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Helix High School students help unhoused neighbors

By DAVE THOMAS

Doing their part to help others, a group of Helix High students have been volunteering with the Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) program.

Such volunteer efforts involves things like transporting food to previously-unhoused senior citizens.

According to Aleen Jendian, English department chair at Helix High and supervisor of the students involved in the group, the school got involved with the food aspect of helping out after noticing students were tossing away a fair amount of food.

“At that time, students had to take all of the lunch offered them,” Jendian stated. “For example, they had to take the juice, fruit and sandwich, whether they wanted it or not. I wondered if we could have a bin next to the lunch area where students who did not want a specific item could donate it and we could give it to a homeless shelter. I found that it was indeed legal to do that. I reached out to one of our grade-level principals, Elena Smith. She contacted the food services director, bought the bins, and gave me the go-ahead to get it going. I remembered seeing a flyer about a student group on campus that was working with the homeless population.”

The group, SDPATH, is led by Helix High student Brayden Pape among others.

“Brayden was so excited,” Jendian continued. “Brayden and I met with Calvin Herbin, who is our lead chef at Helix, and who already volunteers a ton with local homeless shelters. He’s amazing. We discussed logistics and set the program in motion. The program has been in full swing since the beginning of October. We have student volunteers who take the bins out each morning. The students have also held two clothing drives along with taking food to homeless shelters.”

For sophomore Pape being active with this organization



Helix High students Brayden Pape and Lauren Rainey have lent a helping hand to numerous unhoused San Diegans. (Courtesy photo)

is something that brings him happiness.

Pape is a PATH San Diego volunteer and the founder of PILT (PATH Interscholastic Leadership Team). Helix is tied to PATH through PILT and all projects for PATH at Helix are implemented through PILT. PILT is represented at five schools in three school districts in San Diego County.

“When I was a volunteer at PATH San Diego last summer, I saw there was an urgent need for hygiene products that PATH was trying to meet,” Pape commented. “This was during the middle of the pandemic. I met with Ms. Sigrid Struben, who is my supervisor at PATH and also the associate director of community affairs at PATH San Diego, and got her permission to get other high school students involved to help PATH. Then I contacted a few of my friends from middle school who go to schools throughout San Diego County and founded PILT.”

Pape is one of five Helix High students working to make life better for the unhoused around the area. Lauren Rainey is PILT’s project director of kit projects and there’s the food rescue team of Laraigh Allen, Ka’Mari House and Makayla Brooks also making a difference. The food rescue team

is not part of PILT but they help PATH just as much.

According to Rainey, a sophomore, she got involved in the program through Pape.

“He introduced me to the opportunity to come and help and be a part of the team,” Rainey remarked.

Another way the group at Helix helps people without a place to live is by collecting items for care kits, cleaning supplies, items for a new home, food items and masks via Helix’s library. Students can do their part by donating cleaning supplies that go to the Zephyr (Permanent Supportive Housing) site. That site is for formerly unhoused veterans.

“I get enjoyment from knowing that what we do is give people experiencing homelessness hope, put smiles on their faces, and provide them with necessary things all humans should have access to,” Rainey continued. “We eliminate the problem of homelessness by working together and lending a hand to those in need.”

For students and others at Helix interested in helping, Rainey advises them to look for announcements about any projects during Friday’s advisory or look for flyers around campus for information on how to help out.

As Pape sees it, housing and food insecurity go together.

“The entire Helix school community is involved in our efforts,” Pape stated. “I design the projects, Lauren helps me lead them, and the entire school participates.”

Among some examples of their work helping others:

- Excess food from the school’s cafeteria goes to “Trinity” every week through the initiative of Jendian and the hard work of Helix’s food service supervisor, Calvin Herbin. Trinity is PATH San Diego’s permanent supportive housing site for senior citizens living with chronic health conditions. (Helix’s “Food Rescue”



Gathering unused food is one of the ways some Helix High students are helping others. (Courtesy photo)

Home Sellers: How to Get the Price You Want and Need

La Mesa - When you decide to sell your home, setting your asking price is one of the most important decisions you will ever make. Depending on how a buyer is made aware of your home, price is often the first thing he or she sees, and many homes are discarded by prospective buyers as not being in the appropriate price range before they're even given a chance of showing.

Your asking price is often your home's "first impression", and if you want to realize the most money you can for your home, it's imperative that you make a good first impression.

This is not as easy as it sounds, and pricing strategy should not be taken lightly. Pricing too high can be as costly to a homeseller as pricing too low. Taking a look at what homes in your neighborhood have sold for is only a small part of the process, and on it's own is not nearly enough to help you make the best decision. A recently study, which compiles 10 years of industry research, has resulted in a new special report entitled "Homesellers: How to Get the Price You Want (and Need)". This report will help you understand pricing strategy from three different angles. When taken together, this information will help you price your home to not only sell, but sell for the price you want.

To hear a brief recorded message about how to order your FREE copy of this report call toll-free 1-800-270-1494 and enter 1016. You can call any time, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Get your free special report NOW to learn how to price your home to your maximum financial advantage.

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Helix Charter High lottery enrollment for new students ends March 4 at 3 p.m.



Helix Highlights

Be sure to mark your calendars for a number of Helix Charter High happenings right around the corner.

2022-23 LOTTERY DEADLINE

The deadline to enter the lottery for students who will be new to Helix for the 2022-23 school year is rapidly approaching.

The online application process must be completed no later than 3 p.m. on March 4 to be part of the initial lottery drawing. Students submitting applications after the deadline will be added to the waiting list in the order in which their

applications are received. The lottery drawing will take place on March 11.

Students/families will be contacted via the email address provided during the application process, notifying them whether enrollment is being offered, or their position on the waiting list.

