

History of the Kiwanis Club of Tierrasanta, San Diego

Chartered March 14, 1976

The Kiwanis Club of Grantville-Allied Gardens established the Kiwanis Club of Tierrasanta, San Diego in 1976 led by Kiwanis Cal-Nev-Ha Division 21 Lt. Governor Fred Melvin and Grantville President Cal Pancheri. Grantville member Bill Hoover chaired a committee of Kiwanians who canvassed and walked the streets of the relatively new community of Tierrasanta in search of men interested in starting a service club under the banner of Kiwanis International. During the months of March and April 1976, Grantville-Allied Gardens club members along with new members from the Tierrasanta club recruited 32 men who became charter members of the club. An organizational meeting was held on March 14, 1976, establishing the official charter date of the club. At the organizational meeting at the Sands Hotel Rib Cage Restaurant, Tierrasanta resident John Bolger was elected president of the club. The Charter was presented to the club at an evening dinner celebration at Miramar Naval Air Station Officer Club on May 14, 1976 and all members joining prior to that meeting were designated charter members of the club.



Organizational Breakfast Meeting at Rib Cage

Circa March/April 1976

Head Table L to R: Lt Gov Fred Melvin, Bill Hoover (GAG New Club Chair), Jim Vlassis (vice president) and Francisco Gamboa (secretary). President John Bolger is standing and speaking to Logan McKechnie with Gherry Bryant to their left and Cap Peake, Mike Pent and David Crosby to their right. Across that table are L to R Louis McLemore (treasurer) and Kym Murphy. Tom Cherniss is seated at the table to the left behind Cap Peake and Mike Pent. Others in the photo are not identified.



**Charter President John Bolger
Congratulated by Division 21 Lt.
Governor Fred Melvin**



Charter Officers and Directors

Seated L to R: Francisco Gamboa (secretary), John Bolger (president), Jim Vlassis (vice president), Louis McLemore (treasurer); Board members L to R: David Crosby, Kym Murphy, Bob Caproni, Gherry Bryant and Rev. Jerry Groth

Because Tierrasanta is primarily residential, the weekly meeting time for the club was set on Wednesdays from 7:00 to 8:00 AM, for breakfast at the Rib Cage Restaurant, Sands Hotel, on Kearny Mesa Road. This allowed business and professional members who worked in and outside the community to actively participate in the meetings without undue interference with business, professional and family obligations.

By the fall of 1976 the Tierrasanta club was struggling. John Bolger began his second term as president in October 1976. Many of the members had ceased regular attendance and due to business obligations, Mr. Bolger resigned as president of the club. With dwindling attendance the club lost the meeting location at the Rib Cage and made arrangements to meet at the same time each week for coffee and donuts at the Pizza Hut in the Vons shopping center in Tierrasanta. During a fateful meeting in the late fall of

1976 with approximately six members in attendance, the members present discussed whether they should continue the club or disband. Vernon Bowman, a Christiana Community Builders Manager, businessman and charter member who had been instrumental in establishing the club volunteered to assume the club presidency and agreed with others present to make an effort to re-energize the club.

Vernon Bowman helped to arrange a new meeting location with a catered breakfast at the Tierrasanta Lutheran Center, a converted residence on Orozco Road in Tierrasanta. Mr. Bowman agreed to serve a second full-term as president for the 1977-78 Kiwanis administrative year under the leadership of Division 21 Lt. Governor Enrico DeMarco who often attended the club meetings. Club leaders and members became more actively involved in Kiwanis division and district activities. By the end of Mr. Bowman's second term as president, the club membership had grown back to 17 members and in recognition of the progress of the club, Lt. Governor DeMarco awarded the club and Vernon Bowman the Lt. Governor's Memorial Trophy (now Lt. Governor's Trophy).

The club's growth and service continued during the 1978-79 year with Mike Pent as president, a charter member. The club meeting site was moved to the Jolly Roger Restaurant on Clairemont Mesa Boulevard. The club membership was increased to over 40 members and the club was recognized for the highest net gain in membership in the Kiwanis Cal-Nev-Ha District for the 1978-79 Kiwanis year and at the International Convention in Toronto for a greater than 100% membership gain. During the Christmas holidays in 1978, the club initiated a fundraising project to decorate the shopping center on Tierrasanta Boulevard, later expanded to include Clairemont Mesa Boulevard in Tierrasanta. The club presented the charter of the Serra High School Key Club in January 1979. In the spring, club member Dan Driscoll chaired the 1979 Tierrasanta Kiwanis 10-K Run as a fundraiser that was the first major community event in Tierrasanta. Over the next several years the Tierrasanta Kiwanis 10-K Run became one of the most successful and difficult races in San Diego, raising significant charitable funds for the club. The club adopted a program initiated in the Southwest Kiwanis District and awarded Hope of America Awards in elementary schools for the first time in California. In 1981, the Hope of America Award program was extended as a Division 21 program and in 1984 was adopted by the Kiwanis Cal-Nev-Ha District Foundation as a Cal-Nev-Ha District program. The Tierrasanta club and foundation now provides 27 awards each year in a total of 14 schools from elementary to high school. Hope of America scholarships are awarded to recipients who are graduating seniors. A club building committee chaired by Mike Pent organized the Kiwanis Club of Scripps Mira



