

President's Message

By Karen Wheeler



Hello to all our friends, near and far! We are off to a fast start in 2025! We are happy to report that everyone in our TSCA community is safe and well, despite the destructive fires in our region last month. We share the sorrow of many in our region, but we strengthen our resolve to value each day and each friendship even more.

In that spirit, we had a very heartwarming Alumni Reunion Luncheon in January with members whose time with the Torrance Sister City Association began decades ago, and new families whose children are seeking to become Student Ambassadors to Kashiwa this summer. We are grateful for the efforts of the Alumni Reunion Committee, chaired by Shirley Tanaka, for making this event run well and look lovely.

As usual, the applicants represent a range of high schools and are some of the best young people our city has to offer. Student Selection Committee co-chairs Lori Eurich and Aimee Arreygue are overseeing a selection process which will conclude in early March.

Our Board of Directors has been selected for 2025. We welcome to the Board Aimee Arreygue, Mandeep Ghuman, Brad Reynolds and Bryan Welsch. We also gratefully acknowledge the time and efforts of our outgoing Board members, Sumi Arnheim, Keith Glassman, Kathi Matsubara, Werner Willoughby. Our Executive Board welcomes Alyssa Yamauchi as Vice President and Aimee Arreygue as Secretary. We profusely thank outgoing secretary Amie Campbell and outgoing vice-president Werner Willoughby for their service. For our complete list of all current Board members, see our website.



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Applicants for the 2025 Student Exchange Program

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President's Message

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FEBRUARY 2025

Feb. 18 7:00PM

TSCA Meeting West Annex
Commission Meeting Room

Feb. 19 7:00PM – 8:45PM

Bunka-Sai Planning Meeting
Katy Geissert Library Meeting Room

SAVE THE DATES IN MARCH!

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

Our next order of business this year is the most challenging, but also the most rewarding. It is time to get ready for [Bunka-Sai Japanese Cultural Festival](#) on [April 5-6, 2025](#). As we are affiliated with the City of Torrance, this free event is our contribution to the people of our City and the South Bay. We prepare for a few months, and then we proudly share Japanese food, music, art and culture with everyone. The money we raise through food sales and supporting the vendors who sell their unique and high-quality goods helps to pay for the Student Ambassador program. So, yes, it's a fundraiser, but it is so much more. It is a celebration that our city is uniquely situated to do because of its connection to Japanese American history.

If you would like to be a part of another successful Bunka-Sai, please jump in and help us! We need help with serving food, welcoming volunteers and visitors, sales, helping performers and vendors, and even pre-event publicity.

To volunteer, contact us at: bunkasaivolunteer@gmail.com or contact Elisa Reynolds at [310-991-0779](tel:310-991-0779).

Also, the next [Bunka-Sai planning meeting](#) is [Wednesday February 19, 2025, at 7 pm](#) in the [Katy Geissert Library meeting room](#). Please come if you would like to share ideas and decide how to help and perhaps enjoy a tasty snack. We look forward to seeing you.

Please check out the rest of the Newsletter for the latest on our English Teachers in Kashiwa, membership and donation information and other good stuff.

Thank you so very much for your continued interest and support.

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

Welcome New TSCA Board Members!

L to R:

Brian Welsch, Aimee Arreygue and Brad Reynolds. Not shown: Mandeep Ghuman



New and Renewed Members and Donations

Compiled by Alyssa Yamauchi, Membership Chair

11 - LIFE (\$2,000+)

Cambra, May Ikeda
Chan Family, Kenneth
Doyle, Marlene Cambra
Fichtner, Dan and Ray
Rand
Ihde/Dunlap Family
Jordan, Leah Ray
Kaji & Associates
Oriental Motor USA
Roulette Family, Ray and
Gail
Torrance Refining
Company, LLC
Tsujii/Ihde Family

3 - BENEFACTOR (\$125+)

Furey, Pat and Terry
Taniguchi, Hazel
Yamauchi, Bryce and
Cheryl

9 - SUPPORTING (\$75+)

Cababa, Ed and Kerry
Dowell, Bob and Peggy
Heidebrecht, Bill and Kathy
Miles, Frank and Marilyn
Nadsady, Alina and Greg
Nakamoto, Scott and
Bonnie
Plank, Janice
South Bay Judo
Warner, Steve and
Stephanie Ewing-Warner

