



# ANNUAL REPORT 2016

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT – STEVEN J. GALASSO

Although this event didn't occur in 2016, we had to include it in this year's Annual report because we didn't want a year to go by to feature the story. I thought I would give everyone the background on this wonderful photo under our Landmark Sign.

What we believe to be one of the best communities in the region (our Little Italy), recently partnered with the largest university in the state of California to create a symbolic event accentuating the great assets of each party. The only remaining major football team in San Diego just visited our Little Italy.

The idea started when SDSU Head Football Coach Rocky Long found out that Coach Jim Harbaugh of Michigan State, whom he has had an ongoing rivalry with, was taking his entire football team to Rome to experience Italian culture and food. Long stated that SDSU did not have resources to fly

the whole team to Rome so he "looked for the next best thing that I might be able to do that would coincide with their idea"...."We're lucky enough in San Diego that we're a multi-cultural community that has specific things unique to us that are really cool. And one of them is Little Italy".

On March 21st, the SDSU football team traveled 15-minutes by bus to Little Italy to experience the afternoon in this historic neighborhood. The team broke into five groups and began their tour of Little Italy. Each group participated in the five events planned for the afternoon.

The first group started with a walking tour led by Anthony Davi of Little Italy Tours to learn the background and history of the neighborhood. Another group gathered around the famous Piazza Basilone and listened to Pietro Rizzi sing classic Italian songs.

The third group experienced a new challenge to their athleticism by learning the game the game of Bocce Ball, taught by the Amici Park Bocce Club. The players used their competitive spirit to demonstrate their skills at this new game.

The next group went to, what we consider Little Italy's, "Sistine Chapel," Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church, where the players viewed frescoes on the ceiling, stained glass, and Father Joe Tabigue explained the history of the church built by immigrants in 1925. Father Joe then said a prayer in Italian and blessed the players.

The last group worked with the kids at Washington Elementary School to show them how to tackle, throw and catch. All of the kids received SDSU t-shirts.



The team and staff then indulged in Italian cuisine, complements of the restaurants, Filippi's Pizza Grotto, Mona Lisa Restaurant, Cafe Zuccheri and Sorrento Ristorante before board the buses back to campus.

Coach Long stated "I hope they appreciate the kind of community we live in and realize there are a lot of people who came before them to make this country what it is."

This is really what the Little Italy Association is all about. After 20 years

of being president of the Association, I am so proud of our staff who puts events like this on to have been able to provide an educational experience for the Aztecs to see our community as their place to enjoy and be a part of.

We also do tremendous work with the Wounded Warriors Special Olympic games annually in Camp Pendleton, host USO dinners for families who loved ones are serving overseas organized by Joe Scaglione, partner with Washington Elementary School with their STEAM program, host and

Trick or Treat on India Street, and provide the weekly Mercato/Farmers Market for thousands of residents in the Downtown Community.

That is what we are supposed to do and I want to thank everyone involved in our work who demonstrate what our Little Italy was, what it is, and what it will evolve to in the coming decades.

(Thanks to San Diego Union Tribune writer Kirk Kenney for the quotes and background)

## THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF LITTLE ITALY IN THE CITY - MARCO LI MANDRI, CHIEF EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATOR

Growing districts as our Little Italy contribute not just culturally and historically to the fabric of the city, but also have a major impact on the economy of the City. The employment of hundreds of construction workers who built thousands of housing units over the past 15 years, the public improvements that have occurred in water and sewer upgrades in our streets, the rapidly rising sales taxes, hotel taxes and property taxes generated from the vertical development of Little Italy, the parking meter revenues and unfortunately the parking tickets that are levied here – all contribute to the City's general fund.

But there is another economic impact – the number of employees that work here on a daily basis. Data is not easy to come by to calculate this however for the first time, we have been able to quantify this number and are surprised by the size. Little Italy has around 70 acres of land to accommodate all of this new growth.

Little Italy has office buildings, restaurants/bars/pubs, retail outlets, service providers, hotels, major apartments and condo developments, major manufacturing, parking structures, a wonderful church and school and new co-work space that is altering the make-up of the neighborhood. But now we now know how many people actually work here on a daily basis.

