





# San Diego State students give back to the community through service and philanthropy

By NATALI GONZALEZ

With the holidays upon us, giving back to those a little less fortunate oftentimes takes the spotlight. Between the 25 service-based student organizations and the large Greek life community, San Diego State University students have contributed countless hours of community service to different causes.

“Giving back to the community completes the college experience,” Robin Klos, president of the Best Buddies organization, said. “It is

so much more fulfilling to feel like you are a part of where you live, rather than just completing your academic work.”

Best Buddies, an international nonprofit, helps create friendships between SDSU students and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities through weekly activities. Recently, they hosted a field day in collaboration with the university soccer teams to give students a chance to learn and play the sport.

“We are looking to foster and grow an environment of inclusion

and acceptance while having fun,” Klos said.

Another active student group is the Wishmakers, an organization that seeks to support the local chapter of the Make-a-Wish Foundation, which gives children with critical illnesses their “wish” experiences. The club’s goal is to grant one of these wishes per year through fundraising efforts.

“We originated from an SDSU student entrepreneurial class project but wanted to bring it further and actually go through with creating the club,” Carter Holms, president of Wishmakers, said. “Starting last spring we recruited 60 members right off the bat through tabling and student outreach.”

Greek organizations are also important contributors to the service efforts, completing as many as 50,000 hours of community service in previous years. Recent philanthropy efforts included Kappa Alpha Theta’s annual “Rock the CASA” event, which features live music. Money raised from entrance tickets and online donations helps fund Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) for foster youth.

“Supporting this organization is important to me because it ensures that children in the system have every opportunity for



Many SDSU students are giving back to others through a variety of causes, including south of the border. (Photos courtesy of Robin Klos and Erica Axtel)



The Best Buddies take time out to celebrate Halloween season.

reaching their true potential,” Dominique Rocha, a Theta member, said. “It also helps in creating a space for these children to feel safe and accounted for.”

Theta exceeded its fundraising goal significantly, generating \$20,000 in donations. These funds go to the local CASA organization, Voices for Children, benefiting children in need in San Diego.

Service projects have even gone across the border.

The student organization Tijuana Home Build has worked

to raise funds to build houses for families living in dire conditions in Tijuana, giving them a safe space to grow and thrive.

“I got involved in TJHB because I grew up in Modesto, California, which is a lower-income agriculture-based community,” Erica Axtel, the director of Tijuana Home Build, remarked. “Although I did not grow up low-income, I had some classmates throughout elementary school who battled

SEE SDSU STUDENTS, Page 13

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## Mt. Helix Park hosting a Christmas celebration on Dec. 9

By KYUNGMIN MIN

Have yourself a Merry Christmas at Mt. Helix Park. The Park is hosting a celebration, ‘Christmas on Mt. Helix,’ on Saturday, Dec. 9.

The event is returning for the first time in five years. There was no celebration due to the rain in 2019 and shutdowns during the pandemic years. This year’s party will be a large-scale event, so don’t forget to visit if you are interested.

There are enchanting programs such as Kid’s Crafts, Caroling Performance, Christmas Market, and more. The event goes from 4 to 8 p.m.

You can find the detailed schedule below:

- 4 ~ 6 p.m. Selfies with Santa
- 4 ~ 8 p.m. Kid’s Crafts, Christmas Market, Food/Beverage Vendors
- 6 ~ 6:20 p.m. CYT Performance
- 6:30 ~ 7 p.m. Caroling Performance by Wagner’s School of Music

Visitors will be able to experience the atmosphere of a European Christmas market. Various kinds of food and beverage trucks will be provided, and craft vendors will sell their homemade items. A portion of the proceeds

will be back to help the Mt. Helix Park Foundation. Having vendors is meaningful for both the Park and attendees, as there have only been private parties for members in the last few years.

Food vendors include Sapos Tacos, Bethlehem Baking Co., Gordito Tamalito, and Pacific Island Crave. For the beverage vendors, Lonesome Rider Coffee, Bev Bus, and San Pasqual Winery will participate.

For the main program, there will be a 20-minute performance by CYT starting at 6 p.m. Directly after that, Wagner’s School of Music will feature some of their top musicians playing the piano and leading the crowd in a family caroling sing-along. You can find the list of songs for the singalong on the website.

“We’re excited to host this event again and it’s an important event for the community. Everybody gets to see their neighbors and friends, and we really missed not having it the past couple of years,” said Krista Powers, the executive director of Mt. Helix Park Foundation. “We hope to see everybody there. It’s going to be a wonderful evening celebrating community and the holiday season.”

Visit: [mthelixpark.org/christmas](http://mthelixpark.org/christmas) for information.

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# SDSU rolls out new social networking platform aimed at connecting SDSU community

By LAINIE ALFARO

Ask any student today about their LinkedIn profile and they will most likely be able to list off skills they've been endorsed in, people they've reached out to for coffee and their hopes for growing their network. However, SDSU students and alumni may have a new outlook on social networking with the launch of an online platform. LinkedIn may have some competition.

According to Casilda Pagan, assistant director of alumni engagement university relations and development, Aztec Network is a new platform created in partnership between Career Services and SDSU Alumni.

"The cool thing about Aztec Network is we're saying it's a one-stop shop for the SDSU community," Pagan said. "It's open to alumni, students, parents, faculty, staff and friends of the university — our donors. Everyone is verified as being a member of our community before they're approved on the platform. They can get connected through an alumni directory."

It started out under a different name with the generic platform, Gravity, and now houses the Aztec Mentorship Program (AMP). The Aztec Network platform was formally launched on Nov. 7. Pagan said they have invited 250,000 people to join.

The platform contains a directory of all people who join and make profiles, a job board for alumni, an area for affinity groups and mentorship matching. Regarding the mentorship, Casilda said the hope is for both alumni and students to get the career advice and support they need.

"The cool thing about the platform is they can set some weights, depending on what's most important, like industry to career fields," Pagan said. "Students and alumni can participate in that as a very structured program. There are milestones that they hit. There are readings they attend. Things they need to do to be a part of that program. It's been successful so far."

## AZTEC NETWORK PAYING DIVIDENDS FOR SDSU GRADUATES

Vince Nigro, a 2022 SDSU graduate who now works in marketing, said the mentorship program and the opportunity to stay connected with the SDSU community are what made him want to join.

"I have found the mentorship feature of the Aztec Network particularly valuable," Nigro said via email. "It has allowed me to connect with alumni working in my industry and gain insights from their experiences. The knowledge shared by these mentors has been incredibly beneficial."

Major Leanne Babcock is a 2008 graduate of SDSU and is currently an individual mobilized augmentee serving in the air



SDSU students and alumni have yet another means now of connecting. (Photo credit: Sandy Huffaker/San Diego State University)

force as a joint logistics operation planner. In addition to her military role, her civilian jobs include executive director of the 501(c)(3) nonprofit the Dauntless Veteran Foundation and fitness instructor and personal trainer for her town's Parks and Recreation.

Babcock has been a mentor through the Aztec Mentor Program (AMP) at SDSU and is the chair of the Veteran Alumni Organization board, which is an affinity group under SDSU alumni. Babcock was asked to take part in a pilot program of the Aztec Network platform at the beginning of 2022. "[The Veteran Alumni Organization] had all these different types of social networking profiles and we were very involved in the Aztec Mentoring Program," Babcock said. "Throughout all these different entities, we wanted to see if Aztec Network would be a place where veteran alumni, part of that military veteran program, would be comfortable connecting, especially considering that we have a large following on LinkedIn."

Since the launch, Babcock said the Veteran Alumni Organization has utilized the events and directory.

