



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**KINGSBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY, GO FOR BROKE NATIONAL EDUCATION CENTER TO
HOST TRAVELING EXHIBIT ON WWII JAPANESE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE**

***"Courage and Compassion: Our Shared Story of the Japanese American WWII Experience"
Exhibit Is Supported by National Park Service Grant***

LOS ANGELES and KINGSBURG, CA (Nov. 27, 2017)-The Kingsburg, California Historical Society is proud to announce it will host a national traveling exhibition by Go For Broke National Education Center (GFBNEC), "Courage and Compassion: Our Shared Story of the Japanese American WWII Experience." The exhibition will open January 6, 2017 and run through February 5, 2017.

The exhibit will chronicle the story of the Japanese American experience during WWII, and feature local stories of bravery and tolerance from California's Central Valley. The GFBNEC exhibit is funded in part by a 2016 Japanese American Confinement Sites Grant administered by the National Park Service (NPS).

The exhibition will reflect on the Japanese American experience from wartime incarceration and postwar resettlement to the redress movement that resulted in the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. The interactive exhibit will feature images and audio of firsthand accounts, including interviews of Japanese American soldiers from GFBNEC's Hanashi Oral History Collection. Through summer 2019, the national exhibit will visit 10 U.S. communities where citizens extended a helping hand to Japanese Americans during and after the turbulent days of WWII. In the wake of the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, many U.S. officials and residents viewed Japanese Americans with fear and mistrust. Japanese Americans were targets for harassment and discrimination, and families on the West Coast were forcibly removed to government incarceration camps.

In addition to telling the national story, the exhibit will feature interviews with local residents, and artifacts documenting experiences such as the story of local boy Robert Yano leaving the Gila River Concentration Camp to join the famed 442nd Regimental Combat Team to fight in Italy and Germany. Yano eventually returned to the Kingsburg farm he and his family were forced to leave. Stories of successful Japanese American merchants who carved out a little-known history of Japanese influence in the Swedish community of Kingsburg will also be highlighted.

"Courage and Compassion" will be open Wednesdays through Sundays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and by arrangement. Admission is free. The Kingsburg Historical Park is located at [2321 Sierra Street, Kingsburg California](#).

"The exhibit honors everyday people who rose above the public hysteria of WWII to recognize Japanese Americans as friends, neighbors and citizens," Dr. Mitchell T. Maki, GFBNEC's President and Chief Executive Officer, said. "These untold stories have real relevance today as we debate issues of loyalty, citizenship, due process and Constitutional rights."

According to David Meyer, board member of the Kingsburg Historical Society and curator of the local exhibit, "I was amazed to find the extent of the Japanese influence in this valley town traditionally thought of as primarily Swedish. In 1940, Kingsburg's population was 1,504 citizens. At that time there were three Japanese grocery stores, one of which housed a labor contracting business and boarding house for Japanese laborers, as well as a noodle house, and a Japanese farm labor camp. There was also a Buddhist church that schooled Japanese American children in the language of their parents. After the wartime incarceration, many Japanese Americans were able to return to their ranches and business thanks to the kindness of their neighbors. Many others never returned."

About Go For Broke National Education Center

Go For Broke National Education Center (GFBNEC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educating the public on the valor of Japanese American veterans of World War II and their contributions to democracy. Our goal is to inspire new generations to embody the Nisei veterans' core values of courage, sacrifice, equality, humility and patriotism. Founded in 1989, GFBNEC maintains the Go For Broke monument and the interactive "GFBNEC's Defining Courage Exhibition" in downtown Los Angeles, as well as extensive oral histories and archives, education and training programs, and other initiatives. For more information, please visit www.goforbroke.org.

About the Kingsburg Historical Society

The Kingsburg Historical Society has been planning for and anticipating this event for over two years. It is tremendously exciting to be able to bring it to Kingsburg and to our wonderful historical park. We are immensely proud that we are one of only two California communities to have this exhibit. This exhibit will be presented in only ten communities from Hawaii to Ohio. Kingsburg is the smallest of these communities.

The Kingsburg Historical Society is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit operating a large historical park dedicated to presenting and preserving the history of Kingsburg, California. www.kingsburghistoricalpark.org.

The Kingsburg display received additional support from The California State Library Civil Liberties Program, the VFW Post #8499, and The Central California Japanese American Citizens League.

Please contact David Meyer at (559) 481-0480 to make an appointment outside of usual operating hours.

About the NPS JACS Program

This project is funded, in part, by a grant from the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Japanese American Confinement Site Grant Program. For more information regarding the JACS grant program, please contact Kara Miyagishima, Program Manager, Japanese American Confinement Sites Grant Program, NPS, at (303) 969-2885.

Note to Media: "Go For Broke" was the motto of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, a segregated Army unit composed of Japanese Americans from Hawaii and the mainland. The term was Hawaiian slang for "shooting the works," or risking everything for the big win in gambling-as the Nisei soldiers did while fighting in the field in WWII and facing prejudice at home in the U.S.

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