



lakewood 907 magazine

**coupons
on page 34!**

Inside: The Givers of Lakewood

11 Extraordinary Residents Whose Year-Round
Generosity Epitomizes Lakewood's Giving Tradition



907 LAKEWOOD

magazine

Lakewood907.com

local business, local teams, local people

Editor and Publisher John Grossi
Director of Photography
and Graphic Design Nick LaRoque
Director of Content Jonathan Murrietta
Contributing Writers Andrea Sampson,
Blair Cohn, Evan Gorzeman

Happy Holidays to you! During the season of giving we thought it was high time to honor some of the fantastic volunteers in our city that make charity a priority no matter what season it is. I hope the stories in this "giving back" issue are as inspiring to read as they were to write!

Please enjoy the following foreword by Lakewood resident Marc Bonner, MPA & Development Director of the Long Beach Area Scouting Council:

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I'm the kind of person who likes helping others. In fact, over the years I have found a fulfilling paradox: the more I give, the more I get. While helping others charges my batteries, professionally I work side by side with thousands of volunteers making a difference in Lakewood.

Simply put, volunteers are the lifeblood of our community.

It's the ordinary people who make an extraordinary difference. People like you and me bring professional skills, creative solutions, out-of-the-box ideas, connections, enthusiasm, passion, and resources far beyond what staff alone can provide.

Lakewood was built on the principle of caring for one another. From day one, Lakewood volunteers proved critical in providing basic city needs such as youth sports coaches. It's no surprise then that today Lakewood still has a strong spirit of volunteerism.

Our city is filled with many organizations doing great work to make Lakewood the best place to live, work, and play. Not only as a director at a not-for-profit, but also as a Lakewood resident, I would urge you to support these organizations.

You matter. Your support makes a difference. Whether it's through a personal hobby interest, a cause, or your children's activities, charities need people like you.

The following pages are filled with stories of people. Ordinary people who go above and beyond for causes they care about deeply. As not-for-profits, charities, and organizations, we couldn't do what we do without them.

This holiday season, give back. Give of yourself. Give of your time. Give of your money. My guess is you'll find yourself grateful in an interesting paradox.



Marc Bonner

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Your Post-Office Alternative



Robert and Jane Campanelli

Lakewood Mail n' More

By John Grossi

What does working for an off-roading automotive company have to do with running a mailing center?

For Lakewood resident Robert Campanelli, it's all about customer service. After 25 years working directly under the founder of popular off-roading magazine and car company, 4 Wheel Parts, the Lakewood High grad decided to switch industries and open up a Mail n' More business in his hometown. He brings with him the best advice he ever got from his former boss.

"Treat every customer like he or she is your only customer."

This principle is one that comes naturally to Robert and his wife Jane. For starters, either one or both of them is at the store at all times. For Robert it means giving up his Saturdays but that's

a price he's more than willing to pay for the joy of running his own business.

It's clear the customers appreciate his enthusiastic, helpful, and friendly nature. Robert knows most return customers by first name, and is familiar with their mailing trends and needs.

As I interviewed him, one lady—a regular—came in and gave him a hug thanking him for all his help with one of her big projects. It's an interesting and inspiring sight to see at such an unlikely business.

The number one reason you will enter Mail n' More in the near future is to Mail. It makes sense. We'll get to the "n' More" a little later...

Just like a post office, Lakewood Mail n' More can take care of absolutely any

mailing or shipping needs to any where in the world. So why go to Lakewood Mail n' More instead of the post office?

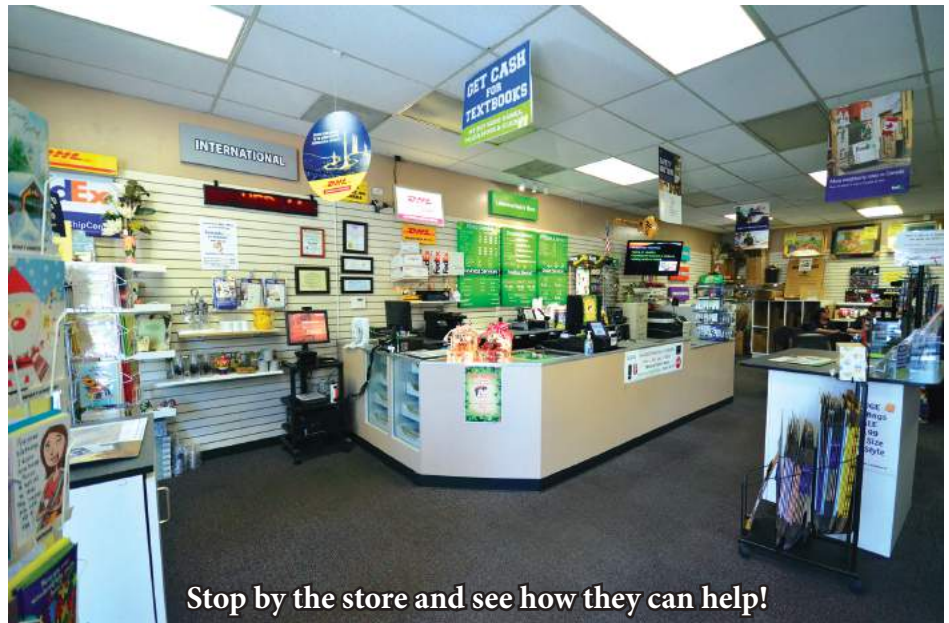
Well, for one it might be a lot closer to your house. And secondly, it might be a lot easier and less hassle than the post office. After all, the guy behind the counter taking care of your postage is the direct guy who depends on your return business! That equals a lot more accountability than you might get elsewhere.

Take their mailboxes for rent. Many customers prefer Lakewood Mail n' More to PO Boxes because Robert and Jane can take more customer-friendly steps like email their customers when they get mail rather than making the customer come in and check every day.

...Now to the “n More” Section.

Christmas time means a lot of gift-wrap and a lot of mail. Luckily, those are two specialties for Robert and Jane. Customers have already started booking Jane’s beautiful gift-wrap services. All her bows are hand-made and her color combinations are the perfect blend of holiday cheer. If you’re anything like me, and the mix of scissors and scotch tape makes you nauseous, then Jane’s fast and affordable wrapping service is a great way to reduce your stress this Christmas season.

When you’re thinking both about reducing stress this Christmas and supporting the city of Lakewood, I urge you to give Lakewood Mail n’ More a try. Their customer service may be the best gift you get this year! ■



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Spend a day this season 10 minutes west in beautiful...



