

YMCA of Greater Long Beach

President's Letter

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This letter is a tribute to the ideal that the highest calling is to give of oneself for the benefit of others, with out expectation.

Like any good story there is an infinite number of ways it can be told. The small handful of people who appear in this letter were chosen because they were best able to move this particular telling truth along. In truth, what has made the YMCA of Greater Long Beach such an amazing venture is the contribution of millions of people involved over the course of 125 years. Without exaggeration, it would be easy to call out the names of ten thousand heroes from this history – volunteers and staff alike – on whose shoulders we stand today. Their belief, vision, and energy has turned the YMCA's mission into reality.

Through their imagination, passion and generosity, the YMCA improves all our lives.

125TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE YMCA OF GREATER LONG BEACH (1884 - 2009)

More than a hundred years before there was a City of Long Beach, familiar names and landmarks dotted the original coastal settlement that was carved in 1784 from a massive Spanish land grant encompassing the historic 28,000-acre Rancho Los Alamitos and 27,000-acre Ranch Los Cerritos.

While American pioneers, inspired by the discoveries of Lewis and Clark, were streaming to the rural frontier at the turn of the nineteenth century, an English Farm boy named George Williams was venturing instead to the big city along with thousands of other young men in search of work. Far from their homes and families, they labored for the railroad and in factories for twelve hours a day, six days a week. Many slept in crowded room over company shops to evade the countless thugs, pickpockets, and drunks who frequented London's streets. Fortunate enough to be employed as a sales assistant in a draper's shop, a forerunner of today's department store, Williams felt personally compelled to provide an alternative for those who lived on the streets. When conditions worsened, he and sever coworkers formed a bible study and prayer group in 1844. Not the usual weekly evangelical meeting, this small assembly crossed the rigid lines which separated denominations, faiths and social classes – the first Young Men's Christian Association... The YMCA.

By 1854, there were 24 YMCAs in England and the Y was expanding to seven other nations including the United States here sea captain Thomas Sullivan was deeply concerned about the temptations facing young men in North American seaports and founded America's first YMCA in Boston.

In the West the same decade saw the end of California's Gold Rush, replaced by the lure of silver in the hills of Nevada. Within six years the fabled Rancho Los Cerritos site would be sold to the family of Lewellyn Bixby, prominent ranchers and developers who still reside in the area. Meanwhile, competition between the new Santa Fe Railroad and the older Southern Pacific line was bringing throngs of visitors to this budding section of the Southern California coast. Did these circumstances contribute to the founding of their first YMCA? Perhaps its founders shared the nation's shift in priorities in the post-civil war 1800's. The answer is not known.

BEFORE THERE WAS A LONG BEACH

What is known is that even before Long Beach officially became a city, the first officers of the local YMCA were elected on May 10, 1884, and a reading room for their 64 members was established at the southwest corner of First and Pine. In fact so intrinsic to this fledgling community was its YMCA that when the city was incorporated 4 years later, two of the four donated parcels of land were designated to the Y, one for a building site and one to sell for construction funds.

In 1905 a series of urgent town meetings was called to map out plans for a permanent residence for the YMCA and a suitable site was gifted provided sufficient funding could be raised. Accepting the challenge, C.J. Walker spoke at a town gathering described as "packed to the doors." Less than a year later, sufficient monies were raised and the community erected its first YMCA building.

RINGING THE BELL

By the turn of the next century, the American Y was building its own facilities with gymnasiums, swimming pools, auditoriums, dormitories, and even bowling alleys. Summer Camps were introduced as well as exercise classes – the precursor to today's aerobics, weight training, and cardiovascular fitness classes- and the Y literally invented basketball and volleyball.

