You might think that you can't do like her, but she did very small things with big smile: she was smiling while she was talking, enjoy eating together at Potluck, she was always cleaning the room which was used.... Let's carry on her volunteer spirit. For potlucks, she would often make barazushi or Inari-zushi which brought me back to memories of mother's taste. I wish we could share it with everyone again.



April, 2023



Ai-chan

~~ In memory of Mrs. Ikuko Osada M. Higashi ~~

I met Mrs Osada 33 years before. I felt that she was always paying attention to the people around her, connecting them, and expanding its connections. I thought that she would relax after her retirement from her busy job at JCC, but to my surprise, she started working for the Japanese community. Luckily I was also involved in the management of Narc and learned a lot from her. I sincerely pray for her soul to rest in peace.

Her great contribution to the friendship between the Netherlands and Japan was recognized in the form of the "Foreign Minister's Commendation", which is listed on the website of the Japanese Embassy in the Netherlands.

Although I know that she would say "Oh no, You do not have to show it to everyone" but I would like to quote the article, with the photo of her beautiful smile.

On the 13th of September 2017, Ambassador Inomata held a ceremony to award the Foreign Minister's Commendation to Mrs. Ikuko Osada, former Deputy Director-General of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the Netherlands (JCC), at the Ambassador's Residence. Mrs. Osada received the Foreign Minister's Commendation in recognition of her contribution to promoting economic relations and friendship between the Netherlands and Japan as a long-time member of the secretariat of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the Netherlands since its establishment.



From the website of Embassy of Japan in The Netherlands

https://www.nl.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_ja/20170629_commendation.html



No war in the world in 2024!

When I returned to my hometown this fall, I walked through the Peace Park almost every day. Every morning and evening, people from all over the world gathered in the park to pray for peace. It became ground zero in August 1945, but over the years, thanks to the prayers of Hiroshima citizens and people around the world seeking peace, I believe it has become the most peaceful place in the world.

K. Matsubara



To make the dark days brighter, we made Christmas decorations at "MOKUYOUKAI" in December.

E. Kannan

~~ Memorial address to Mrs. Osada N. Peters ~~

I cannot still believe that Mrs. Osada passed away last September.

I've met a Dutch boy who is now my husband when we were students, and at the end we got married. That's why I came to The Netherlands.

At first, we've lived in Wageningen where many students were living. It was quite far from Amsterdam where many Japanese people were living usually.

I knew a person who worked at Hotel Okura, he introduced me to Mrs. Osada, if I would like to work in The Netherlands she must help me he said.

I was lucky because I was an interpreter between Japanese and English, and then I got some work offers irregularly.

One time we moved to live in the U.S.A. and and back to The Netherlands, and then we also moved to Japan. After that we all things considered about our children's education and their futures, we came back to live again & settled in The Netherlands.

I started to meet many people here in The Netherlands, Mrs. Osada always helped me and I got some exact advises from her.

Moreover when I was a vice-president of Nichiran Silvernet, Mrs. Osada was a coordinator for me and many Japanese companies.

She helped me a lot when I became a founder of "NPO office Amusekikaku".

Actually there was no Japanese society group in The Netherlands, Mrs. Osada made a great effort for Japanese community working at the office of JCC. It looks that she did not have her private time, I guess.

She was always gentle and her behavior was sophisticated from her character.

Even now I still see her beautiful smile and I can hear her soft voice.

I believe that her family wanted that she could alive.

I sincerely express my condolences with Mrs. Osada. I pray for the repose of Mrs. Osada's soul from the bottom of my heart.

R.I.P.

NALC East branch Activity Report 2023

On November 5th, we had an online lecture by Mr. Mitsuhide Sano, a former member of NALCHolland and currently active at a regional comprehensive support center in Tokyo, about nursing care in Japan. There were 17 participants (including 10 non-members).

He also talked about how he takes care of his family, and the participants asked a variety of questions, including how to care for elderly family members living in Japan, where to request support, types of nursing care facilities, and their fees.

Editor's note: Mr. Sano's activities are also introduced in Newsletter No. 11 (June 2021). <http://nalcholland.nl/nalc-holland-news-letter/11%E5%8F%B7-june-2021japanese/>

3rd Senior Exchange Meeting Report

Tuesday, November 21, 2023 from 14:00 to 15:00 at Bovenkerk Zonnehuis Amstelveen.

6 seniors (Dutch and Japanese) were visited by 5 Japanese (3 NALC members and 2 non-members).

