

Lakewood High School

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Lakewood High School

“Take Your Place in History”

Lakewood, California is a city literally full of stories, some more dramatic or important than others. For fifty years it has accumulated a wealth of significant events and beautiful memories that have shaped the community into what it is today.

Personally, I have never been subject to any such event or memory, and until last year, I had no idea what the city of Lakewood had to offer. I have never lived in Lakewood and I had nothing to do with the city until I began attending one of its public schools. Last year, however, the city of Lakewood became a major part of my existence. I began attending Lakewood High School, and while this may seem, in the grand scheme of history, an insignificant event, it has developed into what I hope to become the foundation for my future.

I lived in Belmont Shores all my life until last summer when my father moved to a sweet little neighborhood in Long Beach. Unfortunately, though, neither time did I have the privilege to live in Lakewood; I had moved from Long Beach to somewhere *else* in Long Beach, so I never had the opportunity to see what Lakewood was all about. I also attended private schools in my youth, so I never experienced attending a public school, especially a public school in Lakewood. When I informed my sheltered friends I would be leaving my small, private school (when I left it was five hundred kids strong, and that was *up* from years prior) to attend Lakewood High School they were all scared for me. They, who would be attending either the uniformed, blocked scheduled Woodrow Wilson Classical High School or Valley Christian, seemed to be under the impression that I would be unable to go the day at Lakewood without being shot. I was

entertaining similar fears myself, and it was not until I actually arrived at the school that I discovered my friends' apprehensions were not only wrong, but entirely off base.

My first day at Lakewood was as I expected, the embodiment of all my qualms. The place was huge, exponentially so due to my previous schools, the largest of which covered at most a tenth of my new high school. Not only was Lakewood High School huge, but it was *confusing!* I'd attended schools previously that had only one or two buildings, Lakewood High School had several buildings, and I had to go to a different one for each class. I felt like I was lost before I even started. Another thing about Lakewood, which I noticed immediately, was the *volume*, there were so many people in the school that I nearly cried my first day. There were more people in this one school than in some towns, and I was lost in the middle of it somewhere (It also amazed me that the halls could clear out so fast—when the bell rang it was not fun to be out in the quad, which turned into a ghost town in mere seconds). I was resigned to the fact, that first day, that I would die within the week, either by trampling, being shot, or by a heart attack, bound to strike at any moment due to the stress created by my new school environment. I soon discovered, however, that I was being really ridiculous, and the likelihood of any such malady befalling me was about a million to one.

The reasons I feared Lakewood turned out to be the very traits that make the school what it is. It is a campus *so* big that there's bound to be a compatible group of friends for every person, a club for every interest, an outlet for every talent. The hallways may be crowded, but they aren't without a friendly face or two. If at first, Lakewood High School seemed threatening, in time I got used to it and found it almost welcoming. The school may have been virtually crawling with students, but once I got

into the classroom, it was a much calmer environment due to the school's smaller learning communities. I was very impressed with how, if you so chose, you had the option of being separated into a smaller group of students, rather than the masses that inhabited the buildings. Once into such a group, you were with some of the same people in every class, rather than just being thrown helter-skelter into a class with a mess of people who just happened to be taking the same subject. This separation proved to make an otherwise heart-stopping situation quite pleasant. In all, what I expected to be a very tragic, horrific event, turned out to be one of the better this far in my life.

My stay at Lakewood is as significant an event as any, at least to me. It has become an outlet for my creativity and a much needed platform for my education. Attending Lakewood High School may not be a significant event to a city as a whole, but to me, it's major. When there are enough kids attending a school that are so greatly affected by it, it becomes a very significant event to a city. Whatever I go on to achieve in my later life will have been greatly affected by my years at Lakewood High School. If ever I was scared to attend this school, it was silly of me to not have welcomed the opportunity with open arms. My apprehensions however, were based upon my knowledge of Lakewood (or lack thereof) derived only from my deprivation of the city and its fascinating history. Perhaps, to some, my attendance of a certain city's high school may not seem a significant event in the history of that city, but how are we to know what I can make of myself, and what my education from that school will allow me to do? Lakewood as a city, may not know it yet, but the fact that I attended it's public high school is a very significant event, indeed.

Borges, Gala
Lakewood High School
Ms. Jordan-Pena Rm. 320
Grade 10

What I Like About Lakewood

From partying at T.F.N. on Friday nights, to doing research at the library after school, Lakewood has always offered so much to everyone. I have experienced a lot of Lakewood because I have lived here all my life. As an infant learning how to swim, playing at the parks, eating at many of the restaurants, spending time at the mall, doing work at the library, and now experiencing high school. I could not have asked for a better place to grow up. My fifteen years at Lakewood have been extremely enjoyable and I'm proud to say I live here.

About twelve years ago, I was already experiencing the greatness of Lakewood. I began taking swimming lessons at the Mayfair Park public pool when I was around three years old. I started at the easiest level with my mom or dad helping me along. Everyone in the pool always had fun learning how to swim and there was no better place to learn than at that pool. On a hot summer day, splashing around in the pool was an ideal way to spend 1/2 hour of the afternoon. For the next few years, I continued to take a couple classes each summer until I had become really comfortable with swimming a lot. My brother followed this pattern as well and he took swim classes during the summer to keep busy. The instructors at the pool always made that 1/2 hour really enjoyable. The second Friday of the two weeks was always the best day; time to eat the best snacks that everyone brought, swim freely, and see if you are going to move on to the next level.

When I was about six and seven, I loved going to the parks and having lunch. Over the weekend, my family and I made sure we got lunch and took it to the park to eat. We

would go to San Martin and find a shady, grassy spot and eat our food. Afterwards, we played with some kind of toy we brought. Around this same age, and a couple years older, I also enjoyed playing on league teams with the park. I played on a softball team for two years, a basketball team for a few years, and a volleytennis team for one year. I met a lot of nice people and a couple I actually became good friends with. That was all back in the day of the easy fun years of being a little kid.

When middle school started, a lot of things changed. I had five different teachers, there were a lot more students at school, and "Totally Friday Nights" (or T.F.N.) was introduced to me. During my sixth grade year, a couple of my friends went but I didn't know exactly what it was and I didn't think it would be fun so I didn't go for most of the year. For one of the last ones of that year, a bunch of us decided to go and just find out what it was all about. As we got there they had all our favorite songs playing so loud it made us want to dance all night. It seemed like our whole school was there and it was the most fun I'd had in a long time. I remember a slow song came on and everyone was dancing with their "boyfriends" and "girlfriends." We started going to every T.F.N. they had and spent a ridiculous amount of time getting ready. We continued to go until we were too old to be there anymore.

Throughout middle school, I found out I had a lot of projects I had to do. I live right by the library and it was a very convenient place to find all the information you needed. Whenever I needed to do research for history or English, or even science, the library was always there and never failed me. Now, through high school, I know I will need the library resources just as much. When I just need a good book to read, the library is great as well. One time in middle school, we had a big project to do for our history class and we didn't

know how we were going to ever finish it; a bunch of us decided the only way we would actually do it is if we got together and did it at the library. One Saturday morning, that's exactly what we did and we got it done.

Driving down Candlewood alone, there are several restaurants to pick from. In Lakewood you will never not have a place to eat. My family loves eating at Mario's and I love getting Jamba Juice when I have a craving for a smoothie. It is really convenient to have such a variety of places to eat right down the street. The Lakewood Mall has also been a very convenient place to go to. Whenever I have the chance and the money I make a trip to the mall and always leave with something good. I get my makeup at the M.A.C. store in Macy's, I get most of my clothes at Forever 21, V Generation, Anchor Blue, and pretty much most of the other stores there that we are lucky to have. I also get pictures done at the photo maker shops they have. My friends and I used to go every few weekends and all get our pictures done. Sometimes we go there just to eat lunch in the food court and walk around to window shop.

Last year was the first year I started going to Lakewood High. I am currently a sophomore and have gotten used to the feeling of being at high school. Lakewood has so much to offer its students. Although it's a big school, the teachers are outstanding. I am currently in the Merit Scholars program they provide for students who can keep a g.p.a. of 3.3 or above. This is also my first year that I am participating on their J.V. cheer squad. Lakewood gives me a huge challenge as I am also taking an a.p. class but these classes are preparing me for what I have ahead of me. I think Lakewood is such a good school because of its teachers. Especially one teacher I had last year for English, Mr. McGrath. He wasn't just a great teacher but he was everyone's friend and you could talk to him about

anything and he'd always be there for you. Every Friday we wrote in a journal where we told him what was going on in our lives. If you were having a hard time, he'd go out of his way to talk to you and make sure you were okay. He straight out told us he's not all about grades, he's more concerned about each of us a person. He helped me get through my freshman year knowing I could always talk to someone.

