

# Neighborhood Resource Center

Training, Technology and Resources for Neighborhood Organizations, Neighborhood Leadership Program,  
Home Improvement Rebates, Neighborhood Problem Solving



## SEEDS OF HOPE ALUMNI NEWS

Alumni Reunion Dinner

January 17, 2012



Long Beach is our home. We work here, live here, shop here and enjoy our neighborhoods in the city we care for. It is unavoidable to not know that we are living in difficult times. We proudly present a few of the 2011 accomplishments of our 522 Neighborhood Leadership Program Alumni as proof that times like these can bring out the best in people. Take a moment to read the stories of local leaders making a difference through their work in the community.

With every deed you are sowing a seed, though the harvest you may not see.

[Ella Wheeler Wilcox](#)



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## Neighborhood Leadership Program Alumni Highlights

**Lysa Gamboa-Levy** was recognized by Long Beach Pride, with their top honor. She received the Whitey Littlefield Community Bridge Builder Award and was featured in the 2011 parade as an award winner.

### Class of 1992

**Teresa Gonzalez** recruited a group of 20 people from Madres Unidas to attend the Jamie Oliver Food Revolution cooking classes that were held on the Pacific Coast Highway campus of Long Beach City College. She continues to work with parents at Edison Elementary School to provide the Raising A Reader program to help families to read to their young children.

### Class of 1994

**Margaret Madden**, serves on Neighborhoods, USA's Board of Directors and was re-elected to serve as Membership Chair for 2011-2012.

### Class of 1997

**Sharon McLucas** was featured in the Press-Telegram for an event in Carson named "Forgotten Images" -- a traveling education exhibit and museum. She spent 16 years collecting items and artifacts that depict 200 years of black history.

### Class of 1998

**Val Lerch** is working for Congresswoman Laura Richardson as her Senior Field Representative. His new duties include representing the Congresswoman in Long Beach, Homeland Security, Veterans Affairs, and Military Academy appointments.

### Class of 1996

**Autrilla Watkins-Scott**, amongst all she's done since graduating, she has written a book. The title of the book is "I Remember When – A Town Named Hope, Arkansas". It recounts the experience of growing up in Hope, AK and how it has laid the foundation for who she is today and all the valuable lessons she's learned in life. She was recognized on the front page of the Press-Telegram this month.



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## Class of 2001

**Martha Cota**, serves as a Community Outreach Liaison for the Long Beach Alliance for Children With Asthma and organized the Third Annual Community Resources and Health Fair at MacArthur Park. 6th District Councilmember Dee Andrews, The Ebenezer Church and First Lady, Nancy Foster hosted the event. Additionally, Martha was elected onto the Steering Committee for Building Healthy Communities (BHC) as a representative.

**Reverend Sunshine Daye**, was featured in the Long Beach contribution to the national "It Gets Better" Project, a series of videos aimed at supporting Lesbian Gay, Bisexual and Transgender youth who may be experiencing bullying or harassment because of their sexual orientation. She also held several life-changing seminars/workshops using a "Review, Release and Renew Process!"

## Class of 2002

**Raymond Chavarria** was elected Chair of the Steering Committee for Building Healthy Communities (BHC), Long Beach. His responsibilities include overseeing the goals of BHC and the \$10 million being invested through BHC into Central Long Beach and other targeted areas. Raymond was also selected to be on the Governance Board of First 5 LA for Healthy Children. First 5 LA is investing \$45 million into Central Long Beach to improve prenatal care & preparing children for kindergarten.

## Class of 2003

**Annie Greenfeld-Wisner**, Chair of the Central Project Area Committee was published in the Press Telegram supporting the work of the Redevelopment Agency as an economic driver and revenue generator for our communities, our schools and for the city of Long Beach itself. She also hosted the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday Workday/Potluck at Peace Garden, which included: harvesting, planting, garden maintenance projects and entertainment. Annie also continues her work serving on the City of Long Beach's Community Development Advisory Commission.

**Alicia Carrera** was recognized at the 48th Gene Lentzner Award Ceremony, hosted by the California Conference for Equality and Justice (CCEJ), for 12 years of involvement in the community. She has been a tireless voice of the community beginning in 1997, when she was the most active member on the Mother's Brigade, a program created to aide in the safety of children walking home after school. She also volunteered as the Site Coordinator for the Summer Night Lights Program at Drake Park.

