

# TSCA NEWS

TORRANCE SISTER CITY ASSOCIATION



[www.torrancesistercity.org](http://www.torrancesistercity.org)

May 2018

## What's Inside

- 2 Membership News  
Calendar  
New English Teacher Chosen
- 3 Anime Contest Winners  
at Bunka-Sai
- 4 Scenes from Bunka-Sai
- 6 Bunka-Sai Appreciation
- 7 English Teacher Report:  
The Beginning of the End
- 8 Host Family Application
- 9 Memories of Japan:  
Earthquake-resistant  
Architecture
- 10 Membership Application

---

Since 1973, the cities of Torrance, California, and Kashiwa, Japan, have enjoyed a sister city partnership, with the goal of furthering international friendship across cultures.



## President's Message

By Hazel Taniguchi

Now that Bunka-Sai is over, we are concentrating on orientation sessions for our eight student delegates and adult leader, preparing them for their trip to Kashiwa in July. This year's orientation leaders are **Jennifer Hirashiki**, the 2016 adult leader, and **Jeremy Gerson**, the 2017 adult leader.

Our students and **Chelsea Keys**, the 2018 adult leader, are looking forward to visiting Kashiwa and learning many things about the Japanese culture. We are also busy planning the itinerary for the Kashiwa students and adult leader who will arrive in August. **Steven Ihde**, chairperson of the August Activities Committee, and committee members are working on an itinerary that will help the Kashiwa group learn about the American way of life.

The Host Family Committee is chaired by **Cheryl Yamauchi**. We need **nine** more families to host for one period each. Please see our Host Family flyer in this issue, on our website ([http://torrancesistercity.org/join\\_hostfamily.html](http://torrancesistercity.org/join_hostfamily.html)), and at Torrance libraries.

Congratulations to **Brandon Matsumoto**, who is our new English teacher to be assigned to Kashiwa Municipal High School. Thank you to **Lori Chong Eurich** for chairing the selection committee.

Our Torrance-Kashiwa Sister City 45th anniversary celebration is not finished yet. We are now working with KIRA on planning the trip that our Torrance adult delegates will enjoy when they visit Kashiwa this October. Anniversaries are celebrated only every five years.

**I'm pleased to announce that TSCA has been selected to receive a very prestigious award from the State Assembly: the Nonprofit Organization of the Year in Assembly District 66.** I will be traveling to Sacramento on June 6 to receive this award for the entire TSCA family, from 1973—and even before that—to the present. A photo and article are planned for the June issue of this newsletter. We are happy and proud to be selected for this very distinct honor!

We are seeking chairpersons for the following committees: 2019 Bunka-Sai Cultural Performances, 2019 Bunka-Sai Anime Contest, and 2019 Sayonara Banquet for the Kashiwa students and adult leader. If you are interested in any of these positions, please contact me at (310) 328-1238. Training will be provided. Not only that...you'll have fun!

If you have questions about TSCA, please feel free to contact me at my phone number above or at [HazNT@aol.com](mailto:HazNT@aol.com).

*Thank you for your support! ☘*

## CALENDAR

### JUNE 11

TSCA Association Meeting (7-9 pm)  
City Hall West Annex  
Commission Room  
3031 Torrance Blvd, Torrance 90503

### JULY 9

TSCA Association Meeting (7-9 pm)  
City Hall West Annex  
Commission Room  
3031 Torrance Blvd, Torrance 90503

### JULY 10

TSCA Student Delegates depart for  
Kashiwa, Japan

### JULY 17

Host Family Meeting (7-9 pm)  
City Hall West Annex  
Commission Room  
3031 Torrance Blvd, Torrance 90503

