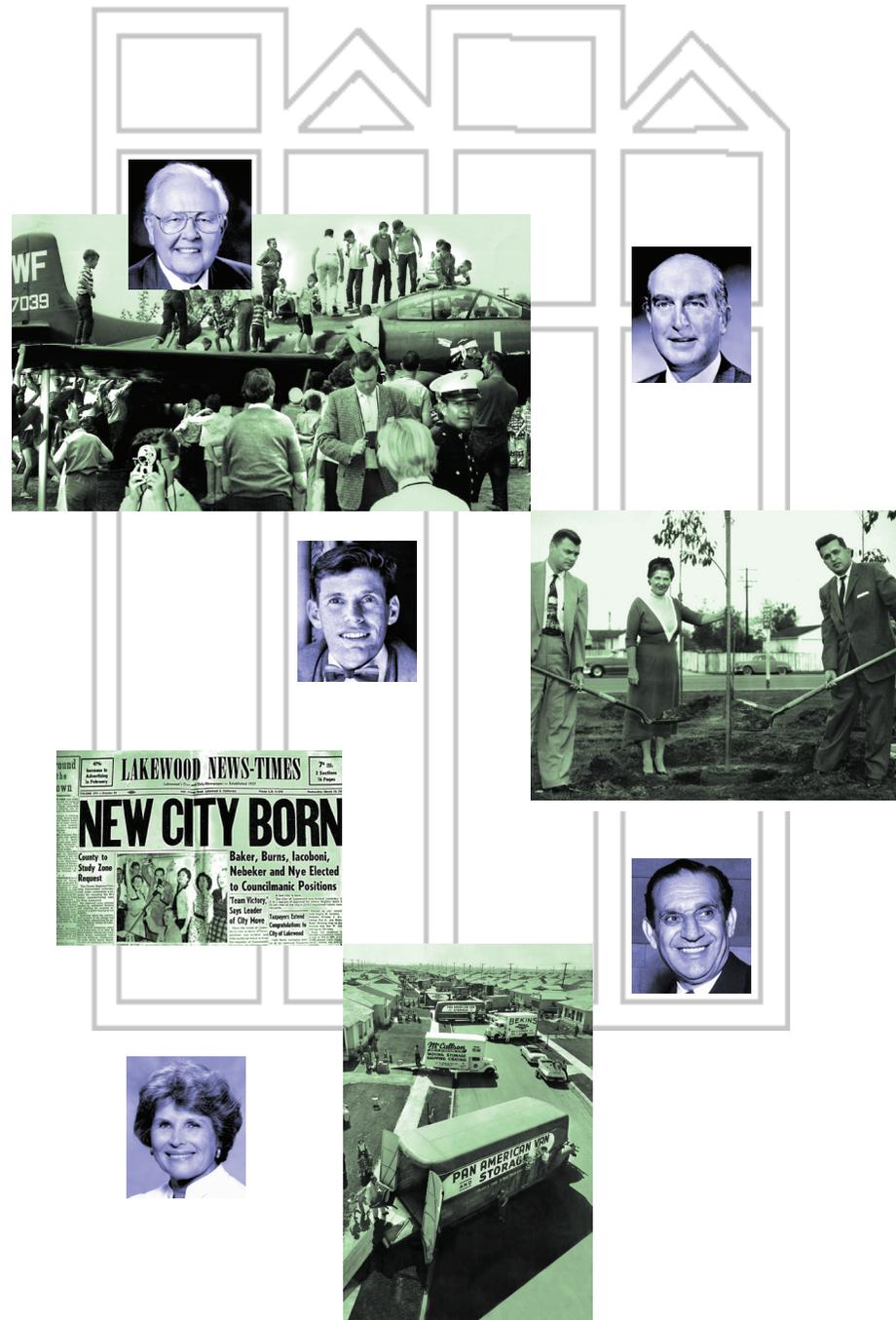


Pillars of Community was made possible by a grant from the S. Mark Taper Foundation as part of the observances of the 50th anniversary of Lakewood's incorporation in 2004. Lakewood is proud to recognize the support of the Foundation, created by pioneering Lakewood developer S. Mark Taper.

Pillars of Community was designed by artist Cheri Gaulke. The pillars incorporate historical photographs from the collection of the City of Lakewood, as well as photographs that illustrate the people, traditions, and values of Lakewood today.

