



La Nueva Voz

The New Voice, a Bilingual (English/Spanish) Publication
Pomona's *only* community newspaper!



Pomona Chamber of Commerce



Member

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Pomona councilmembers review proposed bare bones annual budget with Measure Z poised to provide some relief

By Jeff Schenkel, Publisher

Members of the Pomona City Council had their first full look this month at what appeared to be a bleak, bare bones “no-frills” 2026-2027 budget tailored to keep the city out of financial crisis regardless of Measure Z’s outcome at the polls.

The hour-long May 11 special meeting “budget study session”

LA County Fair 2026 opens as Los Angeles County’s biggest playground!

The LA County Fair opened this month in Pomona for a full 17 days of games, rides, music, food, animals and surprises as it continues its 104th anniversary through the end of the month.

This year’s Fair opened with a bang from two confetti guns at the official ribbon-cutting ceremony at the “yellow gate” (technically, it opened the day before opening day with a special “media preview day” to showcase all the new and exciting foods on hand at this year’s Fair – and to showcase a friendly donkey named Olivia and volunteer handler Pat Cravy with “America’s Great Outdoors”).

Theme of the LA County Fair this year is “Play your Way” in an extravaganza that is all about play – and is the “ultimate kick-off to summer,” according to organizers.

LA County Fair 2026... pg. 10

in the council chambers focusing on the city’s entire spending plan centered on two huge documents – a 403-page proposed \$437 million operating budget for the new fiscal year and a 251-page capital improvement program budget, really a five-year outline for infrastructure needs and a capital plan involving 221 projects totaling \$723.4 million, of which \$327.7 million is funded.

The operating budget includes funds in six special categories in addition to a \$182 million general fund, up from last year’s \$170 million. Interestingly, the total budget package of \$437 million – including those special funds – is down from \$484 million last year.

Also of interest is the fact that the \$182 million general fund represents an \$11.3 million deficit based on anticipated total rev-

enues of \$170.5 million. The budget proposal calls for using \$11.4 million out of the city’s reserves to make up for the deficit.

City Finance Director Andrew Mowbray explained that the Pomona Kids First charter initiative, or Measure Y, a citizens’ initiative and not a city initiative, approved by voters in November 2024, requires an annual transfer to the “Children and Youth Fund” of 6 percent of the city’s general fund dollars in fiscal year 2026-2027 and an additional increase each year until the level reaches 10 percent.

That Measure Y requirement alone represents a proposed budget transfer of \$9 million in the coming fiscal year.

“The city has placed a ballot measure titled Measure Z, The Kids First Funding Amendment, on the June 2, 2026 ballot that if approved by the City of Pomona voters would reduce the annual transfer from the general fund to the Children and Youth Fund (to) an amount equivalent to 10 percent of the city Bradley Burns Sales Tax,” Mowbray said in his report.

As reported in the March 2026 issue of La Nueva Voz, based on recent tabulations of Pomona’s annual sales tax receipts in the \$22

to \$24 million range, 10 percent of that likely would result in about \$2.3 million designated for the Children and Youth Fund – nearly \$7 million less than this year’s Measure Y requirement.

This one variable hinging on the outcome of the election is likely the largest unknown in the city’s budget planning process at a time, as Mowbray pointed out, that “due to economic conditions some of our major revenues are plateauing.”

“While this proposed general fund budget is not balanced, it reflects the city’s highest priority: addressing the community’s essential needs,” Mowbray said.

To make that happen, however, took a little pencil sharpening in city hall.

La Nueva Voz asked City Manager Anita Scott before the meeting for a simple analysis of the significance of the controversial Measure Y / Measure Z issue on the ballot and the impact Measure Z would have in dramatically reducing Measure Y’s cost to the city, a cost that city officials previously have termed unsustainable.

“The draft fiscal year 26/27 budget being submitted to city council is laser focused on maintaining existing operations while covering

Bare bones annual budget... pg. 6



A huge Ferris wheel, beautifully framed by palm trees and one of the main corridors of the midway, reminded visitors to Pomona’s Fairplex this month that it was May and it was time for the 104th anniversary of the LA County Fair, one of the nation’s largest in terms of physical size with some 500 acres of fun. There were three Ferris wheels at this year’s Fair.

Be prepared & make sure your voice is heard if you have a behavioral health crisis.

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Knight Riders photo

FAIRPLEX GROUND BREAKING FOR NEW CRICKET FIELD -- Pomona's Fairplex President and CEO Walter Marquez, fifth from left, and Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval, third from left, welcomed officials from the Los Angeles Knight Riders Group to Fairplex last month for a different kind of groundbreaking -- they used cricket paddles instead of shovels to officially begin construction of a new "Knight Riders Cricket Field" on the fairgrounds. In what officials called a historic milestone, the Knight Riders professional cricket organization has announced its official home field for 2026 will be right here in Pomona, marking what was termed a "pivotal moment" for cricket in the United States in a "long-term partnership." Cricket is the second largest sport played in the world and, while the games will begin this year, the 2028 Summer Olympic Games will hold cricket competition on the same field in two years. The Knight Riders hope to cultivate a local fan base in Southern California and position the region as a future hub for cricket in the United States. "Over the years, the Knight Riders have grown into a truly global family," said Shah Rukh Khan, co-owner of the Knight Riders. "The USA is a great sporting market with passionate fans, and we hope this field becomes a place where people come together to celebrate the game and support the team." The first games are scheduled for July.



**CITY OF
POMONA, CA**

MEASURE Z / MEDIDA Z

The Kids First Funding Amendment / La Modificación Financiera Los Niños Primero



POMONACA.GOV/MEASUREZ

ON THE BALLOT JUNE 2, 2026

Measure Z, Kids First Funding Amendment honors the promise of Measure Y with a funding approach that protects both youth programs and essential city services.

EN LA BOLETA ELECTORAL DEL 2 DE JUNIO DE 2026

La Medida Z, la modificación financiera Los niños primero, honra la promesa de la Medida Y a través de un enfoque financiero que protege los programas para niños y jóvenes y también los servicios municipales esenciales.

Honoring Our Graduates and District Achievements

As we prepare to celebrate the Graduating Class of 2026, we take great pride in reflecting on the many accomplishments of the Pomona Unified School District (PUSD) this year. Together, our students, staff, families, and community have continued to demonstrate excellence, resilience, and a shared commitment to success.

This year, our teachers and staff earned numerous prestigious honors, including recognition as California Elementary Physical Education Teacher of the Year, California Bilingual Education Teacher of the Year, and recipients of Social Justice awards. We also proudly celebrate Dr. Roberta Perlman, Vice President of the PUSD Board of Education, who was recognized by the NAACP Pomona Valley Branch as a Woman of Distinction for her outstanding leadership and service.

Our schools continued to shine at both the state and national levels. Golden Springs and Pantera Elementary Schools were named California Distinguished Schools, and Pantera Elementary additionally received the prestigious California Blue Ribbon School recognition. Thirty PUSD schools earned state-level Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Awards, placing PUSD among the top districts in Los Angeles County for exemplary implementation. Diamond Ranch and Village Academy High Schools were recognized on the College Board's School Honor Roll, while Diamond Ranch, Village Academy, and Fremont Academy also earned Advanced Placement School Honor Roll distinctions. Simons Middle School was named an AVID Schoolwide Site of Distinction, and 17 PUSD schools received the national Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP) designation – the highest number awarded to any district in California.

The accomplishments of our students continue to inspire us every day. Through PUSD's Dual Enrollment partnership with Mt. San Antonio College, Ganesha High School senior Anabelle Gonzalez will graduate with both her high school diploma and an Associate of Arts degree.

Members of the Class of 2026 are pursuing extraordinary futures. Park West senior Kayla Barrios will leave for the United States Marine Corps just days after graduation and plans to study criminology at Cal Poly Pomona. Diamond Ranch senior Jared Jordan, an Eagle Scout honoree, will attend Azusa Pacific University to play football while studying criminal justice. Garey senior Amanda Santiago will attend the University of Notre Dame to pursue a degree in civil engineering.

Pomona High School senior Moises Lua will begin United States Navy boot camp on June 30 after earning more than \$210,000 in scholarships and opportunities through the Navy, where he plans to pursue a career as an Aviation Rescue Swimmer. Ganesha senior Valentina Raygoza will attend Barnard College in New York City to pursue her dream of becoming a doctor, while Fremont Academy senior Ximena Garcia will attend UC Irvine to major in biology as she works toward a career in medicine. Village Academy senior Milton Garcia will attend Cal State Fullerton to study psychology before pursuing his doctorate and returning to Guatemala to establish mental health rehabilitation centers that will serve his community.

PUSD proudly maintains a 92% graduation rate and offers 26 Advanced Placement courses, along with extensive honors opportunities at both the middle and high school levels. Students also benefit from award-winning programs in film, dual-immersion language instruction, and the Health Career Ladder partnership with Western University of Health Sciences.

These accomplishments are a reflection of the dedication and support of our families, staff, and community partners. Together, we continue to create meaningful opportunities that empower every student to pursue their dreams and build a bright future.

Sincerely,
Superintendent Darren Knowles



POMONA
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

PROTECT POMONA VOTE YES_{on} MEASURE **Z**



PROTECT PUBLIC SAFETY



DELIVERS "Kids First"



A RESPONSIBLE PLAN

Voting YES on Measure Z fulfills the promise and delivers on the "Kids First" initiative in the right way with NO NEW TAXES, no new fees, no cost to you.