### JULY 31

TSCA Student Delegates return home

### AUGUST 6

Kashiwa Student Delegates arrive in  
Torrance, California + Welcome Banquet

### AUGUST 23

Kashiwa Student Delegates return home

## Torrance Sister City Association

### PRESIDENT

Hazel Taniguchi

### VICE PRESIDENT

Cindy Scotto

### SECRETARY

Wendy Ito

### TREASURER

Ronald Reeve

### Newsletter Editor

Summer Nagano Gray

### Newsletter Distribution

Donna Dunlap

### Comments or submissions?

Please send an email to  
tscanewsletter@gmail.com

# Membership News

By Reiko Higa, Membership Chair

## NEW AND RENEWED MEMBERSHIPS

### Family (\$40/year)

Lum, Megan  
Sprague, Tracy & Brian

### Individual (\$20/year)

Arai, Masahiko  
Matsumoto, Brandon ☼

*Thank you for joining or renewing your membership!*

### Membership questions?

Please call Reiko Higa at (310) 619-4361 or e-mail [tscamembership@gmail.com](mailto:tscamembership@gmail.com)

## New English Teacher Chosen

By Lori Chong Eurich | Chair, English Teacher Selection Committee

The English Teacher Selection Committee is pleased to announce that **Brandon Matsumoto** will be replacing Amie Komae at Kashiwa Municipal High School (Ichikashi) in August. Amie is finishing her third and final year at the end of July. Brandon joins Alison Abraham, 2011 student delegate, who has almost completed her first year.

Brandon graduated from South High School and UC Riverside with a B.S. in Business Economics. He recently passed level N1 of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test, which is the highest level possible. Foreign students who study in Japanese need to pass this level before starting coursework. He reads, writes and speaks fluently, which will be an asset in his new role.

He served two years as an Assistant Language Teacher in the JET program teaching English in Tsu City, Mie prefecture near Nagoya. Tsu City is the capital of Mie. The JET program is a government-funded program that sends teachers recruited from the U.S., Canada, England, and Australia to schools all over the country, especially in the countryside.

Brandon's family has been actively involved with TSCA. His younger brother, Jay, was student delegate in 2013, and his parents have hosted Kashiwa students and volunteered at Bunka-Sai. His mom, Francis, is also a past board member.

Brandon is an Eagle Scout, and his project was a full renovation of the South High snack shack. In his free time, he enjoys traveling and recently explored Hokkaido, Tokyo, Kyushu, and Korea a few months ago.

*Special thanks to the selection committee members: **Hazel Taniguchi**, **Werner Willoughby**, **Matthew Medlock** (former English teacher at Ichikashi), **Steven Ihde** (2013 Adult Leader), and **Mark Roulette** (assistant principal at Torrance High) for their time, insight and experience. ☼*



Brandon Matsumoto



# Anime Contest Winners at Bunka-Sai

By Lori Chong Eurich, Anime Contest Chair

This year's Anime Contest received 21 impressive entries from middle and high school students enrolled in Torrance, Palos Verdes Peninsula, and Los Angeles School districts on Friday, April 6. The drawings, in both color and black and white, were displayed during Bunka-Sai in the auditorium for guests to admire.

The winner of the "Best Overall" award was **Rui Maruyama**, a Jefferson Middle School student whose drawing featured two characters playing traditional instruments with bonsai branches flowing from their heads. The entry depicting the "Best Representation of Japanese Culture" was created by **Akari Nakashima**, Jefferson Middle School. The winning entry in the "Cutest" category was by **Elise Fujita**, last year's overall contest winner, from North High School. The "Honorable Mention" award was presented to **Sakura Shimomura**, Jefferson Middle School.

Each winner received a sketch book, colored pencils and pens, and an anime drawing book by well-known artist Christopher Hart.

Special thanks to the judging team of past TSCA student delegates, **Sarah Donaldson** and **Jeremy Gray**; past president **Werner Willoughby**; past adult leader **Jen Hirashiki**; and long-time TSCA supporter, **Shun Kohrogi**, who presents the bracelet-making booth at Bunka-Sai and displays artwork from his children's art program. ☘



Winner in category "Best Overall"; Artist: Rui Maruyama  
*Top left:* Rui holds her winning entry.



