

Torrance Sister City Association



<http://torrancesistercity.org/>

October 2015

President's Message

Dear Friends,
This past month has been extremely busy with the Student Delegates from Kashiwa and other activities. A heartfelt "Thank you" is deserved by all who helped in this endeavor, making the Torrance visit so welcoming to our guests. Host Families and businesses who hosted the delegation are especially to be thanked.

The **Ihde-Dunlap Family** hosted two times this year. Others who opened their hearts and homes are the: **Abraham, Peck, Matsunaga, Frichtel, Sherri Crowson, Tokeshi, Ito, Stojcic, Seraydarian, Nomiya, Hsiao, Sueyoshi, Kranz, Henson, Reeves, and Todd families.** As mentioned in the last newsletter, these families truly affected the delegates in a very life-changing way. TSCA thanks you for your kindness and openness to our Kashiwa guests.

Many local businesses and individuals also offered help in treating our guests to an educational trip: Bruins **Rachel Todd and Emiko Kranz** took our guests on a tour of UCLA; the **Torrance Bakery** supplied cakes for our guests to creatively decorate for our Chili Cook-off party for which **Toyota Motors** generously offered the use of the Toyota Auto Museum; **Yuki Tsuji**, a former Kashiwa student delegate now studying at El Camino, acted as translator for our Little Tokyo trip during which we visited **Fugetsu Do**, the **Japanese American National Museum**, and **Rafu Shimpō** among other sights; the **King's Bakery** was

another highlight; **Janet Payne** and **Debbie Hays** arranged an educational visit to the **Torrance Historical Society**; and finally the **Torrance Police and Fire Departments**, the **Farmers' Market** and the **City Council Chambers** are owed a debt of gratitude for their gracious donation of time and energy. **Everyone** involved in this program deserves a big round of applause. I can hear it now, in the background!

All this work doesn't just happen. It takes a team to pull such an effort off. Everyone has a particular job to do and if everyone works together cooperatively, the end result is fantastic. This happened this summer!

At our September 14th meeting the Torrance Student Delegates reported on their studies done before and during their visit to Kashiwa. **Gail Roulette** has graciously agreed to summarize their reports for our Newsletter and they will be in this and future editions.

Another important bit of news is the resignation of Amy Coury, our Historical Committee Chair since its inception in 1996. We regretfully accept her resignation [retirement] and wish her all the best in the future. I remember back in the early 80s when Amy worked with the board to apply and win awards from Sister Cities International. She has done much to make TSCA great.

Thank you, Amy.

I have honored her and Hazel Taniguchi's suggestion that **Gail Roulette** replace her as Chair of the committee. This appointment was made at the September 14th meeting.

And last, I wish to inform you that I am resigning as President of our organization as of September 30, 2015. My letter of resignation was turned in at the September 14th meeting. There have been some unintended and totally unexpected happenings that prompted my difficult decision to resign. I wish nothing but the best to TSCA in its mission to help mutual understanding among the people of the world. I believe my leaving the post of President may help in this matter.

It has been a pleasure to serve as President, and I leave with a saddened heart but know that the City of Torrance is behind our organization and there are many dedicated and talented individuals who will continue to work collaboratively to make TSCA the great organization it has been.

Remember that TSCA belongs to all of us!

Yours in Cross-cultural Understanding,

Dan Fichtner, Ph.D.



What's Inside?

P2

- * Membership News
- * Alumni News
- * TSCA Announcements

P3

- * Focus on Member: Vera Little
- * Kashiwa News

P4/P5

- * Student Reports: Memories of Japan
- * 2016 Adult Leader flyer

P6

- * Bunkasai: When Nostalgia and Newness Collide

P7

- * Torrance Host Family Memories

Upcoming Events

October 2, 16 & 30
City Hall closed

October 12
TSCA Association Meeting

Membership News

New or renewed memberships:

Bothwell Automotive (F)
Michael and Maggie Coble (F)
Bob and Peggy Dowell (F)
Yasofujiko Kineya/AKA: Ayako Perez (I)

Thank you for joining or renewing your membership for 2015.

An application form should be filled out and submitted with your dues payment so that the membership committee has a record with your current

information. Please indicate the type of membership and check any changes on the Directory Update line.

If you have any questions, please email **Reiko Higa** at tscamembership@gmail.com

Alumni News



Mickie, Meisa and Geoff Tsudama

Congratulations to Geoff Tsudama (past English teacher in Kashiwa) and his wife, Mickie on the recent birth of Meisa, their first child. Meisa was born on July 26th at 6:54 a.m. Best wishes to the new family of three!