"For veterans, that's part of our mission and our organization to help provide camaraderie and networking among veteran and military-connected people," Babcock said. "Having that tie into the Aztec Network with their mentoring program, that's a huge asset."

John Aasted, a human resources analyst for the County of San Diego, Navy veteran and a lifetime member of the Alumni Network, said joining the platform was a "conscious commitment" he made when he heard about it.

"It's a way for me to contribute meaningfully to the school that played a pivotal role in shaping my academic and professional journey," Aasted said via email.

As someone who is a recruiter and HR professional, Aasted said that the Aztec Network offers opportunities for community and professional growth in ways that differ from LinkedIn because of the communal aspect of being a SDSU-only platform.

"The shared experience of being part of the same academic

community creates a unique bond that can give rise to a genuine sense of camaraderie," Aasted said via email. "Instead of solely focusing on individual growth, I envision this platform as a space where members actively contribute to a supportive community, collectively dedicated to fostering growth and success for everyone involved."

Aasted said he hopes the platform can continue to expand and mirror the sense of "community service and giving back" that often are found in the social pages of platforms like LinkedIn.

"It would be particularly rewarding to witness the growth of this community reflected not only on the platform itself but also mirrored in spaces like LinkedIn and other forums dedicated to community service and giving back," Aasted said via email. "By extending our reach to these broader networks, we can create a more dynamic and interconnected community that not only benefits from the platform's unique features but also amplifies its impact on alumni engagement and contributions to the community."

## HELPING VETERANS AND MILITARY-CONNECTED INDIVIDUALS

For Babcock, she sees the Aztec Network platform specifically helping the veteran and military-connected individuals find community through the SDSU connection.

"Every time I've traveled somewhere for a new assignment, I've been welcomed by that geographic area," Babcock said. "I would hope that [The Aztec Network] helps connect our veteran and military-connected alumni in those pockets of geographic communities, whether they're moving for their civilian job, or school or part of their military assignment, that they'll be able to connect with that geographic area and find their pocket of Aztecs."

For Emilio Ulloa, SDSU's associate chief diversity Officer HSI & Regional Affairs and an associate professor of psychology, the camaraderie of the platform and professionalism opportunities for

## Pros, Cons, and Steps to Selling Your Home Without a Realtor

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# Patrick Henry High winter sports teams have sights set on CIF gold

By DAVE THOMAS

With the holiday season here, schools will be going on break soon. That said, the winter sports season is fairly active this month at Patrick Henry High School.

On the girls' soccer front, the Lady Patriots under head coach Jason Renfro had their most successful season in the program's history a year ago.

Patrick Henry won two tournaments (Holiday Jubilee and Parker Cup) a season ago. The team then went on to win the Eastern League and captured the very first CIF championship in program history by defeating Francis Parker 2-1. The Lady Patriots ended the season losing to Portola from Irvine in the quarterfinals of the State Regional tournament.

"This season we have been moved up to the top league (Western)," Renfro commented. "We have some amazing returning student-athletes that will play a huge role in our season."

According to Renfro, senior goalkeepers Grace Miller and Kendall Baldwin will be a huge piece to the success. The team also has a great group of seniors (Alex Wehrman, Katy Hinkin, Caitlin Cogan, Avery Slinger, and Zoe Crickard) that will need to fill a few graduating senior's roles. This will reportedly be the key to success to find a group that will prevent the oppositions attack.

A few dynamic players that will play an important role according to Renfro are juniors Naima Castro, Emily Guerra, Chloe Tran, Kathryn Mokhov, Risa Soto-Webster, and Briahna Gieger. Sophomores to look to are Amanda Bear, Abby Weiss, Elizabeth Barefoot, and Zoe Wehrman. Freshmen Aleda Urbina, Emma Cunningham, and Coral Castro are three solid players that are reportedly the future for Henry soccer.

"Like every year, we as coaches have to turn the page and realize last season's success was amazing, but a new season will provide many obstacles," Renfro went on to say. "How we as a group manage the ups and downs will eventually come to the surface. At the end of the season, we will look back to early November when we put this group of talented athletes together and assess the journey. The hopes are we win our tournaments, league, and CIF back-to-back titles. The ultimate goal is to allow these amazingly talented student-athletes to enjoy their high school years playing an amazing game with all their friends and being the face of the school and community."

\* In boys' soccer action, the Patriots under head coach Seth Tunick finished 5-9-4 last season, losing in the first round of CIF.

According to Tunick, key members of this year's team include



Derek McBride goes to the basket for Patrick Henry High during a boys' basketball game. (Photo credit: Tovy Ordonez)

midfielder Cody Luna (junior), center back Braden Sclipei (senior), center back Abraham Estrada (senior) and forward Bryan Pelaez (sophomore).

"This year we have a much more experienced team as the team consists of almost completely upperclassman with the exception of one sophomore," Tunick commented. "The hope is that our experience and maturity of the players will lead us to a league championship and a successful run in CIF. The team is very capable as we have depth in almost every position. We also have some very good players waiting in the wings on our frosh and JV teams and are hoping that this year will start a run of good years to come for the program."

\* The girls' basketball team under head coach Derrick Carter went 17-14 a season ago, finishing 8-2 in league play. The Lady

Patriots made it to the semifinals of the CIF Division IV playoffs.

"Everyone plays a key role for our team's success," Carter commented. "A few key members are Cecelia Parker (Senior, guard), Maddox Weisskopf (Senior, forward), Ally Mangahis (Sophomore, guard) and Taylor Perry (Sophomore guard)."

According to Carter, goals for this season are having fun, winning league and being crowned CIF champions for Division 3.

"Don't cheat yourself, treat yourself," Carter added. Mangahis noted, "It's just work."

\* In boys' basketball play, the Patriots with head coach Kenny Caesar at the helm look to rebound from last season.

"Last year was a tough season," Caesar commented. "We had a first-round playoff exit." Now in Division II and in the City League, Caesar feels the team can be competitive.

According to Caesar, key players look to include Kenneth Klu, Derek McBride and Issac Weatherred.

\* On the rugby scene, the program under former head coach Greg Chronopolos looks to be going in the right direction for both the boys and girls teams.

In boys' action, last season was a rebuilding campaign. Having only graduated one returning senior, the Patriots had a tough, but hard-fought year, finishing just out of the playoff picture.

According to Chronopolos, coaches Tai Tuisamoa (head coach) and Marcus Tupuola are putting together a well-rounded and disciplined squad who will shake up the top sides in the very competitive Southern California High School 7's Division.

Top players look to include seniors Conner Nicks and Ethan Tomosovic providing steady leadership and solid play. Chronopolos noted sophomore Adrian Pham, the team's playmaker, will continue to dazzle his opponents with his intelligent play. The coaching staff is also reportedly bullish on first-year player, Kaeden Kiffe (junior). He is described as a quick study of the game and looks to be a spark the team is looking for.

For the Lady Patriots, after a three-year absence, PHHS returned to action this past season.

"Though the win/lose ratio was not in the team's favor, the team finished last year's campaign with a pair of impressive wins in the final weekend of play," Chronopolos noted.

According to Chronopolos, players to watch include junior Bella Garcia, poised to have another impressive year as the physical leader of the team. Junior Keila Tolentino and sophomore Ally Kesling are back for their second year with the club and are expected to add leadership and experience to a very raw but talented group of ruggers. Newcomer Jenna Roback looks to add a veteran's presence and a strong rugby IQ to the program.

\* Editor's note: All varsity winter head coaches at PHHS were asked to provide information for this article.

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# Patrick Henry High wrestling pins down success, girls team seeing beginnings

By SAM LITVIN

Three years ago, Coach Jack Donio and I arrived at Patrick Henry.