The theme is ``Create Christmas cards using Japanese paper''

In a specially prepared quiet room, Japanese and Dutch people took turns sitting around a large desk and started with a simple self-introduction. What is your name ? What did you do for your work? What day is it today? What day of the week is it? We observed the degree of dementia during such a conversation.

After that, some were asked: where did you live before coming here? What kind of work did you do? How old are you? etc. As we got used to each other, we were able to have a conversation after the workshop. There was a woman who had participated in a previous workshop, and that made the nice friendly atmosphere.



Method: Prepare the material for each person on a plate in advance. Leave the task of tearing the Japanese paper to the participants as much as possible. We prepared the shapes with scissors in advance. It was decided that each person would be responsible for tearing the pieces and gluing them onto the card. It took about an hour, but he worked on it while watching the parts I showed him complete, confirming things with each other, and complimenting each other.



Thoughts: Prepare to use your time as efficiently as possible, but don't give too much help so that the individual's personality can come out. Conversation time is very important. Be careful how you allocate your time. This time I had prepared two things, but I was also able to consider allowing more time for conversation afterwards and having everyone clean up together.

(E. Kannan)



“A new home for young adults with autism and other impairments.”

We are not letting them go but we will hold them differently.



In the beginning of April 2023 the home for young adults with autism “Puzzelstuk” is complete. 16 of them started to live with the supports they need. It is a parents-led residential project in Leiden. Nowadays it is popular amongst parents who have children with disabilities to create an ideal home or workplace for their own children who need supports from others due to impairments. It costs the parents many years of painstaking works in order to realize such a project. It eventually took 7 years in order to build the Puzzelstuk. There are several fantastic parents-led home for young adults in the Netherlands like in Voorschoten en Leidsenburg in our area.



A quilt work “Puzzelstuk” decorating the entrance of the building



Watering the flowers which was planted by the family members

My daughter has autism and severe intellectual disabilities. She has a genetic disorder in the histon which is a new discovery and there are only 29 people with this disorder in the world. She was a sweet child and though it was an uneasy task, we have raised her with our best intention and love. The Dutch youth care system supported us all the way as she needed a lot of care. As the task often overwhelmed me, and at the same time I have two other younger children, it was often very heavy to balance my attention to other children. One day, one of

the mother from her school told us about the project. At that time I was vaguely thinking that I would take care of her still 5 years more till we find a perfect residence for her. Just like a normal kids she is welcome to stay longer with us. But it was about the time that youth care and school informed us to look for a residence and at least apply one as there are always a long waiting lists. So we have discussed the option of puzzelstuk which will be build 400 m from our home and they seem to offer an ideal care. It did not took us long to apply for the Puzzelstuk. Many of the young adults who joined were already her friends from school.

It is a parents-led residence for the children but the parents alone do not run it all. We needed partners to run the project. We needed the city government to start with then social cooperate company for the building and the care institution who will be in charge of the care of the children. A social cooperate housing company in Leiden was happy to work with us and to build a residence. Then the city government gave a permission on a piece of land where old school building was left unused. In this decision I was deeply grateful for. Due to the general shortage of the housing, they could have used this piece of land differently, like building apartments where other people can benefit from. Instead they allowed us to build a dream residence for only 16 people with disabilities. The care parts will be taken care of by the organization ASVZ that has experiences of parents-led residence management. They also have a trustworthy care method for the people with disabilities called triple-C.

Before completing the project we needed to fundraise, applying many funds. Some of the parents were devoted to this and it eventually succeeded to get sufficient amount which aimed for. That we are very thankful for. Not only the financial donation, we have received many visible supports. One example was lady-run marathon event in Leiden, it was organized in such a way that the runner run for Puzzelstuk. The entry fee was donated to us. Many mothers of the young adults who will live in de Puzzelstuk joined the run with same t-shirts of a Puzzelstuk logo. My daughter walked the race and other lady who will be living in Puzzelstuk joined with her wheelchair. I was honestly surprised how they welcomed us in a sense that there was no single stigma about people with disabilities in the lady-run. I was somehow a bit afraid that they might be not welcomed due to the handicap. That was not necessary. We felt empowered thanks to them! We have got a pink medaille which became my daughter's favourite.

Another example of the supports we received was that a chemical company donated all paint for the building. We could indicate which colour we like for each studio, and they offered to paint them for the whole building! They came from all area of the Netherlands, someone even from very far. When my daughter's studio became her favourite colour pink, I was very much moved for the warm devotion from the people who took 2 full days off from work to simply support us. In this manner, we have gotten visible warm supports from many aspects from the society to pursue our project.

