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East Palo Alto Today

Providing news that is relevant, informative and critical



East Palo Alto and Belle Haven

April 2014 - May 2014

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Council agrees on balanced budget plan

By Henrietta J. Burroughs
East Palo Alto Today

After two nights of budget hearings, the East Palo Alto City Council agreed to accept the budget recommendations

proposed by the city staff.

The council accepted the 2014-2015 proposed budget on condition that the staff make five modifications.

These modifications included keeping three staff po-

sitions that were proposed for elimination (the office assistant, a temporary secretary and the economic development manager), and changing the status of the legislative consultants the city maintains

in Washington, D.C and in Sacramento to a "time and material contract" - on an as needed basis.

The 2014-2015 budget recommendations show a basically balanced budget with 33,



002,075 in expenditures and \$32,760,008 in total revenue.

The 2013-2014 projected budget showed a total of \$20,036,808 in available city funding and 40,511,809 in expenditures.

The city's budget team included Magda González, city manager; Barbara Powell, assistant city manager; Edmund Suen, the finance director; Paul Maumalanga, the fiscal analyst and Ana Maria Torres, the account technician.

During the two-day budget study sessions from May 14 – May 15, the council heard presentations from: González, Powell, who is also the city's HR director; Suen, City Attorney, John Nagel; the Community and Economic Development Director John Doughty and the Interim Police Chief, Lee Violet.

In her introductory remarks to the budget document, González stated that she was "Cautiously optimistic" as we move into fiscal year 2014-15, and thus, it is my pleasure to present my sec-

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Rep. Speier spends the day in EPA



Photo by Willie Moore

In this photo, U.S. Congresswoman Jackie Speier (D.) is greeted as she and two of her staff members enter the East Palo Alto Senior Center to attend a special breakfast during her "Listening Tour" of East Palo Alto on April 24, 2014. See article on page 2.

Beyond San Francisco, housing crisis overwhelms peninsula

By Lena Potts
East Palo Alto Today



Photo courtesy of <http://housing.smcgov.org/>

"We're in a housing crisis", everyone told me when I tried to find a place to live between Redwood City and Palo Alto. Tell me something I don't know. I was aware, like everyone living in the area, that housing here is expensive; what I didn't know is that it's nearly impossible.

Newspapers, blogs, and any open internet forums (Facebook, Twitter, message boards) have been flooded by enraged op-eds

shaming tech companies and their tech employees for "destroying" San Francisco. It seems anyone not working at Google is furious about the Google bus, which will transport Silicon Valley employees to work from their San Francisco homes, using designated Muni stops. In true San Francisco form, there have been protests over the bus and other signs of a gentrified city, and they have been passionate. Some writers and news outlets have come to defend the tech industry as wrongfully indicted for innocent growth, pointing out that a shifting market and culture is the very nature of economic evolution.

In all of this San Francisco wrath, it seems the Peninsula's problems have been forgotten. Regardless of whether the housing crisis stems from normal economic stimulus, years of poor planning, or some evil of capitalism, its results are dire for people-

living even closer to the Silicon Valley than SF- much of San Mateo County has been hit even harder.

According to the County of San Mateo Economic Indicators Report, released in September 2013, the average rent for a one bedroom apartment in the county is up to nearly \$2,100. Unsurprisingly, we've seen a 12% increase in homelessness since 2011, due to people losing jobs, being forced

out of their homes, etc. (San Mateo County Department of Housing). It's even harder to count those who are at risk of homelessness, with estimates from the United Way showing that one in five people can't afford their current housing situation.

When the housing world uses words like affordable, it generally means 30% of household income goes toward housing expenses. In San Mateo County, that affordable

30% requires an annual income of \$84,000 or more. This is more than most teachers, bank tellers, EMTs, sales associates, service workers, and many other professionals make in a year. Even for a home with two steady incomes, meeting \$84,000 can be arduous, if not impossible.

I live with three other people in
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Photo courtesy of <http://housing.smcgov.org/>

Inside

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Rep. Jackie Speier spends a day visiting East Palo Alto

By Henrietta J. Burroughs
East Palo Alto Today

Congresswoman Jackie Speier spent a day in East Palo Alto meeting with various groups within the community.

During, what she called her "Listening Tour," she visited seniors, district educators and representatives from the city's health, business and faith communities. Speier even made an appearance with the city's Mayor, Laura Martinez, on the Talking with Henrietta television show.

In explaining the purpose of her tour, Speier cited the high unemployment rate in East Palo Alto and expressed her determination to change "to change these numbers with the cooperation of mem-



Photo courtesy of Office of Congresswoman Jackie Speier
This photo shows Mayor Laura Martinez, Councilmembers Donna Rutherford, Congresswoman Jackie Speier, Councilmember Ruben Abrica and Pastor Paul Bains sitting at the East Palo Alto Senior Center on April 24, 2014

bers of the community." She stated that her tour of the city on April 24 "will be her first visit in a long relationship to lift East Palo Alto." Speier's listening tour of the

city started at 9:30 a.m. with her visit to the East Palo Alto Senior Center, located at 560 Bell Street, where she appeared with several of the city's council members, in-

cluding Martinez, Ruben Abrica, Donna Rutherford, and clergy member Paul Bains.

At the center she spoke with several seniors individually about their concerns. Her visit included an award presentation to the center's executive director, Millicent Grant, for her service, devotion and hard work on behalf of the city's seniors.

Next, she met with Luisa Buada, the CEO of the Ravenswood Family Health Center and members of the center's staff and board to hold a brainstorming session about ways to create more job opportunities in the community as a way of developing more "onramps to the Silicon Valley economy."

The theme of increasing em-

ployment in the community continued with her visits to two city nonprofits, Able Works and the Renaissance Entrepreneur Center. Both nonprofits focus on providing community residents with the financial skills and tools that they need to handle their finances wisely.

At AbleWorks, located at 1836, Suite B, Speier met with the organization's CEO John Liotti and several of the organization's staff. At the Renaissance Center, located in a nearby office space in the same complex, Speier met with the center's CEO Timothy Russell.

With hardly a break in her tight schedule, Speier visited Cesar Chavez elementary school

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Study sees need for satellite school in East Palo Alto

By Edmund Harris
East Palo Alto Today

The Satellite Community College Campus Initiative Task Force was formed to study how to address the broad issues outlined in the McKinsey and Company study referenced that is referenced at the end of this article. The findings mirror the issues of



South Bay low-income and minority students, and the Task Force set a goal of engaging and empowering these stu-

dents to complete associates or bachelors degree courses of study.

During the course of our study, we identified the following problems and challenges that have resulted in only 16.1% and 23.8% of African Americans completing a college-level course in math and English respectively at Cañada, 10% and 21.4% re-

spectively at County of San Mateo (CSM); 17.1% and 14.3% at Skyline; for Hispanics the figures are 26.8% and 27.4% for math and English respectively at Cañada; 28% and 31% at CSM and 31.5% and 23.2% at Skyline:

- Location of Community College Campuses
- Remediation and its effect on matriculation

- Student Services that support South County residents
- Lack of Life Skills, poor work habits and time management skills
- Student/Faculty working relationships
- Collaboration between the high school and community college communities.

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Community News Briefs

Mi Pueblo survives

On Wednesday, May 14, 2014, a San Jose bankruptcy judge approved Mi Pueblo's plan to get out of bankruptcy.

Mi Pueblo had filed for bankruptcy in July 13, 2013 after its financial agreement with Wells Fargo was deemed unacceptable.

Most of Mi Pueblo's creditors objected to the terms of the plan, which gave them less



Juvenal Chavez
Mi Pueblo's owner

than they had requested, arguing that it favored the company's founder and his family.

However, the approved plan now gives the company new life and an infusion of needed capital. Without the plan's approval, the Bay Area grocery chain would have had to sell off its 21 stores.

A demand for more diversity in corporate boardrooms

The Rev. Jesse Jackson returned to the Bay area the week of May 11 to attend more shareholders' meetings to bring attention to the lack of diversity in Silicon Valley boardrooms.

He attended the eBay Annual shareholders meeting on May 13 and Google's annual



Photo - East Palo Alto Today

This photo shows Rev. Jesse Jackson during a meeting with about 25 members of the East Palo Alto community in March 2014 at the East Palo Alto Municipal Building.

shareholders meeting on May 14.

At both meetings, he advocated for the hiring of more blacks, Latinos and other minorities.

After his appearance at Google's shareholder meeting,

Google officials agreed to release minority hiring figures.

In March, Jackson visited East Palo Alto and met with about 40 community leaders in the community room in the Municipal building.

During his meeting, he

talked about Rainbow PUSH's Silicon Valley Project, which has the goal of "specifically targeting corporations in an effort to address the lack of diversity, equality, opportunity and access to capital in the Valley."

The day after his meeting in the city, he attended the Hewlett Packard Shareholders' meeting, where he had the chance to speak briefly with the company's CEO, Meg Whitman about the issue.

Both Annie Loya, the executive director of YUCA (Youth United for Community Action), and East Palo Alto Council member Larry Moody were among those who attended

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EPA family sues nation's largest landlord

By Henrietta J. Burroughs
East Palo Alto Today

Community Legal Services of East Palo Alto sued one of the U.S.' largest publicly-traded landlords, Equity Residential, on behalf of three East Palo Alto tenants. The lawsuit was filed this past Monday in the San Mateo County Superior Court on behalf of Gabriel Mendez, his wife, Ana Rubio, and his father Leonardo Mendez.

