The year 2009 proved once again to be a productive one as LakewoodAlive continued its work in Downtown Lakewood. An enhanced security initiative, the formation of a new Downtown Lakewood merchant organization, and the completion of a wayfinding and signage design plan topped the list of accomplishments.

With the firm belief that a healthy housing stock is critical to furthering economic development, LakewoodAlive launched a new Housing Outreach Program in 2009. Hilary Schickler joined the staff in mid-July and has already extended exterior housing outreach services to over 600 residents to date.

As my two years serving as President of LakewoodAlive come to a close, I wish to thank the Board of Trustees, numerous volunteers, our business and financial partners and our staff for their hard work in realizing the accomplishments highlighted in this annual report.

I am proud of the organization’s many achievements and am confident that LakewoodAlive’s good work will continue to play a pivotal role in improving the quality of life for all Lakewood residents well into the next decade.

Sincerely,
Mikelann Ward Rensel
President

HISTORY
Lakewood’s nonprofit economic development organization was founded in 2002 by the Chamber of Commerce and the City of Lakewood and secured 501-(c) (3) tax-exempt status in 2004. Originally named Lakewood Community Progress Inc., the organization merged in 2008 with LakewoodAlive, a resident-based organization that advocated citizen engagement in economic development issues, and assumed its name.

A National Main Street™ community since 2005, the revitalization of downtown Lakewood continued as the focus of LakewoodAlive’s activity in 2009. This volunteer-based effort realized marked progress in a very challenging economic climate. In recognition of housing quality as Lakewood’s economic lynchpin, LakewoodAlive launched its housing outreach program in July. This program connects low-moderate income residents with financial and practical resources to maintain the exterior of their homes.

LakewoodAlive is a member of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and Heritage Ohio, which is the oversight organization for the Ohio Main Street program. LakewoodAlive is also a member of Positively Cleveland, Northeast Ohio’s tourism and meeting promotional organization.

MISSION
LakewoodAlive is an economic development corporation whose mission is to improve the quality of life of residents by creating alliances with community leaders, leveraging community assets and expanding the pool of available resources in order to facilitate economic stability and growth in the City of Lakewood.

VISION
LakewoodAlive is the community agent for stimulating discussion, innovation and action that drive convergence of individuals, institutions and ideas that enhance the economic growth and vitality of Lakewood.
In face of the worst economic climate in decades, more than $6 million was reinvested in the downtown district in 2009, culminating with the opening of four new dining establishments in the last 90 days of the year. Investor confidence, driven by Lakewood’s strong demographics, the Detroit Avenue Streetscape plan, and the support of City officials, resulted in dramatic storefront changes in the 15400 block (Five Guys Burger & Fries), the INA Building (Panera Bread and new lobby) and the Bailey Building (rehabilitation of original 1930’s façade). In addition, Lakewood Hospital—a Cleveland Clinic Regional Hospital opened its new $3.2 million Orthopaedic Center.

Using the National Main Street Four-Point Approach™, our volunteer-based revitalization efforts marked significant progress in 2009:

#1. DESIGN
In coordination with the City’s Department of Planning and Development, on July 9 our Design Guidelines Committee presented to Lakewood’s Architecture Board of Review (ABR) a draft proposal of guiding principles for new design guidelines for the downtown commercial district.

Downtown Lakewood Blossoms committee coordinated the placement of 32 flower boxes in the district and flowers in the Sinagra Park planters. Keep Lakewood Beautiful, Lakewood United Methodist Church and The Coral Company contributed towards planting and maintenance of flowers and hanging baskets in Sinagra Park.

Under the leadership of Judge Carroll, community service workers were assigned to remove graffiti, assist in weekly watering of the flower boxes plus weeding and litter collection in municipal parking lots in the district.

The Wayfinding & Signage Design Committee completed the design of a new wayfinding and signage system for the district with the help of environmental design consultants, Studio Graphique. The plan has been submitted to the Planning Commission for final approval. Installation is anticipated in 2011. This work was funded through a grant award to LakewoodAlive from Heritage Ohio, matched by the City of Lakewood.