It was 2021, the COVID vaccine was being rolled out and wrestling would for the first time be during spring season. We had 12 boys; not enough for a full squad. In spite of it, we had a great season with only three dual losses and multiple CIF placers.

2022 was a tough year.

We had good wrestlers who got hurt, a lot. Most sports had that issue due to COVID. Last year we improved to 24 wrestlers. We had a very young team, an okay season at duals but a historic one with eight Masters qualifiers, our first Masters champion and two state qualifiers.

During the summer we worked harder than ever. We held a camp and had more off-season practices. We had our first year of wrestling for middle schools.

Today we have a full varsity, junior varsity and the beginning of a girls team. We have excellent coaching and managing staff.

The girls team is lead by a freshman captain, Violet Gray, who took second place with a record of 3-1 at her first tournament. The team also includes senior Alexandra Hopkins; freshmen Aubrey Lund and Eagle Rumble (silver medalist); and sophomore Destiny Torres.

Our varsity team voted for four-year varsity wrestler Alex Adler as their head captain.

Adler placed three times at CIF and had a 2-2 record at Masters. Our two other captains are



Things continue heading in the right direction for the Patrick Henry High wrestling program. (Photo credit: Don DeMars Photography)

Abdullah Alshami and Ethan Vinoray, both sophomores.

Alshami was a first-time wrestler but took seventh at CIF and qualified for Masters. Vinoray was second at CIF and third at Masters qualifying for State Championships as a freshman. This is the first time for Patrick Henry and as far as we know for San Diego Metro Conference a freshman qualified for the State Tournament. Vinoray is currently ranked 23rd in the state and second in San Diego County at his weight.

The varsity team is young with many second-year wrestlers.

Other wrestlers expected to fair well are Masters qualifiers seniors Francisco Saroldi-Gonzalez and Barrett Talbot. Senior Koa Altmeyer did not compete in past CIF's due to injuries but is expected to have a great season. Sophomores Van Alvarez, Jad Carruthers and juniors Reid Muscat and Gage Mote are also returning wrestlers who have shown a lot of improvement and

have a strong potential for placing at CIFs.

Last year, dark horse senior Aedyn Jamison took first at League and third at CIF. First-time wrestlers Andy Crow, Brandon Phung and Anthony Mokhov could be those dark horse wrestlers as well.

New coaching additions to our team include alumni Zavion Guy and Gavin Hingten. Patrick Henry also has its first female coach, Mia Hamel, and a welcome addition is Coach Jores Peters, who coached many CIF placers for Imperial High School.

We are so proud of the team and all the hard work they put in and can't wait to see what this season brings.

We will have two home duals.

The first one is an alumni dual with Madison on Dec. 13 that we are marketing as Founding Father Dual and a Spirit Night on Jan 10 against University City High.

*Editor's note: Sam Litvin is the head boys' wrestling coach at Patrick Henry High School.*

## Top 10 holiday dangers for pets

With the holiday season in full swing, San Diego Humane Society reminds pet owners to take precautions to keep their pets safe. Presents, decorations, plants and holiday foods can sometimes be harmful for our furry friends.

Here are the Top 10 holiday dangers for pets:

**1. Christmas trees:** Christmas trees can be hazardous, especially for climbing cats. Make sure your tree is secure, preferably in a corner to reduce the likelihood of falling. Keep dangerous ornaments, such as those made of glass and tinsel (which can be choking hazards), on high branches and out of the reach of little paws.

**2. Wrapped presents:** If you are wrapping gifts — especially those containing food (particularly chocolate), dog treats or dog toys — keep them out of your pet's reach until they are ready to be opened. Pets have a keen sense of smell and will often unwrap presents early and eat the potentially harmful contents.



Make sure your pets have a healthy and relaxing environment during the holiday season. (Photo courtesy of San Diego Humane Society)

**3. Holiday food:** Pets are often not shy about taking food that is left sitting out on counters or tables. Pets should be kept away from food preparation areas or places where food will be left out unattended or for long periods of time. A few concerning foods that are common during the holidays

include chocolate, bread dough, grapes/raisins, fruitcake and alcohol.

**4. Toxic plants:** Amaryllis, Christmas cactus, Christmas rose, evergreens, holly, ivy, juniper, lilies, mistletoe and poinsettias are

SEE HOLIDAY PET DANGERS, Page 10

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# Health of San Carlos Community Garden revolves around many people

**In the garden**

By JESSICA MILLS

The health of the San Carlos Community Garden (SCCG) is due in large to its community, volunteers, leadership team and board members.

Among their dedicated community members is Founding Member and Board Chair Carol Lockwood. Since the SCCG's founding in 2012, Lockwood has been instrumental in the organization and development of volunteers, their project ideas and the harmony of the garden.

After maintaining her position for over a decade, Lockwood recently announced her retirement as board chair.

Prior to leading the SCCG, Lockwood worked with numerous volunteer and community outreach programs. After moving to San Diego in 1960 with her husband Wayne, Lockwood began working in the publisher's office of the San Diego Union-Tribune. She later served as the executive director for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation of San Diego and Inland Empire and Membership Director of San Carlos United Methodist Church.

"It's always been very satisfying for me to look at a project that needs to be done and find the person who's particularly qualified to do it and help that person be successful," Lockwood said.

She has continued such efforts as board chair with the SCCG.

"I worked directly with the community, found people who wanted to volunteer and utilize their special talents, taking in their great ideas and matching



Carol Lockwood, left, works with board member Gayle Mills and volunteer Steve Vadez on building more outreach at San Carlos Community Garden. (Courtesy photo)

that with the areas of need in the garden," Lockwood commented. "It's great for the garden because a lot gets done."

Lockwood is also responsible for the SCCG's recognition as a non-profit organization.

"The process of becoming a non-profit took over a year to get all of the information that the State requires," Lockwood stated. "I think it's exciting, it lends us a degree of authority and professional standing."

Since then, Lockwood has completed an extensive list of projects in the garden — including her leadership and involvement with Eagle Scout Troop 959 and their 15 completed projects.

"It's been a privilege for me to learn more about and connect with each of the Eagle Scouts in Troop 959," Lockwood said. "It's been so great working with each individual scout. In developing whatever project they choose, they learn to plan, work with people to develop their ideas, learn about fundraising and

they grow in such significant ways."

Life Scout Josh Brookens is currently working on his Eagle Scout project with Lockwood for the SCCG.

"The project is an outdoor chime structure with seven chimes that follow the C major pentatonic scale with an additional octave of G and A," Brookens said. "I hope this chime set will encourage a love and interest in creating music in the next generation of children that visit the community garden." The project is expected to be completed in January 2024.

## SCCG AMPHITHEATER GREAT SETTING AS OUTDOOR CLASSROOM AND MORE

Lockwood has also been instrumental in the development of the SCCG amphitheater's shade tree.

"One of the Garden's more unique features is the amphitheater, a structure that our landscape architect, George Mercer,

suggested in response to ideas originally suggested by our school site partner, the Sierra School of San Diego," said Lockwood. "The amphitheater is great to use as an outdoor classroom for Siera's students, and for many of our Garden programs and group meetings, but its exposure to the sun makes it difficult to use," Lockwood commented. "Our landscape architect suggested 'why don't you plant a shade tree?' I pressed forward with that idea and we got one planted earlier this year; a beautiful Jacaranda tree that was donated by the San Carlos Methodist Church and installed by BrightView Landscape."

