

## **2023 VNCS AGM NAJC Report**

### **Yukari Peerless**

2023 was the first year of NAJC's four-year capacity building initiative. NAJC launched several projects to build the capacity of the organization. In March, a meeting was held at the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre in Toronto with the presidents of each member organization. We each introduced the organization and shared challenges and strengths.

NAJC has also created 9 task forces for each capacity component - Strategic Planning, Community Leadership and Development, Communications, Promotions and Marketing, Membership, Accounting and Finance, Volunteer and Staff Engagement, Partnership and Collaboration, Programming, and Human Rights. I am a member of both the Communications, Promotions and Marketing Task Force and the Programming Task Force.

VNCS participated in several pilot projects under these capacity components, such as Communications - subscribing to the paid version of Mailchimp, and Accounting and Finance, where we consulted with NAJC and, with the help of our new Treasurer Dave Lawson, built a new accounting system. The first-year costs of implementing these new features were covered by NAJC's Capacity Building Initiative Fund.

The NAJC National Conference was held in Winnipeg in September. The focus of the conference was capacity building, and the VNCS sent 5 delegates from Victoria. We had many engaging discussions and it was interesting to see that many of the member organizations had similar challenges such as succession planning and volunteer and youth engagement. It was meaningful to come together and network with other Japanese Canadian member organizations.

Each task force continues to meet to move capacity building initiatives forward. For example, The Communications, Promotions and Marketing Task Force plans to have a one-on-one Zoom session with each organization to learn each organization's specific challenges and also offer social media and/or marketing workshops. The Programming Task Force plans to connect each member organization's specific program volunteers -

such as martial arts, language programs, or festival organizers - so they can share best practices and resources. If you are interested in getting involved with a specific capacity component, please let me know as we are looking for more people to work together.

In 2024, the second year of capacity building, NAJC is encouraging regional meetings - both online and in person. In the fall of 2023, the BC and Yukon groups met via Zoom, and we hope to have a BC and Yukon regional conference sometime this year.

NAJC committees are also encouraged to organize a strategic planning session/mini retreat to work on each committee's 5-year plan. If you are interested in serving on the Human Rights, Arts, Culture and Education, Young Leaders, or other committees, please let me know and I'd be happy to connect with the committee chair.