Winner in category "Best Representation of Japanese Culture"; Artist: Akari Nakashima



Winner in category "Cutest"; Artist: Elise Fujita



Winner in category "Honorable Mention"; Artist: Sakura Shimomura



# Scenes from Bunka-Sai 2018

Photos by Lori Chong Eurich & Summer Nagano Gray



# Scenes from Bunka-Sai 2018

Photos by Lori Chong Eurich & Summer Nagano Gray





# Bunka-Sai Appreciation

## Bunka-Sai Performances Share Cultural Expertise

By **Lori Chong Eurich** | *Chair, Bunka-Sai Cultural Performances*

This year's Bunka-Sai cultural performances featured an international team of taiko drummers from Italy invited by **Rev. Tom Kurai**, the sensei of L.A. Taiko Center. Tom travels to Italy to teach, and this year the group went on tour for shows at El Camino College and the Bowers Museum in Orange County. The Italian team's performance included a duet, solos and joint pieces performed with L.A. Taiko Center artists. Another new cultural performance featured a lovely tea ceremony by **Kasetsu Kubota** from Edosenke School.

Thank you to our program emcees, **Sarah Donaldson**, 2016 delegate, and **Tricia Takasugi** for all of their help in introducing each group, making announcements, and inviting guests to see the instruments and beautiful kimonos that the performers wore.

TSCA is truly grateful for all of the time, preparation and dedication of its cultural performers whose authentic demonstrations give our guests an informative, thrilling, enjoyable and memorable experience of Japanese culture. There is no other local event that features all of the outstanding performances featured in our two-day festival. Most of our performers have been sharing their talents for many years and their loyal support is most appreciated.

Thank you to these groups: **Yuko Kubo** (Urasenke tea ceremony), **Koto Zanmai** (Yuki Yasuda), **Kasetsu Kubota** (tea ceremony), **L.A. Taiko Center**, **South Bay Judo**, **Fujima Seiyumi Kai Dance**, **Torrance Naginata**, **L.A. Taiko Institute**, **Beikoku Shodo Kenkyukai**, **Matsutoyo Kai Folk Music**, **Shawn Schroeder** (shakuhachi), **Torrance Aikido**, **Narumi Nakamura** dance, **Mai No Kai** dance (Bando Hiromiya), **Awaya Kai Koto**, **Ryukyukoku Matsuri Daiko** (taiko), and **USA Wado-ryu Karate**.

## Kamishibai Readers Bring Fun and Tradition

By **Lori Chong Eurich** | *Chair, Kamishibai Stage*

Special thanks to all of our Kamishibai readers at Bunka-Sai in April. This old, traditional form of story reading was performed in English and Japanese by students from the Japanese National Honor Society of Palos Verdes Peninsula High School (PVPHS), city staff, and adult volunteers from the community. Six stories were read on the wooden stage throughout the weekend in a room filled with bonsai plants, ikebana flower arrangements, origami, calligraphy, and an elaborate Girls Day doll exhibit. Two new stories, "Kind Friends" ("Yasashi Tomodachis") and "Everybody Clap" ("Mina de Pon"), were a recent gift from the Torrance Committee of KIRA and presented at the Torrance-Kashiwa 45th Anniversary Banquet in February.

A big *domo arigato* to North High School music teacher and TSCA board member **Keiko Clark** for managing the stage, preparing the readers, and performing in both languages. And finally, a much deserved note of gratitude to **Sachiko Iwami**, the Japanese teacher at PVPHS who encouraged her students and fellow Japanese language teachers in the South Bay to volunteer. ☸



Keiko Clark (left) and Sachiko Iwami



# English Teacher Report

By Amie Komae

## The Beginning of the End

In the summer of 2015, I packed up my belongings, moved out of my parents' house in Torrance, and flew to the Land of the Rising Sun. I was simultaneously terrified and thrilled to begin an entire new life as an English teacher in Kashiwa, Japan, and was ready to embrace everything coming my way. I somehow adjusted to the humidity and the winter cold. I got accustomed to riding a bus 40 minutes every morning and paying my bills at my local 7-Eleven. I picked up more of the language, found a church to attend, befriended my coworkers, and was officially handed my "residential card" from City Hall. I learned the ins and outs of a Japanese high school, experienced three Bunka-Sais, participated in three sports festivals, and cried at three graduation ceremonies. I have grown to call this school my pride and joy, this city my hometown, and these people my family.