I am so thankful and lucky to be able to grow up in this city. I could never ask for anything more and I know a lot of people wish they could experience all that we do in Lakewood. Here, I have found my closest friends, the best teachers, and all new experiences that are helping me through life. Lakewood is a wonderful place and I am glad I am able to live through all of it.

Lovely Lakewood

Wake up in the morning, take an elevator down 32 stories, and exit the apartment building. Walk down the street to the subway station, the buildings are blocking out the sun, the strange smells of the city are overwhelming. See no familiar faces as the journey into the underworld begins. Underneath; the sky is cement with fluorescent lights at regulated distances apart. The walls are filled with pictures of people who have no reason to be as happy as they are told to look, because they are fake. They say to wear their clothes, eat their food, listen to their music and even live where they live. Waiting for a silver bullet to fly away to where the day must be spent, where all days must be spent. There are no real smiles; there is no happiness to be found, only cold. The cold big-city life.

Of course this is not what life has to be like. There can be friendly faces and sincere smiles. There are places where everyone knows each other, where it is possible to walk down a street and not only feel belonged but to be able to see the sky. The blue sky and happy birds drinking in the mid day sunshine and it adorns us with it's golden glow. Places like Lakewood keep the world from falling apart and lifeless drones from being born. Lakewood is cozy, the grass is green, the houses are picturesque, and the people who live in Lakewood are really alive in their own rights. It has everything that any family could hope for, and a general unified feeling. There is always room in Lakewood for a new neighbor; everyone belongs in Lakewood.

Bracho, Jessica
Lakewood High School
Ms. Jordan, Pena-rm 320
Grade 10

There are fun things to do in Lakewood all of the time. The biggest physical object of entertainment would have to be the Lakewood Mall. Sure it may seem like it is just a mall, but it really is so much more than that. It is a place where families bond, where friendships are strengthened and new relationships blossom. Sure the stores are great, they have something for everyone. There are clothes stores, toy stores, electronics stores, and even a food court. It caters to every individual, and because of that very reason it forces the people of Lakewood to mingle with one another. The young and the old, poor and rich, black and white. Everyone belongs; everyone gets along. Just sitting on a bench in the middle of everyone will prove that. The observers are not unnoticed. They are appreciated; they display curiosity in human nature and curiosity in the mechanics of this extraordinary place. Where harmony is achieved, and happiness spills out the doors and onto the streets.

Money is by no means necessary to be content in Lakewood. There are parks in every neighborhood that are in walking distance. Spending time with friends can, at times, be highly underrated. Friends have a way of making even the most boring and familiar things seem new and exciting. A walk to the park on a nice sunny day and hanging out under a shady tree is all that is necessary to have a good time. Bringing a cooler filled with sodas and snacks, and a stereo tuned to your favorite radio station can make a day into a party in the park. Some people prefer a more active lifestyle, in that case bring a basketball, football, baseball, or volleyball and the group can join in on a game. There are also organized teams of just about every sport at the parks. The teams from the

different parks compete in games every weekend, and the families come to support their child's teams.

Not only do the parks provide events to participate in during the day, but they also provide concerts and dances for middle school and high school students. For the middle school students the parks have monthly Friday night dances with a DJ, games, and lots of dancing. They also have concerts with local rock bands on selected Saturday nights open for all ages. These events are held in the youth centers at the parks and are a good way to know just exactly how and where the kids in Lakewood are spending their time. They are enjoyable, safe, and an overall good way to mature.

What about the dreaded weekdays? Sure there are things to do on the weekends, but what about the other 5 days of the week? The air in Lakewood has changed an ordinarily boring day at school and work into something that people can cope with, and in many cases actually enjoy. And really, why shouldn't they. Is there any solid reason why we shouldn't enjoy every aspect of our lives? I know it's hard to be content, but living in Lakewood makes it so much easier. There are fewer things to stress about, and less people to dislike. It is safe to go anywhere without being bothered by things that no one should ever have to bothered about.

The schools in Lakewood are all specifically designed for the good of the students attending. They all make it possible for the students to leave and start a very productive life in any profession they wish to explore. For instance, every public school in Lakewood offers an enriched learning program. Whether it be an

elementary, middle, or high school they all offer equal opportunities to all of their students to achieve all that they can. The teachers care about every student they teach, and encourage all of their students to take up extra study habits and come visit them as the years go by. It is good for students to enjoy their teachers. It can be proven that if a student has a good relationship with their teacher they are more likely to try harder to please the teacher.

All of the schools offer an excellent music program on top of their academic schedule. In elementary school the music program is open for grades 3 to 5. They can learn to play any orchestra or band instrument, if they already don't know how, in the beginning class, and if they already know or have some level of seniority over the other students, they will be in the intermediate group. Students can also learn to play as beginners in middle school, but the main purpose of the middle school music program is to fine tune the player's abilities and to expose them to various styles of playing and music. The students also have more concerts that are open for the school, family, and local community. The schools have competitions open where the orchestra is rated and critiqued. In high school the main purpose is to teach the students how to continue their musical career once they are outside of their school. It is focused more on the individual. The music program really is a great opportunity for growing children, and it is a great testament to the spirit of Lakewood and how hard it has tried to keep the music alive despite the recent budget cuts.

I had lived in Anaheim all but 2 years of my life. I moved here two years ago, and although it was hard to move and leave all of my old friends in

Bracho, Jessica
Lakewood High School
Ms. Jordan, Pena-rm 320
Grade 10

Anaheim, it is a move that I wish I had done years ago. I love living in Lakewood. It offers so many advantages over Anaheim. The people are nicer, the schools are better, and I feel safe here. In Anaheim I would have never been able to take a twilight stroll with someone I love, or have a celebration of life in a park. I know that I will leave when I go to college, and I might even start my own law firm in some nameless big city. The one thing I am sure of is that when my life gets to frustrating and I am ready to settle down and grow some roots I am going to move back to Lakewood. I can only hope that Lakewood will remain the same and wait for me.

What I Like About Lakewood

"Hey, where did you go last weekend?"

"I went shopping at the mall and I went to the park with my younger cousins to play." The Lakewood Center Mall and all Lakewood parks is just a couple of fun and great places in Lakewood. More amazing features of Lakewood are the Lakewood community activities such as carnivals, fairs and holiday celebrations that make everything fun for all kinds of people. They give people something to look forward to when they have nothing else to do. The City of Lakewood and everything in it is all for a good cause and I am very proud to be a part of it.

The Lakewood Center Mall has many great shops and many of them are new. The Lakewood Mall is great for shopping, eating, and just hanging out with others. I go to the mall to do all of those things. I like the mall because I can go there whenever I want and it is so close and convenient. The location of the mall is convenient for parents because it's the center of the city and near major stores like Home Depot and Circuit City; it easy to drop off and pick up their children. The mall is also close to grocery stores so parents can go there while their kid's hangout at the mall. The stores in the mall are so great because they are all new and they have all the cute and "in style" clothing and accessories. The variety of food places in the mall is extraordinary and also inexpensive. The Lakewood Center Mall is great for all people of all ages.

Other great things in Lakewood are their schools, parks, and the library. One such school is the school I attend, Lakewood High School. Lakewood High School has

many great opportunities for students that attend there. They have great programs such as Merit Scholars, Odyssey, and Applied Technology Magnet. I am involved in the Merit Scholars Program and it is great because I am getting prepared for college in a great way. Lakewood High School's sports teams are also very fun. Everyone makes new friends, they get to play their favorite sport and they even get to learn the values of teamwork. When people play sports on a team, they get a great workout by keeping their heart rate up and getting good exercise. When others play on a team, it makes them feel good because they are wanted and needed and they are a part of something along with people they have fun with. This makes it all the more better for everyone.

The parks in Lakewood such as the Del Valle Park are another opportunity place to meet and interact with others and practice their favorite sport. The parks are always clean and not full of trash. Many kids like to go to the parks with their friends to play sports. When I was younger, I used to go to the park with my friends and swing on the swings. Now I go to the park and swing my younger cousins on the swings. The parks are fun for younger and older people. Lakewood helps all of the parks become and stay a healthy and fun environment for everyone. I am proud to be a part of the parks in Lakewood.