In their complaint, the three said they were forced to vacate an apartment unit in the Woodland Park Apartments,

because they had to live with "cockroaches, severe mold, dampness and other unsafe and unhealthy conditions."

The apartment complex is part of the 1,811 rental units Equity Residential owns in East Palo Alto and it is located between Highway 101 and Palo Alto on the west side of the city. These rental units house many of Silicon Valley's low-income families.

Mendez and his family moved out of their apartment in October 2013, citing "uninhabitable living conditions, stress and the lack of security," Mendez said, "We tried



Community Legal Services of East Palo Alto logo

everything we could, but Equity Residential never took our complaints seriously. As a parent, I want to provide a healthy home for my kids. That's not what we got from Equity Residential.... We didn't want to leave, but I couldn't continue to put my family at risk."

Larisa Bowman, a housing

attorney at CLSEPA said, "The severity, scope, and duration of the conditions in this Equity Residential home are a particularly egregious example of the company's failure to provide tenants with a safe and healthy place to live. Both the prior landlord and Equity Residential neglected this family for years by refusing to make necessary repairs, even after they were cited for numerous problems."

In a printed statement, Bowman wrote, "City inspectors found a cockroach infestation, severe mold and dampness, windows

that were not weatherproofed or did not lock, and many other conditions that violated state and local health and safety codes, according to the complaint."

The complaint the legal agency filed alleges that Equity Residential's failure to repair a faulty gate led to two assaults and a robbery at the property. Ken Greenstein, a partner at Greenstein & McDonald, the San Francisco law firm, which filed the complaint jointly with CLSEPA, stated that Leonardo Mendez suffered a violent assault in the complex's driveway because of

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Rent Stabilization Coordinator resignation causes controversy

By Henrietta J. Burroughs
East Palo Alto Today



Carol Lamont

The week of May 10 was Carol Lamont's last week as the director of East Palo Alto's rent stabilization office. Lamont resigned her position following an unannounced audit of the program by Municipal Resource Group, LLC, a consulting firm hired by the city manager's office. The audit stated that the program, which was staffed by two people, could operate more efficiently and effectively.

The Rent Stabilization Program implements East Palo Alto's rent stabilization law, known as the Rent Stabilization and Eviction for Good

Causes Ordinance, which city voters adopted in June 2010.

The law is designed "to regulate....most residential rents in East Palo Alto,.... provide protections for residential tenants in the City from unreasonable rent increases, ... protect tenants from arbitrary, discriminatory or retaliatory evictions and ...assure landlords the right to a fair return."

Many community members, including several city council members questioned the reason for the audit, especially since it was not requested by the Rent Stabilization Board, which oversees the rent stabilization program. They said the audit review of the program was unjustified and it undermines the ability of the program to enforce the rent ordinance.

The rent board itself criticized the city staff for ordering the audit and a tenant lawyer network called Tenants Together, California's Statewide Organization for Renters' Rights formally requested on May 6 that the City Attorney, John Nagel, produce a number of public records and doc-

uments, including: "public records to and from City Manager Magda González between June 1, 2012 and May 1, 2014 detailing and/or discussing the Rent Stabilization Program, between June 1, 2011 and

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From the Editor's Desk

Life moves on as we are passing through

Spring is a season that is usually associated with rebirth, growth and rejuvenation. Few observances epitomize this idea more than the celebration of Easter.

So, I was determined this past Easter Sunday to celebrate the day by planting vegetables and flowers in my garden.

My plans for the day were sidetracked early, when my daughter stood beside me at the kitchen sink and said that she had just spoken by phone with her father.

Then, as the tears formed in her eyes and her mouth started to quaver, I was left only a millisecond to wonder as I looked at her face, what he could possibly have told her to make her start to cry. Then it came out, her grandmother, who lived in Trinidad in the West Indies, had died on Easter morning of cardiac arrest.

She had lived to a ripe old age, but the length of a life doesn't ease the pain of hearing about the death of someone close.

There is always heart-break realizing, when the people you love die, that you will never talk with them or see them in this life again.

It took a while for me to pull it back together again and do what I normally do: sit at the computer and read about the top news stories of the day.

Well, the top story on this day was the news of the death of Rubin 'Hurricane' Carter, an African-American boxer who served 19 years in prison for a murder he said that he did not commit.

I did not know Carter personally, as I did my mother-in-law, and the story about his prison sentence and death on Easter Sunday in Toronto, Canada might have been just another news story that I read.

But Carter's death, just like my mother-in-law's, touched me personally, albeit in very different ways.

I became involved in Carter's story decades ago as a reporter in New York City. As I read some of the news articles about his death, it was noteworthy that all of them prominently mentioned the autobiographical book he

wrote called, "The 16th Round."

These news articles brought back memories, because I wrote a review of his book that appeared in the New York Times Sunday Book Review section, and it became apparent, as I read about him, again, years later, that the flaws that his book revealed about the U.S. criminal justice system are still with us today.

In fact, the injustice and some of the conditions that he complained about have worsened, since far more African-Americans and Latinos are behind bars today than were behind bars in the 1960's and 70's when Carter was in prison fighting for his freedom.

This past Easter Sunday touched me far more than any other one than I can remember, since it went beyond being a time for observing the celebration of death and resurrection to becoming a personal time of mourning as well as a time for remembering.

It became an all too evident reminder of how, as people come into our lives, some touch our lives in profound ways, while others brush our lives in passing.

There is no stopping the fact that life moves on and there are ever-present reminders that even during a season of rebirth, there is no resurrection without death.

Death touches us all. For survivors, it doesn't matter how old the loved one is when the person dies. The death can still be a profound loss.

My mother-in-law died at 90 years old. She lived a long life that was mostly rewarding in the second half of it.

Carter died at 76, as a free man who had achieved some level of fame and fortune.

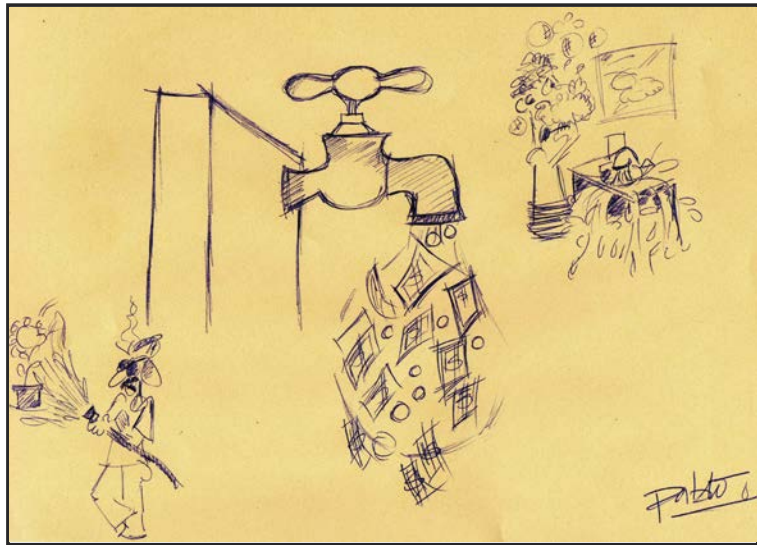
When one loses a mother and a wonderful mother-in-law, it can leave a hole that is never really filled.

Since life doesn't last forever, we can appreciate the time we have with the people who come into our lives, and the rich memories and legacies that they leave us.



Henrietta J. Burroughs

Save water, save money - Ahorra agua, ahorra dinero



Cartoon by Pablo Maldonado for East Palo Alto Today

Letters in East Palo Alto Today

Growing up in East Palo Alto

Dear Editor

Just recently I was having a conversation with a dear friend about life today in East Palo Alto. We reflected on what it was like to grow up in the EPA community.

As a child, I remember having the most rewarding experiences. From playing with friends, taking trips to the library, chasing ice cream trucks, having water balloon fights, playing football in the street, climbing trees, you name it.

And it struck me that life today has changed drastically for many of the kids in EPA. Their parents and guardians have to worry about crime and other forms of negative influence over their children. Which can truly deter a child from having meaningful experiences in their younger years.

Realizing that it will get better, I do hope that those in the EPA Community (that may have involvement in activities that could affect the safety and well-being of it's children), will consider making a life-style change.

Every child on this earth have a right to experience a comfortable childhood. In other more affluent areas, children aren't being kept inside out of the fear of stray bullets,

random act's of violence and visible drug users on the streets.

We should always consider how it makes a child feel to be from a place considered unsafe. A lot of times this could have very damaging effect's on their self esteem, especially as they grow and become more exposed to other kids that can't relate to a "hood lifestyle".

I wouldn't ever judge as I too have made many mistakes in life. It would however, behoove us all to rise as a community and ensure the safety of our children. East Palo Alto is a golden city. There's an unlimited well of potential there.

My sincerest prayer is that each and every child that resides there is protected from any form of harm and will someday become who they were destined to be. One love.

