

Torrance Sister City Association



<http://torrancesistercity.org/>

December 2015/January 2016

President's Message

As my brief term as President ends this month, I want to thank all of you for the support you have given me. I really could not have fulfilled my duties without many of you lending a hand.

In November we enjoyed serving the vendors of the Torrance Crafter's Guild and members of the community at large at the TSCA Cafe. What an excellent opportunity for exposure while having fun and making money for the summer student exchange. A big thank you and congratulations to **Shirley Tanaka**, and family, who coordinated the extensive menu and a well-organized system. Many energetic volunteers worked very hard making the weekend a total success. Thank you to everyone who participated. See you all again in March for the next Arts and Crafts Faire!

North High School was fortunate to host 28 students and two teachers from Kashiwa Municipal High School last month. A few TSCA members were available to meet with the teachers and exchange ideas. It is so rewarding to witness all the programs that have developed over these 42 years as sister cities. So many students have had the opportunity to experience another culture first hand and widen their perspective of the world. Observations they will never forget and hopefully pass on to others.

Also in November, **Lori Eurich** and past delegates talked to many students at the Torrance high schools

encouraging them to apply for the 2016 exchange. Applications, which are on the TSCA website, are due in just a couple of weeks. If you know of a student that would benefit from participating in our program, refer them to the website. There they can watch the videos from past exchanges, visualizing themselves participating in the daily activities and interacting with newly made lifelong friends in Japan.

Thanks to a new member reading the newsletter last month, I am so happy to announce we have a newsletter editor to carry on when **Linda Kranz** steps down. Many, many thanks to **Summer Nagano Gray** for responding to our call to find an editor. We welcome you as another volunteer willing to share your expertise to enhance our program. And many, many, many thanks to Linda for her years as editor, creating the new format and including more pictures in our newsletter. Your time, experience, patience and dedication are much appreciated. We hope you are willing to continue to take great pictures.

This past year we also had another enthusiastic volunteer fill the shoes of **Ron Kimmel** as membership chairperson. Ron was so organized it was easy for **Reiko Higa** to take over managing the ever changing list of members. You recently received the letter to renew your

membership for 2016. Your continued support of TSCA keeps our organization strong, giving us the opportunity to provide the incredible exchange experience to both Torrance and Kashiwa students. Mail your application in today, or bring it to the reunion in January. Applications received by February will be included in the 2016 directory.

Speaking of the Annual Alumni Reunion, mark your calendar: January 9, 2016 at 11 AM in the Ken Miller Recreation Center. Come meet the new adult leader and the students who are applying to be 2016 Torrance delegates. Many of us were once learning about TSCA at this January potluck. Please come and talk to these new

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Upcoming Events

December 11, 24, 25 & 31
City Hall Closed

January 1, 8, 18 & 22
City Hall Closed

January 6
Bunka-Sai Planning Meeting

January 9
Annual Alumni Reunion Potluck
at Ken Miller Recreation
Center

January 11
TSCA Association Meeting

What's Inside?

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families and make them feel welcome to our association. This is a perfect opportunity to promote people to people right here in our own hometown. We already know that the food, conversation and program are too good to be missed.

As my short tenure as President of TSCA comes to an end, I would like to thank all the members, committee

chairs, city personnel, and the Kashiwa liaisons that I have had the pleasure to work with. In three short months I have witnessed the complexities this position encounters. I have the utmost respect for the Presidents that have come before me and those that will follow. It definitely takes a village to make this such a

successful organization. I look forward to continue working with all of you for years to come.



Donna Dunlap
TSCA President

Membership News

The following have renewed for 2016 or have recently joined.

(L) Life Member

(B) Benefactor

(S) Supporting

(F) Family

(I) Individual

- Joe Sekiguchi (L)
- Vince Maekawa, Oriental Motors USA (L)
- Miko Haggot Henson (L)
- Kenneth Chan Family (L)
- May Ikeda Cambra (L)
- Torrance Y's Men's Club (S)
- Aileen and Werner Willoughby (S)
- Ted and Nikki Allred (B)
- Fred and Janice Tanabe (F)
- Heidi Ashcraft (I)

- Gary Yoshida (I) \$40 donation
- Edith Van Bellehem (I)
- Yaeko Tanaka (I)
- Tiffany Penick (I)
- Christopher A. Mori (I)
- Stephanie Mikamo (I)
- Aki Deloyd (I)
- Roy Nyberg (I)
- Jeannie and Steve Fuller (F)
- Eunice, Linda and Richard Hargrove (F)
- Ken and Judy Miller (F)
- Jim and Mariko Namimoto (F)
- Tosh and Mae Nomiya (F)
- Helen and Paul Nowatka (F)
- Carla Grace (I)

- Reiko Higa, PK and Ken Shrivastava (F)
- Ray and Gail Roulette (S)

It's time to renew your 2016 membership. Please fill out the application form on the back of the newsletter or download a form from our website, and submit it with your payment. You may also receive a reminder in the mail with an application form. Please circle the type of membership and check any changes on the Directory Update line. The membership committee needs to record your current information. Thank you for your support.

