2018 OVERVIEW

- The 2018 festival was held on Pennsylvania Ave between 3rd and 7th Streets NW, from 10:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m on Saturday, April 14.
- 30,000 people attended the festival this year - a 20% increase from 2017 and 2016.
- 80 committee members and over 500 day-of volunteers made this festival possible.
- There were over 30 performances from Japanese and Japanese-related groups spread across 4 stages: the ANA Capitol Stage, the J-Pop Stage, the Sakura Stage, and the Martial Arts Stage.
- The festival was divided into four main sections to assist guests in prioritizing their visit: Taste of Japan (24 vendors), Arts & Culture (30 vendors/organizations), Japan Now (20 vendors/organizations), and Ginza Market (15 vendors).
- 2018 was the debut of the festival’s new mascot: Sakura Usagi, or Sakura-chan, a rabbit from the moon.
- The Sakura Matsuri extends its gratitude to its many sponsors and supporters, especially those on the ground: Hakutsuru Sake, Kirin, McDonald’s, Meiji, and Deloitte.

2018 HIGHLIGHTS

- This year, the festival welcomed five performers from Japan:
  - Keisho Ohno, a Tsugaru Shamisen player who mixes traditional music with modern/rock music;
  - D.A.K. Awa Odori Dancers, a cultural dance team from Tokushima Prefecture,
  - Tamagawa University Dance & Taiko Group, which has been performing at Sakura Matsuri for 15 years;
  - Kanadete sourou, a rock band from Kyoto that blends contemporary music with folktale lyrics;
  - Samurai Sword Soul, a theater company which employs TATE (Japanese sword stage fighting) in their demonstrations.
- Matsukawaya, the Nagoya-based wagashi shop that has since opened its first store in the Washington, DC area, returned to the festival to set up a traditional tea area and sell their famous sweets.
- The festival was honored to welcome the new Ambassador from Japan, Ambassador Shinsuke J. Sugiyama, and his wife Madame Yoko Sugiyama, to make remarks on the ANA Capitol Stage.
2018 PROGRAM RECAP

SOCIAL MEDIA/ MARKETING

• Between March 1, 2018 and April 15, 2018, our total organic reach on Facebook was 145,304 (daily average 3,158). The average post reach during the same period was 947.

• During the same period, our Tweets (@sakuramatsuri) earned 14,500 impressions with a 2.1% engagement rate and 135 link clicks (all organic).

• The Sakura Matsuri Facebook hosted a Sakura-chan art contest at the beginning of April, which attracted about 15 entries. The winners received free tickets to the festival, and the entries were shown on Facebook.

• Both physical and e-fliers were distributed among the committees to be given throughout neighborhoods and organizations.

• As of May 1, 2018, the post-festival survey has garnered 1000 responses. Of those, around 83% said the 2018 festival was “great” or “good,” and 49% attended the festival for the first time. 44% approved of this year’s location.

ABOUT THE FESTIVAL

The Sakura Matsuri - Japanese Street Festival started as the Japan-America Society of Washington DC’s annual bazaar in 1961. It became an official part of the National Cherry Blossom Festival in 1992, and is now one of Washington, DC’s major springtime events. The festival is the largest celebration of Japanese culture in the United States, and aims to bring both modern and traditional aspects of Japan to the community.

To learn more about the Sakura Matsuri - Japanese Street Festival, please visit http://www.sakuramatsuri.org, or e-mail info@jaswdc.org.