

Is this person a citizen of the United States?

Yes, born in the United States

Yes, born in Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, or Northern Marianas

Yes, born abroad of U.S. citizen parent or parents

Yes, U.S. citizen by naturalization – Print year of naturalization

No, not a U.S. citizen

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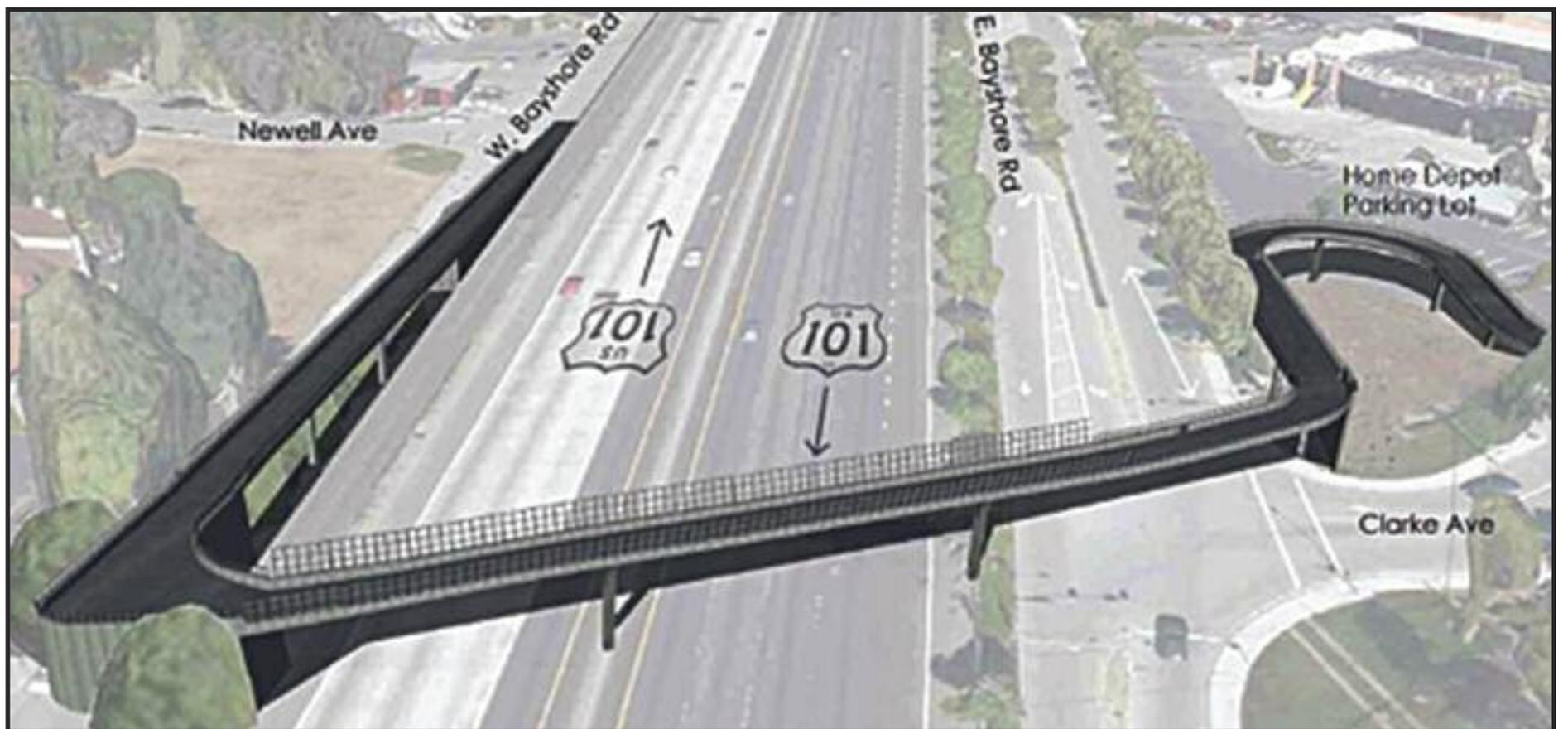
# East Palo Alto Today

Providing news that is relevant, informative and critical

www.epatoday.org

East Palo Alto and Belle Haven Winter - Spring 2019 Vol. 13 No.61

## EPA overpass nears completion



Courtesy of the City of East Palo Alto

The above design shows the path of the new pedestrian/bicycle overpass that is currently under construction in East Palo Alto. The overpass will run from Clarke Avenue, near Home Depot across East Bayshore Road and Highway 101 to West Bayshore near Newell Avenue. Read more about it on page 6 of this issue of East Palo Alto Today.

## City residents share their vision for East Palo Alto's future

By Monica Guzman

Markers and blank name tags sit on the tables inside the Lewis and Joan Platt East Palo Alto Family YMCA's community room. They await participants, who are attending a "meetup" group called, The Future of East Palo Alto. As the meeting attendees enter, they are instructed to write their names on a blank tag and draw a scene which represents what brings them pride and joy in East Palo Alto.

The meetings are part of a much larger civic project to design a new East Palo Alto city hall. They are organized and led by Jerry Chang, who



Photo by Jerry Chang

East Palo Alto residents draw pictures of what they'd like to see in their city.

is a FUSE executive fellow. FUSE fellows partner with local governments to work on a range of issues to design yearlong strategic projects.

Chang oversees the first

phase of East Palo Alto's Facilities Master Plan, which will determine what the future of East Palo Alto is in 30 years.

"If we just look at [what East Palo Alto is] today, we will de-

sign a building for the past," Chang said.

Chang created the "meetup" group to connect with East Palo Alto community members to help identify what the city's current identity is and what it might become in the future. "We want to make sure the new building is designed with the community, not to the community," Chang said.

The meeting on Monday, January 21 was one of several January meetups intended to understand the community values of East Palo Alto. Chang takes a creative approach during the meetings. Some of the activities, during the meeting, in-

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# Politicizing the 2020 Census

## Should the U.S. Citizenship Question be added?

By Henrietta J. Burroughs

Is this person a citizen of the United States? It's a simple enough question. But, it's a controversial question that the Trump administration would like to put in the 2020 Census.

As simple a question as it is, its very existence is being questioned. The fact that the U.S. Justice Department wants to add the Citizenship Question to the 2020 Census has ignited passions and fears throughout the country and lawsuits in several of the nation's courts.

Considering that the data collected in any U.S. Census determines how congressional seats are allotted, how billions of federal dollars are spent and how many other state and national resources are allocated, the fear held by many is that the census questionnaire will go unanswered by millions of immigrants who might feel, rightly

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or wrongly, that the information they give could be held against them.

The very proposal for the Citizenship Question formally originated with a letter from the Justice Department's general counsel, Arthur E Gary, who wrote:

"This data is critical to the Department's enforcement of Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act and its important protections against racial discrimination in vot-

ing. To fully enforce those requirements, the Department needs a reliable calculation of the citizen voting-age population in localities where voting rights violations are alleged or suspected. As demonstrated below, the decennial census questionnaire is the most appropriate vehicle for collecting that data, and reinstating a question on citizenship will best enable the Department to protect all American citizens' voting

rights under Section 2."

Gary went on to write:

"[t]he right to vote is one of the badges of citizenship" and that "[t]he dignity and very concept of citizenship are diluted if noncitizens are allowed to vote." Barnett, 141 F.3d at 704. Thus, it would be the wrong result for a legislature or a court to draw a singlemember district in which a numerical racial minority group in a jurisdiction was a majority of the total voting-age population in that district but "continued to be defeated at the polls" because it was not a majority of the citizen voting-age population. Campos, 113 F.3d at 548."

It seems the ostensible purpose of the question is to distinguish citizens from noncitizens and to protect the rights of citizens from noncitizens, who might cast votes that could influence an election outcome. In short, the question, according to Gary, is meant to protect the civil rights of U.S. citizens. See the entire letter at <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/43406-51-Text-of-Dec-2017-DOJ-letter-to-Census.html>

In spite of Gary's arguments and the fact that the Citizenship Question appeared before 1950 on previous census questionnaires, the prospect of having the question on the 2020 Census has caused serious concerns throughout the U.S.

Reps. Jose Serrano and Grace Meng, both Democrats from New York, wrote a "counter" letter to Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross, who is overseeing the 2020 Census, asking for the rejection of Gary's request. In their letter, they said, "Adopting this

question on citizenship and legal status will negatively affect response rates, jeopardize the accuracy of the collected surveys, and deter many people from participating...."

But citizen or not, the census is supposed to count everyone living in the U.S. Hearing the arguments on both sides, Secretary Ross decided to include the Citizenship Question in the 2020 Census questionnaire.

Critics of the decision filed suit. In April 2018, a coalition of 17 states, 6 cities and Washington, D.C filed a lawsuit against the Citizenship Question's inclusion in the census. The lawsuit was led by New York State's attorney general. Since its filing, the lawsuit was joined by four additional states, four counties and the U.S. Conference of Mayors. The City and County of San Francisco are included in the lawsuit.

See the list of cities and states in the legal complaint that was filed. The City of San Jose took separate legal action with two other states to block the citizenship question.

Current statistics show that California (10,653 million), Texas (4,854 million) and New York 4.540 million) lead the nation with the largest immigrant population and have the most to lose if any undercounting of their immigrant populations occur.

Highlighting this danger, the Dallas Morning News ran an editorial on January 27, 2019 with the headline: A citizenship question on the next census could cost Texas dearly. The editorial acknowledges the financial impact an undercount would have on the state.

The ranking of U.S. states with regard to their immigrant population can be seen at (<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/datahub/charts/immigrant-population-state-1990-present>)

Thus far, the Justice Department has had several major setbacks in its attempt to include the Citizenship Question.

After a two-week trial, which started at the beginning of this year, the U.S. District Judge Jesse Furman

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### AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR RENT IN PALO ALTO

Mayfield Place located at 2500 El Camino Real, Palo Alto, CA is re-opening the one, two and three bedroom affordable housing waiting list.

Rent levels for this affordable housing community are set at 50% and 60% of the Area Median Income: 1 BR \$1,193 or \$1,443, 2 BR \$1,425 or \$1,724, 3 BR \$1,644 or \$1,990 a month. Must be income eligible and meet occupancy guidelines. Households must earn no more than the maximum income levels below:

#### 50% of Median Income

Household Size	1 Person	2 Persons	3 Persons	4 Persons	5 Persons	6 Persons
Max Annual Income	\$46,550	\$53,200	\$59,850	\$66,500	\$73,150	\$77,150

#### 60% of Median Income

Household Size	1 Person	2 Persons	3 Persons	4 Persons	5 Persons	6 Persons
Max Annual Income	\$55,860	\$63,840	\$71,820	\$79,800	\$86,220	\$92,580

Applications may be submitted online at [www.LiveatMayfieldPlace.com](http://www.LiveatMayfieldPlace.com) beginning on February 4, 2019. Alternatively you may download an application at [www.LiveatMayfieldPlace.com](http://www.LiveatMayfieldPlace.com) and mail or hand deliver it to our leasing office located at Mayfield Place, 2500 El Camino Real Suite #103, Palo Alto, CA 94306. Minimum and maximum income limits apply. Full program requirements can be found in our website.

