

Festival helps to bridge Japan, U.S. culture gap

Several hundred Southfield-area residents took time out of their Memorial Day weekend Sunday to celebrate the heritage of a faraway land as part of the Festivals of Japan celebration.

The annual event highlights the tastes, sights and sounds of Japanese culture as a way of bridging the gap between east and west.

Those attending the event sampled the offerings of several area restaurants including New Soul Garden and Musashi Sushi Bar in Southfield. The food proved so popular in fact that most of the offerings were gone by the time the last few tables of people made their way through the line.

Dr. Brenda Stanczak, consortium coordinator for the Japan Center for Michigan Studies, congratulated the city and those in attendance for celebrating Japanese heritage at a time when Japan-bashing has become a common practice.

Among the featured entertainment was a performance by the University of Michigan's Japanese Music Ensemble's songs of Japan by the women's chorus of the JSD Women's Club, a Japanese folk dance and several numbers featuring Japanese dance.

Demonstrations in ink and brush writing also were offered as well as



Making music: Tomoyo Kochler of Southfield provides dinner music playing the Koto during Sunday's Festivals of Japan event in Southfield.

an arts and crafts display.

One lucky guest also made off with the top door prize, two round-trip tickets to Japan, courtesy

Northwest Airlines.

Preparations already are under way for next year's program, according to one organizer.

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