In the prospering community of Long Beach, the YMCA was also growing under the inspiring leadership of General Secretary Robert Gossom, who established the Y's first permanent and somewhat primitive camp in the Santa Anita Canyon in 1913. By the end of World War I, membership had reached an all-time high of 1,200 while overcrowding and increased demands for services convinced the Y leadership that a spacious new facility was imperative. Once again C.J. Walker accepted the challenge, leading two campaigns in April 1919 and again in December 1920. More than 6000 donors "rang the bell" for a total of \$432,000!

MEETING THE NEEDS

As soon as the doors were opened in 1921, the new Downtown YMCA was operating at full capacity and within just 7 years it was necessary to raise another \$215,000 to fund expansion of the facility and to extend the YMCA into northern and eastern Long Beach. In addition to providing a full program for adults and boys, the new East Branch served local junior college students while the North Long Beach Branch focused on the overabundance of young boys in that area, more per square mile than in any

other section. The city had flourished into a thriving community for families and a bustling modern seaport, but times were about to change- for the YMCA, the City of Long Beach and the nation

A DEVASTATING BLOW

As the country grappled with the crash of the stock market in 1929 and the subsequent Depression, the YMCA found a small measure of solace in the knowledge that construction of every new building had been lent to local business men and local labor. Then a natural disaster struck a devastating blow –the 1933 earthquake. While no members were injured, the facilities suffered \$50,000 in damages, but as the Y struggled. To recover and remain financially solvent, membership amazingly continued to grow to over 3,200!

When the specter of the Second World War began to loom over the nation, the Pacific Fleet moved to Long Beach and almost overnight the city became a Navy town with its own Navy Y on Pico Street, the beginning of a long partnership between the Armed Forces Department of the YMCA and the local Y. With the onset of the war, the Long Beach YMCA launched a wide range of services for military personnel including social and recreational activities, residence rooms, and free use of all facilities while YMCAs around the world assisted refugees and displaced persons in 36 nations.

PEACE AND PROSPERITY

Following the war, prosperity abounded in the city of Long Beach with thousands of new families moving into the community. In Bellflower, a group of citizens purchased a home on Woodruff Avenue where they opened a YMCA branch in 1955. That same year YMCA Secretary, now called Director, Pat Vest, began a mobile program – operated out of his car! – Which would eventually become the Los Altos Branch. In Lakewood, where YMCA programs had flourished since 1946, a community-wide campaign generated the funding for construction of a new 7,700 square foot facility in 1958.

Touching the lives of thousands of children and adults throughout the Greater Long Beach area, the foundation had been carefully laid for the YMCA's current branch system of operations. But once again, conditions were about to dramatically change.

A NEW STRUCTURE

Until the early 1960s, the YMCA in Long Beach had operated as a single organization, but in 1963 the YMCA in America initiated a more business-like appearance in operation. In Long Beach the organizational structure was replaced by a new Metropolitan system and the name of the Association was changed to YMCA of Greater Long Beach with its own elected Board of Directors. Each branch operated under the direction of its own volunteer Board of Managers.

In 1964, the Los Altos Branch graduated to a permanent facility built on land donated in part by Lloyd Whaley. Meanwhile, fire had destroyed the house in Bellflower where the YMCA branch had operated since 1955 and the Y was forced to move to temporary quarters in the Kiwanis Hall. When the communities of Artesia and Cerritos, (formerly Dairy Valley) joined this service area, the branch name

was officially changed to the Los Cerritos YMCA. After a successful capital campaign the current facility on Woodruff Avenue was dedicated in 1966.

In downtown Long Beach it was apparent by the mid- 1970s that 50 plus years had taken its toll on the aging, multi-story Downtown YMCA Branch. Studies revealed that the cost of remodeling would equal or exceed construction costs on a new facility. When the City of Long Beach condemned the building because it did not meet earthquake standards, the Y was faced with still another challenge – replacing the Downtown YMCA.

TIME TO BUILD...AND BUILD... AND BUILD

In 1976 a three-phase construction program was launched for the Downtown YMCA, while ground was simultaneously broken for a new North Community Branch, funded in part by an initial gift of \$100,000 from the Freeman E. Fairfield Foundation. Three years later when this branch was expanded with additional support from the Fairfield Foundation, the facility was officially renamed the Fairfield Family YMCA.