Measure Z brings transparency and accountability to how Pomona funds outside youth programs and delivers long term stability for our city budget.

Your local county firefighters, Teamsters Union, and Pomona POA fully support Measure Z because we know that it will help us protect your kids, averts our city's impending budget disaster, and deliver public safety while respecting every voter who prioritized investing in our youth.

Together, we can do it all.

Ad paid for by Pomona Police Officers Association PAC

Congresswoman Judy Chu honors local Vietnamese organization for rebuilding lives, preserving culture and strengthening communities

Congresswoman Judy Chu, whose district includes portions of the San Gabriel Valley from Glendale to Claremont, told members of the local Vietnamese community this month that the Fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975, was “a moment that reshaped the lives of millions of people.”

“During the Cold War, the U.S. was deeply involved in Vietnam in an effort to defend freedom and contain the spread of Communism, and April 30, 1975, marked the Fall of Saigon and the end of the Vietnam War,” she said in Pomona’s Hoa Binh Plaza at an annual commemoration of the historic date presented by the

Vietnamese Community of Pomona Valley. “In the years that followed, millions of Vietnamese were forced to flee their homeland.”

“Some escaped during the final days of Saigon through ‘Operation Frequent Wind,’ others risked their lives as ‘boat people’ crossing dangerous seas in search of safety,” she added.

She said many more arrived in the U.S. in the years that followed through refugee and family reunification programs.

“These journeys carried stories of loss and separation, but also extraordinary cour-



Congresswoman Judy Chu, at left, honors Pomona’s Dr. Huu Dinh Vo at this month’s anniversary observance of the Fall of Saigon some 51 years ago.

age and resilience,” Chu said. “Many Vietnamese rebuilt their lives and helped shape our country in countless ways, opening small businesses, working in health care, enhancing the STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) field, advocating for local communities, serving in the U.S. armed forces and more.”

“And the Vietnamese Community of Pomona Valley has been so important in this process,” she said. “There are 30,000 Vietnamese in the Pomona Valley, and you have grown into such an important organization to pre-

Local Vietnamese organization honored... pg. 8

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Please check our weekly listing at <http://www.lanuevavoz.net> and click on “Arrest Logs” on our home page.

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Bare bones annual budget... from pg. 1

unavoidable cost increases and includes an estimated deficit of over \$11 million, along with the continuation of several frozen positions and reduced service levels implemented last fiscal year," Scott said in an e-mail. "This budget also includes an estimated transfer of nearly \$9.2 million to the Children and Youth Fund in accordance with Measure Y requirements."

"The June 2 election results, as they pertain to Measure Z, would determine if the cost savings measures presented need to continue, or if some level of service restoration can occur after our financial position is fully weighed in light of all of the city's continuing projected fiscal challenges."

Part of those challenges, of course, relate to the city resorting to presenting an operating budget that is over \$11 million in the red.

"Using available reserves cannot be sustained long term," Mowbray said in his report. "If the city continues to budget with the current appropriations set forth including the future Measure Y impacts, by the end of fiscal year 2028-29 all general funds could be depleted if significant fiscal changes in the organization are not implemented."

He pointed out that the proposed general fund budget "continues the reductions implemented in FY 2025-26 from all city departments including 'un-funding' of 28.85

vacant positions in the general fund."

"However, if the current financial environment remains the same, the next fiscal year budget or even this proposed budget will have to implement more reductions that could include recommending the elimination of programs and positions," he said.

Mowbray added that the 2026-2027 proposed deficit of \$11.4 million is about \$6 million higher compared to the deficit adopted in the 2025-2026 fiscal year's budget.

And, he said, despite the \$9 million transfer from the general fund to the Children and Youth Fund, "the city maintains its commit-

ment to provide ongoing youth programming through the general fund, which is a defined priority for the community and council."

The report pointed out that the proposed general fund budget includes continuing the reductions from the current fiscal year for all city general fund departments totaling \$6 million, or about 5 percent of their baseline budgets.

That means the proposed budget is not requesting adding any new positions but leaving full-time authorized staff at 651.

And the city is putting the brakes on any requests for new vehicles.

Scott told councilmembers a year ago that Measure Y impacts already in place at that time included freezing 14 police officer positions that previously had been budgeted, along with a 3 to 5 percent budget cut across the board

for all city departments.

Two years ago before the adoption of Measure Y, supporters were touting the advantages of kids' programs to the community, and opponents were objecting to the plan's method of budgeting by charter amendment and diverting public funding to private groups, backed by organizations outside of Pomona, without accountability.

More recently, also reported in La Nueva Voz, the impact of Measure Y has surfaced in connection with the city's on-going contract with the Los Angeles County Fire Department, and the city is continuing to struggle in meeting cost increases being proposed by the county in negotiations.

City councilmembers approved the final budget without change on a unanimous vote at this week's meeting.

Cultivating compassion in Pomona

By Lisa Christie, Member
Compassionate Pomona

The word compassion means to suffer with. It asks more of us than sympathy. It asks us to stay close to one another and to share responsibility for the burdens we carry together. Pomona knows something about that kind of compassion.

We see it in many places. We see it in the Arts Commission working with artists to shape public spaces that invite people in. We see it in The Club building young lives one conversation at a time. We see it in our planning department imagining a city with more green space and room to gather. We see it in God's Pantry feeding neighbors day after day. These efforts remind us that a city is shaped by the care people extend toward one another.

I have learned this through urban farming. I often say that farming is the most important job in the world. It grows food, and it grows compassion.

Through my work co-founding Lopez Urban Farm and now as Director of Kellogg Ranch at Cal Poly Pomona, I have spent years working with soil, students, and neighbors. Urban farming teaches patience and responsibility. It reminds us that food does not appear by accident and that communities are sustained through shared effort. When people come together around food, something important happens. Neighbors speak with neighbors. Young people discover responsibility.

Hands learn useful work. A sense of belonging takes root.

Pomona knows this story well. Farming shaped this valley long before development changed the landscape, and that history still lives among us. It lives in our schools, our urban farms, and in the desire people have to gather, learn, and care for one another.

Pomona formally embraced its identity as a Compassionate City in 2018 through the global Charter for Compassion movement. Compassionate Pomona, the volunteer group led by Rev. Jan Chase that I am proud to be part of, continues that work by asking how compassion can take shape in the daily life of our city.

The questions before us are simple to ask and important to answer. How do we help people feel seen and valued? How do we protect spaces where families can gather and children can thrive? How do we ensure that healthy food, green space, and opportunity remain part of daily life for

everyone?

At Kellogg Ranch, I see these questions lived out each day. Cal Poly Pomona speaks of "Become by Doing," and there is wisdom in that phrase. Students do not learn responsibility through instruction alone. They learn it through participation. Caring for land teaches patience and humility. Working beside others teaches cooperation. Growing food teaches that our lives are connected.

A compassionate city is sustained through stewardship, hospitality, and people who choose to care for what they share. Kellogg Ranch belongs to that work. It is a place where urban farming, education, and community come together. I hope our neighbors will visit and experience firsthand how caring for the land can strengthen care for one another and deepen our shared life in Pomona.

Editor's note: Lisa Christie is Director of AGRIsapes at Cal Poly Pomona.

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Photo by Kamille Hemsworth

RIBBON CUTTING FOR NEW CHAMBER MEMBER -- City officials and members of the Pomona Chamber of Commerce joined with representatives of the Sasse Museum of Art this month to cut the ribbon recognizing the non-profit organization as the newest member of the chamber. The museum, which celebrates the work of local and regional artists, was founded in 2015 by photographer and educator Gene Sasse. Pictured, from left, are Sasse board members Becky Cheng and Geoff Shaw, Downtown Pomona Owners Association Director Heidi Ortega, Pomona City Councilmember Victor Preciado, Sasse board members Sean Guo, Kurtis Wells and Ginger Lai, Gene Sasse cutting the ribbon, Pomona Chamber Executive Board member Renee Barbee of La Nueva Voz, Chamber Ambassador Victor Khair, Chamber Board member Ron Garner, Jr., and Pomona Chamber President and CEO Monique Robles. Formerly known as the Inland Empire Museum of Art, the nonprofit maintains a permanent collection of more than 2,000 works and produces about 24 exhibitions each year. Admission is always free. The museum is located downstairs at 300 S. Thomas St., Pomona. For information, call (909) 941-3993.

Assemblymember Rodriguez to host 2nd annual BBQ

Assemblymember Michelle Rodriguez is inviting residents of the 53rd Assembly District to her second annual “Summer BBQ,” a free community event bringing together families, local organizations, and community leaders for an afternoon of food, resources and summer fun – all outside her district office in Chino.

Included will be free food and drinks, music and a resource fair. Outstanding community members will be recognized at the event and a scholarship based on an essay submission will be awarded to a Garey High School student. The scholarship is being presented in honor of Raymond Garcia, a 16-year-old student who was preparing to enter his senior year before tragically losing his life.

The event is scheduled for 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, June 20, at Aguiar Square, 13191 6th St., Chino.

“I look forward to celebrating the incredible individuals and organizations that make our district strong,” Rodriguez said in a news release.

Community members can RSVP at <https://bit.ly/2026summerbbq>.

Casa Colina Hospital receives ‘experience award’ for seventh consecutive year

Pomona’s Casa Colina Hospital and Centers for Healthcare this year has received – for the seventh consecutive year – the “Healthgrades Outstanding Patient Award.”

The award recognizes hospitals providing an overall outstanding patient experience based on survey data from the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems.