"It's quite impressive how much the SCCG has accomplished over the years," said Mercer. "I've been involved with the development of many community gardens over the years; of these, the San Carlos Community Garden has been particularly successful. I attribute this in large part to Carol's leadership and the Board's commitment to stay true to the masterplan we developed over ten years ago, striving for excellence at every stage of its implementation."

SCCG Volunteer Susanne Brookens, who has also worked with Lockwood on the Community Outreach Committee for the San Carlos Methodist Church for nearly 12 years, shared that Lockwood is "a woman of action. She is not satisfied with just doing things the way they've always been done. She is not just an asset to the San Carlos Community Garden but to all the many organizations that she actively supports."

SEE SCCG, Page 12

# Give to the Park that provides for you

**Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation**

By JENNIFER MORRISSEY

There's a landmark in your backyard.

Mission Trails Regional Park (MTRP) is one of the largest urban parks in the country, boasting more than 8,000 acres and 60 miles of trails. Mission Trails is and may be one of the reasons you moved to your neighborhood.

From all over the area we can see Mission Trails' Cowles Mountain, the city's highest peak; more than three miles of the San Diego River flows through MTRP. And, the park is home to more than 1,800 plant and animal species, many of which are rare and endangered. To refer to Mission Trails as a gem is an understatement, it's an oasis in our bustling region

and an invaluable resource for the community that needs to be preserved protected and maintained.

For 35 years, the nonprofit Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation and its community of supporters have helped make Mission Trails what it is today: a sanctuary where we can connect and restore. And, thanks to the community's support, the MTRP Foundation has launched an initiative to acquire new land for the park, to expand the park beyond its current boundaries. Not only will this acquisition provide new areas to explore, but it will conserve the land and ensure that it will never be developed.

During this season of giving, we ask that you extend your generosity to Mission Trails, the park that provides for you.

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Take advantage of all Mission Trails Regional Park has to offer. (Photo by Julia Leclerc)

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mail a check addressed to the MTRP Foundation to 1 Father Junipero Serra Trail San Diego, Ca. 92119. You also may call us at the MTRP Foundation to discuss ways to give to the park: (619) 668-3280.

Thank you for your consideration, and we wish you a healthy and happy holiday season.

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# Del Cerro is closing in on a 70th anniversary

**Friends of Del Cerro**  
By JAY WILSON



History has it, the first home in Del Cerro was built in 1954. Our community is several weeks away from being 70 years old.

Jane Klofkorn is the historian for the Friends of Del Cerro (FODC) and a board member of the Friends of Del Cerro. Periodically she interviews Del Cerro residents who have a long history of Del Cerro.

What follows is part of Joan's interview with Lisa Long.

The year was 1957. The Robert Long family moved to a beautiful house on Romany Drive in the new neighborhood of Del Cerro. My name is Lisa Long, the youngest in the Long family. I was four years old at the time. Del Cerro was so new and fun to explore. A new elementary school was being built and opened in February 1958. I would be in the first class to start at Phoebe Hearst Elementary School in the Kindergarten class.

On my street alone were two other kids my age; Alexis Walker (who would prove to be a life-long friend and the namesake of my first child) and Fred Provence, who still lives in his parents' house today on Romany Drive. Farther up the street lived the

Ortleibs. Mr. Ortleib was the head umpire for the little league that was at the site of today's market, Windmill Farms.

Del Cerro holds so many memories for me. Walking to Hearst with my sisters every day, meeting friends at the Speedy Mart, and watching the cute boys playing baseball, never thinking that I would marry one of those boys that played on the Seedorf team, Eddie Hume.

At that time, there was a tunnel we could go through that ran under Highway 8 all the way to where the Alvarado Hospital is today. And, San Diego State was a college, not a university.

It was there on College Avenue my family and I watched President Kennedy ride by in an open car. His bright hair glowed red in the sun, as I recall.

It was a time of safety. We rarely locked our doors. Our parents never had to supervise us outside, no matter how young we were. Everyone took care of each other, and the memories of that time spent in Del Cerro will always stay with me.

**LISA LONG**

If you know of a long-time resident of Del Cerro Jane should interview, contact Jane at [info@friendsofdelcerro.org](mailto:info@friendsofdelcerro.org).

The FODC was recently invited to attend the SDSU student

interns fair for the Department of Public Administration and Criminal Justice. As a result, we have two highly qualified and very motivated interns who will be working on projects to benefit our community.

Members of the Princess Del Cerro Park committee recently met with a contractor to discuss a bid to repair the paver brick area in front of the park's playground.

Thank you to everyone who shared their concerns regarding

Del Cerro and to each of you who recently became members and/or volunteered to serve on a committee. For more information and/or to become a member of the Friends of Del Cerro, go to [friendsofdelcerro.org](http://friendsofdelcerro.org).

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The Best of Mission Times is back, highlighting all the great businesses in the area.

Do you have a business you've been a customer of in the Mission Times circulation area for many years? Is there a business or several of them you'd highly recommend to family and friends? What business or businesses go out of their way to serve you and other customers?

Let it be known what small, medium and big Mission Times area businesses owned and staffed by the families and people in the community you support.

Go to: <https://forms.gle/S5KHv3ydRoAKPKJV7> to vote.

The voting begins on Nov. 10. The deadline to vote is Feb. 2. The Best of Mission Times Courier will publish April 12.

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# PHHS Food Drive

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

priority and the rest is donated to the food bank,” McLemore added.

Families requesting food items are kept anonymous and confidential and are consulted by Biology Instructor, ASB and Student Activities Director and Senior Class Advisor Autumn Ross.

She detailed her feelings on the drive and commitment of her students.

“My hope in helping students organize these drives is to expose teenagers to the importance of being active in the community, seeing the needs of our community and responding to those needs,” Ross said. “Servant leadership is an important mindset and skill that if developed in our high school community, is more likely to be something they prioritize as adults. Collective human experiences like serving those less fortunate is a way to build and foster stronger community ties through shared goals and initiatives. These actions improve the lives of those they are aiming to serve while also forging stronger connections within communities.”

For two weeks, each of the school’s fourth period classes received a basket for food collecting. Every ASB student was assigned and visited between two and three classes to collect and

encourage food donations. Parents, families and community members that wanted to contribute were also able to drop off their food items at the school’s front office.

“Majority of the donations were cans, beans and rice, things that preserve well,” McLemore said. “We made sure to check expiration dates before donating just to make sure everything was all good.”

After their two-week period, the San Diego Food Bank visited PHHS to collect the products — which took up three large bins.

Hoping to further impact the community during this time, PHHS has also started a blood drive.

“Between the food and blood drive, hopefully they can help anyone in need,” Gross remarked. “Especially around the holidays, it’s important to make sure everyone is comfortable and eating well.”

Both Gross and McLemore emphasized that PHHS is here to support their community during times of need.

“We want to make sure that everyone has the resources they need and have easy access to them, especially if they’re nervous to reach out,” McLemore said. “We’re always here.”

From 1,600 pounds of food items and the blood drive, the dedication of each of Patrick Henry High School’s students are likely to impact many.

## IPS RECEIVES \$300K GRANT TO INCREASE ACCESS TO THE OUTDOORS FOR ALL

The Institute for Public Strategies has received a \$300,000 grant to increase access to the outdoors for all San Diegans regardless of who they are or where they live.

The award is part of the Outdoors for All Strategy in partnership with the California Natural Resources Agency to build a movement across the state that will allow more people access to nature and provide outdoor experiences.

“The grant allows IPS to create the East County Outdoor Youth Empowerment and Adventure program, a new outdoor access initiative for youth participants from underserved populations in Lemon Grove, Spring Valley/La Presa, and El Cajon with a focus on equity and inclusion,” IPS CEO Brenda Simmons said. “In partnership with the participants, we’ll lead

day outings and camping trips where youth will learn about health, wellness, and empowerment.”

