

# JACL

*Midwest Office*

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October 2, 2008

Mr. Alan Mollerskov  
Principal  
Union Grove Union High School  
3433 S. Colony Avenue  
Union Grove, WI 53182

Dear Mr. Mollerskov:

As the oldest and largest Asian American civil rights organization in the United States, the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) is disappointed to learn about a particular activity during “spirit week” at Union Grove Union High School. It’s our understanding that one of the activities is to have the assistant principal wear an inflated “sumo” costume for the purpose of wresting someone selected by the student body.

This activity is deplorable because it utilizes a racial stereotype that serves no redeeming purpose except to formulate superficial, negative impressions about an aspect of Japanese culture to students. Irrespective of whether Union Grove Union High School has a diverse student population, the school should promote cultural diversity in a positive manner.

Furthermore, this particular activity denigrates an ancient and venerated Japanese sport, which is rich in history and tradition. We are not opposed to instilling spirit and enthusiasm among students in supporting the high school. However, we would hope that the school leadership would exercise racial and cultural sensitivity in the pursuit of arousing school spirit rather than teaching students to mock the culture of others.

Sincerely,

William Yoshino  
Midwest Director  
Japanese American Citizens League

Cc: David Magar, Superintendent  
Margaret Igowsky, President, Wisconsin JACL