

## President's Message

Donna Dunlap



On February 5th, we had one of the best Alumni Reunions ever. We met at Wilson Park and had a picnic. Thank you to all that came and made it such a success.

I want to thank **Butch Ihde** for washing all the picnic tables and benches, **Shirley Tanaka** for helping set up, **Cheryl and Alyssa Yamauchi, Jake,**

**Deanna and Brian Diederich** for helping to clean up. Also a big thank you to **Yuki Tsujii** and **Steven Ihde** for selling the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary T-Shirts, which were a huge hit. You can see how good they looked in the Alumni Reunion article by **Gail Roulette**. Thanks to the new delegates and their families for coming.

Have you ever attended a party and just wanted to relax and talk to your friends? That's exactly what we did. There were friends we haven't seen since January 2020 at our last alumni reunion. There were many people we have not seen in years, more years than just the pandemic shutdown. We were able to catch up on many lost years. Some of the conversations lasted long after the majority of the people said good bye. It warmed my soul to see so many people enjoying themselves after two long years in isolation. We enjoyed each other at safe distances, wearing masks, and we did not let the pandemic interrupt our fun.

The weather was perfect for an afternoon outside. Our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary committee and the executive board were not only enjoying the good times, but also looking at the picnic area as a venue to use when the Kashiwa's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary delegation visits in 2023. We will introduce them to an American barbecue lunch of hot dogs and hamburgers with all the fixings, salad and chips, dessert and

maybe some fun and games. The only thing that could make the picnic next year even better than this one is YOUR PRESENCE.

I am inviting all of you who live in the area and those of you willing to travel back to Torrance on the three-day President's Day weekend. It WILL be the largest gathering of sister city members ever assembled in one place, Torrance Wilson Park. The expectation of seeing so many people with a common bond is overwhelming. This includes YOU: past delegates and their parents, adult leaders, host families, English teachers, past officers and board members, TSCA volunteers, past mayors and city council members, Torrance city staff, Bunka-Sai participants, sponsors, everyone who has been a part of Torrance Sister City Association. Be a part of the celebration to honor 50 years of friendship between Torrance and Kashiwa.

On February 5<sup>th</sup>, I was pleasantly surprised to see the diverse attendance that came to the picnic: Ages ranged from 2 to 92! There were delegates there representing the years 1977, 1978, 1981, 1982, 1987, 1990, 2005, 2006, 2007 (Kashiwa), 2019 and 2020-22. Many parents of past delegates were also attending. There were Adult Leaders from 1982, 1984, 1987, 1989, 1990, 1992, 2000, 2003, 2013, 2016 and 2020-22. It was wonderful visiting and reliving old memories of our trips to Kashiwa. We thank **Mayor Pat Furey** and **Councilman Michael Griffith** for attending. We estimated that there were at least 60 people and more counting those that stopped by for only a short time. It was great to see people and talk face-to-face (with masks on). It was a PERFECT DAY!

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## MARCH 9

August Activities Committee (7-9 pm)

## MARCH 14

TSCA Association Meeting (7-9 pm)

## MARCH 23

Bunka-Sai Meeting (7-9 pm)  
Polly Watts Room—Library

## MARCH 30

Bunka-Sai Meeting (7-9 pm)

## APRIL 1

Last day to apply for English Teacher position

## APRIL 11

TSCA Association Meeting (7-9 pm)

## APRIL 13

Bunka-Sai Meeting (7-9 pm)

## APRIL 22

Bunka-Sai Setup

## APRIL 23-24

Bunka-Sai

## MAY 9

TSCA Association Meeting (7-9 pm)

## JUNE 13

TSCA Association Meeting (7-9 pm)

## JULY 11

TSCA Association Meeting (7-9 pm)

\*\*Meetings may be conducted via Zoom to prevent the spread of the coronavirus

## Torrance Sister City Association

### PRESIDENT

Donna Dunlap

### VICE PRESIDENT

Stephanie Ewing-Warner

### SECRETARY

Karen Wheeler

### TREASURER

Mayoori Shetti

*Newsletter Editor*

Rae Ann Carr

*Newsletter Distribution*

Donna Dunlap

### Comments or submissions?

Please send an email to  
tscanewsletter@gmail.com

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (CONTINUED)

