TSCA news



MARCH – APRIL 2025

President's Message

By Karen Wheeler



Hello everyone, near and far! I hope you are enjoying the blossoming trees of early Spring or will be soon! Here at TSCA, we do not literally sprout blossoms and leaves, but we do have young people around here that are growing, blooming and branching out into new challenges. Our Student Ambassadors for the 2025 Summer Exchange Program with Kashiwa, Japan, have been selected, and we are proud to introduce them on page 2. We owe a great debt of gratitude to the hard work of **co-chairs Lori Eurich and Aimee Arreygue**, and the members of the **Student Selection Committee**, pictured:

Left to right: Clay Bakhoum, Anoop Ghuman (in front), Karen Wheeler, Alina Nadsady, Marilyn Rubin, Lori Eurich, Aimee Arreygue, Mallory Beard, Aidan Reynolds.



Continued....

President's Message PAGE 1-2

Calendar of Events PAGE 2 Meet the 2025 Torrance Exchange Students and their Adult Leader PAGE 2

New and Renewing Members and Donations PAGE 3

Adventures with Chris Pigao PAGE 4-5

Remembering May Ikeda Cambra PAGE 6

Spotlight on Nobu Kosuge PAGE 7-8

Bunka-Sai Flier PAGE 9

How to Volunteer for Bunka-Sai Page 10

Anime Contest Flier PAGE 11

Teach English in Japan Flier PAGE 12

www.torrancesistercity.org

Calendar

MARCH 2025

March 5 7:00PM – 8:45PM Bunka-Sai Planning Meeting Katy Geissert Library Meeting Room

March 18 7:00PM TSCA Meeting West Annex Commission Meeting Room

March 20 Deadline to apply to teach English in Kashiwa

March 30 11AM – 4PM
City of Torrance Cherry Blossom
Festival Columbia Park

APRIL 2025

April 5 and 6 11AM to 5PM Bunka-Sai Festival Torrance Cultural Arts Center

April 15 7:00PM
TSCA Meeting West Annex
Monthly Association Meeting

Torrance Sister City Association

PRESIDENT
Karen Wheeler
VICE PRESIDENT
Alyssa Yamauchi
SECRETARY
Aimee Arreygue

TREASURER
Stephanie Ewing-Warner

Newsletter Editor
Eve Rappoport

Comments or submissions?

Please send an email to tscanewsletter@gmail.com

President's Message

(CONTINUED)

Good opportunities to meet our Student Ambassadors would include greeting them at the Cherry Blossom Festival on March 30 in Columbia Park, and of course they and their parents will be present at the Bunka-Sai Cultural Festival on April 5-6, 2025, at the Torrance Cultural Arts Center.

This Newsletter includes the information you need for contributing, volunteering, and attending Bunka-Sai. We also have articles from Hazel Taniguchi and Aileen Willoughby, recognizing former Sister City Association President May Cambra, and 1991 Kashiwa delegate Nobu Kosuge. Former Torrance Sister City President and benefactor May Cambra is unfortunately no longer with us. We honor her service to TSCA and extend our sincere condolences to her loved ones. We also have membership and donation updates, a report from our English teacher in Kashiwa, our Calendar of Events, and more. Please peruse and enjoy!

Meet the 2025 Student Ambassadors and their Adult Leader!



L-Artemis Vuong, Torrance High School; Isa Freiler, Bishop Montgomery High School; Grace Kelley, South High School; Kai Long, West High School









L-Mason Tsai, CA Academy of Math and Science; Noah Kisiler, Redondo Union High School; Nathan Kneller, South High School; Clay Bakhoum, Adult Leader

New and Renewed Members and Donations

Compiled by Alyssa Yamauchi, Membership Chair

1 – SPECIAL DONATION (\$500)

Butch and Carol Welsch as a tribute to their grandson 2024 student ambassador Colin Welsch

DONATIONS

\$30 Poirier, Rebecca \$25 Albitz, Phil and Velma \$10 Han, Dai Sup and Jill

2 - BENEFACTOR (\$125+)

Bauer, Craig Willoughby, Werner and Aileen

1 - SUPPORTING (\$75+)