Ebonni Black
Sunnyvale, CA

Governor Brown's Budget

Dear Editor:

California residents and community organizations from across the state will respond to Governor Brown's May Revise Budget.

Spending on Corrections is slated to rise 2.9%, and total spending on prisons will top

\$12 billion.

"It is unfortunate but not surprising that since the Courts granted the Governor's request for an additional two years to come into compliance, he is reducing funding for programs that would safely cut the prison population," said Debbie Reyes of California Prison Moratorium Project.

Funding to begin the expansion of medical parole, to begin an elder parole program and to create a parole process for non-violent and non-sexual second strikers has been cut to half what it was in the Governor's January budget.

"We are encouraged by some of the restorations in social service programs, but very disappointed that the Governor continues to protect the prison budget from real scrutiny and the real cuts that could make a huge difference for poor Californians," said Diana Zuñiga of CURB

This week members of CURB will join with other anti-poverty organizations to demand just and life-affirming budget priorities, and restorations to the state's social safety net.

Emily Harris
emily@curbprisonspending.org, http://twitter.com/CURB_Prisons

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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

Publisher: East Palo Alto Center for Community Media Founder and 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

Measure AA preserves public access in East Palo Alto Baylands

By Yoriko Kishimoto
East Palo Alto Today

Community leaders are rallying behind Measure AA, a bond measure that will preserve and maintain open spaces throughout the peninsula, including East Palo Alto's treasured Baylands.

The \$300 million bond championed by the "Yes for Open Space" campaign would improve and enhance 25 open space areas in the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (Midpen), which covers 550 square miles and 17



Yoriko Kishimoto

peninsula cities stretching from East Palo Alto to Los Gatos and along the coast in Half Moon Bay.

If voters approve the meas-

ure on the June 3 ballot, East Palo Alto would see benefits in their community. The bond would be used to protect and enhance the Ravenswood Open Space Preserve, a 376-acre marshland along the San Francisco Bay. The new funding would protect the preserve's threatened habitats, improve public access and provide for environmental education to benefit visitors of all ages. Partnerships would also be developed to complete gaps in the Bay Trail, restore wetlands and develop more city-to-bay trails.

"Measure AA is an opportunity to improve and enhance the amazing natural Baylands we have right here in our backyard," said East Palo Alto Mayor Laura Martinez. "Two years ago, the City of East Palo Alto worked with Midpen to turn the vacant land into the Cooley Landing Park. Measure AA would help us enhance that wonderful community resource, ensuring further protections to the area and providing more opportunities for recreation and access for residents of all ages."

Measure AA would support

improvements to Cooley Landing and would provide for completion of enhancements to the Cooley Landing Education Center, where children and families could enjoy interactive exhibits.

Beyond the Baylands, the bond measure provides for a host of additional benefits to natural spaces in the East Palo Alto, Redwood City and San Carlos region, including:

Miramontes Ridge: A new trail loop, staging areas and repaired bridges would im-

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Constructing the new fire station 2 in East Palo Alto

By Steve Kennedy
East Palo Alto Today

In my previous op-ed piece entitled, "Solar Cash Cow or \$15 Million Castle?" I advocated the installation of solar panels on the roof of the new fire station in East Palo Alto on University Avenue at Runnymede. I also decried the cost of the installation of bullet resistant (concrete masonry unit) exterior walls and custom inch thick windows, based on a 3 decade old bullet hole in a roll up door. As a Fire District board member (1999 - 2003), I asked to see that slug and it never materialized. Now our 1953 vintage, brick fronted fire station is gone and the evidence with it, so we'll never know.

Since the publication of my March/April 2010 article in EPA Today, Phase One and Phase Two of the construction project have been completed. During Phase One, both suburban homes behind the station were demolished to

enlarge the lot and a new concrete pad was laid down over the lots, including the placement of a diesel fueling station.

In Phase Two, a communications tower was installed and a cinder block communications shed was built. In the last stage of Phase two, the tangled bird's nest of cables and phone wires in the old fire station was sliced, diced and spliced into the new communications shed and linked with the offices in the double wide trailer that has been housing the firefighters... and will do so until their new living quarters are completed.

As an experienced IBEW Local 617 telecom installer with plenty of experience tracing and wrecking out derelict phone wires and unmarked data cables, this re-cabling project made me tired just thinking about it. However, I'd bet that the scrap value alone of the abandoned and derelict copper wire in the old fire station, could have made the



Steve Kennedy

down payment on a goodsized solar PV system. My beer and vacation fund has been periodically replenished after a trip to the recycle yard so we can guess what happened there. There's nothing in the 10 Commandments about scrounging but if there was, my list of likely suspects would be long and distinguished, starting with the members of the Apparatus Replacement Committee, who apparently have a casual relationship with the truth.

Anyway, in the most recent stages of construction, the old red brick fire station was torn

down and the foundation trenches were dug. The rebar and plywood has been installed in the trenches, the slab foundation will soon be poured, the pillars will rise and our precious two story high bullet proof walls and custom windows will soon be up.

The new fire station will solve the worst problem with the old one. The firefighters won't have to hold up traffic on University Avenue during rush hour to put their fire engines back into the garage. They will simply drive around the block, across the pad and pull in to the garage bay. On top of that, the firefighters will have decent recreational facilities, ample storage and secure dorm rooms.

As good as those improvements are, despite my best efforts, the citizen's of East Palo Alto will NOT have a warming station and a phone booth to wade over to when the levee fails and The Gardens Neighborhood looks like New Orleans after hurricane Katrina.

Floods are very democratic and everyone is going to have wet feet. Nearby residents will be lucky to get into the station's Community Room on election days.

The good news is that the MPFD Board of Directors and the facilities oversight committee headed by director Rex lanson, have approved solar panels for the roof(s) of the new fire station. It wasn't readily apparent during my inspection of the prints at the City Building Department, but Rex claims that conduits from the roof will be installed and space for solar equipment has been allocated. Rex doesn't seem to be interested in solar PV for his house so solar for Station 2 might not be high on his list of priorities either.

If Rex and the Board eventually come to their senses about solar PV, this will ensure that when the grid goes down and East Palo Alto is in darkness, even if the backup gen-

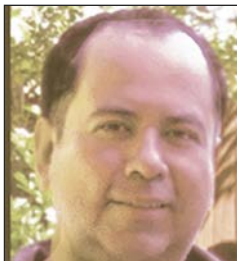
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Time is a flowing river where past and present meet

By J. Samuel Diaz
East Palo Alto Today

"Time is like a flowing river, where the past flows into the present and then into the future. We cannot swim upstream to relive past moments. We fight to return, only to get stuck and fixated on something we never fully understood. And when we tire, we finally let go and flow on to a new reality."

Yesterday, I met a famous man. His name is Jesse Jackson and he is a reverend. He fought alongside Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during a time when racism was an accepted part of American culture. Dr. King had to pressure the federal government to do its part in moving the country out of segregation, and he did it through pacific protests. After all, what was



J. Samuel Diaz

the use of having civil rights if you never got them? In the end, segregation could not be preserved through violence and threats; the law of the land had to be established and it had to apply to all. Interestingly enough, what I had read about Dr. King had led me to his

friend's story.

So you really will not believe me if I tell you I was drinking my soda pop with a straw that pleasant afternoon, when a lone figure appeared on the steps to city hall. He was dressed in a Sunday suit, as if ready to deliver a sermon to the absent masses. Only a parking lot full of cars stared back at him ... and me. He noticed I was observing him. A man walked by and wondered if he was dreaming. He wasn't, I assured him. It indeed was Martin's friend. I say Martin, because I know they were friends. I wanted to give him my condolences for his friend and for the many others who died.

For a moment, he looked sad, almost nostalgic. Yet nothing

in his demeanor expressed exhaustion or fear. He was alert and anxious to look around and his excitement reminded me of the Rainbow Coalition he had started up North and that led to his run for president. He was still working to bring the full spectrum of color to our lives, in much the same way an old TV that shows grainy black and white shadows gets upgraded to a color TV. It led me to wonder if his visit could improve things here? Could we, one of the most neglected areas, become the county's cornerstone?

Tons of folks soon surrounded him and shook his hand and snapped pictures next to him with their big grins, like they were kids again. I was halfway through my soda, taking

it all in. When he looked over to see why I hadn't greeted him, I rushed into city hall, grabbed a copy of East Palo Alto Today and then greeted him and gave him a complimentary copy of the local paper. Only then did a blue car pull up to whisk him away to some other event. For a brief moment, the past had flowed into the present; an historical figure had been in town. I now wonder if he will help launch the second civil rights movements so that we can upgrade our bulky, grainy, color TVs to high definition, flat screen TVs! I can sense today's events already flowing into a better future for all, because you're eventually going to have to upgrade that old TV to the latest and best. Am I right? Or am I right?

Lifecycles

Former East Palo Alto mayor dies - March 23, 1927- March 16, 2014

By Sekou Tou're Blakey
East Palo Alto Today

James Elton Blakey, Jr. 86, of East Palo Alto, California passed away peacefully after a short battle with cancer on Sunday March 16th, 2014.

He was born in Luling, Texas to James Elton and Mayme Alice Blakey.



James Elton Blakey, Jr.

James, better known to many as Mr. Blakey was a strong, family loving man who championed for civil rights and community development.