The new 50th Anniversary T-shirt made its debut at the picnic. The T-Shirts were designed by Jennifer Ando, a professional artist and a 1986 Torrance delegate. She had also designed a t-shirt for TSCA back at that time as well. The design represents the city trees of both Torrance and Kashiwa, each an oak tree but a different species. The tree trunk represents the people that make this tie between Kashiwa and Torrance so strong. The branches are the intertwined relationships that have grown over the years. They will be sold all year, just let me know if you want one. For just \$15 you not only own a beautiful Golden Jubilee T-shirt, but it is your ticket to FREE food at the 50th Alumni Picnic in 2023 with the Kashiwa delegates. Save February 18, 2023 on your calendar and buy a T-Shirt. ☘



## TORRANCE COMMITTEE NEWS



Congratulations to the newest members of the KIRA Torrance Committee. Pictured above from left to right: Kinuko Furuya (Treasurer), Naomi Kitazawa (Vice Committee Chair), Hisataka Takikawa (Chair), Mutsuko Tsukamoto (Liaison). They begin their new positions in April 2022.

Mitsuko Tsukuda (Vice Committee Chair) and Yuko Ishibashi (Liaison) will leave the board at the end of March.

## Membership News

### NEW AND RENEWED MEMBERSHIPS

#### Family (\$40/year)

Eurich, Lori and Dane  
Flynn, Janet and John  
Matsumoto, Mickey and Frances  
McGee, John and Carmen  
Warner, Steve and Stephanie Ewing-Warner

#### Individual (\$20/year)

Hsiao, Chris  
Jones, Eleanor Hom  
Kuwahara, Teresa

#### Donations

Old Torrance Homeowners Association

\$100



# Focus on Fifty

## The First Bunka-Sai

### Mikko Haggott Henson

*First President of TSCA*

The first Bunka Sai was held in June 1973, soon after the sister city affiliation was signed. The purpose was to raise funds for the Torrance mayor and chairman of the sister city committee to visit Kashiwa in October 1973. The event was planned by the Torrance Area Chamber of Commerce because the sister city relationship was under the jurisdiction of the Chamber of Commerce at that time. The present, autonomous, non-profit membership organization, Torrance Sister City Association (TSCA) was founded in 1976. Before then, it was one of the subcommittee activities of the Torrance Area Chamber of Commerce.

In the early 1970s, the City of Gardena had success fundraising with a Japanese festival. **Kenny Uyeda**, a long-time Torrance city planning commissioner and Japanese Gardeners Association member, was involved in this festival. This fundraiser was Kenny's idea and he brought all the exhibitors and participants from the Gardena Japanese festival to Torrance. To differentiate it from all other Japanese festivals, we decided to call it Bunka-Sai. *Bunka* means culture in Japanese. Gardena's Japanese festival was discontinued in 1980.

The first Bunka-Sai was a one day event at Ken Miller Recreation Hall and admission was charged. It was mostly exhibition only: *bonsai*, *ikebana*, Japanese dolls, Japanese brush painting, Japanese calligraphy, *koi* fish etc., with a few demonstrations. The main feature was a Japanese garden. Gardena Valley Gardener's Association built a Japanese garden on the patio area overnight and disassembled it the day after the festival. It was very impressive. This Japanese garden display continued for 17 years at our Bunka-Sai.

Funds raised from this first Bunka-Sai paid for the airfare of **Mayor Ken Miller**, who refused to use city money for this trip, and for **Brian Bell**, chairman of the sister city committee at the Chamber of Commerce. The other five participants of this delegation were **Joe Banando**, the Torrance Lions Club President, **Ben and Mikko Haggott**,



*(Left to Right) Kenny Uyeda, Mikko Haggott Henson, and Paul Bannai, 67th District California Assemblyman, in front of Japanese Garden at the first Bunka Sai*

and **Mr. and Mrs. La Fleur**, whose daughter **Mary** designed the TSCA logo, paid their own way.

