Dear Friends,

Thank you for your support of the TOMODACHI Initiative. In spite of the extraordinary circumstances with the global outbreak of COVID-19, TOMODACHI continues to focus on developing next generation leaders and strengthening the relationship between our two countries. Both the Embassy and the TOMODACHI Initiative had to adapt to the challenging realities of the pandemic. Our primary concern, above all others, was the health and safety of our people and participants. In many cases, TOMODACHI programs were converted to virtual formats to continue to provide opportunities for participants. Together we found ways to make the online formats effective and even discovered benefits from the virtual programs for our TOMODACHI participants.

In February 2020, just before the coronavirus began to cause travel and meeting disruptions, the U.S. Embassy hosted a special dinner event, inviting the key TOMODACHI donors as well as a former Ambassador Mr. John Roos and his wife, Ms. Susie Roos. Top executives from leading companies reiterated the value of TOMODACHI and their commitment to foster the next generation of leaders.

All of us reeled from the loss of founding president of the U.S.-Japan Council, Irene Hirano Inouye, who passed away in April. She devoted her life to strengthening U.S.-Japan relations through people-to-people ties, and the TOMODACHI Initiative was one of her greatest achievements. Her legacy will be carried on by all of us who were deeply inspired by her.

With heightened attention to civil rights as seen in the Black Lives Matter movement, TOMODACHI initiated a new series of TOMODACHI Critical Conversations, providing a safe space to learn and share ideas among TOMODACHI alumni and general audiences. At the Next Generation Summit in December, young leaders from the TOMODACHI alumni, Watanabe scholar communities, and other programs gathered to discuss the three themes: Reflective, Resilient, and Revolutionary.

Since inception, more than 9,500 young people have participated in 333 TOMODACHI programs. Today, while preserving its long-held ties to the Tohoku region, TOMODACHI continues to broaden its reach to more young Americans, as well as youth throughout Japan.

We are grateful for the founders, donors, implementing partners and supporters who share the same vision to support these young leaders, to broaden their horizons, and to achieve their dreams. The U.S.-Japan Council and the U.S. Embassy are proud to work together with the Government of Japan and many other partners to provide these life-changing opportunities to Japanese and American next generation leaders.

We thank you for your commitment to the future of the U.S.-Japan relationship.

Sincerely,

Joseph M. Young
Chargé d’Affaires a.i.
U.S. Embassy, Tokyo

Suzanne Basalla
President & CEO
U.S.-Japan Council

Irene Hirano Inouye
1948-2020

Our Mission
The TOMODACHI Initiative is a public-private partnership between the U.S.-Japan Council and the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo, with support from the Government of Japan. Born out of support for Japan’s recovery from the Great East Japan Earthquake, TOMODACHI invests in the next generation of Japanese and American leaders through educational and cultural exchanges, as well as leadership programs.

Our History
In the aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 11, 2011, the United States military and Japan Self-Defense Forces worked together successfully in Operation Tomodachi to provide immediate humanitarian relief to the Tohoku region. Building upon this cooperation and spirit of friendship, the United States and Japan launched the TOMODACHI Initiative. TOMODACHI is led by the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo and the U.S.-Japan Council, a tax-exempt non-profit organization, and is supported by the Government of Japan, corporations, organizations, and individuals from the United States and Japan.

Our Vision
We seek to foster a “TOMODACHI Generation” of young American and Japanese leaders who are committed to and engaged in strengthening U.S.-Japan relations, appreciate each other’s countries and cultures, and possess the global skills and mindsets needed to contribute to and thrive in a more cooperative, prosperous, and secure world.

Our Future
Going forward, the TOMODACHI Initiative will continue to be a model for innovative public-private partnerships. We will develop and design programs that support U.S.-Japan cross-cultural youth leadership development, especially alumni programs that foster the TOMODACHI Generation while enriching and increasing collaboration with U.S.-Japan-related organizations.

The TOMODACHI Journey
TOMODACHI supports cross-cultural youth leadership development throughout a lifetime of experiences.

Our Programs
Educational Programs provide educational opportunities for students to study abroad and gain exposure to each other’s countries.

Cultural Programs in sports, music, and the arts provide gateways for Japanese and Americans to learn about and develop enduring interest in each other’s cultures.

Leadership Programs help the next generation of entrepreneurs and young leaders develop skills and expertise that will guide them towards success.

