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For Immediate Release

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# SCUSD to Honor Two World War II ‘Survivors’

***Award-winning author interned after Pearl Harbor and rare tree both to be celebrated at ceremony on Friday***

**April 18, 2012 (Sacramento):** Kiyō Sato, 88, is a survivor. A native of Sacramento, her Japanese American family became the target of prejudice after the attack on Pearl Harbor and was eventually forced to live in an internment camp in Arizona.

Despite these struggles, Ms. Sato eventually returned to Sacramento, joined the U.S. Air Force, finished her education and become a successful school nurse and award-winning author.

A rare pink almond tree on Folsom Boulevard near the Rancho Cordova library is a survivor, too. Although it provided decades of beautiful blossoms, it was chopped down to the ground 15 years ago. As a young girl attending Edward Kelley School, Sato says she often admired the pretty tree and was horrified as an adult when it was felled.

“I just about died,” she said. Optimistic that the tree was not dead, she kept a watchful eye on the stump. “And lo and behold, one day there was a shoot. I thought ‘Glory halleluia! This tree is alive!’ ”

On Friday, both Sato and the tree will be honored at a ceremony sponsored by the Sacramento City Unified School District’s Adult Education Department and the Rancho Cordova Historical Society. At the “Kiyō’s Tree” ceremony, a common white-blossoming almond tree will be planted at the school. The goal is to eventually graft the rare pink tree onto this one to create a lasting legacy to Sato, says Dr. Susan Gilmore, director of Adult Education.

“Kiyō is such a special person in our community,” Gilmore said. “She is a symbol of strength and character and perseverance. And so is her almond tree.”

Sato was born to Shinji and Tomomi Sato, who grew grapes and strawberries on their small Sacramento farm, in 1923. The eldest of nine children, Kiyō Sato attended Edward Kelley when it was a one-room kindergarten through eighth grade school.

She wrote about her childhood at age 80 after enrolling in computer classes through SCUSD's Adult Education Program. Her memoir, "Dandelion Through the Crack/Kiyo's Story," was awarded the William Saroyan Prize for International Writing (non-fiction) in 2008.

Sato credits her early years at Edward Kelley for providing her with the keys to success in life. "It was the best school and I got the best education of my whole life."

The oldest continually occupied school in Sacramento County, Edward Kelley, built in 1869, now houses a pre-school operated by SCUSD's Adult Education Parent Participation Preschool Program.

**WHAT:** Kiyo's Tree: Almond Tree Planting Ceremony  
**WHEN:** 12 p.m. on Friday, April 20  
**WHERE:** Edward Kelley School  
3340 Bradshaw Road  
Sacramento, CA 95827

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