

President's Message

By Donna Dunlap



This has been a year to remember for Torrance and Kashiwa. In 2023, each city celebrated the 50th anniversary of being sister cities. If you were not able to participate in the celebration in Kashiwa, please enjoy the beautiful photos taken by **Brandon Matsumoto** and many others on the exchange in this newsletter. Let me recap the two celebrations.

In the last nine months, TSCA and KIRA have celebrated our 50th Anniversary to the fullest. It all started last February when 46 delegates from Kashiwa visited Torrance to commemorate the signing of the original proclamation to become sister cities in 1973. TSCA's 50th committee started in the spring of 2021 to plan that four-day weekend. Early on, possible events were discussed, and what seemed a dream became a reality. New tours, that the delegates had never visited in previous anniversary years, included Southern California Regional Occupation Center and brigantine sailboat cruise out to sea from San Pedro Harbor. Even with the threat of rain, the biggest picnic in TSCA history was organized in Wilson Park that reunited hundreds of old friends from Torrance and Kashiwa. With the help of TOCA, a performance featuring past exchange delegates from both Torrance and Kashiwa was presented in the Armstrong Theater. That night was such a success it surpassed even our dream. Many volunteers made this an awesome celebration, but

I need to thank my faithful, hard-working committee that worked all or part of those twenty-four months: **Mikko Haggott Henson, Hazel Taniguchi, Werner Willoughby, Lori Chong Eurich, Sumi Arnheim, Aileen Willoughby, Eleanor Jones, Wendy Ito, Mayoori Shetti, and Cindy Scotto.** Our meetings lasted so long they morphed into potluck lunches. As February 2023 approached, many others stepped in when needed.

The 50th celebration concluded last month in Kashiwa when 43 Torrance delegates visited our sister city. Words cannot express our gratitude to their 50th committee for the time, effort and talent of organizing the activities with the City of Kashiwa. As in Torrance, we participated in the usual anniversary activities, but after planting the cherry tree in Furusato Park, we witnessed the unveiling of the gift that **Mayor Chen** presented to **Mayor Ota** in February, a directional sign post, in Japanese pointing towards Torrance. We also experienced new activities. We enjoyed the view from the Tokyo Tower, the one that resembles the Eiffel Tower. The delegation for the first time ever, walked down Torrance Street!! A great big THANK YOU to **Mr. Kosai** who organized the vision and the funding for the street where our exchange teachers live, named for their sister city. He made hundreds of pennants for each and every street in Torrance and hung them all along Torrance Street. It was so much fun looking for the street where we lived and pausing for a photo.

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President's Message (CONTINUED)

November 13, 2023
Association meeting (7pm)
Katy Geissert Library Meeting Room

November 13, 2023
Adult leader application due date

December 4, 2023
Executive Board Meeting (7pm)

December 11, 2023
NO Association meeting

December 18, 2023
Exchange student application due date

January 6, 2024
Alumni Reunion
Ken Miller Recreation Center

January 8, 2024
Association meeting (7pm)
Katy Geissert Library Meeting Room

He stopped us in front of his house, threw a bucket of water on the asphalt and magically “Welcome to Kitakashiwa – Here is Torrance St.” appeared. Whenever it rains, the residents will remember our visit. Local residents, KIRA members and past student delegates gathered at a park in the neighborhood and we were entertained by children competing in races and others singing. Adults danced accompanied by the biggest flags I have ever seen swirling behind them. We all were invited to join two teams to throw as many beanbags into a net 8 feet high in 25 seconds or less. It was such an exciting afternoon. For the first time the delegation attended a City of Kashiwa Assembly Meeting. At this meeting the Assembly members voted unanimously to continue the sister city relationship. The Welcome Banquet and the Sayonara Party were exceptional. Besides the scrumptious food, we again met friends from the past and present. I was so surprised to see two men I had not seen for almost forty years. It was as if no time had passed, but for the color of their hair! It was an amazing surprise to see them once again.

Most of us reading this message is remembering good times and experiences we all have had over the years because of this sister city relationship. Though only a few will get to experience the next fifty years, our attention will now focus on passing the torch to those that will carry on. We can encourage and mentor those joining this ever extending, growing family: the exchange students, their adult leaders, the host families, the exchange teachers, the adult delegations, and our friends and family. With your help and their participation, TSCA will be celebrating many more anniversaries and looking forward to the hundredth anniversary with KIRA.

Thank you to EVERYONE that helped celebrate this fifth milestone in true fashion. 2023 may soon be in the books, but for those of us lucky enough to be part of any of those 50th celebrations, this year will be long remembered.



Torrance Sister City Association

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Comments or submissions?

Please send an email to
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Torrance Sister City Association

Dear Friends of TSCA,

This past year has been quite the celebration! Not only were we able to bring back ALL of our exciting programs to the Torrance community, but we were also able to host the first Kashiwa student delegation since 2019! This year was also extra special as 2023 marked 50 years of student exchange programs, adult leaders, English language teachers, host families, anniversary delegations and, of course, Sister City friendship. Certainly, a reason to celebrate!

We couldn't be more thankful for your continued support through your membership dues and donation contributions – especially through these last few years and as we rebuild our programs. Your contributions continue to help offset 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, and we hope that TSCA has played an integral part of your story as well! As friends of TSCA and alumni of our programs, thank you for your continued support and consideration.

Best regards,
Alyssa Yamauchi
TSCA Membership Chair

Our 2024 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 **02/21/24**.