**Gabrielle Weeks** and **Coby Skye** created and posted an inspiring video on YouTube entitled, "Gabrielle's Story" created by U.C. Berkeley. The video outlines how Gabrielle created environmental and sustainability projects. It shows how she's converted her front lawn and backyard into an edible garden, using clothes lines instead of dryers, as well as how she personally chooses to not participate in the 'throw away' mentality. The video is an inspiring work on how small change, creates big impact.



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## Class of 2004

**Gavin McKiernan**, Event Organizer of the Long Beach Neighborhood Foundation, hosted the 4th annual 2011 Wrigley River Run on June 11, 2011. The popular 5k, 10k and Tadpole Trot (kids 1k run) is one of only two races in Southern California with a separate start time for jogging strollers! If you missed out on the bands, the cheerleaders, the Shoe Dog, and one of the best post-race food spreads you will ever find, mark your calendar for this year's event, June 2, 2012.

**Ricardo Linarez** was re-elected as the California 55th Assembly District Delegate. He was also a guest speaker discussing community engagement at California State University, Long Beach (CSULB). As President of the Lafayette Parent Booster Club, he helped to organize the 2011 Annual Harvest Festival at Lafayette Elementary School to raise over \$8,000 to purchase printers for classrooms. Ricardo also assisted Lambda Theta Phi Fraternity to fundraise and distribute over 305 Thanksgiving dinners to families in Long Beach and surrounding cities.

**Henry Salzer** serves on the City of Long Beach's Board of Examiners, Appeals and Condemnations (BEAC). He serves as Vice Chair of North Alamitos Beach Association (NABA), and as the Treasurer for the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC).

## Class of 2005

**LaRee A. Pernick** is a participant of the Team In Training program and organized a hike at the Grand Canyon to raise funds to help stop leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's Lymphoma and Melanoma. She completed this event in honor of all individuals who are battling blood cancers.

**Easther Mulipola** was featured in the "Inside Long Beach District 9", Your Community Newsletter, November, Issue #66. She's quoted, "I want to be involved in programs that benefit our youth and overall community. It's important to include everyone in the positive changes happening in the 9th District."

**Colleen McDonald** hosted a clean up in Wrigley along with neighborhood businesses. Colleen's efforts encouraged the businesses to have quarterly clean ups of their own.

## Class of 2006

**P.G. Herman** participated in Human Relations and Facilitator's Training with the California Conference for Equality and Justice (CCEJ). She also continues her work as Community Liaison with Long Beach Organic. P.G. is also a volunteer of Long Beach Rescue Mission and Food Finders, Inc. She has been a member of the Central Redevelopment Project Area Committee for five years and has been active with the Friends of Alice Robinson monthly feedings at Martin Luther King, Jr. Park.



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**MsT Musze** continues to be an active member and proponent in the art community. MsT has been working very closely with Catalyst Network of Communities and Long Beach Creative to help promote the collaboration and networking of people, groups and organizations and event planning.

## Class of 2008

**Caprice S. Rothe**, Directed "Life is Mostly Straws" at the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual New Works Festival and produced "Apogee/Perigee" at the Long Beach Playhouse. She also organized a yoga and game night for seniors at her home. Additionally, in support of Live Theatre in Los Angeles, Caprice directed the production of the play "Night Mother".

**Diane West** proposed a project selected as a 2011 finalist for the Pepsi Refresh Project grant program, making this the fifth group project selected from Long Beach in the competition. Her project was also a featured story on December 26, 2011 on ABC Channel 7. Several local organizations partnered to launch a campaign to win a community \$50K Pepsi Refresh grant to fund the project entitled "Students at Sea" that would make it possible for over 300 high school students from 4 high schools in Long Beach to participate in a day at sea aboard small sailing vessels. In addition, she is the Program Coordinator for the Advanced Women's Program, the largest homeless women's veteran program in the nation! Serving over 600 since their opening in November 2001, the program offers a 90-day work re-entry program, case management, career counseling, job development and a full service career center.