As construction progressed downtown, the Lakewood YMCA received an unprecedented grant of \$1.75 million in land, cash, and materials from Lakewood pioneer Ben Weingart through the Weingart Foundation. Construction of an all new facility began in earnest in 1979 and the new branch was renamed the Weingart-Lakewood Family YMCA when it opened in 1980.

Although these construction projects stretched the YMCA's finances, the newly re-named Harry A. Buffum Memorial YMCA opened its doors in May, 1980.

A CENTURY OF PROGRESS

Just four years later, in 1984, the YMCA of Greater Long Beach celebrated its first 100 years – a century of pioneering achievement marked by momentous social and economic changes, war and peace, natural disasters, and remarkable growth rooted in the YMCA of the USA's extraordinary legacy of meeting the local community's needs. During the ensuing years the YMCA of Greater Long Beach has continued to faithfully and responsibly serve greater Long Beach while changes in this richly diverse corner of the country have come faster than anyone could have predicted.

DIGGING OUT OF DEBT

Membership and program growth was the major goal and objective as the YMCA began its second century of service to the greater Long Beach community in 1984. These were to be very difficult financial times for the YMCA of Greater Long Beach as each branch was watching expenditures and cash flow on a daily basis. The Buffum-Downtown and Weingart-Lakewood facilities were less than five years old and each had their share of challenges and opportunities. The Buffum-Downtown branch, now located on the northeast corner of Long Beach Boulevard and 6th Street, needed to increase membership to offset a construction loan with Farmers & Merchants Bank. The Weingart-Lakewood branch now had a full facility YMCA and was busy introducing new programs to the City of Lakewood community. The Los Cerritos YMCA, operating from its facility on Woodruff Avenue in the City of

Bellflower, was struggling to maintain its existence and called in Robert Warnock from the Los Angeles YMCA to be its Executive Director in 1983.

1989 saw the retirement of Robert Felder, who had served as General Director since 1975. Felder achieved unprecedented facility growth during his tenure as CEO. He passed away just two years after his retirement, in 1991.

Rig Riggins, from the YMCA of San Diego County, would become the YMCA's 18th chief executive officer in 1989. Riggins, with support from volunteer Chairman Dave Elder, would immediately launch a highly successful debt elimination campaign which resulted in a "Burn the Mortgage" celebration in 1993. The campaign received a matching gift of \$250,000 from Farmers & Merchants Bank which put the fund raising effort over its goal. This was another example of the steadfast loyalty and supreme support that the YMCA has received from F & M Bank and the Walker Family since the Y's founding in 1884.

Although the construction debt had been retired, the Buffum-Downtown YMCA continued to run operating deficits, which became a burden on the entire YMCA system. In 1999, the stately and problematic downtown Long Beach YMCA property was sold to local developer and YMCA Board Member, Tom Dean, for \$1.7 million. Proceeds from the sale were used to pay down accumulated debt, reimburse branches who loaned the downtown branch their operating surpluses, and the purchase of a smaller parcel of property. The Long Beach Press-Telegram would write in an editorial on July 1, 1998, "Many of us, old or young, have worked out or played a fast game on the courts of the downtown Y, and we'll be sorry to see the facilities go. But the Y has always been more than a building or a swimming pool and, we're glad to say, the organization and its values are here to stay."

REINVENTING THE YMCA

Always attune to meeting unmet community needs, in 1996 the YMCA called upon its best collaborative skills and rallied partners such as LBUUSD, CSULB, the Children's Clinic and the Probation Department to prevent juvenile crime. With an allocation of \$4.2 million in state funds, young people in peril of joining gangs and committing criminal acts became the primary targets of this new collaborative led by the YMCA. The five year program involving children and families living in the downtown Long Beach area was immensely successful.

