

## SBCHC 75th Anniversary Series “Las Candalistas”

*By: Marsha Swails and Joanie Neumayer  
Board Members*

Although many community organizations have donated to SBCHC over the years, only one, Las Candalistas, was organized to solely support the needs of the Child Guidance Clinic. Dr. Arthur H. Orlowski from USC served as the clinic's first psychiatrist. Soon, a psychologist and social worker were added. In 1967, recognizing the need for expanded services, the Board of Directors asked Jane McNeil and Mrs. John Farrell to organize a women's auxiliary. The group eventually chose a name that reflects its mission...lighting the way for service.



*Chairman Jane McNeil, left, with Walter Ralphs (1970)*

We interviewed Jane, a person whose volunteer work over her lifetime has left an indelible mark on the South Bay. It was a time before insurance and governmental support were available for mental health. Las Candalistas provided needed revenue through various fundraising efforts. In the beginning, they organized a thrift shop. Later, one of the most successful events became “Walk on the Wild Side.”



*Maggie LePley helping display museum specimens of a dove, roadrunner, cowbird, and towhee, at a Las Candalistas event benefitting SBCHC (1970)*

A site on the Palos Verdes peninsula was selected because of the “splendor of the ocean cliffs, the joy of wooded terraces, and the brilliance of coleco...” The first “walk” was attended by 300 guests. A tailgate luncheon was served using members’ best silver, china, and even candelabras. A docent led the walks describing the natural beauty of the area. That first event raised \$3000. Its success led to future walks with 1400 guests attending. South Bay Children’s Health Center will always be grateful for their dedication.

Because of the great need, Las Candalistas decided to provide grant's to additional organizations in the South Bay as well as SBCHC. Today it remains a vibrant organization in our community as it lights the way.



*A naturalist alerting seated guests of the flowers, birds, animals, and terrain to watch for at Portuguese Bend (1970)*