



College Women's Association of Japan 2025 Annual Report

March 2026



50 Years of Programs for the Visually Impaired—Still Going Strong!

In 2025, the Volunteers for the Visually Impaired (VVI) Committee celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. Launched in 1975 by helping visually impaired university students with English, VVI has continued to evolve and provide meaningful programs for Japanese with a visual impairment for 50 years. The College Women's Association of Japan (CWAJ) expanded this support with a scholarship for the visually impaired and added the Hands-on Art exhibition at our Print Show.

Two events were held to celebrate this milestone. The award-winning documentary film *Life Is Climbing!* about paraclimber Kobayashi Koichiro, "Koba," and his sighted guide, Suzuki Naoya, was screened in April to a full audience at Arcadia Ichigaya. After seeing the thrilling, heartwarming film, the audience was inspired by the experiences that Koba and Naoya shared during the Q&A. The film was in Japanese with English subtitles, and audio description was available for those with a visual impairment, making it accessible to its diverse audience.

CWAJ was honored to have Her Imperial Highness Princess Akishino attend the second anniversary event, the CWAJ VVI 50th Anniversary Concert, Sugata Rika Piano Recital with Kudo Seina, Soprano, in November. The concert featured visually impaired pianist Sugata Rika, 2021 CWAJ Scholar for the Visually Impaired, who performed works by Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, and Mendelssohn. The program also included the lovely voice of soprano Kudo Seina, who is also visually impaired. The full house included representatives of major organizations and individuals supporting the visually impaired with which CWAJ is honored to have a long and close relationship. Braille and Large Print versions of the program were available to meet the needs of all attending. Also, there was a special gift for all to take home, "50 Years of VVI," the VVI 50th Anniversary history booklet.

Three Awards Endorse CWAJ Scholarships and Community Service

Women's Challenge Support Award: Presented to CWAJ by the Gender Equality Bureau of the Cabinet Office in June 2025. Ever since its founding in 1949, CWAJ has supported women through travel grants and scholarships. The longstanding scholarship program reflects the organization's commitment to nurturing the development of future leaders at both the local and global level.

Foreign Minister's Commendation FY2025: Presented to CWAJ in September 2025 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in recognition of our contributions to promoting mutual understanding of cultural, intellectual, and aesthetic values between Japan and other countries. The commendation recognized CWAJ's scholarship program and annual exhibition of contemporary Japanese print art.

33rd Helen Keller Sullivan Award: Presented to CWAJ in September 2025. CWAJ was recognized for its 50 years of service to the visually impaired community in Japan. This annual award honors individuals and organizations that have contributed to the independence and quality of life of visually impaired people.



ABOUT CWAJ

The College Women's Association of Japan, a 100% volunteer organization, supports women through education, arts, community, and friendship. Founded in 1949, our primary mission is the provision of scholarships that are funded by donations and proceeds from the CWAJ Print Show. The Print Show is an internationally acclaimed annual exhibition and sale that promotes contemporary Japanese print art. CWAJ serves the community by providing educational services for children and adults, including innovative programs for visually impaired individuals. CWAJ offers opportunities to engage in meaningful volunteer projects, to participate in cross-cultural events, and to make friendships with women from around the world. **Please join us! Contact membership@cwaj.org**

SAVE THE DATE

CWAJ SCHOLARSHIPS

Announcement of 2026 CWAJ Scholars

May 13, 2026

Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan

69th ANNUAL PRINT SHOW

69th CWAJ Print Show

October 14 (Wed) – 18 (Sun), 2026
Hillside Forum (Daikanyama Hillside Terrace F)

CWAJ Associate Show

YooKooSoo to Yokoo Tadanori's Universe (TBA)
October 20 (Tue) – November 9 (Mon)
Tokyo American Club, Azabudai

CWAJ Online Gallery <https://cwaj-gallery.jp>



OTHER EVENTS

Bunraku with CWAJ: No Strings Attached

May 18, 2026

CWAJ Print Show celebrates its 70th anniversary in 2027!

