



President's Message

By Brad Reynolds



Hello friends and supporters, and welcome to another fantastic TSCA newsletter full of interesting news!

Next week we will know who our Student Ambassadors to Kashiwa will be. We will highlight them in next month's newsletter. We will also be introducing them to the City Council at the March 24 meeting. As I mentioned last month, this is a great group of candidates to select from. Whoever is selected, we will be well represented by this year's delegation!

In April, TSCA is pleased to have the honor of decorating one of the display cases in the Katy Geissert library. Please stop by and enjoy the wonderful Japanese cultural items our members have graciously temporarily donated. My thanks to those people, and to Lori Eurich for managing the display case.

Reminder, our **Bunka-Sai Japanese Cultural Festival** is right around the corner, happening **April 18-19, 2026**. The committees are in full swing, with details being nailed down on a weekly basis. We ask for your support that weekend, by attending and enjoying the food and activities we provide. As our primary fundraiser, money raised supports the Student Ambassador program.

Also, please volunteer and be a part of making the weekend happen! It's a great way to meet other TSCA members and reconnect with those you haven't seen in a while. We need help with prepping and serving food, welcoming visitors, assisting performers/vendors, sales, getting silent auction donations, and even pre-event publicity. **To volunteer, contact us at: bunkasaivolunteer@gmail.com**. The next Bunka-Sai planning meeting is Tuesday, March 24, 2026, at 7 pm in the West Annex. We look forward to seeing you.

Your continued interest and support are greatly appreciated!

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MEMBERSHIPS & DONATIONS LIST

Compiled by Alyssa Yamauchi, Membership Chair

INDIVIDUAL (\$20)

Kraemer, Lynda
Pigao, Chris
Poirier, Rebecca
Tabata, Lynn
Toya, May
Wilson, Yuko

FAMILY (\$40)

Kimmel, Ronald and Gudrun
Lorenz, Larry and Sarah
Matsumoto, Mickey and Frances
Sprague, Brian and Tracy
Tsudama, Geoff, Mickie, Meisa, and Reymi
Ueki, Masaki and Sumi



Torrance Sister City Association

PRESIDENT

Brad Reynolds

VICE PRESIDENT

Alyssa Yamauchi

SECRETARY

Aimee Arreygue

TREASURER

Steve Warner

Newsletter Editor

Maureen Ortega

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tscanewsletter@gmail.com

TSCA



www.torrancesistercity.org



TorranceSisterCityAssociation



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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Monthly Association Meeting

March 17, 2026

April 21, 2026

7:00 PM, City Hall West Annex

Bunka-Sai Planning Meeting

March 24, 2026 @ 7:00 PM

City Hall West Annex

April 9, 2026 @ 7:00 PM

Katy Geissert Library

City of Torrance's

Cherry Blossom Festival

March 29, 2026



11 AM—4 PM



Columbia Park in Torrance

Bunka-Sai

Japanese Cultural Festival

April 18-19, 2026



11 AM—5 PM



Ken Miller Recreation Center

DONATIONS NEEDED!

The **TSCA Gift Booth at Bunka-Sai Festival** is collecting your new or gently used Japanese or non-Japanese items to raise funds for the TSCA Student Cultural Exchange Program. Your donations will be loved by new owners who seek out our treasures every year. Receipts available for tax purposes.

Contact Gift Booth Chair, Karen Wheeler, by text or email to arrange for drop-off.
(213) 399-3566 - bobandkaren@earthlink.net

Items needed: Home goods (dishes, ceramics, chopsticks, figurines, dish towels), books (travel guides, Japanese/English textbooks, cookbooks), posters, prints, banners, art, dolls, cases, toys, apparel (t-shirts, yukata, kimono, scarves, accessories, fans, purses), Japanese music, stationery, school supplies

Our 2026 ANNUAL 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:

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 **02/19/26**.

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

2026 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

Speech Contests 101

By Yuko Wilson

Asst. Language Teacher at Kashiwa Municipal High School (Ichikashi) and former TSCA Student Ambassador

“What do you do as an English teacher in Japan?”