This year, Casa Colina was one of only four hospitals in Los Angeles County to receive the award and

one of only two in the county to receive it for seven consecutive years.

Each year, Healthgrades evaluates thousands of hospitals that submit patient experience surveys. According to the surveys, Casa Colina boasts an 85 percent “patient experience rating,” a level that is 18 percent above the national average.

Topics in the survey focus on the patients’ perspective of their Experience award... pg. 8



Pictured are author Patricia Luna, left, and her coach Erika Cecilia Rojas at the booksigning event for her book “You Are Not Alone”

held last month at Chaffey High School in Ontario. Over 200 people attended which demonstrates the many lives that Luna has impacted. Luna grew up in an environment marked by emotional deprivation, physical abuse, and psychological wounds that accompanied her for years. In these pages, she bravely opens her heart to share the journey that took her from despair to healing as a tireless volunteer and family engagement leader. This is not a story of defeat, but a story of rebirth. “You Are Not Alone” is available through Amazon, or by calling (909) 758-6408. Luna is available for local speaking engagements.



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for
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Time to give small business a tax break

By Jeff Prang
Los Angeles County Assessor

I want to visit with you this month about a proposal to update Los Angeles County's "Low Value Ordinance" by raising the minimum value at which business property is taxed from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

The Low Value Ordinance sets the threshold at which small businesses must report and pay property taxes on items like equipment, machinery, furniture, and fixtures. That threshold has remained at \$5,000 for years, even as costs and economic conditions have changed. I want to increase that threshold to \$10,000.

Generally speaking, and to put this into context, this is part of the business property statements' process, also known as Form 571-L. These forms are mailed by my office to most commercial, industrial, and professional firms in Los Angeles County. They provide the basis for determining assessments on fixtures, equipment, and other taxable business property. Businesses that own business personal property with an aggregate cost of \$100,000 or more are required to file the statement.

Businesses with personal property and fixtures costing less than \$100,000 are generally not required to file annually. Instead, an assessed value is established through an initial filing or an on-site appraisal, and that value may later be adjusted through subsequent appraisals.

Those with \$5,000 or less do not have to pay or file and as I said, I want to increase that threshold to \$10,000.

Small businesses are the backbone of our local economy. This proposal cuts unnecessary red tape and allows our office to focus on work that delivers the greatest benefit to taxpayers.

A recent internal study by the

Assessor's Office found that it costs about \$174 in staff time and administrative expenses to process a \$5,000 business property account, while generating only about \$50 in annual tax revenue. In other words, the county spends more to administer these accounts than it receives in return.

Raising the threshold to \$10,000 would address that imbalance. The study estimates that approximately 43,000 small businesses across Los Angeles County would benefit by no longer having to file and pay taxes on lower-value property.

This is a common-sense reform. We should not require small businesses to comply with rules that cost more to enforce than they produce in public benefit.

Moreover, by eliminating these low-value assessments, the Assessor's Office can redirect staff and resources toward higher-value properties that generate more revenue to support essential public services.

State law allows counties to set the Low Value Ordinance threshold as high as \$10,000. If approved by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, the change would take effect in the next assessment cycle.

The Assessor's Office has shared its analysis with the treasurer and tax collector and the auditor-controller for review as part of the standard policy process.

Editor's note: Los Angeles County Assessor Jeff Prang has been in office since 2014. Upon taking office, Prang implemented sweeping reforms to ensure that the strictest ethical guidelines rooted in fairness, accuracy and integrity would be adhered to in his office, which is the largest office of its kind in the nation and provides the foundation for a property tax system that generates more than \$20 billion annually. Assessor Prang was the 2025 president of the California Assessors' Association.

Experience award... from pg. 7

care in the hospital, including nurse communication, hospital cleanliness and noise levels, and medication and post-discharge care instructions.

"We're proud to be recognized with this meaningful award for the seventh year running," said Casa

Colina President and CEO Kelly Linden. "It's just another testament to the patient experience at Casa Colina. We always strive to provide the best treatment for our patients and their families, and we understand that their feedback truly matters."

Diamond Bar's second annual 'Juneteenth' festival set for next month

Diamond Bar's second annual "Juneteenth Community Festival" is scheduled for next month as a family friendly event filled with crafters, artisans, entertainers and food vendors.

The festival is scheduled for 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, June 20, in the parking lot of the South Coast Air Quality Management District, 21865 Copley Drive, Diamond Bar.

Organizers also are looking for additional vendors from Diamond Bar, Pomona and surrounding cities for the event. For information, contact dbjuneteenth@gmail.com.

The event is hosted by the Diamond Bar Woman's Club. Club President Marriyan Hill, chair of arts and culture for the club, is organizing the event.

Festival highlights will in-

clude an art contest with area students submitting their art work surrounding the idea of freedom, and student scholarships are expected to be awarded.

Juneteenth commemorates the emancipation of enslaved people in the U.S. following the Civil War under the terms of the 1862 Emancipation Proclamation.

Local Vietnamese organization honored... from pg. 5

serve Vietnamese culture, help assimilate refugees into this country, and empower members by giving them a voice in local affairs."

She lauded the group for organizing events from Lunar New Year to student awards programs and a mid-autumn children's festival.

"After 51 years, Vietnam still does not have free and fair elections, and many political dissidents continue to face persecution and imprisonment," Chu said. "So your continued advocacy is so important."

"As we come together to reflect on this 51st anniversary, we honor the resilience, sacrifice and enduring hope of the Vietnamese American people in the face of profound loss," Chu added. "You've rebuilt lives, preserved culture, and strengthened communities. Thank you for everything you've done."

Chu, a former Monterey Park city councilmember and mayor, was elected to Congress in 2009 when she became the first Chinese American woman elected to Congress in history.

Chu was introduced by Dr. Huu Dinh Vo, president of the Vietnamese Community of Pomona Valley and a Pomona physician, who congratulated her for her continuing efforts fighting for Asian-Americans.

"I am honored to have you here today and thank you for your friendship," Vo said.

Vo himself came to America as one of the many "boat people" fleeing Vietnam and, to this day, his organization is still fighting so that, in his words, "Vietnam one day may be free."



Congresswoman Judy Chu presents a special "Certificate of Congressional Recognition" to the Vietnamese Community of Pomona Valley this month. Pictured, from left, are Chu, Dr. Huu Dinh Vo, President of the Vietnamese Community of Pomona Valley, Pomona City Councilmembers Elizabeth Ontiveros-Cole, Lorraine Canales and Nora Garcia, Bryan Milligan representing Congresswoman Norma Torres, and Renee Barbee of La Nueva Voz.



Representatives of the Vietnamese Community of Pomona Valley stand at attention this month as two national anthems -- of both the United States and Vietnam -- are played at a 51st anniversary of the Fall of Saigon in Pomona.

HAZARDOUS WASTE DISPOSAL ELIMINACIÓN DE RESIDUOS PELIGROSOS

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Hazardous material and electronic waste cannot be disposed of in your recycling, organics and/or trash containers, nor in the environment, down drains, and/or gutters. The following list includes the most common Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) items.

Residents: For a complete list of acceptable items, drop-off locations, and collection events, visit CleanLA.LACounty.gov/HHW.

Businesses: The County of Los Angeles S.A.F.E. Collection Centers accepts small business quantities by appointment only.

To schedule an appointment, call 1-888-CLEANLA (253-2652). Large businesses can schedule a hazardous or electronic waste collection by emailing SpecialWaste@AthensServices.com or by calling Athens' Customer Care Center at (888) 336-6100.

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Never dispose of batteries in any waste container. Batteries are considered a hazardous material and can spark or catch on fire if not handled correctly. If properly collected, battery recyclers can repurpose the metal. Hazardous material and electronic waste cannot be disposed of in your recycling, organics and/or trash containers, nor in the environment, down drains, and/or gutters.

Safe Storage and Disposal Instructions

- Place duct tape or non-conductive electrical tape on both ends of the battery and do not cover the brand name or battery type
- Store batteries in containers that do not conduct electricity (i.e., plastic, cardboard, glass)
- **Do not dispose of any batteries in any Athens container**
- Bring batteries to a S.A.F.E. Center, local **Household Hazardous Waste (HHW)** event, or designated LA County Library Collection
- Always **check your local guidelines** for current hours and accepted items

For more information on battery recycling and disposal options, visit AthensServices.com/Batteries.

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Los materiales peligrosos y residuos electrónicos no pueden desecharse en sus contenedores para material reciclable, orgánico y/o basura; tampoco en el medio ambiente, por alcantarillas y/o desagües. La lista a continuación incluye los más comunes Residuos Peligrosos Domésticos (HHW, por sus siglas en inglés).

Residentes: Para obtener una lista completa de materiales aceptables, lugares de entrega, e información adicional, visite CleanLA.LACounty.gov/HHW.

Negocios: Los Centros de Recolección S.A.F.E. del Condado de Los Ángeles admiten de negocios pequeñas cantidades, y con cita previa.

Para hacer una cita, llame al 1-888-CLEANLA (253-2652). Los negocios grandes pueden solicitar una recolección de residuos peligrosos o electrónicos enviando un correo electrónico a SpecialWaste@AthensServices.com o llamando al Centro de Atención al Cliente de Athens al (888) 336-6100.