Installation, September 1978, L to R: Roger Nutter (secretary), Steve Wojdowski (treasurer), Tom Cherniss (vice president), Mike Pent (president) and Vernon Bowman (immediate past president).

Mesa with over 30 charter members and Lt. Governor Cal Pancheri awarded the club the Lt. Governor's Trophy for 1978-79, for the second successive year.

The club continued to prosper during the 1980's by staging regular pancake breakfast and spaghetti dinner events as fundraisers. Under the leadership of charter member and twice president Tom Cherniss, the club expanded service projects to include sponsorship of Boy Scout Troop 985 and later Cub Packs 985 and 279, annual participation in Special Olympics (now Sports for Exceptional Athletes) benefiting children athletes with developmental disabilities, support of youth sports activities in Tierrasanta and the Murphy Canyon Navy Housing complex and the development of recreational sports fields in Tierrasanta. In 1981, under the leadership of Dan Driscoll as president and club building chair, the club established the Kiwanis Club of North Clairemont.

In 1982, George Paluso as club president proposed awarding an annual Kiwanis scholarship to an outstanding graduating Serra High School senior bound for college. The club established the scholarship and a policy to accumulate a scholarship fund using only annual earnings to fund scholarships. The scholarship was accepted by the Kiwanis Cal-Nev-Ha District Foundation and managed by the District Foundation for over 15-years until 1997 when Tom Cherniss led an effort by the club to establish the Kiwanis Foundation of Tierrasanta with Mr. Cherniss serving as the first president. Since then the scholarship program, donations and earnings have allowed the expansion of the scholarship awards to include a four-year scholarship named in honor of Vernon Bowman who died of a heart attack in 1986 and two-annual scholarships named in honor of Tom Cherniss who died after a long illness in 2000 and George Paluso who died of a brain hemorrhage in 2009. The club foundation has acted as the charitable arm of the club and assisted the club with providing a specialized van for Key Club Advisor Chris Timmins, and Reality Changer scholarships to young students coping with challenging life circumstance in honor of club member Judge William Mudd who died in 2009 after a long illness. The foundation also assists the club with the administration of the Hope of America Award program primarily carried out by Bob Richards and by providing monetary stipends to award recipients who are graduating seniors.



George Paluso
1978

The club has continued to grow stronger over time. Meeting locations were changed in the 1980's and 1990's from the International House of Pancakes on Kearny Mesa road near Clairemont Mesa Boulevard to a catered breakfast at the Tierrasanta Christian Church located at the eastern terminus of Tierrasanta Boulevard, Angelo's Italian Restaurant on Clairemont Mesa Boulevard, from 1997 through 2014 at the Holiday Inn on Murphy Canyon Road off Aero Drive, at Giovanni's Restaurant at Clairemont Mesa and Ruffin Roads from 2014 until 2018; then briefly at La Miche Kabobgee and the Spice House Café Restaurants, both on Clairemont Mesa Boulevard. Since 2019, the club meets at Maggie's Café on Greyling Drive in Serra Meas. The most lasting annual



Dr. Hani Shatila

Tierrasanta community events were established through the leadership and continued persistence of Dr. Hani Shatila who serviced as president of the club in 1987-88. The Kiwanis administrative year now begins with an Oktoberfest celebration held in early October at the Tierrasanta Recreation Center featuring games, refreshments, a German dinner, hot dogs, music, and fireworks for the enjoyment of the whole family. Tierrafest-Patriot's Day Parade and Barbecue Dinner is also now an established annual community celebration traditionally held on Armed Forces Day in May starting with a morning parade and evening event that has ranged from a spaghetti dinner to an old-fashioned American hamburger and hotdog barbecue prepared and served by Kiwanis members and other community volunteers. Both these events involve the cooperation of many community volunteers and support of the Tierrasanta Junior Women's Club many others.

