

## President's Message

By Brad Reynolds

Hello supporters, welcome to another great TSCA newsletter!

Say hello to the 2026 Student Ambassadors, and get to know them on page 4!



Torrance City Council, TSCA President,  
and 2026 Delegation

*Photo: Courtesy of the City of Torrance*

Even with Bunka-Sai in just a few weeks, I'm most excited for the announcement of our selected 2026 Delegation to Kashiwa! When you see them about at Bunka-Sai, make sure to say "Hi" and offer words of encouragement for their trip. It was a pleasure to meet and spend time with all of this year's candidates. And those who aren't going this year, I hope we see them again next year.

### KIRA Torrance Committee updates!

I want to welcome back the contributions of our Sister organization, the KIRA Torrance Committee. I'm pleased to share two articles from them. It has been quite a while since they were included in our newsletter - Welcome back!

**Reminder, our Bunka-Sai Japanese Cultural Festival is THIS MONTH, April 18-19, 2026.** At this point everything is planned out, now we just need to execute. The excitement is high! We ask for your support that weekend, by attending and enjoying the food and activities we provide. I hope to see you there; if you spot me wandering around, please say Hi!

**It isn't too late to volunteer and be a part of making the weekend happen!**

Remember, many hands make light work. 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](mailto:bunkasaivolunteer@gmail.com).

The next Bunka-Sai planning meeting is Tuesday, April 9, 2026, at 7 PM. We look forward to seeing you.

Thank you for supporting our mission of increased Japanese cultural awareness!

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# MEMBERSHIPS & DONATIONS LIST

Compiled by Alyssa Yamauchi, Membership Chair

## BENEFACTOR (\$125+)

Willoughby, Werner and Aileen

## SUPPORTING (\$75+)

Nadsady, Alina and Greg

## FAMILY (\$40)

Arnheim, Bruce and Sumi  
Bakhoun Family, Clay  
Campbell Family, Amie  
Evans, Jayne Okazaki and Earl  
Gelbaum, Mark and Ilene  
Hart, Gillian and Jay  
Kikuchi, Larry, Alice, Kaitlyn, and Breanna  
Long, Ron and Holly  
Martel, Lou and Lori

## INDIVIDUAL (\$20)

Bissiri, David  
Higa, Reiko  
Penick, Tiffany (Calhoun)  
Willoughby, Kevin

## DONATIONS

\$500 Welsch, Butch and Carol



**MARK YOUR  
CALENDAR**

## Monthly Association Meeting

7:00 PM

City Hall West Annex

April 21, 2026

May 19, 2026

June 16, 2026

## Bunka-Sai Planning Meeting

7:00 PM

April 9, 2026

Garden Room A & B

## Bunka-Sai

Japanese Cultural Festival

11 AM—5 PM

April 18-19, 2026

Ken Miller Recreation Center

## Bunka-Sai Wrap-up Meeting

7:00 PM

April 28, 2026

City Hall West Annex

## Torrance Sister City Association

### **PRESIDENT**

Brad Reynolds

### **VICE PRESIDENT**

Alyssa Yamauchi

### **SECRETARY**

Aimee Arreygue

### **TREASURER**

Steve Warner

### **Newsletter Editor**

Maureen Ortega

### **Inquiries or Submissions:**

tscanewsletter@gmail.com

**TSCA**



[www.torrancesistercity.org](http://www.torrancesistercity.org)

## Bunka-Sai is an Official Torrance Passport Stop

Have you heard? The City of Torrance has launched its new Torrance Passport program, inviting the community to “embark on a culinary and cultural journey.” From March 26 – April 26, 2026, participants can visit at least 10 Torrance restaurants, city facilities, and events for a chance to win a prize.

Participants can pick up their passport at any Torrance Library, Torrance City Hall, and the California Welcome Center at Del Amo Fashion Center, or by downloading their own at: [TorranceCA.Gov/WhyTorrance](http://TorranceCA.Gov/WhyTorrance).