Applications will be accepted on a first come-first serve basis. Our office hours are Monday – Friday 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. For questions please contact us at [MayfieldPlace@related.com](mailto:MayfieldPlace@related.com).

Features include: clubhouse, elevator, fitness center, laundry care center, assigned garage parking, bicycle storage, courtyard with BBQ, and a complimentary VTA Eco Pass to service all your transportation needs.

Related Management reserves the right to close the waiting list at any time if an excessive number of applications are received. Income limits are subject to change based on changes to the Area Median Income as published by HUD.

Due to the limited number of these apartments the filing of an application in no way guarantees you an apartment.

# Community News Briefs

## Ravenswood City School District Superintendent placed on leave

On February 26, 2019, the Ravenswood City School District board of trustees voted 3 to 2 to place the school's superintendent, Gloria Hernandez-Goff, on a temporary, paid leave of absence

The board's decision came after several years of criticism by a vocal group of parents, teachers and other East Palo Alto community members, including East Palo Alto City Council member Ruben Abrica.

For some time, Hernandez-Goff faced criticisms about the school district's declining enrollment, the dra-



Gloria Hernandez-Goff

matic loss of state dollars, charges of financial mismanagement nepotism and being unresponsive to the district's teachers and parents.

The decision was so swift that it even apparently surprised the district's spokesperson, Rolando Bonilla

and Hernandez-Goff herself since she was on medical leave, when the decision placing her on leave was made.

The change in the board's composition after the November 2018 general election voting in two new board member seemed to have been a deciding factor in the decision since the three person vote supporting the decision came from two of the newly elected board members: Tamara Sobomehin, the current president of the board; Stephanie Fitch, the vice president and, the superintendent's long time board critic, Marielena Gaona-Mendoza, who is currently the clerk of the board. Board members Ana Maria

Pulido and Sharifa Wilson opposed the decision.

Gina Sudaria, the district's former director of human resources, is currently serving as the district's acting superintendent. Many questions remain, for example, how long will the leave of absence last? Will it become permanent. If so, will the superintendent be paid her full salary? Will the board begin the search for a new superin-

tendent?

Also, there is now talk before the Menlo Park City Council having a study session in June about the Menlo Park School District taking over the Ravenswood City School District.

There are, obviously, some major decisions left for the Ravenswood City School District to make.

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## Expanding the University Circle complex

By Monica Guzman

East Palo Alto residents gathered on Thursday, February 28 to voice their concerns about the new building proposed for University Circle. The meeting was organized by the City of East Palo Alto and University Circle to discuss the project and seek community input as part of the pre-application phase.

Three six-story buildings and the Four Seasons hotel currently occupy the campus. The fourth office build-

ing will be located on the corner of University and Woodland where there is presently a parking lot.

University Circle plans to add 682 garage parking spaces to compensate for the 86 surface spaces lost to accommodate the new building. According to Mark English, part of the University Circle development team, this number will meet the city code.

The developers will also preserve the campus's aesthetic by including plentiful

landscaping in the layout. The new building itself will replicate the architecture of the existing buildings.

In attempts to fulfill community needs, University Circle will incorporate an open plaza and a community meeting room into the building's design. They also plan to use the project to rework the sidewalk along Woodland Avenue to make it more attractive for the community.

Although residents agree

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Public Fax Center, Utility Payment Center  
Gift Stop & Jewelry

**OPEN MONDAY THRU FRIDAY**  
**10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.**

## City, County, State & U.S. Government Meetings & Contacts

**East Palo Alto City Council**

The East Palo Alto City Council meets the first and third Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm in the Council Chambers, East Palo Alto City Hall, 2415 University Avenue; (650) 853-3100 or Fax: (650) 853-3115.  
Website: www.ci.east-palo-alto.ca.us

**East Palo Alto City Council Members**

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lgauthier@cityofepa.org

**Regina Wallace Jones**  
Vice Mayor  
650-709-9660  
rwallacejones@cityofepa.org

**Carlos Romero**  
cromero@cityofepa.org  
650) 328-4363

**Ruben Abrica**  
(650) 804-3347  
rabrica@cityofepa.org

**Larry Moody**  
(650) 644-9110  
lmoody@cityofepa.org

**East Palo Alto Agencies, Boards, Commissions, Committees**

**Planning Commission**  
Second and Fourth Monday

**Rent Stabilization Board**  
Second and Fourth Wednesday

**Public Works & Transportation Commission**  
Third Wednesday

**Youth Advisory Committee**  
First Thursday of each month

**Senior Advisory Committee**  
Meets first Wednesday of the even numbered months from 1:30p.m.-3:30p.m. - City Hall.

**East Palo Alto Sanitary District**  
The East Palo Alto Sanitary District office is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 12 noon and re-opens from 1:00 p.m. to

5:00 p.m. for service. Regular Board Meetings are held the first Thursday of every month at 7:00 pm.

**Menlo Park City Council**

The Menlo Park City Council holds meetings every Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. at the City Council Chambers located at 801 Laurel Street. You can subscribe to receive the agendas and minutes by e-mail when they are published. For questions about an agenda, call the city clerk at 650.330.6620.

**Menlo Park City Council Members**

**Ray Mueller**  
Mayor  
650-776-8995

**Cecilia Clark- Mayor Pro Tem**  
650-589-5073

**Catherine Carlton**  
650-575-4523

**Drew Combs**  
650-924-1890

**Betsy Nash** 650-380-3986

**Menlo Park Boards, Commissions, Committees**

Arts Commission  
Bicycle Commission  
Environmental Quality Commission  
Finance and Audit Commission  
Housing Commission  
Las Pulgas Committee  
Library Commission  
Parks and Recreation Commission  
Planning Commission  
Transportation Commission

**San Mateo County Board of Supervisors**

**Supervisor Warren Slocum**  
Fourth District

The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors meets on March 3, 17, 31, & April 14, 28 2009 in the County of San Mateo Hall of Justice & Records 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063. Roll call at 8 a.m. 9 a.m. Regular & Consent Agenda Items. 650-691-2121

**State Officials**

**Governor Gavin Newsom**  
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**Assembly Member Marc Berman**  
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Los Altos, CA 94022  
650 691-2121

**State Senator Jerry Hill**  
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1528 South El Camino Real  
San Mateo, CA 94301  
(650) 212-3313

**U.S. Government**

**U.S. Congresswoman Jackie Speier**  
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155 Bovet Rd, Suite 780  
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Phone: (650) 342-0300  
Washington, DC:  
(202) 225-3531

# From the Editor's Desk

## Lady Justice is not blind

Many in our nation have known for some time that our country has two criminal justice systems: one for the rich and the other for the poor.

This fact was not only highlighted, but also underscored when Paul Manafort was sentenced to 47 months in prison this week – well below the federal guidelines that ranged from 19 to 24 years.

If there were ever a case of sentencing disparity, this is it! How do you give someone life in prison for stealing a slice of pizza or for selling or smoking marijuana (which has happened), and give Manafort less than four years in prison for being convicted on eight counts of bank and tax fraud?

The scales of justice are skewed.

Sen. Cory Booker decried the sentence saying, "One of my friends says we have a criminal justice system that treats you better if you're rich and guilty than if you're poor and innocent."

In justifying the light sentence that he handed to Manafort, Virginia Judge T.S. Ellis III said that Manafort had lived "a blameless life," before committing his crimes.

When you consider some of Manafort's experiences and how he made his fortune, this was quite a statement (See the East Palo Alto Today editorial – Lessons we can learn from the career of Paul Manafort, on page 4 of the September 2018 issue.).

Harvard law professor Lawrence Tribe tweeted, Judge Ellis's assessment that Manafort led an "otherwise blameless life" was proof that he's unfit to serve on the federal bench. I've rarely been more disgusted by a judge's transparently preferential treatment to a rich white guy who betrayed the law and the nation.

Given the sentence, Sen. Kamala Harris declared, 'The justice system is broken in

America." Through all of this, one important question stands out: If our justice system is broken, what are we doing to fix it?

Whatever we're doing, Manafort's sentence shows that we aren't doing enough!



Henrietta J. Burroughs

But all, who are disappointed or distressed by Ellis' decision, can still take heart. Manafort still faces charges for a different set of crimes. He will soon be sentenced for these crimes by District of Columbia Judge Amy Berman Jackson and he could get another ten years, which is the maximum time to be given, added to his current sentence.

We'll see on this coming Wednesday, March 13, Manafort's next court date, the type of sentence he gets from Jackson.

Lady Justice is, obviously, not blind, but how do we enable her to see more clearly?

\*\*\*\*\*

Editor's note: The above editorial is a reprint of the EPA Today Online Blog post which appeared on the EPA Today website at ..... <http://epatoday.org/forum.html> on Saturday, March 9, 2019 - As an update to it, it needs to be pointed out that Manafort received a 7.5 year sentence when he appeared before Judge Jackson on March 13 and it was announced after his sentencing that the State of New York is bringing an additional 16 criminal charges against him for housing fraud. If he is convicted of these charges, then he can not receive a presidential pardon.

Isn't it time that white collar criminals are charged for their crimes like everyone else? Simply because someone is rich and thinks that they are above the law, doesn't mean that they should be treated as if they are.

It's time our criminal justice system lives up to what Lady Justice symbolizes.

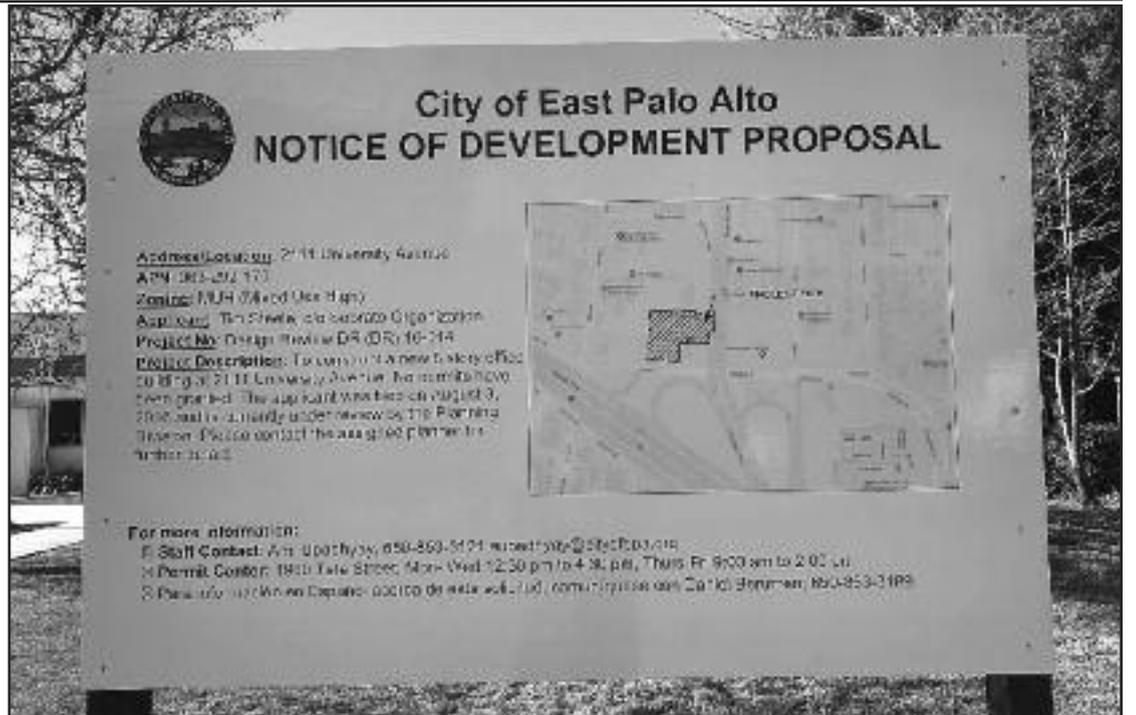


Photo by Alamoni Afungia

This photo shows the notice of development proposal covering the construction of the office complex the Sobrato Development organization plans to develop at 2111 University Avenue. See Afungia's article on page 11 of this issue that discusses the community meetings that were held regarding this proposal.