LAKEWOOD'S PILLARS OF COMMUNITY



LAKEWOOD'S PILLARS OF COMMUNITY

Pillars of Community is an artwork commissioned in Lakewood's 50th anniversary year to commemorate the history of Lakewood and celebrate the traditions and values of Lakewood residents. **Pillars of Community** also honors the men and women who have been named "Legends of Lakewood" for their contributions to the Lakewood community since its founding in 1954.

The founding families of Lakewood had many hopes for the future. They held values that they sought to pass to a new generation of residents. They created community traditions that remain a vital part of Lakewood life. These community activities and annual events demonstrate that neighbors in Lakewood are working together to build their community, just as the first residents of Lakewood did in 1954.

The Pillars of Community artwork is three, eleven-foot glass and steel pillars. Each pillar is topped by the symbolic representation of a house. Each pillar has historical photographs that help illustrate the meaning of the pillar. The pillars each



Most of Lakewood was built between 1950 and 1953.



Voters made Lakewood a city in 1954.

have a different theme: one is for the city's founders, the second is for the community's vision of itself, and the third is for the future of the Lakewood community.

Each pillar displays the names of those who are honored as "Legends of Lakewood" and some of the things they have done to build the Lakewood community. Some "Legends of Lakewood" worked to make Lakewood a city. Others created the civic organizations that do so much for Lakewood today.

The three pillars display names of the first inductees into the Lakewood Civic Hall of Fame as "Legends of Lakewood." The members of the Lakewood Civic Hall of Fame are community leaders who are Lakewood's builders, philanthropists, founders of community organizations, elected officials, and generous volunteers.

The names of the "Legends of Lakewood" are displayed on colorful glass bricks set into the panels of each pillar. One panel is different from the others. It is devoted to all of the men and women who fought for Lakewood's incorporation in 1954. We think of these people as our "greatest generation."

Another panel recognizes all of Lakewood's partners in the creation of the Lakewood Plan for municipal service contracting. When Lakewood began, all city services were provided by county departments under an innovative plan developed by John S. Todd, Lakewood's first City Attorney. Today, these Los Angeles County departments still give Lakewood an exceptionally high level of services.

The Pillars of Community artwork honors the past, but the pillars also invite us to look to the future of Lakewood with the example of heroic and visionary men and women to guide us. As new Lakewood "legends" are recognized for their service to the community, their names can be added to the pillars in a continuing process of renewing the city's commitment to its history, traditions, and values.

A special note for young visitors

Young visitors to Pillars of Community should look for all the elements on each pillar and panel. The name of the artwork is at the top of the pillar in metal letters. The theme statement for each pillar is written in big letters on one of the panels.

The names of those who are honored for their contributions to Lakewood are on individual glass bricks. The photographs show these Lakewood “legends” as well as other Lakewood values, traditions, and people.

This guide to Pillars of Community includes a brief description of the photographs on each panel of the three pillars.

Whom would you add?

The pillars show men and women who helped build their community. But there are many community builders in Lakewood and not all of them are shown on Pillars of Community.

If you had the chance to design another Pillar of Community to honor the important values, places, and people in Lakewood, what would you put on your pillar?

- > **Would you add a member of your own family?**
- > **Would you put your school on a pillar? Your favorite sports team?**
- > **Would you include a teacher, coach, or someone from your neighborhood?**
- > **Would it be you? Do you see yourself as a “shining example” of someone who helps build the Lakewood community?**
- > **What traditions and values would you put on your pillar?**



Families stood in long lines to buy a Lakewood home in the early 1950s.

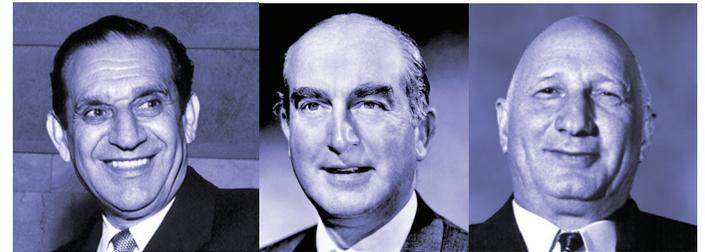
- > **What pictures and stories would tell about your values and family traditions?**



Lakewood Youth Sports began in 1957.

Founders Pillar

We remembered the future.



Boyar, Taper, and Weingart

Louis Boyar, S. Mark Taper, and Ben Weingart were the pioneering developers of Lakewood. Their Lakewood Park Corporation overcame enormous technical difficulties to build more than 17,000 Lakewood homes in less than three years. They sold their houses to young families at a price they could afford. (Not all families were welcome, however. Housing discrimination in the early 1950s meant that most families in new suburbs like Lakewood were white.)