Visit helixcharter.net and access the "Enrollment & Lottery Info" link.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION EVENT

The Helix Business & Entrepreneurship Career Technical Education Pathway students, in conjunction with partner Dreams & Ducats are hosting an event, "Journey To Impact," and the community is invited to attend.

The event is a 100% student-produced, student-led live panel discussion event for

PERFORMING ARTS CALENDAR

March 2 & 3: Instrumental Music Spring Concert

April 20-23: Highland Players present Mama Mia!

students to speak about the issues in education that matter most to them. The event will take place Sunday, March 6, noon to 4 p.m. at the 3167 Art Gallery near downtown.

The agenda will feature:

- Two student-led panels on the topics of "Preparing For Tomorrow Today: What Schools Need To Be Teaching" and "College or Not: Alternatives to The Traditional Route"

- A presentation by the County of San Diego Board of Supervisors
- Live Entertainment
- Local Small Business Vendors
- Giveaways

To Register: Visit www.eventbrite.com and search "Journey to Impact".

Dreams & Ducats is a community-based youth development nonprofit organization that aims to elevate youth consciousness, connect youth to industry, and provide practical, relevant tools to support their transition to adulthood – all through art and culture.

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SPRING FLING BUSINESS EXPO

Presented by: The La Mesa Chamber of Commerce

Wednesday, March 23, 2022 from 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Courtyard by Marriott San Diego El Cajon – 141 N Magnolia Ave, El Cajon

The Chamber invites you to a fun-filled evening to meet local businesses and have the opportunity to win FREE door prizes. The evening will be filled with raffles, great samplings of delicious food from local restaurants and more!

We are holding our expo at our chamber member hotel, Courtyard by Marriot San Diego El Cajon in El Cajon. We are excited to be using the 4,500 square-foot ballroom for our vendors, food stations, and raffles. The foyer will be available for our registration and silent auction activities. You won't want to miss this!

Ticket Price – \$10 per person

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Artists over the decades depict Grossmont ‘castle’



Foothiller Footsteps

By CONNIE and LYNN BAER

Since its earliest years, Grossmont High School’s original 1922 granite school building has been an ideal model for artists to capture. The granite design, its location on the hill straddling the boundaries of La Mesa and El Cajon, and its proximity to the railroad — now trolley — tracks, have made it an East County landmark, leading many to give directions referring to its presence.

1942 DRAWING

Many of the early drawings of the building were published in the student yearbook. In the 1942 El Recuerdo, the “Castle” is depicted in a drawing by Clark Allen, Class of 1942, a member of the GHS Hall of Honor. The drawing captures the dramatic exterior of the iconic building and its timeless nature. Countless photographs have been taken of students, staff and alumni standing in front of the building. Recently, Grossmont High School has received wonderful art work depicting this building in different decades.

1985 CASTLE WATERCOLOR PAINTING

In 2016, the GHS Museum was contacted by Cathy Jardell, daughter of Edwin H. Wordell, who shared “My father Edwin H. Wordell was a very well-known watercolor artist in San Diego. He passed away three-and-a-half years ago. As my brother and

I were going through his art a few weeks ago, we discovered a painting he had done in 1985 of Grossmont HS. It is a beautiful watercolor. The database we keep says that he painted it as a possible commission painting. It was kept by Aesthetics Collection for a few years and was in a solo exhibit at the East County Performing Arts Center in 1990.

“I would love for the painting to be displayed and enjoyed by others rather than lying in a drawer. The painting is 26” x 40” and is unframed. I am willing to donate it to your museum on the condition that it would be framed and hung somewhere on the campus.”

The dramatic framed watercolor painting vividly captures the iconic exterior of the school, as it hangs on the wall of the lobby of the school office, a reminder of decades past.

1971 CASTLE OIL PAINTING

As a surprise for us and to honor Grossmont’s 100th Anniversary, alumnus Ken Wilson, Class of 1972, asked artist friends to depict the original school. Before the 101st Anniversary Celebration, Wilson presented to the museum a wonderfully rich painting by artist Charles Fromer, Class of 1971.

At Grossmont, Fromer was a wrestler, active in ASB and Drama, and was cast as the cook in the 1969 and 1970 Christmas pageants. After retiring from the Department of Defense, Charles transitioned to being a full-time artist who maintains a studio at the LibertyTown Arts Workshop in Fredericksburg. Today his painting is an integral part of the museum’s decade displays.

As we told Fromer, “Since we graduated in the 1960s (Connie

SEE FOOTHILLERS HISTORY, Page 7



Grossmont UHS 1942 Clark Allen drawing



Kaden Brownsberger with 1971 castle oil painting




Administrative Assistants Marlee Dillard Richey, Class of 2011, and Rebecca Granse Hague, Class of 1994, with 1985 watercolor



Rodolfo Saulog and Christian Vatacio with 2022 drawings

New Date Announced



Superintendent Search

San Diego Unified will host a community forum for the public to meet the superintendent finalists and provide feedback. The Board will introduce the permanent superintendent in mid-March 2022.

In-Person Community Forum


The event will also be live streamed. Zoom Webinar Link:
<https://sandiegounified.zoom.us/j/89749595768> | Webinar ID: 897 4959 5768

Saturday
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12:00 - 2:00PM

Wilson Middle School, 3838 Orange Avenue, San Diego 92105

The District follows an Indoor [Guidance](#) for Events protocol.




