

President's Message

By Karen Wheeler

Dear Friends, near and far:

I hope everyone is already having a lovely Spring, but if you are in Torrance, I must tell you, things are about to get even better! Our Bunka-Sai Festival is coming! You are warmly invited to join us on April 20 and 21 at the Torrance Cultural Arts Center, as we eat, shop, dance, watch, play, learn, listen, and eat some more!



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2024 STUDENT AMBASSADORS ANNOUNCED

By Lori Chong Eurich, Chair Student Selection Committee



John-Milo Ernst
12th grade
South High



Colin Welsch
11th grade
West High



Aidan Reynolds
11th grade
Bishop Montgomery



Jordan Kisiler
11th grade, Redondo
Union High

The TSCA Student Selection Committee is pleased to announce the selection of the following students for this summer's exchange program:

John-Milo Ernst, Colin Welsch, Aidan Reynolds, Jordan Kisiler, Kyra Nakamoto, Mia Segovia, Maria Nadsady and Anoop Ghuman.

There were 15 students in the candidate pool including two whose older siblings are former delegates. The delegation is comprised of students in grades 10, 11 and 12 from five high schools. Special thanks to committee members: Aimee Arreygue, Mallory Beard, Donna Dunlap, Franco Lee, Maureen Ortega, Gia Solarzano-Kaats, Marilyn Rubin, and Karen Wheeler for all of their time, support, lived experiences, and patience throughout the three-month vetting process. The students and adult leader, Mallory are now attending weekly orientation meetings organized by former adult leaders Cara Ihde and Maureen Ortega in preparation for the trip in July.



Kyra Nakamoto
11th grade
South High



Mia Segovia
10th grade
Torrance High



Maria Nadsady
10th grade
Bishop Montgomery



Anoop Ghuman
10th grade
Torrance High

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NEW AND RENEWED MEMBERSHIPS

APRIL 7, 2024

Cherry Blossom Festival; 11:00 am-4:00 pm
Columbia Park

APRIL 8, 2024

Association meeting; 7:00 pm West Annex
commission room

APRIL 19, 2024

Bunka-sai Cultural Festival set-up 3:00 pm
Ken Miller Recreation Center

APRIL 20 & 21, 2024

Bunka-sai Cultural Festival 11:00 am-5:00 pm
Ken Miller Recreation Center

FAMILY (\$40)

Lobo, Kevin, Pindi, Ann and Rachel
Ozawa, Noriko and Michael

INDIVIDUAL (\$20)

Geronimo, Cecilia
Yoshida, Gary

We are looking for a

Newsletter Editor

Please contact

tscanewsletter@gmail.com

for more information

Torrance Sister City
Association's Bunka Sai festival
is just around the corner!
Please join us on April 20-21,
2024. We hope you can volunteer
and help us make this year's
Bunka Sai a huge success!

If you have any questions,
please email Sumi at
bunkasaivolunteer@gmail.com.
Thank you!

Sign up using this link:
[2024 Bunka Sai Volunteer](#)
or QR code:



Torrance Sister City Association

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Comments or submissions?

Please send an email to

tscanewsletter@gmail.com

49th Annual Bunka-Sai

Japanese Cultural Festival

Saturday & Sunday

April 20 and 21, 2024

11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Ken Miller Recreation Center
3341 Torrance Boulevard (At Madrona Avenue)



English Teacher Report

By Pedro Abina

Embracing Transitions: Three Months Mark

The third-year students are in their final term of the school year, I am witness to the culmination of their hard work and dedication. For many, this period marks a pivotal juncture as they prepare for university or to enter the workforce. It's a time filled with anticipation and uncertainty, but also one brimming with possibilities and opportunities for growth.

In navigating these transitions alongside my students, I've been reminded of the importance of empathy and understanding in the teaching process. My own struggles with language acquisition have deepened my appreciation for the challenges my students face.

At times during these first three months, I have felt deeply frustrated. The awareness of my limited time here only added to this feeling, leaving me longing for a magical ability to absorb the Japanese language instantaneously. It's been almost embarrassing at times attempting to communicate with workers or others in public, grappling with the language barrier and feeling a sense of inadequacy.

However, amidst these challenges, I've come to recognize the importance of nonverbal communication. Due to my limited Japanese vocabulary, I've discovered that gestures, expressions, and energy play a crucial role in conveying messages and building connections. This realization has prompted me to reflect on the energy I emit during communication attempts, leading to a newfound sense of authenticity and openness in my interactions.

By releasing myself from the burden of perfection and embracing vulnerability, I've found the freedom to express myself more openly without succumbing to self-doubt. This shift in mindset has made others more receptive to what I am attempting to say.

This new lesson was only reinforced during my recent excursion to Utsunomiya which is in the Tochigi Prefecture to visit my dear friend Eisuke, my homestay student from 2017. The journey began with a train ride that ended up being longer than expected, thanks to my



occasional knack for boarding the wrong train or purchasing unnecessary tickets.

Eisuke was eager to show me the local specialty – gyoza – and we wasted no time in heading to a nearby restaurant. Unlike Kashiwa, the locals in Utsunomiya are not as accustomed to being around foreigners but, with the help of some liquid courage, everyone in the restaurant made an effort to engage with me in some way. The evening was spent in deep conversation, discussing everything from life goals to cultural differences to the intricacies of work culture in Japan and the United States.