If you have any questions, e-mail Reiko Higa at tscamembership@gmail.com

TSCA News

The Nominating Committee is pleased to announce the new **TSCA Executive Board**:

- ◆ President: **Werner Willoughby**
- ◆ Vice President: **David Gelbaum**
- ◆ Secretary: **Dana Cortez**
- ◆ Treasurer: **Cindy Scotto**

We are looking forward to another great year!

- Jill Maroney, Nominating Committee Chair

Kashiwa News



Amie Komae (English Teacher) was given a birthday party by the staff. The photo was sent by Mr. Tanaka who is an English teacher at Ichikashi High School. Pictured (l-r): Mr. Mashiko, Ms. Ebisawa, Stephanie, Amie, Ms. Kawamoto, Mr. Tanaka, Mr. Onoda, Mr. Imazawa

TSCA Members Meet with Kashiwa English Teachers

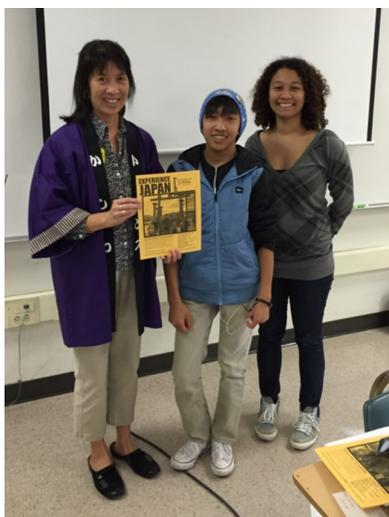
TSCA members enjoyed coffee with Kei Tanaka and Katsu Mashiko, English teachers from Kashiwa Municipal High school during their North High exchange visit in November. Both teachers said they are very pleased to be working with our teachers Stephanie Mikamo and Amie Komae who are North High grads.

Left to right:

Donna Dunlap, Marilyn Rubin, Kei Tanaka, Butch Ihde, Stuart Jones (Torrance High Japanese teacher), Steven Ihde, David Gelbaum, Katsu Mashiko and Lori Eurich (kneeling). After coffee Lori gave them a tour of Torrance Civic Center, Cultural Arts Center and Japanese garden.



Torrance High School Visits



West high Japanese teacher Ms. Sledge with 2015 delegate Alex Ito and I after the presentation about the program which garnered much interest (left photo).

Thank you to 2015 delegate Julia Tokeshi for joining me at South High to share her reflections on the cultural exchange program (right photo).

- Lori Chong Eurich, Student Selection Committee

Introducing TSCA's New Editor, Summer Nagano Gray

Beginning with the February 2016 issue, Summer Nagano Gray will take over the responsibilities of newsletter editor from Linda Kranz.

Summer has worked in the communications field for nearly 30 years and is the Communications Manager for the Office of Women's Health in the LA County Department of Public Health. She also volunteers as the newsletter editor for the Asia America Youth Symphony. Previously, she worked as an editor for consumer magazines, an association trade

publication, and corporate newsletters. She holds a bachelor's degree in journalism from Cal State Long Beach.

A Yonsei (4th-generation Japanese American), Summer enjoys learning about her heritage and Japanese culture, as well as Rollerblading, trying new recipes, all things tea, and going on urban adventures with husband Bob and 14-year-old son Jeremy, a freshman at West High.



Summer Nagano Gray, New TSCA Editor

Student Reports: Memories of Japan

Part of the exchange learning experience is for the students and adult leader to select a topic of interest to them, research, and write

Machines Found in Japan

My trip to Japan was definitely filled with educational opportunities and unforgettable memories. A favorite trip was to Miraikan, a science museum in Tokyo, where I found the robotics section to be the most interesting.

The most popular robot was the ASIMO, considered the most technologically advanced humanoid in the world. Built by Honda, it weighs 43 kg and is 120 cm tall. A demo showed that ASIMO could converse with people and sing a song.