RSVP by emailing superintendentsearch@sandi.net. Submit your questions for the candidates, no later than February 24 so they can be addressed at the forum, and any feedback/comments regarding the forum no later than March 1




Make your voice heard and attend the community forum! The San Diego community has a unique opportunity to help select the next Superintendent of the San Diego Unified School District. We urge members of the community to participate and share their thoughts about the importance of an inclusive and equitable education for all students. —Chris Wilson

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EDITOR
Dave Thomas x130
dave@sdnews.com

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Kendra Sitton x136
Tom Melville x131
Dave Schwab x132

WEB & SOCIAL MEDIA
Dave Thomas x130
dave@sdnews.com

CONTRIBUTORS
Connie Baer
Lynn Baer
Robin Dohrn-Simpson
Nathan Fletcher
Bonnie Owen
Summer Stephan
Julie White

PRODUCTION MANAGER
Chris Baker x107
chris@sdnews.com

ACCOUNTING
Heather Humble
(951) 296-7794
accounting@sdnews.com

ADVERTISING CONSULTANT
Heather Fine x 118
hfine@sdnews.com

BUSINESS CONSULTANT
David Mannis

PUBLISHER
Julie Main, x106
(858) 270-3103 x106
julie@sdnews.com



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Supporting working families, micro-businesses and visiting La Mesa landmarks

Fletcher Notes

By NATHAN FLETCHER



Since I wrote my first column for La Mesa Courier, the Board of Supervisors has advanced several measures to support young people who want to turn their lives around and provide financial support to struggling micro businesses. I also made another visit to La Mesa and had an opportunity to meet some great people.

In February, the Board of Supervisors passed a Working Families Ordinance I co-authored to require the use of a skilled and trained workforce and provide for a prevailing wage on construction projects on County land. It is important workers on county-owned land are paid fairly for their hard work. San Diegans should be able to support their family with good jobs and fair rules to protect them. We felt it was important for the County to become an example for others, and so we took the first step by requiring these workplace standards to reduce poverty and promote the middle class.

Helping families includes looking out for our youth. We recently cut the ribbon on a brand

new Youth Transition Campus in Kearny Mesa that was built to give young people the opportunity to turn their life around. This new campus is a place where young people who want to change their circumstances can receive the encouragement, treatment, education, support and skills they need. This is the type of place that could inspire them to get on a path to a better future, maybe even become an entrepreneur.

As a parent, you want all kids to thrive, whether they are yours or the children of someone else. The reality is that no matter how hard you try to raise your children the right way, there is always the potential they could fall in with the wrong crowd or make some poor choices that get them in trouble. Recognizing that, the County has changed its standards for how we take care of youth who enter our justice system and are assigned to the probation department. We want to give every one of these youth a chance and opportunity to get their life back on track.

Lately, we know our small business owners have been struggling, and the Board of Supervisors recently approved \$3.875 million in funds to help 1,550 micro-businesses that



Chairman Fletcher visits Nonno's Ristorante in La Mesa (Photo courtesy Office of Supervisor Nathan Fletcher)

have faced historic barriers to accessing capital. When you're a business owner that employs fewer than five full-time workers, the margins can be thin and every dollar matters. The action we took is a small step we can take to support our local small businesses.

The micro-businesses that receive the grants can use the money to purchase equipment, invest in working capital, apply for new permits, and for debts and costs accrued because of COVID-19.

To apply for a grant, or learn about any of the programs I discussed in this column, please visit sandiegocounty.gov.

I had another opportunity to visit La Mesa. During my most recent trip, I made several stops including the La Mesa Veterans Club. Retired United States Air Force CMSgt Jack Porath kindly gave me the tour. He shared the history of the facility, and I learned of all the great organizations that host their events

SEE FLETCHER NOTES, Page 7

Buyer and seller beware: Do not fall for Facebook Marketplace scams

DA Notes

By SUMMER STEPHAN



Facebook is a platform where you can seemingly get it all: updates about your friends, cute baby pics, news stories or romantic dates. But its marketplace, where people go to quickly buy and sell merchandise, is also a place fraught with scams. One billion users buy and sell goods on Facebook Marketplace each month. Unfortunately, like with most things in life, there are bad actors ready to take advantage of a technology for their own financial gain. Scams are an unfortunate reality on any selling platform. Oftentimes the scam is one we've seen before but made new using this service.

Here are Facebook Marketplace scams to be aware of:

Fake home and apartment listings

- Scammers pose as property agents, owners or landlords to post properties they have no right to sell or rent.
- They then use high pressure tactics to get the victim to send

money, such as "this is a hot market," "I have tons of bidders," "If you send the deposit or down payment now, I can reserve you the apartment."

- Sometimes they use properties they know are unoccupied and invite the buyer to view the property without them. Use caution if you cannot get into a property.

- To protect yourself, use verified real estate services.
- Use Google reverse image search to see if the property is posted elsewhere.
- Do not pay without signing paperwork.

Fake vehicle listings

- Same type of scam as phone apartment listings in which the bad actor asks for a deposit or payment up front.
- In this scam the scammer does not own the car and does not intend to provide it.
- They may claim the vehicle has eBay purchase protection, but this only applies to vehicles bought on eBay.

Shipping insurance scam

- This scam occurs where the buyer agrees to buy an item and

pay for the shipping if seller pays for the insurance.

- The phony buyer then generates a fake shipping invoice from UPS/USPS/FedEx and often quotes \$50-100 shipping insurance.
- Once the seller pays the buyer the insurance, they never hear from the buyer again.

Stealing your information scam

- Once a seller or buyer agrees on a purchase, the other party claims they want to verify your ID to protect themselves.
- They will ask for your personal identifying information, which can be used to create fake accounts, to obtain credit in your name or to answer questions if they try to hack into your online accounts.
- The fraudster may tell you that you'll receive a text code to your phone number and ask for the code to verify who you are. The scammer then uses your number as verification or set up a Google Voice number connected to your phone number.

It may be a scam if

- If you are asked to switch to a different platform, such as text

or WhatsApp, it may be a scam.

- If the deal is too good to be true, the goods may very well be fake, broken, stolen or non-existent.
- Being asked to pay via gift card or cryptocurrency is a red flag.