Since moving to Kashiwa roughly 6 months ago, this is a question I’ve often been asked by friends and family. Of course, most have some idea of what English teaching entails: creating lesson plans, grading tests, etc. While it is true that the majority of my days as an English teacher are spent lesson prepping, teaching, and grading, there is one aspect to this job that may not be as well-known. Namely, the English teachers play an important role in speech contests.

In Japan, speech contests are competitive events that take place at the local, prefectural, and national level. At these speech contests, contestants give a 5-minute speech in the specified language, and are judged on a variety of factors such as pronunciation, content, expressiveness, and memorization. Depending on the requirements of each speech contest, sometimes contestants select a famous text to use for their speech, or in other cases, they are given a theme and write their own script using personal experiences. There are a variety of speech contests to account for every type of language learner you might find in Japan. There are contests for students who were raised outside of Japan to give a speech in Japanese, and there are even contests for Japanese students to give speeches in Chinese. As a high school English teacher, my responsibility is to work with students who want to participate in English speech contests. We prepare the students in the weeks leading up to their contest by fine-tuning pronunciation, drilling speed and volume, and building confidence.

You might be wondering why a teenager in Japan would choose to spend their free time memorizing a script. Students have shared motivations such as wanting to push themselves to try something new, wanting to experience winning a competition, being forced by parents to participate, and wanting the monetary prize that often comes with first place. On the other hand, helping students prepare their speeches also involves supporting them through many fears and anxieties. Understandably so, students are often anxious that their mind will go blank and forget their entire script, or that they will fall short of the other contestants. With these strong motivations and anxieties that fuel each of the contestants, I often felt that these speech contests are deeply meaningful opportunities for students to face their fears and take a brave step towards the person they want to be. The majority of the time I’m working as an English teacher, I want to show my students how fun English is, and how it widens your ability to communicate with others. But when it comes to this lesser-known aspect of my job, assisting speech contests, I want to highlight how deeply vulnerable, challenging, and transformational learning English can be. It is so commendable for these students to get on a stage before judges and strangers, and share their personal experiences in a language that is not native to them. And every time I watch one of my students finish their speech and walk off the stage with an exhale of relief, I’m confident that no matter what their result is, their bravery to face English and face themselves has grown them for the better.



Kashiwa Speech Contest January 2026



Teach English in **Kashiwa, Japan**

The Torrance Sister City Association seeks qualified applicants for one high school English teacher in Kashiwa, Japan, the Sister City of Torrance. A minimum one-year contract runs from August 1, 2026, to July 31, 2027. The contract is renewable for a maximum three-year assignment.

Duties: Conduct and assist in a variety of English conversation classes; assist with coordinating campus visits by parents, administrators, and junior high students; and assist with extracurricular activities, which may include judging and assisting with speech contests, serving as adviser to the English Conversation Club and business trips, and coaching students for college interviews. Volunteer work with KIRA (Kashiwa International Relations Association) and other city groups may also be required.

Qualifications

Applicants must:

- Live or work in Torrance
- Be fluent in written and spoken English
- Hold a Bachelor's degree plus a teaching credential or have demonstrated teaching experience
- Possess a keen interest in the Japanese language and culture
- Represent the Torrance Sister City Association and foster the goals and objectives of the English Teacher Exchange Program.

Compensation

- Annual salary of approximately 4,800,000 Japanese yen
- One-way airfare from Los Angeles to Japan
- National health insurance (deducted from monthly salary)
- Subsidized housing and transportation allowance
- Paid Japanese holidays and personal days

To Apply

Please email your resume and cover letter to Lori Chong Eurich (Chair, English Teacher Selection Committee) at TSCAinquiry@gmail.com

Also, two recent letters of recommendation from people not related to the applicant must be emailed directly to the Chair.

Deadline to apply is
March 20, 2026

Qualified applicants will be scheduled for panel interviews in late April 2026.

Questions? Send an email to TSCAinquiry@gmail.com

STUDENT TRIP REPORT

Summarized by Gail Roulette

When our seven Student Ambassadors and Adult Leader went to Japan last July, each one picked a topic of Japanese life to research, experience, and then write a report about their findings. I have been given the task of condensing their reports for the next few newsletter issues.