By Blair Cohn

Greetings from Bixby Knolls! The Bixby Knolls neighborhood is just to the west of Lakewood and is a bustling community that connects residents to its businesses.

And vibrant it is. Bixby Knolls has a lot to offer you year round- from boutique shopping, to the best in craft beers and wines, to services from auto repair, to swim lessons and opportunities for kids to be involved with music lessons, digital media and theatre.

Additionally, the BKBIA organizes free events each month for all to enjoy. The First Fridays Art Walk is the premier event that kicks off each month. From 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm along the pedestrian zone of Atlantic Avenue (San Antonio to Bixby Road) people are treated to live music, art shows, and everything from stilt walkers to fire dancers. Businesses stay open late and there is something for everyone. The

event's motto is "Expect the unexpected" and you can count on that.

Another fun Bixby Knolls event that brings the community together is the Supper Club. Every first Monday of the month the Bixby Knolls Business Improvement Association facilitates a program that takes its residents and business owners to different Bixby Knolls restaurants to introduce them to a new dining experience. Come try the great flavors offered here!

The BKBIA also holds a monthly community book club called the Bixby Knolls Literary Society at Elise's Tea Room (3924 Atlantic Avenue). Meeting on the second Wednesday of every month promptly at 7 p.m., the society focuses on current releases as well as the great American Classics of the 20th century.

Most recently, the BKBIA just launched the Bixby Knolls Good Spirits Club, which provides drink

enthusiasts with the best in craft beers and wines.

For the kids, the Kidical Mass Bike Ride cruises the neighborhood every third Sunday for a family friendly bike ride. All ages and ability levels are welcome...and there is free ice cream when the ride is over!

Last but not least, everyone is welcome to the neighborhood walking club, Bixby Knolls Strollers, a group that meets every Saturday morning starting at 7:30 at the Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf. The group goes for an hour walk around the neighborhood. The stroll gives the Bixby Knolls residents and outsiders alike the opportunity to see what's going on in the Bixby Knolls community and at the local businesses.

All this and more are contributing to Bixby Knolls growing into the thriving community it is today. See what's going on in Bixby Knolls by visiting www.bixbyknollsinfo.com. ■

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One of the most rewarding part of Angell's job is arranging family trips that will serve as long-lasting memories for her customers, like the cruise she booked for a couple celebrating their 60th anniversary this summer. The whole family came, including the grandkids. A wonderful time was had by all, and Vacation Connection handled the organization of this memorable family gathering.

In this day and age, when everybody is so busy, consider the gift of travel for a family member this holiday season. Vacation Connection is ready to start planning that much desired getaway with loved ones.



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Miyamo is a fresh, eclectic boutique filled with unique gifts, inspirational signs, clothing at bargain prices, wonderful home décor, and lots of "products with a purpose." Roughly 90% of the store's products give back to some sort of cause.

A few fantastic "give back" products available right now and perfect for the holiday season are Simbi bracelets, dedicated to helping bring clean drinking water to Haiti; iSanctuary jewelry, providing support to victims of human trafficking; and Giving Keys, employing those transitioning out of homelessness, providing inspiration, and encouraging people to pay-it-forward.

Trending now are Lokai bracelets- with water from Mount Everest, and mud from the Dead Sea, each different color donates to a different cause including Breast Cancer awareness, the World Wild Life Fund, and Alzheimer's.

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**Helping
veterans start
businesses...**

They are Worth it!

The Jonas Project... Teri Kelsall

By Jonathan Murrietta

The crowd cheered as Teri Kelsall, one of this year's Women of Worth honorees, stood up and made her way to the stage. She received the award at the 2015 L'Oréal Paris Women of Worth, a national event honoring ten women who have greatly given back to their communities.

Teri, along with husband John Kelsall, CEO of the Greater Lakewood Chamber of Commerce, is the founder of The Jonas Project, a non-profit that helps veterans start their own business-

es. At the December 1 event held at the Pierre Hotel in New York City, Teri gave a heartfelt speech about The Jonas Project—started and named in honor of her son, Jonas B. Kelsall, a Navy SEAL killed in action while serving in Afghanistan four years ago.

"The work that I do is not for recognition, but for love," Teri said addressing the audience.

Chosen among 6,000 applicants, L'Oréal Paris awarded Teri, along with nine other women, a donation of \$10,000 for their individual organizations. In only its third year, The Jonas Project has gained a national presence, keeping Teri and her team quite busy. The non-profit has helped countless veterans become entrepreneurs. Being one of this year's Women of Worth honorees simply validates Teri's love

and passion for helping veterans achieve their dreams, therein honoring her son's legacy.

"When Jonas was alive he always wanted to give back to his military family," Teri said in an interview with Lakewood 907.

Jonas always dreamed of becoming a Navy SEAL. After graduating high school, he embarked on a mission that would ultimately end his life. He completed BUDS—Basic Underwater Demolition—the required training to become a SEAL. Jonas then studied at the University of Texas for the next four years where he received his Bachelor of Arts degree. While in college, he met and married the love of his life. Soon, he became Lt. Commander in the Naval Special Warfare Elite Development Group.

Jonas did it. He achieved his dream and became a United States Navy SEAL, serving his country proudly for 12 years.

On August 6, 2011, Afghan insurgents shot down a helicopter that was on its way to aid ground troops in a firefight. Jonas, 32, was among the Navy SEALs aboard who were killed that day.

