

## President's Message

### Werner Willoughby



As we continue in our months of self-quarantine and mask-wearing, I hope this finds you and your family members safe and in good health.

As part of the distribution of paper copies of this newsletter, I extend special thanks to **Butch Ihde** and **Donna Dunlap** for their efforts in mailing these to those who prefer paper copies and under “normal” circumstances distributing copies to locations around the city (e.g., libraries) to share with our community.

Although the future of our 2021 TSCA activities is in limbo due to the uncertainty associated with COVID-19, we have reserved all dates, venues and times for next year, hoping for the best for **Adult Leader Cara Ihde** and her students. Our most important concerns are the health and welfare of all students and their adult leaders, here in Torrance and in Kashiwa. Other issues dictating our decision to have activities will involve topics such as local transportation, travel abroad, securing host families, policies guiding venues, and other variables that may be out of our control.

In a “normal” year, the first event is the traditional Alumni Reunion, a potluck luncheon. It has been calendared for January 9th, 2021, at the Ken Miller Recreation Center. We will follow-up with information on this event in the months ahead, so stand by. The only activities missing from 2021 will be the student selection activities, when students for the summer exchange program are selected.

Since the students who were selected for this year's exchange did not go to Japan, they will be given the opportunity to participate as the 2021 delegation.

Our most recent TSCA Association meeting was a very significant and exciting one (if meetings can be exciting). The virtual meeting held using the Zoom platform enabled attendees from Kashiwa to join the TSCA board members, so it was held on July 13th at 7:00 pm in Torrance, which was 11:00 am on July 14th in Kashiwa. Nine Torrance Committee members from Kashiwa attending were: **Mike Arai, Makiyo Doi, Yoshimi Enomoto, Masako Fujiwara, Etsuko Kawamura, Akemi Kosuge, Akiko Maruta, Yoko Nakano** and **Akiko Nobusawa**. Considering the circumstances impacting Torrance and Kashiwa, it was a special moment to see familiar faces. Hand-waving and joyful greetings were exchanged over computer screens to friends across the Pacific who haven't seen one another for a long while, sometimes many years. The warm excitement on everyone's faces was the highlight of the evening.

Many thanks to **Bryce Yamauchi** who has graciously assumed the chair of the nominating committee to determine five new members of the Association's Board and eventually a slate of new officers for 2021. Good luck in the months ahead, Bryce!

On behalf of TSCA, may I wish everyone the best of health. We will connect, again, in our final newsletter for the year during the months of November-December. ☘

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SEPTEMBER 14

TSCA Association Meeting (7-9 pm)
TBD\*

Ballots mailed out for Board of Directors Election

OCTOBER 12

TSCA Association Meeting (7-9 pm)
TBD\*

Ballots tallied for Board of Directors Election

NOVEMBER 9

TSCA Association Meeting (7-9 pm)
TBD\*

DECEMBER 14

2021 Budget Planning Meeting (7 pm)
TBD\*

\*Meeting originally scheduled for City Hall West Annex Commission Room. TBD due to corona virus social distancing guidelines.

In June, while I was watching the virtual celebration of the 21st anniversary of the Go For Broke National Education Center's monument on my computer screen, I was surprised by the appearance of Emiko Kranz, a Torrance exchange student from 2013. Go For Broke National Education Center (GFBNEC) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is ". . . to educate and inspire character and equality through the virtue and valor of our World War II American veterans of Japanese ancestry." Emiko is a member of GFBNEC's Torchbearers, a young support group, and represents the group as a liaison for GFBNEC's Board.



Emiko Kranz

A few weeks after the virtual celebration, the June 23rd issue of the Japanese-English newspaper, Rafu Shimpo, featured an article announcing the recipients of the Aratani Community Advancement Research Endowment Awards, given to projects that benefit, advance and strengthen the Japanese American community. And yes, Emiko and GFBNEC's Torchbearers were one of the twelve recipients. Their Endowment Award project involved about 18 volunteers who weeded and cleaned around the many headstones of 442nd Battalion veterans who are buried at Evergreen Cemetery in Los Angeles. In World War II, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, a segregated team composed almost entirely of second-generation American soldiers of Japanese ancestry, earned the distinction of being the most decorated unit for its size and length of service, in the entire history of the US Military.

The last time I spoke with Emiko several years ago, she was a UCLA student helping TSCA lead a campus tour for the Torrance and Kashiwa students as part of the August Activities, as she had done several times before. After the campus tour, she joined the Torrance and Kashiwa students for lunch.

As an update, Emiko graduated from UCLA in 2017 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Microbiology, Immunology and Molecular Genetics, with a minor in Asian American Studies. She is currently in the UCLA Asian American Studies Master of Arts (MA) and Community Health Studies Master of Public Health (MPA) programs, while researching treatments for HIV and certain forms of cancer at the UCLA AIDS Institute in her spare time.

Emiko is the daughter of Linda Kranz, past newsletter editor and a TSCA photo historian, and Linda's husband Dave, who, together, revived and have been running the chicken curry booth at Bunka-Sai for many years. Dave also supports Bunka-Sai as one of our main shoppers for supplies for the event.