Last summer, we brought in an intern to call every business in the community to ask how many employees or sub-contractors work in their space. We were surprised to learn that over 6,000 employees now call Little Italy their workplace.

This is important to know because based upon the annual hourly rate or salary, this might equal between \$180 – 400 million in annual payroll to the City. Again, this is not insignificant.

Little Italy's economic history was always tied to the Bay and the fishing industry. Today, the community is an eclectic mix of traditional food and beverage, tourism, technology and manufacturing. The best communities are ones that can reinvent themselves and areas such as Little Italy, Gaslamp, East Village and more recently Liberty Station have demonstrated that they can do this effectively.

The key elements to the success of this reinvention are the prioritization of place, having sustainable revenues to promote that place and an entrepreneurial district management corporation to manage all aspects of that place.

Little Italy has hit all of these priorities and has become a national model for reinvention, and the growth of employment is testimony to this. With this growth brings new challenges such

as, development and management of new public spaces, cleanliness and beautification of the public rights of way, encouraging outdoor dining, parking management, branding and communication at the street level, marketing and promotion, sponsoring events that strengthen the image of the neighborhood, security related services, and the challenges facing homeless and the chronically mentally ill, etc.

Managing this community for the past 20 years has been tremendously fulfilling and rewarding for me and my staff. Knowing that this community has grown so quickly and is now providing over 6,000 people with their livelihoods makes it all the more satisfying.



# ILLUMINATING GREATNESS BY LITTLE ITALY'S PUBLIC RELATIONS TEAM

## MEDIA RELATIONS

In 2016, nearly 400 media hits were published putting San Diego's Little Italy on the map regionally, nationally and internationally for its marquee events, as a top travel destination, and the best Little Italy neighborhood in the nation. San Diego's Little Italy is consistently recognized nationally in reputable publications including Cooking Light, Travel + Leisure, The Wall Street Journal, USA today, Alaska Air and more. Little Italy's popularity is crossing oceans and getting exposure outside of the United States as well, being recognized globally on Italian TV documentaries and in Italy Magazine, Volaris Magazine, and Huffington Post Australia.

Little Italy is a household name, coming though the television in San Diego County. The neighborhood has had

over 50 TV segments in 2016 on CBS 8, FOX 5, CW, KUSI, ABC 10, KPBS, and NBC 7. The community has been on the cover of the San Diego Union Tribune and featured multiple times in San Diego Magazine, Pacific San Diego, San Diego Union Tribune's Night + Day, Thrillist and other regional publications this year.

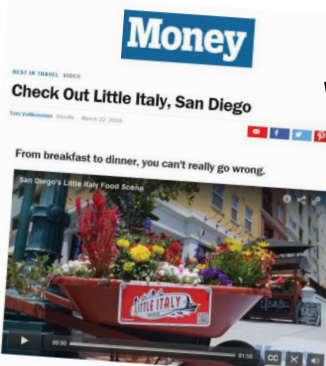
## SOCIAL MEDIA

The Little Italy Association leverages social media to connect and engage with residents, visitors, businesses, restaurants, media, social media

influencers and more. These efforts have resulted in a strong and continuously growing online presence, as well as an online community in which people are excited to be a part of.

## Social Media Statistics

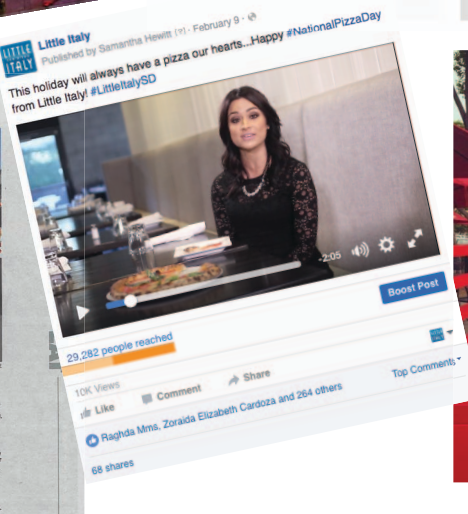
In the last year, these communities grew by 27% on Facebook, 313% on Instagram and 10% on Twitter. With the consistent flow of media exposure and a social media presence, San Diego's Little Italy is seen as one of the top Little Italy neighborhoods in the nation.