Another robot, the InterRobot, can draw people into a conversation by nodding. It uses rhythms and body motions to nodding according to the rhythms in speech for a regular person.

a report on their findings. After their return from Kashiwa, they write another report describing what they have learned. For the next few TSCA

newsletters, we will present summaries from their experiences based on their post-trip reports as edited by Gail Roulette.

It predicts when to nod when there is a break in the conversation.

Androids, as explained at Miraikan, are created to match a robot's likeness to that of a human's. Of three types at the exhibition, I visited the "Child Android" Kodomoroid. It is the world's first android to report global news with her ability to speak many languages in simplified form.

On the streets of Japan I was surprised by the technology of a parking garage. My host mom punched in numbers in a nearby machine. I heard a loud rumbling and soon saw a large door open, exposing a car. Then the floor beneath the car moved horizontally, taking the car to a space leading to



Chris Hsiao

the street. In Japan parking spaces underground help to conserve space. That was when I learned how advanced the Japanese world really is in technology.

- Chris Hsiao

Transition from High School to College in Japan

The goals for getting into college by Americans and Japanese couldn't be more similar. The path to getting there, however, couldn't be any more different.

To get into a top school in Japan one must have skill, drive, and be a natural or trained test taker. The National Center Test for University Admissions is a standardized test that all students in Japan take to get into a college or university. The test is held annually over a full weekend in mid-January. The entire nation is involved. There is television news coverage and newspapers publishing possible test questions in the 29 tests of 6 subjects. The test starts and ends at the exact same time in every location. In 2014, 560,672 students took the test at over 693 locations. There are strict rules



Allison Sueyoshi (pictured center)

about tardiness and absences. If you miss a test date, you must wait one year before taking it again. Without college entrance, one is labeled as a ronin – a salaried man who is unemployed or a secondary school

graduate who did not get admitted into a university.

Actually, I was surprised to find that most students do not go to Cram School; only those from wealthy families do. Many feel they can just study the same material by themselves. Also, many students want a specific job (e.g., pet groomer) that only requires two years at a vocational school and don't worry about college. In addition, I learned that in some cases students don't take entrance exams, but only do interviews to get in. Only a select few go through great lengths to study and practice to get into the school. In schools there, it's who you know and what you know.

- Allison Sueyoshi

Thank You, Amy Coury

In November 1996, Amy Coury and Past President Vic Kilburn formed a committee of two to organize 23 years of TSCA memorabilia which was in a dreadful, chaotic state.

With strong support from others over the years, i.e., Fuzzy Ishikawa, Hazel Taniguchi, Mark Richardson, and Gail Roulette, the Historical Committee has continued to function with Amy as Chair.

Now, as of January 1, 2016, Amy is retiring from the committee. No more collecting articles, programs, lists, pictures. No more encasing in plastic sheets, buying binders, writing minutes,



Left to right: Amy Coury, Hazel Taniguchi, Fuzzy Ishikawa, Gail Roulette

making trips to storage with a carload of boxed material.

Gail and Hazel will be carrying on the work, so please continue to pass along pertinent materials that are

important to save for the organization's posterity.

Amy, you have been a tireless worker to maintain the history of TSCA for 19 years. With your own personal volunteer history for TSCA since its inception, it's no wonder that Sister Cities International selected you as Volunteer of the Year in 2002.

Truly an exceptionally able, talented and productive person, your dedication to TSCA has been invaluable. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

- Gail Roulette

TSCA Café Delivers Great Food at Holiday Craft Faire

At the Torrance Craftsmen's Guild Holiday Arts and Craft Faire, over 30 TSCA members, friends, and family worked tirelessly to ensure that lunch was delivered promptly to the 90 vendors and that plenty of cold drinks and refreshments were available throughout the weekend of November 21 and 22. A variety of delicious entrees and snacks, including freshly made spam musubi, Giuliano's sandwiches, Chinese chicken salad,

vegetarian quinoa chili, and homemade cookies, was also offered to the many visitors and shoppers at the faire. This year we introduced iced coffee, which sold well due to the hot weather!

Many thanks to our super sales and kitchen crew – Afzal, Aileen, Anna, Carl, Cheri, Cindy, Dana, Dick, Donna, James, Janet, Jenny, Jill, Keith, Linda S., Linda Y., Mariko, Marilyn, Pam, Reiko, Richard,

Shanli, Steven, Susan, Wendy, and Werner. It was wonderful to have so many student helpers – Alex, Allison, Garrett, Harrison, Hayley, Julia, Mikaela, Natasha, Nikola, Rachel, Ronan, and Sarah. Thank you so much for giving your time to support TSCA!

