

President's Message

Donna Dunlap



In May, TSCA was invited to the **Japanese Consul General Muto's** house for a Sister City Networking opportunity, the first such event in Southern California. Butch and I attended to represent our association. There were about twelve other sister city organizations at the function. After

opening remarks, we were divided into small groups, TSCA was paired with Long Beach and Huntington Beach sister cities. We were given 15 minutes to share ideas and encourage communications between sister cities in your own area. We exchanged business cards and make preliminary introductions. I was most excited to meet Consul General Muto. I had the opportunity to ask for his help getting our delegates to Japan in July. He gave me his business card and seemed interested in helping TSCA if needed.

Featured in this issue are the 2022 Student Delegates. They have completed their student orientation, expertly led by **Steven Ihde**, and left for Japan on July 10th. At the time of this writing, Japan has opened its doors to small cultural exchange groups. They will experience a different schedule of activities, but still a rewarding trip to not only Kashiwa but also Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka and Hiroshima. We look forward to the reports of their trip in future newsletters.

A big thank you to **Lori Chong Eurich**, chair of the English Teacher Selection Committee, for coordinating the interview process again this year. TSCA members on the panel included **Amie Komae**, Steven Ihde currently teaching math at Miraleste Intermediate School and myself. Amie was a past English teacher in Kashiwa from

2015 to 2018. She was a wealth of information for the applicants on what to expect in Kashiwa both in the classroom and out of it. I too learned a lot listening to her stories and hearing the expectations of the teachers that TSCA has sponsored in Kashiwa since 1979. The committee selected **Chris Pigao** to be the next English teacher in Kashiwa starting in August. Lori and Amie will continue to prepare Chris for his time at Kashiwa Municipal High School (aka Ichikashi). Mr. Kuwabara from the Kashiwa Board of Education will help him get the correct paperwork completed to enter Japan as well as provide an orientation to familiarize him with his new home away from home. Thank you to everyone involved in the selection process. Chris will be joining **Deanna Sun** and he will be replacing **Brandon Matsumoto** at Ichikashi. Brandon has been teaching in Kashiwa for the past four years due to the pandemic lengthening his stay in Japan. Besides all of the innovative ideas Brandon introduced at the high school, Brandon began sending video links to include in the English Teacher Reports. These articles in our monthly newsletters have given us insight in the life of the Assistant Learning Teacher (ALT), and the introduction of these videos enhanced the written word with live action. TSCA is forever grateful for everything he added to the program, elevating the role of the ALT to a new level. ☘

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JULY 11

TSCA Association Meeting (7-9 pm)
West Annex

No association meeting in August

SEPTEMBER 12

TSCA Association Meeting (7-9 pm)
West Annex

OCTOBER 10

TSCA Association Meeting (7-9 pm)
West Annex

NOVEMBER 14

TSCA Association Meeting (7-9 pm)
West Annex

No association meeting in December

IN MEMORIAM—MIKKO HAGGOT-HENSON

By Gail Roulette

In 1963 Mikko Haggott left Tokyo, Japan, to become a citizen of the United States, and TSCA will be forever grateful. Her formal education was in Japan; however, her community involvement and experiences as interpreter and cultural consultant made her knowledgeable about the American social, political, economic and education systems. She quickly began helping others assimilate to this country with her work at the Torrance Language School. And from then on she continued to promote cultural diversity and understanding in Torrance.

It was natural then that Mikko became interested when she heard that the Kashiwa Lions Club wanted Kashiwa to have a sister city in the U.S. and that Torrance had been recommended as a compatible city. After some visits of officials between the two cities, and a special fact-finding mission from Mikko, a Cultural Arts Student Exchange Program was established in 1973. That has evolved into our Torrance Sister City Association. Mikko was there to witness the signing of official papers between the two cities – both in Torrance on 2/20/73 and in Kashiwa on 10/9/73, and she became the first President of TSCA, serving three terms: 1976-77, 1977-78; 1983-84, 1984-85; 1990-91.