All that to say, my time here in Kashiwa is wrapping up. It is a very surreal feeling. Three years seemed like such a mountain of time and yet, here I am nearing the summit. The best part of nearing the end of a good thing, though, is that each moment becomes a little more magical. I find myself pausing during the day and saying to myself, "They don't sell this in Torrance" or "This is so Japanese!" or simply, "I love this so much!" There is no time to waste focusing on anything negative that comes my way, because there is simply too much to be grateful for. That is the blessing of nearing the end of a good thing!

Over the past few months, a lot of sweet memories have occurred. My siblings and their families (10 people total!) visited Japan and we were able to visit Kyoto, Osaka and, of course, Tokyo. At school, we welcomed a dozen new teachers (five of them being new English teachers) and nearly 300 new 1st-year students! Also, I went to see a Tokyo Giants baseball game (my first of many this summer), held a hedgehog at a cafe, bought 100-year-old indigo fabric in Kyoto, and planned a trip to Korea in June. These memories are all so sweet and I am savoring them up before my contract finishes in August and I move back to Torrance.

Life abroad is definitely full of its fair share of challenges, but they absolutely pale in comparison with the lessons learned and the people you get to meet along the way. I am soaking up every moment of my time left here in Kashiwa and overflowing with gratitude for what this TSCA program has given me. Moving to Japan to work at Kashiwa Municipal High School for three years has absolutely changed my life for the better! ☘

*Amie Komae has been teaching at Kashiwa Municipal High School (Ichikashi) since August 2015 as part of TSCA's 3-year English Teacher program.*



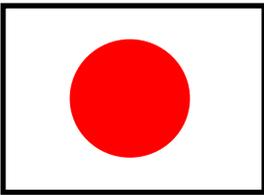
My siblings, their kids, and many of my coworkers enjoy a dinner out in Kashiwa.



At left, Alison (the other TSCA English teacher) and I with our former principal, Mr. Nagao. He transferred schools this past April and gave us small parting gifts!



Cradling a hedgehog in a hedgehog café in Tokyo!



# Expand Your Cultural Horizons

## Host a student from Kashiwa, Japan, for 1 week in August

(August 6-14 or August 16-23, 2018)

**Share our American culture with a student from Kashiwa for the experience of a lifetime!**



"Hosting was such an enriching experience, and a true exchange of cultures. We played volleyball and board games with our new 'daughters,' and they introduced us to *okonomiyaki*. Yum!" ~ The Kuo Family

The students stay with two host families during their 18-day stay in Torrance. All daytime activities are planned and hosted by the Torrance Sister City Association (TSCA). Host families are responsible for transporting their students to and from the West Annex at City Hall each morning and late afternoon. Some weeknight activities are planned and host families are welcome to join the fun! At all other times, the host families will arrange their own activities and meals with their exchange student in accordance with TSCA guidelines. Each host family will have one weekend to plan their own activities. Kashiwa students are able to communicate in English.

A Host Families orientation will be held in late June or early July.

**QUESTIONS?** Please contact Host Family Chair **CHERYL YAMAUCHI** at [TSCAHostFamilyProgram@yahoo.com](mailto:TSCAHostFamilyProgram@yahoo.com)



TORRANCE SISTER CITY ASSOCIATION, INC.



