

## President's Message

By Donna Dunlap



THANK YOU.....  
THANK YOU.....  
THANK YOU!!!!!!!!!!!!

I seem to begin each newsletter thanking everyone who supported a major TSCA event, and there have been more than usual in 2023. TSCA activities are not quieting down.

Here's a look at what is happening right now:

We have just selected the new teacher who will begin teaching in Kashiwa Municipal High School in August replacing **Deanna Sun** who has been an excellent teacher these past three years nearly all of it during the covid restrictions.

We have selected our eight students, featured later in this edition, and will begin weekly orientation on May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Thank you, **Cara Ihde**, for chairing these orientation sessions. Many thanks to the past adult leaders: **Jessica Haugen Chien**, **Jennifer Hirashiki**, **David Gelbaum** and **Steven Ihde** for offering their expertise in the different topics covered each week. **Michael George** will once again give an interesting history of Torrance and **Yuki Tsujii** will help out with Japanese language lessons.

The August Activities Committee has started planning the daily activities when the Kashiwa students visit Torrance in August. TSCA arranges all the weekday outings and many of the evening dinners:

at a Dodger Game, Hollywood Bowl and two formal dinners. Nearly all the daytime activities include our own Torrance delegates and many of the night time activities are open to both host families and any TSCA member that would like to participate.

The eight Kashiwa students were selected at the end of April. Their students have not visited Torrance since 2019. We are so happy to once again host these students. If you are interested in hosting a Kashiwa delegate in your home for eight days in August, please notify **Cheryl Yamauchi**. Our own Torrance delegate families will host, but we will need nine more families. It is such a rewarding experience to have a Kashiwa student living with you. It is a unique opportunity to learn about the Japanese culture without leaving Torrance.

Once again TSCA hosted another very successful Bunka-Sai. This is our only fundraiser that supports the summer exchange program. Many of the booth chairs started in January planning, organizing, reaching out to volunteers, soliciting businesses and organizations for donations and advertisements in the program. This year with the 50<sup>th</sup> Celebration in February it was even more of a challenge to focus on the festival. I am really grateful and appreciate those individuals that worked simultaneously on the 50<sup>th</sup> and Bunka-Sai, especially **Aileen** and **Werner Willoughby** who had major roles in both events. This was dedication to the nth degree!

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**MAY 24, 2023** (7:00 pm)  
August Activities Committee  
Library Meeting Room

**MAY 24, 31, 2023** (4:30 pm)  
Student Orientation  
Library Meeting Room

**JUNE 7, 2023** (4:30 pm)  
Student Orientation with parents  
Katy Geissert Polly Watts Story Theater

**JUNE 12, 2023** (7:00 pm)  
Association Meetings  
Katy Geissert Library Meeting Room

**JUNE 21, 2023** (6:00 pm)  
August Activities Committee  
Katy Geissert Polly Watts Story Theater

Mark your calendars for the  
**2024 Bunka-Sai**  
APRIL 20-21

## Torrance Sister City Association

### PRESIDENT

Donna Dunlap

### VICE PRESIDENT

Stephanie Ewing-Warner

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Amie Campbell

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*Newsletter Editor*

Shoko Matsuda

*Newsletter Distribution*

Donna Dunlap

### Comments or submissions?

Please send an email to  
tscanewsletter@gmail.com

Many of the volunteers that TSCA depends on, started volunteering when they were delegate parents. I am extremely grateful for their continued participation each year. Their dedication and commitment to each new class of delegates is the backbone of TSCA. The student exchange program would not have lasted 50 years, or survived the pandemic, without the involvement of so many willing volunteers. I know that the 2023 delegates and their families will join me in thanking all the volunteers that made this festival a huge success to support the exchange program this summer. We were very fortunate for the wide variety of vendors, exhibitors, demonstrations and hands-on activities as well as the performers on stage to introduce and educate the attendees at Bunka-Sai to the Japanese culture. This festival has been rated as one of the best in Southern California. We are honored to be able to invite everyone to come and learn and enjoy all of these experiences for free.