PREVenga INCENDIOS DE BATERÍAS EN LOS CAMIONES DE BASURA CON UNA ELIMINACIÓN ADECUADA



Nunca deseche baterías en ningún contenedor de residuos. Las baterías se consideran materiales peligrosos y pueden generar chispas o incendiarse si no se manipulan correctamente. Cuando se recolectan adecuadamente, los recicladores de baterías pueden reutilizar los metales. Los materiales peligrosos y los residuos electrónicos no deben desecharse en sus contenedores de reciclaje, orgánicos y/o basura, ni en el medio ambiente, desagües y/o alcantarillas.

Instrucciones para el Almacenamiento y la Eliminación Segura

- Coloque cinta adhesiva tipo duct tape o cinta eléctrica no conductiva en ambos extremos de la batería y no cubra la marca ni el tipo de batería.
- Guarde las baterías en recipientes que no conduzcan electricidad (por ejemplo: plástico, cartón o vidrio).
- **No deseche baterías en ningún contenedor de Athens.**
- Lleve las baterías a un Centro S.A.F.E., a un evento local de **Residuos Domésticos Peligrosos (HHW, por sus siglas en inglés)** o a un punto de recolección designado de la Biblioteca del Condado de Los Ángeles.
- **Consulte siempre las directrices locales** para conocer los horarios actuales y los artículos aceptados.

Para obtener más información sobre el reciclaje y las opciones de eliminación de baterías, visite AthensServices.com/Batteries.

Las baterías son un residuo peligroso y, por lo tanto, se pueden desechar en un evento de recolección de residuos electrónicos CleanLA.lacounty.gov/events o un centro SAFE Sanitation.LACity.gov.

LA County Fair 2026... from pg. 1

This year's "Pomona Day" reception, hosted by Fairplex during week number two of the Fair, which moved down from the Fair's "Picnic Hill" to Avalon on the midway, was an annual recognition of Pomona – from city councilmembers and staff to members of the city's many commissions, representatives of Cal Poly Pomona and more.

Fairplex President and CEO Walter Marquez reminded Pomona Day guests that the LA County Fair – first held in 1922 – was founded by a group of Pomona residents and business leaders. And it had its beginnings on what had been a bean and barley field on the same piece of land making up today's Fair.

Marquez said the Fair today sees nearly 45,000 people go through the turnstiles each day – roughly the same number of visitors Disneyland draws on an average daily basis.

And it is loaded with history. For example, Marquez said drag racing at the Fair started when a local Pomona police chief was concerned about drag racing in the streets and wanted to prevent that.

"What grew out of that is the National Hot Rod Association," Marquez said. "So there's a lot of growth and entrepreneurship that happens here."

He said the "Frisbee" was introduced to the U.S. at the LA County Fair, and the first electric clothes washing machine and dryer was introduced to Southern California at the Fair.

Plus, about 800 feet from the Avalon reception, he said, construction is under way for a cricket field where the L.A. Knight Riders, a major league cricket team, will make its home beginning



Mike Driebe, Board Chair of the LA County Fair Association, cut the ribbon on opening day making it all official just inside the "Yellow Gate" -- the 2026 LA County Fair was open for business through the end of May. Pictured behind all the confetti shot out of confetti cannons, from left, are La Verne Mayor Tim Hepburn, poet David Judah (kneeling), Fair Association Directors Kiana Webb and Gil Ivey, Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval and his son, Roy, Fairplex President and CEO Walter Marquez, Fair Mascot Thummer, Association Director Joshua Swodeck (at rear), Mike Driebe, Director Andy Moreno, Association member Chuck Cable, Director Peter Hidalgo, Fair Association member Brian Bustamante, Nena Hernandez, Pomona City Councilmember Debra Martin, Pomona City Manager Anita Scott and Pomona City Councilmember Lorraine Canales.

with this year's cricket season.

And cricket competition, the second largest sport played in the world, will be held at Fairplex in the 2028 Summer Olympic Games.

Interested in a side note? Marquez said of the four recent finals in all sports, the third most watched final was the Indian Premier League Cricket Final, a league in India that had a viewership of 300 million, double the size of the Super Bowl.

Marquez added he's already being contacted for news interviews with Indian newspapers, the British Broadcasting Corporation, and newspapers in Australia and South Africa.

Also welcoming Pomona Day guests was Mike Driebe, Board Chair of the LA County Fair Association, who said he "fell in love with the Fair" in the late 1980s as a volunteer selling hamburgers and hot dogs at the Jaycees (Junior Chamber of Commerce) stand to

support the Jaycees' charity work for the next year.

He told guests the LA County Fair has had some 89 million people attend since its founding in 1922.

"For more than a century, we've brought families together, we've created memories here, first dates, (a place) where people proposed to their spouses," Driebe said.

"This has been a very special place and, because of those wonderful memories that get created here, it's also a very powerful cultural influence in our community."

"Think of the jobs that have been created, think of the small businesses supported, the hotel rooms that were sold, the students who came here," he



Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval and Thummer, mascot of the LA County Fair

added. "So whether you come for the food, the animals, the rides, the music, we're glad you're here and we hope you'll keep coming."

Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval called the LA County Fair "a seed that was planted that has created community – not just for Pomonans but for people from all over the world."

"It's amazing," he said, adding that the Pomona Day guests all were there "because you're doing amazing work."

Pomona residents were invited to attend the Fair on Pomona Day for \$1.

This year's theme was called a "joyful salute to recreation, imagination and the many ways we let loose," according to a news release.

LA County Fair 2026... pg. 19



Renee Barbee of La Nueva Voz poses for a photo with Fair mascot Thummer on Pomona Day at the Fair.



Mike Driebe, Board Chair of the LA County Fair Association, told Pomona Day guests that some 89 million people have attended the Fair since its founding in 1922.



Fairplex President and CEO Walter Marquez welcomes the Pomona Day crowd to a special reception at Avalon.

Pomona Unified gets first flight training program off the ground

Nearly 100 educators and city and business leaders participated in a grand opening at Pomona's Garey High School this month for the Pomona Unified School District's first-ever aviation "Career Technical Education (CTE) Pathway" program, all to expand innovative college and career pathways for students.

The program is designed to introduce high school students to careers in aviation, aerospace and related STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) fields through classroom instruction and simulator-based learning experiences.

It has been in the development phase for the past two years and reflects the school district's efforts to provide students with meaningful opportunities connected to high-demand industries and future workforce needs.

School district officials said the program will allow students to explore aviation industry careers, aviation certifications, aerospace technologies and post-secondary educational pathways. Students will be able to request the courses through the district's regular course selection process.

In addition to classroom instruction, students will train using advanced Redbird flight simulators including 16 TD2 flight simulation units, two Redbird LD simulators and an FMX full-motion simulator, all enabling students to build technical skills working in a hands-on environment.

The school district hopes to build future articulation opportunities with Mt. San Antonio College, which has its own two-year aeronautics program, the largest in the state, that offers actual in-flight experience working up to flying seven aircraft out of Brackett Field Airport in La Verne.

"This aviation CTE pathway represents another important step in expanding opportunities for students to explore meaningful careers and develop skills con-



Photo by Renee Barbee

RIBBON CUTTING FOR NEW AVIATION TRAINING PROGRAM AT GAREY HIGH SCHOOL -- Pomona Unified School District's Director of Career Readiness Luis Rodriguez cuts the ribbon to officially open the school district's new aviation training career program at Garey High School. From left are Pomona City Councilmember Lorraine Canales, Mt. San Antonio College Board member Manuel Baca, Mt. SAC President Martha Garcia, Pomona Unified School Supt. Darren Knowles, Deputy Supt. of Educational Services Lilia Fuentes, Administrative Director for Secondary Education Monica Principe, Luis Rodriguez, Pomona Chamber Ambassador and computer consultant Victor Khair of OnSiteITExperts.com, Pomona Unified School District Board member Dr. Roberta Perlman, Garey High School Principal Roddy Layton, Assistant Supt. of Pupil and Community Services Fernando Meza (at rear), and Monique Cardenas, program administrator, career technical education, for Pomona Unified School District. Holding the ribbon representing Pomona's On Time Photo Booth Rentals are Pomona Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors Frank Carrillo, at far left, and Domenica Carrillo, at far right.



Posing in front of a stand-alone flight simulator used in the new aviation training program at Garey High School are Pomona Unified School District Board member Arturo Jimenez, instructor for the new training program Christ Kallas, and Pomona Unified School Supt. Darren Knowles.

classroom learning with real-world experiences while introducing them to the many educational and professional opportunities available within aviation and aerospace."

"This pathway represents the kind of forward-thinking opportunities our students deserve," said Pomona Unified School District Board President Dr. Lisa Nashua. "By exposing students to aviation, aerospace and STEM-related careers while they are still in high school, we are helping them imagine new possibilities for their future and preparing them for industries that will continue to grow and evolve."

School board member Arturo Jimenez told La Nueva Voz he suggested looking into an aviation program six years ago after taking his children to lunch at Norm's Hangar restaurant at Brackett Field.

"It's a dream come true," Jimenez said in describing the program.

"What a dream to see our kids participate" in such a program.

He added that part of the planning process involved insight

II mission that flew around the moon.

