

TSCA News



Torrance Sister City Association | September-October 2026

President's Message

By Brad Reynolds

Hello friends of TSCA!

A lot has happened since our last issue! We had a very successful visit from our Kashiwa guests, and I want to thank everyone who made that possible.

A special thanks to the City of Torrance for their continued support of our annual program and our Association. As they say, it truly takes a village, and TSCA membership is that village that allows this wonderful cultural exchange to continue for the last 53 years. We should all be very proud of that!

Now that our summer programs have been completed, we look to next year's events. That process begins with selecting the Adult Leader for our trip to Kashiwa; that is the cornerstone of our planning. If we don't have a good Adult Leader, all our planning doesn't amount to much. Please spread the word with friends and family; share our social media posts (you are following our Instagram account, [@torrancesistercity](#), right?), and visit our website for details and the application materials.

We also begin the student application process in the fall. As with the Adult Leader, word of mouth is our biggest asset to inform people about our programs and mission statement. I believe having a large candidate pool to select from means we send the best possible group every year. So let's get those application numbers up!

Speaking of Instagram, I want to introduce our new Social Media Coordinator, Sako Makino. I also want to thank our outgoing Social Media Coordinator, Maria Nadsady. As with all roles within TSCA, this is a volunteer position, and one that is not for the faint of heart; it involves a lot of coordination and work to craft the posts to promote our activities. I'm just glad that isn't a responsibility that falls to the President!

Thank you for supporting us!



IN THIS ISSUE

President's Message
PAGE 1

**2026 Kashiwa
Delegation Photos**
PAGE 2-3

Calendar Events
PAGE 4

Membership List
PAGE 4

**New Membership
Form**
PAGE 5

**English Teacher
Updates**
PAGE 5

**English Teacher
Article**
PAGE 6

Adult Leader Flyer
PAGE 7

Golf Article
PAGE 8

Bunka-Sai Flyer
PAGE 9

KIRA Articles
PAGE 10-15

2026 Kashiwa Delegation in Torrance



2026 Kashiwa Delegation in Torrance



MEMBERSHIPS & DONATIONS LIST

Compiled by Alyssa Yamauchi, Membership Chair

BENEFACTOR (\$125)

Radomski Family, Ken

INDIVIDUAL (\$20)

Andrade, Anna



Questions about membership?

Email tscamembership@gmail.com



Upcoming Events

Monthly Association Meeting City Hall West Annex 7:00 PM

October 20, 2026
November 17, 2026
January 19, 2027
February 16, 2027

Alumni Reunion

Jan. 9, 2027
11:00 AM - 2:00 PM
Ken Miller
Recreation Center

Torrance Sister City Association

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[TorranceSisterCityAssociation](https://www.facebook.com/TorranceSisterCityAssociation)



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2026 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 90503



**TORRANCE
SISTER CITY
ASSOCIATION**

3031 Torrance Boulevard • Torrance, California 90503

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

- ☐ \$20 Individual ☐ \$40 Family ☐ \$75+ Supporting ☐ \$125+ Benefactor
☐ \$200+ Corporate ☐ \$2,000+ Lifetime Membership*

Donation to TSCA (in addition to annual dues): \$ _____

- ☐ I am Interested in TSCA activities, specifically: _____
☐ For the TSCA Directory, only include my: _____

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

Please make your check payable to: TSCA

Member Information

Please complete your contact information directly below and to the right.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Additional Contact Info

**TSCA Newsletters are sent to all members via email.

Email*: _____

Phone: _____

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

----- Cut and return the form above with your check payment -----

ENGLISH TEACHER UPDATES



August 5, 2026. Our new English teacher at Kashiwa Municipal High School (Ichikashi), **Jared Mori** received his official contract from the head of the Board of Education. He is ready to start working with Yuko Wilson to bring fun and good English skills to the students.

今日は始業式・着任式 🏫



@ichikashi_official

#イチカシ

Jared and Yuko at school in front of a big display of school photos sharing memories from many years.