Since San Diego is known for its Old Town Mexican food and fresh-off-the-boat seafood, you may be surprised to learn that the city's Little Italy has become a prime culinary attraction.

The reason for that, says Candice Woo, founding editor of *Eater San Diego*, is that the concentration of restaurants makes Little Italy wonderfully walkable. In a city with perhaps the best weather in the country, there are sidewalk cafes galore.

Little Italy, though, is a bit of misnomer. Sure, you can find a great plate of pasta or two. But this foodie district is very much a melting pot of cultures. At *Rock Coffee* serves organic and free-trade espresso to coffee lovers. If you're a beer enthusiast, *Ballast Point* has its research and development brewery here. You can sample the





## OUR NEXT STAGE OF GROWTH – FIVE YEAR PIAZZA PLAN FOR LITTLE ITALY

Since 2013, the Little Italy Association has worked on an aggressive plan for creating new public spaces, mostly in the streets of the community. Keep in mind, streets are also considered “public spaces”; they are just predominantly used by cars.

Colorful chairs, tables, and umbrellas will define each space as a unique destination, and each piazza named and dedicated to either the history of this community, a famous Italian American, or significant contributors to the growth of Little Italy.

Our vision has always been to create areas of rest and relaxation, encouraging social interaction in America’s Finest City. Our micro-climate in Little Italy is outstanding with the winds from the Bay acting as an ongoing air conditioner for our outdoor spaces.

We have spent a tremendous amount of time and millions of dollars creating and upgrading these new piazzas. In the table below, you will see our current, planned, and future public

spaces that support our commitment to placemaking in the neighborhood. While we have learned much from the public space development of other cities, ours are unique in that they are part of the fabric of our sidewalks, not separate entities entirely.

This chart will show you the status of our existing and planned public spaces. The map under the chart will show you the location of each Piazza.



PROJECT	LOCATION	STORY	STATUS/FUNDRAISING
Piazza Basilone	India & W. Fir	Dedicated to the “boys that never came home”, veterans of Little Italy from WWII and the Korean War. The well-landscaped Piazza is the center of our community and is constantly used by the Marine Corp. Completed in 2004 and upgraded in 2014.	Yes, fundraising for the Piazza Basilone will occur indefinitely
Piazza Picola Italia	Under the Little Italy Sign	Central piazza which includes the Little Italy sign, the new “big red chair”, tables chairs and umbrellas and beautiful landscaping.	Piazza sign to be installed in 2017
Piazza della Famiglia	W. Date St. between India and Columbia	This new Piazza will be opened and dedicated around Labor Day, 2017. A joint project of the Association and the Fenton Company, this new 10,000 square foot Piazza will be the new Town Center and will be dedicated to the families, past/present/future of this historic community. Major endowment tiles, thus far have included the Fenton Company, the Lusardi family, the Paterno family, and commitments pending from others.	Yes, see Legacy Committee on website for legacy tiles
Piazza Pescatore	Corner of Kettner and W. Fir	This Piazza has been 4 years in the making and is dedicated to the fishing families of Little Italy. A joint project of Broadstone Alliance and the Association, major contributions have come in recently by Bumble Bee Tuna and the Fishmongers group. The Piazza Pescatore is schedule to be completed late this summer.	Yes, see Legacy Committee on our website for family tiles for this Piazza.