There are board of directors who are also supporting us. They are volunteers and have background in politics and welfare management. They support us in many way, for example, to make the relationship between parents and ASVZ smoothly.

We have had and many meetings to discuss many aspects like how to utilize the individual budget. One of the parents works at the university, so we could use the lecture hall where I have studied years back. The

university offered us a space to keep many donated furniture till the puzzelstuk is made. There are several groups where parents are in charge, like furniture, newsletter, interview, garden, care, events, fundraising. I was often struck with the attitude of other parents for their devotion in this work. But if I think it deeply, it is



Leona en me after walking the marathon in Leiden. The pink medaille became her favourite.



Posting invitations to the opening of "Puzzelstuk" to the neighbors

logical what we do, the creation of a good residence for our children is the most important priority in our life. In the mean time the 16 young adults became all "our children" in 32 parents. And the relationship between parents became like a family.

The motto, we are not letting them go but will hold them differently is now realized.

April 2023, as the Mayer's last task (he was going to retire shortly after), the puzzelstuk was open. The building is in harmony with the environment, beautiful and spacious, also there were special attention for autism. The parents have planted more than 4000 flowers in the garden, there are herbs and vegetables growing too. Now it is a beautiful and peaceful place to have a walk. The young adults who live there have their own sensitivities therefore it takes time for them to accustom to a new environment, however every single of them are content and happy with their new home. If there are anything coming up, we ask ourselves " Are there anyone not happy living in the Puzzelstuk?" the answer is always no, so we will find any solutions for our children to keep it. It is our lifelong IKIGAI to watch them grow and support them in any way possible.

(K. Hirata)

NALC senior meet up project in 2024

Since March 2023, we have started senior meet up events at Zonnehuis, a facility for the elderly in the Bovenkerk district of Amstelveen, and we were just informed from the facility manager that they are happy if we could continue this meet up project in 2024 as well, and we are currently in a discussion on upcoming events with Zonnehuis.

First of all, we would like to express our gratitude for NALC members who spent their time to make this project enjoyable and successful for the seniors at the Zonnehuis. Thank you very much.



Now, we are very pleased to announce the following meet up schedule in 2024. Every two months, on the fourth Tuesday of the month, six times in total (tentative): **January 23, March 26, May 28, July 23, September 24, November 26**, time: 13:45 - 14:45 (max. until 15:00 including clean-up)

For 2024, our idea is that a leader would be appointed for each meet-up, and the leader will decide the theme of the meet up he/she will be in charge of.

As for the January event, Ms. Emiko Kannan, and for the March event Chieko Otsuka will coordinate the event as a leader.

If you are interested in helping this meet up event for May, July, September, and November as a leader, please do not hesitate to contact us.

For your information, please see the activities in 2023.

March: Introduce each other and write attendees' names in Japanese.

May: Origami (making Kabuto and Koinobori for Children's Day)

July: Japanese calligraphy experience

(September: Cancelled)

November: making chigiri-e Christmas card

If you have any other interesting ideas for the elderly, such as the examples above from last year, please let us know.

Thank you for your continued support in 2024. We hope we will enjoy volunteer activities together with many NALC members.

NALC senior meet up project volunteer team

2023 Potluck report

February 26th, 3 people attended.

- We had one new member and she immediately came to the potluck.
- About the senior exchange meeting: Every other Tuesday from 3:00 to 4:00, NALC members visit Zonnehuis, a facility in Bovenkerk, to meet with elderly people and have conversations in Dutch. Residents are people with dementia. Even once a month is fine, so if you can come to A'veen on a Tuesday afternoon, please contact us.

March 26th, 4 people attended.

- About the senior exchange meeting: The purpose is to listen to the stories from residents and get them active. This means that the residents have time to talk when they feel comfortable, rather than that we talk. If you are interested in this activity, please contact Mr. Otsuka.
- There are many Japanese seniors living in the Netherlands who are interested in lifestyle-related diseases such as diabetes. Would it be possible to hold a potluck workshop for them?

April 30th, 2 people attended.

- Since a new board member showed up, we talked about the board of directors, etc.

July 30th, 3 people attended.

- About opening a stall at “Bunka sai”. Ideas about selling dorayaki, sakuramochi, and rice balls came up. If there are any other possibilities, please let us know.
- About recent volunteer activities: Garden work at Nemo Sabo: During this season, I am working on pruning branches and pulling out ivy from its roots. Please contact us if you can help.
- At BOVENKERK, senior exchange meetings are held every two months lead by Mrs Otsuka. Please help us!
- About the general meeting: it will be held on August 20th. After the general meeting, we will have a potluck party on the second floor of Nemo Sabo.
- One of our members will be returning to Japan this summer.

