

Nikkei Progressives' Efforts on Solidarity as Community Development



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I. Introduction

Nikkei Progressives was founded in 2016 as a response to the Trump Administration's attacks on immigrants and minority groups. As a Japanese-American activist group, the theme of solidarity has always been at the core of NP's mission. Solidarity requires, listening, supporting, and building up others that face injustice. Nikkei Progressives opens up a space for progressive Japanese-Americans of all generations, recognizing the deep-rooted history of oppression that Japanese-Americans once faced in America. NP recognizes that this oppression continues today in other minority groups and continues to fight and advocate for those groups as well. NP strongly believes that none of us are free until all of us are free, having shown support for various minority groups such as Haitian-Americans, Muslim-Americans, African-Americans, and Asian-American.

Figure 1 -- In Plain Sight- Santa Anita



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II. Methods

In the immigration sector, Nikkei Progressives has supported the Haitian Bridge Alliance in gathering supplies for Haitian immigrants in detention. NP also supports API and Southeast Asian immigrants with supplies and legal support to help immigrants be released from ICE detentions. This summer I worked on a deportation case, working to get a pardon for a Cambodian man who had already done his time, but was sent to Adelanto, an ICE detention center. We advocated for his release by creating community support around his case, pushing a release petition and social media support, hosting Southeast Asian educational workshops, and organizing legislative meetings with public officials. NP will continue to push for this case and other detainees until a pardon is granted.

As protests became national news, Nikkei Progressives released a solidarity statement and video standing with the Black Lives Matter movement, demanding the prosecution of killer cops, defunding of the police, and voting Jackie Lacey out of office. To further support Black Lives Matter LA, NP fundraised and provided meals for their organizers' monthly meetings in an effort called Feed the Revolution. NP is constantly having conversations about ways to support the Black liberation movement, most recently about solidarity and privilege during Sip & Shares that occur every two weeks.



III. Results

Efforts of solidarity allow people to organize more effectively, bridging communities together and allocating resources to where the need is present. Educational and fundraising events create awareness around issues that might not have previously been a priority across the different minority groups. Solidarity recognizes that our struggles across race aren't always so different.

- The Feed the Revolution for Black Lives Matter LA effort raised over \$10,000, when the original goal was \$2,500.
- A petition asking for release and bond for a Cambodian man at risk of deportation raised over 2,000 signatures in 2 days.



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IV. Conclusions

Focusing efforts on solidarity has allowed Nikkei Progressives to create close ties and relationships with other minority groups that face similar struggles. Whether this be hosting educational events, fundraising, or even just having conversations, these actions of solidarity have strengthened the definition of community. Solidarity allows community to be beyond race, to recognize our similarities in the face of struggle, and to help each other understand and respect our cultural differences.