The library in Lakewood, Angelo Iacoboni Library, is a place for children and adults to have a quiet place to study and read. The library is so wonderful because it has a variety of books and subjects. Everything in the library is well organized and clean. People are able to study on the open desks and the cubicle desk areas, so they can have a desk area all to themselves. The library also has couches and chairs for people to sit in if they want to browse through books. The workers in the library are also very knowledgeable and friendly. If someone asked them a question about a book, they

would nicely answer them and try to help them as much as they could. I love to go to the library and check out books for school assignments and for my own reading pleasure.

Lakewood also has many activities, another great way to meet others and they give people a chance to have fun while learning at the same time. For instance, every year around Halloween, the parks throw a little activity for neighborhood people so they can come have a good time playing booth games and earning candy for it. Activities such as this give people a chance to have fun and at the same time, be safe. Lakewood also holds classes and lessons for dancing, gymnastics, karate and other activities in the park recreation centers. These classes allow people to learn new things and pay a low fee. I feel that Lakewood's Community activities give great opportunities for older and younger people.

I believe the best thing in Lakewood is the people. People such as your neighbors, teachers, workers in your community and many more, are so polite and they are great role models. They help others, as they need to be helped. The community workers in Lakewood are helpful because they help others when they are looking for someone or something. The teachers at Lakewood are great role models for the students because they interact with different types of people and they help as much as they are able to. The neighborhoods in Lakewood are also good. Everyone is nice and helpful in Lakewood. I am proud to live in the neighborhoods of Lakewood.

The City of Lakewood has the best opportunities for many diverse people. I am very proud to be a part of Lakewood for many reasons. This city is so wonderful for people of all ages and has activities for people of all ages. Community activities help many people interact with others if they usually do not have a chance to. The people in

Lakewood are helpful in all kinds of different ways. Lakewood High School is the most fun part of Lakewood. I can make new friends and learn at the same time. Lakewood High School, the parks and people in Lakewood, and the community activities in Lakewood make me a proud teen of the City of Lakewood.

Lakewood

Whenever I meet a new person or am reunited with an old friend, the age-old question always comes up. "Where do you go to school now?" I laugh a little on the inside, then brace myself and say "Lakewood!" The most common responses are to the effect of "Ugh" or "Oh, that's too bad." I have become used to the less-than-supportive reactions, but I still question why they respond like that. Why do they dislike Lakewood so? Because of the tremendous pride in our sports programs, school or otherwise? The nice parks? The school spirit? Or maybe it's the nice, friendly, low-crime neighborhoods. Or maybe they don't immediately realize they probably do most of their leisure shopping in Lakewood, in the massively popular Lakewood Mall and the surrounding stores. I'm not quite sure what it is, but I'd like to find out.

Almost every Lakewood citizen has played sports for some team, in the school or in a city-sponsored league. There's nearly everything, from baseball to tennis, from football to water polo. And those are available both in and outside of school. I played hockey for the Lakewood YMCA for two years, and saw the crowds that gather to watch. Former residents who return to Lakewood with their families enroll their children in the same league, continuing the tradition. Junior sports build self-esteem for the players, make parents proud, bring in charity donations, and contribute to the general community feeling.

Needless to say, sports need parks. Fortunately, Lakewood has plenty of nice, clean, well-kept parks such as Jose Del Valle Park, Mayfair Park, Michelson Street Park, etcetera etcetera. Parks are essential for any good city. They provide a place for the community to gather and play. Parks accommodate joggers, cyclists, rowdy children, training athletes,

Feldt, Dustin
Lakewood High School
Ms. Jordan-Pena Room 320
Grade 10

romantic couples, and after supervision is gone, skaters. People can be found at these social meccas during all hours of the day and some of the night, doing as many different activities as there are different people. Some of the larger parks even have activity centers which offer after-school entertainment like teen centers, carom boards, ball and equipment rentals, and special events. Parks are absolutely necessary towards any good neighborhood, increasing land value, decreasing pollution, and making a vent to release pent-up energy.

The main high school, appropriately named Lakewood High School, is a great school. It has good funding, supportive parents, energetic students and an overabundance of school spirit. Many students go to Lakewood because they want to, and enjoy it no matter what other schools say. Of course, like any school anywhere, there are those who seek to avoid any association with school and carry their grudge against their captors for all four years. But not even those few seem to dim the brightness of the Lakewood student body. The great programs and all their specialized class options offer a wide variety of career paths for students to explore, and the extracurricular activities are second to none. No other school has as many clubs, groups, and organizations on or off campus, especially not ones created and facilitated by the students themselves.

I don't actually live in Lakewood, but I enjoy it still the same. I wander the neighborhoods with my friends, and take in the surroundings. It's never quiet, but mostly in a good way. It's more often the sound of squealing, happy children wrestling with their dogs than the roar of thousands of cars on a highway. I never walk down the street and think "Boy, what a boring place." Even when there aren't many people out, there are signs of life; a cat sleeping in the driveway, toys in the front yard, music drifting from an open window. The people who live in these neighborhoods also contribute to the mood, greeting all passers-

Feldt, Dustin
Lakewood High School
Ms. Jordan-Pena Room 320
Grade 10

by with a smile or a friendly "Hello". I personally think it's almost creepy in it's kindness, but it's a good thing. Everyone seems to know everyone, giving the distinct impression of a small, isolated town out in the middle of nowhere.

Then, there's the obvious social epicenter of the city, The Lakewood Center Mall. I, being the fashion-ignorant cheapskate, only go there to shop for clothes about every three years. Every time I do, there's something new and different and splendid. The old mall was, well, old, but still had a good number of popular stores and good facilities. Then, they upgraded. Everything is new, from the tile floor to the second-story food court. It expanded some, too, allowing the placement of several new shops. And that's just the mall itself. The center is almost like another two malls, but all spread out. This collection of buildings includes, but is certainly not limited to, two movie theaters, a hardware store, an electronics store, several dozen restaurants, various department stores, and a library across the street. What more could a kid with fifty bucks in cash want? (Besides another fifty....)

I just don't get it. Most of my acquaintances frown upon me when I say the name 'Lakewood', yet seem to have no idea what they're actually frowning upon. Lakewood has a wide variety of sports and youth programs with extreme pride included in that package. It has a multitude of parks with soft, green grass and good facilities and a great school with exuberant students and many, many clubs and groups. The people are nice and friendly, the neighborhoods are welcoming and very low-crime and secure, the streets are lined with trees. Lakewood also has one of the biggest shopping centers in the area, with one of the most popular malls. Pride in city and school run high in Lakewood, and I can't figure out why other people don't like it.

Greenwald, Zak
Lakewood High School
Ms. Jordan-Pena, Room 320
Grade 10

Joel F. Brodsky D.D.S.

Nobody likes dentists. And for sure, nobody likes orthodontists. Orthodontics is all about metal. Metal brackets, metal wires, metal braces, metal appliances, and more metal. It is a lengthy, expensive process. Even with insurance, a family might expect to pay two thousand dollars per kid over the years. It is also a cumbersome and painful process, but in my opinion, the end result is worthwhile — especially if your orthodontist is Dr. Joel Brodsky. I have known Dr. Brodsky since I was about nine years old, and he has always treated me (and I'm sure his other patients as well) with respect and care. For this reason, I chose Dr. Brodsky as the person and professional in Lakewood who I most admire.

Dr. Brodsky describes himself as a “home grown Southern California orthodontist.” Born in Los Angeles on November 20, 1948, he received his Doctor of Dental Surgery degree from UCLA in 1974. He has two children, Charles and Shauna, and a wife, Edie, who is a real estate agent in the Long Beach/ Lakewood area. Dr. Brodsky has practiced exclusively in the City of Lakewood since 1976. He also donates time to the UCLA School of Dentistry and supervises student research in the field of orthodontics. I admire that Dr. Brodsky offers his time and experience to students, on top of running a full time practice and spending time with his family.

At this time, Dr. Brodsky employs 15 dental assistants in his practice. The qualifications to become a dental assistant include one year in a dental certification program and orthodontic training. Dental assistants also must pass a licensing exam. Dr. Brodsky prefers that prospective employees have two years of work experience before he will hire them to work for him. Dr. Brodsky says that he encourages a fun work environment. An example of something he does to encourage the good morale of his employees is having a special lunch each month for the people who work in his office. The “team concept,” as Dr. Brodsky calls it, is something that he feels strongly about. This seems to encourage the kind of working environment in which people are good to each other, and everyone seems to be having fun. Clearly, Dr. Brodsky is a good boss, and he treats his employees well. I admire that.