The Youth Community Access grant was established with funds from the Proposition 64 cannabis tax to support public, educational, job training and outreach programs that expand youth access to cultural and natural resources.

IPS was one of five nonprofits in San Diego County to be awarded the grant.



## URBAN CORPS OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY AWARDED GRANT

Urban Corps of San Diego County was awarded \$280,680,000 from the California Natural Resource

Agency as a part of its Youth Community Access program.

The funding will be used to provide 300 Corpsmembers with monthly trips to enjoy cultural and natural resources throughout San Diego County. It is part of the *Outdoors for All Initiative* that Gov. Newsom and the State Legislature introduced in 2021 to expand access to California state parks and other state facilities to encourage more people to go outdoors. Urban Corps is one of five San Diego County organizations to receive the funding.

Some of the activities that the grant will fund are kayaking, bird watching, hiking, camping and bike riding, which will be the first time for many Corpsmembers. The funding will also support the Corpsmember Advisory Board which is a leadership program for the Corpsmembers. The Advisory Board teaches selected Corpsmembers leadership skills while they work on projects that benefit themselves and fellow Corpsmembers.

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# Fig Tree Café, making shining moments: Eat, beach, sleep, repeat

What's on the menu?

By ROBIN DOHRN-SIMPSON

Owner Johan Engman, of the Rise and Shine Hospitality Group, had a vision for unique breakfast and brunch restaurants and has created multiple restaurants in San Diego. The fourth Fig Tree Café, located in Mission Valley is now open.

"One of our company's philosophies is to make shining moments. To find ways to make everyone's day a little bit brighter. That could be in our meals or our service. Or it could be going that extra step to help someone in need," said Manager Haylea Glenn. This philosophy is reflected in this shiny new neighborhood restaurant.

They offer an eclectic menu with omelets or scrambles, and plant-based and vegan options. Popular items are the California Breakfast Burrito with skirt steak, chopped applewood smoked bacon, scrambled eggs, and crispy potatoes. Other intriguing menu items are the Breakfast Sushi or Crispy Pork Belly and Grits, Shrimp Frittata and Meatloaf Hash.

Eggs Benedict lovers will enjoy the Short Rib, Traditional, or Salmon plates. Vegans will enjoy the Cauliflower and Chorizo Bennie, with plant-based eggs and vegan hollandaise.

If you enjoy sweet breakfasts, they offer Apple Fritters and Lemon Ricotta Buttermilk Pancakes with a Meyer Lemon Curd.

There's a lot of talk about the "Man Candy" which is thick-cut

bacon, brown sugar, and paprika, which can be added to many dishes and is worth the extra cost.

The tagline of Eat, Beach, Sleep, Repeat is reflected in the decor. Lights made with old surfboards, wall paintings of back-in-the-day beachgoers and classic VW Vans from many years ago, hanging ferns and blue chairs reflecting the color of the sky.

"This is a giving company, and on Christmas Day this year we will choose one location and in support of the Wounded Warrior Project, will be giving away meals to the warriors and their families along with gifts for the children," Glenn said. Look on their website to see which location will host the event.

"Our dream at this location is to be the best restaurant in the



Fig Tree Café is making its share of shining moments. (Photo by Robin Dohrn-Simpson)

company of approximately 40 restaurants," Glenn added.

Fig Tree Café, located at 7710 Hazard Center Drive (in the Food 4 Less parking lot) is open daily from 7 a.m. - 3 p.m. Phone (619) 732-7900.

Check out their menu at <https://figtreeeatery.com/mission-valley/>.

## SDSU Network

CONTINUED FROM Page 3

students is part of his "why" in being a mentor.

"The opportunity to connect with the students and help them to figure out how to realize their goals and create this relationship at my alma mater, those are things that are valuable to me. Ulloa said. "For a lot of us who work at universities, that's one of the reasons we work at the university. We're motivated to do that kind of work anyways."

Ulloa said moving forward there's such a wide range of alumni he'd like to see utilize the platform.

"The way that I would want it to grow wouldn't be about new things but really about reach," Ulloa said. "I would love to see that the alumni association in partnership with career services can get the word out to our alumni. We have a huge network of alumni out there. I would love to see the [Aztec] Network tap into that as a resource for our students and current students with more reach and more depth than we've been doing

so far. It gives the students way more options and opportunities."

As a recent graduate, Nigro said this space for support and connection has already made a difference.

"I have participated in several mentorship opportunities through the platform and plan to engage in more," Nigro said via email. "The platform makes it easy to connect with mentors in my industry, and I've had nothing but positive experiences with the alumni mentors I've met."

In the future, Pagan said this part of the overall engagement strategy for SDSU alumni could be expanded to offer a series of online events.

"We are starting that with our career programming," Pagan said. "In the spring, attached to our career fairs, alumni will be given the opportunity to do a pre-emptive chat with Career Services. In the future, our groups can use it to host their board meetings. People could have panel discussions. The sky's the limit."

To learn more about the Aztec Network, visit: [aztecnetwork.sdsu.edu/](http://aztecnetwork.sdsu.edu/).

## Holiday pet dangers

CONTINUED FROM Page 5

examples of plants that can cause digestive upset or more severe toxicity to pets if eaten.

5. **Unsafe pet toys:** You will see many toys marketed as holiday gifts to pets this season — but that doesn't necessarily mean they're safe for animals. Avoid pet toys that could be dangerous, such as those with easily detachable parts like sequins, buttons or ribbons. These items can be choking hazards or cause gastrointestinal blockages if ingested. If toys have stuffing or plastic squeakers, it's important to supervise playtime to prevent accidental ingestion.

6. **Fire and string lights:** Roaring fires and twinkling lights are common around the holidays, but can cause danger to pets. Place burning candles high, out of your pet's way. A dog's tail wag or a cat's curiosity could be devastating. Homes with fireplaces should use screens to

avoid accidental burns. Cords from electrical string lights should be taped down or otherwise secured to prevent pets from chewing on them.

7. **Snow globes:** Some snow globes contain ethylene glycol, which is highly toxic to all pets. If a snow globe is broken, the sweet smell can attract a pet to lick it up, leading to a potentially fatal intoxication. As a precaution, snow globes should be kept out of reach of pets.

8. **Medication:** If you have visitors, pets may investigate suitcases and can get into their medications, such as pill bottles or weekly pill minders. It is safer to have the visitors put their medication in a closed cabinet that is not accessible to pets.

9. **Salt:** Ice melt, homemade play dough and salt-dough ornaments (even when dry) can be tempting salty treats for pets, but can all also cause life-threatening imbalances in electrolytes. Pet owners should contact their local veterinary professional or the Animal Poison Control Center if their pets get into any of these substances.

10. **Open doors:** Keep your pets safely indoors and always make sure they're wearing current ID tags with your phone number. Holiday distractions make it easier for pets to escape through open doors. Make sure their microchip information is up to date. If your pet is not microchipped, San Diego Humane Society offers \$25 microchips at its El Cajon, Escondido, Oceanside and San Diego Campus locations. Schedule an appointment at [sdhumane.org/microchip](http://sdhumane.org/microchip).

During the holidays, it's also important to make sure your pet has a quiet, secure place to escape the commotion. Pets can become stressed with noise and activity and want somewhere safe to relax. Make sure they have their bed, favorite toys, food and water, and a litter box for cats. Keep them on their regular schedule for feeding and exercise. Pets thrive on routine and increased activity during the holiday season can upset that routine. As always, be sure they get plenty of love and attention from you.