Alumni Programs provide TOMODACHI alumni with the skills, opportunities, and confidence to achieve their dreams while becoming the next generation of cross-cultural leaders.

"I had the opportunity to meet people from halfway across the world who were completely different from me while also sharing fascinating similarities. I would say that kind of experience is essential towards helping you become a more well-rounded person."

~ Colin Timmerman
The TOMODACHI Initiative’s Strategic Partners provide ongoing support that improves the lives of next generation leaders through tailored programs that offer unique opportunities.

In 2020, participants ranging from high school students to professionals took part in Strategic Partner programs.

The TOMODACHI Initiative will continue to provide various programs that invest in the next generation of leaders in 2021 and beyond through the support from our Strategic Partners.
Contributions from donors at the Sponsor and Supporter levels fund a variety of TOMODACHI programs, from educational exchanges and leadership development programs, to cultural programs. In 2020, participants ranging from middle school students to young professionals deepened their understanding of American and Japanese cultures, and built their leadership skills.

10th TOMODACHI - Keio SFC Entrepreneurship Seminar
This program invests in the next generation of leaders through entrepreneurship. In 2020, 599 students from all over Japan participated in the online seminars. Participants learned how to create business plans and effective presentations.

2020 TOMODACHI-STEM @ Rice University Program
This program is aimed towards female university students in Japan that are interested in science and engineering research, and provides opportunities to conduct international research collaborations with institutions in the United States. In 2020, the program was held online.

TOMODACHI Internship Program
This program provides further internship opportunities in Japan to American university students. Over the course of three months in 2020, three students completed their internships across various sectors and shared their experiences of living in Japan online.

TOMODACHI KAKEASHI Inouye Scholars Program
This program promotes cultural exchange between 200 American and Japanese university students. Participants learn about the legacy of Senator Daniel K. Inouye, and create deeper mutual understanding. In 2020, 65 university students from Japan travelled to the U.S. and learned about the U.S.-Japan relationship.

TOMODACHI Disability Leadership Program in America
This program aims to train young Japanese people with disabilities to gain leadership skills and advocacy through training and internship in the United States. After the program, trainees may contribute to their communities in Japan in disability leadership roles.

TOMODACHI Foster Youth Leadership Program
This program links former foster care youth from both the United States and Japan. In 2020, eight Japanese youth traveled to the states of Oregon and California to learn about social care organizations and programs in the United States.

TOMODACHI Social Entrepreneurship Award Program
Through the U.S. study tour, in which the students have opportunities to present their business plans to the entrepreneurs and investors, this program aims to nurture Japan’s student start-up culture. In 2020, online seminars were held.

“TOMODACHI programs fostered an inclusive environment that supported space to speak freely of the experiences I’ve had with my ‘Blasian’ (Black and Asian) identity, and shed insight into how my background fits within the greater context of society.”
~ Iain Mason

“TOMODACHI programs fostered an inclusive environment that supported space to speak freely of the experiences I’ve had with my ‘Blasian’ (Black and Asian) identity, and shed insight into how my background fits within the greater context of society.”
~ Satsuki Iizuka

“I realized that the U.S.-Japan relationship can be used to tackle social issues and the very first and important step is the building of trust between Japanese and Americans at a grassroots level like us.”
~ Iain Mason

“I think ‘TOMODACHI’ means to have a community of friends who you can freely talk to and exchange information with. To me, ‘TOMODACHI’ also means to have friends and a chance at something”.
~ Yuki Nishimura
The TOMODACHI Alumni Leadership Program builds on the initial TOMODACHI experience to inspire and empower the next generation of Japanese and American leaders, providing ongoing engagement, as well as the skills and confidence needed to achieve their dreams, inspire fellow alumni, and contribute to a better world.

Core Values

Workforce Readiness
As leaders of the next generation, we prepare our alumni to become global jinzai (global citizens) by providing them with the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities to thrive with a focus on mentorship and peer-to-peer leadership opportunities.

Critical & Innovative Thinking
Out-of-the-box, critical and innovative thinking provide successful and efficient problem-solving skills that are the keys to prosperity in the twenty-first century, and we aim to arm our alumni with these traits.

Civic Engagement
Building upon the global experiences participants gained through TOMODACHI programs, we hope alumni will make a difference in their communities through the development of knowledge, skills, values and motivation.

