





# East Palo Alto Today Providing news that is relevant, informative and critical

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**East Palo Alto and Belle Haven** 

April - June 2007

Vol. 2 No.3

# U.S. Secretary of State visits community school



Boys & Girls Club Ex. Dir. Peter Fortenbaugh, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Center for a New Generation at Flood School Director Sean Mendy tour classes with 11 year old Jerry Valencia on the right and 16 year old Reenal Narayan who is walking behind in the second row. See News Briefs story page 3.

The U.S. Congress is now debating an immigration bill that would make substantial changes in the current immigration law. The bill is now being discussed in the U.S. Senate. Over the past few months the Bay Area has sent several delegations to Congress to argue for new immigration policies. The following article talks about the trip of one local delegation.

## PIA Leaders Call on Congress

By Jose Garcia

After returning from Washington D.C last March, leaders of the Peninsula Interfaith Action (PIA) organization held a press conference as part of a national effort,

headed by the clergy, to call on the U.S. Congress to halt Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Raids and hold hearings to investigate ICE behavior.

"We object to federal govern-

ment action that has broken up families, left citizen children abandoned, and traumatized whole communities," said Rev. Lange-Soto, pastor of el Buen Pastor

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### The report is out

By Henrietta J. Burroughs

he long awaited report by the Hewlett Foundation on its three Neighborhood Improvement Initiatives is out, and it is already generating controversy.

The 64 page report titled "Hard Lessons about Philanthropy & Community Change from the Neighbor-hood Improvement Initiative," details the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation's experiences as it ends its 10 year, 20 million dollar effort to bring about substantial community changes in three Bay Area Communities - West Oakland, East Palo Alto and the Mayfair area of East San Jose.

The report covers the relationship the Hewlett Foundation had with its partners at each of the three sites and it details a host of issues and challenges the foundation and its partners faced.

It also presents the lessons the foundation learned throughout the process, from the creation of the Neighbor-hood Improvement Initiative collaborative at the Mayfair site in 1996, the disbanding of the West Oakland site in 2002 to the disbursement of the foundation's final grant to the East Palo Alto agency, One East Palo Alto (OEPA) in 2006.

A two page introductory letter to the report written by Paul Brest, the Hewlett Foundation's president is at the center of the controversy and several statements in the letter have gained the most attention. A columnist for a local newspaper wrote an article about the report which carried the headline, "'One EPA' effort called 'a huge disappointment.'"

The headline was taken from Brest's sentence which stated: "Despite the huge

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## Inside

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## The Dumbarton Dialogue is working

**By Debbie Schechter** EPA Today Contributor

Over 27,500 vehicles per day travel on University Avenue to and from the Dumbarton Bridge. Traffic regularly backs up on University Ave., Willow Road, and local streets in East Palo Alto. All of this traffic, which comes primarily during commute hours, results in vehicle emissions and other detrimental

impacts on the quality of life in East Palo Alto.

Given the amount of traffic and its negative impact, some East Palo Alto residents have joined the residents of neighboring communities to participate in an innovative project to help relieve traffic congestion on the approaches to the Dumbarton Bridge. This community participation proj-

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Over 27,500 vehicles per day travel on University Ave. to and from the Dumbarton Bridge.

## Líderes de PIA piden al congreso

By Jose Garcia

Después de su regreso de Washington D.C, los lideres de la organización de la Acción Inter-religiosa de la Peninsula (PIA) tuvieron una conferencia de prensa, como parte de un esfuerzo nacional dirigido por los pastores, para exigir al congreso de EEUU que paren las redadas y tengan audiencias publicas para investigar el abuso de la comunidad debido a las tácticas implementadas por la agencia de ICE.

"Estamos en contra a un gobierno federal que separa las familias, que deja los niños ciudadanos abandonados, y traumatiza comunidades enteras," dijo el Reverendo Lange-Soto, pastor de la iglesia del Buen Pastor en Redwood City. "Nuestras congregaciones estan comprometidas a proteger los necesitados, sin embargo no debemos tener que consalar niños que



PIA members with Congress -woman Anna Eshoo

ahora nos preguntan,
"¿Donde esta mi madre?
¿Donde esta mi Padre?" dijo
Rev. Lange-Soto. Ella estaba leyendo una carta firmada por cientos de pastores
de todo el país de iglesias
que fueron afectadas por las
redadas más recientes.