## Letters in East Palo Alto Today



Photo - courtesy <https://www.publicdomainpictures.net/>

The south lawn of the White House

### Three things wrong with Emergency Powers:

Dear Editor

1. The act does not define an emergency, nor end point. Will it be like the 9/11 Authorization for Use of Military Force, which is still sending boys into combat?

2. Would you give Trump unlimited powers? Dictatorships start with a cult of personality (Check), lying propaganda (check), scaring people with an "enemy" ("immigrant criminals"—check), defying

the Constitution (only Congress can tell how to spend money—check), using cruelty to get what he wants (separating children—check), demanding absolute loyalty (so far, only his appointees).

3. Next would come using surveillance (we already have loss of privacy by computers), arresting "disloyal" citizens, resorting to violence (like the brutal demonstration in Charlottesville that he did not condemn), and whipping up a war to inspire national unity.

This is a tipping point. How will

you respond? This country is full of people who came here to escape the kind of oppression that may be our future.

Use social media, call Congress, demonstrate!

A personal note: 30 years ago, I helped a wonderful family fleeing a murderous government in El Salvador. In my old age, these "illegal aliens" who got asylum are caring for me.

Gertrude Reagan  
Palo Alto, CA

## EPA Today's Policies & Principles

In order to better serve the communities of East Palo Alto and Belle Haven, East Palo Alto Today has made the commitment to operate with high professional standards and to adhere to a strict code of ethical conduct.

The principles and policies stated herein serve as an agreement with our readers, advertisers and all others within our service

area.

East Palo Alto Today is dedicated to conscientious journalism. We maintain this commitment by seeking and reporting the truth, acting with integrity, and serving the public interest. We will report the news thoroughly and accurately and include multiple perspectives without favoring one over the other.

We will hold ourselves accountable to common standards of decency, treating our colleagues, news sources, and the public with respect.

We are committed to maintaining our independence by avoiding partnerships, investments or business relationships that would compromise the integrity of our news reports.

### East Palo Alto Today

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Editor-in-chief: Henrietta J. Burroughs

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# Opinion

The ideas expressed on this page are solely the views of the individual authors who do not represent East Palo Alto Today's board or staff

## What gentrification can teach us

By **Kyra Brown**

"Gentrification is no big deal." More often than not, when the topic arises, this is the response I hear from people (white and non-white) who move into urban neighborhoods and gentrify them. This past summer, when I'd heard that there was a movie about the gentrification of Oakland: "Blindspotting," I just about jumped out of my skin. Since this controversial topic had made it into mainstream theaters, it meant this view that gentrification was somehow insignificant, wasn't quite true. While I'm from East Palo Alto (EPA), California, I identified with the gentrification of Oakland, a city much larger in mass than my own, but similar in its



Kyra Brown

demographic make-up, its history of marginalization and its fight to not be overshadowed by big tech companies such as Uber (in Oakland) or Amazon (in EPA).

At one point in its history, EPA was a predominantly black town, whose movement to incorporate gained momentum in the 1960's and culminated in 1983. During conversations, many people (both white and

non-white, recent gentrifiers and long-time residents alike) assured me: that (1) "gentrification was inevitable"; that (2) the process of gentrification "wasn't that bad"; and/or that (3) the gentrifying of my community was the fault of black "homeowners for selling their homes." While I wondered if there was some merit to the third statement, these answers seemed unsatisfactory.

This is because they were each predicated on a social problem (gentrification) which had no point of origin, no ill-effects and/or a baseline assumption that all black people in EPA who sold their homes (in the early 2000s) and moved out of the city, did so voluntarily, (and certainly not due to other factors

such as direct discrimination via predatory lending). To put it another way, the answers seemed unsatisfactory because they failed to identify the causes of gentrification, in a city where its effects were noticeable. For example, there were Tesla charging stations located across the parking lot from where Ravenswood High School once stood. For me, people's sentiments about the gentrification of East Palo Alto, only brought about more questions. For example: What does it mean for entire ethnic groups to be displaced or pushed out of cities which they helped to build? What does it mean when privileged groups within our rapidly gentrifying communities become dismissive of the difficul-

ties of the most vulnerable groups within the equation—or are we only interested in embracing topics which bring us ease? My hope is that we, as a changing community, are interested in addressing the harms that gentrification can cause and not just uplifting how some aspect of a new development project within our city might bring us some form of happiness.

For this reason, I strayed away from the fallacies that tended to surface when discussing this topic. I moved from the fallacies to the evidence. And based on the evidence, it seems that in the Bay Area, shrinking historically black com-

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## Who forgives our debts?

By **Michael Uhila**

In the Lord's prayer there's a line that goes "forgive our debtors" and so how does that play out today? As of October 2018 the national debt was at \$21.6 trillion. Can debt be forgiven by President Trump? Money was real when it was a silver certificate and hasn't been real since 1964. Today cash is a federal reserve and that means debt. Debt is negative numbers. Debt is an I owe you and it requires borrowing and paying back the bank.

Banks are federally protected to use numbers with

math to keep them in business. They'll rob us. Remember when Wells Fargo stole from it's own account holders. Making fake accounts. Wells Fargo claims to be re-committed to you. That means let's trust them again with our money. Who's stupid enough to trust a thief in corporate clothes?

Home equity Line of credit (HELOC), refinancing and credit cards. Those are loans based on credit scores. Mortgage means till death payments. Mortgage is for a home. The bank knows you need a home and you need a loan from the bank to get a



Michael Uhila

home. That's a mortgage. A home is collateral to the bank which means that they can evict you if you don't pay the mortgage on time. It's called foreclosure.

Somebody didn't make their

payments. Many people fall victim to foreclosure. Why? Late payments and NO payments for months can lead to foreclosure. You're homeless now and the bank got more bills. In Rahsaan Roland Kirk's song Volunteer Slavery he says "Volunteered Slavery it's gotten me having fun—more volunteered slavery". Is going to college volunteered slavery?

Kids attend public school on the taxpayers dime and when they graduate and get loans they are now on the lenders clock to pay back their debt. In my opinion it's a trap to keep debt revolving

like revolving towards \$21.6 trillion. Do the math.

When you're too lazy to think it's easy to be ignorant. As Robert Allen would say "ignorance is expensive". A bank will loan you money to fix up a house and fixing it up is called equity or I like to say "you're sweat". You make the house liveable with a new roof, walls, stable foundation and plumbing. You fixed it, you paid for it and the bank gets paid. You paying for the banks house and you live there on their clock. On their clock there are due payments, on their clock there

continued on page 8

## Drug importation bill would expose Americans to counterfeit meds

By **Peter J. Pitts**

Senators Chuck Grassley (R-IA) and Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) just introduced legislation to legalize the importation of prescription drugs. The "Safe and Affordable Drugs from Canada Act of 2019" would enable Americans to purchase cheap medicines from Canadian pharmacies for their own personal use. The senators believe the bill would reduce patients' spending at the pharmacy counter.

Lowering drug costs is a noble goal. But importation is not the answer. At best, the bill would yield little savings. At worst, it could endanger American lives by opening the flood-

gates to harmful counterfeit drugs.

Importation advocates have long exaggerated the disparity between Canadian and American drug prices. They often point to a handful of specialty drugs that cost more in America. In reality, most generic medicines cost the same or less in the United States than they do in Canada. And generics account for roughly 80 percent of prescriptions filled in the United States. One study from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimated that legalizing prescription drug importation would only reduce U.S. pharmaceutical spending by 1 percent.

The safety risks of importation far outweigh any meager savings.

The FDA can't regulate Canadian pharmacies, so there's no way to verify whether the drugs purportedly imported from the Great White North are safe. During a week-long anti-counterfeiting operation last year, Canadian officials inspected nearly 3,600 packages -- and found that 87 percent contained counterfeit or unlicensed health products.

A striking number of "Canadian" drugs aren't actually from Canada. Canadian internet pharmacies regularly import drugs from less developed and less regulated countries, like Turkey. Then they

slap on their own labels and ship them elsewhere.

One FDA operation found 85 percent of "Canadian" drugs originated in 27 different countries. And more than a third of those drugs were potentially counterfeit.

Canadian regulators have warned Americans that importation could be risky. One official at Health Canada, which oversees that nation's pharmaceutical supply, said the regulator "does not assure that products being sold to U.S. citizens are safe, effective, and of high quality, and does not intend to do so in the future."

Senior U.S. officials have issued similar warnings. Over the past 18 years, in both De-

mocrat and Republican administrations, every FDA commissioner and secretary of Health and Human Services has failed to certify that importation is safe.

If Sens. Grassley and Klobuchar's bill passes, more counterfeit drugs could find their way into the United States. Congress should think twice before putting the health of American patients in jeopardy.

**Peter J. Pitts**, a former FDA associate commissioner, is president of the Center for Medicine in the Public Interest. This piece originally ran in the Hill.

# Pedestrian bicycle overpass nears completion

By Henrietta J. Burroughs

It started as a idea nearly 30 years ago. Now it is being called one of San Mateo County's best built bridges, and it is located in East Palo Alto. On November 1 in 2018, several East Palo Alto City staff members led the press on a tour of the city's long awaited bicycle/pedestrian overpass.

According to the city's then Mayor Ruben Abrica who was on the tour, the idea of having a bike/pedestrian overpass in East Palo Alto started right after the city was incorporated. Now, what was once just an idea is becoming more



and more of a reality as the city's new overpass nears completion.

Officially called the Clarke Avenue-Hwy 101 Bicycle/Pedestrian Overcrossing, the overpass spans Highway 101 with one end of it anchored at Clarke Ave. and East

Bayshore Road near Home Depot and the other end firmly fixed at Newell Road and West Bayshore.

The bridge is approximately 1/4 of a mile long, and it really got underway on July 11, 2017, when the East Palo Alto City Council adopted a reso-

lution authorizing the city manager, then Carlos Martinez, to execute a construction contract with MCM Construction, Inc., a construction company in Rancho Cordova, for nearly \$10 million with a 10% contingency fee of \$973,000.

To pay for the bridge's construction, the city set up a project budget that included \$3 million from city funds that consisted of \$2,500,000 of Facebook Traffic Mitigation Funds, \$477,473,000 of Measure A Funds and \$200,000 of Measure M Funds.

In addition to the construction budget the city also set up a design budget, which was not to exceed \$100,000.