Mr. Blakey was a small business owner, former Vice Mayor (1986-1987) and former Mayor (1988) of East Palo Alto.

Mr. Blakey was a man who lived a life of compassion and

hard work, and he instilled these traits in all those that he encountered, especially his family. He is preceded by his father, mother, and son Cornel Blakey.

He is survived by his son Sekou Tou're Blakey, daughter Aqila Lynette Blakey-Armstrong, as well as grandchildren, and a host of other family and friends.

Mr. Blakey is celebrated for his wisdom, strength, pride, perseverance, kindness, personal growth, and spiritual devotion.

Blakey's memorial service was held at the Abundant Life Church which is located at 2440 Leghorn St, in Mountain View, CA. on Saturday, March 29, 2014 at 10am. He was buried in Riverside, CA.

Mae Bell Washington Let lifesaving conversations bloom

April 21, 1928-March 3, 2014



Mae Bell Washington

tired at age 77. Mrs. Washington was a member of the California Teachers Association and recently joined the National Council of Negro Women Inc.

She joined and faithfully attended the Faith Missionary Baptist Church of Christ. Since the mid-1980s, Mrs. Washington was a regular supporter of the church's work.

Mrs. Mae Bell Washington, age 85, died at Stanford Hospital in Stanford, Calif., on Monday, March 3, 2014. She transitioned comfortably.

Born April 21, 1928, in Galveston, Texas, she lived in Texas, before settling in East Palo Alto, Calif.

She worked at the Ravenswood City School District as a public elementary school teacher for 37 years and re-

Survivors include her daughter, Alice Josephine Washington of Sacramento, Calif.; her sister, Ora Lee Carter of Texas City, Texas; her niece and nephew Nicole D. Carter and Otto Carter, Jr., both of Texas; longtime friends Rosemary Steele and Dr. Charlie Knight; and many others who loved her dearly. Alfred Van Washington, Jr., preceded his mother's death on January 20, 1994.

By Ayanna Anderson
East Palo Alto Today

Every April, I look forward to celebrating the spring season, with its promise of renewal and rebirth.

These themes have added significance for those of us who work in the organ and tissue transplantation field.

You see, thousands of Bay Area residents are living on borrowed time. They are hoping for the second chance of life that can only be made possible through organ and tissue donation and transplantation.

There's simply nothing more compassionate than becoming someone's hero when the time comes.

Just like the lovely gardens that are beginning to spring



Ayanna Anderson

forth, my hope is that families will invite more candid health conversations to bloom. This spring, I challenge you to be the catalyst for sparking healthy dialogue with your family about timely health matters.

Be sure to bring up the critically important topic of organ and tissue donation. Perhaps you may have a powerful story to share about you arrived at your donation decision.

If you have not yet made a

decision about whether or not to register as an organ and tissue donor, I'll bet that your family and loved ones may have many interesting perspectives to share.

Many springs ago, I said "Yes" to donation when I received my first driver's license on my 16th birthday.

I've been showcasing my pink "donor" dot pride for decades now, and I continue to be inspired by the countless heroes who have made such an impact in the lives of others.

To learn more about organ and tissue donation, or to access important conversation-starting information, visit: donateLIFEcalifornia.org.

Ayanna Anderson is the community development liaison for the California Transplant Donor Network

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Creating a remembrance or memory page on the East Palo Alto Today website allows you, your friends and your family members to leave a memorable legacy in honor of a deceased friend or family member. To see the Treasured Memories section on the EPA Today website,

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Lifecycles

Focusing on the work of the Omega Psi Phi fraternity



By Robert Shoffner
East Palo Alto Today

Mu Kappa Kappa Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. welcomed its newest brother Logan M Shoffner on April 5, 2014.

Logan, a resident of Burlingame is a 2013 graduate of Clark Atlanta University with a degree in Management and Marketing.

Omega Psi Phi Fraternity is the first international fraternal or-

ganization to be founded on the campus of a historically black college, Howard University on November 17, 1911.

Today, Omega Psi Phi now has over 700 chapters throughout the United States, Bermuda, Bahamas, Virgin Islands, Korea, Japan, Liberia, Germany, and Kuwait.

Fraternity brothers actively participate in their communities through programs such as voter registration, Assault on Illiteracy, Habitat for Humanity, United Negro College Fund and an Fatherhood Initiative to name a few. Mu Kappa Kappa Chapter was established June 8, 1996 on the Peninsula.

Some of its notable members are Larry Moody a mem-

ber of the East Palo Alto City Council, Samuel Johnson former Superintendent of the San Mateo High school District and Marlon McWilson a member of the Alameda County Board of Education.

Mu Kappa Kappa is active in the community through participation in the annual College and Career Fair held at the Onetta Harris Community Center, the annual Soul Stroll Health Walk, Brother to

Brother Men's Health Symposium and annual Thanksgiving Turkey Drive that has given over 18,000 turkeys to residents in the communities it serves over the last 17 years.

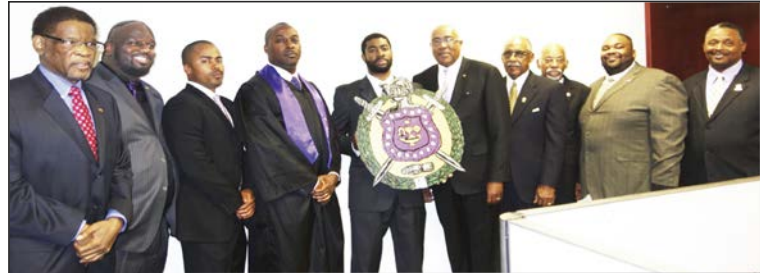


Photo courtesy of the Mu Kappa Kappa Chapter of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity
From left, Edmund Harris, Marlon McWilson, Richard Harris, District Representative Frederick Alexander, Logan Shoffner, Robert Shoffner, Woodrow Andrews, Dennis Parker, Christopher Rollins Basileus, and Larry Moody

Ravenswood City School District responds to feedback

By Rolando Bonilla
East Palo Alto Today

The Ravenswood City School District announced tonight at its Board of Trustees meeting its revised vision for the future of the District's facilities. Currently engaged in a district wide facilities master planning process, the District used the opportunity to



highlight the stakeholder engagement efforts they have undertaken in recent weeks to

present to parents and teachers a vision and various options to transform the District's facilities in order to accomplish a number of the District's long-term goals, such as to increase education opportunities for students, strengthen current educational programs, improve learning and teaching environments, boost student enrollment and develop stronger community connec-

tions. Having initiated the facilities master plan earlier this year, District leaders sought to engage stakeholders early in the process to help outline key goals and priorities to help drive the process and ensure stakeholders are given a voice in determining the most optimal future use of Ravenswood facilities. Already, the District has engaged with its

certified teachers, classified staff and held two parent meetings to discuss the District's vision and solicit feedback in order to modify and strengthen the plan in line with what stakeholders identified as priorities and to build district wide support for modernizing the District's facilities and classrooms in order to better support students

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Street drugs can cause severe tooth damage



Photo courtesy of the J. Paul Getty Museum
Unknown maker, French (daguerreotypist), about 1852

Dr. Virginia Humphrey
East Palo Alto Today

Many drugs, especially illegal ones, can cause severe tooth damage due to increased teeth grinding, reduced salivary flow leading to rapid decay, and poor hygiene.

Estimates suggest that about 40 per cent of people take at least one type of medication that could cause tooth damage, while 23 million people are addicted to illegal drugs.

Not only do these street drugs affect your heart, brain, and overall health, but they can destroy your teeth.

After a short time of use, the mouth will dry substantially allowing decay to form around the tooth entering the nerve and weakening the enamel.

Teeth will then fracture and crumble making them unsalvageable. The gums are also affected and teeth become loose due to inflammation and bone loss.

If you are using illegal substances, start saving for the dentist. It could cost you 25K to over 100K to repair the damage in your mouth. Many addicts end up wearing dentures.

Drugs that carry a high risk to your oral health include:

- Cannabis – Causes dry mouth leading to an increased risk of gum problems. The smoke can cause oral cancer.

- Cocaine – Causes ulceration of the gums and the underlying bone. Cocaine mixed with saliva creates an extremely acidic solution that erodes tooth enamel and exposes the underlying dentin to decay-causing bacteria. Cocaine and crack cocaine cause dry mouth, which further

increases the risk of tooth decay. Cocaine can cause tooth wear by tooth grinding.

- Ecstasy –Side effects of the drug include tooth grinding, jaw clenching, and dry mouth which leave teeth prone to fracture and decay.

- Heroin –People who use heroin tend to crave sweet foods, which can increase the risk of tooth decay if dental hygiene is neglected. Heroin can also cause dry mouth and tooth grinding.

- Methamphetamine –This drug is the worst offender causing severe tooth decay in a very short time.

Dental professionals have coined the term 'meth mouth' to describe the extensive damage typically caused by this drug.

Methamphetamine is highly acidic and attacks tooth enamel. Other side effects include dry mouth, bruxism and jaw clenching.

Any drug dependence or

drug use that causes the person to neglect their personal hygiene, diet and dental care can significantly increase the risk of dental and other health problems.