Dr. Brodsky believes in having fun. I would describe his office as being kid friendly to the extreme. From the music played, to the teen magazines in the racks, to the free cookies that are offered, it is obvious that Dr. Brodsky’s office makes a real effort to make a potentially unpleasant experience more tolerable. One thing his office does which is especially fun is to go all out when it comes to holidays. When it’s Halloween, you know it’s Halloween. But Halloween isn’t the only holiday his office goes all out for. During Thanksgiving the decorations are fall themed. In December, the office is decorated for Hanukkah and Christmas. Even during the months that have no holidays, the office is theme decorated; there are, for instance, cowboy, under the sea, or luau motifs. His office also provides free cookies for the kids and coffee for the waiting parents. He also provides a “graduation” present to the kids when they get their braces off. This present includes all the stuff they’re not supposed to eat while they have their

braces, like popcorn, taffy, and bubble gum. Dr. Brodsky also offers a free night out at the Skate Depot for all of his patients, holds an annual postcard contest, and even had a “Guess the Baby Picture” contest, with pictures of all the employees from when they were little. It’s not just that Dr. Brodsky pays for all these extras out of his own pocket that I appreciate. It’s that the concept of providing a kid-friendly environment is part of his whole philosophy. This spirit of generosity is something I really admire about Dr. Brodsky.

The most notable example of Dr. Brodsky’s generosity is the scholarship that he offers to a Lakewood High School student each year. The scholarship that he offers is for one thousand dollars, and is awarded to a graduating student who is interested in going into a medical profession. The scholarship is open to seniors, and in order to win it, they must submit an essay about their career goals. Dr. Brodsky has been offering this scholarship for the past four years, and has awarded it three times. I found it interesting to learn that the year when no scholarship was awarded was the year that Dr. Brodsky didn’t feel the essays submitted were of the quality that he was looking for. I feel that for him to say that he is only willing to give scholarships to those who deserve it really speaks to his integrity. I find this admirable, because it encourages students to do their best and to be successful in their chosen profession.

Nobody likes dentists. Usually dentists poke with sharp things, drill mouths, and cause pain. But Dr. Brodsky is not like most other dentists. I’m not saying I like him — after all, he is the man who put horrendous metal appliances in my mouth and charged my family good money for it. Still, I do admire and respect him. As a businessman I feel he is a hard working man with high standards for himself and his employees. I like that

he donates his professional expertise to dental students. I like how he treats his employees. I like that he provides a friendly atmosphere for his patients. And I truly admire his generosity and dedication to education. He has been brightening smiles throughout Lakewood for twenty-seven years, and for this reason and more, I think Dr. Brodsky is an asset to the city of Lakewood.

Holmes, Douglas
Lakewood High School
Ms. Jordan-Pena R.320
Grade 10

Lakewood People We Admire
Sonya Levitt

“Hey, you guys going to the first Sunday of the month dance classes tonight?”

There are many people who stand out in their community and influence others' lives all around them. In Lakewood this person would have to be Sonya Levitt. She is a very active Lakewood citizen: an accomplished mother who participates in many things such as her church, her local school, as well as just getting out there and going places. I admire her for just going out there and doing something with her life.

Sonya Levitt is a proud citizen of the city of Lakewood who is always brightens up people days. And that is what she raised her daughter to do as well. She is a loving mother of her daughter Paula Levitt, who is currently attending The University of San Diego. She just so happens to live right down the street from both her local Church, as well as her local school in which she works.

There are many things in which Sonya takes very seriously; one is her local church. Every Sunday she attends Lakewood 1st United Methodist Church. She is a very active member in her church. This includes the committee called Staff Parish Relations, which just so happens to be the highest committee at our church. Things they talk about are very confidential; such as problems in church between people or the ways in which the church is doing financial/and spiritually, etc. In order to get on such a high responsibility committee like this she had to be elected by at least 30 or so people and the nomination committee. She also is very close with the youth of the church. As well as

all these comities, she is involved with events that happen at the church. In fact she was the one who started the Dance Classes on the first Sunday of every month. She also hosts many parties for events including the end of the season church sport leagues, special occasions. She also is known for working at the church during the summer at a weeklong event called VBS or Vacation Bible School. It is a week long camp where young children come from the neighborhood to have fellowship with one another in a way that is more appealing to children of younger ages, by doing crafts and games, as well as other fun activities. Also, for the past two years High School Youth goes to a mission trip called Serria Service Project or SSP. There they travel to Indian reservations in Oregon, Arizona, Nevada, and parts of California, to live on the reservation and to help the Native Americans with home repairs and additions. Both years Sonya has either donated money straight to the youth or has helped in raising money for the trip. The church is very grateful to have such an active member such as Sonya Levitt.

As well as her work with the Methodist Church, she is also very involved with her school. She works at Lakewood High School, in the Long Beach District. She loves her work there, where she often acts as a substitute teacher. When she works as a substitute she always is laid back to the point where everyone has fun but yet still gets all of their work completed. She makes sure that if a student doesn't understand anything whatsoever, she helps them to the best of her ability. She also takes the time to talk to her students about many things such as current events, news around school, and most importantly, clubs and programs to get involved in during our high school years. Mostly she talks to them about a club on campus in which she is very active in called Best Buddies.

Best Buddies is a club in which involves many of the special education students, as well as a peer buddy from the average student crowd. Each buddy is given a peer buddy with whom they talk, eat lunch, and just hang out. The main purpose of this program is to help the special education students to be more involved in the normal student body. For many years now Sonya has been a great part of the Best Buddies program. Everyone knows her face and her cheerful personality. Every year there are many Best Buddies parties for different occasions, and many of these parties are held at Sonya's house. She provides music, food, toys, all kinds of entertainment, but one of the most popular things she has is her big tree house in which many people enjoy playing on as well as just hanging out. Besides all these contributions she gives to Lakewood High School and its students, she is also always there to talk to around campus if any student needs to. This is what makes her a very important contributor to Lakewood High School, and the students who attend the school.

Now one might ask how someone can do all these things and still have a life? Well Sonya Levitt must know their secret, because she not only is dedicated to her local school and church, but she is dedicated to herself, her family, and her friends. During her free time she doesn't just go out there and sit at home while the present passes over her. She gets up and out and enjoys life. Her picture is always in the newspaper for being seen at different places, such as a beach for dogs, where there was a picture of her and her dog dressed up on the beach in Hawaiian style outfits. Last year she attended multiple recordings of the hit reality television show called American Idol. She has also attended different events with her family and friends such as the Teen Choice Awards. There she and her daughter Paula got to see and take pictures of many hot stars both from television

and music. She also is seen going out just to party whether it be going out dancing with some friends, going to the movies, or just out to simple things such as dinner. What ever it is, wherever something is new hot and hip-people can expect to find Sonya somewhere around, because, in reality, she is nothing but young at heart.

Sonya Levitt has and continues to do many things with her life, not just to benefit herself, but to help out others as well. She is a very important member of the Lakewood community. I admire her for the fact that she not only does what a good person should do but she goes above and beyond in bettering her community. Also, one of the reasons she is admired by me is because, even though she is a single mother and not the youngest of the bunch, she doesn't let any of that get in the way of what she wants to do and be in her community. Sonya Levitt is a wonderful person, and a great member of the Lakewood community, and she makes the neighborhood and community a great place to grow up in, as well as grow old in. It's people like Sonya Levitt who make Lakewood such a wonderful place.

Jordan McGuffie
Lakewood High School
Room 320
Ms. Jordan-Pena
Grade 10

Mr. McGrath: The Savior of the English Literature

“Sorry about the lights guys. You can blame ENRON for that,” was the first thing he said to our class last year on our first day of high school. Based on first impressions, I thought he would be a good teacher. As it turned out, he was one of the greatest teachers I have ever had. Throughout the year, he was a great role model to the kids in and out of his classroom and is an overall great person. Many life lessons can be learned from him and most of the students he has taught have learned many life lessons. There are many great people in the Lakewood community that deserve to be acknowledged and rewarded for their work. Mr. McGrath is a special person in the Lakewood community and should be acknowledged for his job both during and after school.

Mr. McGrath was my English teacher last year. He, I think, was one of the reasons why I started to like English in the first place. He turned a very boring English class into a fun and exciting experience. He made most boring activities into something so exotic that I think only he can come up with the ideas that he comes up with. For example, we were popcorn reading the ever-so-famous Romeo and Juliet play. It turned out that I had to play the part of Romeo. So, to make things more exciting, not to mention funny, he gave me this plastic sword and these fake teeth I had to wear while performing my part. He also helped his students become better writers. At the beginning

of the year, I was not a really great writer, but in the one year I was his student, he made my writing so much better.