Eye of The Storm

By Jared Mori, Asst. Language Teacher at Kashiwa Municipal High School (Ichikashi)

The “eye of the storm” is a perfect way to describe the first of my now two months spent here in Kashiwa. After an initial whirlwind of bank accounts, utility agreements, and introductions, I found myself in an almost unsettling period of calm and quiet colloquially known as summer vacation. This year, due to the heat of past summers, teachers at Ichikashi are allowed to work part of the time from home. What’s more, I was told the first couple of weeks would have a somewhat irregular schedule, and so the number of lessons I would need to plan ahead of time would also be less. Thanks to this unexpected peace and quiet, I was not only able to settle in nicely and explore some of what Kashiwa has to offer, but also prepare myself for what I could only imagine was the fast approaching other side of the storm.

For students here at Ichikashi, the end of summer vacation and the start of the second semester can only mean one thing, Bunka-Sai. And what a storm that was. Taking place a mere week and a half after the start of the semester, I found myself swept up in the collective spirit and enthusiasm of the event without truly knowing what to expect. And yet, seeing each class working together, with every student taking on their own tasks in surprising synchronicity, I couldn’t help but want to jump in and participate myself. I found myself periodically checking in on all three international classes, who despite having only met a couple of times up until this point, I already found myself attached to. At the beginning I would look at the various decorations and wonder what their vision was. Towards the end I worried that they might not finish on time. But, as if by magic, all of their plans came to fruition seemingly right on time the night before.

Of course, this was all a prelude to the actual event. This year featured a large number of haunted houses and themed cafes, of which I was most surprised by the first year international class, who created a “rollercoaster haunted house”. This featured a well constructed seat on wheels, from which visitors experienced the haunted house they had constructed, all while being pushed around the classroom by another student. We once again enjoyed some food courtesy of the PTA, and the choreography and coordination of the Sports Classes’ dance routines far surpassed my expectations. My fellow ALT Yuko and I, alongside a few other teachers from the English department, also took some time to walk around and enjoy a few more attractions.

Even as I laid down in my bed exhausted after the two days of fun and excitement, I would be lying if I said there wasn’t a part of me wishing I could skip over the weekend and go straight back to school the next day. As other ALTs before me have said, there is a sort of energy at Bunka-Sai that is just impossible to put to paper. With only two months of my time here at Ichikashi behind me, I can only imagine what kind of fun awaits, and I can’t wait to go back to school tomorrow.



Yuko and I, along with Shirai-sensei and Nakamura-sensei from the English department, at Bunka-sai

TORRANCE SISTER CITY ASSOCIATION

JAPAN 2027

RECRUITING FOR ADULT LEADER



SPEND 3 WEEKS IN JAPAN NEXT SUMMER

MUST RESIDE OR WORK IN TORRANCE; AT LEAST 26 YEARS OF AGE

APPLICATIONS DUE OCTOBER 31, 2026



EXPLORE THE WORLD!

www.torrancesistercity.org

Ground Golf, Anyone?

By Aileen Willoughby



What is a healthy activity that engages people, gets them outside, requires no special skill or preparation, can be played most anywhere, is a form of exercise, is inexpensive, accessible for those with physical limitations, and fun for all ages—from seniors to young children? The answer is GROUND GOLF! And what is the origin of this activity? It started in a town called Yurihama, in Tottori prefecture, Japan, with the objective to promote health and longevity among senior citizens. And who is the best person to talk to about it? AKIRA TSURUKAME, a long-time TSCA member.

Akira's involvement with TSCA began even before TSCA was established as a sister city in 1973. He arranged trans-Pacific travel for the dignitaries involved in the planning of the sister cities as well as for some of the student ambassador trips after 1973. Through the decades, he has been a valuable volunteer interpreter for many Torrance mayors presiding at sister city events.

Akira is eager to promote this healthy activity/sport in the South Bay, particularly in Torrance. Currently, there are GROUND GOLF associations in six countries, and an annual international competition held in May in its birthplace, Yurihama.