Albitz, Phil and Velma

15 - FAMILY (\$40)

Arreygue, Julio and Aimee
Diederich, Brian and Deanna
Donaldson, Dan and Janet
Gerson, Jeremy, Jennifer, Aurora and William
Han, Dai Sup and Jill
Hart, Gillian and Jay
Kikuchi, Larry, Alice, Kaitlyn, And Breanna
Martel, Lou and Lori
Ozawa, Noriko and Michael
Rust, Joe and Carol
Schenkelberg Family, Katie
Toya, George and May
Ueki, Masaki and Sumi
Ujimori, Harvey and Kay
Wheeler, Karen and Robert

3 - INDIVIDUAL (\$20)

Geronimo, Cecilia Poirier, Rebecca Rappoport, Eve

TSCA Gift Booth

The TSCA Gift Booth at Bunka-Sai Festival is collecting your new or gently used items to raise funds for the TSCA Student Cultural Exchange Program.

Wanted: Japanese and non-Japanese items in new or nearly-new condition are welcome! Home goods (dishes, ceramics, Chopsticks, figurines, dish towels), books (travel guides, Japanese/English textbooks, cookbooks), posters, prints, banners, art, dolls, cases, apparel (t-shirts, yukata, kimono, scarves, accessories, purses), toys, music, stationery, school supplies.

Your donations will be loved by new owners who seek out our treasures every year. Receipts available for tax purposes.

Contact torrancesistercityinfo@gmail.com to arrange for drop-off to our coordinator, Karen Wheeler, or contact Karen directly at voiceofkarenwheeler@earthlink.net with any questions.

For a few "Speeches" More by Chris Pigao

First off, I want to wish everyone a very belated Happy New Year! Within the first few weeks of 2025, I was able to do a lot of interesting activities such as watching Professional Wrestling at the Tokyo Dome and visiting Sapporo, Hokkaido for the 75th annual Snow Festival. However, as of recently, I was preparing for one of the most unique challenges while living in Japan: participating in a Speech Contest.

When I first came to Kashiwa in the summer of 2022, one of my very first assignments was being a judge for the Kashiwa Junior High School Speech Contest. I had no clue what to expect or had no preconceived notions on how a speech contest works. I remembered back in high school that there was a Speech & Debate team. They were given a topic, with each team being the supporting or opposition, and the team that excelled with proper and logical rhetoric would win. Going off of that idea, I was expecting the same. It was completely different from what I imagined, and I saw that it was individual performances. Our grading criteria ranged from Fluency, Content, and Attitude. Some of these topics and scripts ranged from global issues, personal development, social commentary, or humorous insight about our lives. It reminded me of TED talks (or my personal favorite: Stand-up comedy).

I found out that Speech Contest were not only in English, but Japanese as well. Foreigners could also participate. I saw Deanna-Sensei participate in the 7th annual Speech Contest presented by K.I.R.A. and I was very proud of the speech that she performed, delivering her message of living life to the fullest a.k.a. "Live Like Lisa". At that moment, it inspired me to participate in this same contest - albeit with a different message that I wanted to convey.

I signed up for the 9th Speech Contest in hopes of challenging my Japanese ability and skills. My message was very straightforward; that pronunciation is important. It is okay to make mistakes, so be careful with similar sounding words. I wanted to add 2 hilarious anecdotes about these occurrences, mishearing the words as food analogies like "Inage High School" as "Unagi High School" and "Tokatsu Student" as "Tonkatsu Student". It was in hopes of breathing reallife into my message, and in a more academic way, using it as supporting evidence for my thesis. With help from Mami Takeda-Sensei, she checked my grammatical errors and suggested simpler sentence structures. As I prepared for my speech, I had help from Fukuma-Sensei and Otsuka-Sensei who strictly focused on my pronunciation and gave me constructive criticism along the way such as "speak slower" or "Don't forget the syllable". It puts me in the same position as the students who I have prepared with for their respective speeches - trying to craft the best performance that I can deliver.