From the beginning, Mikko was instrumental in the development of the exchange program. She was a member of the Student Selection Committee, established the orientation program, arranged for student trips to Kashiwa, and helped schedule activities/events during Kashiwa students' stay in Torrance. The Adult Leader position, the English Teacher position, and the Japanese Bunka-Sai Festival are all the result of her leadership.

Mikko planned, hosted, and guided tours for adult delegations from Kashiwa, including city officials and educators. In 1980 she arranged for a Cross Cultural program from Kashiwa, which was presented at Torrance Civic Center and in Torrance elementary schools. Mikko participated in several Anniversary trips to Kashiwa, and during the 1987 trip she and Barry Henson were married in a Shinto wedding ceremony.

TSCA has won numerous awards at the annual Sister Cities International Conferences in the past thanks to Mikko's submissions, and she personally has been honored with several community awards - the most prestigious being the Jared Sidney Torrance Award for public service in 2002.

True to form, Mikko accepted the challenge to be on the TSCA 50 th Anniversary Committee, spending many hours helping plan the celebratory events. Her special achievement: arranging for a performance of sister city delegates at the Armstrong Theater. Next year we will enjoy the benefits of her efforts. She will not be there, but perhaps the best way to honor her memory would be for us to participate and enjoy the activities to keep alive her commitment to promote cultural diversity and understanding. ☘

Membership News

Alyssa Yamauchi, Membership Chairperson

NEW AND RENEWED MEMBERSHIPS

Family (\$40/year)

Hart Family, Gillian
Segovia Family

Individual (\$20/year)

Glassman, Keith
Jendrucko, Susan

Torrance Sister City Association

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Donna Dunlap

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Stephanie Ewing-Warner

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Comments or submissions?

Please send an email to
tscanewsletter@gmail.com



Jacob Diederich

2022 South High School Graduate
Baylor University

“My goal in Japan is to not only learn more about its rich history, but to learn how Japanese families spend their time with one another.”

Kaitlyn Kikuchi

2022 West High School Graduate
Cal State Los Angeles

“I am looking forward to immersing myself in Japanese culture and forming life-long friendships.”



Meet the 2022 TSCA Delegates

Matthew Segovia

2022 Torrance High School Graduate
UC San Diego

“I’m super grateful to have been chosen for this life changing trip. I hope to experience all the wonderful things Japan has to offer.”



Cara Ihde

“I am honored to be the 2022 adult leader! It has been a dream of mine for many years. I am looking forward to experiencing Kashiwa with the delegates and creating lasting memories with them.”

Abigail Trattner

2022 Bishop Montgomery H.S. Graduate
Texas Christian University

“I hope to learn about Japan’s history and be submersed in its beautiful culture and customs.”



2022 Adult Leader



2022 Bunka-Sai Thank You Shirley Tanaka

Thank you to the following businesses for their beautiful gift baskets, gift cards, and specialty items that generously supported Bunka-Sai. Thanks also to TSCA members and friends who provided additional prizes. We had a very successful Big Raffle!

[Azuma Japanese Restaurant](#) (Gardena)

[Cherrystones](#) (Gardena)

[Chick-Fil-A](#) (Torrance)

[Creative Cuts](#) (Torrance)

[Gardena Bowl Coffee Shop](#) (Gardena)

[Giuliano's Delicatessen](#) (Gardena)

[Honey Baked Ham](#) (Torrance)

[Islands Restaurant](#) (Redondo Beach)

[Kiku Florist & Gifts](#) (Gardena)

[Lomeli's Italian Restaurant](#) (Gardena)

[Mama Says](#) (Torrance)

[Sequim Lavender Company](#) (Sequim, WA)

[Shin Sen Gumi](#) (Gardena)

[SNAX](#) (Torrance)

[Sprouts Farmers Market](#) (Redondo Beach)

[Sunflower Farms](#) (Gardena)

[Sushi Island](#) (Gardena)

[3-D Craft & Shadowbox](#)

[Trader Joe's](#) (Torrance)

[Riviera Pizza](#) (Redondo Beach)

[Yamada Company Inc.](#) (Gardena)

Student Alumni News Gail Roulette

Congratulations to **Olivia Penland** (TSCA Student Delegate in 2019) for being part of the winning Forensics team at El Camino College this year.