Classroom instruction has been under way for the past two semesters, but the program now is going ahead full speed now that it

Flight training program... pg. 17



Photos by Renee Barbee

CHECKING OUT THE EQUIPMENT -- Students at Pomona's Garey High School get used to two types of flight simulators that are part of Pomona Unified School District's first-ever aviation "Career Technical Education Pathway" program that officially opened this month.

ected to future industries," said Pomona Unified School Supt. Darren Knowles. "This pathway helps students connect

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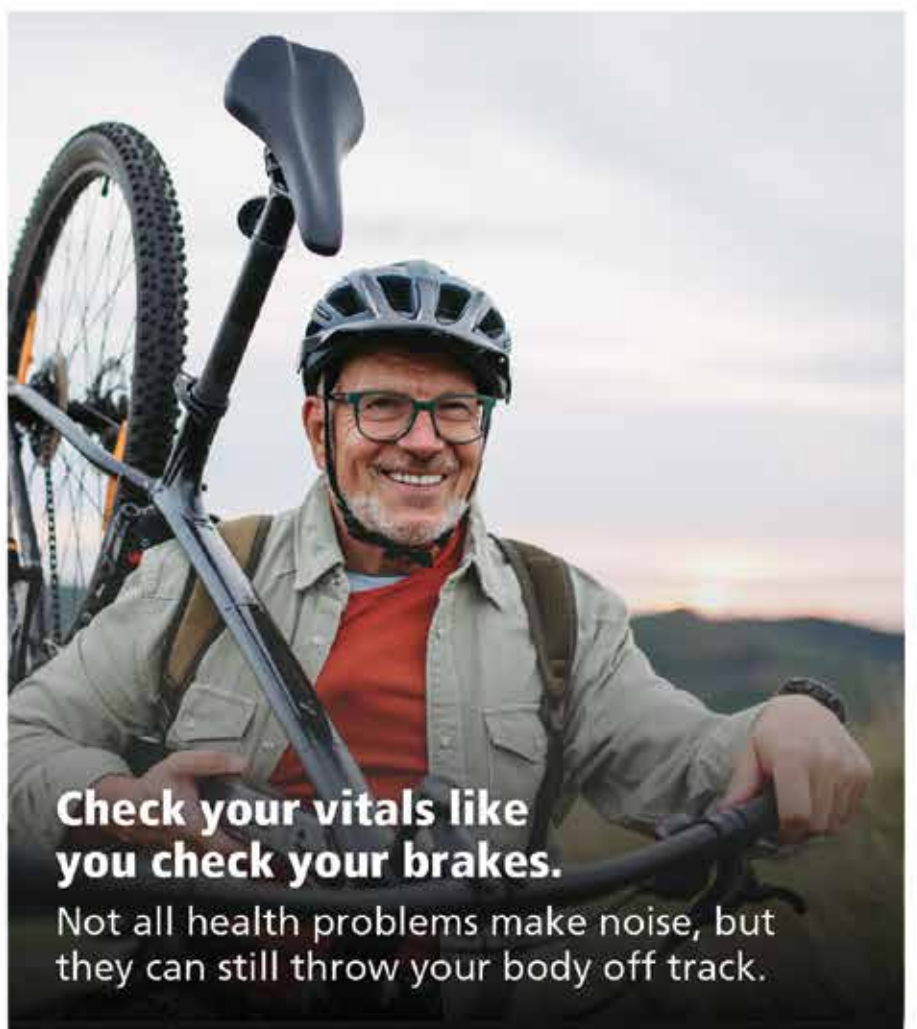
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New 'Nuestra Casa Museum of History and Culture' to open in Downtown Pomona

A group of familiar names in Pomona is "making history" by putting the finishing touches on a new museum, the Nuestra Casa Museum of History and Culture, showcasing the diverse heritage and contributions of area Latino communities.

The museum, called "a dream years in the making" by the organizers of the new non-profit, is expected to open in July in Downtown Pomona.

Founders include volunteer community leaders, educators and cultural practitioners who recognize that despite their rich cultural heritage, generations of students grow without having much knowledge about the history of their own city and the contributions their ancestors have made and continue to make in all fields.

"(The museum) will be the place where these stories will be celebrated and shared with the world," organizers said in a prepared statement.

Interested in participating? Families who would like to share one or two items, along with a brief history, are welcome to do so.

Included will be exhibits of art, history (pre-Hispanic to contemporary), music and traditions, along with workshops, performances and festivals for all ages.

Organizers said the project was designed to have a "transformative impact" on the Pomona area by fostering civic pride, strengthen the region's cultural infrastructure, and contribute to the revitalization of Downtown Pomona.

Assemblymember Rodriguez honors Pomona's Just Us 4 Youth as 2026 'Non-profit of the Year'

Assemblymember Michelle Rodriguez has selected Pomona's Just Us 4 Youth as the 2026 non-profit of the year for the 53rd Assembly District in recognition of the organization's outstanding commitment to serving youth and families throughout the community.

The honor was presented at the 11th annual "California Non-profits of the Year Celebration" this month in Sacramento.

The event recognizes exceptional non-profit organizations across California for their service, leadership, and lasting impact in their communities.

"Just Us 4 Youth has made a tremendous



Photo by Renee Barbee
Luis Juarez, founding board president, stands outside the entrance to the new Nuestra Casa Museum of History and Culture, set to open in July in Downtown Pomona.

They said it also is expected to create both new jobs and volunteer opportunities and attract tourism, all contributing to local economic growth.

The museum also is offering opportunities for funding support from individuals, businesses and philanthropic organizations interested in becoming "founding supporters."

Founding Board members include Luis Juarez, president; Cristina Carrizosa, secretary; Mike Suarez, treasurer; Angela Sanbrano, public relations; and Francisco Espinosa, accountant.

Nuestra Casa Museum is located at 101 W. Mission Blvd., #108, Pomona. For information, call (840) 275-1230 or e-mail info@nuestracasa.com.

difference in the lives of young people and families across the district," Rodriguez said. "Their dedication to mentorship, empowerment and creating opportunities for youth reflects the very best of community service."

More than 1,000 non-profits have been recognized by members of the California state legislature since the recognition program was launched in 2016.

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Mt. San Antonio College, Pomona Valley Hospital hold 'active shooter' mass casualty drill

By Victoria Miranda
Contributing writer

In the midst of growing public safety concerns, the importance of emergency preparedness cannot be overlooked. Pomona Val-

ley Hospital Medical Center collaborated with Mt. San Antonio College's medical program last month to create a realistic mass casualty exercise simulating a large-scale active shooter scenario, emphasizing both the critical need for coordinated response and potential community danger.

The medical and health exercise was "operation-based" and utilized what is known as a Red-

apty and psychiatric technology to simulate patients for emergency response, triage, transport and hospital intake of multiple patients, and to walk through the various stages and actions the hospital would take if an event

exercise. Each stage of what the hospital refers to as the FEMA (U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency) mission areas covers the following: foundation for health-care and medical readiness,

what mass casualty incident (MCI) drills do for both the hospital and the community.

"We always have to be prepared," Goldman said. "We're in a community where, unfortunately, we see these kinds of events,



Hospital photos by Victoria Miranda, Mt. SAC photo by Jill Dolan

POMONA VALLEY HOSPITAL AND MT. SAC STAGE MASS CASUALTY DRILL -- Mt. San Antonio College health program students and AMR ambulance emergency medical technicians triage and prepare for transport a shooting "victim" on the grounds of Mt. SAC, roll the ambulance gurney into the emergency room at Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center, and hook the "victim" up for treatment in the ER during last month's mass casualty exercise simulating a large-scale active shooter scenario.

ley Hospital Medical Center collaborated with Mt. San Antonio College's medical program last month to create a realistic mass casualty exercise simulating a

diNet system. The hospital involved volunteers and students from Mt. SAC's health program classes including nursing, paramedic academy, respiratory ther-

like this were ever to occur. American Medical Response (AMR) ambulance company's emergency medical technicians (EMTs) also participated in the

medical response coordination, continuity of healthcare service delivery, and medical surge. Hospital emergency room physician Dr. Kevin Goldman shared

so it's our responsibility as a hospital to do these drills. They may not be seen often, but they are always something we have to
Mass casualty drill... pg. 18

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RIBBON CUTTING FOR NEW ART SPACE -- Pomona Chamber of Commerce and city officials joined in this month on a ribbon cutting with Cathy and Ed Tessier who opened Karmann Lofts, a newly-created space for art in Downtown Pomona. The space includes murals on the walls outside and lofts providing living spaces for artists upstairs at 665 W. 2nd St., Pomona. From left are Pomona Chamber Board Chair Daniel Thomas, Chamber President and CEO Monique Robles, Kathy Tessier, Chamber Ambassador Victor Khair, Pomona City Councilmember Victor Preciado, Chamber Executive Board member Renee Barbee of La Nueva Voz, Ed Tessier and, at far right, Heidi Ortega, Director of the Downtown Pomona Owners Association.



POMONA OPTIMISTS HONOR FEBRUARY, MARCH STUDENTS -- Members of the Pomona Optimist Club presented awards recently to their "Students of the Month" for February and March in ceremonies at the Village at Indian Hill. Pictured, from left, are Optimist President Sonia Molina, Optimist member Evelia Cervantes, March "students of the month" Joaquin Cortez and Michelle Torrero, both sixth graders at Philadelphia Elementary School, February "students of the month" sixth grader Hiroshi Salazar and fifth grader Jose Arana, both of Philadelphia Elementary School, and Optimist member Claudia Kidney. Photo by Renee Barbee



OPTIMIST STUDENTS OF THE MONTH FROM WESTMONT -- Students from Pomona's Westmont Elementary School were honored by the Pomona Optimist Club as students of the month for April last month at Cachanilla Chinese Restaurant in Pomona. Pictured, from left, are Optimists Renee Barbee and Fernando Meza, students Sara Esparza, Alessandro Klee and Adrian Villalobos, all sixth graders at Westmont, Optimist President Sonia Molina, and Optimist Secretary M. Joyce Bakersmith. Photo by Lorraine Canales



POMONA KIWANIS SCHOLARSHIP DINNER -- Four Pomona high school students were recognized last month at a Pomona Kiwanis Club scholarship dinner at Metro Event Center in Downtown Pomona. Pictured, from left, are scholarship committee member Rodney Tanaka, Nancy Huang and Lilian Lu, both of Diamond Ranch High School, Daniel Hernandez-Garcia of Garey High School, Nathalie Gutierrez of Pomona High School, and Diane Elias and Steven Quintero, also members of the Kiwanis scholarship committee. Each student received a \$1,000 scholarship for demonstrating exceptional academic promise and a commitment to making a difference in their community.

