

For Immediate Release

## **Crystal City Pilgrimage Receives Takahashi Foundation Grant**

The Crystal City Pilgrimage Committee (CCPC) has received a major grant of \$158,000 from the Henri and Tomoye Takahashi Charitable Foundation. The funds will be used for a Memorial Monument as well as a museum feasibility study at the site of America's last WWII internment camp, the Crystal City Family Internment Camp.

"The Takahashi Foundation's grant will be a tremendous help in preserving the stories of our internment," said CCPC President Kazumu Julio Cesar Naganuma. "My family was forcibly taken from Peru, deprived of property and legal status, and interned with many other Japanese Latin Americans in the Crystal City internment camp. It was a terrible injustice that has yet to be properly acknowledged by our government."

The Memorial Monument lists all of those who died during their internment in Crystal City. Along with Japanese Latin Americans, there were thousands of Issei from the U.S. who were interned, along with their families. Germans and Italians were also interned, along with their children, many of whom were U.S. citizens.

The Memorial Monument is placed at the site where two Japanese Peruvian girls, friends who were just 10 years old, tragically drowned in a swimming pool accident in 1944. Crystal City recently paved a road to the site, naming the road "Calle Aiko y Sachiko" to remember Aiko Oyakawa and Sachiko Tanabe.

The CCPC was formed in 2019 by former internees, their descendants, community activists, and religious leaders. Their goal is to educate and raise public awareness of the Department of Justice's largest WWII confinement site formerly known as the Crystal City Family Internment Camp.

At its peak population, the camp held 3,374 men, women and children of Japanese, German, and Italian ancestry from the United States and Latin America who were to be used as exchange hostages for U.S. citizens captured by Axis forces in Europe and Asia. CCPC works to bring light to this hidden history and to provide a platform to preserve the history and legacy of those who were interned.

This past October 28th, over 100 participants including seventeen surviving internees, their families, friends and supporters participated in a Pilgrimage to the site of Crystal City Family Internment Camp.

"This Pilgrimage was a very moving experience for everyone," noted Pilgrimage Co-Chair Karissa Tom, whose grandfather Edison Uno was interned at Crystal City. "There were many family stories shared and we also learned about the history of Crystal City, a majority Hispanic town with a long history of migrant labor, poverty, political organizing and student protest."

"The Takahashi grant will help us preserve the history of the internment camp. And we will be working with our friends in Crystal City to share their story. We are very excited for our work in the coming year," noted Karissa Tom.

For more information, contact the CCPC at [info@crystalcitypilgrimage.org](mailto:info@crystalcitypilgrimage.org) or visit at [www.crystalcitypilgrimage.org](http://www.crystalcitypilgrimage.org)

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*The Crystal City Pilgrimage Committee, in partnership with the Crystal City community, advocates for justice for Japanese Latin American and Japanese American survivors and descendants of the Department of Justice's WWII Crystal City Family Internment Camp through education, pilgrimage programs, and site preservation. The Crystal City Pilgrimage Committee (CCPC) is a 501(c)3 educational non-profit established on August 5, 2019, as a California Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation*