

LAPRA: 100 Years and Much to Celebrate!

LAPRA is officially one hundred years strong! The Los Angeles Police Relief Association, Inc. (LAPRA) was originally organized October 17, 1919 and was incorporated on January 26, 1939 to provide benefits and support for the men and women of the Los Angeles Police Department. The purpose of LAPRA is to obtain and provide group medical, dental, life and off-duty disability insurance plans for its members; to aid and support its members in times of emergency and distress, in sickness, accident and death; to promote and improve the physical wellness, social well-being and welfare of its members and to provide relief to members and their families.



Changes over the years have been extremely positive. Some changes related to enhanced benefits and services, some to administrative efficiencies brought on by new technology, and others to the role LAPRA employees play in helping members maximize the value of the plans and services offered. In one hundred years, LAPRA has aged well. Today, it has much to celebrate.

Kevin McCarthy, who joined the LAPRA Board in 1995 and has been Board President since 2010, says serving on the Board is extremely rewarding. “The good work of LAPRA is a team effort,” he said. He respectfully credits Robert Steinbacher, President of LAFRA (Los Angeles Firemen’s Relief Association), whose father is retired LAPD; Los Angeles Police Protective League Director Corina Lee; United Firefighters of Los Angeles City President Freddy Escobar; LAPRA Executive Director Diane Whisnant and the LAPRA staff; General and Special Counsel Mike Kanne and Robert Macaulay; and consultant Dawna Gray.

“We work together to bring the members of all four organizations the best healthcare for the lowest cost to both the member and the City,” McCarthy said. “As we prepare to go into a new year, LAPRA continues to enhance its technology in order to improve the members’ experience by offering useful and easy to use online tools and electronic communications. We will continue to work closely with our many partners to maintain the high-quality healthcare benefits we have today.”

Collective Wisdom

Michael Kanne has served as General Counsel for LAPRA for the past 25 years. His father, Frank Kanne Jr., was also LAPRA’s attorney, serving from the 1940’s through 1994. Kanne is proud of his and his father’s long-term relationship with LAPRA and says the Association’s successful evolution



LAPD 1919

Still guided by its mission as established in 1919, LAPRA has grown to a membership of more than 18,000 and now offers a wide variety of benefit plans. In 2007, LAPRA established the Los Angeles Police Relief and Assistance Foundation (LAPRAF) to better assist the men and women of the LAPD and their families when there are serious needs beyond the resources of LAPRA. LAPRAF also provides annual college scholarship funds for educational scholarships to well deserving children of members.

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is largely due to the many great people who have served on the Board over the years. “My greatest privilege in representing LAPRA is working with the many talented individuals who have volunteered countless hours to serving the membership,” Kanne said. “These outstanding individuals serve without compensation and go unheralded in their dedication, persistence and commitment to protecting individual member rights and benefits.”

Kanne added that with the Los Angeles Police Relief and Assistance Foundation (LAPRAF), LAPRA has expanded its reach in the community in the way it quietly assists officers during times of crisis. “I have complete confidence in the future of LAPRA,” Kanne said, “and I deeply respect the collective wisdom of the Board which has been and will continue to be instrumental in LAPRA’s success.”

Clarity of Purpose

Retired Police Chief Charlie Beck was once quoted as saying police work was in his DNA. He followed in the footsteps of his father, George Beck, who joined the LAPD in 1950 and was on the LAPRA Board for nearly

10 years. Charlie Beck has been described as a “cop’s cop” because he knew his job well and understood the needs of the men and women who served. His Board tenure began around 1994 and ended when he became Police Chief in 2009. Beck served on the force for 42 years. “I’ve known insurance through LAPRA all my life,” Beck said. “I’ve always been proud to be a part the organization for its staunch commitment to the well-being of police officers.”

Beck said the role of Board members is extremely rewarding but not always easy. He explained that most city employees receive benefits through a different system and this has presented challenges for LAPRA over the years. “We are fortunate that LAPRA advocates aggressively for its members and is always successful in providing the best benefits for the best price,” Beck said. “LAPRA has our backs and cares about outcomes.”