TSCA Announcements

TSCA Café is coming! The Torrance Holiday Craft Faire is coming up on Saturday/Sunday **November 21 and 22**, at the Torrance Cultural Arts Center. Our TSCA Cafe chair, **Shirley Tanaka** needs volunteers in the refreshment booth to sell food and drink, assist with food preparation in the Ken Miller Recreation Center and more between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Helping hands also needed for Cafe set-up Friday, November 20 from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Shifts are flexible and any support is much appreciated. Please email to Shirley Tanaka, ksjtanaka3@yahoo.com and indicate day(s) and preferred hours. Proceeds from the TSCA Cafe support our student cultural exchange program.

Nominating Committee

Elections for new Board of Directors members will be held in October. We have a great slate of candidates, so please keep an eye out for your ballots, which should be arriving in your mailboxes soon.

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

Focus on Member: Vera Little

If TSCA were to give an award for Best Host Family Cheerleader, Vera Little would surely win it. Not only has Vera been an active voice for the benefits of hosting, but she and husband Bob have hosted students and adult leaders numerous times.

Vera was born in the “beautiful state of Colorado,” as were all her ancestors dating back to the 1500s. When in college at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, she fell in love with a California boy named Bob, married him, and they moved to Los Angeles. After putting each other through college, they enjoyed more than 30 years teaching in the Torrance Unified School District. Vera was a television teacher (when the TUSD had closed circuit TV), classroom teacher, and Assistant Principal. Bob and Vera have been married for 53 years and have lived in the same Torrance home for 45 years. They have two children and three grandchildren.

The Littles were welcomed into TSCA about the same time that Mayor Ken Miller planted the first Friendship Tree – that would be



Vera Little at Sayonara Banquet

1973! When Vera retired from the TUSD in 2003, she “had the honor of serving as the Adult Leader of some wonderful students to

Kashiwa.” She found the country so beautiful and the people so gracious, that she was eager to share her exciting adventures with Bob. So they traveled to Japan with the Adult Delegation in 2007. Bob fell in love with Japan and its people just as Vera did.

In addition to being a mega host, Vera has served on the TSCA Board as Secretary. She also volunteers at Torrance Memorial Hospital and Catholic Daughters of the Americas. Between Bible studies, book clubs, exercise, and visiting grandchildren in Arizona, Vera and Bob stay very busy and happy.

TSCA is fortunate to have such an enthusiastic and cheerful person among our devoted membership.

- Gail Roulette

Kashiwa News



Photo of the Torrance Committee sent by Hisataka Takikiawa taken at the KIRA festival.

Pictured (l-r): Mrs. Miyazaki, Mrs. Miyake (2014 adult leader), Mrs. Tsukuda, Mrs. Maruta (Chairman), Mrs. Doi (Vice Chairman), Mr. Miyata (2016 adult leader)



Photo and caption from Mike Arai. KIRA Festival was held on September 27th under the blue sky. It is the biggest event for us. We had a Torrance booth. So many people came in our booth, and enjoyed shopping and conversation with us. It was a great day!

Pictured (l-r): Ms. Miyazaki, Ms. Doi, Ms. Miyake, Mr. Takikawa, Ms. Suzuki, Ms. Hayasaka, Ms. Azuma, Ms. Ishida

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

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.

Evolution of Japanese Music

Our trip to Japan will forever be one of the greatest times of my life. We did all sorts of things, but in the end, music remains one of my fondest memories. Besides visiting places outside of the home, I talked with my host family about bands and music for hours after dinner. My host brother, Hiroaki, said his favorite bands are American and UK rock bands.

I was surprised at how much Japanese listen to foreign music. Jpop is very popular as I had expected, but many listen to other countries' music. A visit to Tower Records in Kashiwa Station revealed one floor filled with Jpop, Jrock, and OST's (Original Sound Tracks) from all sorts of popular media. A shock to me was that the entire second floor was devoted to other foreign music genres – rock, country, and even club music.

Japan's music movement closely resembles America's. They too have entered an age of electronic music. Some believe there are too many



Torrance delegates with brass band in Kashiwa.

electronic trends and tricks.

Two subgenres have caught my interest. Idols are female singers that are trying to be good influences to Japanese people by taking actions in public and promoting good nature, all the while singing and dancing to cute pop music. Another very popular subgenre on the Jpop scene are Vocaloids. They're computer-program animated singers that allow people to program a singing voice instead of singing themselves.

Brass bands in Japan are similar to orchestra concert bands in America,

except their selection of music is more fun than serious. Kashiwa Municipal HS had dancers doing weird moves, singers sang Jpop music, and they even put on ponchos when they played Tequila. I also went to their special performance for charity.

A lot of the music I listen to now is music I bought in Japan. The songs won't ever change. I hope the friendships we've made will never change either. I'll see you again some day, Japan.