After a series of community meetings to discuss the bridge's location and design, the details surrounding the bridge's look, location and construction were finalized.

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# RCSD board makes a difficult and unpopular decision

By Monica Guzman

The Ravenswood City School District's Board of Trustees made a decision on Valentine's Day that made few, if anyone, happy. During their meeting at the district's Euclid Avenue headquarters, the school board decided on a facilities proposal to submit to the KIPP Valiant Community Prep (KIPP) charter school.

KIPP currently serves grades TK(Transitional Kindergarten), K, 1, 2, 6, and 7. The school will expand to offer grades 3 and 8 for the upcoming 2019-2020 school year and will need more facilities space to accommodate its increasing student enrollment.



To accommodate KIPP's request, the school board offered facilities at Ravenswood Middle School in addition to the two current locations KIPP has at Brentwood Academy and at the Los Robles/Ronald McNair Academy.

According to the board, the current sites do not have the

capacity to fit additional students and the Ravenswood City School District does not want to displace any of its own students from their neighborhood schools.

Under Proposition 39, the Ravenswood City School District is required to share its facilities with charter schools. KIPP currently occupies 11 classrooms at Brentwood Academy and 7 classrooms at the adjacent Los Robles/Ronald McNair Academy. Both schools serve students in grades K-5.

Proposition 39 does allow split campuses as long as the school district can provide valid reasons for the split locations. Despite the district's limitations (what limitations?),

parents, students, and staff of both KIPP and the District are displeased with the decision.

The RMS principal said that she is worried that the school has not had the opportunity to grow and the expansion of KIPP onto the RMS campus will impede the middle school's potential growth. Some of the school's current students expressed the concern that sharing the RMS campus with KIPP students would affect student events.

Kate Belden, a KIPP principal, said during the meeting that the proposal is not equitable. Belden suggested the alternative of adding portables to the Los Robles/Ronald McNair and Brentwood site. She did not

specify if KIPP expects the district to fund the portables.

The facilities proposal brought angst to many community members. There were rumors of schools closing and one Belle Haven student tearfully pleaded to the board for it not to close her school. Dr. Gloria Hernandez-Goff, the district superintendent, attempt to allay these fears by stating that "at no point has district considered closing schools in response to KIPP."

The proposal is not an absolute resolution. KIPP has the opportunity to negotiate with the school district regarding the facilities. The final offer will take place on April 1 of this year.

# City residents share their vision

cluded a brainstorm of the pros and cons of the city and a collaborative drawing of an ideal community.

Chang asked all the contributors to keep an open mind, since the nature of the work is to explore several ideas, regardless of how eccentric they are. According to Chang, the meetups are a work in progress, but he wants to make sure that everyone, who is interested can participate.

Federico Andrade, a resident of East Palo Alto for five years, likes the fact that the meetup brings people together and promotes civility. "The internet allows for the worst to come out in us," Andrade said. He added how online discussions and social media community groups can



Photos by Jerry Chang  
Meetup participants sketch their ideas during the The Future of East Palo Alto sessions held in the city in January 2019.

become negative and people attack each other's ideas instead of working together.

"The City of East Palo Alto is changing, and we don't need to fight what's coming. Instead, we should understand and embrace the

change to somehow control it to our favor. As a resident, I'd like to be part of the group that controls the change in the city," Andrade said.

Court Skinner, a resident of 30 years, attended several of the January meetups. Ac-

ording to Skinner, some recurring local themes include an interest in commerce, specifically locally owned retail, along with affordable housing, education, jobs, gentrification, and transportation.

Skinner commended Chang for his ability to bring the community together. "We need something better than what we currently have. City hall is a place where stuff happens and we need to get the community involved to properly design an efficient building," Skinner said.

Chang has received valuable insight from the Meetups which gives him the confidence to share what he has learned with the architects and city leaders. Chang said that he hopes this work will help strengthen the relation-

continued from page 1

ship residents have with their city and the ownership they feel about it.

"The process is not what will happen, but what is possible. We are developing a menu of what we can choose from," he said.

The building's design is the second phase. Chang hopes that the second phase of the city's Facilities Master Plan, the building's design, will merge both the work done within the meetups and the work done with the city. The last phase is the program and structure of the new building. According to Chang, the new city hall project might take five to ten years to complete.

For more information, see the Future of East Palo Alto on Facebook.

# Are grocery stores enough to improve our health?



By Edgar Tenorio

Over six years ago, Mi Pueblo opened up its East Palo Alto location. While the opening of the grocery store was a highly contested issue at the time, the establishment of the supermarket created a central location where residents of East Palo Alto could easily and reliably access fresh, healthy foods.

Before the establishment of Mi Pueblo, East Palo Alto had been called a "food desert," a term used by researchers that signifies that a certain area lacks many stores that sell fresh fruits and vegetables.

Proponents of Mi Pueblo hoped that increasing access to healthy foods would help to curb East Palo Alto's obesity problem.

According to a survey conducted by UCLA, at the time of Mi Pueblo's opening in late 2011, East Palo Alto's rate of obesity was 27%,

over 10% higher than California's overall rate of obesity.

Many researchers and scientists agree that communities with low access to fresh, healthy foods are more likely to be obese than communities that can easily access these types of foods.

As a result, numerous cities and organizations are following(? - Is there evidence to show this) East Palo Alto's lead and are trying to get more supermarkets and other food stores into communities that lack access to healthy foods

Two years after the opening of Mi Pueblo, there had been no significant change in East Palo Alto's obesity rate. While Mi Pueblo did provide a large location for people to easily access fresh food, the establishment of the grocery store has clearly not had the effect that many of its supporters had hoped for.

So, if researchers and government officials agree

that low access to healthy foods can cause obesity, why didn't Mi Pueblo, which has now become Cardenas Market, have a positive impact on East Palo Alto's obesity problem? In fact, the link between food access and obesity is not as clear as many people once believed.

One research study looked at a low income community that built a grocery store in its area. The results of the study showed that the residents of the town had no significant change in the types of foods that they ate. While the real reason for this is unknown, researchers have many theories.

Some researchers believe that this is due to the price of food. Since food deserts are commonly in low income areas and healthy foods tend to be pricier than unhealthy foods, adding a grocery store does not cause any changes because residents cannot afford to purchase the healthy food.

Other researchers believe that obesity is caused by living in a low-income area, and not directly by low food access. For example, individuals living in low income areas are often working longer hours, leaving them less time to exercise or cook at home, which significantly contributes to obesity.

Finally, some other researchers believe that fast food restaurants may be to blame.

Since low income areas and food deserts have high amounts of fast food restaurants in their areas,

researchers believe that individuals are pushed to eat there, whether due to time constraints or the low price, instead of going to grocery stores for their food.

As seen, the Cardena Market grocery store has failed to have a significant impact on the

health of East Palo Alto. If the city wants to tackle its obesity problem, then it must conduct further research and look for different strategies to help alleviate this problem.

Edgar Tenorio is a Public Ally and he is interning at the East Palo Alto Today newspaper.

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## Expanding



Photo courtesy - Google Maps

University Circle, East Palo Alto

that the west side needs a community meeting space and more open space, they are mainly concerned with the increased traffic and lack of parking. Some suggestions included making the meeting room a multi-purpose space and allowing

residents to park at University Circle. Another suggestion for University Circle is to create more retail space, including a community friendly eatery.

According to English, University Circle is open to sharing the parking facilities

continued from page 3

with Woodland residents. They will need to work out the logistics first.

English acknowledged the traffic situation in East Palo Alto is not ideal and University Circle will evaluate the projected traffic impacts to alleviate them. University Circle already has a plan to reduce existing traffic caused by campus commuters. The plan consists of alternate transportation and encouraging alternative working hours among University Circle tenants.

A Planning Commission study session will occur in April and is open to the public. This is the next of several steps required before University Circle can submit a formal application.

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# Lifecycles

## Meeting the needs of East Palo Alto's 'hidden population'

By Sharifa Wilson

Pacific Islanders, make up almost 10% of the community and have similar immigration issues.

East Palo Alto has been home to the Pacific Islander community for many years. The diversity can be seen every day, on almost every block, at every community gathering and in classrooms throughout the city. Samoans, Tongans and Fijians are the largest groups and they make up nearly 10% of the community.

The nonprofit organization One East Palo Alto recognized the need to provide support to these families and it formed a team to address this issue. A Pacific Islander Know Your Rights Initiative (PIKYRI) was launched in 2017.

A major accomplishment of PIKYRI was the convening of two community wide immigration workshops focused on "Know Your Rights" and "Visas and Citizenship Resources". Over 100 Pacific Islanders (PI) attended these forums, and they were provided general information regarding current administration immigration policy.

They also learned of their constitutional rights and the state and local protections that are currently in place. Speakers included Congresswoman Jackie Speier, California Assemblyman Marc Berman, and San Mateo County Supervisor Warren Slocum as well as local representatives from police departments and schools.

Afternoon sessions offered culturally specific individual and small group meetings with attorneys from



Photo courtesy of Sharifa Wilson  
Members of the Pacific Islander community listen attentively to workshop facilitators.

Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto (CLSEPA) and International Institute of the Bay Area (IIBA).

With funds from the CZI Community Fund, a Pacific Islander Resource & Referral Center opened in East Palo Alto this February. The center is located at 903 Weeks Street – and operated by the Multicultural Counseling & Educational Services of the Bay Area (MCESBA). The

center will serve as a hub for members of the Pacific Islander community and is designed to provide bilingual advocacy, immigration and case management services to immigrant constituents. Services will be provided Tuesday 1:00 p.m.- 6:00 p.m. and Thursday 1:30 p.m.- 8:00 p.m. The center is reachable by phone at 650-630-0692.

The Resource & Referral Center will coordinate an

"Immigration Forum" in April. The forum will be held on Saturday, April 6 from 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. at the Ravenswood Middle School, which is located at 2450 Ralmar Ave, in East Palo Alto.

The forum will focus on citizenship and visa renewals and provide an opportunity for consultations with immigration attorneys. These consultation sessions are valuable in increasing an understanding of strategies that can be used by families to adjust their immigration status. This free event is open to any one, who is interested in learning more about how to permanently address their immigration issues.

**Sharifa Wilson** is a former mayor of East Palo Alto. She is very active in One East Palo Alto and a member of the Ravenswood City School District Board.

## Getting to know our residents

By Alamoni Afungia

With the help of my peers, I wanted to begin this new journey of getting to know our community through interviews. Whether it is natives of East Palo Alto, new residents in the area or visitors. As a native of the town myself, I believe it is very important to hear the stories of East Palo Alto's residents and hear how the city has impacted their lives.

This month, I was lucky enough to meet a city resident, who has been living in this small city for all the 28 years of her life. This phenomenal Pacific Islander woman is Eseta (Seta.) Uhila was born at Stanford Hospital on September 13, 1990 and has been living in the community since her birth. She remem-

bers from her childhood how little traffic there was in the city and the many things she did with her friends.

"We did not rely heavily on technology, since during that time it barely existed.

So, my cousins and I would always play on the streets or attend community activities."