From the 1980's through the current time the club grew in stature considered among the top clubs in the Kiwanis Cal-Nev-Ha District of Kiwanis International. Contributing greatly to this was the Kiwanis change in policy in 1987 to allow regular active membership by women. Diane Frank, Cathy Cafiero and Gini Austin, were early women initiates in the Tierrasanta club and Diane and Cathy served as presidents in 1993-94 and 1995-96, respectively. The club moved to extend the sponsorship of Kiwanis chartered school programs including Builders Clubs established at Jean Farb Middle School in September 1993 and DePortola Middle School in June 1994. In the 2000's during the presidencies of John Hopper, Marty Cary, Dick Wilken and Cathy Chesire a K-Kids club was established at Hamilton Elementary School in January 2005, a Builders Club at Monroe Clark Middle School in June 2005, K-Kids at Tierrasanta Elementary in October 2007 and Kumeyaay Elementary in March 2010, a Builders Club at Taft Middle School in June 2010 and a K-Kids club at Miller Elementary School in October 2010. The club has sponsored and supported the re-chartering of the Key Club at Hoover High School on August 4, 2015 and the chartering SET Charter School on Aero Drive near Tierrasanta on October 3, 2017.

Tom Cherniss also led an effort to save the annual December Kiwanis Basketball Tournament for high schools that had been established many years before by the Kiwanis Club of San Diego (downtown). Thanks to the leadership spearheaded by twice club president and past Lt. Governor John Haigis along with past Lt. Governor Jeff Ott the tournament was improved and continued until 2014.

Dedicated club members have contributed outstanding service to the club and foundation sometimes over periods of years as club secretary or treasurer including Roger Nutter, Steve Wojdowski, Tom Cherniss, Tom Murrell, Cathy Cafiero, Bob Weckman, Tom Lambert, John Martin, Pete Caswell, John Haigis, John Hopper, Jeff Ott, Dr. Paul Van Horne, Thom Van Benthuyssen, David West and Rex Warburton. Kiwanis Past Lt. Governor Jeff Ott has served as a Kiwanis District administrator of the Kiwanis International K-Kids sponsored youth program in elementary schools and headed up Kiwanis One Day, an International program of local Kiwanis service to communities everywhere. Under the leadership of Irene Cannon who served as president during the 2014-15 administrative year, Division 21 Lt. Governor Cloti Simpelo awarded the club and President Irene the Marion Miller Trophy as the most improved club in Division 21 that year. The club was again awarded the Lt. Governor's Trophy three additional times for the 2005-06, 2008-09 and 2016-17 years with Mike Pent, Deborah Foley and Mike George serving as presidents.

Club projects have benefited the community in many ways and also include the following:

Monetary Support of Youth Activities at the Schools:

- Valley Forge Freedom Foundation Trip
- Support of NJROTC at Serra High School
- Baseball and Senior Booster Clubs
- Serra High School Basketball
- Support of Serra High Track & Field School students at the State Meet
- Serra High School Foundation
- Leadership Development
- Washington D.C. trips for middle school students
- Reading Is Fundamental(R.I.F) program
- Monetary donations to School Principal Discretionary Funds

Community Youth Support:

- Tierrasanta Little League
- Tierra Canyon Girls softball
- Boy Scouts, Troops 2 and Girl Scouts
- AYSO and S.D. Youth Soccer
- Tierrasanta Spring Egg Hunt
- Children's Hospital Newspaper Day

Community Projects:

- Displaying American Flags on the medians of Tierrasanta and Clairemont Mesa Boulevards during special holidays with the support of the Key Club.
- Annual Oktoberfest Celebration
- Annual Tierrafest Patriot's Day Parade and Barbecue
- Monetary Contributions to Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation
- Contributions to the Tierrasanta Library
- Financial support Tierrasanta Recreation Center to extend hours of operation
- Cleaning Tierrasanta Canyons with Friends of the Canyon
- Contribution to Senior Projects
- Theatre Fundraising Events
- Major Contributor to De Portola Middle School Sports
- Fresh Start Program to surgically correct physical deformities of children.
- Iodine Deficiency Disorder, a Kiwanis International worldwide project to resolve iodine deficiency in third world countries.
- Contributing to the Kiwanis International goal is to eradicate Tetanus in underdeveloped areas

Voices for Children: staging or funding an annual Christmas party for over 600 attendees including 300+ children aided by the Voices For Children organization.

Children's Hospital Radiothon and Miracle Mile of Quarters: support of this invaluable community resource for children

Hurricane Katrina Victim Relief: Collecting and transporting needed supplies to aid Hurricane Katrina victims in Wiggins, Mississippi.

Rebuilding Together (formerly Christmas in April): Club members and the Kiwanis Key Club at Serra High School led efforts in restoration projects for the needy.

Ugandan Orphan Project: foundation and club providing funding for subsistence, education and medical needs of five Ugandan Orphans.



