

LAKWOOD FUTURE TOOLS

Articulating Lakewood's Future: Generation X & Generation Y

- Panel Discussion Notes -

Panel Moderator: Kenneth Warren

Participants: Dana Romeo, Keith Smith, Len Peralta, Julie Warren, Nadhal Eadeh, Vincent O'Keefe, Anila Coniku, Vince Frantz, Julie Hutchison

Time, Date and Location: 4:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m.
March 13, 2005 at the Main Library Auditorium, 15425
Detroit Avenue, Lakewood, Ohio 44107



"How do you experience Aliveness in Lakewood?"

- Dana Romeo - Living car-free in Lakewood.
- Keith Smith - Working, teaching, and being creatively involved with the young people at Virginia Marti College.
- Len Peralta - my five children, living in a close-knit community with our neighbors.
- Julie Warren - Lakewood's small town connection.
- Nadhal Eadeh - The Lakewood nightlife especially walking up and down Detroit Road in summer. The parks and the "flow" in city make me feel alive.
- Vincent O'Keefe - Being a stay-at-home dad, Family Room Early Childhood Preschool P.T.A. and the energy and support I receive from these groups.
- Anila Coniku - Lakewood is only the 2nd city I have ever lived in. It is similar to my home city in Albania in closeness of community and amenities. Lakewood is my new life.

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- Vince Frantz - Being engaged in skateboard park project. Being on Detroit Road watching people enjoy themselves. Skaters make community better by living in it.



"Who are you? What is your biography, values, habits and life path?"

- Dana Romeo - Single mom with four children. Homeowner on Beach Ave. Full-time student and costume designer. Pagan.
- Keith Smith - Teacher at [Virginia Marti](#) for 4 years. 1 Daughter. Owns faux painting company that relies on word-of-mouth business. Enjoys the arts.
- Lenny Peralta - 12-year resident of Gladys Ave. Owns home-based ad agency, [Nobby Nees](#). Was part of corporate lay-offs after September 11, 2001. Participates in running private Catholic school, Padre Pio Academy. Pioneer in Podcasting with [Jawbone Radio](#). Likes mix of suburban and urban styles.
- Julie Warren - Westlake transplant. Works with husband at Erie de Sign. Mother of two daughters. Believes in civic responsibility. Worked with Chamber of Commerce board and is currently president of [Junior Women's Club of Lakewood](#).
- Nadhal Eadeh - Born and raised in Lakewood. Played basketball and football for Lakewood High School. Currently attends John Carroll University. Would like to come back to Lakewood to teach and coach at the high school.
- Vince O'Keefe - English professor currently on sabbatical to raise daughters while his wife works as

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gynecologist. Creates photography and poetry about Lakewood. Works on projects for [Local Girl Gallery](#).

- Anila- As a child danced in Albania Circus and acted in the children's theater. Became an "enemy of state" in Albania because of her involvement with the arts. Got good grades. After graduating from the university in Albania became a high school teacher and a journalist. In September 1997, came to United States to be with her sister and to go to CSU where she received a Masters of Education. It is very "disorienting" when one moves to a new country because everything is so different and Anila now works to help others make the transition to America. Works with local government and the 3200 Albanians that live in Lakewood. Finds so much positive energy in Lakewood and "The American Way".
- Vince Frantz - 5-year resident of Lakewood. Originally from Grand Rapids, Ohio where he worked on farms and at the local ice cream parlor. Attended the University of Cincinnati. Started own business graphics design company. Believes in taking control of your own future. "Don't leave your future to someone else." Lead by example. Totally committed to skateboarding and [Lakewood Skate Park](#) project. Feels very at home here.
- Julie Hutchinson - 10-year resident. Feels more at home here than Youngstown suburb, Boardman, where she grew up. Has encouraged her sister and brothers to move here. Thought she hated "American Life" - had plans to move to Africa, but everything totally changed when she came to Lakewood. Began working at Phoenix - now owns it! Studies anthropology and dance at CSU. Great to live in a walkable city close to the lake that absorbs the bad energy.



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"How do we make Lakewood a "sticky" city?"

- Dana Romeo - Have more activities in the center of town.
- Keith Smith - Create positive chi. In Lakewood, people wave and speak to neighbors. Keep a positive attitude. Generate alive and friendly energy.
- Len Peralta - The skate park is a huge move forward. Bring Lakewood's parks back to life.
- Julie Warren - Bars great for youth, but Malley's is the spot for young families. Increase loyalty among store owners and develop positive relationships. Build upon Lake Erie asset.
- Nadhal Eadeh - No flow in Lakewood=no connection with neighbors. We need to keep the flow.
- Vincent O'Keefe - Oakpark, Ill. similar to Lakewood in structure and makeup. Oakpark pursued a historic community identity - Lakewood can also leverage historical aspects. Participate in the Main St. Initiative. Build upon the success of the Arts Festival and expand Taste of Lakewood. We know how to do these well, so look at other festivals or events to draw visitors and potential residents (e.g., Antiques or Jazz Festivals or even a Kids Arts Festival). Keeping property/front porches attractive is also key.
- Anila Coniku - Celebrate the diversity in the city. Get to know one another. Mayor George met with Albanian delegation to find out needs of community. Dottie Buckon, Toni Gelsimino were very supportive of new immigrant families and individuals. Networking among different spheres of civic life is key. Possibilities of an Albanian Festival or Fair. City

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agencies need to keep active in our immigrant communities to know problems and find solutions. Help others to help themselves.