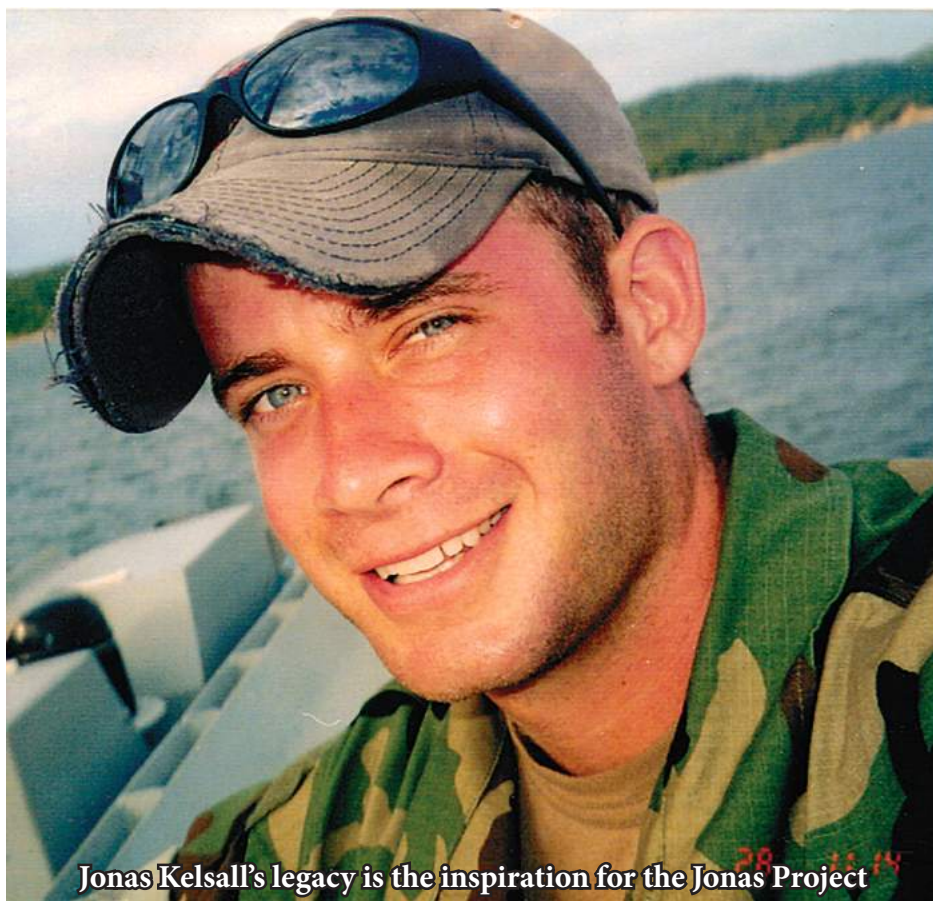
“If anything happens to me, know that I love my job. It is the only thing I want to do,” Jonas would say to his family.

Jonas encouraged others to follow their dreams as well. He always put others before himself and fervently desired that his military brothers and sisters find happiness also. Today, The Jonas Project is helping keep those wishes of Jonas alive.

Caught in traffic on a bustling New York City day, the Kelsall's are on their way to dinner. Having just received her award as a Woman of Worth honoree for The Jonas Project, Teri obligingly takes a call from Lakewood 907 for an interview. Her voice is sweet and warm. Pure joy radiates through the phone line as she describes how rewarding it is to help veterans succeed. “If they truly want something, all they have to do is ask and not be afraid,” Teri says with whole-hearted emotion.

“We’re always ready to help them.” Last year there were more than half a million unemployed veterans in the United States, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Millions of men and women who have served in the armed forces continue to transition back into civilian life. And for many, that transition isn’t always easy. Trying to become an entrepreneur is a difficult task for anyone, let alone veterans, who experience a higher unemployment rate than most civilians.

That’s where The Jonas Project comes in. Over the years, the organization has



helped numerous veterans make that ambitious shift from soldier to business owner.

“If they truly want something, all they have to do is ask and not be afraid,” Teri says with whole-hearted emotion.

And it all starts with simply asking for help. Veterans are encouraged to apply for assistance via The Jonas Project website. They then meet with team leaders at The Jonas Project to discuss their goals.

“Every time a veteran comes to The Jonas Project, we do some pretty heavy assessing of what their business plan is,” says Kim Kelsall, Teri’s daughter, who heads the marketing department for The Jonas Project.

The next step is assigning that veteran a mentor, who for the next two years works with the veteran to grow their business. The volunteer mentors come from all different business backgrounds and are hand-picked and matched to each veteran. Many of the mentors are veterans themselves. Once the businesses begin to grow, the veterans who started them are encouraged to hire other veterans for their staff.

Veterans now own 9 percent of small businesses in the U.S. according to a Census Bureau survey, which also shows that veteran-owned businesses employ 5.8 million people and contribute \$1.2 trillion in receipts. Continuing to grow these veteran-owned business-

es and help employ numerous other veterans still without a job is crucial for The Jonas Project.

Take Daniel Tapia, for example. A veteran of the U.S. Navy and recovering quadriplegic, Tapia decided to start his own restaurant after suffering disability discrimination in the restaurant industry, in which he served for years. Tapia enlisted the help of The Jonas Project and received the funding he needed to make his dream a reality. Now, he has the opportunity to open his European tavern eatery within the next three months. It will be called “4th and Olive” and is marketed as Long Beach’s first rooftop culinary garden. He plans to hire a staff with at least 70 percent veterans.

Another Jonas Project success story is Monica Vasquez, a female veteran, who with the help of The Jonas Project has started her own construction company called E9 Construction. The business operates out of Fort Worth, Texas. The Jonas Project assisted with Vasquez’s business planning, financial projection, and market analysis.

“Every day I wake up and make a choice. I make a conscious decision not to let my grief win... I choose to honor Jonas. I choose to honor our veterans. And I choose to serve them because they are worth it.”



John, Teri, Kim, and Jonas Kelsall November 2009

Perhaps most rewarding is the fact that Vasquez and her Jonas Project mentor will remain good friends forever.

“The relationships that form through our mentorship program speak volumes about our success not only to grow these veteran-owned businesses, but to create lasting relationships for all involved,” Kim says.

And that’s just a taste of what The Jonas Project is doing in and through the lives of veterans across the country. What started as a Lakewood-based organization to honor the life of Jonas B. Kelsall has now turned into a national platform.

Kim Kelsall, who speaks of Jonas not only as her brother but as her hero, wonders how he would respond to all this attention if he were alive today. “I think he would be a little embar-

rassed that we are putting so much attention on him, because he was sort of a quiet, humble guy,” Kim says. “But I think he would be very proud of the fact that we are helping veterans be their absolute best.”

In her speech at the Women of Worth event, honoree Teri Kelsall closed with these words:

“Every day I wake up and make a choice. I make a conscious decision not to let my grief win. Instead I make the choice Jonas would want, and I use it to drive me forward. I choose to honor Jonas. I choose to honor our veterans. And I choose to serve them because they are worth it.” ■

*Visit thejonasproject.org to learn more about the non-profit and to get involved.

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Lakewood Community Gardens... Mel Mueller

By Jonathan Murrietta

The Lakewood Community Gardens has been in existence for 30 years. Today, the garden continues to be a place that brings people together from all different backgrounds and makes them feel at home.

