



LOS ANGELES
CONSERVANCY



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The L.A. Conservancy Provides \$5,000 Grants to Ten Small Los Angeles County Legacy Businesses

LOS ANGELES, October 3, 2023—The Los Angeles Conservancy is delighted to announce round two recipients of its Legacy Business grants. Thanks to the generous support of Wells Fargo, in its second funding round, the Conservancy recently awarded five grants of \$5,000 each to Kouraku restaurant in Little Tokyo, *El Paraiso* in Florence-Firestone, Hop Woo restaurant in Chinatown, Avalon Nursery and Ceramics in South Los Angeles, and Lenchita’s restaurant in Pacoima. We invite you to join us on October 11, 2023 for our next People + Places virtual program, *Keeping Legacy Businesses: Stories from L.A.* to learn more about our Legacy Business Grant Program. We will be joined by Justine Gonzalez, Wells Fargo Vice President of Philanthropy and Community Impact, and Leonardo Romero, second-generation owner of ice cream retailer and manufacturer grant recipient, *El Paraiso*. To register for this free event, please visit laconservancy.org/leg-biz-stories.

“The Los Angeles Conservancy is a strong supporter of legacy businesses in L.A. County,” says Adrian Scott Fine, senior director of advocacy of the Los Angeles Conservancy. “Thanks to Wells Fargo, the Conservancy’s Legacy Business Grant Program can make funding available to longtime small businesses so they can stay open and continue serving their communities.”

Legacy businesses are a vital part of the fabric of Los Angeles neighborhoods. Familiar, authentic, and dependable, longtime mom-and-pop shops often symbolize a community’s history and resilience. However, high rents, rising costs, overdue repairs, fewer clientele, and unexpected fallouts from the pandemic and inflation have put many legacy businesses at risk.

In 2019, the Conservancy launched its initiative to promote and raise awareness about legacy businesses in Los Angeles County. Since the pandemic, the Conservancy fortified its initiative with a #ISupportLegacyBusiness social media campaign spotlighting longtime small businesses throughout L.A. County, reaching over 5 million.

With the support of Wells Fargo, the Conservancy created the Legacy Business Grant Program in 2022. Over two rounds, the Conservancy granted \$5,000 each to ten small businesses in L.A. County that have operated and contributed to their community’s history and/or identity for at least 20 years. The program received more than 500 applications, citing challenges such as struggling to keep up with rising rent and operating costs, unpaid bills, labor expenses, and technology upgrade needs.

“Legacy businesses are at the heart of the neighborhoods they serve,” says Justine D. Gonzalez, Wells Fargo Vice President, Philanthropy and Community Impact. “Wells Fargo is proud to join the Conservancy in strengthening their ability to prosper.”



On October 11, 2023, at 12 p.m., the Conservancy will celebrate the recipients of our first-ever Legacy Business Grant Program with a free virtual event, *People + Places: Keeping Legacy Businesses: Stories*. Learn more about the first year of our grant program and hear from grant recipient, Leonardo Romero of *El Paraiso*, who will also provide a live demonstration!

The Conservancy will also release “Legacy Businesses: Stories from L.A.,” three short films by Los Angeles filmmaker Matthew Oquendo. “Time & Tradition,” “Building Community,” and “Feeding the Future” will launch on our YouTube channel (youtube.com/laconservancy) on October 11th at 10 a.m. These three short films feature the stories of Candelas in Boyle Heights, Sika in Leimert Park, and Lenchita’s in Pacoima, respectively.

About Round Two Grantees

AVALON NURSERY AND CERAMICS, 5334 Avalon Boulevard, Los Angeles, 90011

Owner Maria Luz Lopez founded this South L.A. nursery in 1983 when the corner was just a vacant lot. Today, it’s the only nursery remaining in the neighborhood. Stepping inside the lush, meandering maze of greenery, it is difficult to remember that the bustling corner of Avalon Boulevard and 54th Street is right outside!