70th CWAJ Print Show, in 2027

October 13 (Wed) – 17 (Sun), 2027
Hillside Forum (Daikanyama Hillside Terrace F)

FUND THE FUTURE

The generosity of all of our donors and sponsors makes it possible for CWAJ to continue to provide opportunities for students to pursue their dreams. CWAJ welcomes donations of any amount throughout the year. As in 2023 and 2024, Cartier Japan made a significant donation to CWAJ in 2025 to support a study abroad scholarship. Loro Piana Japan, a leading Italian fashion brand, also supported female artists. With the support of the Japan Foundation Designated Donations program, a tax deduction receipt is available for donors to CWAJ who file tax return forms in Japan.

For further information about making a donation to CWAJ, please contact donations@cwaj.org

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cwaj.org



68th CWAJ Print Show Adds Live Programming

The 68th CWAJ Print Show was held at Hillside Forum in Daikanyama from October 15 to 19, 2025. A total of 208 works, including a diverse range of prints selected through open submission and invited works, from world-renowned masters to emerging artists, were exhibited. The steady stream of visitors from both Japan and abroad created a remarkably lively atmosphere. Notably, the presence of international gallery professionals was strong this year.

Prior to the exhibition, the Opening Reception on the evening of the 15th was attended by more than 200 people, including over 80 exhibiting artists, many supporters, and invited guests from various fields. Members enjoyed light refreshments during a festive gathering.

Following the award ceremonies—the Young Printmaker Award (YPA), the Loro Piana Woman Artist Award, and the 68th Print Show Committee Award—Professor Shimizu Misako of Joshibi University of Art and Design, a long-time friend and supporter of CWAJ, offered the toast to declare the opening.

Guided tours in English and French were offered several times daily.

The Print Show featured a full program:

- Oct. 16 — book signing by catalog cover artist Konno Noriko
- Oct. 17 — lecture by Danish art director Marine Wagner
- Oct. 18 — “My Father, Akiyama Iwao” talk by sons Takahide and Toyohide
- Oct. 19 — silkscreen printing demonstration and hands-on printing experience by Monma Emi, artist
- Oct. 17, 18, and 19 — Hands-on Art for the visually impaired

The Special Exhibition—always a popular feature—was titled “Amazing Mt. Fuji!” Focusing on Mount Fuji as a Japanese source of inspiration, it presented works by six masters past and present, including Hagiwara Hideo and Yokoo Tadanori, and drew strong attention from both collectors and artists. This exhibition was also shown at the Frederick Harris Gallery of the Tokyo American Club, where it was well received. After the physical exhibition ended, the works were displayed and sold online from October 20 to 26, receiving orders from around the world. (The site remains viewable: <https://cwaj/gallery.jp>.) All net proceeds from print and related merchandise sales support CWAJ scholarships and artist grants.

Special Exhibition at Highfield Hall Falmouth, Massachusetts



To celebrate CWAJ's 75th Anniversary, 136 prints from the 67th CWAJ Print show travelled to Highfield Hall and Gardens in Falmouth, Massachusetts in the summer of 2025 for the third CWAJ show and sale hosted by Highfield Hall. The show, “Trailblazers: Celebrating Contemporary Japanese Prints,” paid homage to five of Japan's trailblazing women artists: Shinoda Toko, Yoshida Chizuko, Iwami Reiko, Tatsuno Toeko, and Yanagisawa Noriko. The exhibition was highly successful and received significant press coverage on the Cape, in Boston, and throughout New England. Support was given by the Japan Society of Boston. This show, including Hands-on Art experiences, created a great deal of interest among the local community.



Loro Piana Woman Artist Award

500,000 yen

Feng Yi (MFA, Tama Art University)

I remember, yet I forget

Lithograph

Inspired by CWAJ's mission of fostering female leadership and supporting contemporary Japanese printmakers, leading Italian fashion brand Loro Piana Japan is collaborating with CWAJ with the donation of a special award, the CWAJ Print Show Loro Piana Woman Artist Award. In the 4th year of this collaboration, the winner of the award (500,000 yen) is Feng Yi. “As an artist, I intend to continue exploring the boundaries of lithographic expression while delving more deeply into the visual structures woven from memory, perception, and time, in order to further expand the scope of my artistic practice,” she commented. We hope that this award will help Feng Yi make further progress and contribute to the Japanese printmaking world.