Dr. Virginia Humphrey is a doctor of dental surgery (DDS), who owns the 6to9 Dental office in the Ravenswood Shopping Center. The office is located at 1765 East Bayshore Rd., #H, East Palo Alto, CA 94303.



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RCSD holds 'Future Chefs Cooking Competition'

Rolando Bonilla
East Palo Alto Today

The Ravenswood City School District Child Nutrition Department hosted a Future Chefs Cooking Competition for local fourth and fifth grade students designed to help educate students in healthy eating habits.

In an era when childhood obesity rates are skyrocketing, Ravenswood City School District has encouraged students to make healthy life choices, including in the food they eat. For that reason, contest partic-

ipants were asked to prepare their favorite healthy sandwich and were judged based on health-conscious foods, simple, kid-friendly preparation, fun kid-foods, and table presentation.

On March 19, finalists from all participating schools (Belle Haven, Brentwood Academy and Cesar Chavez Academy) competed for the title of Top Future Chef. All finalists received a framed plaque, a recipe book of all finalists' recipes, a Chef Coat and Chef Hat.

The grand prize winner was Carlos Banos from Cesar



Carlos Banos

Chavez Academy (pictured) with a recipe for a cucumber sandwich (also pictured).

The finalists from all three schools who competed in the March 19 finals are listed below along with their winning recipes.

Belle Haven:

- Francisco Rosales – Francisco's Famous Sandwich
- Hailey Chavez – Dolphin Sandwich

Brentwood:

- Jeremiah Mapa – Extreme Buns
- Faith Tupa – Momo Sandwich

- Cesar Chavez**
- Ashawnty Sims – Honey Mustard Chicken Sandwich
 - Carlos Banos – Cucumber Sandwich



Photos courtesy of Ford & Bonilla. This photo shows Carlos Banos' winning recipe in the Future Chefs Cooking competition.

Baylands program trains junior naturalists

By Sally Tomlinson
East Palo Alto Today

Fourteen students from the Boys and Girls Clubs of East Palo Alto and Menlo Park earned their certification as Junior Naturalists on April 10 at the Environmental Volunteers EcoCenter in the Palo Alto Baylands. They were among the 24 third, fourth and fifth graders who spent five consecutive Wednesday afternoons exploring nature through hands on learning, outdoor discovery, and restoration projects.

Each week took a specific focus in environmental science. In week one, the students were greeted with live hawks and owls as they learned what makes birds different from other animals. After identifying characteristics that distinguish among bird species, the students took a bird watching hike to put their knowledge to use.

When the focus moved on to Restoration Ecology, the students met up with Environmental Volun-



Photo courtesy of Environmental Volunteers EcoCenter. In this photo, an EcoCenter volunteer shows some of the birds in the Baylands to a group of children who are in the Junior Naturalist program.

teers and Acterra at the end of Runnymede Street in East Palo Alto to learn about marshland ecology and help restore parts of the San Francisco Bay Trail. A third session took students back in time to learn how the early California Indians used the local environment to meet their needs for food, tools, and even games. The stu-

dents mastered the skill of making cordage from natural fiber.

On marine science day, the students examined fish up close, locating the gills, touching scales and fins, and even handling live sharks and fish from the nearby bay.

In the concluding session, students met with a park Ranger,

and discussed how to continue their relationship with nature. They went home with wildflowers to plant, and a commitment to share their knowledge and to care for natural resources.

Environmental Volunteers has graduated five groups of Junior Naturalists, and the Boys and Girls Club children have comprised about half of each graduating class. Other students register independently.

The current session of the Junior Naturalist program started on May 7. The program is open

to students in 3rd - 5th grades. Meetings take place every Wednesday from 3:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. through June 4 at the EcoCenter across from the Duck Pond in the Palo Alto Baylands Nature Preserve.

The cost is \$85 for 5 meetings. Scholarships are available to students and families with financial need.

For more information about future dates, contact Eric McKee, (650)493-8000 ext. 345 or e-mail Eric@EVLvs.org.



Photo courtesy of the EcoCenter. This photo shows the EcoCenter, which is a nature center, located in the Palo Alto Baylands. It is an historic Birge Clark-designed "paddlewheel boat."

Support the East Palo Alto Today newspaper

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. 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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Measure AA

continued from page 5

prove accessibility. Fish and red-legged frog habitats would be restored in the Madonna Creek watershed and a wildlife corridor would be established.

El Corte de Madera Creek: New hiking and biking trails would be added while old trails would be repaired to enhance access and preserve the local watershed. Gaps in the existing Ridge Trail would also be eliminated.

La Honda Creek: New loop

and connector trails would be added, rare-species habitat would be improved, dog access would be added in some areas and the Red Barn would be developed as an educational destination, increasing opportunities for volunteers and community events, including night hikes.

So far, the campaign has garnered support from a broad range of area community lead-

ers, including Mayor Martinez, City Council members Donna Rutherford, Reuben Abrica and Larry Moody. Sen. Jerry Hill, Congresswoman Anna Eshoo, Assemblyman Kevin Mullin, San Mateo County Supervisors Don Horsley and Warren Slocum, the League of Women Voters of South San Mateo County and many others.

"This measure is critical to

protecting our region's treasured open space and the lands around our water sources, which are critical in times of drought," said Sen. Hill. "Measure AA will truly benefit everyone in our community and will not only continue to protect our most valued lands and redwood forests but will make them even more accessible to all residents, including senior cit-

izens, families, people with disabilities, and of course, future generations."

For a complete list of campaign endorsements and to learn more about the 25 top open space projects that will benefit from this measure, visit yesforopenspace.org.

Yoriko Kishimoto is a former Mayor and City Councilwoman of the City of Palo Alto.

Constructing

continued from page 5

erator runs out of fuel or fails to start (according to the strict dictates of Murphy's Law), the fire house will have several hours of autonomy for communications, lights and office machines, if the District invests in a battery back up system.

It is very easy to ruin or reduce the service life of a good set of lead acid batteries just through benign neglect so let's hope the District sees the wisdom in a maintenance contract. Low maintenance Tesla batteries should be on Chief Schapelhouman's wish list. To get an idea about the expense, a typical home battery installation of a 60 kWh system by Brand X costs \$7,000 after the tax credits plus the PG&E connection fee of about

\$1,000. A very busy two engine fire station running 24/7 might take a system ten times as large with economies of scale markedly reduced by the inevitable engineering change orders.

The catch is that as the PG&E grid becomes more complex, it may become more delicate at the same time home solar PV and battery systems starves PG&E's capital improvement fund and maintenance department of the gravy dollars from the top of their tiered billing system. So, while the District doesn't need solar and battery systems now, someday they will for economic and operational reasons.

On a societal level, the big

problem with fail safe electric power is starving zombies. When the grid is down and the fire station is warm, bright and cozy, what will happen to the stiff legged, hollow eyed, ragged army of the walking dead with their cold TV dinners, dry ramen noodles, dead laptops and dead iPods? So will there be juice for the masses or bullets to the head and bonfires? As usual, pre-planning prevents poor performances but the Chief is preoccupied with labor negotiations and the reorganization of the department so they'll probably be manning the ramparts of their castle.

The other four fire stations in the District that are slated for rebuilding and moderniza-

tion will also be prepared for increases in the cost of energy with solar panels. (Someday) With a positive cash flow from day one of the installation, the District should see the financial benefits of solar photovoltaics, in vastly reduced utility bills. A flexible fleet of oil embargo proof vehicles running on a variety of fuels and power sources (including trusty diesel) is sure to follow. You'd think that a new fire station with automatic cook stove shutoff and the ability to co-opt a traffic signal would be sophisticated enough for solar PV, but I dunno.

The great question in this modernization effort is when. When will the District install solar PV panels on the roof of Station Two? When will the District realize that the greatest threat to our fire station is not a drive by shooting or stray

bullet but rather rising ocean and bay water levels caused by global warming that puts the station, its mission and the whole city at risk? When will the District learn that as a rule of thumb, organizations that postpone going solar will never catch up financially to the early adopters of the technology? Where is the leadership that we pay so dearly for?

Why is it you can never find a good scaling ladder when you need one? Keep an eye on your local MPFD Fire Station. Great things are on the way.

Steven P. Kennedy, is a former Fire District Board Member. He works as a union telecom installer and also as a lead generator for a solar leasing company. He said he studied Solar PV in Tom Huggett's class at JobTrain in Menlo Park for 5 months on your federal tax dollars.

Rep. Jackie Speier

continued from page 2

at 1:30 p.m. and met with Ravenswood City School District Superintendent Gloria Hernandez-Goff, the school's Principal Amika Maria Maran Guillaume, to discuss how student learning is being impacted by the new common core state standards and how educators are adapting classroom lessons and curriculum to meet challenges students will face in college in the 21st-century economy.

Later on the Talking with Henrietta show, which was taped after her meeting at Cesar Chavez, Speier spoke of the fruitful discussion she had earlier in the day.

The discussion broke new ground with Speier explaining the innovative agreements that were

reached to develop affordable housing on some of the land owned by the San Mateo Community College District. When asked if the type of agreements reached with the college district... could be achieved between the City of East Palo Alto and the Ravenswood City School District, Martinez said that she would bring the issue to the attention of the city staff and to other council members.