#2. ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING
LakewoodAlive staff and volunteers worked with the City of Lakewood’s Department of Planning & Development and developers in the downtown district to attract, expand and retain businesses and tenants. This activity ranged from direct solicitation/problem-solving, to facilitating discussions with city representatives, to representing the district at roundtable meetings designed to showcase the city.

Invited and facilitated by LakewoodAlive, merchants formed the Downtown Lakewood Business Alliance (DLBA). Activities included:

- An enhanced security initiative with Lakewood police
- A 2-day sidewalk sale in conjunction with Streetwalk
- Lakewood Chocolate Walk
- Holiday Happy Hours in conjunction with Light Up Lakewood.

New signs for Downtown Lakewood area
# 3. Organization

**Volunteers:** In keeping with our volunteer-based model, an estimated 4762 hours, valued at $96,430 were logged by volunteers in 2009. Volunteers are drawn from across the community including youth, families, young adults, seniors, nonprofit organizations, for-profit businesses, Lakewood residents and non-Lakewood residents. Each volunteer brings their own set of skills and talents to the table; the generous provision of personal time is invaluable.

**Intern Program:** LakewoodAlive partnered with the Lakewood City Schools by hosting a Lakewood City Academy student as an intern at LakewoodAlive. The intern provides administrative and support services for various aspects of LakewoodAlive programming three mornings a week.

**A blog-based website,** www.downtownlakewood.org, was launched to specifically promote Downtown Lakewood activities and businesses. The LakewoodAlive site, www.lakewoodalive.com, remains as our “corporate” web-based location for economic development news and information.

**Fundraising:** Let’s Wine About Winter, LakewoodAlive Cornhole Tournament and Downtown Lakewood pARTy were presented as “fun”draisers to support LakewoodAlive operations.

# 4. Promotion

Events led by Downtown Lakewood in collaboration with other community organizations were heavily promoted to attract residents and visitors from outside the city to the downtown district. Lakewood Hospital generously stepped up as a major sponsor of all these activities:

**Band2gether: One World Music Series** brought live entertainment to Sinagra Park every Friday evening in July and August.

**Alive & Well Streetwalk 2009,** celebrated Lakewood’s healthy living assets on closed Detroit Avenue. A collaborative effort with Live Well Lakewood and the City of Lakewood, thirty-five volunteer program providers and about 5,000 individuals and families enjoyed being active in Downtown Lakewood.

**Spooky Pooch Parade** offered a chance for dog-lovers to dress in their Halloween best and come to downtown Lakewood to enjoy a parade and enjoy vendors of dog related products and services. Over 200 dogs attended with 500 owners and 1000 parade watchers. Proceeds from this event benefited downtown Lakewood revitalization and the Lakewood Animal Shelter.

**Lakewood Chocolate Walk** was introduced to the community by the Downtown Lakewood Business Alliance and LakewoodAlive. Thirty-three merchants provided a chocolate treat of their choice to 250 attendees for this first ever event which “sold out” days before the event. Funds raised from this event went to the Downtown Lakewood Business Alliance and LakewoodAlive.

While the day was a brisk 45 degrees, the sun was shining and Lakewood neighbors and their dogs put on their finest to participate in the Spooky Pooch Parade. The “puparazzi” were lined both sides of the street feverishly snapping photos of our canine friends.
Light Up Lakewood, for the fourth time, kicked-off the holiday season in the heart of the city. Community organizations and school music programs provided 25 entertainment activities along closed Detroit Avenue. Among many “firsts” was “living windows” presented by Lakewood High School drama students at the Curtis Building.

Downtown Lakewood pARTy provided live music and refreshment to 500 attendees under the Lakewood Hospital Belle Avenue tent following the Arts Festival on Saturday, August 1.

Downtown Lakewood Business Alliance added a “shop local” aspect, Holiday Happy Hours with special promotions and free gift wrapping. LakewoodAlive is also pleased to have arranged for Christmas tree sales in Downtown Lakewood during the Light Up Lakewood festivities for the first time in many years.