64 - FAMILY (\$40)

Altenberg Family, Amy
Arnheim, Bruce and Sumi
Bakhoun Family, Clay
Bissiri Family, David
Chen, George and Amy
Chen Family, Yun-Chuan
Chin Family, Kian-Vine
Dial Family, Emmanuel
Druten, Jason, Yoko, & Max
Ernst, Steven and Ameneh
Eurich, Lori and Dane
Evans Family, Kimiko
Flynn, Janet and John
Freiler Family, Eric
Gallagher, Ann & Marty
Gelbaum, Mark and Ilene

Gray, Bob, Summer and
Jeremy
Hady Family, Evelyn
Hofer, Gary and Fusae
Holmes Family, Wendolyn
Inouye Family, Craig
Ito, John, Wendy, and Alex
Johns Family, Patricia
Kimmel, Ronald and
Gudrun
King, Dennis and Patricia
Kisiler, Mark and Jennifer
Kneller Family, Joni
Komae, Kent and Jody
Kuwahara, Mas and Taeko
Lee, Leon and Weiti Chen
Lizenko Family, Liudmyla
London, Emily and John
Tokeshi
Long Family, Holly
Maroney, Mark and Jill
Mealins Family, Kathy
Medlock, Matthew, Thomas
and Kathleen
Nakano, Helen and George
Namimoto, Jim and Mariko
Newhart, Lance and Natalie
Peck Family, James
Peitzman, Fred and Ann
Penland, Thomas, Olivia
and Ginger
Pigao Family, Christopher
Pushic Family, Jennifer
Radomski Family, James
Reeve, Ron and Susan
Reynolds, Brad and Elisa
Roulette, Mark and Peggy
Rubin, Marilyn and Sherwin
Sargent, Dave and Toni
Scotto, Frank and Cindy
Seraydarian Family, Mark
Shetti, Mayoore, Navin,
Jeena and Ruchi
Shiosaki, Ed & Joan
Sprague, Brian and Tracy
Takikawa, Hisataka and
Hirofumi
Tanaka, Keith and Shirley
Trattner, Glenn and Melanie
Tsudama, Geoff, Mickie,
Meisa, Reymi
Villarie, Jack and Yoshie
Vuong Family, Artemis

Welsch, Bryan and Tanya
Wilson Family, Yuko
Yorizane, Eddie and Eileen

26 - INDIVIDUAL (\$20)

Abina, Pedro
Allen, Sheila
Ando, Frances
Ando, Jennifer
Ashcraft, Heidi
Beard, Mallory
Camarena, Jose Gonzalez
Cauble, Lynn
Dunham, Andrea Henson
Griffith, Kay
Griffiths, Mike
Grundhaus, Duretta
Higa, Reiko
Little, Vera
Matarrese, John
McIntyre, Hugh
Miike, Pamela
Numark, Clifford
Penick, Tiffany (Calhoun)
Pollinger, Lisa
Sakamoto, May
Tabata, Lynnie
Wand, Suzie
Yamauchi, Alyssa
Yamauchi, Blaine
Yamauchi, Patsy

12- Donations

\$100 Scotto, Frank and
Cindy
\$60 Evans Family,
Kimiko
\$60 Villarie, Jack and
Yoshie
\$30 Griffith, Kay
\$30 Sakamoto, May
\$25 Miles, Frank and
Marilyn
\$20 Ando, Jennifer
\$20 Little, Vera
\$10 Arnheim, Bruce and
Sumi
\$10 Sargent, Dave and
Toni
\$10 Shetti, Mayoore,
Navin, Jeena, and Ruchi
\$5 McIntyre, Hugh



Torrance Sister City Association

Dear Friends of TSCA,

This past year has been another successful one for our TSCA programs. We are back to operating at 100% capacity, making for a very full and fun calendar year with new friendships and core memories made! The support and participation in our events and programs have truly been heartwarming, and we are proud of our positive impact on the Torrance community.

We couldn't be more thankful for your continued support through your membership dues and donation contributions—especially over the last few years as we rebuilt our programs. Your contributions continue to help offset increasing annual operational costs, allowing our fundraising efforts to focus on continuing our mission of promoting friendship, goodwill, and understanding through people-to-people connections.