Facebook Marketplace is convenient and useful platform, but make sure you are aware of common scams, so you don't get defrauded. Remember, when meeting in person to exchange goods and payment, be sure it is in a lighted, public and safe space. Also, consider using Facebook Messenger's "check-out" feature, which keeps a record of all transactions.

As your District Attorney, I'm committed to increasing communication and accessibility between the DA's Office and the public. I hope these consumer and public safety tips have been helpful.

—District Attorney Summer Stephan has dedicated more than 29 years to serving justice and victims of crime as prosecutor. Visit <https://www.sdca.org/office/contact/> to contact her.

Foothillers history

CONTINUED FROM Page 5

1965, Lynn 1969), the ivy covered “Castle” depicted in the painting is the building we remember.” Framed, it now sits on top of the 1960s-1970s small showcase with the large 1960s showcase to its left and the 1970s showcase to the right.

2022 DRAWINGS, GHS PAST AND PRESENT

The journey of the most recent art work began with a luncheon in Chicago of a group of four Class of 1959 alumni, wh

Alumnus Marti Ballance Guarin shared that during the luncheon, “Bob asked about Grossmont High. He later looked

it up. Was I amazed when Bob told me his plan to donate his drawings of Grossmont High School then and GHS today in honor of the Class of '59! It was a wonderful initiative of his. The drawings are beautiful and evocative. He also did small versions for each of us. They so bring back our Grossmont years.”

The drawings were mailed to GUHSD Superintendent Theresa Kemper, who contacted GHS Principal Dan Barnes, with a message from Happ, “Marti and a number of her classmates have fond memories of their Grossmont Union High School days. Marti is providing this gift of original art to the District.”

Superintendent Kemper told Happ and Ballance Guarin, “I admit I was jealous and had a hard time handing over the Castle artwork! Bless you all

and thank you so much for your love of Grossmont and your generosity.”

Today these drawings greet visitors at the entrance to the GHS Museum.

As these glorious art works testify, Foothillers from the past are an integral part of today's Grossmont High School culture, reminding us of the timelessness of Foothiller experiences.

To learn more in person, visit the GHS Museum on Wednesdays by appointment or on Saturday, March 19th, from 10-1. As of Feb. 18, masks are still required of all visitors to the museum. For more information, contact us at ghsmuseum@guhsd.net or 619-668-6148.

—Connie and Lynn Baer write on behalf of the Grossmont High School Museum.



Fletcher visits a memorial at the VFW. (Photo courtesy Office of Supervisor Nathan Fletcher)

Fletcher notes

CONTINUED FROM Page 6

there. The La Mesa Veterans Club is a tremendous asset for our Veterans and the citizens of La Mesa.

I also met with Mary England, the CEO of the La Mesa Chamber of Commerce. We talked about the strength of the local businesses community, and the resilience La Mesa businesses have demonstrated over the last couple of years. We took some time to stop into some businesses: Brew Coffee Spot where I met with one of the owner partners, Joe Paraiso, and Nonno's

Ristorante Italiano where I met with Gerardo Ortiz and his wife Lisa. I look forward to visiting La Mesa again soon.

If you need to contact my office, please call us at (619) 531-5544 or email nathan.fletcher@sdcounty.ca.gov and follow me on social media. To invite me or my team to your organization's meeting, request a proclamation or grant, and learn about the work we're doing, visit SupervisorNathanFletcher.com.

—Nathan Fletcher is the San Diego County Supervisor representing the Fourth Supervisorial District, and he serves as Chair of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors.

Unhoused neighbors

CONTINUED FROM Page 3

program was being used as a pilot program for other school districts to follow before the economy started experiencing food shortages).

- Helix donated 1,078 items of gently used clothing for PATH San Diego's formerly unhoused veterans through a school-wide clothing drive challenge that was sponsored by Gillian Marshall and supported by all grade level academic advisors.

- The group delivered “Welcome Home Baskets” (with items donated by the Helix Key Club and packed in gift boxes that were beautifully painted by Helix Art Club) to some of PATH San Diego's clients who are moving into a permanent home for the first time.

- Helix has donated 699 items of cleaning supplies to residents at “Zephyr” – PATH's permanent housing site for previously unhoused veterans since Jan. 10 (this project is ongoing).

- Helix also donated more than 6,000 cloth masks to be distributed to those who are currently experiencing homelessness in San Diego County through the initiative of school librarians Mrs. Potter and Mrs. Bruflat.

- Herbin sponsored (bought ingredients, cooked, and served) a Christmas meal to the 52 senior residents at PATH's newest housing site “Ivy” who would not have been able to enjoy a festive holiday dinner otherwise.

- The group has donated hundreds of items involving hygiene products to be distributed through PATH San Diego's outreach teams.

For Pape, it makes him feel less helpless about the problem of homelessness when he is actively involved in helping the unhoused community in some small way.

“The causes of homelessness are many, and I get the satisfaction of knowing that instead of focusing on the problem, I am focused on

finding solutions, without judgment,” Pape added.

As Jendian sees it, the program gives the students involved an opportunity to help people in need.

“I believe that when students are given the opportunities to help with solutions they jump to it,” Jendian added. “Brayden and the others have had to be consistent and persistent. They have had to work on communications.”

When it comes to student involvement such as this, Jendian believes it is a good thing now and down the road.

“The next generation is compassionate and hard-working,” Jendian noted. “They are eager to help be part of societal solutions. We just need to step aside and allow them to do their thing.”

For any students or staff at Helix High looking to get involved with the program, visit: pilt4path.org and contact Pape: 9890@helixcharter.net. You can also be on the lookout for project announcements and flyers on the Helix campus.

—Reach editor Dave Thomas – dave@sdnews.com.

