



JONATHAN WEIAND/SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL

Nancy Iwami celebrates her 100th birthday at the 80th anniversary celebration of the Japanese American Citizens League's Watsonville chapter. Four of the club's members have reached 100 years old.

**JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE, WATSONVILLE**

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# Club celebrates 80 years

By Calvin Men

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**WATSONVILLE**

— While the Watsonville-Santa Cruz chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League is in a rural setting, it is one of the largest in the nation.

That was one fact Mas Hashimoto highlighted recently during a celebration marking the chapter's 80 years in Santa Cruz County.

With more than 90 people in attendance, the four long tables were filled for

the celebration at JACL Tokushige Kizuka Hall on Blackburn Street in Watsonville.

"We're doing this one because four of our members have reached their 100th birthdays," said Hashimoto, former chapter president. "So we're celebrating their contributions."

Hashimoto recounted the storied history of the chapter to event attendees. He touched on key points, from the chapter's beginnings as a social club

formed by the first generation of Japanese immigrants in the county in the 1930s to years of inactivity in the 1940s because of the government incarceration of Japanese-Americans during World War II.

"It is difficult to explain 80 years of history in a few minutes," he said. "Our chapter today, thanks to its members and board of directors, is one of the largest in the entire JACL and one of the most proactive."

Also part of the celebration was recognizing four

100-year-old members of the chapter: Dr. Masako Miura, Hiroko Shikuma, Enji Shikuma and Nancy Iwami.

"I think the people that started it, they really worked hard and did so much for us," said Iwami, who was there with her daughter and granddaughter.

She also acknowledged the league's efforts to help members with getting reparations from the government in the wake of the internment.