Thank you for being a part of our 50-year story. As friends of TSCA and alums of our programs, your role has been integral. We hope that TSCA has played an important part in your story as well, and we look forward to your continued support and consideration.

Best regards,
Alyssa Yamauchi
TSCA Membership Chair

Our 2025 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DRIVE has begun!

There are several membership levels available,
and two convenient payment options:



Pay by MAIL:
Complete the form below,
and mail with your check.



Pay ONLINE:

Check out with **PayPal**

Scan the QR code
or visit

www.torrancesistercity.org



Postmark deadline to be included in the printed TSCA Membership Directory is **02/19/25**.

----- Cut and return the below with your check payment. -----

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 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.*

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

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

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

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

MEET CLAY BAKHOUM 2025 ADULT LEADER



Clay Bakhoum is an accomplished IT administrator at Riviera Hall Lutheran School, where he has developed a strong expertise in device management and system administration. With a unique cultural background, being born to an Egyptian father and an American mother, Clay has always appreciated the richness of diverse perspectives. Raised in Torrance, he earned a BA in Graphic Design and Digital Media, blending his technical prowess with his creative passions. Clay's leadership skills were recognized early on when he earned the prestigious Eagle Scout award, a testament to his dedication to community service and personal growth. Outside of work, Clay is a passionate photographer and videographer, capturing moments from his travels and everyday life. He enjoys exploring new destinations, discovering different cultures, and sharing his experiences through his art. Clay continues to grow both personally and professionally, balancing his love for technology with his creative passions.

TSCA Gift Booth

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

Wanted: 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.

Alumni Reunion Luncheon Recap by Maria Nadsady, 2024 ambassador

Saturday, January 11th, we held our annual Alumni Reunion Luncheon at the Ken Miller Recreation Center. The event began with a speech by TSCA President Karen Wheeler, in which she acknowledged and thanked outgoing board members. City councilman, Jeremy Gerson, a former adult leader welcomed everyone on behalf of the city council.

Afterwards, Karen introduced City of Torrance City Clerk, Rebecca Poirier, who installed TSCA's new board members. Karen then invited Mallory Beard, the adult leader of the 2024 student exchange, to officially introduce Clay Bakhoun, the adult leader for this year's annual student cultural exchange, who shared a few words about himself and about his appreciation for his selection.

Afterwards, the lunch began, and prospective delegates were able to talk with past delegates, selection committee members, and other TSCA community members as all enjoyed the potluck provided by luncheon attendees. Lunch concluded with an alumni rollcall intended to acknowledge all the ways in which different people contribute to the TSCA community, with past delegates, past adult leaders, past board members, and many more who previously filled different roles within the program asked to stand for all to see.

Afterwards, 2024 student ambassador Anoop Ghuman displayed for all attendees the highlights of the past summer's trip to Japan through a slideshow presentation. As lunch concluded, each of the eight prospective delegates was invited to introduce themselves to attendees, sharing their names, age, grade, the school they attend, and describing their interest in Japanese culture that provoked them to apply. The applicants and their families were then invited to join the alumni and other TSCA members in the traditional Kashiwa Odori dance to conclude the gathering.

Renewing Friendships by Dai Sup and Jill Han, former TSCA English Teachers in Kashiwa

Here we are in 2025 already but we wanted to share an absolute highlight of last year: our first visit to Kashiwa since departing 26 years ago! We were both public school teachers in the South Bay prior to being sent by TSCA as English teachers to Kashiwa in 1996. We learned so much through our experiences working in the Japanese public schools. More importantly, we enjoyed the connections with the people of Kashiwa and have always fondly looked back on those years.

October 2024 presented our first opportunity to return to Japan in 26 years! During this trip, we were able to reconnect in Kashiwa with KIRA friends and some of Dai Sup's former Kashiwa Municipal High School co-workers/teachers. It was such a meaningful time to share about past and present happenings in our lives. Mrs. Doi and Mrs. Fujiwara also took the time to show us the current KIRA offices.

We did not recognize much in the neighborhood where we used to live but it was lovely to see the new neighborhood where the current TSCA teachers reside.

