

JASI Annual Gala

Keynote Speaker:

Tatsuhiko Shindo, Chief Executive Director, JETRO-Chicago

**“Japan: Road to Recovery
Challenges and Opportunities”**

Jake Shimabukuro, Ukulele Virtuoso

The Japan-America Society of Indiana’s (JASI) Annual Gala will feature ukulele virtuoso Jake Shimabukuro (she-ma-boo-koo-row) on Tuesday, June 12th, 2012, at the Indiana Roof Ballroom, with keynote speaker Tatsuhiko (ta-tsoo-hee-row) Shindo (sheen-do), chief executive director of the Japan External Trade Organization-Chicago, speaking on “Road To Recovery: Rebuilding Japan After the Disasters.” The program will also recognize the one-hundred year anniversary of gala title sponsor Duke Energy Indiana as well as the twenty-fifth year anniversaries of Japan-invested companies in Indiana such as Subaru of Indiana Automotive.

“After several years of working to invite Jake Shimabukuro to Indianapolis, we’re excited to feature him at JASI’s annual gala,” said Theresa Kulczak, executive director of the Japan-America Society of Indiana (JASI). “When we tell folks who haven’t heard of Jake that a ukulele player will headline the event, they’re not sure what to think. But Jake’s revolutionary take on the instrument creates an incredible and dazzling performance.”

Based in Hawaii, Jake Shimabukuro has his own record label and tours extensively in the U.S. and Japan. Shimabukuro has taken the four-string, two-octave instrument to places no one has gone before, performing awesome music that ranges from jazz, blues, and rock to bluegrass, classical, and folk. His live performances are an out-of-the-box blend of stunning virtuosity, deep musicality and a natural entertainer's flair.

“The two-part program with Mr. Shindo’s keynote presentation on the progress of Japan’s recovery combined with Jake’s powerful performance will reflect the bright light and hope that are symbolic of the rebuilding effort taking place in the Tohoku region of Japan, hit just over one year ago by the catastrophic earthquake and tsunami,” said Pawel Fludzinski, president of JASI’s board of directors.

The Japan-America Society of Indiana has received almost \$900,000 in donations, placing it fourth in the country after similar organizations in New York, Los Angeles, and Hawaii. 100% of JASI’s contributions have been directed to relief organizations in Japan.

“JASI will give a brief report on the special projects funded by JASI’s Japan Earthquake Relief Fund, such as the three-way partnership facilitated by JASI and the Japan Emergency Network in which forklifts were supplied by Toyota Industrial Equipment Manufacturing of Columbus, Indiana, to a fishing village in Miyagi Prefecture destroyed by the tsunami. Another innovative project that has received funding from JASI is the “Kitchen Car” initiative coordinated by the Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE). The JCIE has invested in a small fleet of food trucks for local chefs who lost their restaurants in the disasters. The food trucks serve the devastated towns and temporary housing units to provide low cost, high quality fare. It offers support on many levels, stimulating the local economy by putting a small restaurateur back to

work and creating a path back to ownership, as well as creating a community gathering place for displaced survivors and local citizens,” added Fludzinski.

The Japan-America Society of Indiana is a 501 (c) 3 not-for-profit cultural and educational organization, and on an ongoing basis offers dedicated support to Japanese and American individuals, companies, and communities throughout the state.

“JASI’s annual gala has grown every year in attendance and corporate support to become one of the largest-attended Japan events in the Midwest, bringing together Japanese and American executives, community leaders, and individuals not only from Indiana but from throughout the country,” commented Kulczak.

The Patrons’ Reception will take place 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. with General Reception from 6:30 to 7:00 p.m. and Dinner and Program from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Registration is available through the JASI office at (317) 635-0123.

Sponsors include Duke Energy Indiana, Subaru of Indiana Automotive, Inc., AISIN, Barnes & Thornburg, Honda Manufacturing of Indiana, Inc., Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Indiana, Inc., Eli Lilly and Company, Hoosier Energy, Indiana Economic Development Corporation, and Toyota Industrial Equipment Mfg., Inc.

Detailed information and Online Registration for the Annual Dinner are available at www.japanindiana.org

###

About the Japan-America Society of Indiana:

The Japan-America Society of Indiana (JASI) is a not-for-profit cultural and educational organization whose mission is to serve as a bridge of friendship and cooperation between the people of Indiana and Japan. The Society is supported by a diverse membership of businesses, economic development agencies, educational institutions, families and individuals. Founded in 1988, membership in the Society includes over 1500 individual and corporate representatives located throughout the state. The organization cooperates with the Consulate General of Japan, the State of Indiana, communities, businesses, and cultural and educational institutions to promote interaction, cultural understanding, and economic partnerships.

About Jake Shimabukuro (excerpted from Jake Shimabukuro website/press):

It’s rare for a young musician to earn comparisons to the likes of Jimi Hendrix and Miles Davis. It’s even harder to find an artist who has entirely redefined an instrument by his early thirties. But Jake Shimabukuro has already accomplished these feats, and more, in a little over a decade of playing and recording music...on the ukulele. In the hands of Shimabukuro, the traditional Hawaiian instrument of four strings and two octaves is stretched and molded into a complex and bold new musical force. On his most recent album ‘Peace Love Ukulele’ (which debuted at #1 on the Billboard World Album Chart), Jake and his “uke” effortlessly (it seems) mix jazz, rock, classical, traditional Hawaiian music, and folk, creating a sound that’s both technically masterful and emotionally powerful...and utterly unique in the music world. No less than the New York Times recently noted his “buoyant musicianship” and “brisk proficiency,” adding, “the innovation in his style stems from an embrace of restrictions: the ukulele has only four strings

and a limited range. He compensates with an adaptable combination of rhythmic strumming, classical-style finger-picking and fretboard tapping.”

Jake’s career skyrocketed when a YouTube clip of him performing “While My Guitar Gently Weeps” in Central Park went viral – over eight-million views and counting. In the years since that clip aired, Shimabukuro has performed with Bela Fleck and Flecktones, Bette Midler, Yo-Yo Ma, Cyndi Lauper, Ziggy Marley, Levon Helm, Marcus Miller, Stanley Clarke, Les Paul, Dave Koz, Chris Botti, and Jimmy Buffett. He’s played on shows like “Jimmy Kimmel Live!,” “The Late Show with Conan O’Brien,” “The Today Show” and “Last Call with Carson Daly,” was a featured artist on NPR’s “Weekend Edition,” and more recently was a featured artist on Rolling Stone Live. He’s landed slots on the Monterrey and Playboy Jazz Festivals, performed at Google and the influential TED conference, and performed in front of the Queen of England in Blackpool (alongside Bette Midler). Shimabukuro also received a cameo in the Adam Sandler movie “Just Go with It,” where he also recorded a few songs for the soundtrack.

Japan-America Society of Indiana
Union Station
39 W. Jackson Place, Suite 50
Indianapolis, Indiana 46225
(317) 635-0123
www.japanindiana.org

CONTACT: Theresa Kulczak, Executive Director
Japan-America Society of Indiana
email: Theresa.kulczak@japanindiana.org
mobile (for media only, not for publication): (317) 409-6771