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In memory of James Leslie Barbee

James Leslie Barbee, passed away last month, following a brief illness at a hospital in Klamath Falls, Oregon, where he lived. He was 91.

A kind, wise, and deeply loved father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, Barbee was a man whose intelligence, quiet humor, and steady presence left a lasting impression on all who knew him. He lived a long and meaningful life marked by discipline, curiosity, compassion, and devotion to his family.

As a young man, Barbee served on a destroyer in the U.S. Navy as a first class radio operator during the Korean War, and that spirit of commitment remained with him throughout his life. He was an editor and proofreader for the Los Angeles Times when his children were young, and although he retired in his early 50s, his love of language and learning continued through freelance editing work for several authors. He was a man of remarkable discipline, beginning his mornings early – often awakened by his beloved



James Barbee

cat Charlie – then exercising, enjoying breakfast, and having a cup of coffee. Even in later years, he rode his elliptical bike for 30 minutes every day without fail.

Barbee kept both his body and mind active. He was an avid crossword puzzle solver who also enjoyed Jumble, Scrabble, and Boggle. He was exceptionally well-read and regularly recommended books, seeming to have read them on nearly every subject. His knowledge, wisdom, and thoughtful perspective were gifts to those around him. He was also an excellent cook who prepared gourmet meals each day, bringing care and creativity to even the simplest routines of life.

He shared a beautiful love story with his late wife, Penny. They met and fell in love in 1994 and were married on Sept. 23, 1996. Penny lovingly called him “my Prince,” a reflection of the tenderness and devotion they shared. Together they loved to hike, take adventurous excursions, and end their outings with picnics. They also enjoyed playing Scrabble and Boggle several times a week. Barbee will be deeply missed not only for his wisdom and warmth, but also for the weekly phone conversations treasured by his family.

Barbee is survived by his oldest daughter, Renee Barbee; her significant other, Jeff Schenkel; his son, Todd Barbee; his daughter-in-law, Cathy Barbee; his grandchildren, Kyle Barbee and Corinne Barbee; Chad Kelley and Julia and Garrett Archibeque; and Michele Ruiz; his three great-grandchildren; and his sister-in-law, Sandi Mollo.

He was preceded in death by his daughter, Suzanne Barbee Jones, his wife, Penny, and his late first wife, Thelma Mae Barbee Cossey. He will be remembered with deep love and gratitude for the example he set, the wisdom he shared, and the enduring love he gave to his family.

Drownings called leading cause of death for children

Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center emergency room physician Dr. Kevin Goldman held a demonstration of swimming safety tips this month at a community pool in La Verne’s Las Flores Park to help protect children from drowning as the summer swimming season begins.

Hospital officials said in a news release that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that May is the beginning of an upward trend in incidents of drowning – the leading cause of death for children ages one to four and the second leading cause of death for children ages five to 14.

Drownings are preventable and knowing what to do in the case of an emergency can be lifesaving, officials said.

In 2024, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health reported 98 people dying from drowning, and the California Department of Developmental Services reported 51 children aged five and younger dying through drowning related incidents the same year.

In addition, the American Red Cross reported an average of 22 non-fatal drownings per day.

And, according to hospital officials, most drownings for children younger than five happen in pools owned by family, friends or relatives.

American Red Cross officials report that CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) can double or triple the chance of survival when a person’s breathing or heart stops.

Goldman provided demonstrations of hands-only CPR, use of an automated external defibrillator, and how different colors of swimsuits offer different levels of visibility in the water.



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Photo by Duane Smith

Photos by Renee Barbee

It was Dia Del Niño again last month at Pomona's Martin Luther King Jr. Park where food, activities, resources and a piñata were on hand for kids from throughout the surrounding neighborhoods. Representatives of Compassionate Pomona were heading up art activities, Tri City Mental Health was on hand providing resource information, the "Character Champion Kids" were there and more, all part of a collaborative of community organizations producing the event each year. Pictured are kids showing what they can come up with at the art booth. Kids also were making their own charm bracelets at the event.

COMPASSIONATE POMONA -- Here are members of Compassionate Pomona, showing two of the finished products created in the "on the spot" art booth by the kids. Pictured, from left, are Pomona Unified School District Board member Dr. Roberta Perlman, Pomona City Councilmember Lorraine Canales, Renee Barbee of La Nueva Voz, Rev. Jan Chase, Nancy Salazar and Kathryn Martens.

Flight training program... from pg. 11 has Christ Kallas, a new full-time instructor, on board. So, fasten your seatbelts!

According to a school district news release, the aviation industry continues to project workforce needs as many current pilots and aviation professionals approach retirement age, creating future career opportunities for students interested in the field.

Cost of upgrades to the room exclusive of the flight simulators but including flooring, paint, ceilings, power and electronics was \$202,005 through a state "Workforce Development Grant" arranged by then-Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez, a Garey High School graduate.

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Pomona Unified's Pantera Elementary School honored by state schools superintendent

Pomona Unified School District's Pantera Elementary School in Diamond Bar is one of only 31 schools statewide recognized by State Supt. of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond with the distinction of "2025 California Blue Ribbon School."

Thurmond's team continued the awards program in California after "the U.S. Department of Education . . . abruptly ended the NBR program," Thurmond said in a statement released by Pantera.

"This award affirms the dedication and achievement of educators, families and communities in creating safe and welcoming schools where students master challenging and engaging content," he added.

The prestigious award honors public and private elementary, middle and high schools that close achievement and opportunity gaps as well as schools where students demonstrate especially high levels of academic success.

Pantera was one of only 14 public elementary schools in the state recognized with the award.

Criteria include academic progress and schools selected are among

the state's highest performing based on all students' scores, subgroups' scores and graduation rates.

Awards were presented last month at an annual recognition program at the Disneyland Convention Center in Anaheim.

"It is a true honor to accept this award on behalf of the entire Pantera Elementary School community," said Pantera Principal Dr. Lacey Lemus. "Our teachers, staff, students and families work together in extraordinary ways, and the results continually exceed even our highest expectations."

It was the first California Blue Ribbon School award in Pomona Unified School District in more than 20 years and the first ever elementary school in the district to earn this distinction.

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I am Chicano: A life shaped by La Causa

By Robert Mendoza

I was born Sept. 16, 1968, in Yuba City, California, and raised between Indio, California, and Sunnyside, Washington. I now call Oregon home. At 54, I reflect on the experiences that shaped my identity.

I carry vivid memories of the Huelgas led by Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers movement. My family appears in a 1970 publication, Viva la Causa, documenting the grape strike.

The publication includes my father Mike Mendoza, my grandfather Manuel, my brother Mike Jr., my sister Yolanda, and family compadre Pancho Botello, an advocate for the movement.

Through Botello, we met Cesar Chavez. I remember visiting his home in Delano and seeing my father serve as sergeant-at-arms. I marched with campesinos, leaders, and clergy in solidarity.

There were struggles, including tensions with growers and law enforcement, but we believed in the cause and in each other.

In 1985 Chavez visited Woodburn, Oregon. I sat with him at PCUN (Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste, or Northwest Treeplanters and Farmworkers United, Oregon's largest farmworker union and Latino organization) and marched through town with supporters.

His passing in 1993 felt like losing a guiding light. Learning more about his recent controversial legacy has brought reflection, but his core values – dignity, unity, and perseverance – remain meaningful to me.

I graduated in 1987 carrying these experiences forward, honoring those who fought for dignity and opportunity. Sí se puede. Viva la causa.

Editor's note: La Nueva Voz columnist Susie Perales shared this story written by Robert Mendoza, her nephew, now a resident of Oregon, who she said carries this history with pride.

Soy Chicano: Una vida marcada por La Causa

Por Robert Mendoza

Nací el 16 de septiembre de 1968 en Yuba City, California, y crecí entre Indio, California, y Sunnyside, Washington. Hoy vivo en Oregón. A los 54 años, reflexiono sobre las experiencias que formaron mi identidad.

Llevo recuerdos vivos de las Huelgas lideradas por Cesar Chavez y el movimiento de los Trabajadores Agrícolas Unidos. Mi familia aparece en la publicación de 1970 Viva la Causa.

La publicación incluye a mi padre Mike Mendoza, mi abuelo Manuel, mi hermano Mike Jr., mi hermana Yolanda y el compadre Pancho Botello, defensor del movimiento.

A través de Botello conocimos a Cesar Chavez. Recuerdo visitar su casa en Delano y ver a mi padre como Sargento de Armas. Marché con campesinos, líderes y clero en solidaridad.

Hubo dificultades con agricultores y la policía, pero creíamos en la causa y en los demás.

En 1985 Chavez visitó Woodburn, Oregón. Me senté con él en PCUN (Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste, el sindicato de trabajadores agrícolas y la organización latina más grandes de Oregón) y marché con simpatizantes.