Mel Mueller, a volunteer garden inspector at the Lakewood Community Gardens since 1993, likes to reflect on the mere tranquility of the place.

"It's a very nice place to be," Mueller says.

With the help of the city, the gardens have allowed Lakewood residents to lease garden plots and take advantage of sunny Southern California's year-round growing season. Mueller helps facilitate the garden's upkeep.

Mueller always loved gardening, an avocation he no doubt inherited from his father, who was a gifted gardener himself. Growing up in Fort Wayne, Indiana, he remembers living a relatively simple life. At Thanksgiving, for example, the family would go to the local turkey farm and pick out a home-grown turkey. After high school, Mueller enlisted in the Marine Corps and left his snowy hometown. He served in the Marines for four years and when he got out, needed to make a stop at Camp Pendleton Military Base near San Diego, California.

Tired of having his VW Bus smothered in snow each winter, Mueller applied to



colleges out west in hopes of completing his degree in the sun. He was accepted at Oregon State University where he received a degree in horticulture. Mueller had found his way back to his gardening roots. It was not long before the U.S. Department of Agriculture hired Mueller to work in their "screen room" researching plant pathology and entomology.

The changing tides of life would soon propel Mueller in another direction. In 1975, he took a position at U.S. Customs, a change in uniform from one federal agency to another. He traveled to New York, Washington, and San Francisco as a U.S. Customs serviceman. In 1984 Mueller moved to Los Angeles to work in U.S. Customs at LAX Airport.

Mueller retired on April 1, 2002. But just one day later, on April 2, 2002 he took a part time position working as a firearms instructor at Rio Hondo

College Police Academy in Whittier, California.

***"I enjoy staying busy
and enjoy people."***

"I was a good shot in my platoon in the Marine Corps," says Mueller, who won a trophy in 1957 for his marksmanship.

Due to budget cuts, Mueller's part time position as a firearms instructor came to a close; however, soon he was hired as an assistant manager at the school's shooting range. He still holds that position today and shoots a few rounds himself from time to time.

"I'm just one of these people that just keeps showing up," Mueller says. "I

enjoy staying busy and enjoy people.”

At the Lakewood Community Gardens, Mueller enjoys learning from the different gardening practices of others. Although he never really left his passion for gardening, Mueller has once again put it into practice in recent years.

“It’s a very serene and quiet place over there at the gardens,” Mueller says.

The three acres that make up Lakewood Community Gardens is located on Candlewood Street between Woodruff Avenue and Palo Verde Avenue. The garden is divided into 323 individual plots each with an area of 150 square feet each, according to the Lakewood Community Gardens website. The city provides green waste for mulching, water, and horse manure fertilizer. Gardeners, who are exclusively Lakewood residents, are responsible for the TLC of their own plot.

Mueller, though a volunteer inspector, helps make sure the gardeners properly manage their plots. He admits he also enjoys doing a little gardening himself.

He once grew a 22 pound cabbage. He cut the huge vegetable in small pieces and shared it with his friends and

neighbors. Often Mueller, along with other garden members, will donate their excess produce from the garden plots to the local firehouse.

These days, Mueller is quite content being outdoors in the sunshine in Lakewood, California. Though he is thousands of miles away from his native Indiana, Mueller feels right at home. It might not be quite like the simple living he experienced in his Midwest hometown, but just the same, volunteering his time to the gardens will no doubt always make him feel like he’s come home again. ■



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Lakewood Rotary Club... Valarie Frost

By Jonathan Murrietta

Kevin, who is 17 years old, wants a basketball. And Robert, 18 months, needs some new baby clothes. These are examples of wishes expressed on Teddy Bear tree ornaments displayed on Lakewood Rotary Club's "Teddy Bear Tree." Through Project Shepherd, Rotarians are helping Lakewood's disenfranchised youth find a little holiday cheer this year. Pick an ornament, purchase the requested gift, and return it to the city office.

Almost every city across the United States has a Rotary Club. The local Lakewood Rotary Club supports other non-profits like helping Su Casa end domestic violence. Additionally, Lakewood Rotarians are involved in supporting the Lakewood YMCA, Boy Scouts of America, Meals on Wheels, The Public Safety Expo, and they help sponsor the Lakewood Award of Valor.

For almost thirty years, Frost has called Lakewood home. Ever since she was a sophomore at Lakewood High School volunteering for ASB club, Frost has always known her true calling was serving the community she says has given so much to her.

"I love Lakewood," Frost says. "I'm a true product of what this little community has to offer."

Before graduating from Lakewood High, Frost attended Madison Elementary and Hoover Middle School. She then went to Long Beach City College, transferring to CSU Dominguez Hills to complete her undergraduate degree. Frost went on to earn a Master's



degree at Long Beach State. These days, she works out of the Recreation Department at Lakewood Civic Center, currently as the community services manager for parks and special events in the City of Lakewood. Frost lives with her husband in the same Lakewood house he grew up in as a child.

Now with children of her own, Frost strives even more to make Lakewood the best that it can be.

"My kids live here, they're growing up, and I want them have a Lakewood they can be proud of from all angles," Frost says.

One of those angles is ensuring Lakewood is a safe community, especially for the city's youth. Two years ago Frost took charge of a program called "Every Fifteen Minutes," an initiative designed to educate high school students about the dangerous consequences of drinking and driving. With the city's help, the Lakewood Rotary Club

"My kids live here...I want them to have a Lakewood they can be proud of from all angles," Frost says.

put together a video depicting a realistic simulation of a car crash caused by drinking and driving. In the drama, someone is killed. Once completed, the video was screened at Mayfair High School. Students watched the film and were taught to make good decisions.

So whether it's helping little Robert receive his baby clothes for Christmas or empowering Lakewood's young adults to become safe drivers, Frost and the Rotary Club are ensuring their city continues to be a happy and safe community, both now and for future generations. ■



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Lakewood Chamber of Commerce Softball League... Frank Cardiel

By Jonathan Murrietta

This February, visit San Martin Park (next to Gompers Elementary School) in Lakewood to behold the 10th anniversary of the Greater Lakewood Chamber of Commerce Adult Slow Pitch Co-Ed Softball League. Started in 2006 by Frank Cardiel, the league was first designed to bring together local Lakewood businesses for networking purposes.

“The initial thought process behind the league was to simply get to know our fellow business neighbors,” says Cardiel, who has been volunteering at the Greater Lakewood Chamber of Commerce since 2003.