Desde Junio, más que 18,000 hombres y mujeres han sido deportados como parte de una operación de ICE (la agencia de inmigración) llamado 'Devuelta a quien le mandó'. Isabel Aguirre, un miembro de la iglesia de San Francis de Asís y madre de 4 niños ciudadanos estadounidenses,

estuvo bajo arresto en su casa todo el mes anterior preocupándose por como pagaría la renta. Ella y su esposo fueron agarrado durante una redada reciente de ICE. Su esposo fue deportado inmediatamente sin poder apelar la decisión o ver un abogado. Sra. Aguirre ha vivido en Palo Alto por más de 20 anos y tenia permiso de trabajar y estaba esperando ser un residente legal.

"Dios nos llama para fortalecer familias. Las familias son el techo de nuestra comunidad, en contraste, estas redadas están aterrorizando a los más vulnerables; nuestros hijos" explico el Padre Goode de la iglesia de San Francis de Asís quien aconsejó la familia.

Durante su reunión en Washington, líderes de PIA se sentaron cara a cara con la congresista Anna Eshoo, quien representa el distrito 14 que incluya East Palo Alto. En la reunión, Rep.

Eshoo compartió su preocupación sobre las redadas y en seguida mandó una carta al departamento de ICE, pidiendo una investigación a su conducta y expresó la importancia para respetar las unidad de las familias. Una carta parecida mandó la Senadora Feinstien en seguida de la visita de PIA. Rep. Eshoo estuvo de acuerdo con los delegados que el sistema de inmigración necesita ser reparada y las familias merecen estar protegidas.

Los estudiantes también estan preocupados sobre las redadas. Uno de ellos es Luís Mora. "Voy a graduarme de la escuela EPA Charter este verano. Ya fue aceptado por las universidades de Harvard y Yale pero todavía es posible que no pueda irme debido a mi estatus migratorio," dijo Mora "He trabajado bastante duro y quiero apoyar mi comunidad, pero es triste ver muchos de mis amigos dejar

la escuela porque no hay una esperanza para seguir a la universidad por sus papeles."

Mora asistió la junta con Rep. Eshoo y la preguntó acerca del estatus de la proyecto de ley llamado 'el sueno' o el 'DREAM Act' en ingles que ella ha patrocinado. Si el DREAM act, se hace ley, se daría la legalización de los estudiantes quien ahora no pueden entrar las universidades por ser indocumentados?. Durante la junta, Eshoo se comprometió reunir con los líderes de PIA este verano para seguir informando la comunidad sobre sus esfuerzos a lograr una reforma migratoria justa. Además, Eshoo expresó apoyo para la iniciativa de PICO para pasar un presupuesto que permitiría ofrecer cobertura médica a todos los niños en los EEUU. El final del viaje, la red nacional de PICO

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## Another year for Summer Employment Program

**By Allan Johnson** EPA Today Contributor

ay Brown is one of the stars of a locally produced film, and he doesn't even know it...yet. Ray is a young man who is featured in a documentary that few people have seen. It is the story of the Sponsored Employment Program (SEP), East Palo Alto's comprehensive and precedent setting answer to one of the most basic problems faced by youth in thisand virtually every-community: a lack of opportunity to learn workplace skills and demonstrate the desire to be



Ray Brown

productive citizens. Most of the citizens of East Palo Alto and the greater Bay Area community are going to get their chance to see the film very soon. Ray's SEP story, and the story of more than a hundred other EPA youth, can be told there.

Ray's story is real. He is a

young man facing the issues young men face. Without community support, especially in a community where jobs for young people are relatively scarce, Ray could wind up being a statistic. East Palo Alto is represented by too many sad statistics.

Starting in 2005, a number of community members and organizations came together and resolved that they would help youth, like Ray, show who they really were and, in doing so, alter some of the negative statistics they'd been seeing for far too long.

Those individuals and organizations were brought together in a forum called

the Crime Prevention Task Force by San Mateo County Supervisor Rose Jacobs Gibson. The task force requested and received funding from the Hewlett Foundation to launch a pilot program called the Sponsored Employment Project that placed 30 youth in jobs where they were able to work with groups laboring to make East Palo Alto a better place for everyone. At the end of that first summer, all but one of those youth graduated (that particular one had moved with her family to the Central Valley), proving the point that youth had been waiting to make:

given opportunities, youth would respond in a positive and productive manner.

These opportunities were offered by a wide array of individuals and organizations, primarily the employersponsors themselves, the community mentors who worked with the youth oneon-one, One East Palo Alto, OICW, and El Concilio of San Mateo County. If you happened to walk into the offices of the East Palo Alto Sanitary District, there was a good chance you talked with an SEP youth. If you dropped by the police station,

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## Teachers Get Salary Increase

By Kathleen Dixon

Ravenswood City School
District (RCSD) today
announced a settlement
agreement with the
Ravenswood City School
District Teachers Union for
the 2006-2007 year.

