

President's Message

By Karen Wheeler



A Big Shoe to Fill!

Dear Friends, Happy New Year! It is both an honor and a pleasure to greet you as the incoming President of the Torrance Sister City Association for 2024. Following **Donna Dunlap, Werner Willoughby, Hazel Taniguchi**, and many before, is a humbling undertaking. In view of their

excellent leadership, I do have a big shoe to fill, so to speak.

I am **Karen Wheeler**, a TSCA Board Member, former Secretary, Chair of the Bunka Sai Gift Booth, Co-Chair of the Historical Committee (with **Sumi Arnheim**), and parent of **Anna (Wheeler) Browning**, a 2016 TSCA Student Delegate. I am at your service as we proceed into the 51st year of the Torrance Sister City Association.

Year 50 was simply **EPIC**. There was a full slate of amazing, memorable and celebratory events. Year 51? Not so much... It will be a year of catching our breath, and continuing to do the annual activities which build and maintain our unique blend of international and interpersonal friendship and cultural exchange.

First up is the annual Reunion on January 6, recognizing TSCA participants, and Board Members, old and new. We also introduce the high school student applicants for the Summer 2024 Delegation from Torrance, California to Kashiwa, Japan.

The process of selecting eight Student Ambassadors begins.

We will once again host the Bunka Sai Japanese Cultural Festival, April 20-21, 2024, at the Torrance Cultural Arts Center. It is an unparalleled opportunity to immerse all five senses into Japanese life, without a twelve-hour flight!

In July, we send our Student Ambassadors to Japan, and similarly in August, we welcome the delegation from Kashiwa, and fill their days with education, adventure and fun. Some of us will have the opportunity to welcome the Japanese high school students into our own homes for several days, to show them American family life, and make friendships that last a lifetime.

We will also continue to select and prepare teachers from Torrance to live and work in Kashiwa for two years, teaching high school English.

Finally, we will do the things that keep our Association running, e.g., keep the books, store the equipment, maintain the insurance, thank our donors, and send out the Newsletter.

For all of these things we depend on voluntary contributions of time, talent and money, as well as collaborative support from the Torrance Department of Cultural Services.

I gratefully acknowledge our Board Members who have completed their terms in 2023: **Hazel Taniguchi, Gail Roulette, and Sumi Arnheim.**

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JANUARY 8, 2024

Association meeting (7 pm)
West Annex Commission Room

JANUARY 16, 2024

Bunka-Sai meeting (7 pm)
West Annex Commission Room

FEBRUARY 13, 2024

Association meeting (7 pm)
West Annex Commission Room
(Tuesday, observing Lincoln's Birthday)

We are looking for a

Newsletter Editor

Please contact
tscanewsletter@gmail.com
for more information

Under our bylaws, they may have the option of returning to board service after a hiatus, if they choose. (And may do.) I also warmly welcome new members to the Board: **Maureen Ortega** and **Leon Lee**. (An additional member is pending and will be announced in our next Newsletter.) Our Student Board Members are **Franco Lee** and **Gianna Solazano-Kaats**, who were part of the 2023 Delegation to Kashiwa. All our Board Members will be participating in decisions, events, projects and meetings in the coming year. Although our monthly meetings are known for their tasty refreshments, members seem to find the work, the people and the events of TSCA even more worthwhile. Any TSCA member can attend a Association meeting to see what's going on. We would love to see you (Second Monday of the Month, 7pm, West Annex Commission Room).

Thank you for reading this Newsletter. Your time is valuable; thank you for spending some of it with us.

Sincerely,
Karen M. Wheeler

Student Selection Committee Underway

By Lori Chong Eurich

The Student Selection Committee (SSC) will begin vetting the fifteen candidates for eight seats on the 2024 summer exchange program in July. The SSC, chaired by Lori Chong Eurich includes: Karen Wheeler, Donna Dunlap, Maureen Ortega, Marilyn Rubin, Aimee Arreguye, Gia Solarzano-Kaats, and Mallory Beard (2024 adult leader). The first of the events is the annual Alumni Reunion Potluck on Saturday, January 6, 2024 at 11:00 a.m. at the Ken Miller Recreation Center auditorium. The fun events are designed to help the SSC members learn about each candidate and their family as they evaluate who is the best fit for the program. Special thanks to the SSC members for their time, efforts and experiences that will assist the team. The students enjoy the engaging events and make new friendships through the process.

Torrance Sister City Association

PRESIDENT

Karen Wheeler

VICE PRESIDENT

Werner Willoughby

SECRETARY

Amie Campbell

TREASURER

Stephanie Ewing-Warner

Newsletter Editor

Shoko Matsuda

Newsletter Distribution

Donna Dunlap

Comments or submissions?