The Board of Directors was firm in the terms for purchasing new property in Downtown Long Beach – it would not be a financial burden on the other Association branches. In November of 1999, the YMCA purchased six-tenths of an acre parcel of land at Locust Avenue and 6th Street, just west of Long Beach Boulevard. The facility needed modifications to get it ready to be a YMCA. The new Downtown YMCA opened in mid 2000, and today serves roughly 600 members.

The Los Altos YMCA continued a strong tradition of sending kids and leaders to Catalina Island's YMCA Camp Fox. The beautiful camp located north of Avalon, provided older kids a more adventurous waterfront camping experience. Camp Director Paul Perry personally recruited hundreds of kids each year to attend, and to this day the camp is considered by many young adults among the fondest of their YMCA involvements.

The Fairfield YMCA was also having success in attracting teenagers to the YMCA through the California YMCA Youth & Government program. Executive Director Robert Oatey created delegations of high school students from Poly, Wilson, and Jordan High Schools, where youth learned firsthand about how the statewide government worked. In 1987, Poly High School's Josh Lowenthal was elected Speaker of the House and attended the conference with fellow delegates Alex Cherrin and Sean Oatey.

In 1985, Susan Baker would become Executive Director of the Fairfield Family YMCA, becoming the first female branch executive director in the Association's 103 year history. Sue didn't set out to be a trailblazer for women when she began working for the YMCA. But it happened anyway and she continues to work at very high levels and has set a wonderful example for many women to follow.

In 1994, the Weingart Foundation donated land adjacent to the Weingart-Lakewood YMCA on Carson Street with the stipulation that the YMCA purchase the former bank building located on the property for \$40,000. The small facility was retained and became the headquarters for the Metropolitan YMCA staff until 2005.

Camp Oakes, having grown from serving 3,000 children in 1983 to serving almost 10,000 kids and their families today, would receive a new conference center named in honor of Wanda Bose Kemper.

YMCA after-school programs continued to sweep the nation through the 1990's and by 1998, the YMCA of Greater Long Beach was the area's largest provider of after-school programs with over 2,000 kids attending daily in over 30 school sites. The YMCA was also delivering innovative programs in the downtown area, especially for children from low income families. Before his departure as CEO in 2001, Rig Riggins would assemble a task force of area specialists to successfully establish a seven year partnership with the James Irvine Foundation to incorporate literacy and family involvement in all after-school programs as a means to elevate sagging academic test scores of school-age kids – the CORAL program. The YMCA would receive its largest grant ever, \$14 million over seven years, to deliver state-of-the-art after-school programs. Riggins would depart for Spokane Washington in 2001 to become the President & CEO of the Spokane YMCA.

A NEW BEGINNING

Board Chair Julia Ibbetson Zilinkas assumed the responsibility of recruiting a new President & CEO to lead California's fifth largest YMCA. She and her committee needed to look only as far as the neighboring YMCA of Metropolitan Los Angeles. Alan C. Hostrup became President & CEO on September 17, 2001, after 25 years with the Los Angeles YMCA, most recently as the Senior Vice President of branch operations. Hostrup literally grew up in the YMCA and was a good fit for the YMCA of Greater Long Beach, bringing fund raising and membership development expertise to Long Beach.

In 2002, costly state insurance rates almost single handedly brought the YMCA to a halt. Named the "perfect storm" by Board Chair-Elect Bob Schack, the YMCA slowly but surely learned to navigate the insurance program by managing open claims and implementing a tenacious safety and risk management program for staff and members. Organized by Senior Vice President Susan Baker, the YMCA of Greater Long Beach had achieved one of the best injury prevention programs in the country. It was to be a

turning point for the YMCA, with the Metropolitan YMCA assuming a more proactive and centralized approach to management without stripping the branches of their autonomy.