Su fallecimiento en 1993 se sintió como perder una luz guía. Su legado reciente ha sido polémico e invita a la reflexión.

Pero sus valores – dignidad, unidad y perseverancia – siguen siendo importantes en mi vida.

Me gradué en 1987 llevando estas experiencias conmigo, honrando la dignidad y la oportunidad. Sí se puede. Viva la causa.

Nota del editor: Susie Perales, columnista de La Nueva Voz, compartió esta historia escrita por Robert Mendoza – su sobrino, ahora residente de Oregón, de quien dijo que lleva esta historia con orgullo.

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Mass casualty drill... from pg. 14

prepare for.”

“We get the whole house of medicine to be involved, and hospital administration is very supportive,” he added. “We also want to test our surge capacity if something like this does happen.”

The hospital's Director of Environmental Safety and Emergency Preparedness Steven Storbakken explained what prompted the hospital to implement this type of drill at this time.

“One of the challenges that all hospitals have is how you deal with treating (multiple) victims from a single event and how you organize that,” he said. “We take those lessons learned from previous MCI's and apply them here to be able to prepare for that.”

He also shared some feedback he has received regarding running these types of drills.

“The staff loves doing these drills because it helps us practice in a more controlled environment,” Storbakken said. “Every department is activated because we know (if this ever does happen), it will be overwhelming, so you just always have to prepare and adjust as it happens.”

Along with improving the hospital's effectiveness, the drill also provides valuable lessons for the students involved. Mt. SAC student Jasmine Lopez called it “very educational.”

“I think going into this to see the pre-hospital care as opposed

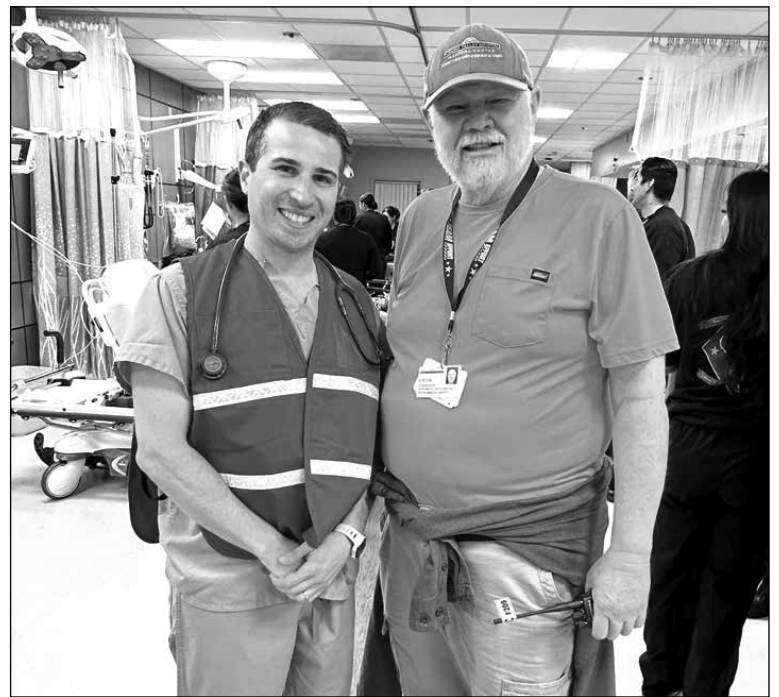


Photo by Victoria Miranda

Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center's emergency medicine specialist Dr. Kevin Goldman, at left, and Steven Storbakken, the hospital's director of environmental safety and emergency preparedness, pose for the La Nueva Voz camera in the hospital emergency room during last month's mass casualty drill.

to the EMT side of things was very beneficial for me to experience,” Lopez said. “I got to see both giving care and getting care.”

Officials agreed that drills of this type provide a proactive way to prepare the community for emergencies by seeing everyone work together to ensure the community and hospital staff is as prepared as possible.

The drill was part of the Los Angeles County Healthcare Coalition's annual medical and

health exercise, designed to evaluate hospital and regional response capabilities during a patient surge event.

Pomona Valley Hospital, which is licensed for 427 beds, was testing its ability to manage a surge of more than 40 patients by focusing on coordination, triage, communication and patient care in a high-pressure environment, according to a news release.

Patients were “triaged” at Mt. SAC's Sherman Park before being transported to the hospital.



A fundraiser to cover funeral expenses was held last month in Pomona for Angel Roman Mendoza Lopez, a 13-year-old boy who died while riding a scooter. Members of the public were lined up as early as 8 a.m. showing a tremendous outpouring of support. The day-long event included an assortment of food and treats.

LA County Fair... from pg. 10

“From whirling rides and friendly contests to creative triumphs and big bites of deep-fried delight, the Fair is transforming its grounds into the county’s biggest playground,” organizers said.

“Play is universal,” Marquez said in a news release. “It sparks connection, creativity and joy.

For 2026, we’re inviting our guests to engage with the Fair in whatever way feels fun, expressive and totally them – from athletic feats to artistic triumphs and everything in between.”

Highlights this year include “The Cutest Dog Show on Earth,” featuring pups showing off their canine skills, more than 70 rides and games including two new rides, “Sound Storm” and “Air Raid,” and on-the-spot contests like bubblegum blowing and hula hoop challenges.

Also featured again this year will be a full-sized skating rink, cow- and goat-milking demonstrations, a pirate-themed play area at “The Lagoon,” and two petting farms with “the sweetest barnyard critters.”

And all the fan favorites are back – electrifying concerts, shopping for unique crafts, and the one-of-a-kind flavors that make Fair food legendary.

The LA County Fair continues from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. through May 31 Thursdays through Sundays plus Memorial Day.



Olivia the donkey and her owner, Pat Cravy, a volunteer with America’s Great Outdoors whose donkeys have walked in parades at the LA County Fair for years, smile for the La Nueva Voz camera showing off Olivia’s baskets of colorful flowers and other decorations. The two appear regularly with Cal Fire, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Department of the Interior’s Bureau of Land Management and others. Here’s a tip -- Olivia likes to move around a lot so exercise caution!



Vincent Villalpando offers Renee Barbee of La Nueva Voz a sample of a strawberry shortcake vegan waffle with strawberries and whipped cream, all non-dairy, at The Veggie Box on “media preview day” the day before opening day at the LA County Fair. Want to try it before the Fair’s over? They are located just across from the Stagecoach Stage near the Fair’s Flower and Garden Pavilion.



This photo is really more of a classic shot -- Avalon’s on the left and the grandstands on the right with the ever-present Sky Ride, moving people from above. The grandstands at Fairplex were built in the 1920s and Avalon has been there since construction in 1937 as part of a major government Works Progress Administration (WPA) expansion project. It originally served as a Fair cafeteria and was known for many years as Anthony’s at the Fair before being renovated and renamed Avalon.



Here’s a smaller sized roller coaster in the kids’ section of this year’s LA County Fair -- for the kids or, for that matter, perhaps the more timid fairgoers who like to keep their feet a bit closer to the ground.



Everything Cubano was available at The Flying Empanada - Empanadas y mas at the LA County Fair where one worker showed La Nueva Voz her selection of Empanadas.

LA County Fair... from pg. 19



One of the four roller coasters at the LA County Fair this year was ready for riders with the beautiful San Gabriel Mountains in the background.



Yes, Mildred, you heard me -- Chicken Charlie's has totally fried frog legs at the LA County Fair this year so if you want some, you still have time to grab some for yourself.



A worker bolts in the last few bolts holding sections of track together on a roller coaster the day before opening day.

OPINION

Yes on Measure Z

By Tim Sandoval

Mayor, City of Pomona

Pomona cares deeply about our children. Last year alone, the City invested nearly \$17 million directly towards youth programming, because we know the value of investing in our kids. Voters recommended this value when they voted to approve Measure Y in 2024, a well-intentioned measure which earmarks 10% of our general fund for youth programs.

But here is the problem: the required monetary contributions of Measure Y puts our youth investment in jeopardy.

Because Measure Y takes 10% of Pomona's General Fund, the City will become insolvent by 2029. Just like taking 10% of your household budget, reducing your available funding means you have less to spend on the things you were used to buying. For Pomona families, insolvency means our streets will go unpaved, our parks and ball fields will go unmaintained, complaints about code violations will go unresolved, and our emergency response times will grow longer.

Last year, the City of Pomona cut each department budget by 5% in response to the obligations of Measure Y. Financial analysis of budget contributions to the Department of Children and Youth has revealed severe General Fund deficits within two to three years. Without any changes, the City will face a budget shortfall of more than \$17 million by fiscal year 2029, when the Measure Y contribution reaches 8% of the General Fund.

Unless we take action, these

department cuts will get worse, including potential layoffs of city workers from EVERY department, including public safety, public works, and community services. These cuts will severely impact our city's ability to provide safe neighborhoods and services that allow children to thrive.

What is the solution? Measure Z. This initiative right-sizes Measure Y by shifting its funding from the General Fund to 10% of our California Sales and Use Tax – the same programs, smarter funding.

Voting YES on MEASURE Z means stability for our children.

Picture Pomona in 2029: a fully staffed Department of Children and Youth, a Director delivering highly ranked youth programs through community-based organizations, an Accountability Board keeping every dollar of Measure Z accountable to our taxpayers, and a solvent operating city budget. This is what a city looks like when it keeps its word to our kids.