Little Italy Dog Park	Amici Park near Union and Front	Amici Park (friends park), was named by Tommy Battaglia, a long-time resident and business owner in Little Italy. The park was taken over by the Association in a 66 year lease arrangement with the Unified School District. It includes a playground for the Washington Elementary School kids, the Amici Bocce Ball courts, basketball courts, restrooms, and now Downtown's only permanent dog park. The restrooms were generously donated by the Fenton Company and the dog park was funded by a very generous contribution by Gina Champion-Cain, a local restaurateur, Supervisor Ron Roberts, Frank Subaru and hundreds of others who contributed. The new turf has now been installed for dogs to enjoy.	Yes, ongoing fundraising to expand the turf area and cover the ongoing maintenance costs of the dog park on a daily basis. Any and all contributions are welcome through the website.
Piazza Giannini	Corner of India and W. Cedar Streets	This Piazza will be dedicated to Amadeo Giannini, the father of modern American banking. A joint project of the Bank of America foundation, the Douglas Hamm family, and the Association, this small Piazza will serve as an entry point coming up from the Trolley. Scheduled for completion in the Fall of 2017.	Yes, see Legacy Committee on our website for family tiles for this Piazza.
Piazza Frankie Laine	Corner of India and W. Beech St.	Franco Lo Vecchio, or Frankie Laine, was one of the truly great vocalists of the 20th century. Frankie spent his final few decades in San Diego and loved our community. This effort will be a joint project from Frankie's band members and the Association. Planned dedication in late 2017.	Yes, but not fundraising at this point. Check back in the fall of 2017
Piazza Costanza	Corner of Kettner and W. Beech	This Piazza will be completed and dedicated by early 2018. Midge Costanza as a great political leader and strong advocate for women who spent her final two decades in San Diego. Midge loved Little Italy and served on the old SD National Bank board.	Yes, but not fundraising at this point. Check back in the fall of 2017
Piazza Kalmia	Corner of India and W. Kalmia	This new, small piazza was created by the initiative of the Little Italy ornamental crew to provide an area of seating for the fast growing North Little Italy area. It has seating and excellent landscaping. Was completed in late 2016.	
Others		Other projects in the coming years will include the Piazza Tomaso (Tom Fat), the Piazza Grancini (Father Steven Grancini), the Piazza Natale (next to Our Lady of the Rosary) and the redevelopment of Amici park	

## DID YOU KNOW?

*Little Italy has...*

**48 Square Blocks**  
**67 Acres**  
**7 1/2 Miles of Frontage**  
**2,123 Parcels**  
**1,858 Property Owners**  
**1,753 Condos**  
**1,113 Apartment Units**  
**Approx. 5,000 Residents**

**476 Business Licenses**  
**944,969 SqFt of Commercial Office Space**  
**1,092 Hotel Rooms**  
**166 Motel Rooms**  
**27 B&B Rooms**  
**Approx. 6,300 Employees**

**18 Maintenance Employees**  
**4 Landscaping Employees**  
**2 Pressure Washing Employees**  
**14 Parking Employees**  
**1,300 Trees**  
**250 Trashcans**  
**100 Recycling Receptacles**

## THE LITTLE ITALY MERCATO CONTINUES TO BRING FRESHNESS



San Diego County's largest farmers' market, the Little Italy Mercato brings locally grown fruits and vegetables, eggs, meats and just-caught fish and sea urchins to five blocks of West Cedar Street every Saturday morning,

year-round, rain or shine. Filling five full blocks from Kettner Boulevard to Front Street, the event enhances the community by providing downtown residents with a place to buy fresh food and meet their neighbors, while bolstering the local economy and raising funds on an ongoing basis for the new and recurring neighborhood improvements that the Little Italy Association plans and implements each year.

Since its debut in 2008, the Saturday Mercato has also become a well-known destination for residents in other areas of San Diego and travelers

from around the country and throughout the world. After shopping for produce and other artisan groceries at the farmers' market, those visitors explore the neighborhood and relax at local restaurants.

Later this year, the Little Italy Mercato will return to its original location on West Date Street. Its five-block footprint will include the new Piazza della Famiglia and, like central marketplaces the world over, it will continue to be part of the heart of the community in which it thrives.

## NEW LITTLE ITALY PIAZZA WITH AN OLD WORLD FEEL - THE PIAZZA DELLA FAMIGLIA

The new Piazza della Famiglia, a 10,000 square-foot open air plaza located on W. Date street between India and Columbia Streets, is nearing completion with an estimated opening date of mid-August.