Connectedness & Sustainability
As members of the TOMODACHI Generation, alumni will connect with each other to expand their networks and stay engaged as members and leaders of their communities, and really build on those people-to-people relations.

TOMODACHI Critical Conversations Series
As the Black Lives Matter movement became global, even making its way to Japan, TOMODACHI responded to the strong need to have these important discussions by developing the TOMODACHI Critical Conversations Series. This three-part program brought together youth in Japan and the United States to create learning opportunities through panels and dialogue. Thoughtful and inspirational speakers joined to help provide their perspectives and knowledge on these critical issues, and peer-to-peer discussions cultivated a safe space for youth to share their experiences and perspectives, and to continue to learn from one another.

TOMODACHI Generation Global Leadership Academy
This three-day youth leadership program, focused on global leadership and civic engagement, brought together 26 alumni from the Tohoku Region in August and September. High school student and university student participants formed a group together and learned from guests from innovative companies, nonprofits and government entities about their way to overcome the unprecedented situation and developed their own ideas of leadership.

TOMODACHI Industry Insights Revisited: COVID Era Talks on the Education Industry
Four speakers came together to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on the educational industry in Japan from a local, federal, entrepreneurial, technological, and futuristic perspective. They discussed new and current challenges and opportunities that COVID-19 has presented. Over 100 attendees joined the webinar.

“TOMODACHI ALUMNI CONNECT is a closed online platform for alumni to connect across different regions, age groups, and industries to discover new opportunities, expand their networks, and build a supportive community.

“TOMODACHI program gave me an opportunity to try something new, and it ended up becoming vital to my future [film] productions.”

~ Kaylin George

“My career goal is to create an equitable civil society for women’s rights in East Asia. TOMODACHI program brought so much out of me in terms of creating the project but also forcing me to go outside my comfort zone.”

~ Patricia Agtarap
Alumni Highlights

workshops and discussions focused on the three themes:

The Summit was organized into two days: the first day was open
to the public on a range of topics and the second day offered
learned from this year of change and the power of resilience.
TOMODACHI alumni, and Watanabe scholars on the lessons
convened over 200 participants including USJC U40 members,
the annual TOMODACHI Generation Summit. The Summit
reflective, Resilient, and Revolutionary

Next Generation Summit:

The Next Generation Summit was held in December as part of
the U.S.-Japan Council Signature Series in lieu of the
conventional U.S.-Japan Council Annual Conference and
the annual TOMODACHI Generation Summit. The Summit
convened over 200 participants including USJC U40 members,
TOMODACHI alumni, and Watanabe scholars on the lessons
learned from this year of change and the power of resilience.
The Summit was organized into two days: the first day was open
to the public on a range of topics and the second day offered
workshops and discussions focused on the three themes:

Reflective, Resilient, and Revolutionary

This year-long leadership training program focuses on social
innovation on a local level. Alumni selected to become Regional
Leaders and Regional Mentors gain valuable skills in order to
identify and tackle social issues, create events, and bolster
their regional alumni community. This will be building upon their
initial TOMODACHI experiences, giving them the opportunity to
continue their leadership journey through hands-on training and
mentorship. Six regions have been established to support the
alumni community with support from the U.S. Consulates and
Embassy in Japan.

Additional 2020 Alumni Programs

TOMODACHI Alumni Internship Program | U.S.-Japan Council Business Advisory Board Meetings | Alumni Speeches at the TOMODACHI Sponsor Dinner

“TOMODACHI told me the importance of expressing myself in order to grow.”

Kokomi Watanabe

Kokomi Watanabe is an alumna of the 9th U.S. Embassy-Keio
SFC-TOMODACHI Entrepreneurship Seminar and participated in
the study tour to Silicon Valley as the member of the winning
team in February 2020. She once saw a news story about fish
eating plastic in the ocean and decided to work with companies
to develop plastic bags made of materials that repel fish.

How did you start this project
to produce plastic bags
made from materials fish
dislike?
I live by the sea and used to
go on walks to the aquarium.
Fish have always been part
of my life and an animal that I
hold very clear. One day I was
shocked to see a news story
on fish that had eaten plastic
bags. This became my biggest
motivation to start this project.

How did you participate
in the U.S. Embassy-
Keio SFC-TOMODACHI
Entrepreneurship Seminar,
and how did your project
evolve?