**Yoklim Tauch** organized and invited her neighbors to work together at a MacArthur Park/Whittier School Neighborhood clean-up on December 17, 2011.

**Charles Wade, Jr.** participated in Peace Week activities as a member of the Long Beach Peace Garden Drum Circle Team. He also works as a promoter for events at Roscoe's Seabird Jazz Lounge.

**Dan Pressburg** helped create the North 40 Community Garden with the Grant Neighborhood Association.

## Class of 2009

**Alma Campos**, founder of New Generations NG, Inc., organized their annual event called "The Gift", which is held at the Washington Middle School soccer field. The soccer field transforms into a carnival of free fun, where families can play games, watch performances and even get a mini-makeover with free haircuts and manicures, as well as enjoy dozens of activity booths.

**Ina Parker-Hicks**, has been directly involved with the Southern California Green Economic Council as an Operations and Marketing Manager. She helped organize and find locations to have the event.



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She also was the Festival Director of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Green Long Beach! Festival, which raised environmental awareness and appreciation for eco-friendly local businesses, non-profits, educators, and the arts.

## Class of 2010

**Alice Robinson** and **Juanita Wilson** obtained sponsorship from the City's Weed and Seed Program for a plaque to be installed near a bench at Burnett Library. The plaque was dedicated on April 23, 2011 and it identifies the bench as part of the Neighborhood Leadership Program Class of 2010 Friends of Alice Robinson community project. Additionally, Friends of Alice Robinson gathered on August 3, 2011 to celebrate the 8<sup>th</sup> year of the lunch program at Martin Luther King, Jr. Park.

**Jim Danno** is the Community Outreach Coordinator for Willmore City Heritage Association (WCHA) and helped create the Willmore Heritage Garden. The project includes a low water use landscape that cleaned, landscaped and beautified an abandoned area located directly north of the intersection of W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street and Maine Avenue, adjacent to the 710 North freeway entrance. Jim also fundraised and helped create a holiday lighting installation at Drake Park.

**Juanita Wilson** was presented the 2011 Peace Maker Award for her accomplishments with the Central Neighborhood Advisory Committee. The acknowledgements come from the 6<sup>th</sup> District Councilman Dee Andrews and the Human Dignity Program. She was also the Event Chair for the Central Neighborhood Advisory Committee's Black History Program. Juanita also worked in conjunction with the 6<sup>th</sup> District Council Office on a collection of 600 pounds for clothing and supplies for tornado victims in Alabama.

**Elliott Gonzales** was featured in a Long Beach Post article for his idea to beautify the rooftop park above the Main Library that he envisions as a rooftop garden and cultural gathering place for the community where they can engage in gardening and the arts. Mayor Bob Foster appointed him to the City of Long Beach Sustainable City Commission and asked him to put together a plan for what he'd like to see done. Elliot created the "Our Urban Paradise" group on Facebook to gain support from the community. He held an event on February 12, 2011 entitled "My City Hall." The event featured music by artists, tours of the Main Library's art galleries and discussions about the future of the Civic Center.

**Joanne Westpoint** is volunteering for the South Florida Region American Red Cross and is working with the Disaster Services Team responding to local disasters such as the Broward County Flooding and local fires. She was also deployed to Hurricane Irene 2011 in New York as a client caseworker for 21 days.

## Class of 2011



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**Emily Tanaka**, Community Advocate for the Willmore City Heritage Association, helped to organize the Winter in Willmore event on Saturday December 10, 2011. Hundreds gathered in Drake Park to celebrate. Santa made an appearance and children were able to take pictures with him and enjoy other activities. The Department of Parks, Recreation and Marine led craft booths, children's faces were painted, delicious tamales and champurado were served, arts and crafts were sold, a DJ set a festive mood, a jazz band played, the mariachi band rocked festive tunes, canned goods were collected for Food Finders, and everyone enjoyed the opportunity drawing. Emily also volunteered to paint the faces of over one hundred children at the Back 2 School Hope Fest in support of The H.O.P.E. Foundation and Stevenson Elementary School students.

**Otis Hogan** was featured in the Inside Long Beach District 9, Your Community Newsletter, July Issue # 47. He was quoted "When we as individuals are stronger, our connected communities are stronger and when communities are strengthened, we all become stronger." Otis is also an organizer of the 9th Annual Lime Ave. Neighborhood Block Party.

