

President's Message

By Donna Dunlap



August was once again vibrant and exciting as the Kashiwa student delegates finally returned to Torrance. This was the first time since 2019 that we hosted eight students and their adult leader, **Hitoshi Watanabe**. Hank, as

he likes to be called in the US, was selected in 2019 and waited four long years to finally get to escort eight students on a trip of a lifetime. From the smiles on their faces and their eagerness to participate in all the scheduled activities, it was obvious they enjoyed their time in Torrance and Southern California. Their tears as they read speeches at the Sayonara Banquet and at LAX confirmed that this was a trip they will remember for the rest of their lives. I want to thank them for enriching our lives as well.

As in all newsletters, there is a host of people to thank for making this exchange so successful:

Planning started months ago under the direction of **Steven Ihde**, the chair of the August Activities Committee. Assisting him on the committee were **Stephanie Ewing Warner, Lori Chong Eurich, Cara Ihde, Yuki Tsujii** and myself. After a four-year pause, some activities remained the same but a few new events were added. Thanks to **Esteban Ortega**, the group for the first time was able to tour FOX Studios. The oohs and aahs as they entered each room, let the tour leaders know this was a special experience in their lives.

Torrance CitiCABLE invited them back to learn how to broadcast a news report. The tape of that show aired at the end of August, but if you missed it, you can find it on YouTube. After seeing FOX Studios and then creating their own newscast featuring their August Activities, they also created a special memory for life. THANK YOU, Steven and the committee, for the many hours of coordinating these wonderful and unforgettable activities locally and in San Diego.

Another HUGE THANK YOU to **Steven Ihde** for his long hours each night, sorting through a multitude of photos taken during the day's activities. Thank you also for the expert photographers each day, sending their photos to Steven to be organized and published. After the photos were organized, Steven included them in an email to each host family as he explained the next day's activities. Photos were also sent to Kashiwa each night so that the parents of the Kashiwa exchange students could enjoy and follow the daily activities of their child. Steven worked tirelessly on his computer behind the scenes so everyone could enjoy the memories of each day.

A GREAT BIG THANK YOU to ALL THE 18 HOST FAMILIES in Torrance and in Kashiwa. TSCA is very grateful to you for opening your homes, providing meals, and making a special effort to provide experiences that supplement and enhance the scheduled

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SEPTEMBER 11, 2023
Association Meeting (7-9 pm)
Katy Geissert Library Meeting Room

OCTOBER 9, 2023
Association Meeting (7-9 pm)
Katy Geissert Library Meeting Room



Designed by Amie Campbell

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activities. Most importantly, your personal interactions and conversations will remain with your guests forever. You provided the insight to a typical American family lifestyle that cannot be experienced in a hotel. Not only do the students see the cultural differences, but also they realize so many aspects are the same as they experienced in Japan. It was obvious in the speech at the Sayonara Banquet that the students, their adult leader, and all members of the host families have developed lasting ties, creating an extended family never to be forgotten. Thank you for instilling a loving and caring atmosphere to promote these feelings with each other.

THANK YOU to daily tour leaders, who took time out of their busy schedules to make arrangements and contacts and then lead the tour making each activity a success: **Cara Ihde, Donna Dunlap, Bruce Arnheim, Lori Chong Eurich, Eleanor Jones, Stephanie Ewing Warner, Emiko Kranz (2013), Butch Ihde and Werner Willoughby. Maureen and Esteban Ortega** escorted the students to Disney California Adventure. They were surprised by **Allison Sueyoshi (2015)**, who now works for Disney. Allison shared her discounts with the delegation and helped them to avoid some long lines. DOUBLE THANKS to San Diego drivers and activity leaders: **Bruce Arnheim, Butch Ihde** and myself. We ALL had a fantastic time learning a lot of California history. They learned a new meaning of the word mission, but decided that back then it really was a Mission Impossible for the early settlers. The students learned to shop for dinner ingredients, given just a generic name with no explanation. Later they experienced cooking their dinner over an open fire.

THANK YOU to the translators that joined many of the activities: **Ellie Kuroda, Shoko Matsuda, Yoshie Villarie, Renko Watanabe and Ruri Reed** for your time and effort. TSCA provides translators for the Kashiwa students. Often the explanations are given too fast, or are too technical, but this year the translators said these students really didn't need their assistance. Thank you for being available in case there was a question. I hope you enjoyed the activities as well. A SPECIAL Thank You to **Saeko Dickinson** who expertly translated for me, with the Welcome Reception and the Sayonara Banquet. I am so glad that TSCA has formed a relationship with you this past year, and for years to come.