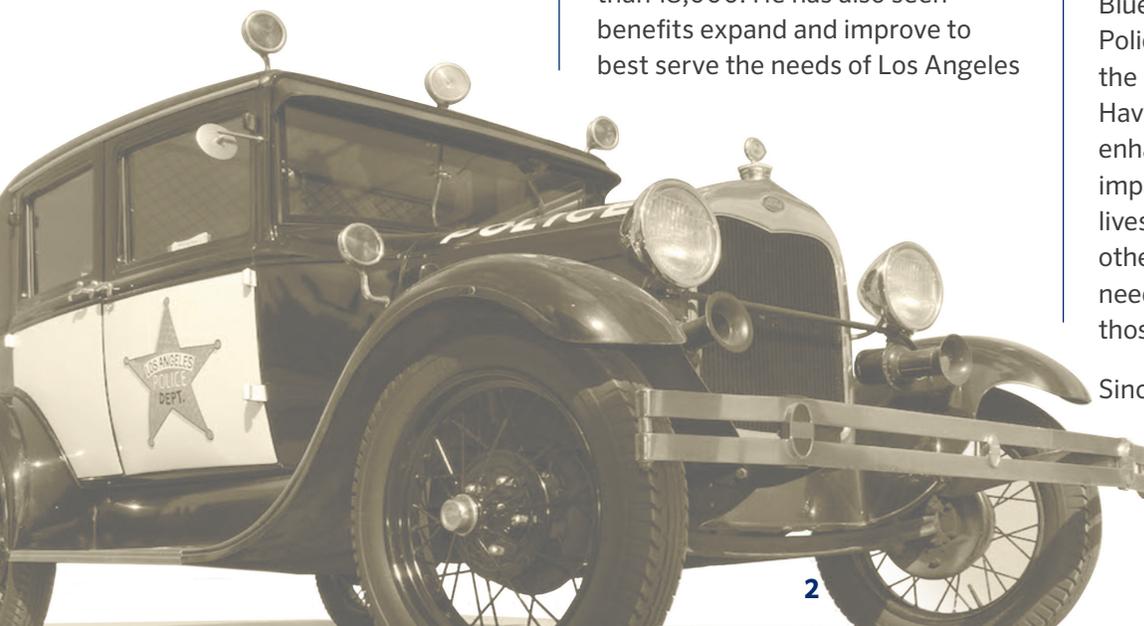
James T. McBride (Tim), who has served as Board Treasurer and Chief Investment Officer for nearly 40 years, has seen LAPRA grow from roughly 10,000 members to the current membership of more than 18,000. He has also seen benefits expand and improve to best serve the needs of Los Angeles

police officers. When McBride joined LAPRA, Wanda Carroll was Executive Director, under the leadership of Police Chief William H. Parker. Wanda, he said, was fiercely committed to providing members with the best possible benefit plans, and that commitment has carried through LAPRA’s history.

“Our Board recognizes the unique health care needs of police officers, and our benefit programs and services are designed exclusively to meet those needs,” McBride said. “We understand the personal sacrifices our members make to do their jobs. Those sacrifices sometimes take a toll on one’s health, and the Board makes it a priority to ensure that health care needs are met appropriately. Compared to plans offered to other employees of the City of Los Angeles, LAPRA provides better benefits at a lower cost, and we’re extremely proud of that.”

Rick Batson, former Board member and four-time Board president, echoes McBride’s sentiments. “We’ve met some special challenges over the years, including changing our insurance carrier to Blue Cross Blue Shield, and negotiating with the Police Protective League to protect the interests of our members. Having LAPD members on the Board enhances the Board’s ability to make impactful decisions that improve lives. I was honored to serve with others who truly understood the needs of LAPRA members and made those needs a priority.”

Since the 1980’s, Gordon Hoffman has been the Certified Public Account (CPA) in charge of the annual financial audit





LAPD 1967 *The Mighty Ten*

of the Association. Like Michael Kanne, Hoffman credits LAPRA’s ongoing success to generations of Board leadership. “The Board has a strong commitment to the welfare of its members and has always been strategic in its financial decisions and benefit offerings,” he said. “They manage spending and invest wisely.” Hoffman added that the Association’s membership growth and expansion of benefits reflect the Board’s clarity of purpose, as well as the backing of its members.