A HUGE THANK YOU to the City of Torrance Central Services staff who did all of our printing needs for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Weekend and also Bunka-Sai. TSCA is very appreciative of the long hours working to meet our needs this year: **William Urquilla, Carlos Romero, Allen Teng and Gail Shota** for the design, assembling and printing of the many programs, flyers and tickets needed for these two events. **Scott Villalva**, facility operations chief, and his crew were responsible for setting up the venues we used during each event. We enjoyed the Mt. Fuji backdrop on stage at Bunka-Sai. Hundreds of chairs and tables were set up exactly where we needed them. We also depended on the new manager of the Cultural Services Department, **Monica Harte** and her office staff, **Uyen Fredericks** and **Jess Salvador**. These two events would not have looked so good or run so smoothly without the help from these three City of Torrance departments.

## SPECIAL THANKS to these DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS

### 2023 BUNKA-SAI Chairs:

**BBQ** – Bryce Yamauchi

**Spam Musubi** – Reiko Higa

**Cotton Candy** – Deanna Diederich

**Health Dept** – Werner Willoughby

**Canopies** - Bryce Yamauchi

**Gift Booth** - Karen Wheeler

**Ads** - Reed Gimian

**Sound** - David Gelbaum

**Raffle Tickets** – Werner Willoughby

**Vendors** – Werner Willoughby & John Ito

**Kamishibai** – Lori Eurich

**Stage Performers** – Aileen Willoughby

**Cultural Exhibits/Demonstrations** – Aileen Willoughby

**Signage/Decorations** – Cara Ihde, Maureen Ortega, Student delegates

**Set up/Clean up** – Steven Ihde, Werner Willoughby, Butch Ihde, John Ito

**Supplies/Equipment, Storage** – (Friday and Sunday) Steven Ihde, Werner Willoughby, Butch Ihde, John Ito

**Bunka-Sai Chairperson** – Werner Willoughby

**Yakisoba** - Mariko Namimoto and Sumi Ueki

**Curry and Rice** – Felipe Segovia

**Dango** – Stephanie Warner and Butch Ihde

**Shave Ice** - Ed and Joan Shiosaki

**Anime** – Lori Eurich and Deanna Diederich

**Publicity** - Stephanie Ewing Warner and Amie Campbell

**Donations** - Shirley Tanaka (Social Media)

**Opportunity Drawing** - Donna Dunlap

**Fliers** – Werner Willoughby

**Financial** - Kevin Lobo

**Supply Shopper** – Brian Diederich

**Kids' Games & Origami** (Sat.) – Lori Eurich

TSCA is so GRATEFUL/Indebted to EVERYONE listed above and also to:

**HUNDREDS of VOLUNTEERS working in these booths including the student delegates, families, TSCA members, city staff, partnership company's employees and many friends past and present.**

# Membership List

Compiled by Alyssa Yamauchi, Membership Chair

## NEW AND RENEWED MEMBERSHIPS

### SUPPORTING (&75+)

Kircher, Ellen

### FAMILY (\$40)

Chen Family, Leanne  
Evans Family, Kimiko  
Gelbaum, Mark and Ilene  
Gimian, Reed and Dede  
Hart Family, Gillian  
Kalani Family, Sharon  
Lee, Edmund, Karla, Colin and Ethan  
McGee, John and Carmen  
Nadsady Family, Alina  
Reeve, Ron and Susan  
Segovia Family, Felipe  
Sheikh Family, Asam  
Shintani, Ron and Patsy  
Ujimori, Harvey and Kay

### INDIVIDUAL (\$20)

Abina, Pedro  
Bissiri, David  
Glassman, Keith  
Kawai, Masaru  
Lee, Christine  
Lewis, Bridgett  
Mattucci, Aurelio  
Miike, Pam  
Montgomery, Kay  
Pollinger, Lisa  
Richardson Mark

### DONATIONS

\$25 Kircher, Ellen  
\$100 Doolittle, Richard

If you haven't paid your 2023 membership dues yet, it's not too late! See the Membership form in this newsletter or pay online at [https://torrancesistercity.org/membership\\_join.html](https://torrancesistercity.org/membership_join.html)  
**Thank you for your support!**

## Thank you to our Bunka-Sai Prize Donors

We are sincerely grateful to the following businesses for their generous donations to Bunka-Sai. Please support them to show our appreciation.