**Jesus Estrada**, Community Advocate from The Children's Clinic, is an organizer for the Jamie Oliver Food Foundation, Mobile Kitchen Educational Cooking Program. The Foundation is a new non-profit organization created to support chef and activist Jamie Oliver's mission: to drive a social movement for cultural change, advocate for better food choices and integrity through the food chain, and develop educational programs to promote healthy scratch cooking, in particular in schools and home kitchens throughout vulnerable communities. Additionally, Jesus has assisted in coordinating Nutrition Revolution, a collaboration between First 5 LA, the Jamie Oliver Food Foundation and the California Endowment.

**Ida "Marie" Briggs**, Program Director of Advocates Committed Together in Service (A.C.T.S.), partnered with like organizations to help assist children and families in need. She also facilitated a jewelry-making class for LA's Prom Closet's "Dress to Remember" event. These dresses are collected, distributed and fit as prom attire for students attending Animo Locke Tech High School for the H.O.P.E. Foundation's Fit For A Queen/King project. She helped to organize and volunteered at the Back @ School Hope Fest at Stevenson Elementary School.

**Donna Marykwas** continues her work with Long Beach Grows, a local organization advocating for urban agriculture. Long Beach Grows and its effort to make changes to the Long Beach Municipal Code were featured in the Press Telegram on October 27, 2011.

**Jorge Rivera** continues to work with his online show, Long Beach Voices, which is designed to capture people, places and events around Long Beach in hopes their videos will help inspire, motivate and connect people of the city.

**Liliana Carillo** is active with the Starr King Neighborhood School walking groups and weekly clean-ups. She currently holds the position of President of the Starr King Parent Teachers Organization and



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she assists with helping the Starr King and DeForest Park Neighborhood Associations continuously grow. In April 2011, she was voted District Captain for the 9<sup>th</sup> District. The District Captain program provides opportunities for 9th District residents to get involved in the community.

**Collin Sam** was presented with the “30, Under 30” Award for Making a Difference Day, by Assemblymember Bonnie Lowenthal.

**Joy Mendoza**, provided entertainment at the 2011 Neighborhood Leadership Graduation. In July 2011, she did a show with Stearns Musical Theatre called “Swing Time!” which was a 40’s musical variety show. In October 2011, she also did “Another Opening, Another Show – A Day at Dress Rehearsals” which was hosted by the Wrigley Association. She serves as the Vice President for Wrigley Association.

**Sidney Cramer** and **Emily Tanaka** were featured in a segment on LBTV that presents what the Neighborhood Resource Center has to offer the community. The information piece airs on LBTV, Long Beach Channel 8.

## ALUMNI IN ACTION!

**Alice Robinson (Class of 2010)** was featured in the Press Telegram’s Reader Page for the eight-year celebration of a lunch program at King Park, which was started by **Alice** and **Stella Davis (Class of 2000)**.

Neighborhood Leadership Program staff were fortunate to be able to connect fellow graduates during time of need. This year, Danita Strauss continued a tradition that began with her mother **Shirley Willis (Class of 2008)** by helping to provide a Thanksgiving dinner gift package to another graduate's family. Danita did this to honor the memory of her mother who passed away in 2011. In addition, another alumni anonymously helped TWO families during the holidays. Thank you 'Secret Santa'!!!

**Jorge Rivera and Esmeralda Flanagan (Class of 2011)**, have been working with various groups around Long Beach including Catalyst Community and **Dan Pressburg (Class of 2008)**, in getting a Farmer’s Market started in different areas around Long Beach.

On Saturday, December 17, 2011 the newly formed Friends of Daryle Black Park held a “Santa at the Park” event. The event was a photo session for families to take their own photos with Santa. Children received a candy cane from Santa, and a bag of cookies, juice, and a stuffed animal and toy donated by the Long Beach Police Department Youth Services Division. Over 60 families participated in the event. Some of the alumni involved included **Colleen McDonald (Class of 2005)**, **PG Herman (Class of 2006)**, **Tom Flores (Class of 2010)**, and **Alice Robinson, (Class of 2010)**.