Toward the end of the show, Speier mentioned the growing sex trafficking of young people.

She said that 100,000 to 300,000 children in the U.S. between the ages of 12 and 18 are victims of sex trafficking.

She said that she would continue her focus on the issue to see it eliminated. Martinez followed up by saying that she would investigate how widespread



Photo courtesy of Office of Congresswoman Jackie Speier - This photo shows Congresswoman Speier standing with some of those who attended her meeting with East Palo Alto's faith community April 24.

sex trafficking is in East Palo Alto and what the police department might be doing about it.

After the show taping, Speier made the last stop on her tour at 4 p.m. to meet with 12 of the city's clergy members at the Faith Missionary Baptist Church.

The church's pastor Rev. Floyd Purdy hosted the meeting. In discussing Speier's visit with the group, Purdy said, they focused mainly about housing and employment in the community.

He said Speier told the group that she would seek funds in

Washington to assist the city with some of its homeless and employment issues.

There were lots of questions and comments about some of the other issues affecting the city, like the hesitancy that some of the undocumented residents have that prevented them from coming forward for fear of persecution.

[Editor's note: To see more photos of Speier's visit, go to the Congresswoman's Facebook page and enter Listening Tour in East Palo Alto. To get more in-

formation about her interview on the Talking with Henrietta show with Mayor Laura Martinez, go to:

<http://www.epatoday.org/tv/html-federalassistance>.



Photo courtesy of Willie Moore Congresswoman Jackie Speier presents an award to the senior center's Executive Director, Millicent Grant, during her visit to the center April 24.

Life moves on

My mother-in-law and Carter had an indelible effect on the lives of those they touched.

As much as we might not like to admit it or think about it, we can, therefore, ask ourselves what type of legacy

would we like to leave behind us one day.

The question reminds me of one of my favorite poems called, Passing Through, by Sidney J. Burgoyne:

We're passing through this life but once,

And do we make each day The better for our having lived, In any worth while way?

Our lives are all too short at best, The days of work so few That we must make each minute count In what we say and do.

We must be sure to live our best,

continued from page 4

So we can leave behind Some lasting mark, some memory Of an enduring kind;

Some heart the finer that we lived, Some life the richer, too-- Because we bravely did our bit

As we were PASSING THROUGH!

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Beyond San Francisco

continued from page 1

a four bedroom house; we split our rent and other housing-related costs between our four incomes. I recently calculated how much of my own income goes toward housing- 28%. I share a home with three other working people and my housing costs are barely affordable. I know that if there were only two of us, or if I had children, or if I were in poor health, or if there were any other strain on my fi-

nances, I, too, would be at risk of homelessness, or would have to relocate out of the area.

20% of the county's residents earn \$35,000 or less each year, a figure that lies between 2012's per capita personal income of \$42,693 and the current individual poverty level of \$11,670 (Bureau of Business and Economic Research, UNM and Department of Health and Human Services). What

would be considered a fine, livable wage elsewhere has become pocket change in the face of surging costs in a market that, in its growth, has abandoned its citizens. This is without mentioning those who have lost a job to the economy, are disabled, had less access to education, or for any other reason cannot financially support themselves at this cost. The aging population finds itself

trapped in the working world beyond retirement age for fear of that their savings are now not enough, while the young scramble to find an income at all, and everyone in between does their best to hold tight to what they may already have.

"We're in a housing crisis", I tell myself on the first of every month, wondering where my paycheck went, but grateful to have a home.

Author's note: Lena Potts is the Community Manager for HIP Housing, a non-profit affordable housing agency in San Mateo County. Their Home Sharing Program is one of the largest in the country, and has helped house thousands in our community. Call (650) 348-6660 or go to hiphousing.org for more information about their programs.

Más allá de San Francisco, crisis de vivienda abruma la península

Por Lena Potts
East Palo Alto Today



"Nosotros estamos en una crisis de viviendas," todos me dijeron cuando intenté encontrar una vivienda entre Redwood City y Palo Alto. Dime algo que yo no sé. Como todos quien viven en esta área, yo ya sabía que viviendas aquí son muy caras; pero yo no sabía que es casi imposible.

Los periódicos, blogs, y cualquier otro foro abierto cibernético (Facebook, Twitter, y los tabloneros de mensajes) han sido inundados con artículos de opinión furiosos que avergüenzan las compañías y empleados de compañías tecnológicas por "destruyendo" San Francisco. Parece que cualquier persona no empleada por Google está muy enojados sobre los autobuses de Google, que transportan los empleados del Silicon Valley de sus casas en San Francisco, y utilizan paradas de Muni diseñadas. En la forma verdadera de San Francisco, ha habido protestas, sobre los autobuses y otros signos de una ciudad aburguesada, han sido protestas muy apasionadas. Algunos escritores y agencias noticieras han defendido la industria tecnológica como injustamente acusado

por los efectos de crecimiento inocente, e indicando que un mercado y cultura cambiando es la naturaleza de evolución económico.

En toda esa ira de San Francisco, parece que los problemas de la Península han sido olvidados. Independientemente de si el crisis de vivienda surge por razones de estímulo económico normal, años de malos planes, o una maldad del capitalismo, los resultados son terribles para las personas vivienda más cerca del Silicon Valley que de SF-mucho del Condado de San Mateo ha sido herido hasta más fuerte.

Según el County of San Mateo Economic Indicators Report, publicado en Septiembre 2013, El promedio de la renta por un apartamento de un cuarto en el condado llega alrededor de los \$2,100. No sorprendentemente, hemos visto un aumento del 12% en las personas con falta de

vivienda desde el 2011, debido a personas quien perdieron sus trabajos y casas, etcétera (Condado de San Mateo Departamento de Vivienda). Es aún más difícil contar a las personas quien están a riesgo de perder sus viviendas, United Way estimula que uno en cinco personas no pueden pagar por su situación de vivienda actual.

Cuando el mundo de vivienda utiliza palabras como "asequible", por lo general significa que el 30% de sus ingresos serán usados para el costo de vivienda. En el Condado de San Mateo, este 30% asequible requiere un ingreso anual de \$84,000 o más. Esto es más que la mayoría de maestros, cajeros de banco, técnicos de emergencias médicas, auxiliares de ventas, y muchas otras profesiones hacen en un año. Todavía, para una casa con dos ingresos estables, para ganar \$84,000 puede ser difícil, si no imposible.

Yo vivo con tres otras personas en una casa de cuatro dormitorios. Dividimos la renta y otros gastos de vivienda entre nuestros cuatro ingresos. Recientemente calculé mi porcentaje de ingresos usado

hacia ni costo de vivienda-28%. Yo comparto un hogar con tres otros adultos quien trabajan, y mis gastos de vivienda son apenas asequible. Yo sé que si sólo hubieran dos de nosotros, o si tendría hijos, o si estuviera en mal estado de salud, o si había cualquier otra dificultad en mis finanzas, yo también estaría en riesgo de falta de vivienda, o tendría que mudarme fuera del área.

20% de los residentes del condado ganan \$35,000 o menos al año, un figura entre los \$42,693, el ingreso per cápita personal por 2012, y \$11,670, que es el nivel de pobreza individual actual (Bureau of Business and Economic Research, UNM and Department of Health and Human Services). Lo que se puede considerar un buen salario en otros lugares se ha convertido en el cambio de bolsillo con los costos crecientes en un mercado que, en su crecimiento, ha abandonado sus habitantes. Y esto es sin menciona a las personas quien perdieron sus trabajos por la economía, los discapacitados, los que tienen menos acceso a una educación, o por cualquier otro razón no pueden mantenerse financieramente con estos costos. La población envejeciendo ahora está atrapada en el mundo de trabajo más allá de jubilación por temor a que sus ahorros no sean suficientes en esta economía, mientras los jóvenes luchan para encontrar cualquier ingreso, y todos entremedios hacen todo lo posible para

mantener lo que ya tienen.

"Nosotros estamos en una crisis de vivienda," me digo a mí misma en el primer día de cada mes, preguntándome dónde se fue mi salario del mes, pero agradecida de tener un hogar.

Nota de la autora: Lena Potts es el Community Manager para HIP Housing, una agencia de vivienda asequible sin fines de lucro en el Condado de San Mateo. Su Programa de Vivienda Compartida es una de las más grandes del país, y ha ayudado a miles de las personas en nuestra comunidad. Llame (650) 348-6660 o visite hiphousing.org para obtener más información sobre sus programas.



Having sleep problems?

If you are 60 years or older, you may be eligible to participate in a study of Non-Drug Treatments for Insomnia sponsored by the National Institutes of Health, and conducted at the Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Medical Center.

Participants will receive extensive sleep evaluation, individual treatment, and reimbursement for participation. **For more information, please call Stephanie at (650) 849-0584.** (For general information about participant rights, contact 866-680-2906.)

Training fighters to be champions for a better community

By Jane Theresa Jones
East Palo Alto Today

The East Palo Alto Boxing Club held its first banquet honoring several members of the club who have demonstrated extraordinary improvement in their lives through hard work and dedication.

The banquet was held on Sunday, February 9, 2014, at the Four Seasons Silicon Valley Hotel. The guests of honor included Judge LaDoris Cordell, San Mateo County District Attorney Stephen Wagstaffe, and Robert "The Ghost" Guerrero.