When John Kelsall became the Chamber’s CEO in 2005, Cardiel approached him about starting a softball league to better the business community. Kelsall and the city of Lakewood approved the idea, and in early 2006 the league had formed.

What started out as a four-team league, which also included Cardiel’s own family, has now turned into a full-fledged operation with at least eight teams playing every year. The league also brings in the best officiating umpires from the Munisports Major Softball League. The participating businesses in the league must be joined to the Lakewood Chamber of Commerce. Some of



the businesses that play in the league include Hawaiian Gardens Casino, Outback Steakhouse, the Elephant Bar Restaurant and Lakewood Best Buy.

Additionally, the league now helps donate funds to Lakewood’s non-profits such as Su Casa, Ending Domestic Violence. Eventually, Cardiel would like the league to start a scholarship fund for high school seniors.

“I want the league to push forward and to show that it can help out the Lakewood community,” Cardiel says.

Its Home Run Derby, Cardiel says, has been instrumental in the league’s ability to donate funds to worthy causes in Lakewood as well.

“I want the league to push forward and to show that it can help out the Lakewood community,” Cardiel says.

“Plus it’s really fun,” Cardiel adds.

The Greater Lakewood Chamber of Commerce Softball League kicks off its 10th anniversary the third week of February on Wednesday night. ■



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Lakewood Meals on Wheels... Wynona McGowan Sheffield

By Jonathan Murrietta

101-year-old Wynona McGowan Sheffield a.k.a. “Willie” has been volunteering for Lakewood Meals on Wheels for 30 years.

To this day, Sheffield still helps both to package meals and deliver food to the home-bound along her route. “I love what I do,” she says. “I appreciate and love people.”

When asked why God has allowed her to live this long, Sheffield, a proud Christian who regularly attends the Journey of Faith church in Bellflower, simply answers, “To do His work.”

And she’s been doing the Lord’s work ever since she was born on September 9, 1914. Back then, Woodrow Wilson was president; Babe Ruth played, as a pitcher, in his first MLB game; and World War I was underway.

Sheffield grew up in Lenox, Iowa. Her dad was a pharmacist in a drug store. “Willie” remembers working the fountain at the front of the store. “So I spent most of my life eating ice cream,” she chuckles.

After graduating high school, Willie spent three years in Denver, studying to become a nurse. She used her training in the Army, where she gained the rank of first Lieutenant, serving in France and Austria in World War II.



Then Willie married Dan Sheffield and had three children—Weston, Gary and Dan. She moved to Southern California 70 years ago.

Years later, Willie relies on son Dan, now 69, to drive her around Lakewood delivering food every Tuesday for Meals on Wheels. “We’re lucky to still have her,” Dan says about his mom.

At age 101, Sheffield could pass for a “spring chicken.” Among the hobbies that keep her going strong throughout the decades: singing, dancing, and immersing herself in adventure. On her 90th birthday, Sheffield rode a motorcycle. She went hot-air ballooning on her 95th birthday and harbored a desire to go skydiving for her 100th birthday. Alas an age restriction prevented her from living out that dream.

Despite that setback, Sheffield keeps active, exercising at “Nifty after 50”

***“I love what I do,”
she says. “I appreciate
and love people.”***

classes in the same building where Meals on Wheels runs its operation. But her most continuous activity through the years has been giving back through her volunteer work. On one occasion, while carrying food to a Meals on Wheels customer, the seemingly unstoppable Willie tripped and fell over a gopher hole. At the peril of her own safety, Willie dove for the food and was able to save the meal from destruction.

“[The customers] are hungry; and it’s worth it,” Sheffield says. That sentiment expresses both the generous spirit and indomitable spunk of the 101-year-old Willie Sheffield. ■



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Campfire of Long Beach... Larry Pool

By Jonathan Murrietta

The Camp Fire Long Beach area council wanted to plant redwood trees on their urban campground located at 7070 Carson Street. After all, redwoods once co-existed with the dinosaurs. They are the tallest trees on earth. And city kids should be able to experience these majestic marvels.

So they turned to Camp Fire volunteer Larry Pool. The Lakewood resident of almost forty years is like a redwood himself—tall and wise, yet gentle, with just that hint of mysteriousness. When he was asked to plant a redwood forest with the kids in the middle of a city, Pool admits he was puzzled.

“You can’t plant redwoods here,” thought Pool. “You’d have to change the whole climate.”

So that’s what Pool did. With the help of the Camp Fire kids, Pool went to work on planting a few groves of redwoods. He changed the chemistry of the soil, creating an effective irrigation system for trees that thrive in moist climates. He even instructed the children on how to line the planted areas with chicken wire, to prevent gophers from digging up the redwood seeds, which are about the same size as a tomato seed.

Pool patiently taught the Camp Fire kids how to properly dig a four foot hole. While digging these giant holes, Pool and the kids discovered an extinct trash pile full of bottles and cans from the 1930s and 40s. The land had once belonged to the Long Beach Water Department and used to dump several hundred pounds of trash.



It wasn’t the greatest spot to plant trees, let alone delicate redwoods, yet surprisingly the seeds took. Nearly a decade later, those first redwoods are now almost 60 feet tall and provide an authentic forest for the kids at Camp Fire Long Beach. In fact, it looks much more like Camp Wintaka up in the San Bernardino Mountains, the retreat to which kids journey every summer. Pool comes back every year to help Camp Fire with various repair projects and to teach kids how to plant trees.

Born in Pasadena, Pool’s roots in Southern California extend back five generations. He remembers that his dad built a cabin up in the San Jacinto Mountains in the 1940s; nothing fancy—just a “plywood shack.” They were putting the floor down when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941.

The cabin eventually got walls too, after construction was halted for several years during World War II rationing.

“You can’t plant redwoods here... You’d have to change the whole climate.” So that’s what Pool did.

Time passed, and Pool found work fixing computers—big, mainframe ones. For the last 10 years, he worked as director of planning for a small electronics company in Miami, Florida. He spent many years traveling back and forth between Miami and his home in Lakewood.

In retirement Pool, like the redwood, finds serenity in just being. While away from his volunteer work, Pool likes to visit the mountains and places like Emma Woods State Beach in Ventura. “I take the R.V. and watch the world go by.” ■

Boy Scouts Troop 67... Jonathan Kennelly

By Jonathan Murrietta

Camping never felt so packed with adrenaline—at least for Boy Scout Troop 67—thanks in large part to Boy Scout community volunteer Jonathan Kennelly, a resident of Lakewood for 16 years. Troop 67 has experienced the thrill of camping trips to places like Buttonwillow Raceway, one of the premier road racing facilities in the U.S. There, the Scouts learn about auto repair, get to ride in a pace car, and plenty more.

