



**Name: Tamiko Ishidate**

**Role: Director of Sake**

**RNDC Work Location: Pleasanton, CA**

**Date of Hire: 07/05/2011**



**Why is Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month important to you?**

As a first-generation immigrant from Japan, and assuming a role representing the beverage category that has a direct tie to the country of my birth, I take pride and responsibility to represent my culture and heritage. Currently, we continue to see unsettling scenes across the nation in our AAPI communities. It's increasingly important we try to help bring awareness and better understanding to the public around us.



**What would you like our RNDC family to know about you? Briefly tell us your story – personal and/or professional. What makes you uniquely you?**

I am originally from Japan and moved to the United States when I was 19. Since then, I have lived a third of my life in Hawaii and the rest in the Bay Area. I am married and have two daughters, one attending college and one is a recent college grad. My husband is a musician and our house is always surrounded by music from classical to jazz to funk to Afro-Cuban. I have worked for RNDC (formerly Young's Market Company) for nearly 10 years. I've truly enjoyed meeting so many wonderful colleagues and customers throughout my work. I love what I do and the community I work with. I am a passionate home cook, and Sake and food pairing is my specialty.

### **What are some of the family traditions that celebrate your heritage?**

We have so many celebrations throughout the year. New Year is a big thing in Japan and we have a peaceful transition to the New Year. We eat Soba noodles on New Year's Eve and eat Mochi (pounded sticky rice cake) on New Year's Day. We have other important cultural holidays like Girl's Day, Boy's Day, Cherry Blossom Festival, Tanabata ("Star Festival"), Obon ("Ancestor Worship" holiday) and National Sake Day on October 1st. We also celebrate all major American holidays which keeps our holiday calendar pretty busy in a good way!

### **What does the celebration and honoring of your culture mean to you and your family?**

Like so many other Americans, I have daughters who are mixed races, and it's important to me that they learn about their heritage and culture. I try to teach them the core values and the principles I consider important about my culture. I also try to teach them what about my culture I feel needs to change and progress.

### **Tell us about your favorite food, meal or beverage that reminds you of your heritage.**

Well, of course my favorite food is Japanese. Perhaps what sums up as my favorite kind of dining experience is a hot pot or "Nabe". In the cold winter days, we huddle around a hot pot simmering over a portable stove top. We cook whatever delicious fish, meat and vegetables are in season. We often add a starch at the end. It's an ultimate comfort food and a metaphor for the joy of communal dining. My favorite beverage is....you guessed it: Sake!



**Why is having an AAPI Associate Resource Group important and why did you volunteer to be one of the group leaders?**



I believe the true understanding of the AAPI culture starts with conversations among our peers. I also have a personal mission to help bridge the cultural gap between Japan and America. That was also the dream of my grandfather, a second generation Japanese American, who moved to Japan before the war and never had a chance to return to America. His dream became my dream, too.