Dawna Gray, LAPRA’s health and welfare benefits consultant, said she is always impressed by the work ethic and dedication of LAPRA Board members. “They put in countless hours and each decision is carefully analyzed to ensure it represents the best outcomes for the membership,” she said.

Culture of Wellness

In 2015, LAPRA made a strategic investment in the well-being of its members with the introduction of the Wellness Program. With an emphasis on preventive care, this program offers incentives, tools, social support and strategies for members to adopt or maintain healthy behaviors. LAPRA Executive Director Diane Whisnant says the

program is extremely popular and includes a free gym membership for those enrolled in a health plan. Also popular is LAPRA’s annual Fitness Challenge which this year drew 2,000 participants who collectively shed 23,222 pounds over 100 days. “A culture of wellness is important to us and we are committed to providing high-end services to keep our members healthy,” Whisnant said. “We also provide guidance and information. When our members are confused about insurance issues or have questions, they know they can count on us for timely answers.”

She added that LAPRA members know they can drop in at any time for answers to questions that range from claims issues to benefit changes to Medicare enrollment. On a daily basis you will find LAPRA benefits representatives meeting with members to help them prepare for their upcoming retirement, or to help families sort through benefits after the death of a member. The LAPRA staff understands the importance of handling each member issue with care and they constantly strive to achieve the desired outcome for members. The importance of their service is not lost on them, and members regularly express gratitude for their assistance via accolades and thank you cards, Whisnant said.



LAPD 1930

Advancing Technology

“When I started with LAPRA 32 years ago, we typed member information on small notecards that were stored in huge gray file cabinets,” explains long-time LAPRA employee and benefits supervisor, Lorraine Estevis. Those were the days before the World Wide Web. As technology evolved, around 2000, LAPRA installed the HOBLink system which allowed data to be entered and tracked more efficiently. “We could add electronic notes to member records, so when a member called LAPRA, we had background information about their prior call or concern. This was an important step toward personalizing the LAPRA experience and establishing our role as advocates for our members,” Estevis said. “It helped strengthen our credibility and build the strong level of trust that we have with our members today.”

Last year, LAPRA introduced Benefitsolver, an online benefits enrollment system that gives members more control of their benefits information. While the system offers many self-service tools, Estevis stressed that the LAPRA team still welcomes calls from members and remains committed to providing personalized support. “The most rewarding part of my job is the relationships I’ve built with members over the years. When a member calls, it’s gratifying to assist with their needs and know I’m making a positive difference. If attendance at our December Open House is any measure of member satisfaction, I’d say we’re doing a pretty good job.” ■

Introducing the 2019 LAPRAF Scholarship Winners



2019 LAPRAF Academic Scholarship winners pictured from left to right: Andrew Moberg, Angelina Baez, Makayla Walia and Emanuel Sanchez.

Proud winners of the Los Angeles Police Relief and Assistance Foundation (LAPRAF) scholarship program have started back to school with the extra financial support of a four-year scholarship. These five exceptional students were selected from 82 highly-talented applicants to receive a \$10,000 scholarship based on their academic excellence, leadership and dedication to community service. Each student will receive \$2,500 per year over four years. The winners and their families were invited to a celebration, which included an awards ceremony and luncheon, on July 17 at The Palm in downtown Los Angeles. LAPRA Board members in attendance included Ruby Flores (emcee), Luq Watkins (emcee), Gerald Woodyard and Jules Sohn.

Andrew Moberg

Andrew is attending the University of California, Berkeley (UC Berkeley) where he will major in Public Health.

He graduated from Santa Clarita Christian School and was involved in a wide array of school and volunteer community activities such as: soccer referee and coach for young children; summer reading program at the public library; youth leader to assist third graders; and serving the Santa Barbara homeless community and *Children's Hunger Fund*. He also played football and soccer.

Andrew's goal is to get into medical school and become a doctor. Andrew's grandmother was diagnosed with early stages of Alzheimer's and dementia. Through this life changing experience, Andrew was able to learn true responsibility and what it really meant to show compassion and love toward others.

Angelina Baez

Angelina is attending the University of California, San Diego (UC San Diego) where she will major in

Popular Music with a minor in Human Biology. She graduated from Orange County School of the Arts and was part of a rigorous and competitive conservatory program for music. Furthering her passion for music and the music industry, she performed for charities such as the *Let It Be Foundation*, Planet Rehab and would sing at local senior centers. She also worked with the *Spanish Honors Society* and the *California Scholarship Federation*.