Once the storm cleared, the YMCA immediately went to work on building up its annual campaign which had been producing roughly \$400,000 in donations from 1,300 donors. Branch boards of management were challenged to grow themselves with talented and energized new members and senior staff dedicated themselves to doubling the number of program volunteers and engaging members and parents on a much higher level. The Metropolitan Board sought out new Directors as well, all resulting in steady growth in annual contributions. In 2005 the YMCA raised \$700,000 under the leadership of Board Chair Robert Schack, founder and chairman of American Business Bank. The YMCA then set its sights on the 2006 campaign with hopes of reaching \$1 million in annual gifts. On March 3, 2006, the YMCA met for its Victory Dinner celebration located in the City of Lakewood's Sycamore Centre, with over 300 volunteers in attendance, the most to ever attend a campaign Victory meeting. The YMCA reported over 3,500 pledges that night totaling \$1,071,000 in gifts, the most ever raised in annual support and the most ever raised by any Long Beach nonprofit youth and family serving organization.

In addition to fund raising growth, the YMCA was also making head way in membership development, and the Weingart-Lakewood branch lead the charge under the capable leadership of new Executive Director Jason Hagensick. In 2004 the Weingart-Lakewood branch ran a \$100,000 surplus and dedicated the proceeds to transitioning the Metropolitan offices into a new healthy lifestyle center. Metropolitan headquarters moved to 3605 Long Beach Boulevard, accepting an excellent lease arrangement negotiated by board member Greg Gill, managing partner for the Charles Dunn Company.

BUILDING OUR FUTURE

The YMCA launched a highly comprehensive strategic planning process in 2004 aimed at fully understanding the needs of each community and translating those needs into measurable strategic objectives. On June 4, 2005, during the YMCA's 121st Annual Meeting, members elected to accept the study as a working plan called "Building Our Future". In it, the YMCA had dedicated itself to meeting five basic community needs:

- Strengthening families
- Supporting the development of youth and teens
- Encouraging healthy lifestyles
- Promoting social and ethnic harmony
- Supporting academic enrichment and literacy for children

Primary objectives included massive growth in all program areas. It was the last objective, a capital campaign to secure needed funds to enrich and expand the Association's five community branches and YMCA Camp Oakes that caught the attention of most in the audience. The YMCA hadn't solicited any significant funds from the community for capital in nearly 30 years and each community facility needed updating. The YMCA needed relevant facilities to motivate parents and their children to become a healthier and stronger family.

GOOD TO GREAT

The DuBois Group, led by former Los Altos YMCA Executive Director, Carl DuBois, was called to lead a goal feasibility study which would determine the amount which could be raised, and identify the key volunteer leaders who could secure the needed funding. Although \$20 million was tested, the study revealed that \$14 million could be secured in a three year capital campaign.

On January 9, 2006, the Board of Directors elected to commence with a capital development campaign to secure \$14 million. It had been over thirty years since the YMCA had conducted a major capital campaign, so this was a gigantic challenge that would require the YMCA's best and brightest. Board Chairman Bob Schack agreed to chair the Executive Steering Committee and he quickly recruited Ron Piazza, John Gooding, Curt Kurtz, Jack Dilday, Janet Molina Watt, and Susan Anderson Wise to oversee campaign goals.

The Chairman of the Campaign came from outside the Board of Directors – Los Angeles County 4th District Supervisor Don Knabe agreed to be the working Chair. Knabe had grown up in YMCA programs in his hometown of Rockport, Illinois and his wife, Julie, had been a member of the Los Altos YMCA as a youth. Newly elected Board Chair Ron Piazza was instrumental in recruiting Knabe to this all important position. The campaign needed Honorary Chairs and a stellar group was recruited, consisting of Long Beach Mayor Bob Foster, former Long Beach Mayor Beverly O'Neill, former State of California Governor George Deukmejian, and Farmers & Merchants Bank President, Ken Walker.