Eat in or order take-out from any Torrance restaurant, and fill in your passport. Be sure to stop by this featured event and official passport stop:

- **Bunka-Sai** — April 18 & 19 at the Ken Miller Recreational Center

Bring your completed passport to the California Welcome Center by April 26, 2026 for a chance to win a prize. For additional chances to win prizes, snap a photo at the restaurant or event and post to your social media using #TorrancePassport.

Happy Exploring!



## TORRANCE PASSPORT

March 26 – April 26, 2026

Taste, explore and experience the richness of Torrance’s diverse flavors, culture and fun at every stop!

----- 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](mailto:tscamembership@gmail.com)



*Introducing*

# The 2026 Delegation



**Tanya Welsch**  
Adult Leader  
*Favorite Japanese Food:*  
*Mochi*



**Malina Ablett**  
Torrance High, 11th Gr.  
*Favorite Anime:*  
*Jojo's Bizarre Adventure*



**Allison Gil**  
South High, 10th Gr.  
*Favorite Japanese Food:*  
*Okowa*



**Sofia Reyes-Castro**  
South High, 10th Gr.  
*Favorite Anime:*  
*Pokemon*



**Lillian Reynolds**  
Bishop Montgomery, 10th Gr.  
*Favorite Japanese Food:*  
*Yakisoba*



**Elaine Suyeyoshi**  
North High, 11th Gr.  
*Favorite Anime:*  
*Naruto*



**Julia Villarie**  
Torrance High, 10th Gr.  
*Favorite Japanese Food:*  
*Takoyaki*



**Jaxon Kamimura**  
West High, 11th Gr.  
*Favorite Anime:*  
*Attack on Titans*



**James Lin**  
Bishop Montgomery, 12th Gr.  
*Favorite Anime:*  
*Black Clover*

# 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  
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

# Farewell, Shun Tamaoki & Mami Takeda Sensei!

By Chris Pigao (Assistant Language Teacher at Kashiwa Municipal High School (Ichikashi))

Happy Spring, TSCA members! The Cherry Blossoms are in full bloom, travel is at an all-time high (in which I had just finished my solo trip through the Kyushu region), and students are celebrating their graduation from their respective educational institutions. However, one of the most perplexing aspects about the Japanese school system is the process of *Jinjidou* (人事異動) or school transfers. *This practice happens yearly, with staff members and teachers who finish their initial contracts that are typically within a 1-to-3-year period, or for those who stayed the long-haul of the maximum allotted duration of 10 years. Being here for a few years already, I have seen my fair share of co-workers transfer to schools throughout Chiba. Teaching at various grade levels which ranges from elementary to high school and on rare occasions, switching subjects or gaining administration roles at district offices.*

This next school year, we see this transfer happen to our most senior members of our English Department - Shun Tamaoki-Sensei & Mami Takeda-Sensei. In previous articles, I have spoken about them with such fondness. Whether it would be about trivial concepts about point cards or being involved with our Rock Band Club, both of them have been an integral part of my life here in Kashiwa. Throughout their 10 years at Kashiwa Municipal High School, they both have visited Torrance with their homeroom students and coordinated a plethora of homestay exchange programs. Tamaoki-sensei has gone to many lengths to acclimate not only myself, but all of the ALT's with living in Japan by helping us set up our contracts, bank accounts, and our utilities in our apartments. Takeda-sensei has helped in guiding us on the best phone and internet services and credit cards. She has even helped me with minuscule, out-of-work tasks like creating cute customized stamps or guidance on the intricate nature of concert tickets & otaku events (the likes of which are difficult to navigate through, even for native residents).