Moments before I went up on the podium, things suddenly became a blur. I remember being in that moment, giving my self-introduction and the title of my speech. From there, I had the same rush that I felt just as if I were performing music. However, it was a strange feeling, hearing no instruments or sound to accompany me. I recall the laughter whenever I impersonated the characters, and I remember looking out into the crowd seeing people I knewJust like that, my speech was over. It felt like an out-of-body experience and once I said, "That's it, Thank you very much.", I came back to my senses.

During the break-time, there was a special live seminar provided by 2 students from Tokatsu High. They taught us the "100 Poems" game and some of the various ways to play it. Afterwards, they announced the winners, and I was surprised that I had received the award for best Humor. Honestly, this was the first time I had won an award since High School, placing 3rd place at Torrance High's Slam Poetry contest. I was able to celebrate with my "host" family and all of the KIRA students that came to support me. With all of the time and effort that I put into the speech; it had paid off with this result.

Whether or not it's a competition or not, speeches are quintessential throughout our lifetime. Ceremonies like Welcome Orientations or Graduation, Information Seminars, Weddings, Retirement, and so on have us in those positions to express our gratitude or convey our thoughts & feelings. So remember, next time you are in a position to speak in front of an audience, make sure you say something captivating....or at least something that they will remember.

I would be remiss to not express my gratitude to the following people who have helped me prepare for the speech: Takeda-Sensei (for proofreading the speech), Fukuma-Sensei & Otsuka-Sensei (who graciously allow me to practice my speech during their class sessions), Mama & Papa Iwata (who luckily recorded my speech and took pictures for me), and to the Saturday KIRA class students (who were my first test audience). My next plan - participate in more speech contests! [video link right here: https://youtu.be/q4hA7WjXT8g]





https://youtu.be/q4hA7WjXT8g

Caption: receiving the "Humor" Award from K.I.R.A. Chair Kosuge Akemi



Remembering May Ikeda Cambra May 28, 1934 - February 3, 2025

By Hazel Taniguchi

May was born and raised in Hilo, Hawaii. She then went to Honolulu to attend the University of Hawaii, from which she earned a teaching degree. She taught 3rd, 4th, and 6th grades in the Compton School District for 37 years, retiring in 1993.

May was actively involved in the community as a volunteer. She worked with the Torrance Sister City Association, the Japanese American National Museum (Volunteer of the Year in 1988), the Arts Council of Torrance, the Torrance Symphony Board, and the National Council of Alcohol and Drug Dependency. May loved to do line-dancing, work in her yard, and travel. She visited Canada, Alaska, the Grand Canyon, Carlsbad Caverns, and the World War II internment camps. She especially enjoyed her trip to Washington D.C. to see the cherry blossom trees in full bloom.

May was a longtime, active supporter of TSCA. She served as president from March 1994 - June 1996. She helped at activities and supported Bunka-Sai and anniversary events with donations and purchases. She went to Kashiwa with the 20th, 25th, and 30th anniversary delegations. May was a friendly, outgoing, and likable person. She will be missed.



(KASHIWA) ALUMNI NEWS Spotlight on Nobu Kosuge By Aileen Willoughby

Over the years, a number of Torrance former student delegates have moved to Japan, and similarly, several Kashiwa student delegates have moved to the United States.

In 1991, the student delegation from Kashiwa included a young man, Nobuyuki Kosuge, and seven others, led by Kashiwa Adult Leader, Mr. Yoichi Katsui.



Feb. 2023 – The Lechman/ Rodriguez and Kosuge families reunite in Torrance

Fast forward to 2025: Nobu, as he is known, has since moved from Kashiwa to the South Bay and is married with two children. I spoke with Nobu recently to ask about his experiences on the student exchange program and his moving to the South Bay from Kashiwa.

Nobu recalled his arrival at LAX 34 years ago with his fellow Kashiwa delegates, meeting his first host family—the Lechmans—at which time he was reunited with Don and Pat Lechman's daughter Laura who was part of the Torrance student delegation the month before. To this day, Nobu remembers an expression that he had never heard of before when Pat, as she drove him around the hills of Palos Verdes Peninsula, said (what was, to him, a puzzling comment), "I am following my nose." After their scenic drive, they arrived at the Lechman home to get ready for the Welcome Reception. Other events that he fondly remembers were the square/line dancing, the Dodger game, Disneyland visit, and the excursion to Catalina Island and Ensenada.