HEARTFELT APPRECIATION to all the city departments for their support with gifts for the Kashiwa group, and participation in events by city officials. TSCA appreciates the ongoing support of the city. Torrance and Kashiwa have had 50 meaningful and productive years as sister cities thanks to your involvement. A special Thank You to **Monica Harte and Jess Salvador** for their help and guidance and coordinating all the necessary details between TSCA and city departments to make this exchange run so smoothly.

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President's Message

(CONTINUED)

Thank you to the city and the Transit Department for providing a bus to safely transport the delegates and TSCA members to daily activities. A special thank you to **Rhonda** in the Transit Department who greeted our exchange students each day as they entered the city bus.

Many local businesses and community organizations also participated in the August Activities. The students learned cake decorating at Torrance Bakery thanks to **Kirk Rossberg**. The cakes were on display and enjoyed by all at the annual Chili Cook-Off. Everyone learned to square dance taught by caller **Dale Hopper** with guidance provided by the Boots & Bows Square Dance Club. The students toured Oriental Motor Company and learned from Japanese nationals what it was like to live and work in the United States. Fire Station #1 explained the different functions of the fire truck and the fire engine. While explaining the role of the paramedics, they saw them leave on a call. Volunteers of the Los Angeles Maritime Institute (LAMI) taught the participants how to hoist and lower the sails of a brigantine during a three-hour tour six miles out to sea. **Werner Willoughby** led the tour to King's Hawaiian Bakery, an annual exclusive tour behind the scenes thanks to Werner's connections. And anyone going on the tour of Little Tokyo with Werner will learn a lot of Japanese History in Los Angeles.

THANK YOU to these businesses and organizations for giving such a wide variety of experiences enjoyed by all attending, especially the student delegates. THANK YOU for your support of our summer program.

A MULTITUDE OF GRATITUDE to EVERYONE who participated in any way to help make the Kashiwa group's visit the success that it was. Their experience was educational, meaningful, unforgettable, exciting and fun for all. I know they are so grateful as well.

Next month a group of forty-three adults will be traveling to Kashiwa, Japan to celebrate the 50th Anniversary between TSCA and KIRA. There have been two orientation meetings in Torrance to prepare the delegates for this trip.....another memorable trip of a lifetime.

At the Sayonara Banquet, one of the Kashiwa student delegates wished the sister city association would last another fifty years; the students this year will be the ones arranging the 100th anniversary in 2073! Many of us are grateful to have had an opportunity to be a part of these two organizations. I too hope that it continues for another fifty years, and it will, with the dedicated volunteers that have perpetuated the bond between these two cities and all the volunteers in the future.

This fall begins the planning of the many activities TSCA offers in 2024. We will be looking for an adult leader and prospective student delegates for the summer exchange program in July. If interested, please visit our website in October for updated information. Future newsletters will also have flyers. New board members will be appointed in January at the Alumni Reunion. The new student applicants and their families will be introduced at that reunion as well.

Volunteers are needed at Bunka-Sai held on April 19-21, 2024. Put it on your calendars and save the date. This festival raises the money needed for a successful summer student exchange program. Please become involved and promote the good will that has been established over these first fifty years. If you have any questions, please contact us through our website: www.torrancesistercity.org.

Again, I extend my deepest gratitude to the groups, venues, and individuals including those I inadvertently did not mention, for their time, effort and support that made this year's August Activities a huge success! DOMO ARIGATO GOZAIMASU!!

Welcome Reception on August 7th, 2023





English Teacher Report

Death, Taxes and Point Cards?

By Chris Pigao

If you have ever purchased something at a Japanese Convenience store like Family Mart or 711, you most likely got this question asked of you: “Point Card arimasuka?” (Do you have a point card). I remember when I first visited Japan in 2019, the only word I could say was “iie” (no). Fast forward to 2023, I practically have a point card for every major chain store in Japan. As interesting as it is, the culture of point cards and rewards are just as similar as in the states, albeit with an emphasis on the amazing Japanese service.

Now the first point card service I received was through my phone provider – Docomo. They offered the point card as a reward for signing up with the company’s phone & internet service. In addition, they gave me 10,000 points (1 point = 1 yen), which would be issued around my birthday. The 2 other ones I signed up for were T-Point & Nanaco. “T-point” is one of the most well-known point card systems in Japan. Not only is it used at grocery shops and restaurants, it can be used at gas stations such as Eneos and Pharmacies like Welcia. T-points are unique because you can get a card with your favorite Sports team, Idol Group, Anime Character, or other famous images. I happened to get mine from one of my students’ favorite anime last season: Bocchi the Rock!