For more information, visit [sdhumane.org/holidaysafety](http://sdhumane.org/holidaysafety).



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# Allied Gardens/Grantville Community Council sees a busy 2023

**Allied Gardens/Grantville**  
By SHAIN HAUG



Struggling, as always, for a topic for our monthly article we looked at the subjects of our commentaries during 2023. We decided to review what we addressed last year – all with the hope that you will let us know what we should take on in 2024.

We began 2023 with a look at the December fly-over bridge lighting, the Tree Lighting ceremony, and the Holiday Festival. By the time this paper hits the streets those events for 2023 will be over and done. So, look for our report in January 2024.

In February we explored food insecurity and the work of the Food Pantry at Ascension Lutheran Church. This vital community activity is a local outreach

of the larger effort of the Jacobs & Cushman San Diego Food Bank. As we did then, we now commend the hard work that is done by this organization and we ask for your contributions.

March brought us to the ongoing question of the housing shortage and the laws that allow the densification of our residential communities. We discussed the role that the Navajo Community Planners, Inc. (NCPI) has (or should have) as the voice of the community in these matters. This issue is so important that we returned to this same subject in November.

The article in April began with the Total Altruism Project (Gary Blume's project to give the community the tools to keep our parks clean), moved on to the Council District 7 Office Hours outreach to constituents, and ended with the discussion of the need for an off-leash dog park. We are pleased

to report that in 2024 the city will have the dog park in operation south of the Allied Gardens swimming pool.

In June we talked about Benjamin Library and what could be done to expand the facility to 15,000 square feet as predicted by the Facilities Financing Plan and as needed by the community. The expansion of the facility is critical to meet the increased demand from Grantville residential development. After the article was published NCPI placed the library expansion on the Capital Improvement List (CIP) for the use of Navajo Community Development Impact Funds (DIF). It will take a long time (San Carlos took 20+ years) but it is a start.

Our July article thanked the community organizers for the Third Annual Fourth of July Community Parade that began at Marvin Elementary School and

was attended by three generations of Allied Gardens residents. It was a splendid event.

The role of the Allied Gardens/Grantville Community Council (AGGCC) was the topic of our August column.

In September the San Diego Commission on Police Practices (CPP) was about to reach the final stage of its organization. We talked about its role in scrutinizing interactions between members of the public and the police. Shortly after that article was published the city hired the CPP management staff, the City Council appointed 25 Commissioners, and the CPP went into full operation.

In late September and early October a group of ignorant and cowardly thugs used the cover of night to distribute antisemitic literature in our Navajo Communities. In our October article we condemned that behavior

and we offered our support to the innocent victims of that assault.

In November we returned to the question of how NCPI conveys our voice to the City Planning Department and how the Planning Department ignores our community values. Absent a sea change in developmental policies, and at this time we see no such possibility, this issue will be at persistent thread in public discourse.

In closing, your Community Council extends to our readership wishes for a happy holiday and a peaceful New Year.

The Allied Gardens/Grantville Community Council maintains an email contact list through which we offer information about what is going on in the community.

Our website is down for the moment. Until we have it back up and running contact us at [www.aggccshain@yahoo.com](mailto:www.aggccshain@yahoo.com) to join our stream of consciousness.

# Crusaders Soccer Club puts final touches on 2023 Fall Recreational Division

By JAY WILSON  
The Crusaders Soccer Club's 2023 Fall Recreational Division just ended.

Throughout the season more than 1,100 soccer players played in over 500 games. This was all possible because of the 150 coaches and division coordinators who donated their time and expertise to ensure every child had an opportunity to be on one of more than 100 teams.

Soccer never ends. We have eight Recreational Division All-Star Teams competing in tournaments through Jan. 7.

On Sunday, Dec. 3, our Girls 2012/13 took home the winning trophy (pictured above) for their

first All-Star tournament, playing teams from throughout San Diego County.

Mike Gooding, their coach said, "I am very proud of this team. The team has only been practicing together for two weeks and in their four games at this tournament, these young ladies scored 19 goals and only allowed three. We are just getting started."

A big shout out to Peter Tarantino, an AWS certified welder, and a resident of San Carlos. There was some damage to one of our cargo containers requiring a mobile welding service. Peter responded within an hour and donated his services. ([tntwfm@gmail.com](mailto:tntwfm@gmail.com)) (619) 402-0120.

Competitive tryouts for the Crusaders Soccer 2024

competitive teams were conducted Dec. 4-7 for players born in 2018 through 2015. The next round of Competitive tryouts will be for players born 2010 through 2014 on Feb. 12-15. Check our website for more information.

On Dec. 15, registration will open for the Crusaders 2024 Recreational Spring season. Register your player by Dec. 31 for an early bird discount. For the spring season, teams will play 8 games on Sundays beginning the first Sunday of March with no games on Easter Sunday.

For more information about our 2024 Spring Recreational Division registration and tryouts for our 2024 competitive teams, go to the Crusaders home page at: [crusaderssoccer.org](http://crusaderssoccer.org).



On Dec. 3, the Crusaders Soccer Recreational Girls 2012/13 All-Star team won their first tournament. They played four games, scored 19 goals with only three goals scored against them. Their next tournament is the Scripps Ranch Recreational All-Star Tournament on Dec. 16-17. (Courtesy photo)

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# Libraries lead the way in helping protect our intellectual freedom

San Carlos Area Council

By MICKEY ZEICHICK



The SCAC is holding our annual potluck social, open house, at 6:30 on Wednesday, Dec. 20.

We look forward to meeting and greeting and hearing a quick update from our Mayor, Councilman, County Supervisor, Assemblyman, SDUSD Board Trustee, Jennifer Morrissey (MTRP), David Ege (Librarian extraordinaire) and some of our past guest speakers. I am so excited that we are doing this again this year. Thank you to the Library staff for setting up our meeting space and cleaning up after our meetings. They help provide a welcoming atmosphere. Please RSVP to me if you plan to attend (not required but desired) at: SanCarlosAreaCouncilPres@gmail.com

As I am writing this I feel the excitement in the (cold) air for the upcoming holidays.

Christmas, Chanukah, Kwanzaa, winter solstice, the New Year, and other special events. Decorations are going up all around San Diego County.

When our kids were much younger I would drive them around in the evening to look at all the "lights" and "decorations" in various neighborhoods. We had a game we played: the first

one who saw decorations would say "I see...." And then point it out. We would all look and oooh and awe; that person got a point. After about an hour the person with the most points would get to pick where we would go for hot chocolate. Some of my favorite memories ... ok, maybe it is just the hot chocolate and marshmallows that I really enjoyed the most! But it got us out and appreciate what people do that puts joy in the world.

I admit that I am a bit confounded about what is "happening" to our neighborhoods.

I am talking about how things are progressing on the thinking that zoning and height restriction laws don't matter anymore in our residential neighborhoods. And that the City wants to have property owners responsible for the sidewalk maintenance and liability of the area if someone gets hurt.

So here is what I am perplexed about: We buy a house/home in a residential area of our choosing for various reasons, based on, among other things, how the area is maintained, front/side/back yard, view, schools, libraries, shopping centers, grocery and hardware stores, flood and fire hazard zones, Maybe nearby restaurants: fancy or not.

The City has the duty to take care of public places like parks, libraries, streets, sidewalks, parkways, street lights, street signals,

street signs. These things we will call "public works projects".