Although, she recalls how amazing her childhood was then and how it looks now, she does bring up how the community has improved since then. "Growing up, we had to be home before sundown for safety reasons. Now that there are more improvements in EPA. That means



Eseta Uhila

that there are cleaner streets. It's more diverse with more Asians and Palangi's (whites), and we have big companies in the area to hopefully help fund EPA."

However, Uhila brings up concerns that she has for East Palo Alto and hopes that the community can focus more on these issues. For instance, because Facebook, Amazon and Google are in the area, it has caused a lot of problems in EPA including rent increases, traffic and discrimination for the migrants who have been living here for ages.

Uhila backs this up by stating, "Change is good. How-

ever, there are too many people and everything is way too expensive."

During our interview, she really focused her concerns on the high cost of rent. She pointed out that the cost of purchasing a home in East Palo Alto is now nearly a million dollars, which pushes residents who have been living here for years out, because they can barely afford the rent increases.

Since there are huge companies in the area, Uhila felt that they should give more support, since she strongly believes that their contribution should go towards helping East Palo Alto by building more community centers and parks.

She even suggested that the city should offer more job opportunities to long-time res-

idents. This way, East Palo Alto is not only giving back, but the city is also helping individuals with a well paying job as well. Therefore, families will hopefully be able to keep the houses they've owned for 20+ years.

Overall, Uhila loves her hometown and is very blessed to have been raised in East Palo Alto. Although East Palo Alto has changed immensely, the sense of family has always remained in the community and for that she is happy to call East Palo Alto her very own home.

**Alamoni Afungia** is an East Palo Alto resident and a former EPA Today intern.

This year she is among the Public Allies who are currently serving at EPA Today.

## Who forgives

are interest rates and you're paying for it.

Are you a slave to the bank? Who really owns the house? The government does, otherwise you wouldn't be paying property tax. The bank owns it too. Who are you? To them you're the asset that keeps them in business. What's an asset? I'll use Robert Kiyosaki's definition of

an asset is what puts money into your pocket or in this case you're putting money in the banks pocket. You live in the house but you really don't own it and even after you pay it off, you still have to pay property tax. You're not an exemption or a religion so you pay taxes till you die. Exemptions are non profit organizations and religions so they

don't have to pay taxes. A religion can forgive a debt but religion aside. Debt is what needs to revolve an economy. Why? Diamonds are a girl's best friend and debt is a national problem.. Bank with Bank of America , transfer with Chase and swipe with Capital one. Can you feel the debt?

In the movie Fight Club the

character Tyler Durden says "the things you own start to own you". You own a Kups coffee maker, the Martha Stewart crock pot and Samsonite 3 piece sandpaper suitcase. It owns you too. With a Ralph Lauren duvet in the bedroom set you sweated to fix up. All because of debt. I'm not a financial professional but I got the freedom of press

to display my opinion like a \$21.6 trillion dollar Christmas tree. It's about debt but who will forgive us for our debts on earth if we don't all make it to heaven?

**Michael Uhila** is an East Palo Alto resident and regular contributor to East Palo Alto Today.

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# Lifecycles

## Healthy Home Connection celebrates health and energy improvements in Belle Haven

By Gloria Flores-Garcia

Lavar Johnson, of Belle Haven, is a celebrated recipient. His home was one of 18 homes selected from the area to receive home improvements designed to create a healthier living space. The improvements were a gift to Johnson and the other homeowners from the newly formed Healthy Home Connection Program.

Johnson lived with severe respiratory issues, which led him to rely on taking many medications, for more than a decade. Due to his physical state and financial situation, he was not able to make improvements on his home that were required for his health and safety. Many people, in



Photo courtesy Gloria Flores-Garcia  
Lucky Lavar Johnson stands in front of his Belle Haven home

situations like Johnson's, are not aware that their overall physical, mental and social health conditions could be affected by the conditions of the space that provides them shelter.

Build It Green (BIG), an Oakland based non-profit, as the lead, leveraged generous funding from Facebook, and collaborated with on-the-ground work from El Concilio

of San Mateo County, a non-profit community based organization, to bring the Healthy Home Connection program to fruition. Surveys, assessments and necessary installs were leveraged to provide the solutions to families faced with hardships in the Belle Haven community.

Celebrated are the 18 Belle Haven community homes and families that received health

and energy upgrades made by the partnership that comprised the Healthy Home Connection Program. The idea of the Healthy Home Connection was purposeful, heartfelt, and intentional in its vision as BIG sought out key players to leverage leadership, funding and an on-the-ground work to make it happen.

Key to the program's success was the use of the Hayward Score to identify unhealthy conditions in the home and each family member's health status. The patent-pending, web-enabled tool built by the best minds in the healthy homes industry over the past three years, provides a survey, home score, and a customized set of recommendations outlining steps

to improve the health and safety of the home.

In addition, this approach can "simultaneously address the affordable housing crisis, the climate crisis and the public health issues that affect thousands of individuals and families in communities facing inequities," said Karin Burns, Executive Director of Build It Green. The result is that some of the most vulnerable families are left behind and must live in homes that exacerbate asthma and other health conditions, as well as homes that are inefficient with high utility bills, contributing to displacement and the affordable housing crisis.

"We at El Concilio are committed to providing the best

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# East Palo Alto Today finds itself a public ally

By Srishti Prabha

**P**ublic Allies is an AmeriCorps program dedicated to young adult leadership development. Its mission is to create a just and equitable society and foster diverse leadership to sustain it.

Public Allies, as an organization, exists in 24 states and is intentional in hiring minorities that are overlooked in a traditional workplace. Affiliated with Public Allies, is a powerhouse of a woman, the first lady of the white house and the first lady of our hearts, Michelle Obama; she asserts that “one of the happiest moments of [her] life” was founding the first branch of Public Allies in Chicago.

Working with East Palo Alto Today and East Palo Alto Center for Community Media are five Public Allies members--Alamoni Afungia, Srishti Prabha, Edgar Tenorio, Lea Bolosan, and Emily Hess. They will be writing a series of articles for EPA Today that will culminate in an event held at the East Palo Alto YMCA; the event will illuminate the strengths, assets, and resources of East Palo Alto.

**Srishti Prabha** is a Public Ally volunteering this year with the East Palo Alto Today newspaper.



Photo by Alamoni Afungia

It was a sunny day in East Palo Alto, so the Public Allies working with the East Palo Alto Today newspaper decided to take a selfie that included themselves and the paper's founder Henrietta J. Burroughs. They had fun with the photo and the shadow the sun cast on everyone.

# Free at last celebrates a community in recovery

By Lea Bolosan

**F**ree at Last, a nationally recognized recovery and treatment center located on Bay Road, celebrated its 25th Anniversary on Friday, January 18, 2019. Its name—a nod to Martin Luther King, Jr.—evokes feelings of joy and hope that matched the lively atmosphere of the event.

Before the dinner and entertainment, staff members led tours of their residential houses, which are located around the corner from the Free at Last center. Cassandra Julian, Free at Last's Women's Residential Director, described the current services available for women like professional development classes and financial training—the same services she was provided 20 years ago. “I came here with my two boys and Free at Last helped me get my life in order.” Grateful for her recovery, she is inspired to pay it forward. “It is a big deal for me to be able to help a woman get her children back by learning how to take care of herself first.”

Donned in custom red shirts displaying the year they graduated from a Free at Last program, alumni gathered with their friends and families for the big reunion. Current staff members were thrilled to see their former clients. Alvin Hall, the Transitional Housing Director, was surprised to reunite with a client from 2006. “The greatest



Photo by Lea Bolosan

Vicki Smothers stands with three East Palo Alto City council members.

part [of working] is the moment I pick up the telephone and someone says ‘something you said to me just helped me out,’ he told her. “And here you are! You are my moment!”

The walls were decorated with photos of its founding members and a timeline of their organization, including news articles from their earlier years and visits from former presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama. Guests cheered and sang along as staff members performed a dance routine to “Ain't No Stoppin' Us Now” from the 1997 film Boogie Nights. The entertainment continued with traditional Tongan and Mexican dances by youth from the community.

There was much to celebrate. Three of its co-founders—Vicki Smothers, Dorsey Nunn, and Molly Hogan—were recognized by Free at Last for their trailblazing efforts.

Reverend Mary Frazier was awarded the 2019 David Lewis Award for her significant contributions to substance abuse recovery in East Palo Alto. In

addition to her involvement at Voices of Recovery, the East Palo Alto Behavioral Health Advisory Group, and the East Palo Alto Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition, she serves as a spiritual advisor for Free at Last. Her son, Eric Walker, after whom the Free at Last men's residential house is named, was also a strong advocate for recovery within the community.

In honor of its anniversary, Free at Last received a proclamation from the City of San Mateo for its 25 years of service. Council member Larry Moody, who presented the award alongside Mayor Lisa Gauthier and Vice Mayor Regina Wallace Jones, praised Free at Last's work to change the narrative of East Palo Alto from “the murder capital of the country” to what it is today.

“You don't have permission to say that about our community anymore,” he said. “We've come through that. We are healthy and vibrant.” Moody praised the scope of the center's work, adding that “the seeds and the work of Free at

Last have gone throughout the nation and throughout the world.”

Echoing this sentiment, Roland Williams, founder of Free Life Enterprises and the evening's keynote speaker, acknowledged that East Palo Alto is a community in recovery. “You don't have to be an addict to be in recovery from something. We all struggle.” Free at Last, he continued, was the stone dropped in a pool—a pool of good people struggling with substance abuse, incarceration, and other issues that have plagued East Palo Alto for decades.

When addicts began changing their own lives at Free at Last, Williams said that the effects rippled. “Children started to have parents back in their lives,” he said. “Gangsters became productive members of society. We had moms that didn't have to worry every time the phone rang.” As Williams put it, people got clean where they got dirty, and as a result, the entire community began to heal.

The week before the celebration, Vicki Smothers, one of Free at Last's founders, and Chief Executive Officer Sue Cortopassi reflected on Free at Last's history, its impact on the community, and its hopes for the future.

In the early 1990s, as East Palo Alto was suffering from drug-related violence and HIV, Free at Last was conceived as a result of its co-founders' frus-

trations with the local treatment programs. At the time, Smothers and David Lewis were recovering drug addicts who cycled through multiple treatment centers. They were tired of their recovery being facilitated by outsiders.

“They didn't speak to the needs of the community,” said Smothers. “They spoke to the needs of the health department, of the society at large, but they didn't speak to the needs of the people that actually lived here in East Palo Alto. They didn't speak to people that were getting out of prison. They didn't speak to the mothers that were pregnant and on crack.” Both Smothers and Lewis knew from personal experience that recovery was possible, and they believed that it could be done by the community.

Through their connections with the San Mateo County Health Department, they met others, who shared their vision. “It was a very small start,” Smothers remembered, as she talked about how she and Lewis co-founded Free at Last.

“We started with three ex-convicts in recovery, a Stanford student, an administrator of a methadone program and a public health nurse. All of us were community members,” Smothers said.

In 1994, they received their first grant and set up shop in a storefront in Whiskey Gulch—a

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# Profiles of 5 public allies who are dedicated to community research and cultural preservation

By Srishti Prabha



**Alamoni Afungia**

**Alamoni Afungia** is no stranger to EPA Today, having worked as an intern in the summer of 2014 for the organization.

She graduated from Oregon State University with a Bachelor's in Anthropology and a minor in Ethnic Studies in the Spring of 2018 and found her way to Public Allies.

