



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Village of New Denver publishes *Kyowakai: Memory and Healing in New Denver*, to honour former Kyowakai Society members

Dec. 2, 2020, NEW DENVER, BC—The Village of New Denver has just released a new historical book titled ***Kyowakai: Memory and Healing in New Denver—Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre***, written by local author Anne Champagne and designed by John Endo Greenaway. The book tells the story of Japanese Canadian internment in New Denver, the creation of the Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre (NIMC) by the Kyowakai Society, and the healing it inspired. The 80-page, soft cover book features colour and black-and-white photographs, including images from the NIMC collection, Nikkei National Museum, Library and Archives Canada (LAC) and various private collections.

In the preface, Anne Champagne writes: “A constellation of events catalyzed a small group of volunteers in a tiny mountain village to create a memorial to their internment during the Second World War, to place their experience into the context of the more than 22,000 Japanese Canadian internees.” With the NIMC, the Kyowakai Society members wanted to tell their story, partly to inspire Nikkei with their story of endurance and partly to assure future generations that they too could tap into such inner strength. With racism recently at the forefront of global and national news, the book’s theme is timely and highly relevant as it reminds us that discrimination is an ongoing issue in Canada and abroad, and that civil rights can be very quickly revoked.

“The goal of the book project was to honour and record the importance of the work of the Kyowakai Society in New Denver and place local history in the context of larger historical events,” said New Denver Mayor Leonard Casley. “Without the Kyowakai, the NIMC wouldn’t exist and the story would be lost.” A National Historic Site, the NIMC became the only centre of its kind in Canada. Part history, part cautionary tale, part companion to the exhibits and gardens at the NIMC, this book explores the vision for the centre, elaborates on the interpretive signs that accompany displays, and unravels the symbolic meaning of the Peace Garden.

The project was funded by the former Kyowakai Society and by the National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC) Endowment Fund. The New Denver Mayor and Council would like to thank the donors — without their contributions, this important project would not be possible — and the project team, which includes local writer Anne Champagne, graphic designer John Endo Greenaway, along with former Kyowakai members Sakaye and Bronwen Hashimoto, Tsuneko Kokubo (Koko), Paul Gibbons, and Ruby Truly providing historical perspective throughout the project. Researcher Kyla Fitzgerald also provided the team with valuable input.

Kyowakai: Memories and Healing in New Denver books will be available for sale at the New Denver Village Office, the Nikkei National Museum in Burnaby, and at the Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre Gift Shop in 2021. Orders enquiries can also be made via email nikkei@newdenver.ca. Proceeds from book sales will fund NIMC operations and future projects.

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About the Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre:

The Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre (NIMC) is a National Historic Site dedicated to telling the story of over 22,000 Japanese Canadians who were forcibly relocated during World War II. Located on the site of "The Orchard" internment camp, the NIMC contains original buildings, period artifacts and interpretive displays as well as the Heiwa Teien Peace Garden, designed by the renowned Japanese Canadian gardener, Tomomichi (Roy) Sumi.

About the Village of New Denver:

Home to over 500 local characters, this vibrant community is situated on the eastern shore of beautiful Slokan Lake. Surrounded by the tall peaks of the Selkirk mountain range, New Denver is located in the Kootenay region of British Columbia. An incorporated municipality since 1929, the Village of New Denver is part of the Regional District of Central Kootenay.

Media Contact: Theresa Tremaine, Community Services

Email: office@newdenver.ca

Telephone: 250-358-2316

Website: www.newdenver.ca/nikkei