We will be forever grateful to TSCA for connecting us to Kashiwa. It is a testament to the dedication of people in both Torrance and Kashiwa that so many continue to be involved in the Sister City mission and in fostering beautiful cross-cultural friendships!

PS - In addition to these wonderful reunions, we experienced quite the serendipitous event. Dear Japanese friends had planned to take us on a day trip to one of their favorite places called Fujiyoshida...which happens to be the Sister City of our current city, Colorado Springs!



Reflections on a Year Abroad in Japan by Peter Abina



Recently, I had the opportunity to take a nearly three-week trip back home to Los Angeles. It had been a year and one month since I had last set foot in my home city. When I first woke up in my bed, my time in Japan felt like a fever dream. It was as though I had never left. It was so easy to jump back into a jam-packed schedule because of all my friends and family. Every moment of those three weeks, from 8 a.m. to midnight, was spent with someone I love.

During that time, all of the things I once disliked about L.A. suddenly became endearing. Yes, there's a lot of traffic, and gas is expensive, but the absolute freedom that comes with having a car is unmatched. Driving around, blasting my favorite music, and knowing I could go anywhere at any moment reminded me of the unique independence California offers. The geography of California—its sheer variety—is something I had forgotten to fully appreciate. On Christmas morning, I woke up in the mountains at Big Bear and later that night went stargazing with friends in the Joshua Tree desert. These moments reminded me of how lucky I am to live near such natural beauty.

I also took for granted the simple, spontaneous conversations I could have with strangers—at the gym, while ordering food, or even standing at a taco stand. These interactions are so much a part of life in L.A., and I found myself cherishing them more deeply during my visit.

However, my time in Japan was far from a fever dream. In the year I've spent abroad, I've learned so much about myself and adopted habits that have become an intrinsic part of who I am. Patience has been my biggest takeaway—patience with myself and with others. Life moves at a different pace in Japan. Although people are busy with their day-to-day lives, the reliance on public transportation, biking, and walking means there are natural pauses built into the day. These moments allow for reflection, observation, or simply a chance to breathe.

Driving offers a sense of freedom, but it can also be isolating. When you're behind the wheel, it's hard to focus on anything beyond the road in front of you. On public transport, however, you have a chance to lift your head, look around, and put things into perspective. It also fosters a sense of connection; when you're literally shoulder to shoulder with others, you become more conscious of the shared humanity around you.

Japan has also taught me to be more mindful of what I put into my body. I've come to understand how food affects both my physical health and my mental clarity. Miso soup is now a staple of my diet, and I've developed a love for vegetables and the countless ways they can be incorporated into meals. These lessons are ones I plan to carry with me for the rest of my life.

Perhaps most importantly, I've learned how to enjoy my own company. While I've made great friends here, doing things alone is much more common in Japan, and many restaurants and establishments are designed with solo patrons in mind. This cultural difference has helped me become more comfortable and confident in spending time by myself.

Over the past year I've learned that it's not about where you are in the world, but how you choose to engage with the life around you. Whether in the bustling streets of Los Angeles or the serene countryside of Japan, meaning and connection come from appreciating the small moments, embracing new experiences, and being present. Happiness and fulfillment are not tied to geography but to your mindset and the people you surround yourself with.

As we step into 2025, the Year of the Snake, which symbolizes new beginnings, I'm reminded of how life is constantly evolving. We are now equally close to 2050 as we are to 2000, and the world is changing rapidly. I encourage you all to take moments to pause, look around, and appreciate the people and places that surround you. Let's remember that we are all living on this planet together. I hope 2025 brings joy, growth, and connection to each of you. Thank you for being part of my journey!

50th Annual **Bunka-Sai**

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)



Enjoy tasty plate
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

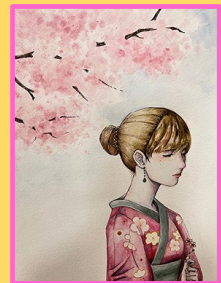
**Please leave your pets at home, authorized service animals are exempt.*

TorranceSisterCityInfo@gmail.com



Torrance Sister City Association's
**9th Annual
ANIME ART
CONTEST 2025!**

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

Forms and more info at www.torrancesistercity.org



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



Torrance Sister City
Association
3031 Torrance Boulevard
Torrance, CA 90503