On the deed to our property there is a legal description of the property and the area we are responsible for. Now the City has said because we need more affordable housing, property owners can put up one or more ADU (additional dwelling unit/s). We have garages meant to house our cars (ok, sometimes they are storage units but you get the point). When the laws are not enforced, that impacts everything and the neighborhood changes. With ADUs it is most likely more cars will be parked on the street and there will be more traffic. The City now wants to transfer the responsibility of maintaining the parkways and sidewalks to the adjacent property owner. That means if someone trips and falls because the sidewalk is uneven, whether due to the tree the City has planted, shifting of the earth (which happens for various reasons) the property owner can be sued.

A real estate change of ownership status must have an offer and acceptance, what happens if the property owner does not accept this property the City wants us to be responsible for?

Having a neighborhood changed for the convenience of the City is not a good enough reason to allow ADU's in residential neighborhoods, nor does it make

sense to have high rise buildings, of more than 2 stories, in a residential area. That's why there are zoning and height restriction laws. We need to adhere to the laws that were in place when we made the decision to buy our property. Or at least, we need to have it on the ballot.

Now I am all in favor of helping people, "all lives matter", but I hate to see our neighborhoods dramatically changed from what was the intent of the zoning and height limitation laws at the time we made the decision to purchase our property.

Now, you are probably wondering what the difference really is when condemnation is the government or quasi-government, taking your property v the City wanting to place the burden of maintenance and liability on your property. The "burden" in my opinion (and I am not an attorney or legal professional) of having the property owner responsible for the maintenance at the risk of being sued and THAT is attached to our ownership, which is a "form of taking". The City is making us responsible for their action, or in-action. Just doesn't seem right. What are your thoughts about this?

Our speaker at the Jan. 17, 2024, meeting will be County Supervisor Joel Anderson.

If you would like to be on the Board of the SCAC please let me know. Happy New Year!

## SCCG

CONTINUED FROM Page 6

Additionally, Lockwood helped develop the garden's 50-foot-long native plant garden, succulent garden and plant signage. When not organizing and contributing to the ideas of others, Lockwood spends time tending to her own plot.

"Being in the garden, pretty much every day through COVID, is really what got me through the pandemic. The garden is a really inspiring place, it really saved me."

For Lockwood, nurturing a community park-like area that everyone can enjoy and contribute to has been her overarching mission, which many feel she's contributed to.

"Carol is a natural leader," commented the SCCG's Resource Manager, Jeanne Bauer. "She has a knack for getting people involved in the garden whether as gardeners or as volunteers."

The aforementioned events and achievements are but a small glimpse into the legacy and contributions of SCCG Board Chair Carol Lockwood.

Although she is relinquishing her official title as board chair, Lockwood plans to be just as active on the leadership team and will continue assisting in events and volunteer opportunities.

It is her accomplishments and dedication that have cultivated the garden's community.

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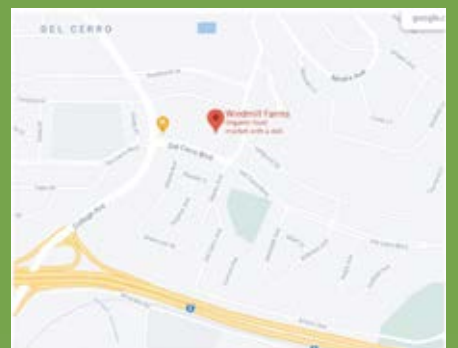
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# SDSU students

CONTINUED FROM Page 2

homelessness...when I heard about TJHB's mission, I knew that I had to get involved as I witnessed the differences between the haves and have-nots firsthand growing up.”

The group is in the process of raising money for their upcoming home build in March 2024 after a successful trip last year.

“After the home build trip last March, I was so humbled and in awe of the value of family in the Tijuana community,” Axtell continued. “I literally bought a plane ticket home last year to see my family two days after we got back from the trip. It's definitely easy to take what you have for granted, so I deeply value community service because it reminds me of what's truly important.”

Regardless of the cause being supported, students emphasized that philanthropy and service

were important for everyone to be involved in.

“As a student, it is very easy to put your head down to only see what is in front of you,” Holms stated. “Many students also live fortunate lives to have the opportunity to go to college. It's important for students to take a step back and realize how other people's lives can be very different and help those in need.”

Students also encouraged others to take advantage of the opportunities available on campus.

“The [organizations] on campus are convenient, fun and most of all, they provide students with the opportunity to feel accomplished in a holistic sense,” Klos said. “Community service doesn't have to be a huge endeavor or something that is ‘boring.’ There are so many opportunities just a five minute walk from your last class of the day, your dorm, or wherever else you might be. And best of all, it can be very fun.”



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## News Release

Los Angeles District

For Release: Final Release  
October 2023

Contact: Dena O'Dell  
(213) 452-3925  
[Dena.M.O'Dell@usace.army.mil](mailto:Dena.M.O'Dell@usace.army.mil)

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### Corps to begin five-year review for Camp Elliot/East Elliot Formerly Used Defense Site

LOS ANGELES – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District will begin its first five-year review for Camp Elliot-East Elliot, Munitions Response Site 01B, which is a formerly used defense site. The project number is J09CA006705.

More information about this site can be found at: <https://www.spl.usace.army.mil/Missions/Formerly-Used-Defense-Sites/Camp-Elliot/>

Camp Elliot-East Elliot is located about 12 miles northeast of downtown San Diego. Munitions Response Site 01B comprises 523.3 acres and is a sub-area of the overall East Elliot MRS 01, which comprises 3,035.5 acres. Most of the 523.3-acre is an active landfill, known as the Sycamore Landfill.

The landfill was opened in 1962 by the County of San Diego and is permitted to remain in operation until 2045. Fencing around the landfill restricts access to the site and “no trespassing” signs are posted. Once the landfill has reached capacity, its surface will be revegetated with native plant species and the area will become part of the Mission Trails Regional Park. Records indicate Camp Elliot was previously used by the U.S. Marine Corps for live-fire training exercises from 1942 until the end of World War II. During WWII, the range associated with Mission Response Site 01 was comprised of nine overlapping ranges, two of which fired into Mission Response Site 01B. These include Range U and Range V, which were maneuver, combat, and musketry ranges.

Following WWII and up until 1953, Camp Elliot was used as a U.S. Navy Training and Redistribution Center, where, reportedly, live-fire training was not conducted.

The Department of Defense ended its use of the entire Camp Elliot-East Elliot area in 1960. East Elliot was declared surplus in 1961, and the land was transferred to the General Services Administration, or GSA. Between 1962 and 1974, under transferred ownership to the GSA, the land was sold to real estate developers, private parties, and municipalities. Various investigations and removal activities were conducted at Camp Elliot-East Elliot from 1984 to 2014. In 2019, a decision document was prepared for the site, describing the final remediation to remove Department of Defense military munitions from the surface.

Los Angeles District

The Corps' formerly used defense team continues to educate and inform the surrounding community about the potential dangers. The agency implemented the Explosives Safety Educational Awareness program to keep the public educated and informed about the potential dangers of unexploded ordnance and munitions.

The munitions response site is now under long-term management. The Corps investigates the site every five years to evaluate if the remedial action activities are still protecting human health and the environment. The five-year review process involves a technical assessment of the remediation and activities designed to inform the community about the five-year review process, which also allows them to provide feedback.

The technical assessment includes a site inspection and interviews with people working or living near the area and those with knowledge or concerns about the site's remediation. The site inspection is scheduled for November 2023. The five-year review will be completed by September 2024.

The findings and conclusion of the five-year review, including recommendations, will be presented by the Corps in a five-year review report, which will be made available to the public after finalizing the report in the East Elliot project repository, located at Mission Trails Regional Park Visitor's Center and San Diego County Public Library, Santee Branch. The administrative record also can be found on the Corp' project website at: <https://www.spl.usace.army.mil/Missions/Formerly-Used-Defense-Sites/Camp-Elliot/>.