HOP WOO BBQ & SEAFOOD RESTAURANT, 845 North Broadway, Los Angeles, 90012

Hop Woo BBQ & Seafood Restaurant is a popular mainstay, thanks to the late Chef Lupe Liang, who was the restaurant’s beloved founder. Chef Liang was a culinary crusader who embraced L.A.’s multicultural layers. (Hop Woo’s menu is offered in English, Spanish, and Chinese.) Liang’s wife Judy, daughters, and its loyal customers have rallied to help keep this family-operated restaurant going amid the pandemic, rising utility costs, and more.

KOURAKU, 314 East 2nd Street, Los Angeles, 90012

Little Tokyo’s Kouraku is known as the oldest operating Japanese ramen noodle restaurant in the country. Founded in 1976, Kouraku was taken over by the late Hiroshi Yamauchi in 1986, who brought popular post-World War II Japanese comfort foods to the community. Though new owner Mamoru Tokuda is now at the restaurant’s helm, Kouraku’s culinary traditions remain and this longstanding restaurant still feels like “home.”

LENCHITA’S TORTILLERIA AND RESTAURANT, 13612 Van Nuys Boulevard, Pacoima, 91331

Lenchita’s Tortillería and Restaurant in Pacoima has been serving up traditional dishes and homemade tortillas since 1977. A San Fernando Valley institution, it’s been said that there hasn’t been a kid from Pacoima who didn’t grow up with a Lenchita’s quesadilla in one hand and a pineapple drink in the other.

EL PARAISO, 1760 East Florence Avenue, Los Angeles, 90001

Paletas are a delicious Mexican frozen treat made from natural fruit, and Florence-Firestone’s *El Paraiso* has been serving them since 1979. Family-owned and operated, it is part of the neighborhood’s fabric and offers a warm feeling of nostalgia for its customers, many of whom have been coming here for decades.

About Round One Grantees

88 GIFTS SHOP, 311 Ord Street Los Angeles, CA 90031



For over 30 years, the original location of 88 Gifts Shop was in BC Plaza on Broadway. In 2020, owner Annie Ma was forced to relocate her business to its present location. Ma’s shop sells housewares, plants, and a variety of Lunar New Year gifts to neighborhood residents and tourists. Notably, 88 Gifts Shop sells Chinese-language newspapers, keeping local elders in touch with news events both here and abroad.

CANDELAS GUITARS, 2724 E Cesar Chavez Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90033

Founded in 1947 by brothers Porfirio and Candelario Delgado-Flores, Candelas specializes in custom guitar making. Third-generation owner Tomas Delgado—along with his son Tomas Jr.—have proudly continued the Candelas legacy of fine craftsmanship. The store’s clientele includes famous artists like José Feliciano but it’s also a source of community pride, giving back to Boyle Heights in many ways including the creation of a 501c (3) nonprofit that provides free music lessons to local youth.

EL AGUILA BAKERY, 5028 Huntington Drive South, Los Angeles, CA 90032

El Aguila Bakery was established by Apolinar Casillas in 1973 and has been a beloved fixture in L.A.’s El Sereno community ever since. With a loyal, multi-generational clientele, El Aguila prides itself on its authentic Mexican sweet breads, cakes, tamales, and so much more! The bakery also supports the community by giving back to local institutions such as the city, schools, and places of worship.

GARDENA CINEMA, 14948 Crenshaw Boulevard, Gardena, CA 90249

Gardena Cinema is a single-screen movie cinema built in 1946 and operated by the Kim family since 1976. It’s the only such theatre located in Gardena and has provided affordable entertainment options for more than four generations. It’s a place where families can enjoy a film together and have meaningful experiences: in addition to their unique film slate, Gardena Cinema also hosts cinema potlucks, popcorn happy hours, and more.

SIKA, 4330 Degnan Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90008

Sika, an institution of Leimert Park Village, has been specializing in custom jewelry, African art, clothing, and other goods for 30 years. Sika, the store’s owner, weathered a downturn in the economy in the 2000s. His resilience has commanded the love and respect of the community and, today, despite concerns about gentrification, Sika remains at the heart of the neighborhood as a cultural gathering place.

About the Los Angeles Conservancy

The [Los Angeles Conservancy](#) is a member-supported nonprofit organization that works through education and advocacy to recognize, preserve, and revitalize the historic architectural and cultural resources of Los Angeles County. What began as a volunteer group in 1978 has nearly 5,000 member households, the largest membership of any local preservation organization in the U.S.

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