As co-president of the team, Olivia helped lead the team to an overall victory at the Phi Rho Pi National Championship. Held in St. Charles, Missouri, this tournament includes other prestigious four-year colleges and universities. This is the first time in ECC history that their Forensics team has won this competition.

For her individual part, Olivia received a first place award in Impromptu Speaking as well as Extemporaneous Speaking (her second year in a row for gold-medaling on both of those subjects), and she received a gold medal in Parliamentary Debate. These achievements contributed to her being named the third best overall speaker in the nation this year.



Olivia Penland, TSCA 2019

English Teacher Report

Bring Your Child to Work Day

Deanna Sun



Perhaps the title is a bit misleading because, well, I don't have any children and we don't have "Bring Your Child to Work Day" at my workplace. However, I do remember all the great memories I've had visiting my parents at their jobs when I was young! It's fascinating to see a day in the life of

someone's work, so I thought I could do a written, pandemic style "bring your readers to Ichikashi High School" tour for you all. In the last year and a half, I think I've talked about almost everything under the (rising) sun, except for my daily life at work. So, without further ado, let's spend a day at my workplace together!

I arrive at Ichikashi by bus around 8 a.m., and the first thing I do is beep in, enter "*Eigoka*" or the "English Department Room", and make a fresh pot of coffee. My coworkers always greet me in the morning, and then I head to the staff room for our daily morning meeting. Today is Monday, which means I have no classes to teach during 1st and 2nd period. I sit at my desk in *Eigoka*, eat my *conbini* breakfast, chat with Brandon who sits next to me, and make my to-do list for the day. Every day is different, but today I have English conversation class with my 2nd-year students during 3rd and 4th period. It's an especially fun day because today's topic is "Prom"! I show videos of my high school prom and explain what a school dance is like in America.

After class, I eat lunch in *Eigoka* and chat with my fellow 17 English teachers! When lunch is over, I teach my last class of the day with another English teacher. This is a freshman class, and today each student is performing a short skit about food. Finally, classes end around 3 p.m. and it's time for "*souji*" or "cleaning" time all over the school. My international students and I sweep and mop the hallway floors, take out the trash, and chat about random topics in Japanese and English.

Because today is Monday, after *souji*, Brandon and I lead English Conversation Club (ECC), which has around 35 members. Today we have "*Senpai-Kohai*" Day, so the two of us planned a giant scavenger hunt around the school for upperclassmen and lowerclassmen to navigate and bond with each other. We placed clues all around Ichikashi and watched as our students use English to solve riddles, play games, and earn prizes!

After a very eventful day, I wait for the bus at 5 p.m. and head home. I love chatting with my students on the bus or



listen to music and podcasts during my commute. I arrive home to my dog, Forrest, and we take a walk along the river near my apartment, then I have dinner and relax for the rest of the night!

This is a very, very vague example of my life at work, but I hope it gives you some understanding of what my job is like! The work-life balance is balanced, the students are diligent yet hilarious, and my co-workers are warm and easygoing. I'm considering making a video series on daily life here, so if you're interested, I will post them on my YouTube Channel "Deepartures"! Hope you enjoyed coming to work with me today! ☘

TSCA's English Teacher Selection Committee is pleased to announce that **Christopher Pigao** will be the next teacher at Kashiwa Municipal High School (called Ichikashi). He replaces **Brandon Matsumoto** who will be completing his fourth year at the end of July. Special thanks to **Amie Komae, Donna Dunlap, and Steven Ihde** for serving on the selection team. Our other English teacher, **Deanna Sun** looks forward to having him join the Ichikashi team soon. We wish Chris and Brandon all the best in their new endeavors.