Teachers received a 2.5% salary increase over the 2005-2006 salary schedule under an agreement ratified last year that takes effect July 1, 2007. Teachers will receive an additional 2.5% increase over the July 1 salary schedule for a total salary increase of 5% over the 2005-2006 salary sched-

ule

In addition, teachers will receive a 51% increase in medical benefits. The increase ensures equitable coverage to teachers whether they are enrolled in single, married/partners or family plans. The increase is retroactive to Feb. 2.

"The district is pleased to announce it has reached a fair and amicable agreement with the RCSD Teachers Union," said Superintendent Maria De La Vega. "Our goal is to attract and maintain high quality teachers and give our children the education they need to be suc-

cessful in their lives, both personally and professionally. Ravenswood is privileged to have so many dedicated teachers in our classrooms. In addition to increasing teacher salaries and benefits, we have put tremendous effort into professional development. As a result, retention is now at an all time high of 87 percent."

The district's master plan centers on instructional excellence within a supportive, responsive and collaborative environment that includes teachers, administrators, parents and the community. The plan is based on

three guiding principles: achieving results, developing relationships, and taking responsibility.

Kathleen Dixon is with Dixon Communications in San Jose.



## **News Briefs**

#### City of East Palo Alto

#### New city budget proposed

On Wednesday, May 30, a Joint Special City Council/Redevelopment budget study session began to discuss the 2007-2008 proposed budget for the City of East Palo Alto. MLGordon, the assistant city manager, opened the budget discussion by telling the city council members that the proposed new budget was dedicated to the city' first mayor, the late Mrs. Barbara Mouton.

Gordon said that if the city adopted the new budget, then the city would end the

fiscal year with \$114,000 in reserve. He warned, however, that it was criticial that the council take immediate action to establish policies to manage potential losses to the city, such as unanticipated delays in the development of the Ravenswood business center, excessive medical expenditures. property expenditures and lawsuit settlements, along with other situations that might make the city vulnerable.

During the public comment session, several city employees and residents requested that the city reconsider the once a month Friday furlough policy because they felt that it had a negative impact on both the employees who are furloughed and the city itself.

#### A high level visit

Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice visited the East Palo Alto community Thursday, May 24 to return to the Center for a New Generation, originally, a program at the James Flood School in Menlo Park.

Rice started the Center to increase the graduation rates of local high school students when she was the provost at Stanford Univ. 15 years ago.

The Center for a New



Photo by Nadine Priestley Pastor Paul Bains, Peter Fortenbaugh, Sean Mendy, Cammie Harris, Sec. Condoleeza Rice and Superintendent Maria De La Vega

Generation is made possible with significant support and collaboration with the Ravenswood City School District.

The program now exists at 3 Ravenswood Schools – James Flood, Edison McNair and Bellehaven with the organization's overall program focus geared toward supporting the school districts efforts.

Our Academic Program focuses on Literacy and we provide enrichment and athletic activities that no longer offered at the schools.

As a result of the program's success, the Center received an invitation to expand the program to the Hoover School in Redwood City. The new program will continued on page 19

## East Palo Alto Redevelopment Agency: results and ongoing work

By Carlos Martinez

East Palo Alto's tax base has increased substantially since its incorporation back in 1983. At that time, the total assessed valuation of the Redevelopment areas was a meager \$61M, and the largest sales tax generator was the McDonalds at Bay and University. Today, sales tax has grown to \$2.6M and the assessed valuation in the Redevelopment areas adds up to \$755.8M. That's progress!

As a result, East Palo Alto is not the nation's murder capital as deemed back in 1992. It is a proud and healthy community lifting itself from its bootstraps. Fifty percent of the City's budget is not dependant on private foundations or the Federal government, as it



**Carlos Martinez** 

was the case in 1998. Now, East Palo Alto has a "AA" bond rating, and subsidies make less than 1% of the City's total budget. All this progress would not have been possible without the strategic investments of our multiple regional and federal partners and the political leadership of the City's elected officials.

When the University Circle Redevelopment Project Area was formed in 1988, its assessed valuation was \$7M. After a decade of redevelopment efforts, the area's assessed valuation in 2006 reached \$373M. The Gateway 101 assessed valuation was \$17M in '93, it was assessed at \$307M in 2006. The Ravenswood, the area where Redevelopment is now focusing its efforts, has only grown from \$36M in 1990 to \$75M in 2006.

However, the increased attention of Redevelopment in this geographic area, are expected to produce the types of increased physical improvements and valuations seen in both University Circle and the Gateway 101 redevelopment areas.