As a special going away gift, I had contacted all of the ALT's who have worked with both Tamaoki and Takeda-Sensei throughout their tenure in helping me produce a personalized "Thank You" video message filled with unforgettable memories and heartfelt gratitude. During the creation process, I had included a retrospective slideshow compiled with photos and videos throughout their extraordinary career at Ichikashi. It was filled with familiar faces, random slice-of-life moments, and milestone events. At our English Department's final school year meeting, we showed the video at the end. It was heartwarming and had some of our staff members shed a few tears. (Here is a video link of the slideshow portion only: <https://youtu.be/6lwNLCjRM5M>)

There is an idiom that I heard recently that had a profound impact on my current perspective on their move: "Change is just as good as a holiday". I have come to terms that sooner or later, we are constantly changing and moving on to the next phases of our lives. In doing so, we leave the places that we once were in while trying to make it better than when we first found it. As we say goodbye, we give thanks and our unconditional appreciation to the people and place that shaped these vital times.

To Shun and Mami, take care and please bring your singing, humor, and most importantly, your flawless application pedagogy, to each of your respective schools' and future students. The significant impact that both of you have made during your time here will certainly be remembered throughout Ichikashi's respective and prestigious history. Always remember, "Keep Studying, Practice Hard, Polish your Skills, and **NEVER** give up on your dreams". I will be waiting for both of you to come back to Torrance someday with Chicken Parmesan with the Cheese on top, making sure to save some room for dessert.

Until next time, friends!



(Photo: Farewell photo card that was given to everyone in the English Department. Luckily Kokubu Kanako-Sensei used iOS to include all of the members missing in the photos - including myself.)

## Kashiwa Delegation 2026: Meet Adult Leader Yumiko Ueno

My connection with Torrance began in 1982 as a student delegate. Those life-changing experiences—meeting lifelong friends, bonding with host families, and immersing myself in American culture—opened my eyes to the vastness and diversity of the world. They gave me a guiding principle I carry to this day: *“Believe in the possibilities of the future and take on new challenges.”*

Hoping that future generations can experience this same magic, I joined the KIRA Torrance Committee in 2023 and currently serve as Treasurer. I recently retired after a 40-year career as an elementary school teacher—a dream I held since childhood. During that time, I dedicated myself to music education, served as a homeroom teacher, and concluded my career in school management as a Principal. Today, I am working as a music teacher under a reappointment and also remain active in music through choral instruction and the preservation of traditional Japanese flute. My hobbies include playing the piano, singing in chorus, traveling, and watching movies.

As an Adult Leader, I am committed to strengthening the friendship between Kashiwa and Torrance. I look forward to supporting our delegates as they foster mutual respect for diverse cultures. **I am so excited to see you all in Torrance!**



## Celebrating the Year-End with Bento and Bingo!

By Hiroko Sugiyama, KIRA Torrance Committee Liaison

In Japan, the fiscal year runs from April to March, making March a special time for reflection and celebration. To celebrate our hard work over the past year, the KIRA Torrance Committee held its final regular meeting of the year on the evening of March 16.

With 43 people in attendance—including two newcomers interested in joining our group—the meeting started at 6:00 PM. After quickly finishing the agenda, we moved on to the highlight of the evening: Our traditional “Chat-over-Bento” social time! This year’s bento was truly special—a delicious meal from a famous Chinese restaurant in Kashiwa. It was the perfect accompaniment to the lively conversations. Once everyone was satisfied, it was time for the main event: Bingo! This year’s prizes ranged from a Starbucks drink voucher and a LINE prepaid card to tissues, snacks, chocolate, tea,

strawberries and negi green onions. Whether we won a prize or not, the entire room was full of high spirits.

It was a wonderful way to refresh ourselves, and we are now fully energized and ready for another fantastic year of activities ahead!



*Bingo begins. Waiting for the numbers to be called.*



*Ready for next year! All energized after an evening of connection, bento and Bingo.*



*A close-up of the gourmet bento that made the evening extra special.*

# 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, Grace Kelley: Vending Machines in Japan

Grace found that vending machines, aka *jidohanbaiki* or *jihanki*, are very different from their American counterparts. The machines are physically different, are most often filled with drinks, and there are many more of them. Non-drink vending machines generally serve different types of a specific item, e.g. different ice cream flavors, types of bread, etc.