2025 CWAJ Young Printmaker Award

500,000 yen

Kobayashi Kanta (Enrolled in the Master's Program in Printmaking, Nihon University)

Under the Light

Woodcut (water-based ink)



CWAJ established the Young Printmaker Award in 2005 to encourage the development of young artists. Past winners have gone on to make remarkable achievements in the world of printmaking and art. This year's winner, Kobayashi Kanta, said, “I create works with the aim of clarifying my own values and fixing them on the screen. Even if I see the same motif in the past, present, or future, the information I receive from that motif often differs depending on my sensibilities and changes in my surroundings. . . . The prize money I received from the YPA Award will be used to further develop my foundation as a printmaker, specifically for comparative experiments with Japanese paper and tools.”

The 2025 CWAJ Scholars

CWAJ awarded 15 million yen in scholarships in the following categories for the 2025-2026 academic year:

CWAJ Cultural Exchange Graduate Scholarship for Japanese Women to Study Abroad 3.5 million yen (Supported by the Japan Foundation)

NAMEKAWA Haruka

MBA, Fuqua School of Business, Duke University, USA

CWAJ Cartier Scholarship 3.5 million yen (Funded by Cartier Japan)

KOYAMA Miina

Master of Educational Technology and Applied Learning Sciences,
Department of Computer Science, Carnegie Mellon University, USA

CWAJ Graduate Scholarship for Non-Japanese Women to Study in Japan
2.0 million yen

YU Lingna (People's Republic of China)

PhD, Department of Frontier Biosciences, Osaka University

CWAJ Cultural Exchange Graduate Scholarship for Non-Japanese Women to Study in Japan 2.0 million yen each (Supported by the Japan Foundation)

Wilitier Chemutai MOMANYI (Republic of Kenya)

PhD, Environmental Studies, University of Tsukuba

Sofia HUERTA NUNES (United Mexican States)

PhD, Peace and Conflict Studies, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

CWAJ Scholarships for the Visually Impaired to Study in Japan

Two scholarships of 1.0 million yen each

UMEYAMA Tomoyuki

MSc, Department of Chemistry, Institute of Science, Tokyo

KITANA Miu

MEd, Special Needs Education, Educational Design for Teacher
Educators Program, Hiroshima University



From left: Namekawa Haruka, Wilitier Chemutai Momanyi, Umeyama Tomoyuki, Kitana Miu, Sofia Huerta Nunes, Yu Lingna, Koyama Miina

Congratulations, 2025 CWAJ Scholars!

CWAJ presented the seven 2025 Scholars at the General Meeting held May 28 at the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan. Introducing our scholars is always a joy, and CWAJ was honored to welcome representatives from the Embassies of Kenya and Mexico to celebrate the occasion with the scholars from their countries.

Honoring the 50th Anniversary of VVI, the Keynote Speaker was 2017 Scholarship for the Visually Impaired recipient Kaneko Ririna, who spoke about "The Privileges of the Non-Disabled." Her talk challenged non-disabled people to recognize that they are in an entitled position by being born without disadvantages.

We continue to gather with our alumnae at the Print Show and the scholarship luncheon in May.



Embassy of Kenya First Counsellor Jennifer Njuguna, Wilitier Chemutai Momanyi, and Deputy Head of Mission, Ambassador Arthur A. Andambi



Valeria Solis, Head of the Political and Gender Affairs Section, Embassy of Mexico, and Sofia Huerta Nunes

CWAJ Scholars at EXPO 2025



From left: Ishikawa Rin, Ogoda Makoto, and Sangita Das during the Q&A

On July 25, CWAJ gave its presentation, "Empowerment through Education: CWAJ Women Supporting Women," twice at the "WA" Space, Women's Pavilion in collaboration with Cartier, EXPO 2025 Osaka Kansai. The panelists were three CWAJ scholars: Ishikawa Rin, 2023 CWAJ Cartier Scholar/Study Abroad, strategy consultant, global management consulting firm; Ogoda Makoto, 2005 Scholar for the Visually Impaired, attorney, Ogoda Law Office; and Sangita Das, 2002 Non-Japanese Graduate Scholar, consultant and advisor for NGOs. Their experiences confirm that higher education provides opportunity and potential to explore and create new paths to meet social needs.

The Q&A moderator was Elizabeth Gamarra, a CWAJ 2023 Non-Japanese Graduate Scholar, who was a USA Pavilion Youth Ambassador at EXPO 2025.