The Ravenswood faces additional challenges related mainly to a) previous industrial uses that caused some contamination in the area, and b) deferred infrastructure

maintenance.

East Palo Alto was named one of sixteen Brownfield Showcase communities in the nation. Substantial environmental testing and clean up has resulted in increased attention to this area by the development community. The City is working with property owners to create an assessment district to generate the revenues to install the infrastructure needed to support the envisioned level of increased development. Thus, the City and the Redevelopment Agency are tackling head on, two of the greatest challenges for progress in the area.

The City's sales tax revenue has also increased substantially, from \$285K back in 1995, to \$2.6M last year, 2006. Steady and strong progress has been

accomplished by attracting solid retail anchor tenants in the Gateway 101 regional shopping center, such as Home Depot and IKEA.

Nevertheless, on a per capita basis, East Palo Alto's sales tax revenue of \$72 per resident, is well below-less than half-the county wide \$151 average. Despite the fact that other municipalities' sales tax revenue declined from the first quarter of '03 to the second quarter of '06-Menlo Park's declined from \$203 to \$185, and Countywide, revenue declined from \$196 to \$151during that same period, East Palo Alto revenue experienced a solid growth from \$49 to \$72.

This steady and solid growth shows that a lot has

continued on page

## City, County & State Government Meetings & Contacts

### East Palo Alto City Council

The City of 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:

### East Palo Alto City Council Members

www.ci.east-palo-alto.ca.us

**David E. Woods- Mayor** (650) 853-1907

Patricia Foster- Vice Mayor (650) 328-3944

**Ruben Abrica** (650) 321-4001

**A. Peter Evans -** (650) 321-1009

**Donna Rutherford** (650) 327-7926

#### East Palo Alto Boards, Commissions, Committees

Planning Commission
Second and Fourth Monday

Rent Stabilization Board
Second and Fourth
Wednesday

Public Works & Transportation Commission First and Third Wednesday

Youth Advisory Committee
First Thursday of each
month

Senior Advisory Committee Meets the 1st Wednesday of each month - 6:30p.m. - City Hall.

#### **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. An agenda is posted in advance of the weekly meeting, and past agendas and minutes are filed by the date they were held. If you have questions about an agenda please call the City Clerk at 650.330.6620.

#### Menlo Park City Council Members

Kelly J. Fergusson -Mayor (650) 327-4533

Andrew M. Cohen - Mayor Pro Tem (650)327-5332

John C. Boyle (650)323-5438

Richard Kline (650) 228-5166

Heyward Robinson (650) 330-6631

#### Menlo Park Boards, Commissions, Committees

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

## San Mateo County Bd. of Supervisors

## Supervisor Rose Jacobs Gibson, Fourth District

The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors meets on February 7, 28 March 7, 14, 28, 2006 in the County Government Center: Hall of Justice & Records 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063. Roll call at: 8a.m. 9a.m. Regular & Consent Agenda Items.

#### **State Officials**

#### Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger State Capitol Building

Sacramento, CA 95814 Phone: 916-445-2841 Fax: 916-445-4633 Email: governor@governor.ca.gov

#### Assembly Member Ira Ruskin District Address

5050 El Camino Real Ste.117 Los Altos, CA 94022 650 691-2121

## Senator Joseph S. Simitian

District Address 160 Town & Country Village Palo Alto, CA 94301 (650) 688-6384

## Measure C:

## In the middle of the controversy

Tax Measure -- City of East Palo Alto (2/3 Approval Required) Pass: 2,160 / 67.7% Yes votes ..... 1,030 / 32.3% No votes

To reduce violent crime and apprehend violent criminals, shall a City Council-sponsored special tax be approved for a period of ten years with 50% of tax funds to support youth and community prevention and 50% to support neighborhood law enforcement programs and is subject to annual audit and performance oversight by a citizens' committee with exemptions for senior citizens and disabled persons?

#### By Henrietta J. Burroughs

hen 67% of East Palo Alto's voters cast their ballots in last November's election to pass Measure C, some of the measure's supporters were so ecstatic that they held a victory part to cele-

After all they had beaten the opposition and had convinced more than 2/3rds of East Palo Alto's voters to support a measure which enacted a tax on property owners in the city. The measure mandated that one half of the proceeds collected from the tax would be spent on youth programs in



Kanchan Charan

the city while the other half of the revenues collected would be given to strengthen the East Palo Alto Police Department.