The Nanaco card is specifically used at the Seven & I Holding Company – which owns and operates 7-11, Denny’s & Ito Yokado shops. The interesting thing about Nanaco card is that you can load up the card with Yen just like a IC commuter pass. This works well if you pay your utility bills with the card, earning Nanaco points for paying the bills. Luckily, this card would be my “dues ex machina” if I ever am low on money.

I asked some of my co-workers here in the English Department about the ways they use their point-cards. Yuko Murata-Sensei owns a point card to Belc Market in Abiko. She states that she always has her membership card in hand. However, she has not redeemed the points, allowing her to build it up over time. When asked why point cards are used in everyday life, she states that “[the] Supermarket wants many customers to buy things. They have good customer service.”



The various point cards that you can get – in both Physical & Digital copies

Saori Kimura-Sensei also shares the same sentiment when it comes to using point cards here. Often using point cards like Rakuten, Docomo, and the retail company Muji, she often uses the points that she accumulates to treat herself. As a reward for her hard work, she often gets sweets from the market. The importance of the cards to her is the universality that these cards have. She states that these card systems are “easy-to-use” and are “Transferable”.

Mami Takeda-Sensei, is a user of many different point cards including, but not limited to, LINE Points, Majica, & restaurant-exclusive ones like MOS Burger & Taco Bell. Strategically, she uses the points to round off her purchases to the nearest 100 yen. When asked why the point card system is good, she states that “It makes it easier for part-time workers to identify the customers.” In addition, she mentions how the purchases are often tracked, allowing stores to see what items are trending or are popular (i.e. – Tuna Mayonnaise Onigiri is popular – have more of that in stock).

Although Points Cards and Reward memberships are nothing new to the American lifestyle, the way Japanese companies treat it is far above expectation. To me, it really goes to show how the relationship between the business and customer truly extends to just a simple transaction. It gives people the reason to come back and expect that same friendly service – “Irasshaimase~!”

KASHIWA DELEGATES IN TORRANCE

Day 1

Arrival, Reunion and Welcome Reception



KASHIWA DELEGATES IN TORRANCE

Day 2-3

City Hall, Farmer's Market, Fire Department, Torrance History, Dress Fitting



KASHIWA DELEGATES IN TORRANCE

Day 4-5

**Oriental Motor, Torrance Bakery, Chili Cook-Off, Square Dance
King's Hawaiian, Torrance Beach, Dodger's Game**



KASHIWA DELEGATES IN TORRANCE

Day 7-8

Tall Ship, FOX Studios, UCLA



KASHIWA DELEGATES IN TORRANCE

Day 9-11

San Diego



KASHIWA DELEGATES IN TORRANCE

Day 12 & 15

CitiCABLE, Pool Party, Hollywood Bowl, California Adventure



KASHIWA DELEGATES IN TORRANCE

Day 16 & 17

Little Tokyo, CA Science Center, Sayonara Banquet



Many thanks to the host families for their kind and generous hospitality hosting a Kashiwa guest in their home.



The Torrance Sister City Association Welcomes Applicants for the Position of

Adult Leader

For the 2024 Cultural Exchange Program in

Kashiwa, Japan

Represent the City of Torrance
while mentoring local youth!

As the TSCA Adult Leader, you will accompany eight high school students in July 2024 on a three-week, life-changing, cultural immersion experience in Japan, and serve as an ambassador of goodwill when the Kashiwa delegation visits Torrance in August 2024

Qualifications

- Be at least 26 years of age at the time of the trip
- Reside or work in Torrance
- Have experience working with youth in at least one of the following areas: education, counseling, behavioral sciences, leading youth activities, chaperoning school trips.

For more information about the cultural exchange program of the Torrance Sister City Association and to download the Adult Leader Application, please visit www.torrancesistercity.org

The complete application, resume, and two reference letters are due by

Monday, November 27, 2023

Qualified applicants will be contacted for interviews.

Contact:

TSCA

torrancesistercityInfo@gmail.com

Mailing address:

**Torrance Sister City
Association**

c/o Community Services Dept.
3031 Torrance Blvd.

Torrance, CA 90503

Attn: Adult Leader Program



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

- | | |
|---|----------|
| <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 **check** payable to **TSCA**

www.torrancesistercity.org



**Torrance Sister City
Association**

3031 Torrance Boulevard
Torrance, CA 90503