“Boy Scouts is fun with a purpose,” says Kennelly, whose own sons, Dylan and Liam are third generation Scouts.

Dressed in his Scout uniform, Kennelly epitomizes the “Scout dad.” He wears his merit badges proudly and as troop leader, revels in being an “opportunity provider” for his sons and other Boy Scouts.

“You’re almost like their secret little helper,” Kennelly says. To be clear, he adds, it’s up to the kids to be in charge of their own Boy Scouts adventures. He’s just there to make sure the logistics of the various Scout escapades are met - like when the boys go grocery shopping for a certain campout. It’s up to them to get the right type and quantity of food. However, if Kennelly notices his Scouts haven’t bought enough burger buns, or the right quantity of mustard, he’ll send them back into the store.

“The little quirks of preparing for a camping trip I think I can teach them, but for the most part it’s just a matter



of doing it,” Kennelly says.

Kennelly, who’s seen it all volunteering as a Scout leader for the past 10 years, notes that food provides a lot of the funny stories told from camp to camp in Boy Scouts. There was that time one Boy Scout was grilling hamburgers - they were frozen patties - and he stuck the cheese right on top of the patty without flipping it first. Or the trip when a kid put the spaghetti in the pot before the water had a chance to boil.

And nobody could forget the time the Scouts planned to make a casserole with corn flakes. They came out of the store with the “fun size” pack of corn flakes—and they were frosted. But that comes with the territory when the boys are learning to fix their own food.

“Food is the binder of silliness in our troop,” Kennelly says. “My job as a Scout leader is to just make sure they don’t burn themselves while making their own meals. The kids learn from

their mistakes.”

But through the mistakes and silly camp stories, Boy Scouts are achieving

***“Food is the binder of silliness in our troop,”
Kennelly says***

a special bond with one another and learning about team work. Eating a meal together after making it themselves, Kennelly muses, is fast becoming a lost art.

Through the years, one thing that has remained constant is the idea of family and comradery behind the Boy Scouts. And those values have certainly become embedded in the Kennelly family. Kennelly learned the Scouting way from his dad, and now he is teaching those same life lessons to his sons and the rest of his troop, with countless adventures along the way. ■

Pathways Volunteer Hospice... Linda Atkinson

By Jonathan Murrietta

Light shines through a window in a room and reveals colorful paintings on a wall. The images on the walls have one common theme. They were drawn by grieving children. The room is where Linda Atkinson's grief support class meets. Like the light streaming through the window, Linda's beaming smile and sunny countenance shines on the faces of innocent faces anguished with the loss of a loved one. Under the "Changes" grief support program at Pathways Volunteer Hospice, Atkinson volunteers her bright personality to help young children cope with death.

Projects designed to help children in Atkinson's grief support class include arts and crafts such as painting. Sometimes the kids will draw a tracing of their hands and feet and color it red, signifying their anger at losing a loved one. Others will paint masks of their faces—how the world sees their grief and how the grief looks inside.

"I tell the kids that it's okay to be here and not know anybody, yet talk about your feelings openly," Atkinson says. "Their feelings are important."

The seven week program encompasses several lessons about grieving and death for the children; that death brings change, death is final, and all emotions are good.

The kids usually start the program completely terrified. After all, they are in unfamiliar surroundings with other



grieving children. But when Linda starts asking the children questions about why they are there, it's not long before the kids begin to open up.

"My dad died," one child will say. Surprised, another kid says, "My dad died too."

"So the kids pick up on things and start to think, 'Wow I'm not the only one going through this,'" Atkinson says.

"Because when you're a kid, losing a parent or close relative automatically makes you different. And that's a struggle for some little ones."

Atkinson says that the value in having children bond over their grief is healing in itself.

"There's nothing like talking one-on-one in person," says Atkinson.

At the end of the program she sends letters to her 'littles' and makes gift

boxes for them.

"This last time I made little boxes and a heart with a key. Inside I wrote, 'You'll always have a place in my heart,'" Atkinson says.

To say Atkinson is great with kids is an understatement. Vickie Kaefer, Operations Manager at Pathways, marvels at Atkinson's ability to help grieving children.

"Many people don't know how you'd even begin to work with kids on grief counseling," Kaefer says. "Thankfully for Pathways, we have Linda."

Atkinson grew up in the community and has been a resident of Lakewood for 56 years. She attended Gompers Elementary, Bancroft Jr. High, Lakewood High and Long Beach City College. Atkinson worked as a special education assistant for years and one day saw a sign calling for volunteers to

“Every day is a good day that I get to meet these children and know them...These kids are so special and it’s so hard to let them go,” she says holding back tears.

help out at Pathways. She’s facilitated child grief support at Pathways ever since.

“Linda is one member of about an eight member volunteer team at our grief support center,” Kaefer says.

“The whole family can come to our facility to receive grief counseling.”

Pathways also works with the local school districts to assist grieving children on campuses.

“Pathways’ philosophy is that first we want to try to help the whole family as a unit and then form a support group on campus as well, so kids can get their peers’ support too,” Kaefer says.

Towards the end of Atkinson’s class, the kids write down who they have in their lives that support them. Sometimes it’s God, sometimes they say that it’s their dogs. Whomever they have, Atkinson wants them to know they can always look to her for love and support.

“I want my littles to know that they’ll always have a friend in me,” Atkinson says.

When the group graduates, Atkinson admits, it’s hard to let go herself—she’s spent seven weeks with the same group of children and has watched them grow. They go from being shy and confused to expressive and all the more strong.

“Every day is a good day that I get to meet these children and know them,” Atkinson says. “These kids are so special and it’s so hard to let them go,” she says holding back tears.

On the walls of Atkinson’s grief support room are paintings left behind by children in years gone by. Dusk is approaching and the fading light creates shadows across the drawings. Many children who graduated from the program have since grown. But no doubt they’ll never forget Atkinson—the volunteer, who by shining her light, showed them how to survive the darkness. ■

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Lakewood Women's Club... Ruby Cure

By Jonathan Murrietta

Sporting her club pin and nametag, Ruby Cure – the president of the Los Cerritos District Women's Club - is up early ready for another day of giving back to the community. The 55 year resident of Lakewood joined the Lakewood Women's Club in 2004 under the tutelage of founding member and good friend Alma Lee Woods (Mrs. Woods passed away at the age of 90 in November 2015). Like her friend Wood's, Cure has volunteered with various organizations for most of her life.



