

# Torrance Sister City Association



<http://torrancesistercity.org/>

November 2014

## TSCA Announces New Board Members

Congratulations to our newest TSCA Board Members: Dan Fichtner, David Gelbaum, Shanli Tsui, Frances Matsumoto, and Cindy Scotto.

We all look forward to working with you. See you at the next meeting!

Thank you very much to my fellow Nominating Committee members,

Donna Dunlap and Reiko Higa, whose input was invaluable.

- Jill Maroney  
Nominating Committee Chair



Dan Fichtner



David Gelbaum



Shanli Tsui



Frances Matsumoto



Adam Jordan



Leane Kuo

## President's Message

Congratulations to our new board members: **Dan Fichtner, Shanli Tsui, Cindy Scotto, David Gelbaum** and **Frances Matsumoto** who begin their three-year term in January 2015. Two students were also appointed to the board and a warm welcome to **Adam Jordan** and **Leane Kuo**. Thank you to everyone who sent in their ballots. At the November association meeting the Nominating committee will present their slate of officers for 2015. The new officers will be installed in January at the Alumni Reunion luncheon on January 10<sup>th</sup>.

Our TSCA Café will be set up at the Torrance Craft Fair on Saturday and Sunday, November 15 and 16 at the Ken Miller Recreation building. We are the only group that sells food and drink at this big event and

**Shirley Tanaka**, our café chair needs volunteers to help with food and drink sales and spam musubi preparation. See her article for more details.

The Student Selection Committee is now taking applications for the 2015 summer cultural exchange program. The application is on our website and the deadline to apply is December 18<sup>th</sup>. Please help us get the word out to high school students in Torrance.

Thank you to **Ron Kimmel**, our membership chair for maintaining our membership database, processing renewals and coordinating the printing of the directory. We appreciate your long-time support with this important job. He is sending out membership renewals for 2015 so please check your mail for this information.

We like to feature updates on members, so if you have news to share, please send the information to Linda Kranz our newsletter editor at [TSCAnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:TSCAnewsletter@gmail.com).

Happy Thanksgiving to everyone!

- Lori Chong Eurich  
TSCA President



## Upcoming Events

**November 11, 14, 27, & 28**  
City Hall closed

**November 10**  
TSCA association meeting, 7:00 pm

**November 15 & 16**  
Torrance Craft Fair, Ken Miller Recreation building

**January 10, 2015**  
Alumni Reunion Luncheon

## What's Inside?



### P2

- \* Membership News
- \* Alumni News

### P3

- \* TSCA Member News
- \* Kashiwa Photos by Stephanie Mikamo

### P4

- \* Going for the Gold!

### P5

- \* Torrance Student Reports: Family Life and Japanese Schools—Learning About Our Differences

### P6

- \* Focus on Member: Werner Willoughby

### P7

- \* Experience Japan! flyer

## Membership News

New and Renewed Memberships:  
Jensen, Davis and Kathleen (F)  
Yee, Stephanie (F)

It's time to renew your membership for 2015. Please fill out the application form on the back of the newsletter or

download a form from our web site and submit it with your dues payment. The membership committee needs a record with your current information. Please circle the type of membership and check any changes on the

Directory Update line.

If you have any questions, contact Ron Kimmel at [tscamembership@gmail.com](mailto:tscamembership@gmail.com)

## Alumni News

Congratulations to **Tiffany Yoshida** (2004 exchange student and past board member 2011-2013) on her recent engagement to Kevin Yonemoto. We wish them a very happy wedding day and a life full of love and happiness.

Tiffany Yoshida and Kevin Yonemoto were engaged on May 19, 2014 on the top of KoKo Head near Hawaii Kai in Oahu. They hiked up 1,049 steps and he proposed on the very

top of KoKo Head with her two sisters (Katie and Jaime) and Jaime's boyfriend (Jeff Uyeno) being there to witness the engagement. The wedding will be on July 11, 2015 in Seal Beach. Currently, she is a Recreation Therapist working with Spinal Cord at Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center in Downey and Kevin works as a Systems Engineer at Raytheon in Fullerton.