KEEP ACTIVE, BE FIT, STAY ENGAGED.



You are invited to an informational meeting about the SoCal Rehab Golf Programs!

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Barbara Drews: late-in-life artist



As a child, Barbara Drews was always interested in the art shows around the Pacific Northwest where she grew up in Tacoma, Wash. She never missed an opportunity to visit a gallery or an art museum. After a career of thirty years with United Airlines, Drews surprised herself by putting brush and paint to a canvas.

With the encouragement of her neighbor and dear friend, Mary Alice Stanley, she was encouraged to try painting. Barbara was so inspired by Stanley's art that she jumped in and several years later, she is still painting and looking



"Betty Davis Eyes" by Barbara Drews



"Caffeine Buzzzz" by Barbara Drews



"Red Skies at Night" by Barbara Drews



"A Tree Grows Through It" by Barbara Drews (Photos courtesy Foothills Art Association)

forward to learning something new every day.

Drews loves nature and conveys that in her use of color and texture. She has also made some artistic birdhouses that people love to hang in their garden.

Drew Bandish was Barbara's first teacher. Then she took classes with Chuck MacPherson who continues helping her find her inner artistic self. Bandish encouraged her to try different media and to fully express herself artistically.

Drews' work is mostly in acrylic and watercolor and she especially enjoys painting and decorating bird houses with items of nature found in her daily walks. Leaves, seeds, seed pods, pieces of bark are inspiration for her art.

Barbara enjoys being a member of the Foothills Art Association and receives ideas and inspiration from the members there.

—Bonnie Owen is editor of Footnotes, the monthly newsletter of the Foothills Art Association.

Grossmont High

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

program for the last decade, commented.

Laura Dawson serves as the co-advisor.

"Not only do these students meet one-on-one with students needing to talk to someone and host mediations with students in conflict, but also these seniors look for any way they can to affect the school community as a whole," Santoro added.

Recently, the peer listeners hosted, "Where is the Love" week.

Each day the bulletin announced information on how kindness can improve wellness. The peer listeners crafted more than 400 heart grams, hosted music at lunch where they handed out the free heart cards to any student who wanted to spread kindness. They created a "Love Meter" and filled it with messages of kindness. The grams were then delivered to classes at the school.

The group also hosted a door decorating contest. Each participating teacher was provided a quote related to kindness for the theme. The PL's chose winners from first to third place. Those winners got a pizza prize, doughnuts and candy bars.

"We were so impressed that we decided that all participants earned suckers even if they did not place," Santoro continued. "The two-minute music bell was switched to use the song, 'Where is the Love' for the week. And lastly the students created a lesson about kindness, with some videos that were shared with the school to end a recent week."

Student Jessie Kim said she was drawn to Peer Listening for the social emotional skills she could grow.

"I wanted to learn how to best be there for others, gain new perspectives, and meet Foothillers in



Students cut out hearts to let others on campus know they care. (Photo courtesy of Grossmont High School)

SEE GROSSMONT HIGH, Page 9

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Grossmont High

CONTINUED FROM Page 8

a different setting,” Kim said. “My involvement in this program has allowed me to be part of the bigger picture and leave an impact on Grossmont by making it safer, more inclusive, and a place students feel free from judgement.”

According to Kim, she has enjoyed getting to see her surroundings through a different lens.

“Hearing kids my age be vulnerable really showed me how we’re all on the same boat,” Kim went on to say. “It’s helped me become a curious person, rather than judgmental. Beyond that, the program itself is so rewarding: one serious conversation truly makes the difference needed. It’s shaped me into a cognizant person, on and off campus.”

For future seniors with an interest in the program, Kim noted that it is definitely worth the time and effort.

“I can confidently say, without this program I would be a completely different person my senior year,” Kim commented. “It sets an environment for a passionate, genuine, and mature individual to sprout. The best part is, you get to help your peers in a way that can change lives at the same time. There’s no perfect peer listener, but a diverse group of kids all wanting the same thing: to make a balanced, positive and

safe space. If that sounds like you, give it a shot. You never know.”

Fellow student Alazain Angotti said becoming a peer listener was an easy decision, after she received help from the program throughout the hardships she dealt with.

“I wanted to be able to bring the same sense of support to others on campus,” Angotti remarked.

According to Angotti, she most enjoyed being able to make a positive difference on campus. “I am able to find pieces of myself in every student I meet with because I too have had struggles of my own and being exposed to other student’s struggles while helping them through it has been very rewarding.”

Angotti said she would encourage others to be a part of this program firstly because while going through the training process, they will meet the most supportive and skilled group of students who they can build trust and be vulnerable with.

“They’ve become some of my best friends,” Angotti stated.



Various doors at the school were decorated with encouraging messages. (Photo courtesy of Grossmont High School)

“Because the feeling of being a resource to students in their time of need not only helps you feel more fulfilled at school everyday, but also causes you to become so deeply rooted to this campus and to Grossmont as a whole. It is truly a remarkable way to give back to the school and its students.”

Giving back to the school and its students is something this group has stepped up and done with a lot of heart.

—Reach editor Dave Thomas - dave@sdnews.com.