August 27th, 3 people attended.

- We talked about “bunka sai”, setting prices of each selling items. We asked two participants to make dorayaki and bring it to us for tasting.

September 24th, 2 people attended.

- Regarding preparations for the October 21st bunker sai. By opening stores (dorayaki, sushi, sakuramochi, etc.), publicizing NALC to the people and taking questionnaires, we will expand the quality of our activities and invite new members. We reviewed the contents of the questionnaire. Men / women , ask questions anonymously, the age(about) how long do you live in the Netherlands, specific types of volunteer work that he/she would like to do,(Example) Cleaning the garden, doing housework, doing simple do-it-yourself work, watching over the house during vacations, caring the children, helping with shopping, volunteering at non-profit organizations, pushing a wheelchair during walks at a facility in the Netherlands, joining senior exchange meeting.

October 29th, 5 people attended.

- We all shared memories of Mrs. O, her personality, and the story from her hospitalization till her death while looking at the photos.
- Regarding time banking: We talked about the difference between points reported to Japan and NALC additional activities, and point declaration. We would like to continue expanding our volunteer activities and making it easier for our members to participate.
- Mrs. I is currently working at the counter at NEMO Sabo. Mrs. K and Mrs. N manage the garden. We are looking for someone who can clean the garden. Also, if you have a project that you would like support for, please contact Kanan.

November 26th, 4 people attended.

- A new member, Mrs. S, attended and each introduced himself and explained about NALC's volunteer time commitments. Mrs. S is a family member of a Japanese expatriate, but she was thinking about volunteering in Dutch society, so she participated in the senior exchange meeting on November 21st. She is a proponent of the EUMO currency in Japan and is also implementing the need for connections in the third place in human society. We would like to take this opportunity to explain the connection between NALCHolland and Japan and strengthen our publicity efforts to the families living in Japan.

December 30th, 3 people attended.

- About the senior exchange meeting Location: Zonnehuis, Amstelveen
There were a total of four activities in 2023.
March Self-introduction, May Origami, July Calligraphy: Write your name with a brush
November: Making chigiri-e Christmas cards
We have been contacted by the facility requesting to continue with holding the networking event in 2024. If you would like to participate, please contact Ms. Otsuka.
Schedule in 2024.
January 23rd, March 26th, May 28th, July 23rd, September 24th, November 26th
Time: 13:45-14:45



NALC “Bunka-sai Cultural Festival” Participation



On October 21st, NALC participated in the "Bunka-sai Cultural Festival", an event sponsored by JACOP, held at SAKB in Amstelveen.



This year it was the second edition of "Bunka-sai Cultural Festival". Despite the rain in the morning, JACOP reported that nearly 900 people attended. There was a bazaar, a cafe, physical workshops, art workshops, presentations, and a variety of food stalls selling Japanese delicacies. The event was crowded with visitors of various nationalities, from children to students to adults.

As NALC, we participated in the event not only as a public relations activity aiming to spread the word about NALC's activities, but also as an opportunity to recruit new members.

Preparation of the stall was conducted mainly by four executives. In addition, on the day of the event, two NALC members (including one from the east part of the country) served as volunteers: Ms. T worked as a food salesperson, and Mr. N, along with Mr. I, the chairman, set up tents and patrolled the venue, helping JACOP. They played an active role in assisting behind the scenes in managing the entire event.

The contents of the stall included handmade Dorayaki (white bean paste and azuki bean paste), Ohagi, Chirashi sushi, Dokudami tea, etc., all prepared and sold

by NALC members. As expected, Japanese food is very popular...the 50 pieces of Dorayaki were sold out within the first 30 minutes, and the Chirashi sushi and Ohagi were sold out before 12:00.

Although the original purpose of NALC's participation was to make NALC's activities known and recruit new members, this was only partly materialized; two new members joined. (Congratulations!)

It was really fun for the members to work together as they don't usually have the chance to interact in this way, and to enjoy the feeling of an event while getting to know other Japanese communities.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank NALC members Ms.T and Mr. N who participated as volunteers (and Special Thanks to Mr. P), as well as the JACOP staff who planned and organized the event, and everyone who came as a customer. We would like to express our gratitude for having had the opportunity to join this nice day.

If there are any members who are interested, we look forward to your participation next year.

(K-NN)

Colofon

NALC Holland URL: <http://nalcholland.nl>

masako@telfort.nl / 06 2425 2523