Downtown Lakewood helped with the cross-promotion of LEAF nights, the North Union Farmer’s Market, Lakewood Arts Festival, Starry Night Lakewood Hospital Benefit, and Lakewood Library programming.

Downtown Lakewood became a member of Positively Cleveland to have access to its many resources for attracting out-of-town visitors to our city.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Geiger’s Clothing & Sports was nominated by Downtown Lakewood and recognized as Heritage Ohio’s Main Street Business of the Year at its state conference held in Cleveland in May.

LakewoodAlive’s Downtown Lakewood program was recognized as being nationally accredited by the National Main Street Center in February.

LakewoodAlive and the City of Lakewood were jointly recognized with an Economic Impact Award from Team NEO in June for its work in attracting Wholesome Development headquarters to Lakewood.

The City of Lakewood, Lakewood Historical Society and Downtown Lakewood were recognized with a Preservation Award by the Cleveland Restoration Society in May for work related to the passage of the preservation ordinance and our Main Street program.

LakewoodAlive received a Cuyahoga Arts & Culture $5000 grant award in the form of matching funds for Band2gether: One World Music Series programming in Downtown Lakewood.

In October, a joint Ohio Historic Preservation Office Award was presented to LakewoodAlive, Lakewood Heritage Advisory Board, the City of Lakewood and Lakewood Historical Society for collective efforts to “recognize, preserve and promote Lakewood’s historic resources.”

LakewoodAlive received a $2,000 grant from Target for its 2009 Light Up Lakewood program and has been notified by the Junior Women’s Club of Lakewood that it is the recipient of a grant to be awarded in 2010.

Flower and banners welcome visitors to downtown Lakewood. Bright colors and lush plantings brighten the Lakewood experience for the thousands of people who come to the district on any given day to shop, work, and play.

Photo: Mary Anne Crampton
STREETSCAPE FUNDING

On June 22, Congressman Dennis Kucinich announced $311,000 in Federal Highway appropriation for Downtown Lakewood streetscape improvements. LakewoodAlive has been meeting with the representative and his staff to advocate for this critical aspect of Downtown Lakewood’s revitalization. The City of Lakewood made the formal appropriations request on our behalf.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In February, the Community Engagement Committee presented a forum, Lakewood Hospital—Vision for Tomorrow, to update the community about Lakewood Hospital’s strategic vision and investment plans for the institution.

In September, the Community Engagement Committee presented the forum, Wind Turbines on the Horizon? The Cuyahoga County Wind Energy Task Force members presented the Great Lakes Wind Energy Feasibility study to the Northeast Ohio community for the first time. An electronic survey system, provided by Turning Technologies, was utilized at the forum and over 100 attendees were able to provide instant valuable feedback to the task force.

LakewoodAlive staff made presentations about our work this spring to Junior Women’s Club of Lakewood, Lakewood Garden Club, Prudential Lucien Realty and two chapters of the Lakewood-Rocky River Rotary.

Downtown Lakewood has created a page on Facebook, has started “tweeting” on Twitter, and is exploring other social networking opportunities.

HOUSING INITIATIVE

In mid-July, Hilary Schickler joined LakewoodAlive as our Housing Outreach Director. Funded by federal Community Development Block Grant dollars, Hilary launched our housing initiative by working with low-moderate income residents to resolve exterior house maintenance issues. In addition to offering practical advice, this program provides information to eligible property owners on government programs available to help address these issues. Prior to Hillary Schickler beginning her work with LakewoodAlive, LakewoodAlive benefitted from the pro-bono services of CSU Marshall Law fellow and social worker, Sarah Dixon, who documented for us her significant research on government processes and resources related to housing issues.

We have extended exterior housing outreach services to over 600 residents and engaged nine in service provision. First time housing violation notices from the City Building Department now include a LakewoodAlive Housing Outreach Services brochure.

Our Housing Outreach Director meets with and works with block clubs, as well as city and court representatives in addition to other non-profits to explain our services and to problem-solve specific cases.