CWAJ volunteers at EXPO 2025



COMMUNITY SERVICE: 1500+ Volunteer Hours in 2025

The **Volunteers for the Visually Impaired (VVI)** serve visually impaired students and adults by providing English language programs and holding events, volunteering a total of over 1500 hours. Besides celebrating VVI's 50th anniversary with special events, publishing our 50th Anniversary booklet, and publishing a newsletter, volunteers taught English twice a week at the Japan Vocational Development Center for the Blind and Low Vision, where adults are retraining for employment and English proficiency is regarded as a valuable skill in the business world. Members also conducted mock test interviews for 12 high school students at the Special Needs Education School for the Visually Impaired, University of Tsukuba, who were preparing for the Eiken Test in Practical English Proficiency. Also, a one-to-one English conversation program by native English-speaking volunteers was offered to students upon request.

In 2025, **CWAJ Foreign Students Circle (FSC)** continued its support of international students living in Tokyo. This year opened with a well-received online program featuring a professional subtitle translator. That was followed by a variety of seasonal and cultural experiences, including a Hinamatsuri outing, an afternoon tea celebrating graduating students, a visit to the CWAJ Print Show, and a year-end *norimaki* cooking party.

In 2025, **English Outreach for Children (EOC)** volunteers visited St. Joseph's Home for Children five times. For each visit, they organized an interactive lesson plan to reinforce the children's familiarity with the English language. Rotating through four stations (book reading, games, crafts, and worksheets), the children are exposed to English in fun settings. Each class is based on a picture book that one of our members has translated into Japanese. A QR code on its back provides a link to a bilingual recording of our members reading the book in English and Japanese.

CULTURAL PROGRAMS

The Cultural Program Committee held a Noh event, "**Masks of Time: A Journey into Noh Tradition**," on Friday, September 19 at the Yurai Noh Theater in Kagurazaka. It was attended by 90 participants. This hands-on exploration of Noh included experimenting with masks and dance, plus a performance by Matsuki Chitoshi, Holder of an Intangible Cultural Property. Participants thoroughly enjoyed these workshops under the direction of Noh artists. Other events included participation on April 5 in the **Gyoki-daie** event at **Zojoji Temple** commemorating the death of Honen, founder of the Pure Land sect of Buddhism, and the **Afternoon Tea Concert** on May 12.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



CWAJ celebrated **International Women's Day** with a talk at the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan on March 6: "Inclusion Through Innovation: Can AI Bridge the Gender Gap in Society?" The discussion explored how gender biases are embedded in science and technology and how AI can promote gender and social equity in Japan. The panel featured Masako Ishii-Kuntz (Ochanomizu University), Nitta Izumi (Fujitsu Limited and Ochanomizu University), and Itatsu Yuko (University of Tokyo), and was moderated by Mari Christine (Tokyo Women's University). The lively discussion addressed the Japanese gender gap and how AI might help reduce it. Two key takeaways were the need to increase women's representation in STEM and to include the social sciences and humanities in shaping AI's future. The event reinforced CWAJ's commitment to advancing women's empowerment and equality across all sectors of society.

MONTHLY GENERAL MEETINGS

Throughout 2025, CWAJ held monthly general meetings on Zoom or in a hybrid format. Dynamic speakers addressed a variety of topics of interest to the membership.



January: Ito Moriyasu, Shinto Priest, Meiji Jingu Intercultural Research Institute
"Shinto Culture through the Eyes of Priest Diplomat"



June: John Tofflemire, Urban / Regional Economist
"The Nakasendo – Getting in Touch with Japanese History"



February: Patricia Massy, Artist and Writer
"The Colors of Japan"



September: Hiratsuka Yuji, Professional Printmaker
"Ukiyo-e's Influence on My Artwork"



March: Ruth Sonja Simonis, Independent Researcher
"Augustus the Strong and His Passion for Japanese Porcelain"



October: Iwamoto Mitsuhiro, Visually Impaired Ocean Adventurer
"Seeing the Unseen: From Despair to the Horizon of Hope"



April: Dr. Nancy Connell, Senior Scholar at the US National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM)
"Avian Influenza – The Long Journey from Birds to Cattle to Humans"



November: Dr. Toby Slade, Associate Professor, University of Technology Sydney
"Kawaii: The Aesthetic of Cute in Japan"



May: Kaneko Ririna, 2017 SVI-SJ Scholar
"The Privileges of the Non-Disabled"



December: Lensei Nishizawa, Singer Songwriter
"A Delightful Musical Experience Perfect for the Holiday Season"