- |                                    |                                    |   |                            |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| *Azuma Japanese Restaurant         | *Bollywood Zaika                   | *Beach Cities Health District Center for Health & Fitness |                            |
| *BJ's Restaurants Inc.             | *California Pizza Kitchen          | *Cherrystones   | *Country Touch Café        |
| *Creative Cuts, International      | *Dai Ichi-Bonsai Kai               | *Gaetano's Restaurant                                     | *Gardena Bowl Coffee Shop  |
| *Giuliano's Delicatessen Gardena   | *Griego Hair Salon                 | *Honey Baked Ham  | *Hof's Hut                 |
| *In-n-Out Burger                   | *Islands Restaurant                | *Kiku Florist & Gifts                                     | *Lazy Dog Restaurant & Bar |
| *Lomeli's Italian Restaurant       | *Lucille's Smokehouse BBQ          | *Malaga Bank  | *Mama Says                 |
| *Mimi's Café                       | *Mishima Foods USA                 | *Paul's Photo Inc.  | *Rascal's Teriyaki Grill   |
| *Sequim Lavender Company           | *Shin Sen Gumi                     | *Sprouts Farmers Market                                   | *Starbucks                 |
| *StoneFire Grill                   | *Sunflower Farms                   | *Target   |                            |
| *Torrance Cultural Arts Center Fdn | *Trader Joe's                      | *Urushibata-san   | *Villa Hermosa Plant Shop  |
| *WakaWakka Kimono & Photo Studio   | *Yamada Company Inc.(Garden Store) |   |                            |





# Bunka-Sai



*Bunka-Sai was held on April 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at Ken Miller Recreation Center*





# Bunka-Sai (cont'd)







# Bunka-Sai (cont'd)





# Bunka-Sai Anime Drawing Contest Winners

## High School



First Place : Erika N.

## Middle School



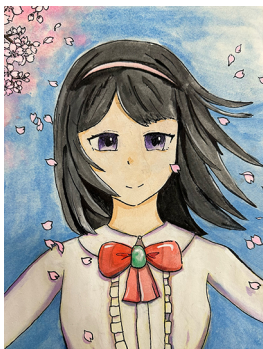
First Place : Rhiley P.



Second Place : Angelina S.



Second Place : Naoko G.



Third Place : Sakura N.



Third Place : Hanaka K.



# English Teacher Report

## Gotta Catch 'Em All

By Chris Pigao

On March 25th, 2023, the beloved multi-media franchise known as Pokémon ended their journey with Ash (known as Satoshi in Japan) and Pikachu as the focal lead characters of the show. Seeing as how after 20+ years, Ash has finally won the Pokémon League Championship tournament, it's only apropos to close up a story that took nearly 2 decades to complete. These turn-of-events primarily happened so that the franchise could introduce a new set of characters and adventures for the next generation of Pokémon fans. So why is it that I, a 30-year-old Millennial, am writing on such a trivial subject that may not be applicable for some readers. Well, Pokémon is far from just cute and simple characters, it truly is an integral part of Japanese Pop Culture and society as a whole.

First off, how deeply rooted are Pokémon in the States? I remember back in Grad School, I did research on the fascination of Japanese Pop Culture in the United States. I believe it was an article written by Koichi Iwabuchi where I found out that Pikachu is the 3rd most recognized Japanese cartoon character in the world (alongside Hello Kitty and Doraemon). Even during our Macy's Day Parade, a giant Pikachu float can be seen every year alongside other iconic cartoon characters like Snoopy or Garfield. Pokémon, alongside other Japanese imported media, became synonymous with every kid during the 90's and 00's.