Please send an email to
tscanewsletter@gmail.com

Membership List

Compiled by Alyssa Yamauchi, Membership Chair

NEW AND RENEWED MEMBERSHIPS

LIFE (\$2,000+)

Cambra, May Ikeda
Chan Family, Kenneth
Doyle, Marlene Cambra
Fichtner, Dan and Ray Rand
Henson, Mikko Haggott
Ihde/Dunlap Family
Jorday, Leah Ray
Kaji & Associates
Oriental Motor USA
Roulette Family, Ray and Gail
Sekiguchi, Joh
Torrance Refining Company, LLC

CORPORATE (\$200+)

Miyako Hybrid Hotel

BENEFACTOR (\$125+)

Bauer, Craig
Furey, Pat and Terry
Taniguchi, Hazel
Torrance Y's Men's Club
Willoughby, Werner and Aileen
Yamaguchi, Bryce and Cheryl

SUPPORTING (\$75+)

Cababa, Ed and Kerry
South Bay Judo
Thomas, John

FAMILY (\$40)

Arnheim, Bruce and Sumi
Chin Family, Kain-Vine
Diederich, Brian and Deanne
Dowell, Bob and Peggy
Eurich, Lori and Dane
Ghuman Family, Mandeep
Gimian, Reed and Dede
Grahmann, Alex and Erin
Hargrove, Eunice and Linda
Hirashiki, Hiro and Jen

Hofer, Gary and Fusae
Ito, John, Wendy and Alex
Kaemerle Family, Carl
Ito, John, Wendy and Alex
Kaemerle Family, Carl
King, Dennis and Patricia
Komae, Kent and Jody
Kranz Family, Linda
Kuwahara, Mas and Taeko
Lee, Leon and Wei-Ti Chen
Matsumoto, Mickey and Frances
Medlock, Matthew, Thomas and Kathleen
Nadsady Family, Alina
Nakamura Family, Stephany
Nakano, Helen and George
Newhart, Lance and Natalie
Ortega, Esteban, Maureen and Grayson
Peitzman, Fred and Ann
Penland, Thomas, Olivia and Ginger
Radomski Family, Elisa
Roulette, Mark and Peggy
Rubin, Marilyn and Sherwin
Takikawa Family, Hisataka
Trattner, Glenn and Melanie
Wheeler, Bob and Karen

INDIVIDUAL (\$20)

Ando, Frances
Ashcraft, Heidi
Cauble, Lynn
Dunham, Andrea Henson
Grunhause, Duretta
Johns, Patricia
Kraemer, Lynda
Matarrese, John
Matsumoto, Brandon
McGee, John
Pigao, Christopher
Poirier, Rebecca
Pollinger, Lisa
Wand, Suzie
Willoughby, Kevin

Yamauchi, Alyssa
Yamauchi, Blaine
Yamauchi, Patsy

Donations

\$60 Roulette, Mark and Peggy
\$10 Arnheim, Bruce and Sumi

If you haven't paid your
2024 membership dues yet,
it's not too late!
See the Membership form
in this newsletter or
pay online at
[https://torrancesistercity.org/
membership_join.html](https://torrancesistercity.org/membership_join.html)
Thank you for your support!

Happy New Year from Japan



These great artworks are from Tanaka-sensei's students at Kashiwa Fourth Junior High School.

These are nengajo, new year's cards that are exchanged with Torrance High school students in Mr. Jones's class.



Adult Leader for 2024



My name is Mallory Beard and it's wonderful to meet you all! I'm a native of Southern California, growing up in the South Bay, then the Inland Empire. I've had the opportunity to travel domestically and internationally for education, athletics, and work, and look forward to fostering the value of those experiences through TSCA's focus on cultural exchange. I'm delighted to be an adult leader for the Torrance Sister City Association and hope to share lasting and profound memories with the students, leading and supporting them as we grow together this year.

Alumni Update

"Dear TSCA,

Just wanted to share with you, Franco got accepted to United States Naval Academy officially!!

Thank you for your support and care for all these months!! You will see him on the ship a couple years later with Japan delegates in San Diego!!

Thanks again!!

Weiti"





English Teacher Report

完全な円: A Teacher's Journey and Nature's Serenade

By Pedro Abina

My journey with Ichikashi began in 2018 through the North and Ichikashi exchange program. During the first part of our trip, I explored the bustling streets of major cities and savored the serenity of rural landscapes with some of my best friends. It was a crash course in the diversity and richness of Japanese culture, offering a well-rounded glimpse into the country.

The second week, we reunited with the students who had ventured to California in November 2017. Among them was my friend Eisuke and his family, whose warmth and hospitality became a defining aspect of my time there. We traversed that week together, immersing ourselves in shared experiences, and in a mere seven days, bonds had forged that felt as though they'd weathered years. Leaving Japan was nothing short of heart-wrenching, knowing that our time together had barely scratched the surface of the camaraderie we shared. That separation fueled a determination within me to return to this land.