In addition to music, Angelina is passionate about anatomy and the medical field. Angelina believes it is her personal mission and social responsibility to discourage the stigma toward mental illness and to advocate for good mental health. Whether she pursues music or the medical field, she is confident that UC San Diego will provide her with the education needed to support her future path.

Makayla Walia

Makayla is attending Southern Utah University where she will major in Nursing. She graduated from Grace Brethren High School and was a gymnast and a member of the varsity girls golf team. Along with other key school activities, she was a member of the *National Honor Society*, *California Scholarship Federation*, *Spanish Club* and *Interact Club*, Senior Yearbook Editor and Senior President. On the community side, she was a youth mentor for *Miss Simi Valley Days Pageant* and Fundraising Chairperson for the *Simi Valley Days Foundation*.

Makayla feels that Southern Utah University's smaller campus will continue to provide her with the ability to build strong relationships with students and the professors will have more time to invest in each of their students. She is also excited about the great nursing program, clubs and extracurricular activities. The University was voted "The Most Outdoorsy" school which really excites Makayla.

Emanuel Sanchez

Emanuel is attending California State Polytechnic University, Pomona (Cal Poly Pomona) where he will major in Aerospace Engineering. He graduated from Chino Hills High School and assisted the student body with rallies, prepared food for the Homecoming dance and was a four-year member of the Cross-Country team. Community service included helping younger kids at his local public library. To fulfill his passion for protecting the environment, he volunteered to help clean-up state parks.

Andrew researched numerous engineering programs and is excited to attend Cal Poly Pomona. He was attracted to their teaching philosophy of "learning by doing" with hands-on experiments and activities.

Isabella Darling

Isabella is attending UC Irvine where she will major in Business. She graduated from Valencia High School and was a member of *Project Linus* and the *STEM club* where she held leadership positions. Isabella was dedicated to the *Girl Scouts* and was a Bronze, Silver and Gold Award recipient, which includes a rigorous community service project.

Isabella selected Business as her area of study, because she wants to be a leader and make a difference not only in the lives of people she works with, but to also make a national and potentially even a global difference. ■



Not in attendance: 2019 LAPRAF Academic Scholarship winner, Isabella Darling

Where They are Now

Shelby Lynn Larsen

Shelby was a 2015 LAPRAF Academic Scholarship winner. Fast-forward four years, Shelby is still as hard-working, focused and passionate as she was in high school. Shelby graduated this past spring from Brigham Young University, following a rich family heritage of BYU alumni, with a Bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering. She is excited to graduate in four years, rather than the typical five years it takes to complete the program. Thanks to the LAPRAF scholarship, as well as other academic scholarships and working at Northrop Grumman as a summer intern for the past three years, she is graduating debt-free!



Northrop Grumman also recognized Shelby's academic and personal achievements. She was recently hired as a full-time Electrical Engineer. Shelby would like to increase her technical expertise, so that she can represent the company in the best light possible in quality, safety and communications. She will start a master's degree program in Engineering Management this winter with the goal of moving into management.

The *GUARDIAN* is a quarterly publication for members of the Los Angeles Police Relief Association. All rights reserved. If you have an idea for a future article, or would like to contact a Board member, please send an email to benefits@lapra.org or call (888) 252-7721.

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Mark Your Calendar

LAPPL Upcoming Membership Outreach Days

Thursday, October 17

Hollenbeck

Thursday, November 1

West Valley

Thursday, November 21

Metropolitan

Thursday, December 12

Topanga

LAPRA/LAPPL Annual Holiday Open House

Wednesday, December 4

More details coming soon

Help Us Take Care of Our Own

The Los Angeles Police Relief and Assistance Foundation (LAPRAF) provides financial assistance and other support to active and retired officers and their families who find themselves in dire financial circumstances. The LAPRAF also provides academic scholarships for children of LAPRA members attending college. Please consider a financial donation, small or large, so we can help even more officers and their families who need assistance. For information on how you can make a donation, call LAPRA at (213) 674-3724.

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LAPRA

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