Mr. McGrath is a middle-aged person with a mind like a seven-year-old child trying to put together a 100 piece Spider-man jigsaw puzzle. His mind is always coming up with new ideas. His hair looks like rain clouds just waiting to burst at any moment. The way he carries his hair reminds me of Albert Einstein. His hair is done haphazardly like he left his house without even laying the tip of a comb on it. To some people, it might look as though he doesn't care about what he looks like. To me, it seems like he is more dedicated to his students and how he teaches his students than how his hair might look. So I see his hair as a sign that his students are more important than he is, and I respect him for that. Although he knows he doesn't get paid enough for his work, along with many other teachers, he does his job one hundred and ten percent everyday to see his students succeed.

Mr. McGrath, in some ways, reminds me of Superman. He is someone who can do many tasks at once. He is able to grade essays, listen to book review he assigned his students, teach a class about Shakespeare, and remember to pick up dinner all at the same time, but not many people recognize this attribute in him. Most people only know him as a teacher. His teaching methods are golden, so to speak. Unless someone he is teaching doesn't want to learn from him, he has the ability to help someone understand something that seems impossible to understand. Although he is a great teacher, there is much more to him the naked eye doesn't see. From the stories he has told our class, he seems like a big family man. He seems like he is a very involved parent and is concerned about how

his children are doing. Mr. McGrath does not get the credit he deserves for doing all of the things he has to do.

Mr. McGrath cares a lot about his students. He was always there for them when they needed help with homework, on how to write their essays, and with their personal lives. He always wants to see his students improve on their writing and overall English skills rather than just pass his class without learning anything new. He has helped me in so many ways that I don't think I can ever repay him for what he has taught me and what he has done for me. I went into my freshman year of high school thinking, "It will be the same as last year. Nothing but reading and comprehending, weird essay prompts and a lot of spelling homework." His classes, however, were nothing like that. We had essays of course, but unlike my other teachers, he made so that we learned from our mistakes. Previous teachers just marked what was wrong in a dark, blood-colored red that all students fear, and gave us a grade. With Mr. McGrath, he would tell us what our weak point was and try to help us on that certain weakness, not to mention that he hardly ever corrected in red. Thanks to his help, I am a much stronger writer than I used to be before. He would also make the students feel like they were someone special by giving us great remarks while helping us improve, instead of giving us negative feedback and making us feel bad about ourselves.

Mr. McGrath is an average Joe to most people, but to me, he is like my fire escape to help me out of a blazing fire. He is my savior for English literature. Although he does so many things for people in the Lakewood community, he is barely recognized for everything he does. There should be some sort of reward for him and all of the other hardworking teachers who work their tails off for their students for a pay that is less than

what flight attendants make, because they really deserve it. Mr. McGrath is one of those people that other people can look up to as a role model. Many life lessons can be learned from him. He has taught me that I can do anything I want to do as long as I put my mind to it and I really try hard at what I am doing. Mr. McGrath is a great person in the Lakewood community and has helped the Lakewood community by passing on some of his wisdom to his students.

What I Like About Lakewood

"SWIMMERS TAKE YOUR MARK..." booms the man on the loudspeaker as I reach down to grip the wobbly diving block. My hands are shaking and my heart is beating out of my chest as I wait with anticipation for the race to start. The stands are filled with families and friends cheering on the Lakewood High School swimmers as I take a deep breath to calm my nerves. When the buzzer finally goes off with a loud "BEEP!" six swimmers explode off the blocks and sprint freestyle down the pool. Many exciting swim meets, much like this one, are of the many fond memories that I have at Lakewood High School and in the City of Lakewood. The City of Lakewood has been like a second hometown to me because it's where I spent most of my childhood. The biggest turning points of my life have all happened in this small, suburban, Southern Californian city. Although I grew up in Long Beach, I will never forget everything that this wonderful little city has offered to me that has made me the person that I am today. There are so many things that I make me proud to be a part of Lakewood. The people of Lakewood are so friendly and compassionate. Lakewood is also a wonderful place because of all of the activities that the city offers to the people. From its spirited schools to the magnificent Lakewood mall, this little city has it all.

The great thing about the people of Lakewood is that they're friendly and generous. I've realized that every time I walk down a peaceful Lakewood neighborhood, friendly smiles and familiar faces greet me. The people at Lakewood never cease to amaze me with their uplifting spirits that can just make my day. These people include

the helpful librarians at the public library to the friendly sheriffs who help keep Lakewood a safe place. Of course, who could forget the residents of Lakewood? They've also contributed a lot to society with their generosity and kindheartedness. There are many times when I've had the opportunities to be a part of this world of caring. One of these many opportunities is the Key Club at Lakewood High School. As a second year member of Lakewood's Key Club, I can proudly say that these wholesome students have made a huge impact on the community of Lakewood. In fact, just a few weeks ago, Key Club volunteered to help a very grateful elderly woman to help clean up her home and garden. Key Club members also volunteered to help at the library's annual book sale. There are many service projects that Key Club has planned for this year and I can't wait for my next opportunity to give back to the community that has already given so much to me. I have never felt more proud to say that the Key Club is a part of the compassionate people of Lakewood.

Lakewood offers many recreational activities for everyone of every age and every ethnic background. I've had the opportunity to experience just a few of the many fun things to do at Lakewood. If Lakewood City didn't have so many different activities, I may not have discovered the joy of the pool. I became a Junior Lifeguard at McCormick Swimming Pool of Bolivar Park. While I was a Junior Lifeguard, I competed in my first swim meets and realized for the first time that I really enjoyed it. I learned useful skills and I met many new friends, some of which I will never forget. It was one of the best summers that I'd ever had and I finally discovered my passion. Other activities in

Lakewood are the different sports programs offered at Lakewood High School. One of the many sports programs at Lakewood High is the Girls' Water Polo team. Joining the Girls' Water Polo team is one of the best decisions that I've ever made. I've become very devoted to the sport and to my team. With our outstanding coach, Sean McWhorter, and his constant motivation, the water polo team is another part of Lakewood that I put my pride in. Our team represents Lakewood and shows a lot of effort, teamwork, and good sportsmanship that proves how hardworking and committed our team is. No matter what it may be, Lakewood offers many interests. I am very proud of the numerous activities that someone can do at Lakewood.

Lakewood schools not only offer great education with its challenging curriculums, they are also enjoyable and safe environments for students to go to everyday. I've been attending school in the city of Lakewood for four years now. My Lakewood school days began at Hoover Middle School. Going to school at Hoover has molded me into the person that I am today. I honestly can't imagine who I would be if I had not gone to Hoover. I would not have my loving friends who have taught me what being a true friend is all about, and I'm very grateful for everything that they've done for me. The friends that I made at Hoover will always be in my heart. The best things about Lakewood schools are the teachers. Although all of my teachers at Hoover were wonderful, there were two who impacted my life far more than I ever thought was possible. One of these teachers was my music teacher, Mr. Scott Peffers. Mr. Peffers was more than just a teacher; he went beyond the call of duty to really care. Mr. Peffers

taught me how to read music and improve on my singing. But then again, the most important lesson that Mr. Peffers taught me was not about music: it was about integrity. He said that integrity was doing the right thing even when no one was watching. I am thankful to him for helping me become a person of great integrity and morals. The other person from Hoover who has greatly impacted my life was my eighth-grade English teacher, Mr. Chris Boyle. The only thing that I can say about Mr. Boyle is that he is as far away from "normal" as a guy can get. He introduced me to great poetry and great literature. However, the best thing about Mr. Boyle wasn't what he taught in the classroom; it was what he *wasn't supposed* to teach in the classroom. He fascinated us with stories of his youth. He taught us lessons that weren't part of the curriculum, but were a part of life. As I advanced to high school with these life lessons that I attained at Hoover, I went on to attend Lakewood High School. When I graduate from Lakewood High in 2006, I will leave with even more life lessons under my belt and I will be even prouder to be a part of the city of Lakewood.