### HOST FAMILY INTEREST FORM

All first-time applicants will be screened by TSCA

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Emergency/Daytime Phone \_\_\_\_\_

We would prefer to host a Boy \_\_\_\_\_ Girl \_\_\_\_\_ Either \_\_\_\_\_

We would prefer to host a student from August 6-14 \_\_\_\_\_ August 16-23 \_\_\_\_\_ Either week \_\_\_\_\_

Number in household \_\_\_\_\_ List pets, if any \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Adults \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Children \_\_\_\_\_ M / F Age \_\_\_\_\_ M / F Age \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ M / F Age \_\_\_\_\_ M / F Age \_\_\_\_\_

Others \_\_\_\_\_

Our family has participated in these TSCA Activities: Bunka-Sai \_\_\_ Student Exchange Program \_\_\_ Host Family Program \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_

Please mail form to Torrance Sister City Association, Attn: Host Family Program, 3031 Torrance Blvd, Torrance, CA 90503

## Earthquake-Resistant Architecture

By Harrison Reeve, 2017 Student Delegate

Tall buildings, luxurious buildings, skyscrapers—many first-world countries have the same modern buildings, including Japan. However, given Japan's location on the Pacific Ocean's Ring of Fire, where more than 80% of the world's largest earthquakes occur, the country has instituted strict building regulations and developed innovative building methods to combat the unique dangers that earthquakes present.

I have always liked building and architecture, even when I was young playing with Legos, but what made me choose earthquake-resistant architecture for this report was my interest in exploring the types of innovative thinking and design that Japan uses to keep its people safe during an earthquake. I was very excited to go to Japan and see some of these designs firsthand.

While Japan has endured many earthquakes, including the Great Kanto earthquake in 1923, which claimed more than 100,000 lives, its new, more stringent anti-seismic design code came into effect in the 1980s. In 1995, when Japan was hit by another devastating earthquake, known as the Great Hanshin earthquake or Kobe earthquake, the country again revised its building code with a focus on structural strengthening of *existing* earthquake-resistant buildings.

Japanese companies invest a great deal of time and money on research and the redesign of old buildings.



Top: Here I am (center), pictured with two other student delegates, at the Kashiwa Fire Station. We were able to experience an earthquake simulation while there. Bottom: Upon arrival in Kashiwa, I was welcomed by my host families!

Experimenting with a new material can cost more than \$50 million. With Japan's people and government working hard to provide a safer environment for their country, around 87% of the buildings in Japan are earthquake-resistant.

There are various methods to make a building earthquake-resistant.

For instance, many of the skyscrapers use braces and shocks, usually made out of steel and rubber pads, that allow the building to sway with the movements of an earthquake. They are strong enough that the building won't sway out of control and collapse.

Another method is to use a huge curtain made out of carbon fiber ropes that attach to the roof of a building and are tethered to the ground around the building. If the building jolts left, the ropes on the right pull it back to hold it in place. The same for if the building

jolts right or forward or backward.

Japan also has plans for people who aren't in buildings during an earthquake. For example, if there are people in a bullet train and seismic waves are detected, the train uses its emergency brakes to stop before the main quake hits.

Japan takes many precautions to create the safest environment for its people in the event of an earthquake. Its strict anti-seismic building regulations and innovative building design and strengthening methods are key to these efforts. ☘



TORRANCE  
SISTER CITY  
ASSOCIATION  
3031 Torrance Boulevard  
Torrance, CA 90503



## TORRANCE SISTER CITY ASSOCIATION 2018 Membership Application

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

Name _____	Individual	\$20 per year
Address _____	Family	\$40 per year
City _____ State ____ ZIP Code _____	Supporting	\$75+ per year
Telephone (    ) _____	Benefactor	\$125+ per year
E-mail address _____	Corporate	\$200+ per year
	Life member	\$2,000+ (one-time donation)

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:

Torrance Sister City Association  
c/o 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](mailto:tscamembership@gmail.com)

TSCA meetings are held on the second Monday of each month at the Civic Center West Annex Commission Room, 7 pm  
(Exceptions: No meetings in August or December 2018)