Upon returning to Kashiwa after his glorious visit to Torrance, he missed the time spent with his Torrance host families. He also remembers that when he and his fellow Kashiwa students were leaving Los Angeles, each of the Torrance students gifted their Kashiwa friends with a cassette tape of their favorite songs. Nobu still has that tape!

Nobu and the Lechman family kept in touch through the years, and Nobu made several trips back to Torrance to visit the Lechmans. On one of these trips in about 1998, he went to the Torrance Airport to take a Demo Flight, an hour-long ride that cemented an interest he already had with helicopters. So he vowed to return to Kashiwa to do some research on a career flying helicopters.

His visits to Torrance continued through 2006, and he stayed with the Lechman family in 2004 for about two or three months. When Nobu finally made the big move to the U.S. in 2006, he chose the South Bay because of his connections with the TSCA program. He settled in San Pedro with his wife who he met here, living in the same apartment building as Laura, which made his transition much easier. He described language communication as one of the biggest challenges in his assimilation—the colloquial expressions and lack of common knowledge that native Angelenos grow up with. What he missed about Japan, though, were his family and Japanese food. He also missed riding the trains daily and passing through Kashiwa Station, where he could find everything he needed in one place: department stores, restaurants, shops, markets, etc.

Here in the U.S., he pursued a career in the helicopter industry and works as a pilot. He believes his interest in aviation began as a youth when he was intrigued by the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force, Shimofusa Air Base, which is currently located in Kashiwa. After his Demo Flight at the Torrance Airport, he was convinced that helicopters were in his stars. Nobu shared some interesting aspects of the helicopter business and the applications for pilots, which include but are not limited to: (1) flight instruction; (2) medical evacuations; (3) fire fighting; (4) moving cargo and large tools used in building construction; and (4) agricultural support. I was intrigued by agricultural support so he elaborated. He remembers flying his helicopter from 3 am to 7 am over a dark field of Cotton Candy Grapes. Why? In order to manage frost on the crops. The helicopters push warmer air down into the

trees so that frost cannot damage them. He also mentioned that helicopters are utilized for drying cherries: they move the air downward to shake cherry branches, thus shaking off accumulated water after it rains. And helicopters are involved in "aerial application," more commonly known as "crop dusting,"

For several years during the Kashiwa student visits to Torrance, TSCA then-President Werner Willoughby, knowing that Nobu was a certified helicopter pilot, invited him to lead a student delegation tour of the Robinson Helicopter facility, located in Torrance. While Nobu led the Kashiwa students in Japanese, a Robinson Helicopter staff member led the tour for the Torrance students in English. When Werner introduced Nobu to the Kashiwa delegates, they were absolutely astonished to learn that Nobu had once been a Kashiwa student delegate, just like they were.

When I asked Nobu what he thought about the TSCA Sister City Program, he said it was very important in fostering cross-cultural awareness among people. He expressed amazement that the TSCA program has existed for half a century and hopes for its continued success in many years to come. He maintains friendships with many in TSCA, including the 1991 Torrance Adult Leader Kerry Cababa.

His mother, Akemi Kosuge, is a familiar name to TSCA members, for she is very active in KIRA (Kashiwa International Relations Association) and has been its President for many years, including now. Akemi has visited Torrance on a number of occasions, as a 1988 Kashiwa Adult Leader, even riding on the 2008 Torrance Rose Parade float with then-TSCA President Hazel Taniguchi. Most recently, Akemi, her husband and her daughter came to Torrance in 2023 for the 50th anniversary celebration, along with many KIRA members, where the Kosuge family was reunited with the Lechman/Rodriguez families.

As modest as Nobu is, what he didn't mention in his interview with me was that in 2021, he was awarded the Helicopter Association International (HAI)'s **Flight Instructor of the Year** award. A March 4, 2021, article appeared in the *Helicopters Magazine* describing how his "soft-spoken demeanor and dedication to safe, skilled helicopter flight have had an immense impact on countless pilots over the last two decades," and how "he has qualified dozens of law enforcement pilots through [qualification courses for other agencies]." https://www.helicoptersmagazine.com/kosuge-receives-hai-flight-instructor-of-the-year-award/. See the YouTube video, too https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hZpoO4yhEXo. Well done, Nobu!!!! We are proud of you!!!