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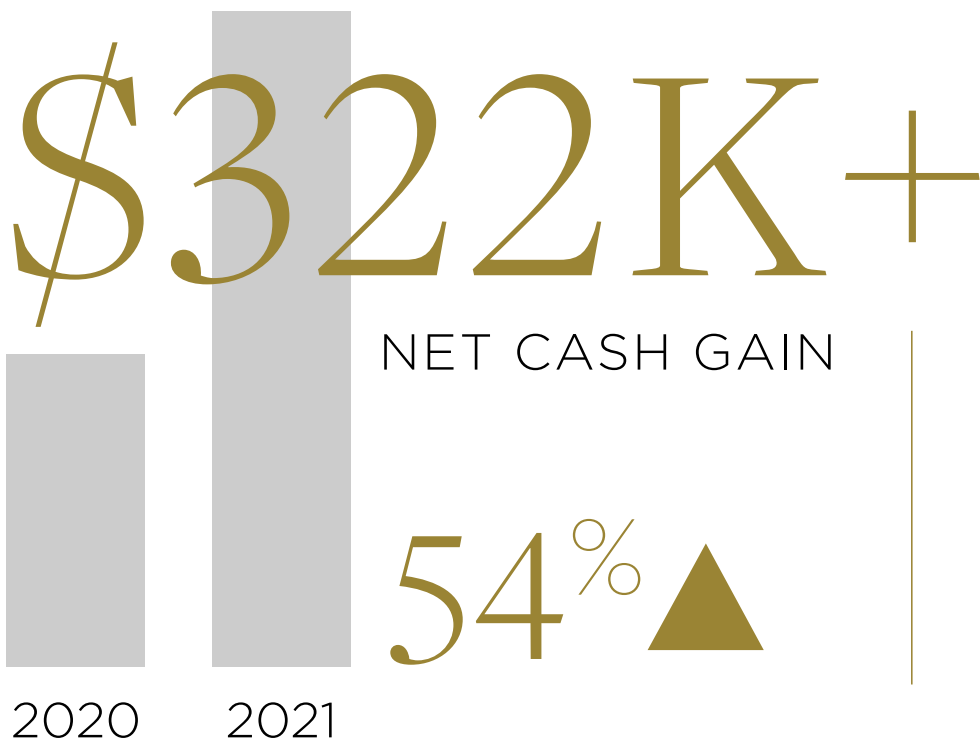
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Solar rates

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

energy users without solar panels. This includes costs such as maintenance repairs as well as projects to move wires underground in order to prevent wildfires.

The Wall Street Journal characterized the current policy as “welfare for the wealthy” with rich Californians benefiting from the subsidies while costs were shifted to the poor.

Opponents worry this will discourage new solar customers and hurt the state’s booming solar industry.

San Diego County has the most solar penetration of any California county – with an estimated 25% of homes using the renewable energy source. Those homeowners are compensated at the market rate for any excess energy they contribute to the grid.

Haney Hong, a resident in east San Diego, revealed that due to his rooftop solar panels, his annual San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) bill is around \$56. Meanwhile, those without solar are estimated to pay \$240 more annually than their solar counterparts.

Even if this subsidy changes, there are still many state programs in place as incentives for people to switch to solar. However, even with those cost-saving measures in place, studies show the vast majority of homes with solar make more than \$50,000 in income. Sixty-five percent of residential solar customers have incomes in the six figures.

“Residential solar is overwhelmingly purchased by those who can afford the initial costs,” Hong said.

Poorer households, as well as renters and people living in apartments, are cut off from the benefits of solar and the costs of maintaining the grid are shifted to them.

Hong leads the San Diego County Taxpayer Association and is urging the California Public Utilities Commission to more aggressively fix this inequity than their shelved proposal would have. The organization is advocating for the commission to increase the rates for solar customers within five years rather than slowly over 15 years. Their proposal would make the rare low-income solar customers exempt from rising costs.

“When... we create structures that don't help those in poverty, we run the risk of concentrating [wealth] and making California even less livable than it already is,” Hong said.

The focus on more equitable metering comes amid a major surge in energy costs. SDG&E attributes the rise in rates to a hike in natural gas prices and an increase in use during the December cold front.

“There is a challenge in the ability to meet the demand for natural gas, which of course, spikes the price,” said Anthony Wagner, communications manager at SDG&E. “The natural gas cost has gone up about 25% In the last year, and SDG&E does not make a profit off an upcharge in gas. So whatever it costs at the wholesale price plus the cost of transmission and distribution is the cost that we pass off to our consumer or customer.”

According to CBS8, SDG&E has the highest electricity rates in the country. The rates have risen

since 2013 as SDG&E makes the grid more climate resistant and works to prevent wildfires. Still, Sempra, the owner of SDG&E, made \$9 billion in profits annually in a report they released.

“If we don't fix, for instance, the things in this solar rate proceeding and that energy metering, it's only going to push your rate higher and higher. And so we have to fix these structural issues in the rates,” Hong said.

All price increases must be approved by the California Public Utilities Commission, but Edward Lopez, executive director of Utility Consumers’ Action Network (UCAN), told CBS8 that the commission often puts politics over people and rarely decreases rates.

The high cost of energy in the area is just another aspect of why San Diego is becoming too expensive for many. San Diego was recently named the least affordable city in the nation, surpassing San Francisco in a report conducted by home-buying platform OJO-Labs. While other metros like New York City may look more expensive on the surface, they are paired with higher wages.

Legislators are implementing other programs that should increase renewable energy use and decrease costs.

San Diego Assemblymember Chris Ward introduced AB2316 to establish a statewide solar and storage program. He noted that 45% of Californians are renters who cannot install solar. His idea is to install smaller-scale community solar projects so renters, residents, and business owners who cannot install solar themselves can subscribe to the project and receive a credit on their utility bill

for their share of the power that is produced. The storage aspect would also help decrease energy costs during peak hours when the sun has set.

After seven years of work, the cities of San Diego, La Mesa, Encinitas, Chula Vista, and Imperial Beach are rolling out their San Diego community choice energy program that partially breaks SDG&E's monopoly. Nonprofit San Diego Community Power will provide those cities with an alternate power source while still using SDG&E's grid infrastructure. The nonprofit has two rate plans: a more expensive 100% renewable, carbon-free energy one and another with 50% renewable energy that is comparable or slightly cheaper than SDG&E energy rates.