Cornell University in New York became involved last year when students were researching activities that would benefit the health of senior citizens. Their studies put them in contact with the Mayor of Yurihama, Mr. Masamichi Miyawaki, who visited Cornell in April this year to participate in the Cornell Sports Research Conference. In July, Cornell University held its first GROUND GOLF Match, which can be enjoyed at this link:

<https://sportsresearchconference.org/gg>.

So how is GROUND GOLF played? Similar to croquet, a player uses a wooden club to gently hit a ball toward a metal cup located anywhere from 50 to 165 feet away. The objective is to simply roll the ball into the cup. Where do you get the supplies? Currently, Akira was gifted 30 sets of this 8-hole game from Mayor Miyawaki of Yurihama, who was thrilled that GROUND GOLF would be shared in the South Bay region of Southern California.

On a sunny day in June, Akira partnered a group of eight senior citizens with eight second grade students of Nishiyamato Academy of California in Lomita. You may have seen some of these students since they have participated at Bunka-Sai, sharing Japanese cultural performances on the stage. The GROUND GOLF activity held on the school campus was a win-win, with the seniors ranging in age from 70 to their 90s and the children interacting enthusiastically as they laughed, smiled and cheered each other on. "Nice shot!" "Wow, that was amazing!" "You almost got a hole-in-one!" After the event, each child wrote and presented a handwritten Thank You letter, complete with illustrations, to the senior partner he played with. And the seniors found the activity deeply rewarding, even 96-year-old Sumiko.

Buoyed by the success of this activity, Akira is eager to promote GROUND GOLF wherever he can. He and his committee members from the Choppiri Omoiari no Kai organization (The Little Kindness Society) recently held another GROUND GOLF activity at Torrance's Lago Seco Park and De Portola Park in Torrance. Akira even introduced GROUND GOLF at a recent Japanese prefectural reunion held in Buena Park, as depicted in the photos.

Interested in GROUND GOLF? Contact Akira Tsurukame at akiratsurukame@gmail.com. There is the possibility that Mayor Miyawaki may visit Torrance in November, and he would be delighted to see GROUND GOLF being played in our city!



52nd Annual Bunka-Sai

Japanese Cultural Festival

Saturday & Sunday
April 17 and 18, 2027
11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Torrance Cultural Arts Center
3330 Civic Center Dr., Torrance, CA 90503



Enjoy tasty plate lunches, sweets, arts and craft items, cultural performances, dance, music, martial arts, kids' games, demonstrations



Presented by
The Torrance Sister City Association

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

2026 Torrance Delegates –

Highlights of Their Stay in Kashiwa (Part 2)

By KIRA Torrance Committee

Even as autumn arrives and delegates settle back into school, the unforgettable memories of their shared summer remain bright. Continuing from Part 1, this second part highlights the rest of the Torrance Delegates' stay in Kashiwa, featuring:

1. Student Ambassadors' Exchange Event
2. Tea Ceremony at Shohakutei
3. Fire Station Challenge, Calligraphy, and Zazen meditation
4. Special Joint Class at Kaichi International University
5. Takayanagi Summer Bon Odori Festival
6. Sayonara Party

1. Student Ambassadors' Exchange Event (7/20)

This year's exchange opened with a lively Jeopardy game instead of the usual cooking demonstration. Students debated answers, raced to the buzzer, and laughed over the scoring, while Chris-sensei, an ALT at Ichikashi, kept the activity energetic and on track. Anime/Manga questions, musical chairs, and a surprise birthday celebration for Ms. Lillian Reynolds kept the day cheerful. For future exchanges, KIRA hopes to restore the cooking demonstration as an early icebreaker and have both delegations share the role of leading activities, creating more meaningful exchange time rather than relying primarily on the ALT.