Kevin Yonemoto and Tiffany Yoshida



Shintani family at the White Coat Ceremony

On August 28, 2014, **Melissa Shintani** attended her White Coat Ceremony for the incoming students of the USC Doctorate program for Physical Therapy. The white coat ceremony begins the ceremonial passage of the students into the profession of physical therapy. The students each receive a white coat as a symbol of their entry into a profession dedicated to the care of other human beings. She will be in the graduating class of 2017.

Melissa was a Torrance student delegate to Kashiwa in 2008. She remembers her experience as being the "experience of a lifetime". The memories and friendships she experienced have been an important and integral part in how she holds life.

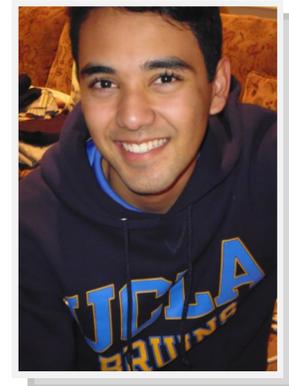
Our family is grateful for the TSCA and the city of Torrance for such a wonderful and meaningful experience!

- Patsy Shintani

UCLA undergraduates are the first in the world to build a satellite entirely worked on by students on campus. **Ken Shrivastava**, 2013 Torrance student delegate, is one of eight sophomores selected to work on the ELFIN project at UCLA. There are a total of about 40 students at UCLA who will participate in this project. NASA and National Science Foundation have awarded 1.2 million to ELFIN for this program, and NASA's

CubeSat initiative and low-cost access to space program guarantees them a launch spot. The ELFIN team will put this satellite in orbit and operate it from the UCLA Mission Operation Center for six months in 2016. More details can be found in Wikipedia when you search for "elfin ucla".

- Reiko Higa



Ken Shrivastava

## TSCA Member News

- \* Congratulations to Yoko and Jason Druten on the adoption of their new baby, Max. **Yoko Druten** taught in Kashiwa for one year.
- \* **Geoff Tsudama**, who taught English in Kashiwa from 2008 to 2011 is now working at Pasadena City College in budgeting.
- \* A warm welcome to **Mr. Vince Maekawa** who has been promoted to President of Oriental Motor USA in Torrance. The company is a life member of TSCA and hosts the Kashiwa exchange delegates every year. We wish him the best in his new position.



Jason, Yoko and Max Druten

## Kashiwa Photos



Ichikashi brass band performing "Tequila" at Bunka-Sai

Photos taken by English teacher Stephanie Mikamo at Ichikashi school



Students passing the baton in the inter-class relay at Taiikusai



Students participating in an obstacle relay at Taiikusai

## Going for the Gold!

I should have listened to my parents when I was younger: “Matthew, enjoy not having much responsibility now because as you get older, it’s only going to get harder.” – and boy, were they right.

I have been at Ichikashi now for about two years (I know, it’s already been two years!) and I can tell you, honestly, that it has not been an easy ride. My first year was filled with failure; as a teacher, as a friend and everything else in between. Growing up, we are taught that if we do things like homework and study for tests we are sure to pass through school with a breeze. I moved to Ichikashi two months after I graduated from college. I used the same methodologies that I used in college: do what is asked of you and you shall pass. However, when entering into the big world called “life” there is no one there telling you what to do or how you should do it; you have to figure it out on your own. Figuring out the things that work for you is often not as simple as one might think. It is through the process of trial and error that we often find what works for us and what does not. And that is what I learned that teachers have to go through everyday. I think second to parents, teachers are criticized and ridiculed by their students mentally and sometimes verbally almost every day. I have to admit, when I was in high school I did my fair share demoralizing teachers in my mind and it was because I thought that being a teacher was easy: telling the children to open a book and read what was in the textbook, assigning homework and just grading. I never considered that there was an actually process that took place and that they had to do research and other things to make sure the students got everything from the topics that are being taught. Keyword: STRESSFUL. This was my entire first year, learning things like this, testing it out and failing. My confidence really plummeted and some days it was hard for me to come to school, but I have a very persistent personality and so cutting

school was not going to do it for me.