I hope you had fun and enjoyed the camaraderie among us. It was the best café ever!

Shirley Tanaka, TSCA Café Chair



TSCA volunteers working at the TSCA café at the Torrance Fall Craft Faire, November 21 and 22, 2015



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

A Common Language

Some of my earliest memories involve a hardwood court and the rhythmic bounce of a basketball. With three older siblings all participating in various basketball organization and teams, you could say I grew up on the basketball court. When it was my turn to lace up my shoes and start playing the game I was more than ready.

I spent a lot of time as a kid at basketball practices, weekend tournaments, as well as watching NBA and college games with my family. Basketball was an essential part of my childhood and a game I will always love.

Fast forward through my teenage years playing F.O.R, AAU, high school ball at North High, and intramurals in college, and I was ready to retire my basketball shoes for good. Then I came to Japan. A new country with a language I barely spoke and a school full of new faces and new opportunities for friendship. But how was I to connect to these people when we didn't speak the same language?

My answer came in the form of a short conversation I had with the girls basketball coach one day at school.

I had briefly mentioned my love for sports and Coach said I could come check out the girls basketball practice and maybe (jokingly) lace up my shoes and join in the fun. That next week I went to practice and watched the girls run their drills and shout encouraging phrases at one another all the while my heart was swelling with pride knowing exactly what it felt like to play the game.

The following week it was my turn. Coach said I should join in on all the drills and run a quick hour and a half practice with them. So I pulled my basketball shorts from the back of my closet, dusted off my shoes, and hit the hardwood.

Although I am not as agile as I once was, being back on that court felt like the most natural place to be. The drills they were running were slightly different than the ones I grew up on so I spent some time watching a few rounds and then jumping in to join. Saki, Hazuki, Shion, and Rio, four girls in my English

conversation class, served as my translators pointing out where I should go next or which line to stand in. They worked hard to express their

won't soon forget.

It seems as if my years of practices, summer sports camps, drill after drill, wins, losses, and



Amie Komae (center, 2nd row) with students

thoughts in English and I used my broken Japanese to ask for clarity. But once we stepped on that floor, we all spoke the same language - basketball. Pass, dribble, pass, pass, shoot, swoosh, high five, smile.

lessons learned on the court have come back to save me. The common language of the game of basketball has allowed me to connect with these students and coaches in a way that I might not have been able to otherwise. I am

After that first practice we gathered in a circle at the middle of the court. I taught the girls a cheer I would always do as a high school player, this time



replacing the phrase "game-time" to a more fitting phrase of our schools' name "Ichikashi." Right foot in, arms wrapped around one another, starting with a slow chant while swaying right and left, "Ichi-Kashi....Ichi-Kashi..." slowly picking up speed "Ichi-Kashi...Ichi-Kashi!" until the words were coming out faster than we could imagine. We all started cheering, raising our hands and shouting our school name with pride. It was a beautiful moment I

looking forward to dusting off my shoes a few times a week to get out on the court with these students and continue our dialogue, using basketball as our language of choice.

- Amie Komae,
English Teacher



Torrance Sister City Association Bunka-Sai 2016 (Japanese Cultural Festival) Ad Form Supporting the Student Cultural Exchange program

When: Saturday, April 16, and Sunday, April 17, 2016
Where: Ken Miller Recreation Center, the Toyota Meeting Hall, and the Torino Plaza
Objectives: To help the community learn about Japanese culture
To raise funds for the Student Cultural Exchange Program

The Student Cultural Exchange Program is...

A cultural exchange program that takes place each year in July and August. Since 1974, Torrance sends a maximum of eight students and an adult leader to Kashiwa, Japan for three weeks in July. Kashiwa sends a similar group to Torrance in August. This program is often referred to as “the gem” of the Sister City Program.

Please help us by placing an ad in our festival program booklet

Your ad will promote your company/business and support the Student Cultural Exchange Program. Personal ads celebrating special occasions, etc., are also welcome. Your ad will appear in the program booklet that will be distributed to an expected 2,000+ visitors over the weekend.