An East Palo Alto native, Alamoni is concerned with the shifts occurring within East Palo Alto. She has noted that many people she has known throughout her life have been priced out of their homes. "Some," she said, "have left the state and their communities" entirely.

Her interest lies in cultural awareness and preservation, for which she works tirelessly as a teacher's aide at East Palo Alto Academy.

Alamoni continues to give back to her community, because she is cognizant of its value. For her, "it's more than a community, it's a family."

She feels so empowered at times that she's willing to sky-dive despite her deathly fear of heights.



**Lea Bolosan**

**Lea Bolosan** comes with a bevy of experience. After graduating from UC Irvine in 2012 with a Bachelor's degree in biology, she went on to become a production manager at Anatomage, a company associated with 3D medical imaging.

The salary was great, but Lea had a moment of revelation as she was karaokeing melodically to Bonnie Tyler's 'Total Eclipse of the heart,' she realized that she did not want to turn around and go back to work at Anatomage.

She knew that she had had a total eclipse of the heart and she craved change.

The change came in the form of Public Allies and her enrollment at CSU Northridge in a masters program in pub-

lic administration specializing in nonprofit management.

She is currently working at Pivotal, a nonprofit agency that provides education and employment services for foster youth.

Lea hopes to continue to learn, grow, and work on the three topics that concern her the most: healthcare, homelessness, and winning karaoke competitions.



**Emily Hess**

**Emily Hess** is a transplant to the Bay Area as a result of Public Allies. She was in her freshman year at the University of Missouri in Kansas City studying sociology and political science when she discovered the Public Allies organization.

Her dedication to advocating for sexual assault victims pushed her to pursue direct service. She works at Fair Oaks Community Center, where she

helps to provide access to resources for low income and homeless families and individuals.

Emily is benevolent but she has faced her fair share of adversity as a gay women in the rural midwest.

Additionally, rumor has it, that she had to grow up with a cracked skull that she obtained battling crime as a fetus in the womb.

She entered the world kicking and screaming and she uses that same zealotness to advocate for the marginalized. She wishes to continue her endeavors in policy and law after she graduates from college in 2023.



**Srishti Prabha**

**Srishti Prabha** graduated with a bachelor's degree in biology with a minor in environmental science from Northeastern University and then went on to pursue a master's in anthro-

pology from Harvard University.

Srishti was confronted by the glass ceiling and the oppression of minority women when she began doing research in labs.

Tiny but mighty, the feeling of disenfranchisement in research science was unsettling and she could not remain a bystander. That's when she decided to shift her focus to social justice for tangible change. Quickly, she found that her interest lies in equal access to culturally competent education and resources for youth.

Public Allies and her collaborative placement with the Palo Alto YMCA was the perfect template for her to explore advocacy and leadership for youth.

Srishti seems to have been born with the fight. When she was in second grade, she took a chicken nugget right off her friend's plate because her friend had given everyone in the group, except her, a chicken nugget. Though the chicken nugget looked grey, uncooked, and inedible, she knew what she was really addressing was inequity. She says, "I do not regret that decision to this day. It was the best chicken nugget I ever had. Tasted like justice."



**Edgar Tenorio**

**Edgar Tenorio** is a recent college graduate from Santa Clara University's Class of 2018. He majored in biology and public health.

Edgar's exposure to issues in the Bay Area stem from his upbringing in San Mateo. In college, he delved into

healthy living and food access issues for youth, which led him to become an advocate through Public Allies.

He works at the Sienna Youth Center where he enables youth to be active and healthy. His passion for his community and others can be

viewed in his willingness to take on extra projects such as tutoring Spanish-speaking mothers in English.

However, some believe that this might be a covert operation to get moms of the world into his true passion--Harry Potter. Furthermore, he

claims, "I look like a kid from the very first broom scene in Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone" and he truly believes it. Even though his look-alike has no lines, this is his penultimate accomplishment and some might argue, the reason for his obsession with Harry Potter.

## Community News Briefs

But, as for now, Hernandez-Goff's photo and superintendent's message are still on the Ravenswood City School District's website.

### A proposed new office complex in EPA

Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center hosted a community meeting at the East Palo Alto City Hall, regarding the new Sobrato building that will eventually be built at 2111 University Ave, directly across from Amazon on University Avenue and Donohoe

Street. During two meetings on January 17, 2019 and January 28, 2019, community members heard plans for the site and were invited to give their feedback.

Currently, this site houses the office of EPA Today, the Drew Pharmacy, The Stanford Law Project and several other small businesses. It is still up in the air how long these companies will stay in their current location.

While some at the meetings said that this would be a perfect time for the city to improve and bring in more tax

revenues, long time residents of EPA argued that this will cause additional gentrification. To make things worst, individuals believed that the proposed 8 story building planned for the site would bring more traffic to the area.

There were also concerns about the usage of this new building. Many stressed that this would be a perfect time for local businesses and non-profits in East Palo Alto to rent out the new offices. However, others said that Sobrato is only interested in the money and will offer this

space to companies that can bring more finances to the table.

Others concentrated on the design of the building. A lot of individuals mentioned that the draft of the building was very similar to the Amazon building therefore, they were concerned that it would cause confusion with visitors in the area. Others, said they liked the building's large visible windows and the fact that parking spaces would be at the very top of the office complex.

The second meeting oc-

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curred on January 28, 2019 at the City Hall at 7pm. Regardless if you attended the first one or not, it is very important that the community of East Palo Alto makes sure to share this with all friends and family in the area and attend if you can. This is a perfect time for the people of EPA to stand up and let your voices be heard--- it is never too late to get involved!

The city's planning commission has asked for changes in the building's design.

# An advocate for immigrants lives up to its name

By Emily Hess

To liberate means to free. Libre, the adjective form of liberate means free, or at liberty. That is exactly what the local San Mateo County program called Libre is trying to do for immigrants in San Mateo San Mateo County.

Libre is an organization dedicated to linking low income immigrants with resources that will allow them to meet their basic needs. Libre's services include legal consultation, which is free for help with (SIJS, VAWA, and U VISA.- what are these?) They also help with applying for public benefits and the complications involved in getting public benefits. These benefits include, but are not limited to, Health Programs (Medical, Family PACT, ACE, etc.), Food Assistance Programs

(CalFresh/SNAP, Child Nutrition Programs or WIC), and cash assistance (Calworks, CAPI, SSI/SSP, State disability, etc.).

LIBRE also works with outreach and educational activities aimed towards informing immigrants about news updates and changing immigration policies.

In order to go more in depth and to see more of what LIBRE does and has to offer, I sat down with Rocio Garcia, a LIBRE Project Coordinator/Assistant. She described LIBRE as "a little bit of everything." Garcia is a newcomer to the LIBRE team. She joined in November 2018. Her previous background of working with immigrant students prepared her for her new job.

[Her role includes but is not limited to seeing immigrants, prescreening, intake, grant



Rocio Garcia

work, petitions, and staying up to date.] Garcia's new position has helped solidify her passion for working with undocumented citizens. It has also allowed her to look more deeply into the way government operates and work within the system in order to get resources to the families and individuals who need it.

The majority of Libre's clients are immigrants with many different backgrounds and many different stories.

"People come with a lot," said Garcia. A few weeks ago Garcia had a client who came in because he had been informed that his state disability would stop. Garcia called the U.S. State Department on his behalf, spoke with one of the department's representatives and was able to get the client back on disability. As a result, he was able to pay his rent.

One of the big topics that I and Rocio were able to talk about was the newly proposed changes to the public charge. For those of you who don't know public charge, currently, is an immigrant who relies solely on the government to get by (this is primarily determined by whether the family/individual receives cash benefits or not, such as Calwork and etc. Being recorded as a public charge can have large effects on an immigrants

ability to get a visa, or green card. However, there is a newly proposed change to what would make someone qualify as a public charge. Trump and his administration is proposing to expand those determining factors to include whether or not an immigrant is using other government resources such as CalFresh, WIC, Medical, etc. Thus making it even harder to get a Vista or Green card for low income immigrants. Rocio knew that this would make a big change when it came to her line of work, because her first training was over the newly proposed amendment to the current reigning public charge qualifications. Rocio stated a brief description of her opinion on the new changes, "Criminalizing people for needing to

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## Healthy home program

services possible to the community through programs that support people to create better futures for themselves and their families. We are proud that our partnership with BIG helped facilitate healthier and energy-efficient homes to those who would otherwise experience great afflictions," said Ortensia Lopez, executive director of El Concilio.

Multiple benefits resulted in



homes that are:

- Safer and healthier with improvements that mitigate indoor quality issues that exacerbate asthma and other medical conditions
- More affordable, with lower utility bills to help stabilize the

finances of families and prevent displacement

•Demand-harmonizing and climate-friendly, contributing to lower greenhouse emissions and optimizing grid-delivered clean energy resources

Housing services for communities facing inequities are often siloed and delivered inefficiently. Energy efficiency and weatherization programs do not address home health

conditions, which are often closely related. Furthermore, many homes are disqualified from receiving energy efficiency and solar PV improvements because of existing conditions in the home, such as mold, moisture, unsafe HVAC systems leaking carbon monoxide or dilapidated roofs. The result is that some of the most vulnerable families are left behind and must

live in homes that exacerbate their health conditions. We celebrate the accomplishments made from this pilot project and look forward to continued and growing partnerships.

Because of the improvements that were made through the Healthy Home Connection program, the 18 other homeowners, like Johnson, can now live healthier lives in their own homes.

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## Gentrification

munities (namely, EPA, Oakland and San Francisco) are the price we pay for expanding technological advancement. But it doesn't have to be this way. Not only this, it is also my position that if rapid gentrification is impacting the black community in EPA, its only a matter of time before it starts displacing the Latinx and Pacific Islander communities as well. Just recently, I'd read in the "San Jose Mercury Newspaper" about the eviction of a long-time Pacific Islander family from EPA, who I protested on behalf of, just two years earlier! Moreover, this pattern of displacement isn't just happening in California, it's happening to urban communities all over the United States.

Simply stated, I was looking for a conversation which did not make people gentrifying the city saints who were deserving (i.e. "I worked hard") and people being displaced from the city sinners who were undeserving ("They didn't work hard enough"). The conversation is more nuanced than that. I was



Kyra Brown stands proudly with her mother Sherice Lane and her grandmother Bonnie Bradford.

looking for balance. And struggling to find it.

With all of my questions, I was sure that there was another way to approach discussing gentrification. And for me, "Blindspotting" offered some guidance. What we, in my experience, are missing in the conversation around gentrification, is the unapologetic way in which we create a space for tension which allows people to wrestle with what is happening to their communities. Only then can we find ways to engage in meaningful conversations which point us toward more equitable solutions. But dismissing the experiences of those most negatively im-

pacted by the expansion of big tech and their subsequent displacement, won't do it for us.