Last but definitely not least, who could forget about the fabulous Lakewood Mall? To quote Homer Simpson, "For an evening or a week, there's no place like the mall! Food, fun and fashion, the mall has it all!" This is especially true of the Lakewood Center Mall. In the past few years, the Lakewood Center Mall has drastically expanded and has become one of the main attractions of Lakewood City. However, the Lakewood Mall was not always so famous. Up until a few years ago, the Lakewood Mall was small and simple. Over the next few years, the City of Lakewood decided to expand the Lakewood

Mall by adding another segment of the mall as well as a second story that would later become the food court. The re-establishment of the Lakewood Mall quickly became a popular hangout spot for everyone, especially for us teenagers. The expansion of the Lakewood Mall also offered a promising future for successful business and new jobs for many employees. The Lakewood Mall also has outstanding establishments surrounding it such as the new restaurants, Mimi's Café and The Elephant Bar, as well as the Stadium 16 Movie Theater and the brand new Target store. This new beginning is another part of Lakewood that I take a lot of pride in because it provides a promising future for the already successful City of Lakewood.

Lakewood is the ideal All-American city because it has everything that anyone could ever want. This friendly little city has made me the person that I am today and I am extremely grateful for everything. I take great pride in the City of Lakewood. I feel very honored when I can consider myself to be a part of Lakewood. Lakewood has greatly influenced my character and as an individual, it has helped me improve my self-esteem and made me feel like I am a part of something very special. Although on the outside, Lakewood may just seem like another ordinary city, we all know better. We know that Lakewood is city of heart, a city of compassion and a city of great pride.

Reid, Kyle
Lakewood High
Ms. Jordan-Pena Rm. #320
Grade 10

The Stars and Stripes Forever

Thousands dead. Millions of dollars in damage. Hundreds of crushed families, and one shattered nation. September 11th, 2001, a disaster struck the heart of America, a disaster that would change it permanently. It left the people shocked, and for some, exposed to the cruelty of terrorism for the first time. In September 2002, a year later, the City of Lakewood hosted a memorable event that would later become an annual tradition. This event, known as Patriot Day, brought friends and family alike to gather in memory of that tragic day. Clad in red, white, and blue, people spent the whole day at the park eating packed lunches and listening to live music, all in support of America and all that it stands for. One such performance was by the Lakewood High School Band, of which I was privileged to be a part of. Participating in the 1st annual Patriot Day Memorial placed me in an exciting and important part in Lakewood's history.

For years, the City of Lakewood has been hosting Thursday night concerts at Del Valle Park. Those concerts were advertised on the park's billboard and ranged from country to jazz and even blues. I had attended one or two of the concerts and did not have much interest in the park and its activities. However, I knew something was different when they were advertising a thing called "Patriot Day", something I had never heard of before. I expected the event to be a sad and dreary service, attended only by military patrons and relatives of those lost in the tragedy. I would have much rather spent my day watching TV, hanging out with friends, or just doing plain old nothing. All in all,

it wasn't anything I planned on attending. However, it seemed my marching band director had other plans.

Being a part of the Lakewood High School Regiment, I was used to last minute changes and spur-of-the-moment ideas. From delayed performances to new songs perfected the day before, working with a tight deadline was nothing foreign to us. Yet I was still surprised when my director told us we would be performing at Patriot Day, no less than two weeks away. I immediately feared the worst...it would be a horrible performance and entirely uneventful. Eventually the day came and with an inadequate amount of practice, we marched towards the park to play "The Star Spangled Banner" in full uniform and broad daylight. The Milikan Marching Band was to perform with us too, yet we hadn't practiced the song together once. Being so, we had no idea how the show would turn out and it probably comes as a surprise that this was not the highlight of my day. However, standing there in attention and playing our National Anthem amidst patriotic colors, fluttering flags, and solemn-faced Americans, I was surprised at the turnout.

With the distant murmur of hundreds of anxious people, we waited in silence for our cue to perform. Behind the brick walls that hid us from the public eye, the announcer boomed our introduction over the loud speaker and we began to march. As we did, the heads and attention of every parent and child turned towards us. For most people, standing in front of large audiences makes them at best slightly nervous, but I do it so often, I hardly think twice about it. It was no different on Patriot Day; it was just another public performance full of energy and last minute changes...until we began to play. The spectators stood up, hats beside them and hands over their hearts, facing the flag. It was

dead quiet save for the rustling of leaves and singing of birds. The amount of respect shown to us was something strange and surprising. Usually, there is people's constant chatter as a background for our playing, but this time, it was us. The people's dedication to their country was so strong that they took the National Anthem dead serious.

Lakewood has always shown a large amount of American pride, from the flags found in our yards every 4th of July, to the numerous yellow ribbons waving prayers from trees and cars. All these things seemed to appear overnight right after September 11th, yet even now, numbers of signs brandishing the American flag adorn the busy streets near my home. With all this around, I should have known the response the people would have to this All-American event. I should have known how many people it would attract, all in the name of America. The positive attitude of all the people is what I have come to know as the trademark for Lakewood. It's a feeling that makes one feel good to live in such a patriotic city.

Having spent most my life in Lakewood, I sometimes tend to think that all cities are like this, but every once and a while, I pass through a different city and realize that they're not. In very few places can we sleep with our doors unlocked and let kids play freely outside. There have been days when I have left my garage open all day, to come home and have everything intact, something that I know is unheard of in many towns. Cities in general are not usually as friendly, clean, and overall welcoming as Lakewood is, and they often pale in comparison to it. Events such as Patriot Day can verify this as well. I am glad that I was a part of it and glad that I was "forced" into attending something that I had no interest in. It turned out better than I expected and I enjoyed it as well. David L. Denvir once said that, "National unity in confronting a crisis is not

uniquely American. But it is something we do better than anyone else on earth.” This statement shows the unity and support of America, including the citizens of Lakewood. I am proud of Lakewood as well as Patriot Day and I look forward to it in years to come.

Snider, Samantha
Lakewood High School
Ms. Jordan-Pena Rm. 320
Grade 10

Lakewood

A peaceful forest sits in calm serenity, patches of glowing sun light filtering through the mosaic of green leaves above. The breeze floats through the branches and twigs, fluttering through the leaves and swirling through the soft dirt on the earthen floor. It is a calm, peaceful place where all are happy, and life is enjoyable; like life in Lakewood. Lakewood has so many aspects about it that a person can enjoy. Take for example the popular teenage hangout, the Lakewood Mall. With fantastic food, a vast variety shopping, and a lively atmosphere, what isn't to like? Then there are the schools, especially Lakewood High School. With the rigorous curriculum, friendly teachers, and great programs and sports, it is easy for students to learn and grow. Now, you can't forget the Lakewood Girl Scout Council. There, girls of all ages can partake in activities that will help them grow, and older girls are helped to prepare for the real world and college. With great places like the Lakewood Mall, Lakewood High School, and the Lakewood Girl Scout Council, it is easy to find something that you can really enjoy in the City of Lakewood.

The Lakewood Mall has it all; especially the shopping. There are clothing stores, jewelry stores, bath stores, furniture stores, toy stores, game stores, teen stores, book stores, movies stores, and the list goes on and on. Some of the most popular clothing stores being: Hot Topic, Peanuts Revenge, Banana Republic, and Forever 21. There are also the sporty-trendy shops like Tilly's, Clair's, Quicksilver, Vans, Adidas, Roxy, and

all sorts of other stores of that nature. There are also great stores to buy goods, like Electronics Boutique to buy videogames, or Suncoast and Sam Goodie for videos and DVD's. There is Bath and Body works, the toy stores like the Disney Store and KB Toy Works, all sorts of jewelry stores, and fantastic bookstores. We also cannot leave out the massive department stores like J.C. Penny's, Mervyns California, Macy's, and Robinson's May. They have large selections for everyone of every age group, not only the teenagers, like so many other stores. They are especially a favorite among woman of all ages. Last but not least, there is also the new Target that just opened. This is great news for Target shoppers in Lakewood, because now they don't have to drive all the way out to the farthest reaches of Long Beach to shop at Target. It may not be the largest mall, but it does have a surprising amount of variety for so small a mall. With all these great stores, it is hard to find someplace that isn't interesting and fun to shop at. The mall also has great food, especially since the mall has expanded to include a two-story food court. Now with two levels of dining choices, the options are limitless. Fast food, cultural food, snacks, bakeries, ice cream parlors; these are just a few of the many decisions for you to make on your meal. The atmosphere is also wonderful. It is always a busy buzz of talking, eating, laughter, shopping, and enjoyment. It is kickback and fun, with a usual hum of shopping and the relaxing chatter or hanging-out. The shopping, food, and atmosphere really make the Lakewood Mall a great, enjoyable place.