Far more than just a housing tract, the “city of tomorrow” that Boyar, Taper, and Weingart built included dozens of innovations and design features that still contribute to Lakewood’s quality of life. At the heart of Lakewood, they placed the remarkable Lakewood Center, for many years the largest regional shopping center in California.

Lakewood today succeeds as a community of homes, parks, schools, places of worship, and retail centers because of the wise decisions of Lakewood’s builders.

Each of the builders of Lakewood went on to remarkable careers after Lakewood and each of them became noted philanthropists. In particular, the S. Mark Taper Foundation and the Weingart Foundation have been partners with the city in the construction of important public facilities, including the S. Mark Taper Foundation Vista Lodge at Monte Verde Park and the Weingart Senior Center.

City Attorney Emeritus John S. Todd was a young lawyer involved in civic matters even before Lakewood was built. By 1954, he was closely identified with the incorporation movement for the city that had grown up around him. In 1954, he developed an entirely new way for cities like Lakewood to govern themselves.



John S. Todd

Todd conceived the idea that unincorporated communities didn't have to choose between annexation by a big city or building a civic infrastructure from scratch. Instead of having city employees provide all the functions of traditional local government, Todd believed that city councils could turn to the county to deliver municipal services through a system of contracts with county agencies.

Todd correctly reasoned that Lakewood residents were happy with county-provided services. Continuing them by contract would save the new city the huge cost of hiring and managing new police, fire, road, and sanitation departments.

Todd's contribution to local government innovation is often called the Lakewood Plan or "contract city" form of local government. With his guidance and the support of county officials, Lakewood became America's first "contract city" in 1954.

The contract plan for local government was soon copied in a wave of incorporation movements in Los Angeles County and throughout the state. Today, the contracting plan that Todd created shapes the future of one-quarter of California cities and hundreds of cities in all parts of the nation and even in other countries. Lakewood has become famous because of the plan Todd created.

Today, Lakewood City Attorney John S. Todd is honored as the "father of the Lakewood Plan."

The photographs on the Founders Pillar



This sign greeted motorists on Lakewood Boulevard in 1950. It told eager homebuyers that they had come to the right place: the city "as new as tomorrow."



The purchase price of a new Lakewood home in 1950 was about \$11,000. Monthly payments were affordable for working people. Additional housing assistance came from state and federal benefits for military veterans, who could buy a Lakewood home with "no money down."



S. Mark Taper had been a developer of new communities in England before coming to Southern California in the 1930s.



Louis Boyar, least known of the three developers of Lakewood, later became a major supporter of the new State of Israel.



Ben Weingart was a Los Angeles entrepreneur who later founded a chain of discount department stores.



John S. Todd continued his association with Lakewood through 50 years of devoted service to the community. He retired as Lakewood's City Attorney Emeritus in 2004.



The sales office for the new Lakewood homes was originally located where Lakewood Boulevard and Candlewood Street intersect. A portion of one of the sales offices later became the first synagogue in Lakewood.



Lakewood was the newest city in America in 1954, something that Lakewood residents were very proud of.

Vision Pillar

Our best years are ahead of us.

Donald Rochlen is a "Legend of Lakewood" because he brought neighbors together to fight for the incorporation of Lakewood in 1954. He shared with them his energy, enthusiasm, and skill in community organizing.



Donald Rochlen

Rochlen had been hired initially by Ben Weingart to promote the new Lakewood Park development. When, in 1953, efforts were made to annex Lakewood neighborhoods into Long Beach, Rochlen joined with John S. Todd to organize community resistance.

Rochlen helped Todd outmaneuver the piecemeal annexation of Lakewood using Todd's strategy of voter protests to prevent annexation elections from being held. Rochlen's energy and drive greatly impressed Todd. Rochlen then helped the eager volunteers of the incorporation movement in early 1954.

Rochlen also aided in the production of a film shown everywhere in Lakewood advocating the incorporation of Lakewood as a "contract city."

Rochlen is best remembered today for orchestrating

the most famous photograph of early Lakewood (right). As Rochlen remembered in 1999, “New homeowners were moving in at the rate of sixty families a day. So to symbolize that, we got sixty moving vans on the street and told the people just to come out and put out a few pieces of furniture on the lawn.” Rochlen’s staged photograph was printed in Life magazine and became an icon of suburban America.