Little did the party-goers know that Measure C would later be mired in controversy. Now, East Palo Alto's officials and residents have expressed concerns about the Measure's future. It has

been the topic of debate at several city council meetings. The fact that the measure passed -- with one percent more of the vote than it needed -- is not the issue. What's currently at issue is the fact that the San Mateo County tax collector alleges that the language in Measure C conflicts with the California Tax Code and would present problems for the county if it attempted to collect the taxes Measure C requires.

Kanchan Charan, the Deputy Controller for the San Mateo County Tax office, said that there are two issues that cause the measure to be problematic. First,

he said, Measure C states that no liens should be placed on properties when the owners of these properties fail to pay the taxes the measure requires and, second, the penalties and interest the measure imposes for late payments is in conflict with the tax code law.

Michael Lawson, the attorney for the City of East Palo Alto, agreed that the problem Measure C faces with the San Mateo County Tax Collector involves "technical features related to collection."

But, he said, when Measure C was written, it "was drafted from Oakland's Measure Y which had been

in effect for two years.

"Alameda County collects a similar tax for Oakland and Santa Clara County collects a similar parcel tax for San Jose," Lawson said.

Charan said he spoke with Alameda County Property tax officials and they pointed out to him that liens and penalties are addressed in an Oakland city ordinance and not in Measure Y itself.

Charan stated that the problem lies in the practical enforcement of the measure. He said that when the county normally collects taxes for cities, special districts and other taxing agencies it pays

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## A three month East Palo Alto Police Report

In November, December and January, the City was hit with a violent crime wave that captured media headlines and generated fear within the community. The wave resulted in 6 murders and 56 firearms assaults within a three-month period. There were 3 murders and 21 firearms assaults in January alone.

These numbers were extremely alarming and reminiscent of the level of violence witnessed in 1992 when the City earned the dubious distinction of murder capital of the nation. In response to this violence, the community and police department partnered in an historic fashion to implement Project Safe Neighborhood - a comprehensive strategy designed to quell violence.

Firearm assaults were

reduced 70% (from 56 to 13) and murders reduced 100% (from 6 to 0) the past three months (February thru April). Overall violence was reduced 79% the same peri-

The strategy was a multifaceted and intelligencebased program that balanced intervention, prevention and enforcement efforts. Using intelligence gathered from the Department's Criminal Investigations Division, the San Mateo County Intelligence Unit, and information obtained by the community, the Police Department quickly identified the nature of the violence.

Unlike the 90s, it was determined the violence was not necessarily street-corner based.Rather, three separate groups were involved in heated in-fighting for varying reasons. These disputes

included several families fighting within the Pacific Islander community, two rival Black gangs fighting over drugs, and two notorious Hispanic gangs continuing decade-long war. Each situation generated extreme violence in a short period of time and threatened even greater violence if not stopped. There were literally three separate "powderkegs" waiting to explode.

This intelligence enabled the community and Police Department to tailor its enforcement response to each situation and garner community support and resources which extended well beyond arrests. The strategy equally focused on intervention, prevention and enforcement.

#### Intervention

Key community groups took both an aggressive and

effective role in this endeavor. Community leaders hit the streets to talk to our youth and encouraged them to stop the violence. Several community and faith-based organizations met with people actually involved in the in-fighting and negotiated cease-fires that remain in place today.

#### Prevention

The community conducted a Unity March and Rally with over 1000 attendees. The rally brought all segments of the community together to send a message of intolerance to violence. A Youth Summit with over 300 in attendance was also conducted. The purpose of the summit was to identify long-term solutions to violence and garner support from youth in the community.

To reinforce the stop the violence message, the Police Department partnered with "No More Tears" - a group of San Quentin inmates - and produced a Stop the Violence" public service announcement. This video was aired on the local cable channel

and can currently be viewed on YouTube.

In short, there was an overwhelming response from the community. So much so that I dare not attempt to name specific individual or groups in fear that I will fail to name them all. This community effort was one of action not rhetoric. These efforts, coupled with the strategic enforcement program listed below, have contributed greatly to our success thus far.

#### **Enforcement**

As part of Project Safe Neighborhood, the Police Department declared a "crime emergency" and implemented a multi-phased, intelligence-based enforcement program in partnership with the following agencies: San Mateo County Sheriff's Department, Menlo Park Police Department, Palo Alto Police Department, California Department of Justice (DOJ),San Mateo County Probation, California State Parole, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), California Highway Patrol (CHP),

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#### **HOURS:**

ABIERTO: 8:30 am - 7:00 pm Lunes - Jueves Monday-Thursday Tuesday 1:00 pm - 7:00 pm Martes 8:30 am - 5:00 pm Viernes Fridays Saturdays 8:30 am - 12:00 pm Sabado

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