Cost (no change in years): Full-page ad.....\$200
Half-page ad.....\$100
One-fourth page ad.....\$50
Business card size ad.....\$25

Specifics: Must be no larger than 8 1/2" x 11". **Must be camera ready. Deadline: March 4, 2016** in order to meet the printing deadline. **Checks made payable to: Torrance Sister City Association or TSCA**

Questions? Please e-mail TSCAads@gmail.com

***** Complete and return the section below*****

Company Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Contact Name _____ Phone # _____ E-Mail _____

Ad information: Size _____ Cost _____ Use last year's ad? _____

New? _____ Camera ready copy enclosed? _____

Specific instructions _____

Mail this portion, your ad, and check to: **Torrance Sister City Association
3031 Torrance Blvd.
Attn: Community Services Dept.
Torrance, CA 90503**

Thank you for your support!

Bunka-Sai 2016

Bunka-Sai—it's been 44 years since its inception and still going strong! I hope that this year's April 16-17, Bunka-Sai is on your calendar, as another exciting weekend is being planned. If you have ever participated or volunteered in this enjoyable event, thank you for your help. If not, then please join us this year!

Here are some ways you can help:

1) We are looking for donations of new or like-new items, especially Japanese items, kitchenware, toys, etc. for our gift booth which is run by TSCA members. You may contact Jill Maroney at 310-951-7502 or mjmaroney@aol.com, or Reiko Higa at 310-619-4361 or reikookinawa@gmail.com. Another possibility is to drop off your donations at one of our Association meetings on Feb. 8, Mar. 14 or Apr. 11 at the West Annex of City Hall from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Thank you for your support.

2) We print and distribute 1,800 programs to the 2,000+ visitors for each Bunka-Sai. These programs

include ads from large corporations, small businesses, and families sending photos celebrating special occasions, etc. The cost of an ad ranges from \$200 for full-page ads to \$25 for business card size. **For this great advertising opportunity please see the ad form in this issue of the newsletter.** If you have any questions contact TSCAads@gmail.com.

3) Opportunity Drawing prizes needed: If you are a business, we would appreciate gift items or gift certificates for services. If you are an individual, we appreciate merchant gift cards in any denomination. Please contact Erin Wauke at tscaevents@gmail.com. All donors will be recognized in the official Bunka-Sai program booklet and mentioned when the drawing takes place on Sunday April 17.

4) Finally, we need volunteers to prepare for and staff the event on Fri., April 15 (12 pm to 7 pm); Sat., April 16 (8 am to 6 pm); and Sun. April 17 (8 am to 6 pm). Each year groups from businesses, schools,

clubs, and other organizations as well as individuals return year after year to help out. It's a great opportunity to see old friends, meet new ones, and get involved in a great sister city program. Many volunteers take pride in making that perfect dango, batch of yakisoba, piece of grilled fish/beef or chicken, tasty bowl of curry or delicious dessert, skills they have fine-tuned over the years and are happy to teach to new volunteers. To join this outstanding group, please contact student volunteer coordinator Wendy Ito at kawenai@verizon.net, or contact adult volunteer coordinator Dana Cortez at dcortez@torranceca.gov.

The Bunka-Sai is the major fundraising event for our successful Student Exchange Program, which is the envy of many other sister city organizations. TSCA truly appreciates your support.

We look forward to seeing you April 16 and 17!

- Werner Willoughby

2015 Alumni Reunion Potluck

**Saturday, January 9, 2016
11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Ken Miller Recreation Center
3300 Civic Center Drive, Torrance**

Everyone is welcome at our annual Alumni Reunion to celebrate the installation of our new officers and board members. Meet the 2016 Partnership Award recipient and updates from the 2015 Student delegates and Adult Leader. Renew friendships, share favorite memories and enjoy tasty potluck dishes. Applicants for the 2016 student exchange program will be attending to learn more about the trip of a lifetime.

Individuals or couples, please bring a dessert or a vegetable. Families, please bring a main dish and a salad. Drinks will be provided. Please bring serving utensils labeled with your name.

To volunteer to help or for more information, contact Shirley Tanaka at ksitanaka3@yahoo.com or Reiko Higa at reikookinawa@gmail.com. We look forward to seeing everyone. Please feel free to wear your hapi coat, yukata, or t-shirt from your year. We'll also be accepting membership renewals.

Bunka-Sai 2016 planning meetings will be held from 7-8:45 in the Katy Geissert Library meeting room on the first floor. Mark your calendar and join us January 6, February 3, March 2, and March 30. We need input from members and supporters to help plan our biggest event of the year. Suggestions and new ideas welcome.

If you have questions, please contact Werner Willoughby at: w.p.willoughby@gmail.com



Photos from the 2015 Bunka-Sai. Photo Credit: Linda Kranz



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TORRANCE SISTER CITY ASSOCIATION

2016 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 email Reiko Higa
 at tscamembership@gmail.com

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.