One such volunteer opportunity came in 1983 when Cure was appointed by the Lakewood City Council to serve on what was then called the Private Industry Council, a federal and state job training program.

This program was approved and funded by both sides of the political aisle with Senator Ted Kennedy and Senator Dan Quayle and is currently funded as the Workforce Development Board. On this council, Cure represented the city of Lakewood for 19 years, serving as board member and later chairwoman when Governor Pete Wilson was in office. Cure helped oversee the proposals that were submitted from the local schools, requesting funding for their at-risk youth programs.

It was during her term as chairwoman, funding was granted to establish an off-site program for at-risk youth who could not attend public schools, to obtain work skills and their GED.

"I was the first director to sign checks for the young men who never had one cent given to them for working, and after obtaining their GED and job training, they had the opportunity to be placed in a job using their work skills," Cure says.

Cure, who arrived in California in 1960, took a job in avionics, working for the chief engineer of the Apollo Program, where she enjoyed the excitement of the Space Program for nearly 30 years before her retirement. After retiring, she and her husband purchased a flower shop, Buds n Bows, on the corner of Palo Verde and Del Amo. She enjoyed giving flowers to decorate the tables of local non-profit organizations for their events, like the YMCA and supported the Miss Lakewood Pageant for 16 years. Their business also became a member of the Greater Lakewood Chamber of Commerce over 36 years ago and Ruby still finds time to support the chamber activities.

Today, Cure and the 30 members who encompass the Lakewood Women's Club continue to help the community. Around the holidays, the club is busy with Thanksgiving and Christmas food baskets for needy families, a program sponsored by Project Shepherd. This year, the Lakewood Women's Club is sponsoring two families. Cure will have an especially good time this Christmas season buying clothes for the children, as one family has two boys.

"When we buy things for the families it's going to be fun for me, because I have two great grandsons who are seven and nine years old. So I'm looking forward to going out and shopping for the two boys in one of our adopted families. Many of the women in our club are grandmothers and so many of them have fond memories of little ones now grown big. These grandmas enjoy giving back by donating clothes and shopping for our 'adopted families.'"

The Lakewood Women's Club is busy throughout the year as well. When it gets close to Valentine the club makes valentines for the veterans at the Long Beach VA Hospital.

Cure remembers this man dancing very enthusiastically in his wheelchair...

"So I sat in his lap and danced with him," Cure says with a big grin on her face.

The first of December, the Volunteer office at the VA Hospital assigns a ward to the club for members to decorate the tree and also bring cookies,

candies, magazines and personal items.

While volunteering for the Women's Club at the VA Hospital one year, Cure remembers an especially cheerful veteran sitting in a wheelchair. The gentleman was the spitting image of her brother, who had also been in the military. Music played and Cure remembers this man dancing very enthusiastically in his wheelchair.

"So I sat in his lap and danced with him," Cure says with a big grin on her face. Memories like these, Ruby says, really makes volunteering special.

"It is great to go into any type of volunteering situation and to see the way people are so deeply appreciative of the fact that there are organizations out there that care," Cure says.

The Lakewood Women's Club is an opportunity for women to use their skills and give back to various non-profit organizations that need our support.

The Lakewood club is one of eleven women's clubs in the surrounding communities belonging to the Los Cerritos District Women's Club, with Miss Cure serving as their District President.

Her President's Project for Los Cerritos District is the Long Beach Ronald McDonald House.

"We have a yearly "House Shower" where members bring supplies for the house from their wish list of items they need the most."

On an early morning at Mimi's Café, Ruby Cure is handsomely dressed carrying a binder full of Women's Club pamphlets and fact sheets. People look at her, wondering what is the story behind this woman's obvious glow. The answer to her sparkle is a lifetime spent helping others.

The Lakewood Women's Club meets every third Tuesday of the month at 11:00 am at the Sycamore Plaza Center. ■

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Friends of Lakewood Libraries... Gwen Travis

By Jonathan Murrietta

Nestled on the kitchen table in the home of Gwen Travis, volunteer for Friends of the Lakewood Libraries, sits a sunny plate that says, "There is Joy in the Lord." The 65-year resident of Lakewood has certainly given joy back to the community. From a very young age, Travis remembers her love for the library and reading.

"I was very quiet and shy back then," says Travis. "I would go to the library and sit by the window; with the sun shining on me I would just read and read for hours."

Travis then passed her love of books down to her own children. She moved to Lakewood in 1950, back when the city seemed like it was out in the middle of nowhere.

"I've seen the city grow for sure," Travis says.

1954 proved a monumental year for Lakewood as it became incorporated as a city. It was also the same year the city established the neighborhood library. In 1959 the library moved to a larger building; then in 1965 was rededicated as the Angelo M. Iacoboni Library, named after Lakewood's first mayor. In 1973, the library moved to its present location on Clark Avenue and has been there ever since.

Travis, who worked as a pre-school teacher at the Lakewood Village Com-



munity Church for 33 years, found the time to volunteer at the Iacoboni Library. She would go once a week to work in the government section, helping to file Senate papers. She also read to children visiting the library. Travis has been volunteering with Friends of the Lakewood Libraries for more than 30 years now, and since retiring from her position as a pre-school teacher, now spends most of her time helping out at the place she's loved since childhood.

Through the years, Friends of the Lakewood Libraries has helped Iacoboni Library, as well as George Nye Jr. Library, stay relevant. "I've heard people say that libraries are going out with the times because of new reading technology devices, but that's not so, many people still visit the Lakewood libraries," Travis says.

Travis has helped for years in putting together book sales and other fund-

raisers to give back to the community libraries. For example, Friends of the Lakewood Libraries has paid for computers so that children can use them to do their homework after school. "Friends" has also helped the libraries fund various story time events for the children in the community.

Additionally, Friends of the Lakewood Libraries is now providing scholarships for students graduating high school. A lot of the children who grew up coming to the Lakewood libraries and helping Travis and the other volunteers with library duties throughout the years are now receiving scholarships from "Friends."

Travis has fond memories of the children who have come to call the library home.

"We had a candy dish on the library counter and some kids would always come in, not to look for books, but to

see what kind of candy we had,” Travis says with a chuckle.

