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East Palo Alto Today

Providing news that is relevant, informative and critical



East Palo Alto and Belle Haven

February 2014 - March 2014

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Community tells the council 'No'

By Henrietta J. Burroughs
East Palo Alto Today

It might not have been the outcome some members of the city council and the city staff expected, but it was an outcome that most in the audience at the meeting apparently wanted.

The audience burst into applause when the East Palo Alto City Council voted 4 to 1 to veto the idea of having the city staff collect information regarding the outsourcing of the city's police services.

Prior to the vote, council members and city staff heard 25 community members passionately share their views on the issue.

Assistant City Manager, Barbara Powell, acknowledged, even before audience members started speaking on the issue, that there were strongly held views. Her remarks became an apt description of the two-minute speeches that followed.

Twenty-three speakers adamantly opposed the idea

of outsourcing, while two speakers said they were open to the idea.

Most of those, who opposed outsourcing the city's police services, argued that it would be a step backward, since after incorporation the community sought to have its own police force and end what it considered racist attitudes

and abuse from the San Mateo County Sheriff's Department which provided police services to the city.

Robert Hoover, a longtime community activist, said that when he moved to East Palo Alto in 1959, officers from the sheriff's department were abusive, disre-

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Black history museum features wealth of exhibits



Photo by Jane Theresa Jones

This photo shows one of the exhibit tables in the black history museum that opened in Menlo Park on Saturday, February 8, 2014. The museum is formally called the Dominic Hoskins Black History Exhibit and Learning Center, and was housed at 190 Independence Drive in Menlo Park. The museum closed on February 28. See more about the museum in the article titled Black history museum features wealth of exhibits on page 9 of this issue.

Grand opening of the Zechariah Community for Empowerment and Peace

By Jane Theresa Jones
East Palo Alto Today

Last year, Able Works brought a small four unit apartment complex from disrepair and foreclosure to transform it into a transitional housing complex located along the Bayshore Frontage Road.

The housing complex developed as a result of the collaboration between two East Palo Alto nonprofits, Able Works and Live in Peace, Inc. Blanca Medina, the Live-

Able Program Manager, and other Able Works staff members served as master of ceremonies for the housing complex's grand opening.

Katie Ferrick presented a proclamation on behalf of U.S. Congresswoman Jackie Speier. San Mateo County Supervisor Warren Slocum commended the team and said that he was fascinated with the diversity of the groups that aided with the project.

Mayor Laura Martinez offered congratulations to the Able Works team and its supporters for successfully completing the renovation project.

She also cited their continued efforts to extend the ladders of success to the residents of East Palo Alto, and to provide avenues to help them make life choices that enable them to climb out of economic survival mode.



Photo courtesy of Jane Theresa Jones

East Palo Alto resident Heather Starnes watches as two residents cut the ribbons at their housing units as Rev. John Liotti also looks on.

Hannah Wang, from Wells Fargo Bank, expressed her excitement at being a part of the funding team that provided financing to complete the Zechariah Community project. Heather Starnes, executive director of Live In Peace shared that although the housing project is complete the residents still need additional furnishing and other household items.

She invited anyone who is interested in purchasing items

for the residents to contact her at Able Works.

Rev. John Liotti, the CEO and co-founder of Able Works explained why the name Zechariah was chosen. He said, "We named the units the Zechariah Community for Empowerment and Peace, after the scripture in Zechariah 8:4-8 which paints a Biblical picture of a restored community. The scripture says: "Once again men and women of ripe

old age will sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each of them with cane in hand because of their age. The city streets will be filled with boys and girls playing there."

Liotti said that this vision of a city that is good to grow old in is a place where all can live in peace and freedom. We believe this community is a small step toward that vision.



Photo by Jane Theresa Jones
Some of the participants in the housing complex's grand opening.

Inside

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Time is running out to sign up in time

By Kathleen Alexander
East Palo Alto Today



If you are a legal resident and you do not have health insurance, then you need to enroll in Covered California before Monday, March 31st 2014 or pay a penalty.

The penalty starts at \$95 or 1% of your income whichever is greater.

Why health coverage matters

Think about it. You are willing to insure your car because

you know accidents happen and you don't want to be hit with a huge repair bill. Your body is a lot more valuable than your car. You need health coverage not just to cover costs in the event of illness or accident, but to keep

you "tuned up" with preventive care. Besides, you may be eligible for federal financial assistance to cover your health insurance!

How Covered California can help you.