In line with “Japan’s massive vending machine culture,” Grace once counted 16 on the street in a very short time while on a bus in downtown Kashiwa. She was eager to try a variety of drinks and get a different one each day. What surprised her was the absence of the soda *ramune* which she had in America, but found in Japan is only for special occasions or festivals. Here are places she used vending machines -



Cat café vending machine with all free drinks!

**At the cafeteria at Tokyo University:** Two machines were outside so the drink could be conveniently selected before going inside. She was surprised to see only pictures of the drinks on the display, and not the containers themselves. She chose her favorite drink, a Dr. Pepper. Inside the cafeteria a machine offered coffee and cocoa – hot or cold for both.

**At a cat café:** there was a machine with a variety of drinks with hot and cold versions, and all were surprisingly free! However, there was an entry fee to the café. She was also surprised to see hot corn

pottage and strawberry au lait, which she chose and which reminded her of American strawberry milk.



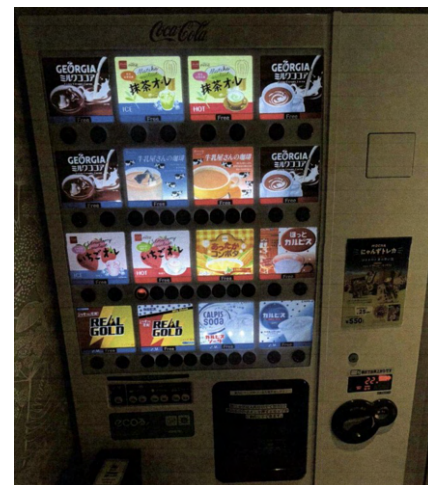
Teapot vending machine at Tokyo Disney

**On the top deck of the ferry** to Miyajima Island in Hiroshima: A hot day, and she purchased an Aquarius to try for the first time. In her words, “The electrolyte drink, despite being clear, was quite sweet, but a little too fruity for my taste. But it was nice to know, that even if I was on a boat for 10 minutes, that Japan had got me covered.”

**On the train platform** returning from Tokyo Skytree: No machine clearly in sight; took a while to find one. Very unusual.

**At Tokyo Disney:** Fewer machines than expected, but all were themed to the section of the park where they were located.

Back in the USA Grace missed the convenience of ready available vending machines, especially when she forgot her water bottle! She thanks TSCA for the wonderful trip opportunity and all the members' hard work and fundraising at Bunka Sai.



Coffee vending machine in Tokyo University cafeteria



## TSCA - Bunka-Sai

# SILENT AUCTION

On-Line Auction Opens:  
11 a.m. on Friday, April 17, 2026  
On-Line Auction Closes:  
3 p.m. on Sunday, April 19, 2026

Auction Items Include:  
Restaurants-Jewelry-Camps-Museums-Shows-Wine Tasting  
A Big Bear Cabin-Family Outings-Hair Salons-Harbor Cruise-AND MORE!

**Bid TODAY at**

[www.32auctions.com/BunkaSai2026](http://www.32auctions.com/BunkaSai2026)

**OR scan the QR code →**

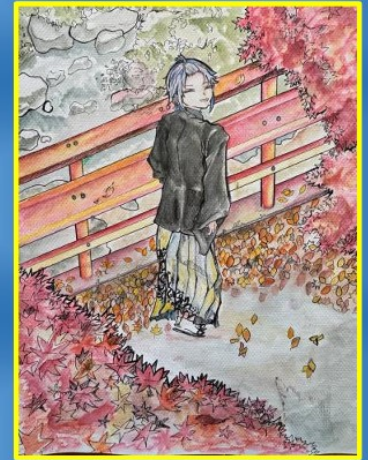


*\*All sales are "final. No refunds. Prizes must be paid in full prior to collecting. Local pickup only. No items will be shipped.*



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](http://www.torrancesistercity.org)



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](mailto: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 \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



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