Armed with onigiri and coffee, Eisuke and I hit the slopes for a day of snowboarding. Despite our language mix-up, the shared laughter spoke louder than words, echoing through the mountains with each tumble we took. Sore muscles served as a reminder that the joy of the adventure transcends any language barriers.

As I look ahead to the coming months, I am filled with a sense of excitement and anticipation for the experiences that lie ahead. Each day brings new opportunities for connection, learning, and personal growth, and I am grateful for the privilege of being part of this vibrant community.

President's Message

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It will be a wonderful opportunity to meet the eight student ambassadors who will represent Torrance as they visit the City of Kashiwa this summer. You will recognize them by the purple *happi* coats they wear as they circulate through the event. Their proud parents will also be there, serving food, welcoming people, and helping in so many ways.

The aroma of Japanese food will draw you toward a number of choices for lunch. We have curry, yakisoba, teriyaki grill, spam musubi, and dangos! Other snacks and goodies are also on offer. Come hungry.

The Ken Miller Center will feature entertainment and cultural demonstrations all day long. I don't know where else you could go for free, and see the variety and quality of performances that we feature. Martial arts, taiko drums, traditional dance and so much more.

Torino Plaza will be the venue for *amezaiku*, candy sculpture by the "Candyman," Shan Ichianagi, who has performed all over the world. See him skillfully transform a round piece of hot candy into animals and figurines with his artistry. This is becoming a lost art, seldom seen even in Japan, so this is a truly unique experience. Shan will be performing on Sunday 4/21, from 12-5, and his art will be available for purchase.

In the Assembly Room at the Ken Miller Center, there will be demonstrations of *ikebana* floral arranging, *bonsai* trees, and *kamishibai* story telling in Japanese and English. Hands-on activities include calligraphy and origami. Children's games also beckon the little ones, out on Torino Plaza.

The Toyota Meeting Hall is the place for shoppers! A couple dozen vendors sell Japanese goods, artisanal crafts, and other beautiful items. I am frankly torn between wanting to tell you everything we have, and wanting you to simply come take a peek for yourselves, so you will have the joy of discovering more things that will make you say "*sugoi!*"

All of this will be happening because of the effort of our Association members and community volunteers. If you like your Bunka-Sai experience, I hope you will join me in thanking these fine folks who give their time so generously for our City. I also hope you will continue your support of Torrance Sister City Association, and the student exchange program which has been a part of our community life for 50 years and counting.

I look forward to seeing you at Bunka-Sai, April 20, 21!

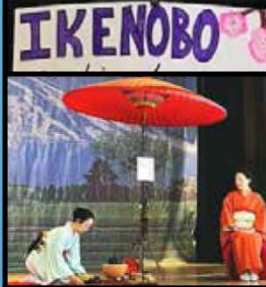
Karen Wheeler
President,
Torrance Sister City Association

49th Annual Bunka-Sai

Japanese Cultural Festival

Saturday & Sunday
April 20 and 21, 2024
11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Ken Miller Recreation Center
3341 Torrance Boulevard (At Madrona Avenue)



Enjoy tasty plate lunches, sweets, arts and craft items, cultural performances, dance, music, martial arts, exhibitions, demonstrations



Presented by
The Torrance Sister City Association
TorranceSisterCity.org

*Proceeds to benefit the student cultural exchange program
Please leave your pets at home, authorized service animals are exempt.

TorranceSisterCityInfo@gmail.com



Torrance Sister City Association's
**8th Annual
 ANIME ART
 CONTEST 2024!**



2023 Winners: Erika N, Angelina S, Sakura N, Rhiley P, Naoko G, Hanaka K

DIVISIONS

Middle School & High School

CATEGORIES

Hand Drawn & Digital Art

Separate prizes for middle & high school by category
 Winner \$30 | Runner Up \$20

All participants receive certificates

RULES

- Entries must be on 8½" x 11" paper
- Format: Portrait (vertical) or Landscape (horizontal)
- Entries may be in Color or Black & White
- Only one entry per person
- No violent or dark themes, such as death and funerals
- Entries must include a Release Form signed by the artist and parent/guardian (if a minor)

Entries must be submitted **IN PERSON** on Friday, **APRIL 19, 2024**, 4pm – 6pm
 Ken Miller Recreation Center (3341 Torrance Blvd, Torrance, CA 90503)
Winners will be announced on Saturday, April 20 at 12:15 pm

Forms and more info at www.torrancesistercity.org



TSCA - Bunka-Sai

SILENT AUCTION

**Saturday, April 20, 2024
&
Sunday, April 21, 2024**

Auction Items include:

Restaurants ~ Jewelry ~ Museums ~ Zoos ~ Wine Tasting

Bid TODAY at

www.32auctions.com/2024bunkasai

OR scan the QR code --->



*All sales are final. No refunds. Prizes must be paid in full prior to collecting. Local pickup only. No items will be shipped.

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

Mail your check and this form to:

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

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

[] Individual \$20
[] Family \$40
[] Supporting \$75+
[] Benefactor \$125+
[] Corporate \$200+
[] Lifetime Membership* \$2,000+
Enclosed is a donation to TSCA (in addition to \$ annual dues)
Total Enclosed \$
Make your check payable to TSCA

TSCA meetings are held on the second Monday of each month, except in August and December, at the Civic center West Annex Commission from 7:00 p.m. TorranceSisterCity.org

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

www.torrancesistercity.org



Torrance Sister City Association

3031 Torrance Boulevard
Torrance, CA 90503