- Alex Ito

Attending a Japanese High School

First I would like to say how grateful I am to have experienced this amazing exchange program. I truly treasure all of the memories and friendships I made in Japan.

In Japan, I focused on observing the typical life of a high school student. I originally thought their school experience would be very different from that of a teenager in America. However, after talking with my host siblings and the Kashiwa delegates, as well as visiting Ichikashi and Kashiwa Nittai high schools, I soon realized just how similar the high school experience is.

Differences include the fact that American students typically attend the high school closest to their home, while students in Japan often attend schools farther away. My host sister, Yukiko,



Ronan, Nikola, Chris and Mikaela (back row, center with striped shirt) with cheerleading club in Kashiwa Nittai High School

traveled about 45 minutes to get to school everyday. Also, while American students usually go by car, Japanese students travel to school

via public transportation, biking, and walking.

Many students have large amounts

Continued from page 4

of homework. Yukiko would come home every day and retreat to her room to do homework. However, some high schools (like Ichikashi) do not assign much homework, often because their extracurricular/club programs are so intense.

Participation in clubs is a large aspect of student life. Clubs include activities like sports, band, dance, robotics, etc., and are typically greater in members than their American counterparts. At Ichikashi HS I had the pleasure of

watching their amazing brass band perform. At Kashiwa Nittai HS we met their large track and field and cheerleading clubs.

A fun activity outside of school is the Purikura photo booth, which customizes or retouches faces in the picture. In Harajuku, I found an entire room full of Purikura photo booths! Singing karaoke is another extremely popular activity in Japan. Similar to Americans, students in Japan enjoy shopping at malls, playing in

arcades, and watching/playing sports.

Even though we may speak different languages and live in different areas of the world, American teenagers and Japanese teenagers really aren't that different.

- Mikaela Frichtel

Have You Considered Being an Adult Leader for the TSCA Student Cultural Exchange Program?

- Accompany up to eight high school students to Torrance's sister city, Kashiwa, Japan in July 2016
- Learn about the Student Cultural Exchange Program and Japanese Culture
- Spend up to three exciting weeks in Japan as an Ambassador of goodwill

Qualifications:

- Be at least 26 years of age at the time of the trip
- Reside or work in Torrance
- Have a background working with youth in at least one of the following areas:
 - ◆ Education, counseling, behavioral sciences, or
 - ◆ Youth activities, chaperone for school trips

Interested?

Contact: Stephanie Ewing Warner, chair Adult Leader Selection Committee at sewingwarn@aol.com by **November 15, 2015** or mail a brief letter of intent to apply for the position, giving TSCA a brief personal background.

Deadline for applications is November 15, 2015. Send your completed application by U.S. mail. Qualified applicants will be called for a panel interview with the Adult Leader Selection Committee.

Please see website for more details at www.TorranceSisterCity.org

Mail all material to:

Torrance Sister City Association c/o Community Services Division
3031 Torrance Blvd.
Torrance, CA 90503
Attention: Adult Leader Program

Bunkasai: When Nostalgia and Newness Collide

Ichikashi's annual Bunkasai was held on September 18th and 19th, 2015.

The halls were lined with cardboard cutouts of Disney characters and superheroes. The classrooms smelled of fresh popcorn, cinnamon churros, and ramen. The students were proudly flaunting their class designed



The hallways lined with posters created by students

t-shirts and running down the halls making last minute preparations before the opening ceremonies. There I was, the newest member of the Kashiwa Municipal High School (Ichikashi) teaching staff, about to experience my first Bunkasai (Cultural festival). Having just moved to Japan a month prior I was greeted by this new school, new schedule and the anticipation of such a big annual festival. Yet, somehow amidst the newness I found myself taken aback by a sudden and shocking sense of nostalgia.

nostalgia: noun. *a sentimental longing or wistful affection for a period in the past.*

Back when I was a student at North High School I was actively involved in the student council. My fellow classmates and I planned the dance themes, assembly games, multicultural festivals, and much more. The leadership opportunities and avenues of creative expression I experienced in High School eventually led me to pursue these passions further at Azusa Pacific University. While at APU I was a member of Residence Life and helped organized many hall events, overnight trips, and community gatherings for students.

As I walked down the long hallways of Ichikashi this sense of nostalgia followed me and my eyes seemed to widen with every passing room. 3B's incredibly authentic ramen shop with a line out the door and around the corner. 1A's serene tea garden classroom lined with tatami mats and stocked full of green tea and dango. 3A's space themed toy-story-like attraction with a glow in the dark frisbee toss and meticulously painted portraits of the solar system. I had flashbacks to the many nights I spent in high school and college painting



Students for 1A and I in front of their amazing Japanese tea garden room!

plywood signs, brainstorming eating contest games, and the overall thrill

months of hard work.