Congratulations to Emiko for her achievements and best wishes to her in her future endeavors. TSCA is proud of you! ☘

Torrance Sister City Association

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Comments or submissions?

Please send an email to tscanewsletter@gmail.com

# Meet the 2021 TSCA Delegates



**Cara Ihde**  
Adult Leader

*"I am honored to be the 2021 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."*



**Madeline Anderson**  
Marymount High School, 12th Grade

*"While in Kashiwa I hope to improve my leadership skills and learn some of the Japanese language."*



**Jacob Diederich**  
South High School, 11th Grade

*"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."*



**Amanda Kang**  
West High School, 11th Grade

*"I am most excited to meet my host family and everyone else in Japan. I'm looking forward to experiencing what living in Japan is like and seeing all the beauty the country has to offer."*



**Harry Kaplan**  
South High School, 11th Grade

*"I am excited to experience Japan's style of life and to apply what I learn to my everyday life in America."*



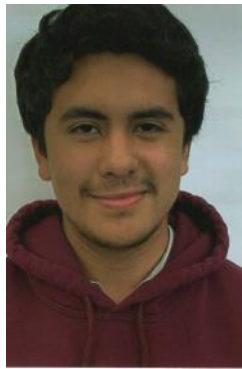
**Kaitlyn Kikuchi**  
West High School, 11th Grade

*"I am looking forward to immersing myself in Japanese culture, spending time with my host families, and forming life-long friendships."*



**Cole Moore**  
South High School, 12th Grade

*"I am looking forward to being emerged in Japanese Culture and using my Japanese knowledge that I've been cultivating for 4 years."*



**Matthew Segovia**  
Torrance High School, 11th Grade

*"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."*



**Abigail Trattner**  
Bishop Montgomery H.S., 11th Grade

*"I hope to learn about Japan's history and be submersed in its beautiful culture and customs."*



# Torrance Sister City Association

## ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

*Our 2021 Membership Drive has begun!*

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



**Option  
1**

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



**Option  
2**

**Pay ONLINE:**  
Visit  
[www.torrancesistercity.org](http://www.torrancesistercity.org)  
and



*Postmark deadline to be included in the printed TSCA Membership Directory is 02/17/21.*

### Torrance Sister City Association

### 2021 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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

#### 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 <b>check</b> payable to <b>TSCA</b>	

*If you have any questions about your membership, please email Alyssa Yamauchi at [tscamembership@gmail.com](mailto:tscamembership@gmail.com)*

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

## Little Tokyo Should Be More Like Big Tokyo

Amanda Stahl

TSCA 2019 Student Delegate



After the hundreds of pedestrians cleared from Shibuya Crossing, the sidewalks became crammed. Despite the large number of people, there was not a piece of trash in sight. I am used to big cities as I go to LA often, but never had I seen one so unblemished.

Not only did the cleanliness of the city surprise me, but I was also taken aback at the end of my free day in Tokyo when I realized I had not seen a single homeless person. It was the polar opposite of Little Tokyo in Los Angeles where there is a beggar on every corner. I started to wonder: where are all the homeless people in Japan?

I asked my host families about homelessness in Japan and they were surprised I was even interested. Although he didn't know what to say at first, my host father later sent me 30 pages of very useful information. I learned from the article, "A glimpse at life on the streets of Tokyo" by Andrew McKirdy, that the Japanese homeless are "not often in the pathway of daily commuters or students on their way to school, so many people are not aware that there may be more than a few homeless people amongst them". This is not a very popular topic in Japan today considering that, according to the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, there are only 4,977 homeless people living in Japan. Although some independent researchers suggest it is two to three times that number, that is still a very low number considering about

128 million people live there. In Los Angeles County alone, the population of homeless people is about 60,000 with a total population of 10 million. Although they are not perfect, we have a lot to learn from Japan's ways to reduce homelessness.



Firstly, their culture has a large influence on the population of homeless people. Drug use is very uncommon in Japan compared to the US. In addition, they have not been involved in any wars since WWII; therefore, they don't have veterans returning to their home country without a home. Moreover, people who are mentally ill or addicted to drugs are often well cared for in rehabilitation centers. It is very rare for women to become homeless because they are under the support of their parents or partners for most of their lives. Single mothers and domestic violence victims are prioritized in welfare programs and in shelters and public housing. I would also argue that there is a cultural pressure stronger than in the US, to contribute to society and not be a burden.

**Megan Lum**, a TSCA member, volunteered for the non-profit, Second Harvest Japan, where she cooked and distributed food to those in need, most of whom were homeless. She recalled, "I can't remember seeing a single person giving me eye contact, only a few people wished me back 'good morning'" as a cloud of shame hung above their heads. It is very rare to find a homeless person asking for



*Fifth part in a series of reports  
from TSCA's 2019 Student Delegation*

# Little Tokyo Should Be More Like Big Tokyo

By Mandy Stahl (Continued)

assistance in Japan, in addition to seeing someone giving them money. Instead, they collect cans and newspapers to recycle for money in an effort to be productive.