The first members of the Lakewood City Council

– Gene Nebeker, Angelo Iacoboni, George Nye, Jr., William Burns, and Robert Baker – were among thousands of war veterans who migrated to Los Angeles County in the early 1950s and purchased homes in Lakewood. In 1954, they took John S. Todd’s “contract plan” for city government and made the untested plan work.



Swearing in

Baker, Burns, Iacoboni, Nebeker, and Nye were elected to the first Lakewood City Council on March 9, 1954, when residents voted by 7,524 to 4,868 (a margin of 3 to 2), to

incorporate Lakewood. Already well known as president of the Lakewood Chamber of Commerce, the Exchange Club, and Sons of Italy, Iacoboni (then age 35) received more votes than any of the 38 other candidates. Iacoboni was followed in the tally by real estate broker Gene Nebeker (then age 32), newspaper reporter Burns (age 41), Nye who was a teacher (age 33), and engineer Bob Baker (age 31). When the city council met for the first time on April 16, they named Iacoboni to serve as Lakewood’s first mayor.

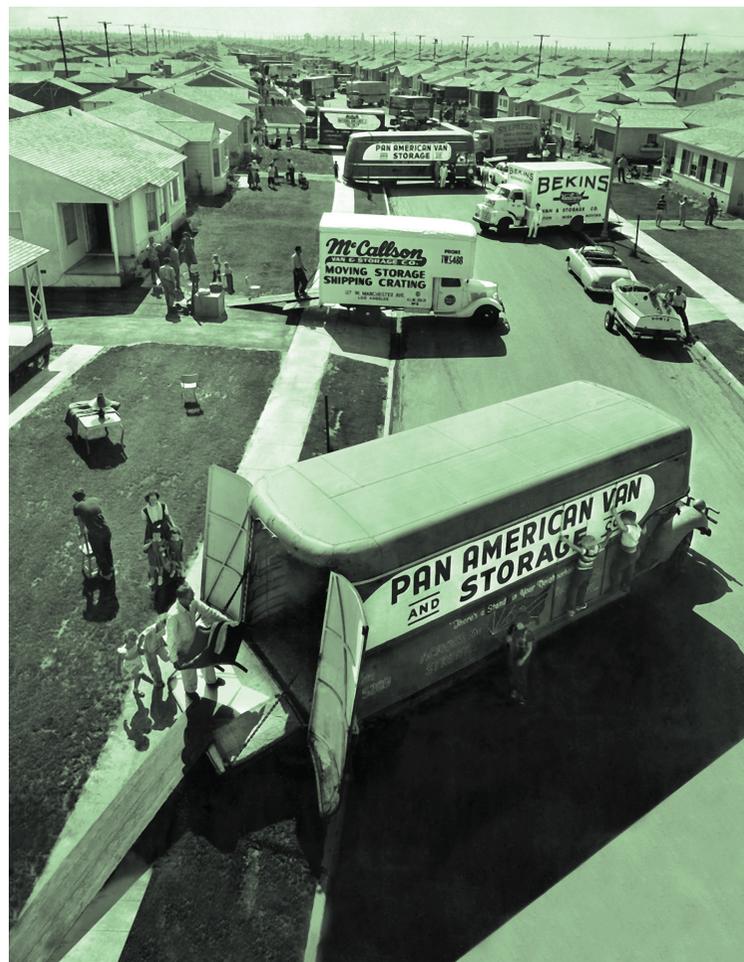
The first city council meeting continued through the night into the morning hours of the next day as they read the code book of city ordinances, formally adopting each one.

“Let’s give them this chance to govern themselves, and one of these days they’ll be showing us a thing or two about government.”

—Herbert C. Legg, Los Angeles County Supervisor
January 1954

Los Angeles County departments were Lakewood’s partners in providing world-class municipal services through contracting in 1954. Today, they are still the city’s principal service providers. Without the commitment of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, the Sheriff’s Department, the County Fire Department, the County Department of Public Works, the Office of the County Counsel, the County of Los Angeles Public Library, and many other county agencies, the Lakewood Plan for cityhood in 1954 would never have succeeded.

Help in circulating the petitions to hold an election to create the new city came from off-duty fire fighters, for example.



Moving day in Lakewood in 1953

At critical moments like this in the battle for incorporation, it was the leadership of county officials that gave Lakewood supporters the confidence to succeed when many observers claimed it would be impossible.

In the years following Lakewood’s incorporation, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, the Sheriff of Los Angeles County, and heads of other county departments expanded the reach of the “contract plan” to many newly incorporated communities and eventually to more than forty cities in Los Angeles County. Later, non-profit agencies and private businesses also became major providers of city services by contract.