Every good story has a conflict and my plot twist arrived in the form of visa delays, a hurdle that stretched my patience and resolve for nearly three months. Instead of the anticipated late August arrival, I landed in mid-November. With little time to dwell on the delay, I plunged headfirst into the rhythm of this new reality. The urgency of the situation propelled me straight to the school upon touchdown. Turbulent as the circumstances were, there was an unspoken sense of duty—a determination to seamlessly integrate into a semester already in motion.

Amidst the whirlwind of relocating across the Pacific and the emotional rigors of teaching, moments for reflection were scarce, reserved for the quiet pauses while awaiting my evening bus home after school. It was in those solitary moments, surrounded by the reddish leaves adorning the school's entrance, that the realization struck—I had never truly experienced the authenticity of an autumn before.

The urgency of my unexpected arrival left no room for hesitation; instead, it fueled a drive to act swiftly and decisively. Amidst rapid adjustments, the intricacies of teaching English unfolded and exposed the labyrinth of language. Teaching extended beyond mere words on the page, encompassing the subtleties that transcend them—intonation, tone, and the delicate dance of effective communication. It reinforced that language is not just a compilation of phrases but a symphony of expression. My purpose now extends beyond imparting language skills; it encompasses sharing experiences, nurturing curiosity, and fostering connections that transcend linguistic boundaries.

Once mid December came around, I had time to stop and think. With all the students out for winter break, I thought about how amazing it was that Chris, my senpai, managed to handle all of our classes for the majority of the semester while I was awaiting my visa. As I walk the halls filled with pictures from the last 50 years of friendship, I am reminded of all that the ALT's before me have accomplished and I am inspired by the mark they've left. Brandon's introduction of video editing sparked a surge of creativity among the students, Deanna's incorporation of movement techniques proved transformative in guiding students from thought to action, and Amie's enduring TGIF initiative continues to be a place where students can engage in language exchange in a much more relaxed setting!

As I stand amidst this confluence of past and present, I am reminded that our journey is a continuum, a tapestry interwoven with the threads of yesterday, today, and the promises of tomorrow. The Torrance Sister City Ssociety stands as a testament to our commitment—nurturing these bonds that traverse oceans, echoing the sentiment that distances are mere markers in the grand scheme of our shared humanity.

English Teacher Report

(Continued)

As I write this, 2024 is only a few days away and as I wait for the evening bus home those trees along the school's entrance are completely bare now. As a Californian accustomed to a more "consistent" climate, experiencing a full-blown season shift up close was a revelation. It struck a chord, reminding me of the cycles in life. The trees shed their leaves, making way for new growth, just like the cycle I've experienced—from being a wide-eyed student here in 2018 with North High School to finding myself back, this time as the one at the front of the classroom.

Life, it seems, orchestrates these quiet symphonies of symmetry and growth, inviting reflection on the cyclical nature of our existence. It has been an immersive journey, straight into lessons and hustling through finals for the students. In the chaos of it all, those trees became my silent teachers, whispering tales of change and rejuvenation. Here's to the unforeseen delays that give us new perspectives, to the contemplative bus rides, and to the arboreal instructors that silently narrate the cycles of life.

Here's to embracing the rhythm of life's seasons and those serendipitous full circle moments.

皆様、明けましておめでとうございます



Our English teacher, Pedro Abina received his official contract from the Kashiwa Board of Education in November. He replaced Deanna Sun and joined our other teacher Chris Pigao at Ichikashi.

Except for the Lifetime Membership*
all dues are in effect from
January 1 to
December 31

Member Information

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
Telephone _____ Email Address _____

My membership is: New Renewal

TSCA Directory Update:

- New Address New Telephone Number New Email Address
 I do not want to be listed in the TSCA Directory

TSCA Activities:

- I am interested in participating in TSCA activities

TSCA meetings are held on the second Monday of each month at 7-9 pm
(No meetings in August or December)

Postmark deadline to be included in the printed
TSCA Membership Directory is 2/16/24

*If you have
any questions
about your membership,
please email Alyssa Yamauchi at
tscamembership@gmail.com*

Mail your check and this form to:

Torrance Sister City Association
c/o Community Services Department
3031 Torrance Blvd.
Torrance, CA 90503

- | | |
|---|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$20 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | \$40 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting | \$75+ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor | \$125+ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate | \$200+ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime Membership* | \$2,000+ |

Enclosed is a donation to
TSCA (in addition to \$ _____
annual dues)

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Make your **check** payable to **TSCA**

www.torrancesistercity.org



**Torrance Sister City
Association**

3031 Torrance Boulevard
Torrance, CA 90503