2. Tea Ceremony at Shohakutei (7/20)

KIRA successfully reserved the entire Shohakutei tea house in Kashiwanoha Park, offering a serene environment beside a pond and garden. Ten members of the Kashiwa City Tea Ceremony Association guided the Torrance Delegates through each step with care. Because the delegates had pre-studied etiquette at Ichikashi, they were able to appreciate the authentic style more deeply. The participation of both the 2025 and 2026 Kashiwa Delegates added richness to the experience. KIRA extends sincere gratitude to the Tea Ceremony Association for their warm support and the wonderful matcha and sweets they prepared.

(continued on p. 11)

3. Fire Station Challenge, Calligraphy at Kashiwa Chuo High School, and Zazen Meditation (7/21)

A visit to the fire station is a longstanding tradition. With last year's major disaster in Los Angeles still fresh in memory, experiencing a firefighter's work felt especially meaningful. Seven delegates attempted the rope-climbing rescue drill, and three reached the top, including Adult Leader Ms. Tanya Welsch. She has experience with big-wall climbing on Half Dome in Yosemite National Park—an impressive achievement. The students also wore traditional hanten (絆纏)—firefighters' jackets featuring the kanji for 'bond,' a fitting symbol of this exchange—and posed for commemorative photos. In the afternoon, the delegation visited Kashiwa Chuo High School. After buying lunch at a convenience store, students gave presentations about Torrance and their schools. The main activity was calligraphy, supported by the calligraphy club. This year's special feature was writing each delegate's favorite kanji—selected in advance—onto a folding fan, creating beautiful keepsakes. The day concluded at Daitoin Temple, where the head priest taught the basics of zazen meditation. Although the delegates were tired, KIRA hopes they will remember this moment as part of Japanese culture—steadyng the body, regulating the breath, and sitting with a calm mind.

4. Special Joint Class at Kaichi International University (7/22)

Kaichi International University served as the intellectual highlight of the second half of the program. Professor Tamie Kanata—specializing in intercultural communication and researching interracial and interethnic communication in the United States—welcomed the Torrance Delegates to a seminar with university students from Japan, Russia, Iran, China, Indonesia, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. The goal was to explore trust, peace, and happiness among youth.

The seminar included:

- **Speed Meet & Greet:** Sharing what brings joy and discovering common values.
- **Small Group Discussion:** Proposing policies to help the next generation build trust and peace.
- **Whiteboard Symposium:** Acting as senior members of a “Ministry of Youth Happiness,” brainstorming policies for youth wellbeing. Coinciding with the 250th anniversary of the United States, the seminar referenced the “Pursuit of Happiness” and encouraged students to exchange dreams, hobbies, and perspectives. Among the various exchange programs, this seminar may have stimulated the delegates' intellectual curiosity the most.

(continued on p. 12)

5. Takayanagi Summer Bon Odori Festival (7/25)

The postponement of the beloved Kashiwa Festival to mid-September was a major shock, as Torrance Delegates—many of whom dance the Kashiwa Odori exceptionally well—would lose the chance to perform before a large audience. In response, Ms. Yumiko Ueno, Adult Leader of the 53rd Kashiwa Delegates, secured participation in the Takayanagi community's Summer Bon Odori Festival. This turned out to be a wonderful success. Mayor Kazumi Ota, who had promised to reunite with the Torrance Delegates through the Kashiwa Odori, also attended and introduced both delegations on stage. Surrounded by the traditional scenery of a summer evening, the delegates danced “Kashiwa Odori” and “Bahama Mama” under lantern lights on the red-and-white festival stage—creating unforgettable memories.

6. Sayonara Party (7/27)

Although the Sayonara Party follows a familiar format each year, its atmosphere changes with the host families. Many hosts this year had younger children, and these little brothers and sisters gathered around the Torrance Delegates, reluctant to say goodbye to the “big brothers” and “big sisters” who had suddenly appeared from America. Their presence made the venue feel especially young and vibrant. The Torrance Delegates were visibly nervous until they finished their Japanese speeches before more than 150 participants, but once finished, they relaxed and enjoyed interacting with the children. Near the end of the party, a slideshow of their days in Japan played, and the room came alive again as dancers performed the Kashiwa Odori.