It was introduced to me by the
grand-prize winner of the High
School Business Plan Grand
Prix. I did my own research and
became interested, especially
as the winning team would be
given a chance to participate
in the study tour to the United
States. Moreover, if selected,
we would be able to improve
our ideas with mentors and
university students. I had not
had such an experience and
wanted to apply.

We formed a team at school
to work on this project and
continued our work during
school breaks and after
school. We talked very openly
to understand one another better.
The moment we felt
our minds became united
happened on the last day of
the TOMODACHI program.

Our team was selected as a
winning team, which made us
so happy, and we heard many
cheering from other teams
including university students.

What does TOMODACHI
mean to you?
TOMODACHI taught us the
importance of expressing
ourselves. During the U.S.
trip, we met with many
entrepreneurs who are
outspoken about their ideas.

I realized the importance of
expressing myself in order
to grow by speaking up and
sharing what I am good at
thanks to TOMODACHI.

How did you come to
know about TOMODACHI
programs?
At Fairfield University, I took
Japanese only to fulfill the
language requirement. A
professor told me about the
2017 TOMODACHI Daiwa
House Student Leadership
Conference, and I began to
realize how much more
there was to discover in the
realm of U.S.-Japan relations
and the longstanding relationship.

The opportunity remains to
be one of the most important
and meaningful events I have
ever attended. Through JASC programs that I participated in
the following years, I fell in love
with Japan as a country; the
language, the food, the people
and perhaps most importantly,
the relationship with Japan
that we were a part of as
Americans, the immense depth
and infallible strength of the
U.S.-Japan relationship.

What kind of impact did the
TOMODACHI programs have
on you?
It wasn’t merely that I learned
new things or met so many
intelligent and driven people,
whom I still have the pleasure
of calling my friends, the

“TOMODACHI continued to invest in me so
I cannot wait to pay it forward.”

Mason Williams

Mason Williams is an alumnus of the 2017 TOMODACHI Daiwa
House Student Leadership Conference. He also participated
and led the Japan-America Student Conference (JASC) in
2018 and 2019, travelling throughout Japan as a coalition of
American and Japanese students.

How did you describe
2020?
It has been hard to look
forward to a hopeful future,
given how dark the world
seems. From the 2011 Great
East Japan Earthquake, the
TOMODACHI Initiative was
born. Similarly, I believe
that from this pandemic
and the demonstrations
calling for racial justice, new
organizations and groups of
incredible people will band

together and spring forward
in the same spirit of cooperation
for a brighter future.
ALUMNI Q&A

Ryota Konno
“I realized that I too have a duty to rebuild my region.”
Ryota Konno is an alumnus of the TOMODACHI-Coca Cola Homestay Educational Program in 2012 and he participated in many TOMODACHI Alumni leadership programs. He graduated from Waseda University Graduate School of Sport Sciences and he wishes to revitalize his region through sports. How did the Great East Japan Earthquake affect your life? I was a 15-year-old high school student who was committed to track and field, and on the day, just as I was heading to school as usual for practice, the earthquake struck. The shaking was like nothing I had experienced before. Namie, my hometown, was within 10 kilometers of the nuclear power plant, so we had to pack up and evacuate the following day.

I started attending a new high school and once I settled down to a new life in a location we evacuated to, I started to track and field, and on the day, just as I was heading to school as usual for practice, the earthquake struck. The shaking was like nothing I had experienced before. Namie, my hometown, was within 10 kilometers of the nuclear power plant, so we had to pack up and evacuate the following day.

What is your hometown Namie? I am now working at the City Hall in Namie Town, standing at the starting line of fulfilling my personal “duty.” Going forward, as one member of the TOMODACHI Generation, I intend to build on the experience that I gained through the TOMODACHI program, and together with other TOMODACHI alumni in the community, I will continue to engage in the recovery of the region.

Rachel Brooks
“Take note of what you get really excited about and do not be afraid to change course.”
Rachel Brooks was a U.S. delegate for the 2018 TOMODACHI-Mitsui & Co. Leadership Program. She is an MA candidate in International Relations and Security Studies at England’s University of Bradford and her research centers around democracy, corporate social responsibility, and technology policy, particularly the fight against disinformation.