Like you, I care deeply about our children. Before I was elected Mayor in 2016, I was a high school teacher and later a Program Director for a nationally recognized Pomona based non-profit that has helped thousands of youth go to and graduate from colleges all over the country. Many have returned to help serve our city as doctors, teachers, nurses, attorneys, city planners, business owners, and a host of other professions. That work demonstrates what is possible for our children when our parents, city, schools,

Measure Z... pg. 23

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Photo by Renee Barbee
LORBEER MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS HONORED -- Student members of the California Junior Scholarship Federation Chapter 983 at Pomona Unified School District's Lorbeer Middle School in Diamond Bar were honored by members of the Pomona City Council at their meeting this month for their "exceptional leadership and dedicated service" and for their "commitment to collaboration and initiative" through which they have "strengthened the bond between your school community and the broader community it serves." "Your leadership, all of you, demonstrates the powerful role young



people play in creating meaningful, lasting change," Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval said in presenting the certificates. "We'd just like to thank the City of Pomona for their unwavering support, as well as their dedication to community service, as well as student leadership across our community," said the group's president, Caleb Lee. He explained the group is trying to "spread the message of what Dr. (Martin Luther) King as well as what we as students are trying to achieve here at Lorbeer to give back to our community." Pictured, from left, are Kevin Lee, Caleb's father; Pomona Unified School District Board member Arturo Jimenez, Pomona City Councilmembers Victor Preciado and Nora Garcia, students Nathan Asuncion, Zoey Ching, Kaelyn Lam and Caleb Lee, Sandoval, Pomona Unified School Board member Dr. Roberta Perlman, Linda Pena, Nathan Asuncion's grandmother, and Pomona City Councilmembers Lorraine Canales, Debra Martin, Elizabeth Ontiveros-Cole and Steve Lusto. Not pictured were Chapter 983 faculty advisors Lashana Crutchfield and Vuthy Tim. The California Junior Scholarship Federation is a statewide academic honor society for middle school and junior high students (grades 7-9). Its primary mission is to foster high standards of scholarship, service, and citizenship. It serves as the middle school equivalent of the high school California Scholarship Federation.

PRESERVATIONISTS OF THE YEAR AWARDEES -- Members of the Pomona City Council this month celebrated Deborah and John Clifford receiving the "Preservationists of the Year" award for 2026 from the City of Pomona. A certificate of recognition honored the Cliffords for their "outstanding dedication and leadership to preserve Pomona's history." The city council also proclaimed May 2026 as "Historic Preservation Month" in Pomona and presented awards for work on preservation projects throughout the city. The Cliffords have been involved for years in everything historical in Pomona, from commissions and committees to Pomona's Ebell Museum of History and the Historical Society of Pomona Valley. Pictured is Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval presenting the award to the Cliffords as city councilmembers, Historical Preservation Commission members and Board members of the Historical Society look on.



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Will third time be the charm for revising Pomona's Palm Lake Golf Course site?

The City of Pomona is receiving a \$500,000 grant from the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District to transform the city's long-idle Palm Lake Golf Course.

The funds were part of the voter approved Measure A initiative that has already resulted in a total of \$78 million in grants countywide.

In Pomona, the grant will support the transformation of the old golf course site into a "safe, accessible and vibrant multi-use recreational space for the community," according to a city news release.

The project includes conceptual and schematic designs, site feasibility studies, California Environmental Quality Act analysis for environmental impact reports, green infrastructure, and the development of construction-ready documents.

Community engagement workshops will be held to help ensure the project reflects community needs and priorities, while positioning it for future funding opportunities.

Meanwhile, La Nueva Voz has learned that news of the grant has sparked interests in several areas. For example, officials at Pomona's Lopez Urban Farm have indicated



La Nueva Voz file photo

FUNDING RECEIVED FOR PALM LAKE GOLF COURSE SITE -- Pictured is what was left of the original snack shop at Pomona's Palm Lake Golf Course as seen in 2021. Part of the original golf shop / club house can be seen at left. The buildings have since been demolished.

they would like to have a "seat at the table" in the discussions, perhaps looking at opportunities for either community agriculture or programs or both.

Others have expressed interest in reviving at least the golf driving range portion of the property for its original use as a practice range.

A spokesperson for the city told La Nueva Voz that the project will include community outreach to ensure residents become aware of the opportunity, and "the design will be driven by community input."

Two previous attempts to restore the golf course were unsuccessful.

As reported in the November 2021 issue of La Nueva Voz, Celso Palafox of Chino Development League was still working on restoring the site which, at the time, was a 62-year-old facility overgrown with weeds and crumbling buildings.

As reported in the June 2019 La Nueva Voz, Palafox was awarded a 20-year lease by the city – at the rate of \$1 per year – to upgrade and operate the golf course located along West Phillips Boulevard extending east from the 71 Freeway.

At a news conference on the golf course grounds at the time, Palafox said the facility – which had been closed since 2017 – was expected to be open for business on the driving range side within 60 days.

Of course, although several improvements were made – a little concrete here, protective netting there and a lot of planting of petunias around the golf shop – the facility was never able to reopen.

The city ended up calling on code enforcement officials to try to bring the operator and the property into compliance with terms of the agreement, but buildings that once housed a golf shop and a snack shop were demolished, the

brand-new driving range netting came down, and chain link fence went up around the entire property.

A spokesman for the developer told La Nueva Voz in 2021 that while "nobody in particular is to blame for the last 2.5 years," he said the problem was "scrap metal dealers who serve the thieves and vandals," referring to equipment that was destroyed and copper pipe that was taken.

"What it comes down to is we've been a victim of circumstances, bureaucracy, crime and materials shortages," he said at the time.

The plan had been to refurbish the club house and restaurant in a "retro" style concept using the 1950s design of the original buildings.

The original proposal called for a \$100,000 investment which had jumped to half a million dollars and had been expected to reach more than \$1 million during 2019.

As reported in La Nueva Voz, the 2017 closure of the nine-hole golf course came after an unsuccessful three-year attempt by Pedro Gonzalez, a teacher at Pomona's Madison Elementary School, to revitalize the course and make it cost-effective.



TRI CITY YOUTH FILM SHOWCASE AWARDS -- It was lights, camera, action this month in a movie theater downstairs at the Village at Indian Hill in Pomona as short films were screened and 16 award winners named in the 2026 youth film showcase "Directing Change: Screening and Recognition Award Ceremony." And the winners even received miniature "Oscars" just like the Academy Awards. The special evening celebrated youth voices and excellence in mental health storytelling through art and film. Directing Change is a statewide initiative that uses art and film to prevent suicide and substance use, reduce mental health stigma and promote student wellness. Students participating in the program were from Claremont, Park West, San Dimas and Village Academy high schools. Pictured with their certificates are the student filmmakers.

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Pomona's Westmont Elementary School held its own Dia del Niño celebration last month on a special day dedicated to honoring the joy and importance of children. Included was sack race competition, making huge soap bubbles, dodgeball, musical chairs and more as the campus was transformed into a vibrant and festive space where students, led by Principal Maria Martinez, participated in hands on activities creating a fun and memorable experience. As one of Pomona Unified School District's Spanish dual language immersion sites, the celebration also reflected the cultural richness and community connections that are central to Westmont's instructional program.



SOROPTIMISTS CELEBRATE 80TH ANNIVERSARY -- The Pomona/Claremont Soroptimist International chapter celebrated its 80th anniversary last month during a special meeting and induction of new members at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel in Claremont. Theme was "A Timeless Celebration: 80 years of making a difference." Pictured, from left, are Renee Webb, Secretary Linda Chavez-Nunez, Vice President Dianne Brockman, Julianne Hines representing State Sen. Susan Rubio, President Lucille Lyons, Gayle Claiborne, Jennifer Collaso, Judy Sanders, Treasurer Elizabeth Andrews, and Penny Ellis. Health professional awards went to Jaipal Kaur Sandu and Jihye Moon, and "Live your Dream" awards were presented to Lilyana Cesena and Tianna Gutierrez. Proceeds will benefit local charities and provide awards for women and girls in the area. For information, visit the web site at sipomona-claremont.org.



AERIAL VIEW OF LANTERMAN -- Cal Poly Pomona has selected global architecture and design firm Gensler to lead a comprehensive conceptual land use plan and utility assessment for the university's historic 300-acre Lanterman Developmental Center site in Pomona, as seen in this aerial view of the facility that once served as a public psychiatric hospital and a facility serving the needs of those with developmental disabilities. The site includes more than 100 buildings ranging from housing to a hospital. The university's long term goal is to transform the site into a vibrant mixed-use district that supports its academic mission, expands housing opportunities in the community, strengthens community partnerships and drives regional economic growth. The immediate project will include a market and financial feasibility analysis, an updated historical resources assessment report and a hazardous materials survey report before Cal Poly issues a request for proposals for a master developer. Gensler's work is expected to be completed this summer. This step in the process builds on more than a decade of planning since the site was transferred from the State of California to the Cal State University system in 2015, with Cal Poly Pomona designated as the lead campus.

Measure Z... from pg. 20

community non-profits, and businesses work together to create the conditions for our children to thrive and have success. Our children win, we all win.

YES on MEASURE Z means this vision becomes a reality. It means you are voting to keep our parks and ball fields maintained. You are voting to keep Pomona safe. And, most importantly, you are voting to spend millions of dollars on our kids.

Pomona's children need you to VOTE YES on MEASURE Z – to make your voice heard, keep our children funded, protect essential city services and keep Pomona financially strong.

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