The campaign, involved over 600 volunteer and staff leaders, and was unofficially launched on May 18, 2006, at a gathering to begin securing gifts from board members, campaign volunteers, and staff. Over \$900,000 was contributed from the Board and staff. On August 2, 2006, the campaign officially went public with a press conference at the Los Altos YMCA featuring Supervisor Don Knabe and Mayor Bob Foster. It was Mayor Foster's first day on the job as the Mayor of Long Beach. All in all, the campaign produced \$13.1 million as of the writing of this commemorative history book.

Many legacy gifts were secured during the campaign including a \$5 million lead trust from the estate of Julia I. Zilinskas. Laserfiche, Inc. and its founders Nein-Ling and Chris Wacker created a new healthy lifestyle center at the Fairfield branch. The Joan Wismer Family Foundation gave \$550,000 for projects at Camp Oakes. Paramount Petroleum Corporation funded a healthy lifestyle center at the Los Cerritos YMCA and a Family Recreation Center at the Fairfield Family YMCA. Special donations were also received to name the Los Altos YMCA lobby and a residence at Camp Oakes in honor of Paul and Lois Perry.

In 2006, the Camp Oakes Board identified the need for a new campfire circle and secured \$200,000 for a much needed amphitheatre and campfire circle, which was dedicated to the late Clair Johnson, YMCA CEO from 1960 - 1974, and his wife Helen. An extension to the camp's Williamson dining hall, repairs to the camp swimming pool, and the addition of volleyball courts were also completed. Many of these projects were organized and engineered under the excellent volunteer leadership of Mark Bixby, camp board member and a past board chair.

Since 2001, the YMCA has also seen a build-up of early childhood education programs (ECE), most in the form of preschools located in YMCAs, schools, and churches. In 2008, the YMCA secured funding to open three new preschools, bringing the total number to nine. Daily enrollment will soon reach 800 and the YMCA will have become the largest provider of childcare and education for kids five and under. This program has been thoughtfully managed and led under the guidance of Vice President Donya Webb.

SERVING WITH PURPOSE

In 2006, the YMCA saw its public reputation and overall stature grow to new heights as Parade Magazine, with a Sunday morning newspaper distribution of 20 million, highlighted the Long Beach YMCA Stevenson Community School. Under the careful direction of YMCA staff, a community refused to give up on education, and the entire neighborhood contributes to the school's success. The Y partnership trains parents in literacy skills, and then sends them out to teach other parents at home.

2008 also ushered in a new era for the YMCA of Greater Long Beach, having been named a Global Center of Excellence by the National YMCA. Only ten YMCAs in the country received this distinction, given for pioneering work being done in Long Beach by helping new immigrant families to understand and connect with the American way of life in their new community.

In 2001, the YMCA of Greater Long Beach created the Youth Institute, an intensive year-round program of the YMCA Downtown Community Development Branch that uses technology as an integral mechanism for promoting positive youth development and enhancing the academic success and career readiness of low-income, culturally diverse urban high school students. Under the watchful eye of Executive Director Bob Cabeza, the goals of the program are to increase technology and academic knowledge, enhance social and life skills, as well as develop leadership and job training skills. Students are recruited strategically so that the project is ethnically and gender diverse. The rationale behind this is to prepare students to become successful team players in our increasingly diverse workplaces, colleges and communities.

IT ALL STARTED WITH FAITH

In April of 1968, the YMCA hosted its first Good Friday Breakfast, a community event which attracted approximately fifty guests. Through the years the breakfast attracted good speakers, including former Governor George Deukmejian, and good attendance. But in 2005, CEO Alan Hostrup set a goal to make the event a more high profile gathering for community leaders and YMCA supporters. He enlisted the help of Dr. Mike Walter, the former Dean of Cal State Long Beach Business College, and his wife Arline, a retired Union Bank Executive, to underwrite the breakfast as a "gift to the community". The breakthrough year was 2007 as Hostrup invited Los Angeles County 4th District Supervisor Don Knabe to be the Keynote speaker. He was joined on the stage with YMCA Board Members Jack Hinsche (Windes & McClaughry Accountancy Corporation), Beverly O'Neill, Mayor Bob Foster, Arline Walter, Long Beach Chamber CEO Randy Gordon, and Alan Hostrup. Reservations went through the roof with over 500 tickets sold and Knabe gave a speech that guests are still talking about today. The next year, Hostrup recruited the still very popular former CSULB President Bob Maxson and moved the event to the CSULB Mike & Arline Walter Pyramid, and over 700 tickets were sold. The 2009 breakfast had Former Long