Let us not forget the wonderful establishment named after the City of Lakewood; Lakewood High School. Lakewood High School has many great aspects, especially the curriculum. It is rigorous, but also interesting; that way each class is a fun challenge for the students to overcome. This is a wonderful way to help students grow and develop

their minds and broaden their views. There are also many programs for students to join, each with their own academic opportunities. Some of the programs offered are CAPP, ATM, HERO, Odyssey, and the most rigorous of the lot is Merit Scholars. Merit Scholars is the equivalent of Poly's Pace, or Millikan's Quest. Not only are the classes and programs great, but so are the teachers and other staff members. The teachers work their hardest to ensure that the lesson plans are challenging, but fun as well. They take the time to be sure that every student understands and is following along in the work. For those in need, many teachers also provide students with tutoring. The teachers don't want any student left behind. The staff members are equally important; they make sure that everyone is safe and doing the right thing. Lakewood High is also a very spirited school with award winning sports teams. The varsity football team ranks up in the league with Poly. Softball is very competitive and they have been Moore League Champions. Lakewood High is also privileged enough to have last years star gymnast and gymnastics coach. Also the Lancerettes can't be forgotten. Along with the mascots, they keep the crowds cheering at the Friday night football games.

Finally we come to the Lakewood Girl Scout Council. This is a great program for younger and older girls to interact and have fun while learning. The girls are taught to behave and act mature, and they learn all kinds of things from car repairs, theatre, art, career choices, ecology, manners, kindness, first aide, songs and games, and even space exploration and other technologies. It is a program to keep girls active; to let them have fun while broadening their horizons. Girls participate in large varieties of events; from badge workshops, campouts, day camps (held at El Ranchito, Marine Landing, and Skyland Mountain Camp), fun weekend activities, celebrations, and Wider Opportunities

(Wider Opps) where girls spend the summer at an educational recreation camp out of state. It is a great place and program for girls to learn and enjoy themselves.

All of this goes to show how great a city Lakewood really is. So great a city in fact, that all of its wonderful things and opportunities can't all be crammed into one essay. The Lakewood Mall, Lakewood High School, and the Lakewood Girl Scout Council are all just the tip of a massive iceberg. That really is the greatest thing about Lakewood; there is such a huge variety of things to be had in Lakewood. With such a variety, you aren't forced to choose what is your favorite thing to do; and you'll never run out of new things to try and enjoy. The enjoyment of being able to live in Lakewood and have fun while you are doing it, really is what makes the City of Lakewood so great!

Through the Love of Chemistry Comes Admiration

As soon as I walked into the room, I could smell the fragrance of coffee. It was an intoxicating aroma that's always part of the classroom environment. I was then greeted for the first time by the man who was to be my chemistry teacher for the next year. I immediately liked him. That was weeks ago. It was before I got to know the person who has contributed greatly to the city of Lakewood and who is quite admirable.

Victor De la Loza is my chemistry teacher at Lakewood High School. He teaches chemistry and AP chemistry at Lakewood High School. He is of Hispanic origin, with a plump figure, about average height, and wear glasses. Mr. De la Loza is funny, outgoing, and a bit compulsive. Also, he loves coffee. The smell, the taste, everything about it drives Mr. De la Loza crazy. He drinks at least a cup of coffee everyday though he is trying to quit. Classic rock music is also a favorite of Mr. De la Loza. He likes to do for relaxation. Chemistry, coffee, and music are the loves of his life.

Mr. De la Loza's class is a favorite among the students. Maybe it is not the class in general, but himself. Chemistry is hard. There is lots of work and many things to learn but he is organized and passionate about what he teaches. He teaches us about chemistry through notes, labs, examples and words. When he teaches, it's not like just any other class. There is humor in the class too. His personality, his style, how he acts, his jokes, make him funny. He makes us laugh and enjoy ourselves while we are trying to learn the world of chemistry. Chemistry gets Mr. De la Loza excited, and that helps

us get excited about learning chemistry too.

There are two reasons why Mr. De la Loza loves to teach chemistry. One is the love of the subject, chemistry, and the ability to teach others to love it also. It is nice to have a teacher who is passionate about his work and wants others to be too. The second is working with the students. He gets to meet a variety of students each and every year. The one-on-one experience he can have if students come in for tutoring is fulfilling. He actually wants his students to understand the work. He won't give up until he is certain that they will get it. Mr. De la Loza believes if young students are kept on track and focused, they can accomplish anything asked of them. That is what Mr. De la Loza believes he can do.

Mr. De la Loza didn't always want to be a chemistry teacher. He always did love the subject and went to the California State University, Long Beach to get his chemistry major. Chemistry is the study of materials and what they do. It is all around us. It involves math and science into one subject. He enjoys both. After finishing college, he didn't have a job set up. He thought that he would teach until he found a "real job". Now his "real job" is teaching chemistry.

It has been years since Mr. De la Loza started teaching at Lakewood High School. He used to teach at the California Academy of Math and Science, otherwise known as CAMS, on the campus of the California State University, Dominguez Hills. It is a four-year academic high school that provides their diverse students college preparatory classes based on math and science fields. After the five year contract was up at the school, Mr. De la Loza went looking for a new school to teach at. While looking for that new teaching job, he came across Lakewood High School. The science building really impressed him and he decided to apply for a job. It was a sad and hard

leave, but once at Lakewood High School, Mr. De la Loza enjoyed the school and its students. The first year was great. The atmosphere fitted Mr. De la Loza. Sometimes he misses CAMS but when he looks around and sees all his students, he knows that he is in the right place.

For the city of Lakewood, Mr. De la Loza has contributed and can be considered an admirable person since he teaches the students of Lakewood. Not only does Mr. De la Loza teach students about chemistry, he teaches them about life, humor, determination, hard work, and friendship. He is not just some ordinary teacher. Teachers are often taken for granted or forgotten but this doesn't apply to Mr. De la Loza because I know that I'll never forget him. He has taught so many people over the years along with my peers and me. He is a supportive person that can always be counted on in a time of need.

After some time in Mr. De la Loza's class, I knew I was going to like his class. I liked him immediately when I first met him, but I like him more each day. Some people might not agree with me but I like the challenge. Though the chemistry is hard sometimes and I have to work really hard, it gives me pleasure to know that I am in Mr. De la Loza's class. I know he will be there if I need help. His teaching style fits me since I learn by hearing, writing, doing, talking, and seeing. Chemistry is my favorite class this year.

Mr. De la Loza is an admirable person since he puts all his strength and will into teaching students chemistry. He is there when I need him. He is passionate and in love with his work. Students love him and the way he teaches. Students love his weird, brute sense of humor. If he weren't teaching chemistry, I don't know what else he would be doing. This lifestyle, waking up and going to school to teach classes of chemistry, feels

so right to Mr. De la Loza. Maybe in the eyes of others it may not be true, but for me, Mr. De la Loza is an admirable man. The teaching lifestyle is hard but Mr. De la Loza still manages to do it everyday.

Mr. McGrath, The Person I Admire

He seems like a plain and simple Lakewood teacher, but he is certainly anything but ordinary. Stephen McGrath is an English 1-2 teacher here at Lakewood High School. There is never a day where he doesn't crack a joke or make a comment that makes his students laugh. Sure, he gives out homework and plenty of reading like any other teacher on campus, but what makes him outstanding is the attitude he carries with him to work each and every day. Honesty, laughter, education, and joy are all it takes to make one outstanding and admirable person.

Not everyone lies, but not everyone is true to his or her words either. Nowadays, who is there to trust? Sometimes even my best friend isn't as trustworthy or that honest. Mr. McGrath is the rare type who rarely or never lies; he is honest with his students. So many people are so deceiving these days, its good to meet a teacher who is so honest to his students and friends. The first day I walked into that class freshman year, I thought it would be one of those classes where there are piles of work and way too much reading. I was a freshman and a bit scared to take on high school, but Mr. McGrath was honest; he explained, "The first couple of months we'll get our feet wet." At first I didn't understand and figured that he might just be saying that to make us feel comfortable for a couple of days before the homework piles up.

Tran, Lisa
Lakewood High School
Ms. Jordan-Pena Room# 320
Grade 10

I was quickly proved wrong within the first month. He wasn't lying; he was preparing us for the rest of the year. We got "our feet wet" the first couple of months and I soon developed a liking for the class. Every time we had a project or essay to do, he never lied saying it was so easy or so hard like other teachers had said before. He gave his honest opinion on the assignments he gave us, as if he was one of us trying to do the homework. I never met such an honest teacher before, but I'm glad that I did the first year of high school.