Customers can choose to opt-out of the program. Libraries, fire departments, and other city properties began using the alternative energy source in 2021 and the program is expanding to residential customers. According to the San Diego Union-Tribune, San Diego Community Power's 767,700 total customers will make it the second-largest community choice aggregation, or CCA, in the state.

While those cities are looking to meet their climate plan goals of using 100% renewable energy by 2035, for many customers the more urgent worry is being able to afford their ever-increasing energy bills.

Amid the new programs and policy changes, there is hope that both goals can be met.

—Kendra Sitton can be reached at kendra@sdnews.com.

Bill Baber

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

“I want to pass forward that gift to the next group of candidates,” he said. “Campaigns in this city are intense. They're expensive and take a lot of time so I want to give every candidate who's thinking of joining this great body enough time to prep and prepare.”

During his remaining 10 months in office, Baber promised to focus on finishing up projects that were underway in 2020. He also promised to meet with each city council member to figure out what the next year would hold.

“I'm not going anywhere. I'm going to be productive,” Baber said.

He encouraged his constituents to still contact him with complaints and also thanked many people for contributing to make La Mesa the best place to live in the country.

Throughout two decades in elected office, he was a registered Republican although in 2020 he switched to the Common Sense Party.


Of the other city council members, Colin Parent and Jack Shu are Democrats and recently-elected Laura Lothian is a Republican. Lothian won a special term and faces reelection in November alongside whoever will fill Baber's seat. Neither Democrat on the council will need to seek reelection in December so Lothian will be the only incumbent in need of a win to stay on the council.

SEE BILL BABER, Page 14

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Bill Baber

CONTINUED FROM Page 13

Mayor Mark Arapostathis is an independent. He may seek reelection as well.

Nineteen of the 22 years in office, Baber said he worked alongside Arapostathis. He joked that when they first started working together, both

of the balding men still had hair.

Baber led the campaign to pass ordinances to add term limits and tax marijuana businesses in the city. He currently represents La Mesa at SANDAG and on the new San Diego Community Power Joint Powers Authority (SDCP).

—Reach Kendra Sitton at kendra@sdnews.com.



Baber (far right) participates in the ribbon cutting at the grand opening of the La Mesa Community Garden in 2021. (Courtesy photo)

Microenterprise home kitchen operation initially passed by County for a two-year test period

By ROBIN DOHRN-SIMPSON

San Diego County supervisors voted unanimously recently to approve an ordinance that will allow people to operate mini-restaurants out of their house or condominium. Initially this ordinance is for two years before reassessment.

This operation will allow residents to cook, serve, deliver and serve food to customers. They will also be able to store food in their homes. Participants must cook the food the same day served. This does not include caterers and cottage food operations. Home cooks will need to submit an application, earn a food safety manager certificate, pass an initial inspection and undergo annual inspections. Kitchens that use well-water also have to conduct private tests to ensure the safety of the water.

All home kitchen operators can serve as many as 30 in-person meals and 60 meals per week.



(Photo credit: Pixabay.com)

This can be eat in, take-out or delivered meals.

Supervisor Joel Anderson said, "I am grateful to my Board colleagues for supporting this ordinance because MEHKOs are a win for chefs and for our communities. I am eager to see how this new ordinance will enrich San Diego County's food diversity and offer our neighborhoods greater

options for nutritious and affordable freshly prepared meals."

"This is a huge win for non-traditional entrepreneurs, particularly immigrants, women, and people of color, who may have faced barriers when looking to start their own businesses," Anderson continued.

SEE MICROENTERPRISES, Page 15

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Microeateries

CONTINUED FROM Page 14

“Restaurateurs can put their food to the test before making the exorbitant investment into a brick-and-mortar storefront.”

“I think this could be cool if utilized properly. I could host an exclusive dinner in my backyard once or twice a month, or do a fun cooking class and it would be legit,” Chef Jeff Rossman, past President of the California Restaurant Association and Restaurateur of the Year said.

Charles Heineke, of Charlie’s Classic Cooking, feels “In many ways, it’s going to be good. Food from your homeland, comfort food for many immigrants who want their own familiar foods. My biggest concern is sanitation. In an industrial kitchen, our food storage and cleanliness are highly regulated.”

According to Anderson, “The San Diego County Department of Environmental Health and Quality will conduct regular inspections to confirm sanitation and refrigeration standards are being met and ensure the health and safety of customers. Under the MEHKO’s ordinance, food may be stored in garages if properly stored in a fridge or freezer. In addition, meals must be prepared and sold on the same day. They cannot be left in the fridge overnight.”

—Robin Dohrn-Simpson is a local food and travel writer. Reach her at robindohrnsimpson.com.

Beef Barley Soup



By JULIE WHITE

Serves 6 -8
The barley in this soup adds a nutty flavor that is very tasty.

INGREDIENTS

- 4 Tbs Vegetable oil
- 2 Carrots peeled and sliced
- 2 Medium onion diced
- 1/4 cup tomato paste
- 1/2 cup red wine
- 2 pads steak, fat trimmed and cut into 1/2 inch pieces
- 1 28 oz. can diced tomatoes
- 2 cups beef broth

- 2 cups chicken broth
- 1/3 cup soy sauce
- Pinch of salt and pepper
- 1/4 cup pearl barley
- 1/4 cup of fresh chopped parsley for garnish before serving

DIRECTIONS

In a pot, brown the onions and meat in the oil. Brown cut veggies next.

Put all remaining ingredients in a slow cooker on low for 8-9 hours. Or you can put it in the oven in a cover pot and cook for 2 hours. You could also simmer on the stove on low heat for 2 hours in a covered pot. Check often for liquid and don’t leave unattended. An Instant Pot or pressure cooker can also be used. The slow cooker or Instant Pot are the easiest method as you can leave unattended.