In an era where there's no shortage of political divisions which further separate the haves and the have nots, I submit that we can think of different ways to run our communities which don't demonstrate a "Make the Neighborhood [insert name of gentrifying neighborhood] Great Again" mantra. This mantra/mindset assumes that nothing which exists in the neighborhood pre-gentrification, make it great (this includes the people). And that the only way to measure greatness or progress within a city is by how many white people OR

upper class people have moved into the community. Also, if you're a long-time resident and decide to set up shop on the sidewalk and sell water to a white jogger you see running through your neighborhood, and #PermitPatty reports you to the police for not having the proper paperwork, you might want to switch to a lemonade stand. Apparently, lemonade is less of a threatening drink than water, and selling it won't result in your eventual displacement from the neighborhood.

"Blindspotting" is prophetic, in that it shows us what can boil over, if we keep sweeping the topic of gentrification under the rug. If we aren't able to discuss the tension of this topic in community, in real time, with real people (those threatened with displacement and those new to the neighborhood), where else can we do it? Where do we go to discuss these matters? Where do we sit with the tension?

Oakland is the birthplace of the Black Panther Party and WIC programs. EPA is the home of Nairobi Day School and College

and a community having been redlined into existence, yet seeking to govern itself so much so that the case went to the Supreme Court. Yet many of the children of these generations are being pushed out of town. This is not to say that communities should only have low-income people who reside in them. However, it is to say that both cities (Oakland and EPA) are home to marginalized groups within our society, and as these cities grow, we cannot forget this fact. If we do, shame on us. This past December, Barack Obama put on his Instagram that "Blindspotting" was one of his top movies of 2018, if that does not convince you that it is a movie worth watching, I do not know what will! The movie "Blindspotting," in addition to challenging us to sit with the tension of what gentrification means to us individually, I offer that it also urges us to pull up our chairs, close down our computers, and figure out what we are going to do about it, collectively.

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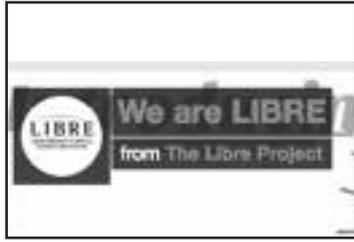
# Los defensores para los inmigrantes

Translated by Jessica French

Liberar significa poner en libertad. "Libre", la forma adjetiva de liberar, significa poder. Provenir libertad es exactamente lo que el programa del municipio San Mateo, llamada LIBRE, trata a hacer para los inmigrantes en el municipio del San Mateo.

LIBRE es una organización dedicada a conectar los inmigrantes de bajos ingresos con los recursos que les permiten a cumplir a sus necesidades básicas. Los servicios de LIBRE incluye consultación legal, que es gratis para los que busca ayuda con el Estatus del Inmigrante Especial y Joven (SJIS), La Acta de Violencia Contra Mujeres (VAWA), y U-VISA, una visa de no inmigrante que mantiene en reserva para las víctimas del crimen y sus miembros de familia directa.

LIBRE ayuda a la gente



que están solicitando los beneficios públicos, y también con los problemas que ocurren con solicitar los beneficios. Estos beneficios incluye los programas del salud como Medi-Cal, Family PACT and ACE; los programas de asistencia con la comida como CalFresh/SNAP, programas del nutrición de los niños, y WIC; y los programas de asistencia con el dinero como Calworks, CAPI, SSI/SSP, y discapacidad del estado.

LIBRE trabaja con las actividades del compromiso y las actividades educacionales que se dirigen a los inmigrantes y informarles sobre los progra-

mas nuevos y policas de la inmigración que están cambiando.

Rocio Garcia, una coordinadora del los proyectos y un asistora de LIBRE, describe LIBRE como "un poco de todo." Garcia está nueva al equipo LIBRE. Se unió en el noviembre del 2018. Dijo que su experiencia de trabajar con los estudiantes inmigrantes se preparó para su trabajo nuevo.

Su posición nueva se ha solificado su pasión de trabajar con los inmigrantes sin documentación. También se ha reconocido a reflejar más en como se maneja el gobierno y como trabajar por la systema para que puede dar los recursos a las familias y las individuales que los necesitan.

La mayoría de sus clientes son inmigrantes de muchas orígenes diferentes con muchas historias diferentes. "La gente viene con mucho," dijo Garcia.

Hace unos pocos semanas, Garcia tuvo un cliente que vino porqué se han informado que su discapacidad del estado parerá. Garcia llamó al departamento del estado U.S. de parte de él, habló con un representante del departamento, y pudo continuar su discapacidad. Por eso, él podía pagar la renta.

Una de las temas grandes que nos habló era el cambio sugerido a la carga pública, que explicó como un inmigrante, que por individual o por familia, está dependente completamente en el gobierno para los beneficios del dinero e/o los programas del arriba.

Ser recordado como carga pública tiene muchos efectos en la habilidad de un inmigrante a recibir una visa or tarjeta verde. Sin embargo, hay un cambio sugerido nuevo a cambiar la definición de la frase carga pública que determinará si alguien la está o la

no está.

La administración Trump está sugiriendo a expandir los factores determinados a incluir si un inmigrante está usando o no está usando otros recursos del gobierno, como CalFresh, WIC and Medi-cal. Este lo hace más difícil a recibir una visa o tarjeta verde para los inmigrantes de bajos ingresos.

Garcia sabía que este haría un cambio grande a su tipo del trabajo, porqué su primera práctica era sobre el cambio sugerido nuevo a los cualificaciones actuales.

Hablando sobre el cambio sugerido, Garcia lo describió como, "penalizando a la gente para necesitando sus derechos y necesidades cumplidos, como una necesidad para la nutrición y cuidado de salud." Ella también urgió que los inmigrantes que todavía

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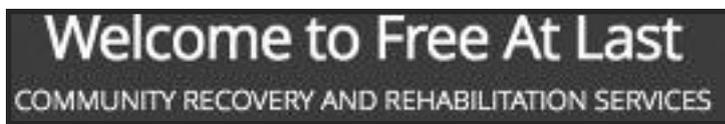
## Free at Last

strip of shops, bars, and apartments that has since been redeveloped as the site on which the Four Seasons is located.

Over the years, Free at Last has survived multiple operational and financial challenges. Smothers reminisced about their earlier years operating out of offices with leaky ceilings and no phone line. "We had a pay phone outside that people could call and that's where we would do their intake."

After their relocation, Free at Last was hit hard by the deaths of two of their co-founders: Lewis in 2010 and Priya Haji in 2014. Considering the years of low funding, Smothers admitted that five years ago, she did not believe that Free at Last would survive. "It was real scary for everybody," she said, "having to call people that have been working for years and tell them we can't keep you because we don't have any money."

Much credit is due to Sue Cortopassi, who was appointed Free at Last's chief executive of-



ficer in 2013. Cortopassi was referred to Smothers by a friend and Smothers knew instantly that she was the right person for the job. Under her strategic leadership, Free at Last was able to secure funding and continue to operate without cutting services. Smother's gratitude overflows not just for Cortopassi, but also for the many employees, for example, who took a voluntary 2% pay cut so Free at Last could maintain its services. "We have really good people with good hearts working here," she repeated throughout the conversation.

Today, Free at Last offers a full range of bilingual services such as street education, substance abuse treatment and transitional housing. The organization's services have been effective at reducing crime and substance abuse rates in East Palo Alto.

It also has a proven track record of success. In 2016, it provided prevention information and referrals to over 1,200 individuals. Moreover, the facility had over 9,000 Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous sign-ins. "Our arms are open to whoever needs treatment," Smothers said proudly of the organization. "If you respect the facilities and respect the staff, we've got services for you," Cortopassi added.

Out of the ten Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) service providers in the county, Free at Last's residential programs for men and women currently have the highest graduation rates. Graduates from Free at Last have secured housing and job education. Many gain employment at businesses in the area such as IKEA and Home Depot.

The success of Free at Last

lies in its community-recovery based model. It's crowning glory, as Smothers puts it, is that Free at Last is "built in the community, for the community, and by the community." This model is practiced in every aspect of the organization. From being founded by community members to having program graduates serve on the board of directors, Free at Last is, for many a shining example of asset-based community development.

Although she retired last year from the job she had with San Mateo County, Smothers will continue to dedicate her time to developing Free at Last alongside Cortopasi. Their dream for the organization? "We'd love to own our own administrative offices," Smothers said smiling, "so that we can continue our commitment to the community." Their goals are to expand the facility to include an in-house detox center, and to increase their recruitment efforts in the prisons—the desired result

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being quicker access to services at Free at Last. Smothers and Cortopassi are working towards a diversified funding stream that the organization can sustain to support this effort.

Free at Last's quarter-century-long journey is embedded in the history of East Palo Alto. Just as the city has shed its label as the murder capital of the country, Free at Last has persevered through turmoil and rebuilt the community by providing its residents with opportunities to begin new lives free of substance abuse. Vicki Smothers, David Lewis, and countless other individuals that have walked through the doors at Free at Last have shown that "The model of a community rebuilding itself from within, that's our model." Smothers said proudly. "We're rebuilding ourselves from within."

**Lea Bolosan** is a Public Ally working as an intern with the East Palo Alto Today newspaper.

## Advocates

have their basic right/needs met, such as need for nutrition, and healthcare." She also urged that immigrants who qualify should still continue to apply for these programs (non-cash benefits) or continue in the non-cash public benefits, because they will have 60 days to withdraw without penalty if/when the change passes.

On the final and positive note

Rocio and I decided we wanted to end on a positive note. Something that Rocio wanted to share with the readers was, "There is a lot of good and bad especially in this climate and the field we worked in; it's important to see people working for the greater good," Rocio is hoping that through her work she can make differences in the people lives, and help immigrants

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get what they need in order to survive and live healthy lives, like many of the LIBRE representatives. She hopes to spread hope to immigrants within the area and help them to know they have an advocate in LIBRE, and in her.

**Emily Hess** is a Public Ally who works as a volunteer with the East Palo Alto Today newspaper.

## Los defensores

califican deben continuar con solicitar estos programas (beneficios de no dinero) o continuar a recibir los beneficios de no dinero, porque tendrán 60 días a salir sin sanciones si y cuando el cambio ocurre.

De manera positiva Garcia dijo, "Hay mucho de bueno y malo, especialmente en esta clima y lugar dónde trabajamos. Es importante ver la gente bajando por la bien superior."

continued from above

Garcia espera que, por su trabajo, pueda hacer una diferencia en las vidas de la gente y ayuda a los inmigrantes a recibir lo que necesitan para sobrevivir y vivir las vidas saludables, como muchos de los representantes de LIBRE. Dijo que le gustaría expandir la esperanza a los inmigrantes en el area y ayudarles a ver que tienen una defensora por LIBRE y por ella.

# Big changes

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ruled against the Justice Department, denying the Trump Administration the power to include the Citizenship Question on the 2020 Census. The ruling came down on January 15, 2019.

In the Supreme Court case – the critics of the question included the American Civil Liberties Union Foundation, the Attorney General of the State of New York

Several days later the Justice Department appealed the district court's ruling to the U.S Supreme Court. On January 17, 2019, the Supreme Court, which was scheduled to hear the case on February 19, 2019 ruled to remove from its calendar the request to have Ross testify before the court about the reasons for having the Citizenship Question included in the census.

But, all is not over. As of now, the Justice Department has asked the Supreme Court to review its decision and rule on the Citizenship Question.

