By Nancy Oda

Education, excitement, energy all gathered together on October 2 during the SFV JACL chapter’s Children’s Day held at the Community Center. Board members got up early to prepare their famous “Ono Ono” chicken plate that sold out with proceeds earmarked for the Scholarship Fund. Marion Shigekuni and side kick, Mitzi Kushida, were Top Chefs that day! Thank you to Dr. Sanbo Sakaguchi for his donation in honor of his wife, Kay.

With the help of Carolyn Sanwo of Heritage Books, author Shig Yabu told youngsters how internees felt about their pets that they left at home and how a magpie bird became a friend in their book, “Hello, Maggie”. Nancy Hadlock, Manzanar National Park ranger, simulated the personal choices that grandparents had to make while packing on short order while Phil Shigekuni met with guests who were interested in Camp 101.

The theme took families through New Year’s Day, Children’s Day, and Moon Viewing with rich, fun filled activities. New Year’s Day was heralded with *Taiko*, wish tree, and the Japanese Language Institute table for writing *kanji* or calligraphy. The youngsters wrote their names on long white strips and hung it on freshly cut bamboo. Mrs. Jonokuchi exhibited her exquisite Boys; and Girls’ Day collection as a model for *kokeshi* doll making brought to life by Sue Wong and Emi Scott.

Of course, making *onigiri* was a hit since you can eat your sample. Pacific Southwest JACL President, Craig Ishii, and intern, Keiko Arzouman added zest with their youthful enthusiasm. *Gyotaku* (fish printing) was drying on tables led by artisans, Hazel Isa and Eileen Furukawa. Kids had fun making origami with Kay Yamada who got a fan and towel donation from Union Bank to created a clever new craft item. The Soroban Center led by Dale Kadonaga taught a new generation how to use an abacus. Jane Nishii, ceramist, brought clay for the kids to make tanuki dolls and Japanese toys.

*Tsuru* (origami crane) pencils were twirling reminding us of “Sadako and the Thousand Cranes” The pencil committee included Linda Tanaka, Chieko Merz, Karen Yoshino, Harold and Ellen Kameya.

The *Ikebana* Club’s Mayumi Dennis and club members taught the children how to bring nature closer. A Takayama Photo Studio was set up where children were photographed in *kimono, yukata, and getas* with dresser, Linda Tanaka. Mrs. Akutagawa lent her costume collection to make it authentic.

Nancy Gohata was a show stopper with her song that brought the 70 kids and their families, young and old, in community at the end of the day to sing “Haru ga kita”. It was exciting to see our young adults helping the smaller kids and cleaning up. They are Grant and Sydney Arakawa, Taylor Kariya Kei Kawada, Derek and Taryn Manaka, Trent Miyagshima, Remy Ng, and Sarah Uyehara.

Many thanks to Doreen Kawamoto and Mabel Takimoto for being the hostesses with the mostest. Sumi Yamaguchi, Nancy Gohata, and Karen Yoshino made goody bags for the kids with generous donations from members, Union Bank, and *Umeya* Crackers. Yas Gohata, Clara Hashimoto, Mas Yamashita, Ellen and Harold Kameya, Mary Ishimoto, Al Kushida, Dennis and Barbara Okita, Geri Shiraki, were everywhere! Thanks to the Community Center and Coordinating Council, especially Lois Okui, for their support. “Our Japanese and Japanese American heritage was vivid this day. Further, the Ono Ono chicken was moist and tasty. A good time was held by all,” reports Nancy Oda, 2010 Chair.