In my second year, things became a little easier but still difficult, but I became more confident in my abilities as a teacher and more confident with school schedules and building a curriculum. I was not perfect and nor did I try to be, but my confidence still wavered from time to time because I was still unsure in my abilities to teach and in my understandability of the content of things we needed to teach.

So far in my third year, I have become the Sempai (coordinator) of the English Language Teacher’s at Ichikashi. I now have to be confident in my instruction and in my abilities to show my Kohai (lower-ranked coworker?) the ways of teaching at Ichikashi. Even becoming the Sempai, I was nervous because I was not even reassured of the things that I was doing was okay or not. Or even if what I was doing at Ichikashi has been effective.

We work with students everyday: teaching them, having fun with them, caring for them like they are our own. The battle of teaching is tough and is sometimes monotonous. Teachers are supposed to be the muses for their students, the people who inspire children to carry out their goals. However, sometimes teachers need inspiration; signs that tell us what it is all worth for.

Finally, in the beginning of October, I got my answer. Every year, we have a regional English speech contest that we participate in and for the last six years we have not won anything. This month however, it all changed. I had been working with my student since the beginning of September, but we had many times that we were not able to not meet because of festivals or extracurricular that she was involved in and so frankly, I did not feel that we were going to be a threat at the speech contest. But, the day before the speech contest we finally pulled it all together and she was decent. The day of the speech contest, I was a nervous wreck. I had to hide it from my student that participated so that my nerves would not affect her speech presentation. When it was her turn to go up, I was

nervous but as she started to convey her speech, my nerves relaxed and I just listened. Her speech was not perfect, but her passion and emotion was ever present throughout her delivery. It was felt by everyone in the room.

After her speech, we waited for a couple hours. At that point, I honestly did not think her performance was outstanding (comparing that performance to the ones she did at school) but good. As the judges read off the names of the winners of the speech contest, “3<sup>rd</sup> prize...” I did not think we were going to be called “2<sup>nd</sup> prize...” and then... “1<sup>st</sup> prize, ICHIKASHI!” I was stunned. My student went up to grab the prize and I was still in shock.

After the contest, a few of the teachers and I went out to celebrate.



After my stupefaction ceased, a warmth of satisfaction and accomplishment came over me. I felt my confidence come back in full force: I was on top of the world.

Until that point, I did not realize how my attitude was affecting my teaching style and the people around me. I needed inspiration, soul food if you will, to



keep me going and my student gave me that. She brought me back to life. The moment she won solidified my existence at Ichikashi and I will never forget it. It finally made me feel comfortable and confident in my abilities as a teacher and for that I will always be grateful.

## Going for the Gold (continued)

In the middle of November, we are heading to prefectural competition (equivalent to going to state) and we have been training more diligently than ever before. We will try our best and get as far as we

can in the competition and hopefully bring home the gold! I am confident now that we can succeed!

My parents were right in saying that life does get harder as you get

older, but they forgot to mention it also gets more rewarding. Wish us luck!



Matthew Medlock,  
English Teacher

## Torrance Student Report: Family Life

What I learned from my first host family is that Japanese families are the same as American families and that there aren't many differences. I did find one difference, though. While looking through a photo album of my host sister I found a photo of her in a kimono. I thought she was just dressed up for a festival, but it turned out that she was actually celebrating her 20<sup>th</sup> birthday. Unlike in America when teens celebrate their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday to become adults, in Japan their 20<sup>th</sup> birthday is celebrated.