I also give credit where credit is due, Pokémon definitely helped me to read. As a child, I had no interest in reading. My parents got me a Gameboy Color and a copy of Pokémon Blue for my birthday. I found out that the game was not a simple game like Mario or Pacman. It was a role-playing game where players had to select battle commands. They had such simple sentence structures like "Pikachu used Thunderbolt. It was not very effective." It made me a faster reader, helping me comprehend sentences. In more recent times, I purchased the newer games here at HobbyOff. As I'm currently studying Japanese, I remembered how I learned to read as a child. I set my game's language to Japanese, forcing me to read and understand the grammar and syntax. Likewise, it's helpful that the games also include furigana with the Kanji,

making it easier for me to read and memorize the characters.

As for the franchise and its connection to my life in Kashiwa, Pokémon is my conversation starter for everyone here - young and old. I am able to connect with my co-workers here at Ichikashi and bond over our memories with the game. I talk to my students about it, even telling them the American version of the Pokémon's name. For example, the beloved singing fan favorite "Jigglypuff" is originally named "Purin" in Japan. I remember telling my former Ichikashi student, Nonoka, about the name. She honestly told me that the name sounded "weird". No matter if they were a hardcore gamer or just enjoy Pokemon because they are cute, I find ways to incorporate the series during my lessons.

For our Research Class, I assigned a video project on reporting News throughout the year. One group of students actually recreated a scene from the anime. I was immediately impressed. I've learned that if you present a topic that students are interested in, the more intricate and detailed their content will be.

In closing, Pokémon has such a huge impact in my life - both past and present. If there's one life lesson that I take from the franchise, it would be that the journey always continues. "You teach me, and I teach you...Pokemon"



*(Photo: Me at the Pokémon Cafe in Nihonbashi, Tokyo. If you ever want to visit Japan and want to go here, I highly advise making a reservation a month in advance. Look how cute those Pikachu are!)*



# English Teacher Update

## Meet the new Ichikashi Teacher!

Hello everyone, my name is Pedro Abina, and I am thrilled to introduce myself to the community.

In 2017, I was able to travel to Japan through the cultural exchange program between North High School and Ichikashi. That experience left a profound impression on me, and I gained a deeper appreciation for the country's culture.

After high school, I attended El Camino College where I participated in the Honors Transfer Program, served as a Student Ambassador, and also held the position of Senator of Finance for the Associated Student Organization. I then went on to earn my degree in Political Science from UCLA.

Nearly six years later, I am thrilled to have the opportunity to bring my skills and experiences back to Kashiwa.

I am eager to contribute to the educational and cultural exchange between Kashiwa and Torrance while making a positive impact on the lives of my students.



*Pedro Abina will be the new English teacher at Ichikashi from Aug. 1, 2023*



## *New English Teacher Chosen*

By Lori Chong Eurich, Chair  
TSCA English Teacher Selection Committee

The English Teacher Selection Committee is pleased to announce that Pedro Abina will be our teacher (called ALTs) at Kashiwa Municipal High School (called Ichikashi) from August 1, 2023. He will replace Deanna Sun whose three-year contract ends on July 31, 2023.

Special thanks to the Selection Committee members: Donna Dunlap, Hazel Taniguchi, Mark Roulette (Assistant Principal at Torrance High School) and former ALTs, Amie Komae Campbell and Stephanie Mikamo for their time, professional experience, insight, and lived experiences which were invaluable in making the decision.

We wish Pedro all the best as he joins Christopher Pigao, who was selected last year and will serve as his mentor teacher in their terrific opportunity to live and work in Kashiwa

*Current English teacher Chris Pigao, Ichikashi English department chair Tamaoki-sensei, and former teacher Amie Komae Campbell reunited during Amie's recent spring trip. She delivered our black 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary tote bags filled with American candy*



# Expand Your Cultural Horizons

## Host a student from Kashiwa, Japan, for 1 week in August

August 7–15 or August 17–24, 2023

### Share our American culture with a student from Kashiwa for the experience of a lifetime!



"We really enjoyed hosting Mina and Kana and sharing the American and South Bay cultures with them!" ~ *The Staal Family*

"Hosting is a fun and enriching experience, and each student becomes a part of our family." ~ *The Shetti Family*

The students stay with two host families during their 18-day stay in Torrance. All daytime activities are planned and hosted by the Torrance Sister City Association (TSCA). Host families are responsible for transporting their students to and from the West Annex at City Hall each morning and late afternoon. Some weeknight activities are planned and host families are welcome to join the fun! At all other times, the host families will arrange their own activities and meals with their exchange student in accordance with TSCA guidelines. Each host family will have one weekend to plan their own activities. Kashiwa students are able to communicate in English.

