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JAPAN SOCIETY PRESENTS PASSING THE TORCH

**New Programs Featuring Superstar Athletes and Sports-Centric Panels,
All Leading up to the Tokyo Summer Games**

Through August 8, 2021

New York, NY, June 10, 2021 – From July 23 to August 8, 2021, the spotlight will be on Tokyo, host to the world's Summer Games. In celebration of this global event, Japan Society is proud to announce newly added programs that highlight resiliency and strength in overcoming adversity by showcasing the athletic mindset following the Games' postponement due to the global pandemic. Japan Society's institution-wide series, *Passing the Torch*, kicked off in April with talks on judo, martial arts classes for children, and a sports-themed film series and continues with a new set of exciting programs later this month.

"Sports unify people across global cultures, both on and off the field," notes Japan Society President Joshua W. Walker, Ph.D. "In the spirit of Japan Society's mission, we celebrate the resiliency, triumph, and hope of the Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympics through these dynamic programs."

Japan Society's interactive online programming leading up to and throughout the Games will celebrate champion athletes past and present from two sports that are enormously popular in both Japan and the U.S., baseball and figure skating.



Maia and Alex Shibutani

***Kudo Kids* Book Event with Olympic Medalists Maia and Alex Shibutani
Saturday, June 19 at 12 PM EDT**

Passing the Torch continues with a captivating event for young people and figure skating fans, featuring Maia and Alex Shibutani (aka the ShibSibs), two-time Olympic bronze medalists, three-time World medalists, Four Continents Champions and two-time U.S. National Champions. At the 2018 Winter Games in PyeongChang, they became the first ice dancers of Asian descent to medal at the Olympics and are only the second sibling duo in the history of the sport to share an ice dancing medal. Off the ice, the ShibSibs are known for sharing their experiences and interests on social media – helping to bring new audiences to the sport. They are also the authors of the *Kudo Kids* book series, which is geared towards children, ages 8-12 — *The Mystery of the Masked Medalist* and the newly released *The Mystery in Manhattan*, published by Penguin Random House on May 4. Along with a chat about their Olympic experiences, they will discuss their writing process, how their travels to Tokyo inspired their first book about the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, and the pivotal role NYC played in crafting their new book. Viewers will have the opportunity to submit questions to this dynamic duo and purchase autographed copies of their books.



Mirai Nagasu

The Inside Edge: Skating Champions from Japan and the US
Tuesday, June 29 at 8 PM EDT

Japan Society is thrilled to present an interactive, online discussion with champion figure skaters from Japan and the U.S. Moderated by **Nancy Kerrigan**, two-time Olympic and World medalist and 1993 U.S. National Champion, the panelists will discuss an array of topics, including training and competing in both countries; the athletic mindset and resiliency in overcoming challenges; superfans and the extreme popularity of the sport in Japan; and life after competitive skating. Participants include two-time Olympian, 2018 Olympic bronze medalist and 2008 U.S. National Champion **Mirai Nagasu**; 2007 and 2011 World Champion, 2011 Four Continents Champion and three-time (2003, 2004, 2010) Japanese National Champion **Miki Ando**; and two-time Olympian, 1994 World Champion and two-time (1993, 1994) Japanese National Champion **Yuka Sato**, with more exciting panelists to be announced. Fans will have the opportunity to ask questions during this live interactive event.

Let's Play Two: Baseball in Japan and the US
Wednesday, July 14 at 8 PM EDT

Baseball is not only the national pastime of Japan and the U.S., but it will also be featured in the Tokyo 2020 Olympics for the first time since 2008. In this virtual discussion, athletes who played in both Japan and the U.S. will compare and contrast the differences in the game in each country, the popularity of the sport, experiences playing through the pandemic, the resiliency of the athletic mindset, and prospects for baseball as a new Olympic sport this summer. The event will be moderated by award-winning director **Yuriko Gamo Romer**, whose upcoming feature film *Diamond Diplomacy* explores the relationship between the US and Japan through a shared love of baseball. Confirmed participants include the outfielder and first baseman from Nippon Professional Baseball (NPB) (Tokyo Yomiuri Giants), Major League Baseball (MLB) (Montreal Expos, Kansas City Royals), and 1989 NPB MVP **Warren Cromartie**; and popular MLB outfielder (Chicago Cubs, Oakland A's, Colorado Rockies) and 2010 NPB single-season hit record breaker (Hanshin Tigers) **Matt Murton**. Additional panelists to be announced shortly.

Expect to see more baseball programming in the lead up to Japan Society's celebration in 2022 of the 150th anniversary of baseball in Japan.

All roads lead to our celebration of the Summer Games. For more information about the series as it progresses, please visit [Japan Society's website](#).

About Japan Society

Japan Society is the premier organization connecting Japanese culture, business, and society with audiences in New York and around the world through innovative programs in arts and culture, public policy, business, sustainability, and education, online and on-site at our headquarters in a landmarked New York City building. Since 1907, our mission has been to promote mutual understanding and *kizuna* – forging deep connections – between the U.S. and Japan, by convening critical conversations, championing future creators, and serving as a trusted guide to the abundance of Japan. We are committed to strengthening connections within our community and building new bridges beyond. japansociety.org

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Let's Play Two Program Partners

Japan Society is proud to partner with our sister organizations across the US in presenting *Let's Play Two: Baseball in Japan and the U.S.* Thank you to our program partners: Japan America Society of Dallas/Fort Worth, The Japan America Society of Chicago, the Japan America Society of Greater Cincinnati and the Japan/America Society of Kentucky.

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