While at my second host family's house I learned that it was normal for kids to take the train or walk



Arianna Barragan, 3rd from the left

alone to school, even though they may live far from the school. My 8-year-old host sister walked to school about 25 minutes away. It is normal for kids that age to walk or bike to school.

The father of my second host family

did not live at home because of work. My host mother explained that it was common, and that business came before family because he needs to provide for them. He lives in Aichi, Japan, far from Kashiwa, but visits home once a month. My host sisters said they missed their dad a lot, but he will have to live in Aichi only one more year.

I noticed that kids and teens in Japan are given more freedom and live at home longer than many American teens. For the most part, though, family life in both countries is very similar.

- Arianna Barragan

## Torrance Student Report: Japanese Schools--Learning About Our Differences

The Japanese school system was reformed, following World War II. It follows the 6-3-3-4 year system: 6 years in elementary school (not counting kindergarten), 3 years in middle school, 3 years in high school, and 4 years at a college or university. If you were to tell a Japanese student that you are a *junior* in high school, they wouldn't understand, because they don't go by the 4-year system like we do.

Facts about high schools learned from my host parents, who are both teachers.

Enrollment rate is about 96%, with a drop-out rate of about 2%.

Most work on a trimester system starting in April.

They get 6 weeks for summer break, and 2 weeks for winter and spring break.

Students stay in one class with one teacher all year.

Teachers have knowledge in all subjects; switching periods as in



Kyle Nishimura doing karate in Kashiwa

America is not done.

Now here's what I learned by observing two different high schools in Japan for myself. Sadly, we didn't get the chance to visit the elementary school due to the typhoon's high winds and rain, but still, the two schools that we did see were very enjoyable and fun! One of the main differences that could be seen is the wide variety of extra-curricular activities that America has. Notable clubs and activities that Japan has that America doesn't are Archery, Judo, kendo, etc.

At Kashiwa Municipal High School, we put on judo uniforms and actually learned a leg-sweep technique. We

also got to see the famous Kashiwa MHS band play a live show for us!

The visit to Nittai High School was one of my favorite days because we got to feel like actual Japanese high school students for a day. We went around in our groups doing activities such as shodo, basketball, playing musical instruments, eating lunch, and finally, karate!

So much for differences. The main similarity is the students! I was very surprised to see that the Japanese students are just the same as us: crazy adolescent kids who just want to have fun! I had an amazing time bonding with my friends from Nittai... they made me feel like I belonged to their school and been their friend for years.

Sister city associations provide the opportunity to meet and befriend people from different countries. Thank you TSCA for giving us that opportunity.

- Kyle Nishimura

## Focus on Member: Werner Willoughby

Past TSCA President Werner Willoughby is a native Californian, born and raised in San Diego. After Point Loma High School he went to San Diego State University, graduating with a bachelors degree in Chemistry.

Werner was hired with the L.A. School District right out of college in 1966 and stayed until his retirement in 2005. For 25 years he was at Dorsey High School teaching chemistry, and also serving as track and cross country coach for about ten years. While at Dorsey, Werner was faculty advisor for groups such as senior class and student council, as well as being Science Department chair. Most importantly, he met his lovely wife of 34 years, Aileen, who was teaching Social Studies, English and Japanese at Dorsey. For another 16 years, Werner taught at San Pedro High School, where he coached the Academic Decathlon team for ten years and served as Science Department chair.

Werner and Aileen have two sons. Jason graduated from UC Irvine in Electrical Engineering, and is currently



Werner Willoughby

working for Parker Hannifin in Orange County. Son Kevin went as part of TSCA's student exchange group to Kashiwa in 2007. He is a graduate of UCLA with a double major in Ethnomusicology and Japanese. He currently lives in Tokyo, studying Japanese instruments, performing with his sensei, and teaching English.

The Willoughbys' first house was in Westchester before they moved to their present Torrance home some 29

years ago. To keep fit, Werner walks at nearby Wilson Park most days of the week.