L-Akemi Kosuge and Hazel Taniguchi on the Torrance "Festival of Flowers" Float for the 2008 Rose Parade M- Aug. 1991 - Student Delegates: Laura Lechman (TSCA) and Nobu Kosuge (KASHIWA) R- Feb. 2023 - TSCA 50th Anniversary: Nobu Kosuge and Laura Lechman (Rodriguez)

Bunka-Sai Bunka-Sai Eestival

Japanese Cultural Festival

Saturday & Sunday April 5 and 6, 2025 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Ken Miller Recreation Center

3341 Torrance Boulevard (At Madrona Avenue)









lunches, sweets, arts and craft items. cultural performances, dance, music, martial arts, exhibitions. demonstrations

Presented by The Torrance Sister City Association TorranceSisterCity.org

Proceeds to benefit the student cultural exchange program *Please leave your pets at home, authorized service animals are exempt.



Setup: Friday, April 4, 2025

Festival:

Saturday, April 5, 2025 Sunday, April 6, 2025

Volunteer Opportunities include:

SETUP ~ FOOD PREP ~ ORDER COLLECTION ~ FOOD ASSEMBLY
GIFT SALES ~ WELCOME TABLE ~ CLEANUP ~ & MORE!

MAKE SURE TO
BROWSE
THROUGH THE
VARIOUS BOOTHS
TO SEE ALL THE
WAYS TO HELP!

Volunteer TODAY

SCAN the QR code ->

CHECK BACK OFTEN!
NEW OPPORTUNITIES ALWAYS ADDED!



Questions?



BUNKA-SAI

JAPANESE CULTURAL

FESTIVAL!

April 5-6









2024 Winners (clockwise from top left): Anastasia, Koharu, Angelina & Elena

DIVISIONS

Middle School & High School

CATEGORIES

Hand Drawn & Digital Art

Separate prizes for middle & high school by category Winner \$30 | Runner Up \$20

All participants receive certificates

RULES

- Entries must be on 8½" x 11" paper
- Format: Portrait (vertical) or Landscape (horizontal)
- Entries may be in Color or Black & White
- Only one entry per person
- No violent or dark themes, such as death and funerals
- Entries must include a Release Form signed by the artist and parent/guardian (if a minor)

Entries must be submitted IN PERSON on Friday, APRIL 4, 2025, 4pm – 6pm Ken Miller Recreation Center (3341 Torrance Blvd, Torrance, CA 90503)

Winners will be announced on Saturday, April 5 at 12:15 pm







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, 2025, to July 31, 2026. 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 coaching 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 email your resume and cover letter to Lori Chong Eurich (Chair, English Teacher Selection Committee) at torrancesistercityinfo@gmail.com

Also, two recent letters of recommendation from people not related to the applicant must be emailed directly to the Chair.

Deadline to apply is

March 20, 2025

Qualified applicants will be scheduled for panel interviews in mid-April 2025.

Questions? Send an email to torrancesistercityinfo@gmail.com

2025 TSCA Membership Application Form

Mail your check and this form to: Torrance Sister City Association, c/o Community Services Dept. 3031 Torrance Blvd. Torrance CA 30503

TORRANCE	Except for the Lifetime Membership* all dues are in effect from January 1 to December 31.			
SISTER CITY ASSOCIATION 3691 Temence Souleward + Temence, Cell fumile 96909	Individual [\$40 Family		S125+ Benefacto
I am Interested in TSCA activities, specifically:		Donation to TSCA (in addition to annual dues): \$		
For the TSCA Directory, only include my:			Total End	losed: \$
Member Information	000-000		Please make	your check payable to: TSC
Please complete your contact information directly below and Name:	•		tional Conf	tact Info
Address:		Email**:		
City: State:	Zin:			

If you have questions about membership, please send an email to: tscamembership@gmail.com



Torrance Sister City Association 3031 Torrance Boulevard Torrance, CA 90503