Kiwanis is a global organization of volunteers dedicated to changing the world one child and one community at a time.

1976 Charter Members

John Akstin, III
Phillip R. Babb
Robert N. Berke
John R. Bolger
Vernon D. Bowman
Sid Brooks
Gherry K. Bryant
James R. Caproni
Tom Cherniss
Dr. James O. Cleveland
Charles Christian
Roger Crobarger
David Crosby
Dan Desmond
Edward P. Dick
Neal Farinholt

Randolph T. Fillet
Robert French
Francisco S. Gamboa
Rev. Jerome Groth
Dr. J. Andrew Hunter
Richard A. Lange
C. Logan McKechnie
Louis McLemore
W. Kymberly Murphy
Roger Nutter
Charles A. Peake
Michael Pent
William Perry
Michael J. Stevenson
Anthony R. Tirpak
James Vlassis

Presidents of the Kiwanis Club of Tierrasanta

1976	<i>John R. Bolger</i>	2001 – 2002	<i>Edward P. Williams *</i>
1976 – 1977	<i>Vernon D. Bowman</i>	2002 – 2003	Deborah Foley *
1977 – 1978	<i>Vernon D. Bowman *</i>	2003 – 2004	Jim Law *
1978 – 1979	Mike Pent *	2004 – 2005	John Hopper *
1979 – 1980	<i>Thomas G. Cherniss *</i>	2005 – 2006	Mike Pent * # κ H
1980 – 1981	<i>Daniel R. Driscoll *</i>	2006 – 2007	Rex Warburton *
1981 – 1982	<i>George V. Paluso H</i>	2007 – 2008	Marty Cary
1982 – 1983	Don Longacre *	2008 – 2009	Deborah Foley *
1983 – 1984	Jay Kopp *	2009 – 2010	Dick Wilken *
1984 – 1985	<i>John Bailey *</i>	2010 – 2011	Cathy Chesire
1985 – 1986	<i>John Schellinkhout</i>	2011 – 2012	<i>Edward P. Williams</i>
1986 – 1987	<i>Troy M. Joplin</i>	2012 – 2013	Lonnie Folsom k
1987	<i>Edward P. Williams</i>	2013 – 2014	<i>Dr. Paul Crane</i>
1987 – 1988	Dr. Hani Shatila * κ H	2014 – 2015	Irene Cannon
1988 – 1989	Randy Bosch	2015 – 2016	Jim Cote
1989 – 1990	<i>Thomas G. Cherniss * κ</i>	2016 – 2017	Mike George *
1990 – 1991	<i>Jesse Lee Jones</i>	2017 – 2018	Jim Knox *
1991 – 1992	Paul Liberto	2018 – 2019	Rich Orr
1992 – 1993	Davis Bowman	2019 – 2020	Keith Fuller
1993 – 1994	Diane Frank	2020 – 2021	Clint Messerschmidt *
1994 – 1995	Larry Carter κ	2021 – 2022	Elaine Folsom
1995 – 1996	Kathy Cafiero *	2022 – 2023	Dave West *
1996 – 1997	John Haigis *	2023 – 2025	Jan Whitacre
1997 – 1998	<i>Edward P. Williams</i>	2025 – 2026	Norm Ryan
1998 – 1999	Duncan MacDonald *	2026 – 2027	
1999 – 2000	Ron Carnago	2027 – 2028	
2000 – 2001	John Haigis D		

Presidents of the Kiwanis Foundation of Tierrasanta

1997 – 2000	<i>Thomas G. Cherniss</i>	2005 – 2007	Jim Law
2000 – 2005	<i>George V. Paluso</i>	2007 – Current	Mike Pent

Tierrasanta Members Servicing as Kiwanis District Officers

1984 – 1985	Mike Pent	President, Kiwanis Cal-Nev-Ha District Foundation Now- Kiwanis Cal-Nev-Ha Children's Fund
-------------	-----------	--

Division Lieutenant Governors

1980 - 1981	Mike Pent #	Division 21
1998 - 1999	Ian Wotherspoon	Division 21
1999 - 2000	<i>Billie Lange</i>	Division 26
2001 - 2002	Jeff Ott #	Division 21
2008 - 2009	John Haigis	Division 21
2016 – 2017	Lonnie Folsom	Division 21
2025 – 2026	Jan Whitacre	Division 21

Legend

*	Distinguished President
#	Distinguished Past Lt. Governor
κ	Kiwanis Life Member
<i>D</i>	District Life Member
<i>H</i>	Kiwanis Legion of Honor (25 or more years of Kiwanis service)
	<i>Deceased members are listed in Italics</i>