- Vince Frantz - [Phoenix Coffee](#) house presents "slices of Lakewood" and a macrocosm of the community as a whole. Lakewood needs to extend our community as an original. Reflect the community as it stands. Historical aspects are also worth playing up, but be what we are and be unique.

- Julie Hutchison - Hold more social events, community dance events, especially with family angles. Be a place for "cool places" to develop (e.g., Burlington VT grassroots retail community). Things in Lakewood will change, but change is good. Develop a bike map for Lakewood. Soon will be renting bikes from Phoenix to support the car-free community. Develop community gardens. Build on Lake and metroparks assets. Close Detroit for events more often. Extend RTA rails and develop public transportation options.



"How Can Lakewood Become More Child-Friendly?"

1. Dana Romeo - Enhance traffic and cycling safety. Investigate traffic signal changes or lanes for cyclists.

2. Keith Smith - Get involved with youth - Virginia Marti works with LHS students while they are still at LHS. Encourage students to do their best. Be a mentor to the students.

3. Len Peralta - Start a Kids Festival. Investigate ways to lessen traffic cut-thoroughs on side streets - very scary to let kids play in front yard. Stop signs at tracks to slow down motorists.

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4. Julie Warren - Engage youth through programs at civic institutions, e.g., Lakewood Public Library, Beck Center or Friday Night Flicks. Schools restructuring and new initiatives will be very important for Lakewood's future. Safety issues and sidewalks streetscape needs work.
5. Nadhal Eadeh - Improve city parks. Investigate Recreation Center possibilities. Encourage an active lifestyle. School initiatives will be important.
6. Vincent O'Keefe - Improve cinema offerings, including independent/art films house. Seek to attract chain or independent bookstore for the city.
7. Anila Coniku - Hold Children's Festival or concerts. Let children play.
8. Vince Frantz - Remember kids 12 and older. Look for "Kid enhancers" by staying on top of what kids really want to do. Make Lakewood a place kids want to come to. Involve kids in the planning (e.g., the [Public Square Group](#) youth volunteer/advocacy group that formed as a result of the Skate Park initiative). Develop apprenticeship-style advocacy.
9. Julie Hutchison - Hold more activities for 13-16 year olds. More interaction between LHS and community Recreation Center.



"How do We Identify/Develop a Lakewood Brand?"

1. Dana Romeo - Encourage friends to move here. Set example for others to come here.

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2. Keith Smith - Often represents for Lakewood and tries to draw students to Virginia Marti, who then move to Lakewood.
3. Len Peralta - Identify and market the "humor" of the community. Encourage friendliness.
4. Julie Warren - Also engage potential residents with humor.
5. Nadhal Eadeh - Demonstrate to potential residents that there is young, vibrant flow and that housing is inexpensive.
6. Vincent O'Keefe - Use humor to correct misrepresentations in media.
7. Anila Coniku - Being hospitable makes visitors feel welcome. Become actively involved with community.
8. Vince Frantz - Be on message about Lakewood. Develop the word of mouth buzz. Create deep well of info to brand.
9. Julie Hutchison - Build and amplify what we already are. Don't seek big bandaids, but pursue smaller, more achievable projects.



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A SELECTION OF QUESTIONS TO PONDER LAKEWOOD'S FUTURE

- Where you find your aliveness in Lakewood?
- Who are you? Bio, values, habits, life path?
- Do you have any day in/out rituals that bring a sense of vitality to your life in the city?
- Does this ritual involve any streets, or residents?
- What brought you here?
- Why Lakewood for you? Now? Forever?
- If not Lakewood why, where else?
- What attracts you to Lakewood - will that attraction serve you in the future?
- What repels you about Lakewood - what will that repulsion do to you in the future?
- What will help Lakewood become a sticky place you want to stay?
- How can we improve the level of play in the City?
- How are you feeling about resource flow - money, economy, jobs, and taxes?
- Can you tell us about how work is going for you in this city and region?
- How can you feel like you are getting what you need from the sticky city?
- What are your cultural strategies - beyond job, family and television set?

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- ❑ What can you do here that you can't do elsewhere? How many people do you know? How big is your social group?
- ❑ Is Lakewood a good place to raise kids?
- ❑ Does living in Lakewood mean you are giving more than you are receiving or receiving more than you are giving?
- ❑ How much energy are you leaking?
- ❑ How has Lakewood helped you inform your values and views of life?
- ❑ What do you need from Lakewood? Are you getting it? How do you get what you need?
- ❑ Is there a Lakewood brand, a sense of Lakewood among young people both inside and out - what is the good, bad and ugly? Any fixes for the bad or ugly?
- ❑ Describe your best future for the city.
- ❑ What are the strengths and threats to realize your preferred future.