Lori Chong Eurich

Chair, English Teacher Selection Committee

Meet TSCA's Newest English Teacher Chris Pigao



Hello everyone! I just want to formally introduce myself to all of the TSCA newsletter readers. My name is **Chris Pigao** and I have the utmost honor and privilege to be the next English Teacher (ALT) at Kashiwa Municipal High School. I am South Bay born and bred, I was born in Harbor City, grew up in Carson, and eventually settled in Torrance in 2006. I went to Torrance High School - graduating in 2011. I began my collegiate career at El Camino Community College and transferred to California State University Long Beach, graduating in 2017 with a degree in English Education. After working various jobs outside of academia, I pursued post-graduate studies at California State University Dominguez Hills and received my Master's in Literature with Rhetoric and Composition in 2021. Aside from all of these accolades, I would consider myself a very outgoing individual. People can recognize my distinct smile from far away. I'm an avid bicycle rider and I'm a huge music fan! One of my favorite bands of all time is the Cure. I also play Japanese Rock/Pop music with some of my dearest friends in a band called EV133 [which you can check out at "ev133.carrd.co"].

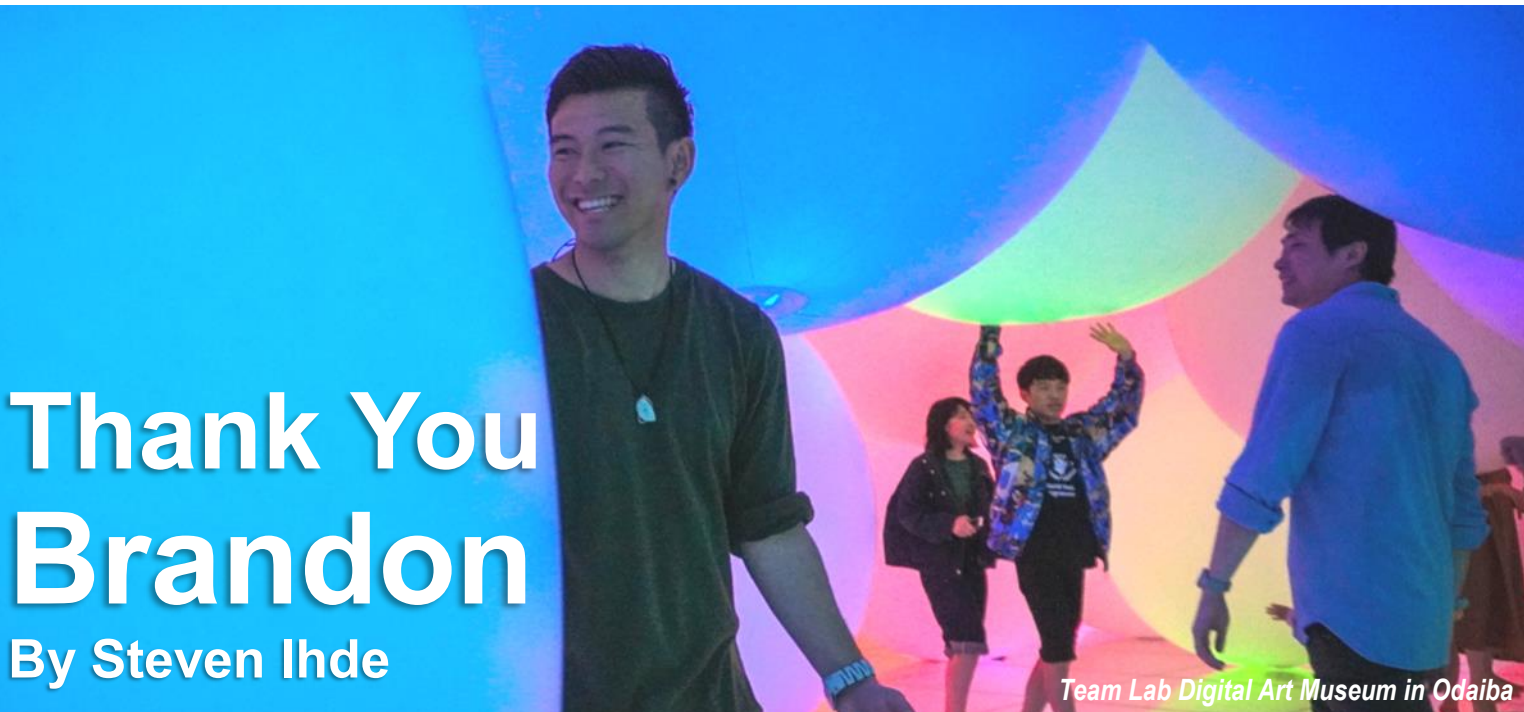
I want to express my sincerest gratitude to Lori, Donna, and Amie for selecting me as this year's teacher. I had