Most of the homeless population are elderly men with low levels of education and have rural backgrounds who couldn't find work in the cities or who got laid off. Some of the population are former Yakuza, LGBTQ youth, alcohol and gambling addicts, or are running away from debt.

To help the homeless, the government has levels of support to help integrate them back into society. First, there are emergency shelters that provide medical care and basic necessities and usually have a maximum stay of two months. Then people can move to self-reliant support shelters that provide services to help people get jobs and allow them to stay and save enough money for an apartment. In addition, they provide assistance in getting livelihood protection. Livelihood protection provides about 130,000 JPY or 1,212 USD a month. Most homeless people qualify and receive the welfare. Although it is harder for younger healthy men to

receive it due to the assumption that they are not working hard enough, the stigma is reducing over the years. Furthermore, there is affordable housing such as public housing and “*doya*” which are cheap single rooms or flop houses that provide basic utilities for only 53,700 JPY or 500 USD a month. You would never be able to tell by walking around San'ya, that you were in Tokyo's “skid row”, as most of the homeless are staying in these *doyas*. Although there are flaws in their system and much room for improvement, most of their tactics are much more effective than the ones we have here.

In Los Angeles, our shelters are packed and dangerous, while Japan's shelters haven't been full in decades. Their homeless population is consistently decreasing while Los Angeles' is surging. Japan's outstanding care for its homeless population has inspired me to do the same for my community. I hope to start a conversation to change the way we approach the homeless epidemic in Los Angeles, so eventually, Little Tokyo can look a little more like big Tokyo. ☘

## Ichikashi Student Report

### English Conversation Club

Fujio Joshua Miki



I'm Fujio Joshua Miki and I'm half Filipino/Japanese. I'm originally from the Philippines and I came here to Japan for to enrich my future. Secondly, I'm a member of English Conversation Club (ECC) at our school.

In ECC, we have a lot of fun things that we do, such as playing games, activities, etc. We have amazing teachers that accompany us when we need them. They're like my second family because they do their best to support and understand us.

Lastly, when I came to Japan, I was amazed because of the beautiful infrastructure and refreshing air. When I first entered my school, I was surprised about the differences in the school system. The most difficult part for me is the language and mainly the “kanji”.

My dream job is to be a policeman. Former U.S. Defense Secretary Colin Powell said, “A dream does not become reality through magic; it takes sweat, determination and hardwork.” He inspires me to become a policeman in the future. ☘

*The guest writer, Fujio, is a second year student at Ichikashi High School.*

## My Garden

Brandon Matsumoto



Schools stayed quiet for months. Bars and restaurants were hesitant to reopen. The summer of 2020 was officially ruined. Usually I am back home with my family for the summer but this year was very different. I was stuck in Japan. Not that it was a bad thing, but I quickly came to realize that I haven't been away from family for this long before. It was a strange feeling but a **しょうがない** one.

**しょうがない** (sho-ga-nai) means "it can't be helped" Many people here use that word daily. An example would be if they accidentally spilled tonkatsu sauce on their white shirt. Sho-ga-nai. Or when you realize that the potatoes you bought last week are now lively sprouting some beautiful green shoots. Sho-ga-nai. Yes, these are examples from my life this summer. Although the tonkatsu sauce ruined my brand new white shirt, I thought, "these potatoes aren't ruined YET. I wonder how much it could grow." I placed it in shallow water and positioned it in plenty of sunlight. This began my first chapter of my 2020 quarantine garden.

In a few weeks my potatoes exploded with life! I quickly bought potting soil, but then at the home improvement store, some seed packs caught my eye. I ended up coming



home with lettuce seeds, cabbage seeds, and cucumber seeds. I couldn't stop! The next week I brought home sunflower seeds, lavender seeds, and a strawberry plant! I needed more planters! I had some extra bamboo from last year's Nagashi Somen event, so I repurposed it to hold my lettuce!

The depressing summer days of 2020 quickly took a turn to make room for my new love of gardening. Fresh vegetables and beautiful flowers welcomed me home everyday.

My sunflowers and lettuce are now producing seeds and I can't wait to plant them for next year.

For me, the summer of 2020 will be remembered as a summer of growth and patience. Hopefully, we can all come out of this pandemic stronger and with a more positive mindset.

Short video of my beautiful garden:

<https://bit.ly/325jUB2> ☘



# Kashiwa Youth Exchange Society (KEYS)

On August 8, 2020 this year's Torrance delegates participated in an online Olympic Games event with the Kashiwa Youth Exchange Society (KEYS), a club comprised of students in high school and college on Zoom. Brandon Matsumoto, our English teacher and club advisor joined KEYS members in a meeting room in Kashiwa hosting four games. Twenty-five participants from seven countries enjoyed the activities and time in breakout rooms for informal conversation. Many thanks to Brandon for being the technical director and to the KEYS team for an excellent job in organizing the event.



**Torrance Sister City Association**

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Torrance, CA 90503