Student Ambassador, Kai Long: Modern and Traditional Clothing in Japan

Kai began his research with the more traditional style clothing when his first host mother took him to explore the shops in Asakusa. When it comes to festivals, there are many kinds of acceptable clothing: Normal western clothes, the jinbei, yukata, or happi. They are described as follows:

- **Jinbei** – Resembles a shorts and t-shirt, representative of an older era in Japan's history. Tied at the hip with strings, worn primarily by men and not very colorful. Versions for women and young adults are available and much more appealing.
- **Yukata** – Favored by women, with a colorful design, tied around the waist with an obi of complimentary color, covered by a himo (decorative string). Men's options are simple and mostly dull-colored. The women's versions definitely stand out.
- **Happi** – Coats worn by performers or people coordinating the festival, like TSCA members at Bunka-Sai, and those playing taiko drums.
- **Geta** – Wooden sandals worn always with any of the above outfits.



In summer the Jinbei and Yukata can be seen in public for no particular occasion.

In urban areas like Shinjuku in Tokyo, 80% of modern style clothing is similar to western fashion where “men wear t-shirts, shorts, baseball caps, you name it.” Women's styles also resemble the U.S., except that Japanese women are more apt to wear skirts, long or short. This used to be true for school wear, but the trend is to be gender neutral, with pants and shirts for both boys and girls. Then there's Harajuku... “Tons of gothic, gyaru, and lolita sub-genres of western fashion have accumulated massive popularity....”



On the day of the Matsuri festival, Kai's second host family took him shopping at the Kashiwa station mall, and he got to design his own full yukata outfit, “It turned out wonderfully.” The store personnel told him this was not a popular activity for Japanese men, and Kai wondered if it was because of the expense. He had told his host families that, in essence, money was no object. So he returned to Torrance with “seemingly a treasure trove's worth of clothing and accessories.”

Kai is ecstatic with thanks for the life-changing experience this trip provided—making new friends and memories for a lifetime: “It's hard for me to express my gratitude fully because words cannot describe the emotions my heart holds.”

51st Annual Bunka-Sai

Japanese Cultural Festival

Saturday & Sunday

April 18 and 19, 2026

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, kids' games, 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.

TSCAinquiry@gmail.com



TORRANCE SISTER CITY ASSOCIATION
3031 Torrance Boulevard
Torrance, CA 90503

February 24, 2026

Dear Business Owner,

The Torrance Sister City Association will be hosting its 51st annual Bunka-Sai Cultural Festival on **April 18 and 19, 2026.**

This 2-day celebration not only promotes Japanese culture, but it supports our student exchange program which takes place every summer with Kashiwa, Japan. Eight students and 1 adult leader from Torrance have been selected to spend three weeks abroad. Later in the summer, Torrance will host Japanese students and give them a taste of American life. It is an amazing opportunity and experience for all involved.

We hope we can count on your support this year by placing an ad in our official Bunka-Sai Program which is given to 2,000+ attendees. There are 4 categories for ads: full page, half page, one-fourth page, and business card. The artwork must be camera ready.

Attached you will find an order form with all the necessary information, but should you have any questions, email TSCAads@gmail.com. Please note that the deadline to be included in the program is **March 10, 2026.**

Thank you for your support of TSCA and our 2026 Student Exchange Program.

Sincerely,

Deanna Diederich
TSCA Ads Chair



TORRANCE SISTER CITY ASSOCIATION, INC.

3031 Torrance Boulevard

Torrance, CA 90503

Torrance Sister City Association Bunka-Sai 2026 Japanese Cultural Festival

Supporting the Student Cultural Exchange Program

- When: Saturday, April 18th and Sunday, April 19th
 Where: Ken Miller Recreation Center, Toyota Meeting Hall, and Torino Plaza
 (3330 Civic Center Drive)
 Why: Raise funds for the Student Cultural Exchange Program by providing a fun and interactive exhibition of Japanese culture for our community

Student Cultural Exchange Program

Since 1974, the Torrance Sister City Association sends up to eight students and one adult leader to Kashiwa, Japan for three weeks in July. In turn, the city of Kashiwa sends a similar group to Torrance in August. This exchange is often referred to as "the gem" of the Sister City program and through the years has included over 750 students.

Placing an ad in our festival program

Your company/business will be advertised to an expected 2,000+ visitors over the weekend. Additionally, you'll be included on the TSCA website for a full year, all while supporting the Student Cultural Exchange Program. Personal tribute ads are welcome as well.