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

2024 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



English Teacher Report

TSCA and KIRA 50th Anniversary Weekend

By Chris Pigao

First and foremost, I want to say thank you to all of the Torrance Delegates that came to Kashiwa for the 50th anniversary event. Seeing familiar faces and meeting new ones was such a great opportunity. You all truly brought that California sunshine to Kashiwa throughout the weekend (albeit, for the rain the following Monday). Thank you for all of the gifts and treats not only for myself, but for the Ichikashi students as well.

As I wrote about the coincidences between my life in Torrance and Kashiwa earlier this year, I could not help but to share some of the interactions that I had with some of the TSCA delegates that really unlocked some “secrets of the universe”.

In our International Room, we have posters, yearbooks, and photo frames of our past cultural exchanges. We provide the room as a place for all of our students to hang out during lunch or afterschool. When we redesigned the room for a more “hang-out” style space, one of our 3rd Year students, Ayana Iwata, said that the room reminded her of when she was enrolled in an American School.

At the center of our wall hangs photos of the 1994 Torrance and Kashiwa exchange. Susan, one of the TSCA delegates, immediately recognized herself in the photo and told me “Oh, there I am!”. I was surprised to not only see her, but to finally put a name to a face. I told her later on, “Yeah, whenever we eat lunch or hang out in that room, we always look at these photos”. Now whenever a student asks about those photos, I can gladly say that we met someone in the photo.

Another great interaction that I had was with Mayor George Chen and Mayor Kazumi Ota. Although I exercise my civic duty and vote in primaries and elections, I never really interacted with political figures. It was a great pleasure to introduce myself to both respective leaders, ensuring that I am currently a citizen of both Torrance and Kashiwa.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention a more personal and heartfelt interaction - my conversations with Dr. Dan Fichtner. I know the majority of you know about Dan's legacy, but for those who are unaware, he was the first ALT sent to Kashiwa and former TSCA president. I'm not going to lie, I was slightly nervous to introduce myself. Who wouldn't be - the 47th ALT meeting the 1st ALT. There was a rich history to be upheld!

Needless to say, those worries were put to mere shambles - Dan is the most sweetest person that I've met during that weekend. He asked me how I was doing and how the classes were going. Dan told me stories about his time in Kashiwa and how he would have cooking lessons with some of the KIRA students. He also told me how with just working with one teacher in Kashiwa, how he was allowed to take control of the class and curate it. One of the most memorable things that he told me was that “[You] are doing such a great job. Keep it up!” and also reassured that he is reading and enjoying my article. To me, Dan is such a trailblazer for us ALT's and truly is considered the ultimate “senpai”. Thank you for your words of comfort and wisdom. I still have a long way to go and a lot more to learn..

To echo the sentiment that current TSCA President Donna Dunlap said during the sayonara party - “It is up to the youth [KIRA/TSCA students] to keep this going for another 50 years”. Thank you all for a wonderful weekend visit. I hope to see you all again soon. Once again, congratulations to Torrance and Kashiwa on 50 years of friendship! Last, but never forgotten, in loving memory of Mikko Haggott Henson, whom we owe this beautiful sister city relationship to.



TSCA + KIRA

50th Reunion in Kashiwa











ADULT LEADER NEEDED FOR STUDENT CULTURAL EXCHANGE



TORRANCE SISTER CITY ASSOCIATION

Have You Considered Being an Adult Leader for the TSCA Student Cultural Exchange Program?

- Accompany up to eight high school students to Torrance's sister city, Kashiwa, Japan in July 2024
- Learn about the Student Cultural Exchange program and Japanese Culture
- Spend up to three exciting weeks in Japan as an Ambassador of Goodwill

Qualifications:

- Be at least 26 years of age at the time of the trip
- Reside or work in Torrance
- Have a background working with youth in at least one of the following areas:
 - ▶ Education, counseling, behavioral sciences, or
 - ▶ Youth Activities, chaperone for school trips

INTERESTED?

Contact: Donna Dunlap, TSCA president at lhdebat@aol.com. Send application, resume, cover letter and two signed reference letters by November 13, 2023. Qualified applicants will be called for a panel interview with the Adult Leader Selection Committee.



Please see website for more details at www.torrancesistercity.org

Mail all material to:

Torrance Sister City Association
c/o Cultural Services Division
3031 Torrance Blvd. • Torrance, CA 90503
Attention: Adult Leader Program

EXPERIENCE JAPAN



Torrance Sister City Association

is looking for highly motivated Torrance residents who are high-school sophomores through seniors, 19 years old and younger, to serve as cultural ambassadors in the Student Cultural Exchange Program. Since 1974, TSCA has sponsored hundreds of students to represent the highest qualities of American Youth in Kashiwa, Japan, our sister city, for three unforgettable weeks in July.

2024 applications will be available in November on our website:

torrancesistercity.org

To submit your application or if you have any questions, please email

torrancesistercityinfo@gmail.com

- **Promote international friendship and understanding**
- **Become part of a family in Kashiwa, Japan**
- **Visit modern Tokyo and the ancient temples of Kyoto**
- **Gain understanding of Japanese customs and daily life**
- **Experience Hiroshima**
- **Make lifelong friends and much, much more!**

APPLICATION must be postmarked by Monday, December 18, 2023 ▪ TorranceSisterCity.org

Mackenzie Holloway, a 2018 delegate, graduated from Chico State University in May of 2023 with Bachelor's Degree in Asian studies and double major in Japanese and Photography. She graduated summa cum laude and was the recipient of the 2023 Boyle Outstanding Student in Asian Languages Award. She now works in San Francisco as a studio photographer.



**Torrance Sister City
Association**

3031 Torrance Boulevard
Torrance, CA 90503