I wonder myself, "Why would of all teachers, an English teacher be admirable?" The answer is self-explanatory, he just is. English is one of the most important subjects a student has to take through his or her life. Having a strong, helpful, and fun English teacher like Mr. McGrath helps us to the path of our futures. I must admit, I never thought I would admire anyone, especially not a teacher! My first thought when I walked into the door of Mr. McGrath's room was, "A small, cramped classroom with a middle age, semi-gray haired guy. This class will probably be boring." Well was I wrong! As soon as the bell rung, he had already made the class feel so comfortable. He said a joke, made funny comments, and teased some of the students. He has such a lively and fun personality.

Throughout the year, he prepared us for the CAT6, essays, tests, and so much more. I learned so much from that class, but I learned a lot more as well outside. Mr. McGrath isn't just a teacher who doesn't interact with his students; he actually gives out helpful tips and advice outside the classroom doors. He made sure that we were having a good time and that we were living a healthy life. He was like a loving father watching over us, making sure none of his students got hurt mentally, physically, and or

Tran, Lisa
Lakewood High School
Ms. Jordan-Pena Room# 320
Grade 10

emotionally. He is so caring that it amazes me that a teacher can actually be thoughtful of his students outside the classroom as well as in. He helps out the Merit Scholars program and Lakewood as much as he can. He also makes sure we do well in school and is always asking for volunteers for this and that. He has such compassion for his job and for the people he is educating.

“Laughter is the best kind of medicine,” this is a quote that is used all around the world. It is the quote that I live by as well as my friends. Without laughter, there is no love, no fun, no life. This is exactly what everyone needs everyday and this is what Mr. McGrath brings to the classroom. There is never a day he doesn't go without a joke, a funny comment, or friendly teasing a student. His impression of George. W. Bush is so hilarious. Randomly, he would take out his puppets and make them come to life. It puts us students at ease and lets us be stress-free. The stories that he tells are funny, we can't get enough of them. Come to think of it, he never finished this certain story for us; maybe I'll go ask him to later on. Without laughter, the classroom is just a dull and lifeless place to be in for an hour. If I wanted to sleep I would have just stayed home all day!

Not an average school, and definitely not the average teacher. Lakewood High School is one of the top schools in the district and has great programs to be in. What makes Lakewood so special are the teachers who put in that extra 10% to help their students with whatever they need. Mr. McGrath gives his all plus an additional 25%. He's not an average teacher where I get to catch up on my sleep in class. We wake up in his class! One word, one definition, one sentence is not enough to describe Mr. McGrath. Now Mr. McGrath is a fun and very comical teacher, but don't mistake him as the laidback teacher who doesn't care about grades or the student's future. Sure, all average

Tran, Lisa
Lakewood High School
Ms. Jordan-Pena Room# 320
Grade 10

teachers push their kids towards college, but how many actually push far enough that their students have no way of turning back? Not many, but I'm sure glad that I met at least one.

Mr. McGrath teaches us the techniques and shows us how to improve our grammar and vocabulary. He gives examples and even personally helps the students out one on one. This just shows he cares a lot about the teacher-student bond. Letting us write in our own journals each Friday, lets us improve our writing on essay prompts. We get to write whatever we want on Fridays and even if there isn't a prompt or particular question to answer, we learn that we can write a lot better on essays because of it. We experience our writing in so many new ways in the class that we always seem to score at least a three or higher on essays. If only the school had more teachers like Mr. McGrath then I would be excited to go to school a lot more.

Happiness is found within and is a great gift to give to friends, family, and students. I am very happy and joyful that I had the chance to meet Mr. McGrath. He showed me how to improve my writing, poetry, and essays. It's the extra effort that he puts in that gives us students a brighter future. It's his personality that he has that makes the classroom a world of fun and education. It's that attitude he carries with him that lets us know that he cares about his students. Mr. McGrath is one of the reasons that I love and wake up every day to go to school. He is the one who makes me want to go to English class each and every school day. He is certainly anything but ordinary. Mr. Stephen McGrath is the person that I admire at Lakewood High School. It's the honesty, laughter, education, and joy that he brings to this school that make more students attend each and every year.

Lakewood.....Home Sweet Home

What comes to one's mind when thinking of Lakewood? For some people the answer might come easy, such as "the malls" or "school". For many others in this city, however, it might take some time to think back and reflect on all of the things that Lakewood brings to southern California. Lakewood is unique because it has everything that any city could ever need: schools, shops, parks, theaters, fitness centers, restaurants, businesses- and those are only few of many. In addition, the people of Lakewood add diversity and culture to the city, giving the place its one-of-a-kind quality. All of these components intricately woven together make Lakewood a great place to be.

Since there are a great number of them in Lakewood, it is only appropriate to start by honoring the wonderful parks in this city. It seems like almost everywhere one goes throughout Lakewood, there is some kind of park or recreational facility. That is partially due to the fact that when committees were planning the city of Lakewood in the 1950s, it was an objective of theirs to have one park for every two square miles of land. Today, as a result of their valuable time and effort to make Lakewood reach its full potential, people from all around can enjoy themselves in a safe, family-oriented environment.

Lakewood has also expanded to include a variety of other recreational options such as malls, movie cinemas, fitness centers, and various other recreational facilities. People of all ages go to the malls to socialize and have a good time with their friends and family. Movie theatres are also a popular gathering, particularly to adolescents, to indulge a little and unwind from a long week at work or school. The physically active are also considered, because of the numerous

gyms and fitness facilities that Lakewood has to offer. Among some popular places are the Y.M.C.A. and 24-Hour Fitness. After a tough workout at the gym, one can choose to eat out at any of Lakewood's abundant, multi-cultured restaurants. There are restaurants from nearly all cultures, from traditional American food to Greek cuisine. There are virtually no limited options for anything in Lakewood.

Sports are very popular in today's world, and there is great emphasis on people of all ages to join a sports team or aerobic instruction group to stay active. Sports are also a great way to meet new people, spend time with old friends, and learn a sense of responsibility, commitment, and discipline. Lakewood offers a whole world of sports opportunities, such as swim teams, horseback riding, soccer, golf, tennis, and almost all the other existing sports. Athletics can also bring the community together because when people come to support a team, they all come for the same purpose and get into the spirit of the game. When Lakewood's sports teams travel to other parts of the state or country, their families and friends travel with them not only to support them, but also to represent the great city of Lakewood and pride themselves on the tremendous talent that we have.

Along with great sports, Lakewood also includes some of the greatest schools in southern California. The schools of Lakewood are safe and culturally populated. Students can absorb different ideas and customs from different people by being in schools that are diversely peopled. Parents can also feel at ease about sending their children to school because each school accepts a zero tolerance policy regarding violence and dangerous activities. This is an effective way to keep schools safe and keep students feeling secure and protected while attending school.

Being a prospective alumnus of Lakewood High School's Class of 2006, I can personally attest to the fact that the teachers of the schools in Lakewood are the best around. The teachers

that have instructed me at Lakewood are the most accommodating and understanding of any teachers that I have had. They are helpful and constructive in the classrooms and make themselves available for extra help outside of the classroom as well. No teachers are unapproachable, so students do not have to stress about not understanding materials and being afraid to ask for help. Lakewood's staff and faculty set their expectations high when accepting teachers into the school. That is why Lakewood has the best-of-the-best teachers around. Students will leave Lakewood High School with not only a strong knowledge of the subject materials acquired in their classrooms, but they will also be prepared for the real world, have a sense of mature responsibility, and will be ready to start on the paths of their futures.

Another great advantage of living in the city of Lakewood is that July 4th can be fully celebrated here because we are allowed to set off our own fireworks. Besides, what is the 4th of July without fireworks? Granted, most other cities set off fireworks in honor of the holiday, but Lakewood is one of the few cities remaining that permits the *private* use of fireworks on residential streets. This event also brings the neighborhood together, giving us the chance to bond as a community and share in the celebration of a national holiday.

In addition to all the many wonderful traits that Lakewood possesses from a social and educational standpoint, there is also the visual beauty of Lakewood to reflect on. Jacaranda trees are common to this area, and their intense purple flowers make for a bright and beautiful spring season. During the winter months, the frost on the roofs of houses and the icy dew on the grass of lawns beautify the mornings. The changing leaf color and growing piles of leaves on the ground characterize fall. Summertime is filled with activity, and since Lakewood is conveniently positioned between the coastline, mountains, the desert, and a valley, one can travel to any or all

of these places in less than a few hours and make their summer as dynamic and worthwhile as possible.

Lakewood is a great place to live because every opportunity anyone could wish for is at his or her fingertips. It is also a safe community and its residents can sleep soundly at night knowing that they are protected. I am proud to be a resident of this city and I feel I speak for all people of Lakewood when I say that it is home sweet home.