A Host Families orientation will be held in late June or early July.

**QUESTIONS?** Please contact [TSCAHostFamilyProgram@yahoo.com](mailto:TSCAHostFamilyProgram@yahoo.com)



TORRANCE SISTER CITY ASSOCIATION, INC.



### HOST FAMILY INTEREST FORM

All first-time applicants will be screened by TSCA

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Emergency/Daytime Phone \_\_\_\_\_

We would prefer to host a Boy \_\_\_\_\_ Girl \_\_\_\_\_ Either \_\_\_\_\_

We would prefer to host a student from August 7-15 \_\_\_\_\_ August 17-24 \_\_\_\_\_ Either week \_\_\_\_\_ Both weeks \_\_\_\_\_

Number in household \_\_\_\_\_ List pets, if any \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Adults \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Children \_\_\_\_\_ M / F Age \_\_\_\_\_ M / F Age \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ M / F Age \_\_\_\_\_ M / F Age \_\_\_\_\_

Others \_\_\_\_\_

Our family has participated in these TSCA Activities: Bunka-Sai \_\_\_\_\_ Student Exchange Program \_\_\_\_\_ Host Family Program \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail form to **Torrance Sister City Association, Attn: Host Family Program, 3031 Torrance Blvd, Torrance, CA 90503**



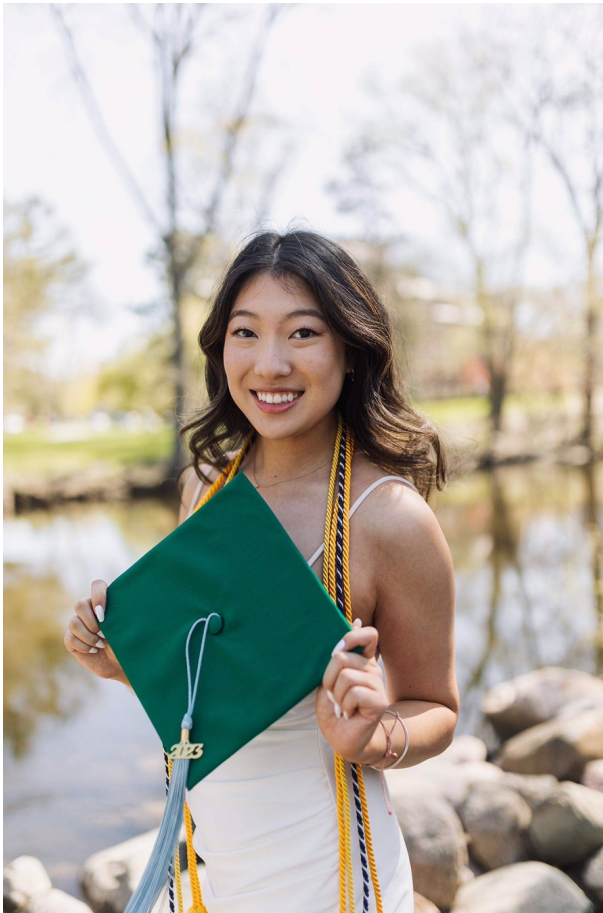
# ConGRADulations



Erika Clark Henderson, former exchange student graduate from Brigham Young University in April 2023 with a B.S. in Sociology



Kyle Nishimoto graduate from University of Southern California in May 2023 with a M.A. in Occupational Therapy  
He will internship at the Shirley Ryan AbilityLab in Chicago then begin his doctorate in Occupational Therapy at USC



Sydney Matsubara graduate from Michigan State University with a Bachelor's degree in Kinesiology  
She will be taking a gap year, currently working at a physical therapy clinic then applying to the graduate school for physical therapy

## 2023 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](mailto:tscamembership@gmail.com)



**Torrance Sister City  
Association**  
3031 Torrance Boulevard  
Torrance, CA 90503