

NEWS RELEASE
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DENSHO RECEIVES TWO NATIONAL PARK SERVICE GRANTS TO ADVANCE ITS MISSION TO PRESERVE AND TEACH JAPANESE AMERICAN HISTORY THROUGH AUTHENTIC VOICES

(Seattle – August 4, 2011) – Densho: The Japanese American Legacy Project, which owns the largest archive of visual testimonies on the Japanese American WWII incarceration experience, is excited to announce it was awarded two grants totaling \$544,713 from the National Park Service Japanese American Confinement Sites (JACS) program. The first grant enables Densho to create a curriculum package and expand its democracy education program to 600 teachers in six states. The second grant gives Densho the opportunity to upgrade its existing web-based photograph and document collection by partnering with four community and historical organizations to make accessible more than 50,000 digital objects related to the Japanese American confinement sites.

“Densho is extremely grateful to the National Park Service as the grant monies will accelerate our ability to preserve and teach the Japanese American WWII incarceration experience in other regions of the U.S.,” said Tom Ikeda, executive director, Densho. “The key to success for the projects will be partnerships. The depth and diversity of the photo and document collection will increase dramatically as we work with organizations in California, Hawaii, Oregon and Wyoming. Our reach into the classroom will expand as we train and support hundreds of classroom teachers on an ongoing basis.”

"I want to extend my congratulations to Densho for the two National Park Service grants they were awarded," said Congressman Jim McDermott. "Densho plays a vital role in documenting the period during World War II when Japanese Americans were unjustly incarcerated. Their work will help ensure that we never forget this part of American history, and it will also serve to educate future generations of the policies that violated civil rights and human liberties."

Densho has been developing and conducting teacher training and curriculum on the WWII incarceration story for more than 10 years. The JACS grant of \$281,733 will increase its teacher education library by providing a teacher resource package containing classroom-tested, state and national social studies and history standards-based curriculum that focuses on the WWII incarceration of Japanese Americans. Targeting upper level elementary through high school students, the curriculum will build critical thinking skills by utilizing historical and primary source materials from the Densho repository; teach an understanding of democratic ideals and constitutional principles using as example the Japanese American WWII incarceration; and promote civil discourse by examining the parallels and differences from the incarceration story and contemporary issues affecting youth today.

To ensure the package is used, teacher training will be conducted starting in fall 2012 in at least six states where the confinement sites are located, which could include: California, Hawaii, Washington, Oregon, Arizona, Idaho, Wyoming, Arkansas, Utah, and Colorado. The workshops, which will first be piloted within the Seattle Public School system, will reach 600 teachers nationally in a one-year period. In addition, Professor Ron Ritchhart, author and principal investigator of Harvard Graduate School of Education's Project Zero, will consult and advise on how to integrate the lessons with civil discourse.

In addition to the training, teachers will be able to access an online learning community on the Densho.org website. Working with Densho's educational specialist, teachers will be able to connect current events to Densho's other award-winning online resources including: more than 1,000 hours of impactful oral histories; 10,700-piece collection of rare digital images, home movies, period newsreels, camp newspapers and other documents; and other teaching tools to enrich classroom learning.

The second JACS grant awarded Densho \$262,980 to create a web-based repository that will enable community and historical organizations to make their digital objects available online. Densho will design and create a digital archive system while working with four partnering community organizations: Japanese American Museum of San Jose, Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation, Oregon Nikkei Endowment, and Japanese Cultural and Community Center of

Hawaii. “We want to share our 15 years of experience creating and managing digital archives with other community and educational institutions,” said Ikeda. “We believe that working together we can create an open, standards-based approach to ensure all our collections are easily accessed, and sustainable and scalable for future growth.”

The community repository, upon completion in summer 2013, will include more than 50,000 objects. It will contain a broad range of materials for the public to better understand the Japanese American experience, including materials from prewar, wartime, and postwar eras. Items will include: photographs and documents that tell what people lost when they were sent to an incarceration camp; wartime materials from the camps, including places from Hawaii where the incarceration story is less widely known; and postwar materials that examine Japanese American community rebuilding and resettlement and the redress process.

“This year marks the 70th anniversary of the start of the war between the U.S. and Japan and many photos, letters, and documents detailing the impact of the incarceration have been lost,” added Ikeda. “The loss of these important items will accelerate in the next 10 years as most Nisei will pass on. We have an obligation to the community to collect and preserve these precious resources for educators and future generations to come.”

Key to the digital archive will be the ability to easily share photographs and documents between partners, to effectively use these objects through educational initiatives such as online learning activities with primary sources, and to easily share the objects through social media channels such as Facebook. The public will have free access to the archives to: better understand what happened to their own families, create lesson plans, student projects such as the national History Day projects, film and documentary research, and a myriad of other projects. The digital archive system will include policies, procedures, and tools to allow partnering organizations to add on an ongoing basis their own content to the digital repository. Moreover, an archive partner kit will be developed and available to future partners interested in digitizing and sharing their collections online.

Congress established the Japanese American Confinement Sites Grants program in 2006 and authorized up to \$38 million in grants, for the life of the program, to identify, research, evaluate, interpret, protect, restore, repair, and acquire historic confinement sites. The grants are made as part of a competitive process in which \$2 of federal money matches every \$1 in non-federal funds and “in-kind” contributions. The goals of the grant program are to teach present and future generations about the injustice of the confinement and inspire a commitment to equal justice under the law.

Densho: The Japanese American Legacy Project is an award-winning nonprofit organization located in Seattle. Established in 1996, Densho is preserving the legacy of Japanese Americans who were unjustly incarcerated during World War II before their memories are extinguished. Using digital technology, Densho offers an oral history program to record firsthand accounts; digital collection of images, documents, and video; and teacher resources and training to explore principles of democracy and promote equal justice for all. For more information, visit www.Densho.org.

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