Ad Prices

Full-page ad.....	\$200
Half-page ad.....	\$100
One-fourth page ad.....	\$50
Business card size ad.....	\$25

Specifics: Camera-ready copy, no larger than 8 1/2" x 11". May be in color.
Email electronic copy to TSCAads@gmail.com or request a pick-up.

Deadline: **March 10, 2026**
Make checks payable to: Torrance Sister City Association or TSCA

Questions? Please email TSCAads@gmail.com

.....
Company Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Contact Name _____ Phone # _____ E-Mail _____

Ad information: Size _____ Cost _____ Use last year's ad? _____ Use new ad? _____ Ad enclosed? _____

Specific instructions _____

Mail form, ad, and payment to: **Torrance Sister City Association
3031 Torrance Blvd. Attn: Community Services Dept.
Torrance, CA 90503**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!



Torrance Sister City Association's
**10th Annual
 ANIME ART
 CONTEST 2026!**

BUNKA-SAI
 JAPANESE CULTURAL
 FESTIVAL!
 April 18-19



2025 Winners (from left): Angelina S, Mayo N, May U, and Azusa M

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 17, 2026**, 4pm – 6pm
 Ken Miller Recreation Center (3341 Torrance Blvd, Torrance, CA 90503)
Winners will be announced on Saturday, April 18, at 12:15 pm

Forms and more info at www.torrancesistercity.org



Torrance Sister City Association
2026 Anime Art Contest Rules

1. Maximum of 1 entry per person. Hand Drawn or Digital Art is acceptable.
2. Entries must be on 8½ x 11" paper, either Portrait (vertical) or Landscape (horizontal) format.
3. Entries may be in Color or Black and White.
4. Entries will be judged on the following criteria: **Design & Composition, Technique, Originality, Viewer Impact**
5. *Artwork should not contain dark, violent, or gruesome themes, such as death and funerals.*
6. We are unable to accept entries containing images of **copyrighted** characters, such as Totoro, etc.
7. Back of artwork must include: artist's name, grade, school, student email, and parent cell phone number (if student under 18). No names on the front of artwork.
8. Entries will only be accepted in person on Friday, **April 17**, from **4pm - 6pm** at the Ken Miller Recreation Center (3341 Torrance Blvd., Torrance, CA 90503).
9. Entries must have a signed Statement of Authenticity and Photo Release signed by the artist, and parent or guardian if student is a minor.
10. Entries will be submitted in a plastic sheet protector with the **Release form behind the artwork.**
11. Winners will be announced on Saturday, **April 18**, at 12:15 pm on the Ken Miller Auditorium Stage. Winners do not need to be present.
12. Winning entries will be featured in the TSCA newsletter as well as displayed on the website and other promotional communications.
13. TSCA will retain the rights to any entries, and will scan copies of them before returning to the artist.
14. Entries must be picked up on Sunday, April 19, at 5pm. Unclaimed artwork becomes the property of TSCA.

Thank you for participating in the Anime Drawing contest and supporting the Torrance Sister City Association's Bunka-Sai festival. Questions? Please feel free to contact TSCAinquiry@gmail.com.

Statement of Authenticity and Release Form

I _____ am the **original** artist of the artwork submitted.
 Print entrant/artist name

My artwork is (check one) Hand Drawn Digital Art My artwork is not copied from any other artist.

School I attend: _____

Entrant (Signature) _____ Date _____

PARENT RELEASE

My child (print name) _____ is allowed to be photographed along with his/her/their drawing and included in the TSCA Newsletter and on its website and other promotional communications.

Parent/Guardian Name _____

Cell Phone _____ Print name _____ Signature _____
 Date _____

TSCA Representative _____ Date _____
 Signature _____

City of
TORRANCE
California

Community Services Department Presents

CHERRY BLOSSOM CULTURAL FESTIVAL

COLUMBIA PARK ❀ MARCH 29, 2026 ❀ 11:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Columbia Park — 4045 190th St, Torrance, CA 90504

Join us and experience great performances, unique crafts, and amazing food!

FREE parking and shuttle service at 20420 Madrona Ave., Torrance, CA.



Torrance Sister City Association
3031 Torrance Boulevard
Torrance, CA 90503