In November of the same year, Kashiwa sent a ten-member official delegation to Torrance which included seven assembly members and three city staff. The money raised from Bunka-Sai was also used for these expenses. It is clear that 1973, the first year of affiliation, was a very busy year for Torrance. ☸

# 2022

# ALUMNI REUNION

Written by Gail Roulette with photos by Steven Ihde

Bright gold T-shirts with a special design in black were a hot item on a beautiful day in Wilson Park on February 5 when TSCA held its annual alumni reunion. The shirts signaled the start of a celebration of 50 years of sister city friendship between Torrance and Kashiwa. More than 35 shirts were sold that day, and more are available for those who missed out.

Two long rows of tables were adorned with patriotic flag coverings. Red and silver heart-shaped balloons reminded us of the affection we have for each other in TSCA as we circulated and chatted with each other. Many among the approximately 60 attendees were current active members, and several were people whom we had not seen for some time, like **Toni and Dave Sargent**.

Winning the virtual prize for “oldest” alumni had to be **Mark Richardson** (1977); **Jacquie Lee** (1978); **Eleanor Hom** (1981); and **May Sakamoto** (1982 Adult Leader). Mark has been retired for some time. Jacquie worked 41 years in information technology and travels as often as possible. Eleanor retired recently and is taking care of family members. She and Jacquie knew each other at Victor School, and they were delighted to reconnect with their 7th grade English teacher, **Vera Little**. Both of May’s sons went to Kashiwa – **Ken** (1978) works in environmental programs for Orange County; **Gary** (1980) works in a law office.

City officials **Mayor Patrick Furey**, **Councilman Mike Griffiths**, and former councilman **Cliff Numark** joined in the festivities.

Three of the current student delegates came with family members: **Abby Trattner**, a senior at Bishop Montgomery, is into soccer, cross country, and track. She plans on attending college, is still looking at possibilities. **Matthew Segovia**, a senior at Torrance High, excels at math and takes a course at ECC. Mr. Segovia looks forward to hosting, thinks it would be a “cool experience.” **Jake Diederich**, senior at South High, also with math abilities, is on the swim team and involved in student government



*Hiro, HanWool, and Jen Hirashiki (2016 Adult Leader)*

as person in charge of assemblies. We wish Bon Voyage to these students and their Adult Leader **Cara Ihde**.

Some brief updates on alumni from parents: **Linda Hargrove** (1984) works with an orphanage in Tanzania; **Anna Wheeler** (2016) is doing well in Mississippi, along with her husband who is finishing a degree in Computer Science; **Jeremy Gray** (2017) is a junior at Case Western Reserve University, with a double major in music and biology and thinks he will take the MCAT (Medical College Admission Test) this summer.

After finishing our picnic lunches, we gathered for a group picture thanks to our resident photographer **Steven Ihde**. With this very enjoyable gathering, we are now energized to move forward in celebration of our special sister city relationship! ☘



1. See you in 2023!
2. Brian, Deanna, and Jake Diederich (2022 Delegate)
3. Marilyn and Sherwin Rubin, Gail Roulette, Toni and Dave Sergeant, and Vera Little (2003 Adult Leader)
4. Vera Little (2003 Adult Leader), Eleanor Home (1981 Delegate), Mark Richardson (1977 Delegate), Mikko Henson (1st TSCA President), Jacqui Lee (1978 Delegate), Diana Scott-Monck (1987 Delegate)
5. 2022 Delegates Matt Segovia, Jake Diederich, Abigail Trattner, and Cara Ihde
6. Alyssa Yamauchi (2005 Delegate), Shirley Tanaka, Donna Dunlap (TSCA President and 1984 Adult Leader), Butch Ihde (1990 Adult Leader), Cara Ihde (2006 Delegate and 2022 Adult Leader), Cheryl Yamauchi, and Yuki Tsujii (2007 Delegate)



# Teach English in Kashiwa, Japan

The Torrance Sister City Association seeks qualified applicants for one high school English teacher in Kashiwa, Japan, the Sister City of Torrance. A minimum one-year contract runs from August 1, 2022, to July 31, 2023. The contract is renewable for a maximum three-year assignment.