Contracting with the county brought the benefits of local self-government to communities that otherwise might have become an anonymous district within some big city’s boundaries.

It gave hope to new homeowners that their aspirations for themselves and their children might be realized.



Lakewood Sheriff’s Station in 1959

Lakewood's "greatest generation" of founding families moved into new Lakewood homes in the early 1950s and found, even in the midst of their diversity, that they shared common hopes for the future of their sons and daughters. They built a thriving community based on those hopes and dreams in the early 1950s. They resisted the lure of annexation by Long Beach in 1953. And they put their faith in the members of the first Lakewood City Council in 1954 by choosing to incorporate their community as the first "contract city" in the nation.

Through those difficult, early years, Lakewood's "greatest generation" of founding families clung to the values that still shape Lakewood: volunteerism, loyalty, good government, service to their community, respect for law, family recreation, concern for youth, and commitment to education.



Lakewood residents in 1957.

The photographs on the Vision Pillar



Lakewood's parks met a growing need in the 1950s and 1960s as the number of young people in Lakewood grew.



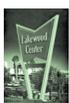
Lakewood's first city council was sworn into office on April 16, 1954 in a storefront city hall in the Faculty Shops at Lakewood Center. With their hands raised for the oath of office are (from the left) Gene Nebeker, Angelo Iacoboni, George Nye, Jr., William Burns, and Robert Baker



Joe Covas (left) and Frances Veeder mapped the fight to prevent Lakewood's annexation in 1953.



Fire protection in Lakewood in the 1950s came from the Los Angeles County Fire Department. Today, three county fire stations protect Lakewood homes and lives.



The construction of Lakewood Center was a gamble. Would shoppers want to walk through a pedestrian mall? Would retailers prosper or fail? Today, Lakewood Center is one of California's most successful shopping centers.



The staff of the Lakewood Sheriff's Station in 1959 poses for a group photograph. Today, more than 300 deputies and civilian staff members are based at the Lakewood Sheriff's Station.



The arrival of so many new families in Lakewood was captured by Life magazine in this famous image.



It was a night for celebration in March 1954 when the votes were counted, and Lakewood residents learned they had made their community into the nation's first "contract city."



The majestic M on each of the four sides of the May Co. building in Lakewood Center proudly declared the coming of a new kind of retail experience for shoppers.



Don Rochlen brought his remarkable energy to making Lakewood a city.



Lakewood residents in 1957 – so young and optimistic – saw a bright future for their community.



Pan American Festival

Community Pillar

Times change. Values don't.

Dr. Walter Montano and Jess Solter were Lakewood Village neighbors and fellow Lakewood Lions Club members in the 1940s. They shook hands over their backyard fence in 1947, pledging to begin a community program that would

foster good relations between the United States and the people of Latin America.

Their inspiration began the oldest community event in Lakewood. Starting with a flag exchange program and expanding over the years to include a community festival and other community events, Lakewood's spirit of pan-American friendship never wavered.



Montano and Solter

When three Lakewood parks were dedicated in 1957, they were named after Latin American heroes: Simón Bolívar, whose armies freed half of South America from Spanish rule; José San Martín, who liberated southern Peru and Chile; and José Del Valle, who wrote a declaration of independence for Central America.

Today, Montano and Solter's tradition of celebrating pan-Americanism continues. The annual Pan American Festival kicks off each May with the El Comienzo Luncheon, followed by the three-day Pan American Fiesta at Mayfair Park. The festivities include amusement rides; music and entertainment; and food, craft, community, and cultural booths.

Former Mayor Jacqueline Rynerson

joined other young mothers and fathers in the battle to prevent annexation by Long Beach in 1953 and secure the incorporation of Lakewood in 1954. With her husband, Bud Rynerson, she walked petitions and helped organize dozens of pro-incorporation volunteers. When her efforts were successful, Rynerson went on to serve her community as a leader of the city's Recreation and Community Services Commission and the Lakewood Coordinating Council.



Jacqueline Rynerson

In 1978, Rynerson was elected to the city council. She served three terms as mayor, retiring after twelve years as a city council member. During her years of dedicated service, Rynerson began the Lakewood Beautiful Home awards program that honors pride in property upkeep with annual awards for Lakewood's best looking homes.