Guerrero is a 6-time, 4-division boxing world champion with titles in the Featherweight, Super Featherweight, Lightweight, and Welterweight divisions. Guerrero trained at the EPA Boxing Club gym in 2010.

Other honorees at the banquet included Robert Guerrero, Mario Serrano, Isaac Teasley, Steven Scano, Stephen Wagstaffe, Juan Valle, Hanni Kruggel, Maximiliano Aguilar, Raymond Gutierrez, Will Webster, Jose Luis Hernandez, Paul Orozc.

The East Palo Alto Boxing



Photo courtesy of Jane Theresa Jones

In this photo, East Palo Alto City Council member Lisa Yarbrough Gauthier is seen standing with members of the East Palo Alto Boxing Club.

Club was started by Johnnie Gray, Jr. Gray is a native of East Palo Alto, who graduated from Ravenswood High School, which was located in East Palo

Alto. Gray was a professional boxer and a three-time Golden Glove Middleweight Champion during his boxing career. Gray said that his love and

devotion for boxing motivated him to start the boxing club for at-risk youth in the community as a place for them to work out and relieve stress. The program is designed to prevent delinquency and motivate youth development. Gray stressed that, "the boxing program is designed to provide a fitness workout that is fun, easy to learn, and safe."

Gray and the boxing club have a record of success, e.g., Fatima Alcantar, a student in the boxing program, has been with

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Council agrees

continued from page 1

and recommended budget. The future is exciting and holds a great deal of promise, and I look forward to the City Council's direction through the budget process to continue to move the organization and the community forward."

Achievements in 2013-2014

González, then went on to cite as her administration's accomplishments during the 2013-2014 fiscal year, such things as the adoption of the Ten Year Capital Improvement Plan including the necessary staffing; a renewed and productive partnership with American Water Enterprises and a financial and operational audit that allowed the city to better manage and maintain its water system; "the assessments of several service areas with the preparations of corresponding work plans; the development of an organizational infrastructure and a records management system; the completion of an inventory of City Council Resolutions and the opening of the new Permit Center located in the city operated building at 1960 Tate Street. She said that the city would continue to revise

ordinances "in order to update the Municipal Code to meet best practices and to comply with State and Federal statutes. The city would continue to seek grant funding for signature Police Department programs such as Reentry, and expediting recruitments to achieve full staffing."

González acknowledged that the city has an ongoing structural deficit with its expenditures outstripping its revenues. So, in the proposed budget, the staff identified areas of potential reductions which included the elimination of several city positions, which the council did not accept.

Most of the proposed budget changes were outside of the police department and the public safety arena, given, what was considered the department's limited staffing and resources.

With respect to the police department, the staff proposed to create a new Community Policing and Professional Standards Unit by reclassifying a police officer position to a position of sergeant "to ensure all staff are properly trained, and

community outreach and overall Community Policing efforts are maintained."

Given what the staff said is the pressing need to focus on economic development in all areas of city government, the budget recommended that the Community Development Department be renamed the Community and Economic Development Department.

One of the major concerns during the budget hearings was the Reentry Program, which the council

ideally wanted to be self-sustaining. But, thus far, the program has not managed to be and continues to be partially supported by city funding.

One sticky point emerged at the end over the increased funding recommendation made by the city's rent stabilization board that the city increase funding to the Rent Stabilization office.

Council member Abrica wanted the council to make a decision regarding the funding right away, but Martinez wanted to wait until a future

meeting. Abrica said that it would be a disservice to the rent stabilization board to put their request off.

So, it was agreed that Martinez and Yarbrough-Gauthier, who jointly decide the agenda for the council meetings, would arrange to discuss the issue at a council meeting prior to the next discussion of the budget.

A finalized budget, with the council's proposed modifications, will be brought back to the council in June.

Celebrating A Decade of Service

Primary health care for residents of East Palo Alto, Belle Haven and Redwood City.

- Primary medical care
- Dental care for adults and children
- Behavioral health counseling
- Chronic disease care
- Prenatal care and Family Planning
- Immunizations and school physicals

To enroll as a new patient: 650.330.7416
For medical appointments: 650.330.7400
For dental appointments: 650.289.7700

Children (18 and under) can receive dental care without being enrolled as a medical patient.

Ravenswood Family Health Center
1798A Bay Road, East Palo Alto

Celebrando Una Década de Servicio

Cuidado médico primario para los residentes de East Palo Alto, Belle Haven y Redwood City.

- Servicios médicos primarios
- Cuidado dental para adultos y niños
- Asesoramiento de la salud mental
- Tratamiento para las enfermedades crónicas
- Cuidado prenatal y planificación familiar
- Vacunas y exámenes físicos

Para inscribirse como nuevo paciente: Para una cita médica: Para una cita dental

Niños menores de 18 años pueden recibir tratamiento dental sin estar registrados como paciente médico.

Belle Haven Clinic
100 Terminal Avenue, Menlo Park

Rent Stabilization

May 1, 2014; any and all records of communication between City Manager Magda Gonzalez and Rent Stabilization Program staff; between Gonzalez and any representative of Equity Residential Apartment, detailing and/or discussing the Rent Stabilization Program; any and all records of communication produced by the City of East Palo Alto, detailing and/or discussing an audit of the Rent Stabilization Program and any and all records of communication to or from Gonzalez, detailing and/or discussing the scope and/or contents of the Rent Sta-

bilization Program Audit."

In responding to the criticisms and in clarifying her position on the issues involved, Gonzalez stated, "I would like to assure the community that I am completely in favor and in support of the Rent Stabilization Ordinance as passed by the voters of this community. I understand the importance and value of the ordinance, and will continue to provide my full support to preserving the ordinance and carrying out the mission and purpose of the ordinance. In my job as City Manager, I will continue to make sure that the Rent Stabi-

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lization and Just Cause for Eviction Ordinance is rightly and justly enforced. I am committed to ensuring that the ordinance is not compromised, and will do all I can within my authority to continue to: protect residential tenants from unreasonable rent increases, discourage speculation in rental property, protect tenants from arbitrary, discriminatory or retaliatory eviction, and assure landlords the right to a fair return."

Leah Simon-Weisberg, Legal Director, Tenants Together said the city's request for the audit didn't make any sense, since this

is a program that is so important to the city, especially at a time when the enforcement of the program is more critical than ever.

Weisberg cited the example of Equity Residential, one of the nation's largest landlords, which owns approximately 2,000 rental units in East Palo Alto. Equity Residential is being sued by East Palo Alto tenants for allowing "uninhabitable living conditions" in some of its units.

It is claimed that some of the company's rental policies are leading to the mass displacements of its East Palo Alto tenants (See EPA Today article East Palo Alto tenants sue the nation's largest landlord online at <http://epatoday.org/news/2014/a>

unhealthy_living_conditions_2132.html or on page 3 of this issue.

In speaking of these displacements, Weisberg said "this little tiny rent stabilization program is doing all it can to help all of these tenants."

The city has 10 days to respond to the request for public documents. Several members of the Rent Stabilization Board read a letter, on behalf of the board, at the May 6 city council meeting in which they asked for the reinstatement of the rent stabilization coordinator and they were critical of the city audit.

Study sees need

continued from page 2

To accomplish helping residents in the South Bay earn a degree in higher education, we propose locating a satellite campus in East Palo Alto/East Menlo Park that supports the residents unique needs through a collaboration between the San Mateo Community College District, Sequoia Union High School District and the Satellite Community College Campus Initiative. This satellite campus would support the offering of a course of study that includes Educational Planning, Academic Support Services, Life Skills, Financial Edu-



Edmund Harris is shown meeting with a student in his office.

cation and Efficacy in Diversity Training for Faculty and Staff.

The expected outcomes, the proposed solution and collaboration are the following: Improved college accessibility, Improved College and Career Readiness, increased job opportunities, im-

proved community identity, enriched community infrastructure, increased tax bases for the community.

Working together to address these issues, we can create a strong economic future for the South Bay communities where more residents will reach their education goals and succeed more often than not.

Reference:

In the study performed by McKinsey and Company entitled "The Economic Cost of the US Education Gap," findings found in 2009, that "a persistent gap in academic achievement between children in the United States and

their counterparts in other countries deprived the US economy of as much as \$2.3 trillion in economic output". The study further found that the education achievement gap between African-American and Hispanic students and their white counterparts cost the US economy up to \$525 billion in GDP and up to \$160 billion dollars in earnings for these ethnic groups. When looked at in term of lower income students versus other students the GDP gap grew to \$670 billion.

California is not immune to the statistics noted above. The Campaign for College Opportu-

nity reports that California is projected to be 2.3 million college degree and certificates short of meeting the economic productivity demands of our economy by 2025. Currently only 22% of Latino and 26% of black community college students complete a certificate, associates degree, or transfer after 6 years, compared to 37% of whites.

California currently ranks 41st in the US for number of bachelor's degree awarded to students six years after graduating from high school and over 500,000 students are unable to enroll in institutions for higher education due to not meeting requirements.

Community News

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Jackson's meeting in East Palo Alto.