The Piazza will feature movable tables and chairs, a large fountain near Columbia Street as well as a permanent evergreen tree to be used for the annual Christmas tree lighting. It also features 16,000 square feet of new restaurant space as well as 125 apartments above. The Piazza della Famiglia will be the main Piazza in Little Italy and will be marketed as an

international attraction.

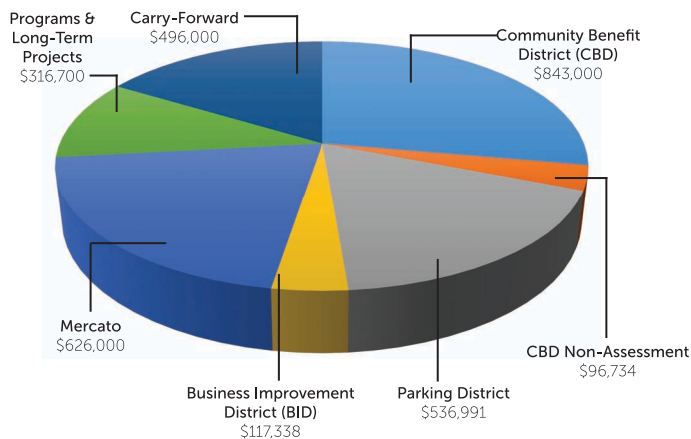
The main focus will be the activation of the Piazza with multiple events each day at varying times including exercise (yoga, tai chi), non-musical acts (jugglers, magicians, story time, professional learning events, Washington Elementary school outings) and musical entertainment. There will also be chalk art canvases (concrete pads in the Piazza) available on a more frequent basis as well as the Little Italy Mercato moving back to India street after the Piazza's completion.

A full-time event manager has been hired to oversee the sales, marketing and activation of the Piazza and will work with Olive PR to advertise to visitors (cruise ship, info center at Waterfront, conventions, vacationers) so the Piazza is a "must see" in San Diego. The event manager will also market the Piazza as a possible event venue on various websites and to local Destination Management Companies (DMC's), wedding planners and event specialists to utilize the Piazza for various private paying events.

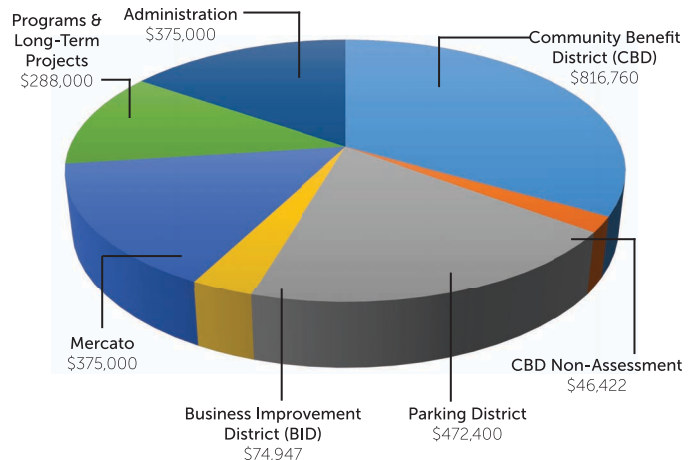
The Piazza della Famiglia will be managed by the Little Italy Association.

## LITTLE ITALY ASSOCIATION FINANCIALS - FY2016

Income / \$3,032,764



Expense / \$2,448,529





## LITTLE ITALY FREE UNDERPASSES LIT UP FOR PUBLIC SAFETY

Over the past several years, the Little Italy Association has received hundreds of complaints regarding the concern for pedestrian safety and security of vehicles parked under the three Little Italy freeway underpasses.