How did you become passionate about democracy, peacebuilding, and security? I studied public policy in undergrad where I largely focused on education policy and sociolinguistics. I recognized that education systems looked vastly different around the world, but I had not had a chance to visit any other countries. Then, I got a chance to teach English on Jeju Island in South Korea for two years after graduation. While teaching abroad, it was eye opening to see how my students perceived the United States and why. When I returned to the United States, I was resolved to learn more about the roles of different sectors in solving some of society’s biggest issues.

How do you think we can be responsible in distinguishing reliable information versus disinformation? There are so many bad actors intentionally spreading harmful and untrue information. That is also what makes this a really critical space for research. Freedom of speech is like two sides of the same coin. The fact that we value free speech and public debate is so important to democracy, but those values also create vulnerabilities bad actors can exploit by spreading disinformation. While I think that digital platforms and governments have a large role in addressing this issue, there are a lot of really great digital and media literacy resources for us as citizens looking at the information environment to educate ourselves.

Looking back on your experience, what advice would you give for students and young professionals? My answer would be to find what really drives you. From teaching English in South Korea to my current researches, I have been able to find the threads that drive me. Maybe you care about disinformation and democracy but feel more passionate about something else. Test out those interests and do not be afraid to change course. Take note of what you get really excited about or what problems you keep coming back to. Find the challenges that you feel frustrated by and see what you can do to help solve them.

The U.S.-Japan Council (U.S.) and the U.S.-Japan Council (Japan) work in collaboration with the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo to implement the TOMODACHI Initiative as a public-private partnership. Implementation includes program development and oversight, communications and outreach, marketing, fundraising, donor relations and management, and operations.

The U.S.-Japan Council is a non-profit 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization headquartered in Washington, DC with staff in California, Hawaii and Tokyo. The Council is dedicated to strengthening people-to-people connections among Japanese and Americans of all generations. The Tokyo-based U.S.-Japan Council (Japan) is a Public Interest Corporation, Koeki Zaidan Hojin. The two organizations are separate entities, each governed by an independent Board of Directors, which work closely together in the administration of TOMODACHI.
I used to be afraid of failing and gave up on goals that seemed too big. However, throughout the program I was able to overcome many obstacles, listen to people’s experiences, and realize the importance of taking action and being open to challenges instead of worrying about failure.”

– Kiyoka Sato

Thank You

Founding Strategic Partners

($1,000,000 or more, with initial donation in 2012)

Evolution Financial Group
ExxonMobil Japan
Hayasaka Tax Accountants’
Office Co., Ltd.

Supporters

($10,000 - $100,000)

Hotel Okura Tokyo Co., Ltd.
Imperial Hotel, Ltd.
Japan Association of
Charitable Organizations
KPMG AZSA LLC
Naya CPA Office
Omnick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP
Tricor K.K.

Operational and Administrative Support for TOMODACHI

We thank our corporate partners, who understand our mission to foster leaders of the next generation and provide support that strengthens the TOMODACHI Initiative’s operation and organizational foundation.

The TOMODACHI Initiative would like to give special thanks to Takeda Pharmaceutical Company Limited for contributions devoted specifically to strengthening TOMODACHI’s operational and administrative capabilities. To be effective, an organization must have dedicated staff and the resources to accomplish its mission. The generous donation by Takeda Pharmaceutical Company Limited provides the ability to develop life-changing programs that nurture the TOMODACHI Generation and build a strong, enduring U.S.-Japan relationship.

TOMODACHI in the Spotlight

We thank our many corporate partners for raising the profile of the TOMODACHI Initiative and spreading the word about the importance of U.S.-Japan youth exchange.

Implementing Partners

TOMODACHI works with many partners in order to make these life-changing experiences possible for young people. In 2020, the following partners supported and implemented TOMODACHI programs.

Berklee College of Music | Children’s National Medical Center | Cultural Vistas | Fashion Institute of Technology | General Foundation SFC Forum | International Foster Care Alliance | The Japanese Association of the Experiment in International Living | Japan International Cooperation Center | Jibun Mira Club | Katariba | Laussanian Institution | Lumen Learning | The Tokyo New Business Conference | NPO Soixante | Parsons The New School for Design | Rice University | Temple University | University of California, Berkeley | University of Massachusetts Boston | U.S.-Japan Council Outreach & Allyship Committee | The Washington Center | World In Tohoku (WIT)

Financial

Cumulative TOMODACHI Commitments by Year (USD)

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<th>U.S.-Japan Council (Consolidated)</th>
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