Ending (7/28)

Thus, the 2026 Torrance Delegates' stay in Kashiwa came to an end, leaving behind countless memories and many positive outcomes. We apologize for omitting the fantastic Disneyland Tour, sponsored by the Kashiwa Oak Lions Club, Tokyo Tour, and many other activities due to space limitations. At 11:45 a.m., the bus left Kashiwa City Hall, surrounded by a large crowd of well-wishers. Some host families even traveled all the way to Narita Airport for one last goodbye. Moments like these remind us how deeply these exchanges touch the heart. Goodbyes are never easy, especially when new bonds have grown so quickly and so strongly. Under TSCA President Mr. Brad Reynolds and Adult Leader Ms. Tanya Welsch, we extend our heartfelt appreciation to this year's Torrance Delegates, TSCA, and all supporters in Japan—for helping make this exchange so meaningful. With sincere gratitude, we conclude this two-part report.



1. All are excited about Jeopardy game



2. Authentic Tea Ceremony



3.1 Climbing Challenge



3.2 Wearing Hanten



3.3 Presentation at Kashiwa Chuo High School



3.4 Completed Calligraphies of Favorite Kanji



3.5 Meditation at Daitoin



4.2 Small Group Discussion



6. Sayonara Party



Sayonara to Host Families and KIRA members



4.1 Ms. Kanata's Joint Class



5. Mayor and the delegates on stage at Takayanagi Matsuri



Thank you for sharing this unforgettable summer with us. Until we meet again!

Early Kashiwa "Student Club" Members

Celebrate 50th Anniversary

By Hiroko Sugiyama, 1977 Kashiwa Student Delegate

On Saturday, August 29, thirty early Kashiwa delegates and two former adult leaders gathered in Kashiwa to celebrate the 50th anniversary of their friendship.

The idea for this reunion started with a simple LINE message asking when a couple who met on the 1976 delegation would celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary. While their actual Golden Anniversary is still five years away, the question made us realize something special: 1976 was the year our connection began—a bond that grew stronger with each new delegation and gradually took shape as the group later known as the "Student Club."

Sparked by this chat, 30 alumni from the 3rd to 13th delegations (1976–1986) in a LINE group and two adult leaders reconnected, traveling from the local area, neighboring prefectures, and Tokyo—and even from as far away as Hokkaido, Miyagi, and Toyama.

Today, over 800 students from Torrance and Kashiwa have taken part in the program. Back then, we never imagined that we would share such a life-changing, once-in-a-lifetime experience with so many people—an experience that opened up our lives and made us who we are today. This year marks the 53rd delegation, led by a 1982 alumna. With second-generation delegates no longer rare, we may soon see students whose grandparents were part of the exchange.

As early delegates, we were truly fortunate. Keeping the vibrant energy from Torrance, we served as the core driving force and hands-on team for sister city activities through the "Student Club." This experience allowed us to form deep bonds with delegates across different exchange years, fostering lifelong friendships in both cities.

The August reunion was filled with the same energy from our student days—perhaps even more! Starting with opening remarks quoting Steve Jobs' "Stay foolish," the venue was alive with toasts, updates on Sister city activities, great food, and lively conversation. During the fun, two alumni formed a spontaneous opera duo and performed "*Libiamo ne' lieti calici*" from *La Traviata*, to the delight of everyone present. The celebration concluded with heartwarming comments from the couple whose story had inspired this gathering—a perfect ending to an unforgettable day.



Still young at heart: Older and wiser, yet happily "staying foolish" together.



The program's very first alumni couple: Koichi and Kayoko Yamanobe (1976), who now share a wonderful life with their growing family.



*A toast to friendship! Tami Ooka (1980) and Ichiro Ehara (1983) performing "*Libiamo*" to wild applause.*



Torrance Sister City Association
3031 Torrance Boulevard
Torrance, CA 90503