In speaking about that meeting, Moody said, "It was fantastic. Rev. Jackson was at his best. What he did was to shed light on an area that has been ignored for a long period of time: the lack of di-

versity and leadership for many of the Silicon Valley companies, and also I think he's offered an opportunity to create bridges between those entities and our East Palo Alto community.

"I think we're close to identifying a location for a Rainbow

PUSH Coalition here in East Palo Alto," Moody said.

"With me," Loya said," Rev. Jackson's visit not only highlighted the continued issue around the Digital Divide Initiative, but the need for a digital relaunch, by re-launching the digital inclusiveness initiative. That issue has been troubling for the last decade or so."

Loya added that Jackson not only highlighted the consequences to East Palo Alto of the tech industry's flourishing business, but, in highlighting the digital divide, he also highlighted what is shaping up to be a housing divide.

"I think his business was an invitation for collaborative discussions to continue to develop and

encourage a new corporate culture for the tech industry.

As an advocate of young people, I think it's something that we will continue to explore with regard to the realm of education and educational opportunities for young people in East Palo Alto," Loya said.

Community Calendar

East Palo Alto City Council meetings. First and third Tuesdays of the month. Meetings usually start at 7:30 p.m. in the Municipal Building at 2415 University Avenue, East Palo Alto. For more information, go to the City of East Palo Alto's website at <http://www.ci.east-palo-alto.ca.us/agendacenter>.

Visit by Ty Cobb's Grandson - May 27, 2014 - Join a special event at Little House with Herschel Cobb, author of Casey Award winning book, "Heart of a Tiger." Hear stories of an American legend, who spent treasured time with his grandchildren. Sit in on an afternoon to remember at Little House, 800 Middle Avenue Menlo Park, CA. 94025 | 1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Innovations in Reducing and Resolving Conflict in Our Communities - Wednesday, June 11 7:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. Learn about innovative ways to approach conflict and improve communication in your community from this free event, where breakfast will be served. Hear speakers who will discuss exciting new developments to reduce and resolve conflict in the 21st century. For more

info., call the Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center at (650) 513-0330.

Lawyers in the Library - Thursday, June 12, 2014 at 6:00 pm The second Thursday of each month the library, in partnership with the San Mateo County Bar Association, holds free legal clinics. Participants have a twenty minute free consultation with an attorney. Lawyer's legal expertise

may vary from month to month. Call the East Palo Alto Library for details at (650) 321-7712.

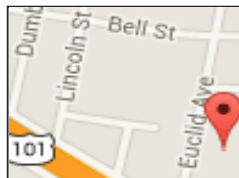
See more community calendar events at the website for the East Palo Alto Today newspaper at www.epatoday.org/events.php

Ravenswood School District responds continued from page 7

and teachers.

"Our Board Trustees have been clear from the onset about the need for open, thoughtful dialogue with parents and stakeholders to ensure the District's vision aligns with the needs of those we serve," said Ravenswood City Superintendent Dr. Gloria Hernandez-- Goff. "Our outreach efforts have paid huge dividends and have resulted in a stronger, more cohesive vision for our District's facilities, proving the value of collaborating early and often with the stakeholders we proudly serve. I have great confidence that, moving forward, our community will continue to be engaged in this ongoing process and that together we can deliver transformative results for our parents, students and our hard-- working teachers and staff."

The revised facilities master plan incorporates the priorities that consistently emerged from the District process -- the need for one comprehensive middle school, support for neighborhood--serving elementary schools and support for the District's dual im-



mersion program. Parents and stakeholder also supported moving Kindergarten programs to the District's elementary schools to reduce parent travel time, foster a greater sense of community, better accustom Kindergartners to the elementary school environment, and free up space at the District's Child Development Center in order to provide Pre--K programs to children as young as three years old.

The concept of forming just one comprehensive middle school rather than two represents a significant departure from the District's initial vision. However, after receiving thoughtful input from teachers about the multiple advantages to be gained by consolidating resources, District leaders refocused on developing one large middle school at Cesar

Chavez that could better serve its 1,200 middle school students, as well as its middle school teachers who are increasingly reliant upon support services and staff to meet the holistic needs of Ravenswood's students and families.

Working with District leaders to identify configurations and support systems needed at the future middle school in order to better ensure long--term success, teachers suggested the creation of small learning communities within the campus that could support enrichment programs in key areas, including science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) and a dual immersion program integrated with the middle school curriculum. While the District would realize savings from streamlining support services and reducing duplicative functions from developing only one comprehensive middle school as opposed to two, the small learning communities would offer parents and students choice in regards to their academic and potential career interests.

"While District leaders have

Talking with Henrietta Increasing Diversity in Corporate America



Photo courtesy of the Talking with Henrietta show. From left, Edmund Harris, show host Henrietta J. Burroughs and Dr. Joseph Bryant are shown on the set of the Talking with Henrietta television show after their discussion on diversity in America's corporate boardrooms. The discussion included the work that Rainbow PUSH Coalition is doing locally and nationally. Get more information about this show at www.epatoday.org/tv.html#diversity.

many ideas of how to improve our facilities in order to positively affect student learning, we have prioritized our stakeholders' voices in this process to ensure we not only develop the necessary level of public support to accomplish our goals but that the outcomes we seek to deliver meet the diverse needs of our stakeholders," said Ravenswood City Board of Trustees President Ana Maria Pulido. "By listening to what our parents and our teachers

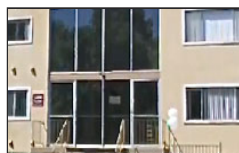
have to say about the future of Ravenswood's schools, we have made significant improvements to our vision and have taken an important step forward in transforming our vision into reality."

The District's facilities master plan will continue to take shape over the next several months, with additional reports from the District's architects expected to be presented to the public via the Board of Trustees in late--May.

EPA family

the faulty gate that left him permanently blind in one eye.

CLSEPA and Greenstein's law firm are seeking the following in damages: "A. For general damages, in the amount of \$500,000.00 for each Plaintiff for each of the following Causes of Action: the First, Third, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, Eighth and Ninth Causes of Action; B. For special damages, in the amount of \$100,000.00 for each Plaintiff for each of the following Causes of Action: the First, Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Ninth, Twelfth



This photo shows a portion of the Woodland Park Apartment complex at 45 Newell Road in East Palo Alto.

and Thirteenth Causes of Action; C. For punitive damages of \$5,000,000.00 against the EQR Defendants and \$300,000 against REDUS WOODLAND,

LLC; D. For incidental damages, past, present and future, according to proof,

E. For rental reimbursement of \$80,000 or in an amount according to proof, plus interest; F. For statutory damages of \$5,000.00 for each violation of Civil Code section 1942.4"

In talking about the lawsuit, Bowman said that she and her colleagues at CLSEPA get a lot of complaints about the same problems the Mendez family experienced. She stated that Equity Residential's policies are causing

mass displacements from their rental complex, a situation that brought many lawsuits against the complex's former owners, Page Mill Properties.

She cited, for example, Equity Residential's lease arrangement with tenants, which allows tenants to pay their rent 5 days after its due date on the first of the month, with a \$50.00 late penalty. However, tenants are not told that under state law, the company can proceed to evict them on the second day after the rent is due, which the company has been accused

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of doing with a number of tenants.

While the company's policies aren't illegal, Bowman said that they are unfair. According to Bowman, "It's not a pretty picture when people are losing their homes."

Many of the complex's former residents have moved to such areas as Tracy, Modesto, Salinas and even out-of-state.

As of this writing representatives for Equity Residential have not been formally served with the lawsuit and they have not been reachable for comment.

Training fighters

the gym since it opened in 2003, and has trained with Gray for over 10 years. In 2007 she began training others. Alcantar said that boxing has helped her become a more open and disciplined person.

Christopher Cheng, Ph.D., Honors Banquet Chair and Member of the Board of Directors, proudly reported that, "The event succeeded beyond our expectations, and we were so fortunate to have had such amazing honored guests, event sponsors, and a ballroom full of people! I have been told that breaking even at an organization's first fundraising event should be considered a success. We are proud to report that after all of our expenses, we netted close to \$30,000! With these funds, on top of our base operations, we have begun to compensate our trainers, increase

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our hours, and created an initial homework tutoring program."

Cheng said, "In addition, our Measure C Large Collaborative Grant, done in collaboration with the Drew Health Foundation (another 501(c)(3) in EPA), finally received final approval. We are launching our program to: 1) provide education of health issues and solutions in EPA in the form of workshops, written materials, and a referral resource center, 2)

provide daily fitness workouts and training to the community, with weekly training sessions on selected health issues, and 3) develop volunteer resources for the community."

The Boxing Club partnered with the Drew Health Foundation, Inc. to continue its youth development program by offering a free monthly dinner & health seminar called, The Lifestyle Series.

The series is held on the fourth Thursday from 7:00 p.m. -- 9:00 p.m. in East Palo Alto at the PGA

Tour Superstore conference room. The series addresses topics such as; self-esteem, bullying, gang awareness, relationships, and substance recovery.

Upcoming topics:

May 22, 2014, Anger Management; June 26, 2014, Healthy Weight, July 24, 2014 Healthy Cooking, August 28, 2014, Depression. The lifestyle series continues through December. More information can be obtained at <http://www.epaboxingclub.org/donate.html>.