



Dear Members, Volunteers & Friends of Tonari Gumi,

🌸 **Spring is in the air!** 🌸

Since the Nara period (710-794), the cherry blossom has been a symbol for Japan. Originally chosen by the government to set the country apart from China, whose emblem was the plum blossom, the cherry blossom has been used since. Moreover, cherry blossoms are a symbolic flower of spring, a time of renewal.



With the beautiful spring weather and the sakura blossom in full bloom, many of us are thinking about going outside. So the question for some of us is to mask or not to mask? Over the past few weeks TG has been offering sites that provide instructions on how to make your own face mask. While, there had been some confusion at first about the necessity to wear a mask, many of us have decided to wear a mask if outside and in a situation where social distancing is not possible. Ideally, for older adults and those with other health issues, the recommendation is still to stay indoors as much as possible. There are many services available that enable you to do this. TG has a great list of these services.

According to Dr. Henry, B.C.'s provincial health officer, non-medical masks are fine to wear, but "not an alternative to the things we know work to stop the spread of COVID-19, such as physical distancing and washing hands."

If you are making a mask, here is some information to improve the effectiveness of homemade masks:

- Some materials are better than others. Use clean and stretchy 100% cotton t-shirts or pillowcases.
- Ensure you are using proper methods to put on and remove your mask\*
- The mask should fit tightly around the nose and mouth; material; that allows droplets to pass through will not work.
- The mask should be comfortable, or you won't want to wear it consistently.
- Clean or change the mask often.



### **\*Handling Your Face Masks Properly**

1. Wash your hands first.
2. Always put mask onto your face using the ear straps.
3. Make sure your nose and chin are covered.
4. To remove your mask – do not touch the centre area.
5. Remove mask using the ear straps.
6. Used cloth masks should be washed with warm water and detergent.
7. Always wash your hands again after removing mask.



## **Community Kindness**

### **Local Companies Donate Non-Medical Masks to Tonari Gumi!**



North Vancouver company, CA5 Athletics (<https://ca12345.ca/>) owners Beverli Barnes (<http://beverlibarnes.com/>) and Deborah Nielsen (<http://www.dnidesign.ca/>) has generously donated 65 masks to Tonari Gumi. The company has designed and produced non-medical grade face masks that they are donating to local small businesses. These face masks are water resistant and re-usable. Community generosity and donations like these support our community services during these trying times for TG and our community. Thank you so much!

**A special thank you to Kay Manabe for making this donation possible.**

## **BEWARE:**

### **Telephone and Internet Scams**



One of our TG volunteers wrote in that:

“I thought we should include a reminder to be extremely careful about giving personal information over the phone or the computer. I received an "urgent" phone call from BC Hydro yesterday insisting that I was in arrears and if I didn't pay in the next "30 minutes" my Hydro would be cut off.”

## Telephone and Internet Scams:

Fraud and scams especially against seniors is a serious issue and with more seniors isolated from their community we need to be more careful. A tactic often used is to force the senior to pay up immediately, so panicking the senior; thus, not giving the person a chance to think about it.

Crime Stoppers is warning the public to be cautious of scammers and criminals who may try to use the coronavirus pandemic to defraud the vulnerable, particularly seniors.

Types of approaches could include scammers:

- imitating governments to fraud seniors out of money. The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) has already issued a warning to Canadians about fraudsters sending texts about the Canada Emergency Response Benefit.
- companies offering services or special filters that they claim can protect against COVID-19 particles;
- posing as the Red Cross, offering free medical products in exchange for a donation,
- and utility companies threatening to disconnect power for non-payment.

Remember if you didn't initiate contact, you don't know who you're communicating to;

- Never respond or click on suspicious links and attachments;
- Never give out your personal or financial details.



## Sakura and the Japanese Canadian War Memorial

On April 9<sup>th</sup> CBC Radio interviewed David Iwaasa and Susan Yatabe regarding the centennial of the Japanese Canadian War Memorial in Stanley Park. The interview is on-line and very interesting.

<https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-46-on-the-coast/clip/15770367-april-9-2020-war-monument>

We received a response from the interview:

Junichi and I love the war memorial in Stanley Park, something we are not directly related with as family history, but we both have memories of the hardship of WWII bombing and the burnt flat Tokyo and Osaka. The war memorial is a very real silent memory of our young childhood that we seldom share with even among the group of newcomers of our generation. So this is similar to the childhood memories of many Nikkei of the internment camps. Very often I knew what they are talking about.

We love the tunnel of Shirotae cherry trees lining the path to the cenotaph. Junichi has been struggling to paint the Shirotae in full bloom. This angle and that angle ever since we came to Vancouver. We realized the cherry tree tunnel was not really set up as it should be. This is always our mystery. There must be something missing, but we do not know the history of it.

However, I always praise the Japanese gardeners who chose this kind of cherry tree, Shirotae. It is just so delicate and noble, yet strikingly beautiful. Walking through this Shirotae tunnel under full bloom is an unbelievably wonderful space to walk into.

As I sent you the photo, today at the site, now I understand how Japanese gardeners at the time understood the pride and struggle of the community and chose Shirotae instead of Somei Yoshino cherry. Shirotae blooms during those days when the Battle of Arras [Vimy Ridge included] was fought.

I am deeply moved when within the Shirotae tunnel in full bloom.

-Atsumi Hashimoto



**PLUS A BIG THANK YOU** also to all our Tonari Gumi staff and volunteers for providing so many valuable services and acts of kindness.

**WE ARE A STRONGER TG TOGETHER!**



**If you find this newsletter useful,  
please share this newsletter and website information  
with your family and others in our community.**

**[www.tonarigumi.ca](http://www.tonarigumi.ca)**