The candy was soft taffy, and Travis remembers one little boy who would always come in to enjoy his favorite chocolate taffy at the library, or as he called it, “the candy store.” He would look through the candy dish and when he saw that the chocolate taffy was all gone, he would say, “Aww man, that chocolate one was mine!”

Travis delights in telling little library stories from the past. But perhaps her most affectionate memories from volunteering with Friends of the Lakewood libraries has been seeing countless children find their own corner in the library so they could be alone to read for hours—just as Travis did when she was a young girl.

“It always makes my day seeing those kids find joy in reading,” Travis says.

These days Travis finds joy in her volunteer work at Friends of the Lakewood libraries. She also volunteers for Meals on Wheels and knits comforters for the homeless. Travis is a church-going woman and a living testimony to the proverb that “the generous soul shall prosper.” (Proverbs 11:25) ■

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Lakewood Pan American Association...

Vivian Shultz

By Jonathan Murrietta

The large pool in the backyard of Vivian Shultz's Lakewood home would beckon all the neighborhood kids in the summer. But Shultz never minded.

"I've always loved young people," says Shultz, who has lived and volunteered in Lakewood for six decades. "We put the pool in when my kids started junior high; after that we had more kids here than any other house on the block," the now 86-year-old says.

Shultz has been opening her home and heart to the community of Lakewood since she moved to the neighborhood in 1955. Most notably, she's served as the Lakewood Pan American Association's treasurer for about 30 years. She has had the opportunity to see dozens of young people awarded scholarships through the Lakewood Pan American Association, which has given more than \$150,000 in scholarships to Lakewood's high school seniors over the years.

"We have a luncheon for all the kids and their parents," Shultz says. "It's great fun."

Shultz has also been the Lakewood Pan American Association's president and served in many capacities throughout the years for the group originally founded to foster an appreciation and celebration for Lakewood's Latin American neighbors.

"I just have always been involved with the city, volunteering," she says.



Shultz began volunteering at Madison Elementary School in 1957, when her kids started school there. She immersed herself in the school's PTA and when her kids moved on to Hoover Jr. High, so did she, volunteering as treasurer for its PTA. She also spent 14 years with the Long Beach Council PTA and was the treasurer for Lakewood High School for many years.

The principal of Lakewood High took notice of Shultz's dedication and love for young people, and suggested she join the Lakewood Pan American Association. Shultz obliged and began volunteering with the organization in 1979. She also served as the co-chairwoman of the Pan American Miss Lakewood Pageant and has volunteered with Su Casa Family Crisis and Support Center for Abused Women and Children.

"I don't think I ever learned how to say no," Shultz says with a smile. "I enjoy being around people and Lakewood is such a friendly city. It's such a wonderful thing living here."

Shultz moved to the Lakewood area just one year after the city was incorporated. She grew up on a farm in Minnesota until the age of 11. Then in 1941, the family moved to Colorado, at which point Shultz grew accustomed to moving around a lot, following her dad, a construction worker. Before she graduated, Shultz attended five different high schools! Years later, after she married husband David Shultz, the two moved their family to Southern California. Shultz recalls that the emerging Lakewood neighborhood was really diverse.

"Everyone was from someplace else," Shultz says.

“I enjoy being around people and Lakewood is such a friendly city. It’s such a wonderful thing living here.”

The Lakewood Pan American Association began not long before Shultz arrived to the neighborhood. A decade earlier, two Lakewood residents, one a former South American consul and the other a schoolteacher, pledged to begin

a community program that would create a bond with their Latin American neighbors. Thus, the Lakewood Pan American Association was born and since then, the organization has helped to sponsor community events like concerts in the park, cultural festivals, and scholarships for Lakewood’s high school students.

“The Lakewood Pan American Association really benefits the community a lot,” Shultz says, adding that volunteering at the organization’s fundraisers is always fun too, such as its annual fireworks booth.

“We give pretty good sized scholarships,” Shultz says.

The city honored Shultz’s many years of volunteering in 2013 at an event called Lakewood Celebrates, where State Senator Ricardo Lara named Shultz Lakewood’s 2013 Woman of Distinction.

Then Lakewood Mayor Steve Croft was present at the event. “We are very, very proud of Vivian,” he said. “She’s a wonderful example of community service and has made an impact on so many people in Lakewood.”

Yet perhaps her impact truly started when simply opening her home to the neighborhood kids to come and enjoy a swim in her pool on a hot summer day. ■

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1 FREE MONTH + FREE UNIFORM
US Taekwondo Academy
 See our advertisement on page 17

One month FREE classes at US Taekwondo. Includes FREE uniform. New members only. One coupon per person. Offer expires 02/29/16



\$5 OFF ORDER OF \$25 OR MORE
Naples Rib Company
 See our advertisement on page 25

With this coupon only. Not valid with any other offer, discount, coupon or price special (including happy hour). One per table or Take-out order. Offer expires 02/29/16



Free Skate Rental
The RINKS- Lakewood-Ice
 See our advertisement on page 3

Good for one free skate rental at The Rinks- Lakewood Ice with paid public skating admission. This coupon has no cash value. Offer expires 02/29/16



100% Car Inspection Only \$34.95
Free Lance Motors
 See our advertisement on page 19

With this coupon only. Includes oil and filter change! \$34.95+tax and crv. Most models apply. Synthetic oil additional charge. Not valid with any other offer. Offer expires 02/29/16



Buy 1 Get 1 Free McCafe
McDonald's- Lakewood
 See our advertisement on page 35

Buy one regular sized McCafe hot beverage of your choice and receive a free regular sized hot McCafe beverage. Offer is good at any Lakewood McDonald's restaurant. Not valid with any other discount. One coupon per person. Offer expires 02/29/16



Piazza Family McDonald's

Youth Sports Hall of Fame located at:

4848 Woodruff Ave. Lakewood, CA 90713



Honoring the great *Lakewood Youth* sports teachers



HALL OF FAME



Come support these legendary coaches!



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IN ESCROW!



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SOLD FOR TOP DOLLAR!
3 BED, 2 BATH FOR \$625



Hersholt Ave, Lakewood 90712



Vivian Ains
BRE# 01744842

Brenda Trigo
BRE# 01927445

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VB Realty Group knows your neighborhood. That's because it's theirs, too. They live here, work here, and serve the community here.

This powerful duo has successfully helped many of your neighbors with the buying and selling of their homes, all while helping orchestrate countless community projects with other staple organizations in the area, such as the YMCA, Allison Tutoring, and the Lakewood Rotary.

kw | **PACIFIC ESTATES**
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