

President

Gabriel Coronado - When I ran for President in 2019, my goal was to help build a better community for all of the alumni in the JETAA Chicago region. In the last 16 months, the leadership has made incredible strides in connecting with new alumni, reconnecting with some of our more established alumni and creating an environment in which all of us can thrive and feel welcome. We as an organization are on the correct path and I want to maintain or forward momentum into 2021.

I want to find new ways to bridge the generational gaps between our alumni, strengthen our partnerships in the local community and work towards long term stability for our chapter.

I hope you will give me the opportunity to do so.

Vice President

Lara Espinoza - The level of commitment to building a better community for all alumni my fellow JETAA Chicago officers and alumni leaders have shown the past 16 months is the foundational reason for me wanting to continue serving a third term as JETAA Chicago Vice President.

I'm incredibly grateful to have had the opportunity to work alongside our alumni members to consistently show up for our regional, national and international JET community even in the midst of a global pandemic. During my second term as VP, I've had a central role in keeping the chapter focused on JETAA Chicago's mission, while embedding a culture of equity and belonging as transitioned to a completely remote/virtual environment in March 2020. One of the most important initiatives I spearheaded with my fellow officers was establishing the [JETAA Chicago's Community Conduct & Agreements](#) that set clear expectations for all JET alumni leaders/members/partners who participate in and with our chapter. I'd like to help the JETAA Chicago leadership further iterate and improve this foundation of increased transparency to continue to rebuild and establish trust in fostering deeper connections to stabilize our internal/external operations in continuing to support our regional (Illinois, Wisconsin & Indiana) alumni and greater JET communities.

Secretary

Jocelyn Russell - It was a hot, sticky summer day inside a prefectural building with the air conditioning (unsurprisingly) turned off and about 100 soon-to-be JET alumni crammed together in a small conference room when I was told about the trials I might soon face when I finally leave Japan. If I'm being honest, I was only half-listening. I was making lists of things that needed to be done and things I still wanted to do. I told myself that I would be fine upon returning to the Chicagoland area. I'd be jumping right into the job search in a new field, in a big city. I'd be reconnecting with old friends; reunions were already in the works. I had new hobbies I wanted to pursue, trips I was going to take. I was going to be too busy to "mourn" my JET

experience.

While the COVID-19 crisis certainly didn't make it any easier, it was no walk in the park like I thought it would when I returned. I missed Japan, I started to have regrets about things I never thought about while I was on JET, I wanted to talk about JET and Japan with others, but those near me were already moving on. It was sad, frustrating, and quite lonely. When Gov. Pritzker announced the stay at home order in February of 2020, I felt like I hit a new low in the post-JET experience.

It was shortly after that when I decided to join a JETAA Chicago open board meeting. I was pleasantly surprised by how warm and welcoming the entire board was and I found myself excited for future meetings and events, even though they were 100% virtual. As a general member, I went from attending meetings to helping plan, promote, and host virtual events like our successful Fold n' Sip Origami Folding Night (July 2020). Shortly after, I joined the board as secretary and I would like to continue on for another year!

I want to help bring this close knit community to even more JET alumni, both in the Midwest, across the nation, and around the world. I want to continue to assist JETAA Chicago in helping bring some comfort and a sense of community to JET alumni who might be struggling like I did.

I also played a role in helping JETAA Chicago become more active in the virtual space, which has helped us bring in participants from all over the world. Although in-person gatherings might be on the distant horizon, JETAA Chicago will continue to build its strong reputation in the online space for years to come and I would love to be a part of that.

I'm very excited to see where JETAA Chicago goes from here. I hope for your continued support to serve as the JETAA Chicago secretary for the 2021-2022 year. Thank you!

Philanthropy Coordinator

Sheila Burt - It has been an honor and privilege to serve as Philanthropy Coordinator for JETAA Chicago this past year. I am running for this position again with the goal of supporting our chapter's growth and long-term mission. We recently were honored to receive a grant from the USJETAA/Sasakawa USA Chapter Grant Program. In the coming year, I hope to continue to research other ways we can foster dialogue through our programming and ways we can support our members. I also hope to foster relationships with partner organizations, including the Japan American Society of Chicago, Japanese American Service Committee, and the Japanese Culture Center. Finally, I would like to formulate ways we can support local school districts where JET alum teach and other schools that may be interested in hearing from JET alumni about the program.

Marketing Coordinator

Alexis Palmer - Hi everyone! I would like to run for the position of Marketing Coordinator of JETAA Chicago for the 2021-2022 term. I started in the Marketing Coordinator position in November of 2020, and while I only have a few months of experience under my belt, I think I have learned a lot not only about marketing and advertising but also about event planning and collaboration. I am passionate about forming and maintaining bridges between people, and volunteering as the Marketing Coordinator has given me the opportunity to do so. We are all uniquely connected through our shared life-changing experience of participating in the JET Program, but upon returning home it is easy for us to become isolated and to drift apart from our JET community. I want to continue to contribute to the board's efforts to provide everyone with a safe, welcoming environment in which all former and future JETs can seek advice and share their experiences.

Specifically pertaining to the position of Marketing Coordinator, I believe that I could continue to be a strong asset to the board. I have excellent organizational and communication skills and am committed to gaining more knowledge relevant to marketing that would improve the organization's promotional and outreach efforts. In addition, I have relevant experience working with executive boards, as I served as the treasurer for both of my sports clubs during college. I look forward to continuing to serve with the JETAA Chicago Board and I appreciate your consideration!

Activities Coordinator

Cassie Conrad - Hello! I'd like to run for the Activities Coordinator position. I've had a great time planning events this past year and am looking forward to the opportunity to come up with even more ideas!

My goal when I first joined the board was to make events more accessible to members who didn't reside within the city of Chicago. While covid prevented me from organizing many of the events I'd had in mind, I think I did achieve my goal of bringing more members together and building a stronger community. I hope to continue to do so this year, with your support.