Werner's first knowledge about TSCA was when he accompanied Aileen's dance group, toting bags, etc., for their performances at Bunka-Sai in the 1980's to 2000's. Little did he realize then, as he wandered around the festival, the involvement that was in store for him. Kevin's interest in the exchange program resulted in Werner being six years on the TSCA Board; two years as member of the Student Selection Committee; two years as President; three years as chair of Bunka-Sai; and four years as August Activities chair.

When asked if he was involved in other organizations, Werner replied, "No, it's just TSCA 24/7." How's THAT for commitment!

- Gail Roulette

**SAVE the DATE – November 15-16, 2014**

# TSCA Cafe needs Help

TSCA is running the refreshments stand at the Torrance Fall Craft Faire on Saturday and Sunday, November 15-16. 100% of our proceeds will benefit the exchange program!

Will you volunteer to make this event a success? Helping hands can pick up donuts, deliver lunches to the vendors, work light kitchen duty, or sell snacks. We are also looking for spam musubi makers for both days – our musubi is a top seller!

If you can help, please email to Shirley Tanaka, [ksjtanaka3@yahoo.com](mailto:ksjtanaka3@yahoo.com).

Any time you have is greatly appreciated. Thank you!

**Torrance Craftsmen Guild's Fall Arts and Crafts Faire  
Torrance Cultural Arts Center  
Saturday and Sunday, November 15-16, 2014  
Craft Fair hours: 9 am to 4 pm**



Newsletter Editor-in-Chief: Linda Kranz  
Newsletter Distribution: Donna Dunlap  
We welcome your comments and submissions to the TSCA newsletter.  
Please send them to: [tscanewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:tscanewsletter@gmail.com)

# Experience Japan!



**Become  
a Cultural  
Ambassador for  
the adventure  
of a lifetime!**

## **Torrance Sister City Association (TSCA)**

is looking for highly-motivated Torrance residents who are high school sophomores through college freshmen, 19 years old and younger, to serve as cultural ambassadors in the Student Cultural Exchange Program.

Since 1974, TSCA has sponsored hundreds of students to represent the highest qualities of American youth in Kashiwa, Japan, our sister city, for three unforgettable weeks in July.

Applications are in your school's Counseling Office or call the Torrance Community Services Department at 310/618-2930. Download application at our website

- ◆ Here's your chance to represent the best of Torrance youth
- ◆ Promote international friendship and understanding
- ◆ Become part of a family in Kashiwa, Japan
- ◆ Visit modern Tokyo and the ancient temples of Kyoto
- ◆ Gain understanding of Japanese customs & daily life
- ◆ Participate in an authentic tea ceremony & martial arts
- ◆ Experience Hiroshima
- ◆ Make lifelong friends and much, much more!



**APPLICATION MUST  
BE POSTMARKED BY  
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2014**

**TorranceSisterCity.org**



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**TORRANCE SISTER CITY ASSOCIATION**

**2015 Membership Application**

Except for the Life Membership, all dues are in effect from January 1st to December 31st.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Individual \$20 per year  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ Family \$40 per year  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Supporting \$75+ per year  
Benefactor \$125+ per year  
Life member \$2000+(one time donation)  
Telephone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

My membership is:  NEW  RENEWAL  I do not want to be listed in the TSCA directory

Directory Update: New address\_\_ New telephone number\_\_ New e-mail address\_\_

I am interested in participating in TSCA activities. \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is a donation to TSCA (in addition to my annual dues) in the amount: \$\_\_\_\_\_ Total enclosed: \$\_\_\_\_\_

Make your check payable to TSCA and mail with this form to: The Torrance Sister City Association  
c/o The Community Services Department  
3031 Torrance Blvd.  
Torrance, CA 90503

If you have any questions about your membership, please call Ron Kimmel at 310-530-2382.

TSCA meetings are held on the second Monday of each month, except in August and December, at the Civic Center West Annex Commission Room 7:00 p.m.