originally set my sights to be an ALT for the JET Programme, but they convinced me otherwise to take part in this experience. To me, our interview felt less like an interview and more like an amazing conversation amongst colleagues. I knew they grabbed my attention when Amie mentioned the Keion (Music) club. Overall, it was really natural and I knew deep down in my heart that this is what I really wanted. When they called me and offered me the position, I immediately said "YES".

Although I am sad to move away from our beautiful city - leaving all my loved ones and most importantly the Torrance High students I met in 2021-2022, I look forward to experiencing all of the wonderful things that Kashiwa, Japan has to offer! I am excited to meet all of the teachers and administration at Ichikashi who are eagerly anticipating my arrival. I also heard that there was a HUGE Don Quixote right off the next train stop so I plan on getting lost in DonQui's miracle jungle. For all the students at Ichikashi, brace yourselves! I guarantee that we will have the time of our lives & make memories! I promise you, we will! よるしくお願いしますた! ☘

Thank You Brandon

By Steven Ihde



Team Lab Digital Art Museum in Odaiba



Brandon Matsumoto, Alison Abraham, and Mr. Tamaoki



Kashiwa Exchange Youth Society 2019



Yeah, I'm out of shape.
うん、運動不足だわ

Torrance Sister City Association would like to congratulate **Brandon Matsumoto** on completing his service at Kashiwa Municipal High School. For the past four years, Brandon has served as an **Assistant Language Teacher**, supervising his own classroom, and working closely with the English Department teachers in developing curriculum and planning lessons. His proficiency in the Japanese language was an added factor that enabled him to assimilate easily into his role.

Beyond the daily instruction at the high school, Brandon has served the greater Kashiwa community by coordinating and leading campus visits, assisting in extracurricular activities, judging speech contests, serving as the adviser to the English Conversation Club, coaching students for college interviews, and volunteering with **Kashiwa International Relations Association (KIRA)** and other city groups. As well as these duties, Brandon also played an integral role in the creation of the **Kashiwa Exchange Youth Society (KEYS)**, a club of international students in high school and college, serving as the club advisor for many years.

During school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Brandon, with the assistance of teaching colleagues, used his videography skills to produce interesting, educational, and humorous videos for his students to study while at home. TSCA newsletters have also been enhanced by the introduction of Ichikashi Student Reports and his entertaining videos. His creativity is displayed in every facet of his work both inside and outside the classroom. Although Brandon will be leaving his teaching position at Kashiwa Municipal High School this summer, the immeasurable impact he has left on the school and the students will remain. Thank you, Brandon! ☘

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

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

Mail your check and this form to:

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

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<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$40
<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting	\$75+
<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor	\$125+
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<input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime Membership*	\$2,000+
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Make your check payable to TSCA	

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