However, time is running out. The deadline to print the 2020 Census is July 2019.

No one is resting on his or her laurels. From the national to the local level, organizations and agencies are weighing in on the Citizenship Question and mobilizing.

At its January 15, 2019 meeting, the East Palo Alto City Council heard a special presentation from the San Mateo County Office of Community Affairs called Ensuring a Complete and Accurate Count for Census 2020. The report was made by Megan Gosh and her associate, Aparna Ramakrishnan, both from the San Mateo County City Manager's Office of Community Affairs.

In the report, Gosh said that immigrants, people of color, households with low income, households with limited English proficiency, children under 5 years old, the homeless and the housing unstable were groups that have been historically difficult to count.

She also said that there are now new challenges that the 2020 Census faces. The list includes the following

- \*Dramatically underfunded (50% decrease per household from 2010)

- Fewer local offices, less field staff, anticipated challenges recruiting qualified enumerators for non-response follow up

- Moving to primarily online Census, raising concerns about data security and presenting challenges for those who lack digital access and literacy

- Fear and lack of trust in



federal government, including data privacy

- Anxiety among immigrant communities due to Citizenship Question

Her report cited the fact that the City of East Palo Alto, in comparison with California as a whole, is particularly vulnerable to undercounting, since it contains a higher than average number of areas that exceed the state average with respect to poverty levels, limited or non-English speaking, those living in rental housing and in crowded housing, and those without a college degree – all factors that might make the inhabitants hard to count.

Also, statistics show that 43% of East Palo Alto's residents are foreign born and 73% speak a language other than English, additional characteristics that could lead to an undercount of the city's residents

There is a lot at stake in Census 2020. According to

Gosh, "In 2015, \$675 billion was distributed nationwide. CA received about \$77 billion. That equates to \$2,000 per resident per year for the next 10 years."

Gosh and Ramakrishnan ended their council presentation by asking the five council members to partner with San Mateo County in its outreach efforts to get all eligible East Palo Alto residents to participate in the 2020 Census.

Council members and the city staff agreed to work with county officials to do everything that they could to see that all East Palo Alto residents are counted.

Considering the numbers of residents within the city, who fall in the difficult to count category, an all-out effort will be needed, especially since the recent government shutdown might have added another complication.

Research by current data

collecting organizations, like the Pew Research organization, shows that the 35-day government shutdown has negatively impacted many areas of the federal government, including the Census Bureau. The shutdown leaves open whether the bureau will be able to print census documents by the July 29 deadline.

Given the effects of the shutdown, the lawsuits and the locations of those who are most vulnerable to being undercounted in the census, it might take an enormous effort by state, county, city and a multitude of census supporters to get citizens and noncitizens alike to overcome their fear and distrust of the government to participate in Census 2020, even when the issue involving the Citizenship Question is resolved.

####

What do you think? We'd like to hear from you. Do you think the Citizenship Question should be added to the 2020 Census? Go to <https://flipgrid.com/qv4sss8> and give EPA Today your feedback. You can record your response with your phone or give your feedback via your laptop or desktop computer.

# Pedestrian overpass

continued from page 1

The actual groundbreaking for the bridge occurred a year ago this month in November 2017. According to members of the city staff, the construction on the bridge is at the midpoint with its completion and grand opening scheduled for next spring, on or near March 1, 2019.

Several members of the city staff led members of the press on a tour of the overpass. The tour given on Thursday, November 1 also included the city's Mayor, Ruben Abrica. said that when the overpass is completed, it will be the fastest way for people to walk and to bike from the East side of East Palo Alto to the west side of the city.

The mayor also said that once the creek trail is opened a short distance away on East Bayshore Road, the overpass will be the fastest route to the Baylands and to the Dumbarton Bridge.

Abrica expressed his excitement about the fact that the city's residents, who live on

the west side of East Palo Alto will now have easy and safe pedestrian and bike access to the Highway 101 Ravenswood Shopping Center and to schools on and near Clarke and Pulgash Avenues.

The tour given for the press was an historic one, since it marked the first time anyone other than construction crews and, possibly, several city staff members have set foot on the bridge.

The day of the tour, one could walk from the East side of the bridge over the freeway to the area of the bridge that sat directly over the middle of East Bayshore. The concrete still needed to be poured to cover the portion of the bridge from the middle of East Bayshore to the sidewalk at Clarke.

In talking about its construction, both East Palo Alto's Interim City Manager Sean Charpentier and the city's Public Works Director Kamal Fallaha, agreed that the bicycle/pedestrian overpass will



Photo by Henrietta J. Burroughs

East Palo Alto's City Council member Ruben Abrica stands on the pedestrian/bike overpass with the city's Public Works Director Kamal Fallaha during a press tour in November 2018.

be one of the fastest built and one of the safest in San Mateo County and the rest of the Bay Area.

For Charpentier, the bridge is a reflection of the council's commitment to meeting the needs of the city's residents.

According to Fallaha, the overpass will be one of the widest and one of the safest in San Mateo County spanning 12 to 14 feet across. It will also have LED lights, a seven-foot fence and a handrail that will span its entire length.

Not only is the bridge completely ADA compliant, but

given its gradual sloping feature, it will be easy for people who are even out of shape to traverse its length.

Being a project that's been nearly 30 years in the making, its construction and completion is being seen by some, including Abrica, as an issue of environmental and social justice.

Palo Alto and Menlo Park both had pedestrian and bike overpasses, but East Palo Alto lacked one.

For the first two decades, Abrica said, the city focused on University Avenue, then for

the last 10 years ago, it put the bridge as a goal.

It's clear that the goal is almost reached with about 25% of completion remaining.

Last year, just after Thanksgiving, both sides of Highway 101 were closed from university Ave to embarcadero on separate nights to allow for the removal of temporary construction areas, called "falsework" under the bridge.

Once the bridge has been completed, the city council will turn its attention to issues related to the overpasses' maintenance and safety issues, such as the potential installation of cameras to provide for public safety.

Once the overpasses opens, it might once again be time to consider the construction of another bicycle and pedestrian overpass adjacent to the existing highway overpass for cars, bikers and pedestrians at University Avenue, between Donohoe and Woodland.

# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

**Mobility Study Community Meeting** - Wednesday, March 20, 2019 at 7:30 pm  
 Where: City of East Palo Alto City Hall Community Room (First floor), 2415 University Avenue, East Palo Alto. Study topics include: cut through traffic in EPA; parking in the Gardens, Palo Alto Park and the Weeks neighborhoods; stop signs; bicycle and pedestrian improvements. For more information, contact Susan Barnes, Project Manager at:.....sbarnes@city-ofepa.org

**Introduction to Motivational Interviewing** - March 29, 2019

In this introductory workshop, participants will explore the spirit of Motivational Interviewing (MI) through recognizing, maintaining and facilitating change and commitment. MI is a gentle, person-centered directive

method of communication for enhancing intrinsic motivation to change by exploring and resolving ambivalence. Learn different communication modalities that help bring out the best in how you connect with and advise those you work with When: Friday, March 29, 2019. 9:00 am - 3:00 pm. Where: Silicon Valley Community Foundation, 1300 South El Camino Real #100, San Mateo, CA 94402. Cost: Free! Go here for more information.

**Dar sentido a las Conversiones de Garajes y Unidades de Vivienda Accesorias (ADU) - March 26, 2019**

Qué se tiene que considerar al construir o legalizar estos espacios Martes 26 de Febrero 6:30-7:00pm Cena ligera 7:00-9:00pm Programa Iglesia de San Francisco de Asís 1425 Bay Road, East

See more community calendar events at the website for the East Palo Alto Today newspaper [www.epatoday.org](http://www.epatoday.org)

Palo Alto Resumen de la iniciativa: por qué esto importa Unidades informales, cumplimiento de códigos y identificación de recursos Herramientas básicas y calculadora de costos Opciones de financiación Preguntas y respuestas, próximos pasos y Feria de Recursos de Planificación en Junio Si está interesado en obtener información básica sobre su propiedad, incluida la elegibilidad para tener una unidad adjunta o separada, confirme su asistencia a Tabitha al [adu-initiative@rebuildingtogetherpeninsula.org](mailto:adu-initiative@rebuildingtogetherpeninsula.org) o llame al 650-832-5182.

## Talking with Henrietta

Learning about the African Diaspora



Photo courtesy of Talking with Henrietta From left, Twum Djin, Henrietta J. Burroughs and Almaz Negash sit on the set of the Talking with Henrietta television show after the taping of their show discussion on February 28, 2019. (Coming on March 17, 2019 - See the new show on Oscar Grant)

This show can be seen on Channel 30 on the Midpeninsula and on the Internet at the days and times below until Fri May 27, 2018 on Sundays@5 p.m., Mondays@2 p.m., Tuesdays@8 p.m., Wednesdays@2 a.m., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m., Thursdays@8 p.m., Fridays@3:00 a.m. and 12 p.m. and Saturday at 10 a.m.

Talking with Henrietta also appears on Channel 27 on Wednesdays at 10:30 p.m.

Get more information about this show on the East Palo Alto Today website at [www.epatoday.org/tv.html#africandiaspora](http://www.epatoday.org/tv.html#africandiaspora)

## Keep Community Media Alive



Support the East Palo Alto Center for Community Media and its media outlets by making a tax deductible donation and by purchasing one or more **T-shirts for \$15.00 each** (sm., med., large and x large), and one or more **water bottles for \$10.00 each**. See more ways to support the center's programs below.

## Support the East Palo Alto Center for Community Media

The East Palo Alto Today newspaper is published by the East Palo Alto Center for Community Media, a nonprofit agency that was formed in January 2003 to create media outlets in East Palo Alto and provide the type of positive, relevant information about the community that is not easily found elsewhere. If you like what you see in East Palo Alto Today, then we ask that you enable us to serve the community better. You can do this by completing the partnership card below and mailing it with your tax deductible donation which will go directly to the center's media efforts. You can read more about the East Palo Alto Center for Community Media online at [www.epamedia.org](http://www.epamedia.org). You can also donate to the center at the EPA Today and the EPA Media websites. Please contact us if you have any questions. We look forward to hearing from you.



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Yes, I am interested in becoming a partner with the East Palo Alto Center for Community Media. Please accept my tax-deductible donation as a personal contribution \_\_\_\_\_ or as a contribution on behalf of my organization \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ \$25 \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 \_\_\_\_\_ \$100 \_\_\_\_\_ \$250 \_\_\_\_\_ \$500 \_\_\_\_\_ \$1,000 \_\_\_\_\_ \$2,000

\_\_\_\_\_ \$2001 to \$5,000 \_\_\_\_\_ \$5,000 and above \_\_\_\_\_ In-kind \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Please check back with me about becoming a donor.

\*The East Palo Alto Center for Community Media is a tax-exempt nonprofit corporation - CA # 20-1415500

Mail donations to:

East Palo Alto Center for Community Media PO Box 50274 East Palo Alto, 94303



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 (Belle Haven Branch)  
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 9-10 am

**St. Francis of Assisi Church**  
 1425 Bay Rd, East Palo Alto  
 10:30-11:45 am

**East Palo Alto Senior Center**  
 560 Bell St, East Palo Alto  
 12:30-1:30 pm



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