Beach Mayor Beverly O'Neill giving her life story of faith, hope, and love – which left many in the room in tears. The YMCA's ability to bring large groups of diverse people together in recognition of one of the most religious days on the Christian calendar, gave new meaning to Christian emphasis of the YMCA's 125 year mission.

THE CAMPING EXPERIENCE

One of the most memorable events in a young person's life is their first night spent sleeping out in the open, under the stars. For more than 75 years, the YMCA of Greater Long Beach has acted as the catalyst in bringing youth and nature together – often for the first time. The Association's earliest records of camping date to 1905. Today, only faded advertisements of that first camp – Camp Clyde Doyle – remain.

Over the next seven years, several locations would be used by the YMCA of Greater Long Beach. Among them were a Y camp in Silverado Canyon (1908), Laguna Beach (1909), and Camp Sabobas (1911), located in Indian Canyon at the foot of San Jacinto Peak, this early camp was advertised as presenting the "finest kind of opportunity for swimming, fishing, hiking and games."

In the spring of 1913, Robert Gossom and Boys Work Director Ralph Cole set out on a trip to find a permanent camp site for the YMCA. They explored the Canyon and then selected the site of what was to be called "Kamp Kole." The camp was named by Gossom after Ralph Cole, who insisted it be spelled with a "K".

For the next 36 years, between 40,000 to 50,000 boys and other citizens would visit the camp.

Primitive, to say the least, Kamp Kole would, in later years, see construction of a swimming pool, mess hall and other facilities. Though the camp managed to survive numerous fires, and a series of floods, in 1949 a disastrous fire finally destroyed it.

Nine years passed before the YMCA of Greater Long Beach could begin building a new and much larger camping facility to meet the needs of the post-war population boom. In 1957, an initial gift of \$100,000 from Roscoe and Margaret Oakes, and subsequent gifts from their foundation and others made possible the development of YMCA Camp Oakes.

A 230-acre site, 7300 feet high in the San Bernardino Mountains, Camp Oakes became a year-round coeducational camp with a full-time executive in 1962. Winter/summer dorms, new leaders' cabins, larger restroom facilities, and a new caretaker's home were added. In 1964, with the help of Paul McClaughry and Charles Z. Walker, Sr., additional land was purchased which served to prevent the camp from ever being blocked in by housing developments.

Under the leadership of Los Altos and Camping Services Board Member Bruce Kerr, a lake named in his honor was built in 1973.

Five years later, in 1978, Kamp Kole alumni launched the Kamp Kole Memorial Program. An idea that had been formulating for several years, the Memorial Program had two objectives. The first was to

construct a new outdoor chapel at Camp Oakes utilizing stones recovered from Kamp Kole buildings. And secondly, a Kamp Kole Memorial Endowment Fund dedicated to maintaining a strong spiritual emphasis in the YMCA's camping program through generations of boys and girls to come would be established.

On May 22, 1983, that dream came true and more than 300 people attended the dedication ceremonies for the new Kamp Kole Chapel at Camp Oakes.

A VERY SPECIAL FAMILY

Perhaps no other family in the city of Long Beach has had as long, and as close a partnership with the YMCA as the Walker family.