After the first day of festivities for the students and faculty on Friday, everyone headed back to school on Saturday for the Bunkasai to be open to the public. At this point I really saw the extent to which this community loves and supports Ichikashi. The campus was full to the brim with visitors buying food from the student booths and packing into the courtyard to watch the many musical, dance, and comedy numbers.

I was so proud of the effort and camaraderie between this school and community as a whole. Ichikashi is an incredible place and I'm honored to be able to share a bit of my perspective and experiences with all of you. This event was truly a beautiful collision of the sweetness of my memories as a student and the anticipation and responsibility in my new life as a teacher in Japan. I walked away from this year's Bunkasai feeling undoubtedly grateful and hopeful for the adventure ahead.



Ichikashi's famous Brass Band performing

of pulling off an event on such a big scale. I felt a deep connection to these students, knowing how much of themselves they had put into this event. What I really loved about the day was the striking confidence I saw on the faces of all the students as I toured their rooms; a radiance that comes after revealing your masterpiece after months and

Thank you for your support of this long-standing relationship between the cities of Torrance and Kashiwa and I hope the sense of nostalgia may greet you once in a while to carry you back to a delightful and precious moment in time.

- Amie Komae, English teacher

Torrance Host Family Memories

Opening your home to a delegate is one of the things that sets the Torrance/Kashiwa exchange program apart from other programs. Every Kashiwa delegate and adult leader is hosted by two families during their stay in Torrance every summer. They are generously treated to experiences tailored to their interests and have first-hand experiences in American daily life. Many families have hosted for many years, such as the Ihde-Dunlap family, who have hosted dozens of leaders and students from Kashiwa since 1984.

We have hosted three delegates since 2013 and have had very different

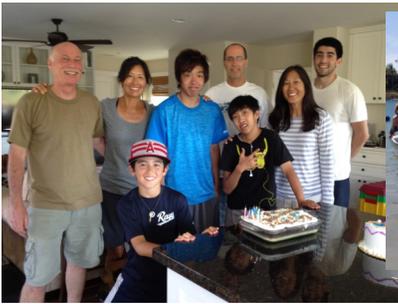
experiences each time. We have tried to expose our delegates to places and foods common to our area and have equally learned about Japanese life and culture.

One of the funniest experiences I had with our most recent delegate, Natsuki Sugiura, was when I asked her a question that she couldn't understand. I entered the question into my phone for Google to translate. When she read the Japanese translation, she laughed because she understood what I was trying to ask her and explained how badly Google had translated it. Even though communicating can

sometimes be difficult (because of my limited Japanese language skills), we managed to understand each other. I believe that hosting adds a richness to the delegate's experience and has been unforgettable for us as well.

Thank you to the Dunlap/Ihde, Ito, Abraham, Seraydarian, Todd and Henson families for sending in the photos and captions below sharing their memories with their Kashiwa delegates—and to all the families who generously share their lives in order to support cultural awareness.

- Linda Kranz



Hiroki with the Ito family and friends



Hiroki's first-time ever Stand-Up Paddleboarding in Dana Point with



Hanako Senda with Barry Henson before leaving for the airport



Hanako Senda with Mikko Henson



Seraydarian family with Hisataka Takikawa in Palos Verdes overlooking the beautiful coastline. This was their third time hosting but first for an adult. Hisataka's son Hirofumi was a 2011 delegate with Thomas Seraydarian and they remained friends. Mark Seraydarian met Hisataka in Kashiwa last May, and became friends. When Mark returned to Torrance he asked TSCA if they could host him and return the hospitality they received.



Above are two photos of the Abraham family and Mizuki Niwa. This is the third time the Abraham family has hosted. When Alison went to Japan in 2012 through TSCA, Mizuki's family hosted Alison too! Alison was happy to return the favor to her "younger sister."



Natsuki Sugiura with Emiko Kranz, and Emiko's friend, Jiu



Dave and Linda Kranz with Natsuki, out for an Italian dinner at Mama D's in Manhattan Beach



Adult leader, Hisataka Takikawa, and hosts Donna Dunlap and Butch Ihde sit in the home dugout on a tour of Dodger Stadium.



Adult leader, Hisataka Takikawa, stands next to retired Dodger number "42" on a tour of Dodger Stadium. Hisataka proudly stated at the Welcome Reception that it was an honor to be the 42nd adult leader, a number shared with his favorite Dodger - Jackie Robinson.



TORRANCE
SISTER CITY
ASSOCIATION
3031 Torrance Boulevard
Torrance, CA 90503

NON-PROFIT
ORG.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Torrance, CA
Permit No. 78

Return Service Requested

----- ✂ -----
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 email Ron Kimmel
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.