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# MOVE



# San Carlos Branch Library set up for 50th Anniversary celebration and more in the New Year

By DAVID EGE

In the 1960s, the Tavares Development Company assured buyers that the new San Carlos area would quickly become a complete neighborhood with retailers, eateries, churches, firehouses, parks, a recreation center, schools, and a library.

By 1970, this mission had been accomplished except for the library.

San Carlos resident and parent, Toni Noel, was instrumental in

bringing attention to the library project. When Noel showed up at a San Carlos Community Council Meeting and demanded to know what was being done to get the promised library built in San Carlos, she was appointed Library Chairman.

Noel learned from City Librarian, Clara Breed, that unless pressure was brought on the San Diego City Council to purchase property and build a library in San Carlos, then San Carlos residents would have to continue driving to

other communities for library services. Breed told Noel how to get the Council's attention and Noel applied to have her name placed on the next City Council meeting docket. Council members listened attentively to Noel, admitted they were sorely uninformed about the community's needs, and asked someone to investigate the matter and bring it to the attention of the City Planning Commission.

When the subject was scheduled to be on the City Planning Commission's docket, a large group of San Carlos residents attended the meeting. Several members of the group spoke before Noel made an impassioned plea for the City Council to select a site for the proposed library before the best sites were all snapped up for service stations.

The interest of the residents turned Councilmember heads and one week later, City Librarian, Clara Breed, and Noel were driving around the neighborhood looking for likely sites. Breed preferred the location to be near public transportation and a shopping center, so the City purchased the present site of the library on Jackson Drive.

The San Carlos Branch Library opened its doors to the community on Jan. 9, 1974.

Speakers at the opening ceremony included then current 7th District Councilman Jim Ellis, past Councilman Allen Hitch, San Carlos resident and Librarian Marco Thorne, and Library Director, Bill Sannwald.

In 1974, the new 8,000 sq. ft. San Carlos Branch was the largest branch library in the City and the 40-person Community Room was the first of its kind within the San Diego Public Library system. The branch opened displaying 20,000 volumes of its 32,000-volume capacity and future Friends of the Library Book Sales supplied the funds to fill the shelves. The total cost was \$384,000, paid for by the Community Buildings and Improvement Bond Fund of 1966, and the City's Capital Outlay Fund. Cost of the land was \$88,000, design and construction cost \$288,000, and furnishings cost \$16,000. It took only four years to find and purchase the land, finance, design, build, and open the first San Carlos Branch Library. Thank you to all those community members who helped fulfill the promise made.

Please join us for the 50th Anniversary Celebration of the San Carlos Branch Library on Saturday, Jan. 13, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. We will be hosting family friendly activities for kids including craft-making, a scavenger hunt, and pictures with ODI the Coyote as well as featuring District 7 Councilmember Raul Campillo. Light refreshments will be served.

## AUTHOR TALK AND SPEAKER SERIES RETURN IN JANUARY 2024

On Friday, Jan. 19, from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m., Write Out Loud will present Ripples of Walden Pond.

This 55-minute, one-person play written by Richard Platt explores the life of Henry David Thoreau, the influence of his mother who hid slaves,

his experience as a high school teacher, building and living in his Walden Pond cabin, his friendship with Ralph Waldo Emerson, and his reflections on civil disobedience, a citizen's obligations to his government, society, and himself.

Local Author, Jennifer Coburn, will discuss her historical fiction novel, Cradles of the Reich, on Friday, Jan. 26, from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m.

The novel takes readers inside the bucolic Heim Hochland, one of the real Third Reich breeding homes. The lives of three women become intertwined as they realize they are trapped within Hitler's terrifying scheme to build a Nazi Aryan nation. Come learn about this little-known piece of World War II history.

The San Carlos Friends of the Library Used Book Sales are on the first Saturday of each month from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Come buy books and support the Friends of the Library. Ask for a membership envelope from the book sale cashiers to join or donate to the San Carlos Friends of the Library. We are in need of your gently used book donations which are accepted any time during library open hours.

—David Ege is branch manager at San Carlos Branch Library.



Contrasting images of the old San Carlos Branch Library and the preliminary exterior design for the new library. (Courtesy photos)



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# Large group of renters desiring to finally own a property

**Real Estate Update**  
By SARAH WARD

Mortgage interest rates, after peaking in October, have drifted down almost a full point to the mid 6's. Data showing a slowing economy is trickling in, resulting in a drop in rates. Also, the inflation metric is moderating, although still elevated. If rates stay where they are or drift a bit lower into the high 5's, I would expect buyers to emerge in early 2024, once again looking for properties to purchase.

There remains a large group of renters out there making good incomes and desiring to finally own a property.

However, the low inventory will likely remain as very few homeowners want to give up their 3% mortgage rate. This scenario of low supply and increasing demand is likely in my opinion to keep home prices where they are or perhaps moving a little higher in the coming year.

**PROP 19:** I recently worked with clients who were hoping to transfer their appreciated San Diego home to their child and then move to a home in Palms Springs.

I reviewed the recent Prop 19 information. Prop 19, passed a couple of years ago, primarily had headlines that residents 55 and older could transfer their property tax basis to a new property within California.

One difficulty is when people purchased property in the 1970's and 1980's, they established a low basis for property taxes and were paying maybe \$3,000 to \$6,000 per year in taxes. The result of selling their larger home, no longer needed, and moving to a smaller property is the hit in property taxes.

If purchasing a \$900,000 home in a different area, property taxes would then start at \$10,000 a year and increase annually from there. This effect caused many retired people to stay put in their large family home purchase 30 or 40 years ago. In order to assist this group of homeowners and allow

more properties to be sold to families needing larger homes, Prop 19 allowed residents to transfer over their original property tax basis to their new home and continue paying a lower property tax.

What was NOT advertised or publicized in Prop 19 is another clause that considerably limits the availability of the parent-child exclusion for purposes of property tax assessments.

Prior to Prop. 19, a parent (or grandparent) could transfer a primary residence to their children (or grandchildren) without a new market value reassessment, regardless of how the property was to be used. What would often happen is the children would rent out the parent's home for full market value but continue paying a much lower property tax based on the basis from when the property was purchased many decades ago. Even second homes were allowed this opportunity. But Prop 19 has eliminated this loophole, unless a child makes the home their primary residence.

So children who inherit property from their parents will have to now consider the increased property taxes when deciding to keep or sell the property and the children will now face a significant increase in property taxes.

This might result in the children deciding to sell the property instead of keeping it (which could help another family somewhere desperately looking for a home to raise their family).

## MARKET REPORT (Single Family):

- **College Area (92115):** November median price up 1.7% year over year to \$915,000 and with 22 homes for sale (a 10% increase).
- **San Carlos (92119):** median price down 3.6% to \$969,000 with 10 homes for sale (a 37.5% decrease).
- **Del Cerro/Allied Gardens (92120):** median price down 3%, year over year to \$1,045,000 with 5 homes for sale (a 79.2% decrease!!).

—Sarah Ward is a REALTOR with Coldwell Banker West. Reach her at: sarah@sarahdoesrealestate.com.

# Holiday lights and more taking shape locally



With the holidays here this month, don't be surprised to see your share of lights, decorations and more locally. Hanukkah runs from Dec. 7-15. Christmas will be on a Monday this year. For those waiting on New Year's Eve, the day falls on the last Sunday in 2023. Finally, kick off the New Year on Monday, Jan. 1. No matter how you celebrate, enjoy this time of year. (Courtesy photos)

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