Through her efforts, the volunteer-based Project Shepherd program was begun in 1973 to assist needy families. She also assisted in the development of the Weingart Senior Center, the expansion of River Park in eastern Lakewood, and the purchase of the adjacent Lakewood Equestrian Center. The park was named Rynerson Park in her honor in 1990.

The values that Lakewood's founding families established in 1954 still flourish in traditions that continue today: Lakewood Youth Sports, the Pan American Festival, Lakewood Volunteer Day, Lakewood Tot Lot parent cooperatives, Lakewood's many civic and service organizations, Lakewood's PTAs, and the city's religious congregations.

In recent years, the values of Lakewood have flourished in new programs such as Meals on Wheels, the Teens in



Top: Patriot Day, park sports in the 1960s, Sky Knight helicopter patrol
Bottom: swim class, Lakewood Equestrian Center

Lakewood Care volunteer program, the Project Shepherd program aiding needy families, the Lakewood Beautiful Home Awards program, Lakewood Neighborhood Watch, and other law enforcement volunteer activities sponsored by the city and the Lakewood Sheriff's Station.

Lakewood's values also are evident in the expansion of community services, the upkeep of city parks, and the partnership between the Lakewood Sheriff's Station and the community in Lakewood's program of community-based law enforcement.

Your name here!

The last panel on the Community pillar is reserved for you, should you accept the challenge taken up by Lakewood residents in 1954 to build a community of hope and dignity for residents of every age and background.

Lakewood today is very different in many ways from the city its first residents knew in 1954. Lakewood is much more diverse, for one thing. But in many other ways, Lakewood hasn't changed. Lakewood is still a community of homes, neighborhoods, schools, stores, and places of worship.

This panel asks:

- > **How can you make a difference to your neighborhood and community?**
- > **What is your vision for Lakewood's future? What would you change about Lakewood today? What should stay the same?**
- > **What traditions and values should Lakewood continue? Would Lakewood be a better place if new traditions were adopted?**

The photographs on the Community Pillar



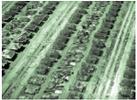
Olympic gold medalist Lisa Fernandez trained and played at Lakewood parks. The baseball stadium at Mayfair Park is named in her honor.



Dave Rodda (standing in the back row) was a pioneering advocate of youth sports programs for women beginning in the 1960s. He became Lakewood's director of Recreation and Community Services and a noted Olympic coach.



Track, park league basketball, and flag football were part of the city's youth sports programs in the 1950s. They are still part of the award-winning Lakewood Youth Sports program.



Seen from above, Lakewood in 1951 looked nothing like what it does today. Some aerial photographs from the early 1950s, before the growth of neighborhoods and community facilities, depicted Lakewood as a barren, empty landscape.



The Lakewood Equestrian Center at Rynerson Park evokes the city's rural past for a new generation of residents.



In this photograph, Mayor Iacoboni (far right) helps city staff members plant trees that form today's canopy of green over city playgrounds and picnic areas.



Mae Boyar Park, named for the wife of original developer Louis Boyar, once had this memorable "giant" as its theme play structure.



The Marine Corps jet fighter at Del Valle Park is from the Korean War era. As the photograph shows, the jet had originally been given to the city as a piece of playground equipment.



Jess Solter and Dr. Walter Montano, founders of the Lakewood Pan American Festival, rode in the Pan American Parade for many years.



Jacqueline Rynerson was a city commissioner, a city council member, and Lakewood's mayor. She also was very active in the movement to incorporate Lakewood in 1954.



Patriot Day events in Lakewood remember the victims of 9/11/2001.



The recreational open space at Rynerson Park includes this field of California wildflowers.



The Weingart Senior Center, named in honor of Lakewood developer Ben Weingart, promotes a healthy lifestyle for older Lakewood residents.



The annual Pan American Fiesta at Mayfair Park honors the people and cultures of Latin America. It is one of the nation's oldest community programs honoring pan-American friendship.



The city's Sky Knight program is the nation's oldest day-and-night helicopter patrol. Begun in 1966, Sky Knight flies over Lakewood and other cities served by the Lakewood Sheriff's Station.



The flourishing trees in Lakewood parks reflect the city's commitment to the environment. Lakewood's park and street trees are an "urban forest" that has been honored by the National Arbor Day Foundation.



These students are sorting Project Shepherd donations. The city's history shows that volunteerism is essential to the health and stability of the community.



Lakewood's extensive youth sports program includes swim instruction at two city-operated pools.



On Volunteer Day, Lakewood residents help seniors and the disabled with home and landscape improvement projects.