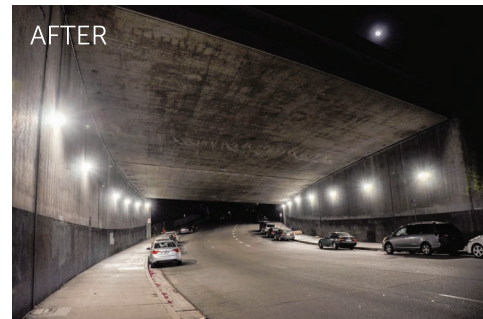
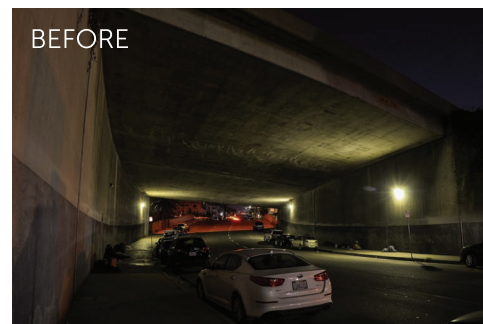
During FY16, the Little Italy Association secured funds through the Little Italy Parking District to hire Nasland Engineering to do a feasibility study and draft Request for Proposal (RFP) documents for this fiscal year's lighting initiative of those three bridges. After a rigorous RFP review and selection project, the contract was awarded to Ace Electric.

In the FY17 Little Italy Parking District budget, the Little Italy Association

allocated \$150,000 to convert the minimal number of high-pressure sodium lights to bright-white LED lights with an increased frequency of through each one of the three underpasses.

Since the conversion, we have seen a decrease of vandalism, break-ins and a better connection between Little Italy and the Uptown communities while giving pedestrians a visible path.

The Little Italy Association is planning for many more traffic calming and pedestrian safety projects in the upcoming years.



## THE NEW AND IMPROVED LITTLE ITALY DOG PARK



San Diego's Little Italy is a premier neighborhood for all things food, shopping, culture and a hip place for our four-legged friends! Our Little Italy resident pooches are getting some love and being upgraded to a new and improved Little Italy Dog Park at Amici Park. The new development will be open for play on Monday, May 1. As a result of the successful fundraising campaign, over 2,000 dogs that call Little Italy home will now have a new and improved place to come and play in the neighborhood.

The many dogs that stroll the streets of Little Italy everyday watch us enjoy our café lattes and bowls of pasta al fresco in the neighborhood and now a man's best amici (friend) will have a place to enjoy in the heart of Little Italy too. The Little Italy Association of San Diego has been working to fundraise for park improvements for the last year. The park creates a place for the pups of the

neighborhood to run off leash separate from the children's playgrounds, giving pets and owners a safe place to socialize and exercise with other dogs in the park throughout the day.

The renovated Little Italy Dog Park at Amici Park is equipped with secure fencing, water features, shaded seating, two beautiful mimosa trees, improved landscaping and 6,100 square feet of K9 grass for the pups to play. Thanks to the Little Italy Association's fundraising campaign and support from the community, the Little Italy Association

is able to implement these improvement and also maintain the park—keeping the area clean.

Community members that supported the fundraising campaign are being honored at the Little Italy Dog Park in multiple ways including Paw Pavers and Medallions that will be installed in the park. The Paw Pavers are engraved bricks on the Paw Path that include the names of donors and their beloved dog's name, sharing the bond with their pet with the neighborhood. The medallions are engraved charms that will be displayed at the entrance of the dog corral!

One of our most generous donors, American National Investments, Inc., donated funds in honor of the CEO & Chair of the Board, Gina Champion-Cain's late dog Gordie Howe to install a permanent water feature and also funded the first 2/3 of the new K9Grass by ForeverLawn. The Gordie's water station allows dogs and their owners to drink from and cool off on hot days. Other notable donors include County Supervisor Ron Roberts and Frank Subaru.

## LITTLE ITALY ASSOCIATION

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Daniel Mocerì

*Vice President*

Luke Vinci

*Secretary*

Louis Palestini

*Treasurer*

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*Olive PR Solutions*

Sandi Cottrell

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Perry Meyer

*Meyer Fine Art*

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*Hairy & Merry Pet Spa & Dog Wash*

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Domenic Brunetto

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Dino Cresci

Principal David Crum

Jim DeSpensa

Rich Gustafson

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Joe Cordileone

Tom Di Zinno

James Pieri, Jr.

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### DISTRICT MANAGER

Christopher Gomez

### FINANCIAL MANAGER

Rosie DeLuca

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Shirley Zawadzki

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