We continue to work with other community housing divisions and the City to understand the full potential of housing services we might provide and which services would be most beneficial to the community and not duplicative of the City or county services.

StreetWalk 2009 attracted an estimated 5,000 visitors as Lakewood celebrated its many active lifestyle resources and amenities. Participatory activities, including dancing, skateboarding and Lakewood Hospital’s Wheel of Health demonstrated the fun of healthy, active living.
INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS
City of Lakewood
Citizens’ Advisory Committee
City Council
Discount Drug Mart
First Federal of Lakewood
Geiger’s Clothing & Sports
Gilz & Associates
Lakewood Chamber of Commerce
Lakewood Hospital—a Cleveland Clinic Hospital
GAYLORD GRANTS
Cuyahoga Arts & Culture
Heritage Ohio
Keep Lakewood Beautiful
Lakewood—Rocky River Rotary
Target
DOWNTOWN MERCHANTS
14701 Detroit LLC
Aladdins Eatery
Panera Bread
Candy Shoes
Covelli Enterprises dba Panera Bread
Discount Drug Mart, Inc.
First Federal of Lakewood
Friends of the Lakewood Public Library
GBC Property Mgt.
Geiger’s Clothing & Sports
GreenSmartGifts
Hermes, Inc.
It’s A Party
Lakewood Public Library
Lakewood/Warren/Detroit Partnership LTD.
Landfall Travel
Lion and Blue
Melt Bar & Grilled
Phoenix Coffee
Plantation Home
Radio Shack
Rozzi’s Wine House
The Empty Nest
PROGRAM SPONSORS
Nicke J. Antonio
Around the Corner
Aububon Bell LLC
Thomas & Jennifer Baker
Beegan Arch. Design LLC
Bela Dubby
Borderline Café
Curtis Brosky
Buckeye Beer Engine
Thomas Bulloch
Bill & Mary Lou Call
Camp Bow Wow
City of Lakewood
CSDS Inc.
Curry Copy Center
Detroit-Warren Building
Dewey’s Pizza
David & Virginia Estrop
Jonathan & Helene Gaidelis
Galney Lakewood
Geiger’s Clothing & Sports
Grand Giant Eagle, Inc.
Great Lakes Brewing Co.
Hermes Inc.
HeyButler.com
Home Depot
Horace Mann PTA
Hyland Software, Inc.
Inn The Doghouse
Kathy’s Creative Sewing
Lambert Lakepark
Great Lakes Academy
Lakewood High School
Kiwanis
Lakewood Catholic Academy
Lakewood Chamber of Commerce
Lakewood City Schools
Lakewood Historical Society
Lakewood Hospital—a Cleveland Clinic Hospital
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FINANCIALS
FOR 2009

RECEIPTS ........................................ 194,970
- CDBG Funds ................................... 53,719
- Grant Awards .................................. 37,638
- Business Contributions ..................... 46,858
- Individual Contributions ..................... 9,880
- Event Revenue .................................. 25,775
- Corporate Sponsorship ...................... 21,100

DISBURSEMENTS ...................... 193,174
- Downtown Revitalization ................. 107,946
- Signage Design ................................. 32,120
- Housing ........................................... 20,326
- Mgmt & General ................................. 16,283
- Fundraising ..................................... 16,499

2010 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MARCH
Let’s Wine About Winter
Saturday, March 6
Downtown Lakewood Open House
Saturday, March 13

JULY
Streetwalk 2010
Saturday, July 17
Front Porch Concert Series (Library steps, 7–9pm)
Friday, July 9: African Village–Halim El Dabh
Friday July 16: Saborit Latin & Soul
Friday, July 23: Carlos Jones and the PLUS Band
Friday, July 30: Student Rock Bands

AUGUST
Downtown Lakewood pARTy
Saturday, August 7

OCTOBER
Spooky Pooch Parade
Saturday, October 16
Lakewood Chocolate Walk
Thursday, October 28

DECEMBER
Light Up Lakewood
Saturday, December 4