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In May 2011, **Dan Pressburg (Class of 2008)** and **Jack Smith (Class of 2006)**, **Annie Greenfeld-Wisener**, and **Deborah Kearn** traveled to Anchorage, Alaska to compete in the national Neighborhood of the Year competition and Better Balance for Long Beach (BBLB) won 1<sup>st</sup> Place in the category of Best Neighborhood Program for their Christmas Store and the Neighborhood of the Year Grand Prize from Neighborhoods, USA (NUSA).

In December 2011, **Annie Greenfeld-Wisner (Class of 2003)**, **Francisco Rodriguez (Class of 2004)**, **Colleen McDonald (Class of 2005)**, **Jack C. Smith (Class of 2006)**, **Dan Pressburg (Class of 2008)**, and **Joy Mendoza (Class of 2011)** were all active participants in the Better Balance for Long Beach One Day 'Shop with Dignity' Christmas Store.

**Annie Greenfeld-Wisner (Class of 2003)**, and **Deborah Kearn (Class of 2009)** helped the Central Neighborhood Advisory Committee (CNAC) and Neighborhood Advisory Group (NAG) win the 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Award for the Peace Garden at Martin Luther King Park.

In December 2011, **Annie Greenfeld-Wisner (Class of 2003)**, **Jack C. Smith (Class of 2006)**, **Sylvia** and **Ken Williamson (Class of 2007)** and **Dan Pressburg (Class of 2008)** planned and put on a North Long Beach community party.

**Martha Cota (Class of 2001)**, **Raymond Chavarria (Class of 2002)**, **Nelly Garcia (Class of 2004)**, **Concepción Garcia (Class of 2005)**, **Clara Garcia (Class of 2006)**, and **Francisco Sunun (Class of 2011)** helped found the Latin American Community Center (LACC), which is a non-profit organization serving Latino Families in the 6<sup>th</sup> District. They hold monthly meetings every 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday at MacArthur Park.

**Kathryn Jones (Class of 2005)**, **Sandra Johnson (Class of 2009)** and **Christina Galvan (Class of 2011)** planned and organized the Windward Village Community Fair. The fair addressed senior concerns, medical and Medicare questions, provided information about utility bills & home improvement topics, as well as safety and disaster prevention, and much more with over 40 organizations/businesses in attendance.

**Martha Cota (Class of 2001)** and **Monica Parrilla (Class of 2005)** held a workshop at John Muir K-8 Academy School regarding how air pollution affects health, different types of cancer, heart disease, birth defects, asthma, and respiratory problems.

**Annie Greenfeld-Wisner (Class of 2003)**, **Charles Wade Jr. (Class of 2008)**, **Deborah Kearn (Class of 2009)**, and **Alice Robinson (Class of 2010)** received the Peace Maker 2011 Award from Councilman Dee Andrews.

**Hilario Avena (Class of 2007)** and **Dawn Del Bello (Class of 2011)** volunteered at a tree planting that was held by the 1<sup>st</sup> Council District Office on 7<sup>th</sup> Street.



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**Linda Palacios (Class of 1994), Jana Shields (Class of 1997), Annie Greenfeld-Wisner (Class of 2003), Colleen McDonald (Class of 2005), Jack Smith (Class of 2006), PG Herman (Class of 2006), and Juanita Wilson (Class of 2010)** served on the Redevelopment Central Project Area Committee.

**George Miller (Class of 2002) and Easter Flora (Class of 2007)** serve on the City of Long Beach Citizens Advisory Commission on Disabilities.

**Val Lerch (Class of 1998), Sylvia Williamson (Class of 2007), Dan Pressburg (Class of 2008), and Debbie Flynn (Class of 2009)** served on the Redevelopment North Project Area Committee.

**Laura Storke (Class of 2007) and Anna Ulaszewski (Class of 2009)** serve on The Long Beach Housing Development Company Board.

## *In Memoriam...*

Dedicated graduates of the Neighborhood Leadership Program gave so much to our community and worked tirelessly to improve our city. They live on in our memories and in the work they did in bettering the lives of others through their selfless efforts, their commitment, and perseverance.

**Mary Islas (Class of 2001)      Joey Summers (Class of 2008)      Shirley Willis (Class of 2009)**