Sprinkle with fresh chopped parsley and serve hot.



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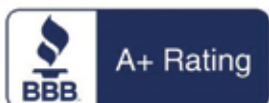


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Grossmont Center's Elam's Hallmark showing it has heart

By DAVE THOMAS

When it comes to having heart, Elam's Hallmark in Grossmont Center certainly qualifies.

The business recently completed its annual Hearts for CF campaign. This was their 11th year of raising awareness and funds for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation of San Diego. Elam's Hallmark has now raised more than \$150,000 for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation of San Diego.

In business since 1976, Elam's Hallmark has nine stores in San Diego County. The Grossmont location raised the most money for the organization this year.

Owner Scott Elam has a friend whose son, Justin, was born with cystic fibrosis – a genetic lung disease. This is why the business has the annual fundraiser.

"Each year when we do our Hearts for CF Campaign, we try to see which of our nine stores can collect the most money for CF," Elam noted. "This year our staff in Grossmont Center raised the most for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation of San Diego. Overall, Elam's collected \$16,600 this year in Justin's name."

The fundraiser was held for only 18 days in nine stores and still raised a large amount total.

Elam's Hallmark has been recognized by CFF of San Diego with the "Until It's Done" award for being a corporate sponsor that has donated \$5,000 or more for five consecutive years. The business does take contributions to CFF anytime.

"It is just during the Valentine's Day sale period we put up the Hearts on the wall with a picture of Justin," Elam added. "Once we get past Valentine's Day we stop posting the hearts – but we will always take more contributions."

According to Elam, the business has gotten great feedback from employees and customers alike.

"Many of them tell me they really like this program because it allows them an opportunity to

give back in a way they didn't know they could," Elam stated. "They feel like they are making a difference. Every small contribution added together between nine stores for 18 days really adds up. Most contributions are between \$1-\$5, but look how quickly that added up to \$16,600. Some of my staff have really wanted to learn more about Cystic Fibrosis so they would really know what they were talking about if questioned by a customer. We are really raising awareness for the disease."

Elam, who is a third generation Rotarian and past president of La Mesa Rotary, has also

reached out to other foundations to help support CF and the Hearts for CF Campaign.

"The Cushman Family Foundation has contributed \$5,000 in each of the last three years," Elam added. "I am currently actively looking for other foundations that would be interested in contributing as well."

The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation of San Diego is holding their major fundraiser of the year, Great Strides, the annual walk for Cystic Fibrosis on June 4. Learn more on their website at cff.org/chapters/san-diego-chapter.

—Reach editor Dave Thomas - dave@sdnews.com.



Pictured at Elam's Hallmark in Grossmont Center with Justin Moughan are L-R: Rita, Monica, store supervisor Esther, store manager Mechelle, Tonya and Deanna. (Courtesy photo)

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SUDOKU PUZZLE

4						6		5
		6			8		4	7
1								
		1		9			8	
		9		7	1			3
			3				7	8
	3				7	5	1	
		8	5	4				2

Fill in the blank cells using number 1 to 9. Each number can appear only once in each row column and 3x3 block. Use logic and process elimination to solve the puzzle.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9	10									
11				12							13								
14								15					16	17					
	18								19								20		
				21		22					23								
					24		25	26	27		28								
				29			30			31			32						
				33		34		35											
36	37	38		39			40		41										
42			43		44			45											
46								47		48									
49				50	51				52		53	54	55						
	56					57		58									59		
			60				61												
				62							63								

CLUES ACROSS

1. Constrictors
5. Abounding in rocks
11. Speed
14. German city
15. Lacking sympathy
18. Visionaries
19. Wastes away
21. One precursor to th
23. Nursemaid
24. Unconsciousnesses

28. Baby's word for father
29. Equal to 64 US pints (abbr.)
30. Senses of self-importance
32. Midway between S and SW
33. When you hope to get there
35. Electronic data processing
36. Passports and drivers' licences are two
39. Fishes
41. Air Force
42. Personal computers

44. Ecological community
46. Wings
47. Halfway
49. Cool, calm and collected
52. Jewelled headdress
56. Musical composition
58. ___ Falls
60. Repeating remarks
62. Periods in one's life
63. Hyphen

CLUES DOWN

1. ____ Humbug!
2. Devices that alert pilots (abbr.)
3. Grocer
4. One point east of southeast
5. Subjects to hostility
6. Work unit
7. Atomic #56
8. British thermal unit
9. "Elusive Butterfly" singer
10. Fastened over animal's neck
12. Deceive
13. Rechargeable power source
16. Ancient sage
17. Consist of two elements
20. "Pygmalion" writer

22. "The Centennial State" (abbr.)
25. Of I
26. Get older
27. Brotherhoods
29. Buzzing insect
31. Sunscreen rating
34. Brew
36. Leader
37. Indigo bush
38. Burn with a hot liquid
40. Junior's dad
43. Horse mackerels genus
45. Morning
48. Unit of linear measurement (abbr.)
50. Double curve
51. Small, twisted bunch

53. Developed
54. Mars crater
55. Humanistic discipline
57. Word element meaning ear
58. Last or greatest in an indefinitely large series
59. Wood residue
61. It cools your home



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[illegible]

4	8	7	1	3	9	6	2	5
3	9	6	2	5	8	1	4	7
1	5	2	7	6	4	8	3	9
5	2	1	6	9	3	7	8	4
8	7	3	4	2	5	9	6	1
6	4	9	8	7	1	2	5	3
9	6	5	3	1	2	4	7	8
2	3	4	9	8	7	5	1	6
7	1	8	5	4	6	3	9	2

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Laura Lothian
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MOUNT HELIX - \$1.6M



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LA MESA VILLAGE - \$905,000
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