**Duties:** Conduct and assist in a variety of English conversation classes; assist with coordinating campus visits by parents, administrators, and junior high students; and assist with extracurricular activities, which may include judging and assisting with speech contests, serving as adviser to the English Conversation Club and business trips, and coach students for college interviews. Volunteer work with KIRA (Kashiwa International Relations Association) and other city groups may also be required.

## Qualifications

### Applicants must:

- Live or work in Torrance
- Be fluent in written and spoken English
- Hold a Bachelor's degree plus a teaching credential or have demonstrated teaching experience
- Possess a keen interest in the Japanese language and culture
- Represent the Torrance Sister City Association and foster the goals and objectives of the English Teacher Exchange Program.

## Compensation

- Annual salary of approximately 4,800,000 Japanese yen
- One-way airfare from Los Angeles to Japan
- National health insurance (deducted from monthly salary)
- Subsidized housing and transportation allowance
- Paid Japanese holidays and personal days

## To Apply

Please submit your resume and cover letter by email to Lori Chong Eurich (Chair, English Teacher Selection Committee) at [lace167@hotmail.com](mailto:lace167@hotmail.com).

Also, two letters of recommendation are needed. Arrange to have them emailed directly to the Chair by those submitting letters on your behalf.

Deadline to apply is

**April 1, 2022**

Qualified applicants will be scheduled for panel interviews in May.

**Questions?**

Email [lace167@hotmail.com](mailto:lace167@hotmail.com)

# KIRA Alumni News

## Rina (Yamada) Neman

### What have you been doing since you went to Torrance?

I went to Torrance as an exchange student in 2016. My experiences really motivated me to study English harder and to also leverage my newly developed English skills to deepen my understanding within my major. I studied Education at Chiba University in Japan.

To further my English studies, I decided to study in Finland for ten months to study Education and Gender. I lived in a student dorm while I was in Finland. I primarily studied in English so I only learned a few Finnish words. After I graduated from Chiba University, I worked as a home economics teacher at a middle school and high school from 2019 to 2021. The first school was a competitive private school called Ichikawagakuen and the second school was a public school called Ichikawa Third Junior High School.

After working as a home economics teacher, I worked as a human resources contractor while I was preparing to move to the states. I have been in the states since December 14, 2021, and I'm currently taking an English course at the University of Texas, Austin while preparing for my next job. Since Texas is close to South America, I've also had the chance to become friends with some girls from Brazil, Venezuela and Colombia. I'm looking for a job in the human resources industry.

### How has your experience helped you adjust to your new life in America?

My experience in Torrance and interaction with the TSCA students and my host families definitely helped me to understand American culture better. Also, the good memories of how we enjoyed and respected each other's culture enabled me to learn and interact with other cultural differences positively as well.

Another example of my time in Torrance helping me adjust to my life in America is that I initially found out in Torrance that American stores usually sell bulk packages of food, and I've learned how I can budget effectively, and make use of buying food in bulk, such as freezing chicken and beef.

Moreover, even for the little things such as greetings, it's nice to have already gotten used to hugging when I meet my friends or how to respond to short conversations in



*Rina and Trevor Neman in Austin, Texas.*

stores, such as: “How are you doing?” “Good, how are you?” and “Have a nice day (Have a good one!)” “You too.” and so on.

My time in Torrance was amazing and will always be a wonderful memory of mine!

I met Trevor when he was studying at my university in Chiba. We haven't had our wedding yet due to COVID, but are planning to do it in Hawaii sometime soon. I feel Austin is quite a modern city, especially downtown. Austin is a multicultural city and you can get Asian food including Japanese food very easily! There is a kind of similar atmosphere as central Tokyo in downtown Austin as well. Austin doesn't have beaches like Torrance unfortunately, but we can enjoy hiking alongside rivers and many parks with creeks. ☘

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

## Member Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

- My membership is:       New                                       Renewal
- TSCA Directory Update:
- New Address               New Telephone Number       New Email Address
- I do not want to be listed in the TSCA Directory
- TSCA Activities:
- I am interested in participating in TSCA activities

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

Postmark deadline to be included in the printed  
TSCA Membership Directory is 2/16/22

### Mail your check and this form to:

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

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

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

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

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

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



**Torrance Sister City  
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