C. J. Walker, founder of the Farmers & Merchants Bank, was one of the organizers of the Long Beach YMCA. As early as 1899, he was already a member of the Board of Directors for the newly-formed Association and would be a prime mover in the construction of the first building at 121 Locust in 1906. He remained active in ensuing years and was elected President of the Board in 1919, a position he continued to hold for an unprecedented 13 years. Under his leadership, the YMCA grew and expanded, constructing the new building at Sixth and America in 1921. Before his tenure in office expired in 1932, an addition was made to the Downtown facility and the North and East Branches of the YMCA were constructed and opened.

His son, Gus Walker, started with the YMCA early in life. He attended camp in July, 1911, and in 1916 was co-leader of a Bible class with Harold A. Wagner. Childhood experiences with the YMCA have stayed with Gus throughout his life. Over the years, he continued his support of and involvement with the YMCA, and in 1948 he was elected President of the Association staying in this office until 1950.

While Gus followed in his father's footsteps in the baking business, his brother Charles Z. Walker went into law. A prominent local attorney, C. Z. also involved himself in YMCA activities early in life. Like his father and brother before him, he too would be elected President. During his tenure, 1951-1956, attendance at Y activities more than doubled and two new branches were established in Lakewood and Bellflower. After leaving office as President of the Long Beach YMCA, C. Z. Walker went on to become a member of the National Council of YMCAs.

His son, Charles Walker, Jr. also went into law and is presently an advisory member of the YMCA's Metropolitan Board of Directors.

Ken Walker, as his father and grandfather before him, also entered the banking industry. And like them his generosity and commitment to the YMCA has been undiminished with time. Ken along with his beloved wife Nancy until her passing in 2008, continues to be an active volunteer and member of the YMCA family as do his sons Daniel, John and Henry, his daughter, Anne Nicholson and his grandson, Brett.

Always strong financial supporters of the YMCA, the Walker family and Farmers & Merchants Bank gifts to the YMCA have intensified during the past 10 years making them one of the major contributors to the Association.

But the Walker family has given much more than financial support. They have given of themselves. Following the tragic death in 1973 of young R. Howard Walker, the son of Ken and Nancy, the family made possible a living memorial of Ken's grandparents and son by endowing the C.J., Carrie D. and R. Howard Walker Foundation in support of a special three-day Christian Leadership Training Workshop. Each year, at YMCA Camp Oakes and across the country, young leaders attend a special leadership training event that focuses on the religious and character development aspects of a YMCA youth camping experience.

Through their generous giving, the Walker family has, for five generations, demonstrated their belief in the YMCA's vital role in the Long Beach community.

MOVING FORWARD - 2009 AND BEYOND

Never in the past 125 years has the YMCA of Greater Long Beach been stronger and better positioned to grow and extend its reach of mission driven programs. With a strong Board of Directors of 45 members under the caring eyes of Chairman Jack Dilday, and a mature and dedicated staff led by President & CEO Alan Hostrup, the future of the YMCA is in excellent hands.

Facility expansion and improvements to the Weingart-Lakewood branch and YMCA Camp Oakes, and capacity building at Los Altos branch, will highlight the next two years. Also, major program expansion at the Los Cerritos, Fairfield, Early Childhood Education, and Downtown Community Development branches will dramatically increase the YMCA's service to youth, teens, and families.

Its not just about member growth as the YMCA continues to sharpen its focus on meeting critical unmet community needs like childhood obesity, youth violence, family dysfunction, poverty, new immigrant growth, and ever expanding diversity. The YMCA's commitment to healthy lifestyles, leadership development, character building, safe havens, cultural competence, strengthening families, and social enterprises that support youth and work force development is an agenda unmatched by any other youth and family serving organization.

The true genius of the YMCA movement in the greater Long Beach area still continues to be its focus and dedication on the mission of *"putting Judeo-Christian principles into practice through programs that develop a healthy spirit, mind and body for all"*. Board Members and staff, parents and members, donors and collaborators, each dedicated to its passionate hunger of building strong kids, strong families, and strong communities.

God bless us all as we receive the "batons" of the past 125 years and begin our service as we write the next chapter of this amazing Association we call the "YMCA of Greater Long Beach".