As required by the Affordable Care Act (ACA), California set up a health insurance exchange called Covered California that allows you to shop and compare qualified health insurance plans. It will show you what the costs are for dif-

ferent levels of coverage – Catastrophic, Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum,—and how much each plan will cost you, based on your income and the level of coverage you choose.

What the Affordable Care Act Guarantees.

Each Covered California health insurance plan has to provide you with essential levels of coverage and consumer protections that are required by the Affordable Care Act.

And that's a good thing be-

cause in the past, insurance companies could exclude sick people, kick people off of health plans, or find ways to limit the services you could receive.

The new ACA qualified insurance plans cannot deny you coverage because of a pre-existing condition and what is more, they must cover preventive care, family planning and medical screenings, such as mammograms and

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Let Freedom Ring resonates in East Palo Alto

By Jane Theresa Jones
East Palo Alto Today

It was a sold out performance and guests seemed charmed by the astonishing recital given during the fifth annual Eastside College Prep Benefit Concert.

The concert was called Let Freedom Ring - The Resounding Music of African American Composers and it took place on Sunday, January 26, 2014, at 3:00 p.m. at the Performing Arts Center at the Eastside College Preparatory School located at 1041 Myrtle St. in East Palo Alto.

La Doris Cordell, gracefully managed the roles of master of ceremony, vocalist and pianist.

Performances were given by The Eastside Preparatory School Choir which included: Tahjee Ali, Ayana Bohannon, Ashley, Ashley Davis, Mikayla Dones, Aujshanya Green, Christian Hunter, Jose Luis Sanchez, Cierra Sherman, Gisela Vargas. David Chaldez was the director, and Jansen Verplank played the keyboard. The choir also performed a piece titled "Tomorrow," by The



This photo shows some of the performers during the Let Freedom Ring concert that was held in East Palo Alto on January 26, 2014

Brothers Johnson with the lyrics by Siedah Garrett.

Other works included "Variations on a Theme of Valerie Capers Variation 7: Finale adapted for four-hands was performed by LaDoris Cordell and Josephine Gandolfi. "Musique" for piano, violin, and cello by John Robinson (2013) was performed by the Picasso Ensemble, which included Susan C. Brown on the violin, and Josephine Gandolfi, on the piano with Victoria Ehrlich on the cello.

Another piece: Three Spir-

ituals was performed by Yolanda Rhodes, a soprano, LaDoris Cordell and Josephine Gandolfi on the piano.

During the recital, Cordell shared that the group received a thank you letter from Dolores White for including her version of "Go Down Moses," in the show. "You Can Tell the World," by Margaret Bonds concluded the Spiritual trio.

There were several tributes to Trayvon Martin. These included "Grief" by William Grant Still; "Elegy for a Child," which was composed in 2013

by Joshua McGhee and Hold Out for Joy, by Regina Baiocchi.

McGhee composed three works for the Picasso Ensemble to perform at the Eastside College Prep benefit concert: "Where Freedom Rings," "Variations on an African American Spiritual," and the tribute previously mentioned for Trayvon Martin.

John Robinson III, on recorder and cello, Valeria Capers on piano and Jim Kassis on percussion presented an incredible rendition of

Thomas A. Dorsey's "Precious Lord," a song written by Dorsey following the death in childbirth of his first wife and infant son.

According to the southern music website, Precious Lord "has been recorded by such diverse artists as Mahalia Jackson, Tennessee Ernie Ford, Roy Rogers and Dale Evans, and Elvis Presley, and was the favorite Gospel song of both Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who asked that it be sung at the rally he led the night before his assassination, and of President Lyndon B. Johnson, who requested that it be sung at his funeral."

See more information at <http://www.southernmusic.net/thomasdorsey.htm>

The finale ended with "Ruby." The music and lyrics for this selection was written by Valeria Capers (2013).

Other performers during the concert included Fredrick Berry, Susan Brown, John Monroe, Lauren Sibley, Carol Somersille and Victoria Ehrlich.

At the end, the audience participated in the selection of "Let Freedom Ring."

Master planning process underway in Ravenswood City School District

By Henrietta J. Burroughs
East Palo Alto Today

The Ravenswood City School District announced that it has started a comprehensive facilities master planning process to determine the needs at each of its facilities.

The school district serves 3,500 students throughout East Palo Alto and Menlo Park and its administrative office is located on Euclid in East Palo Alto.

The district's new master plan will serve as a roadmap for the district as it seeks to make major investments in its campuses and classrooms over the next few years.

Under the plan, the district will focus on enhancing student safety and preparing students for success in both high school and college.



Photo courtesy of the Ravenswood City School District website

In the announcement which was made on February 21, 2014, Ravenswood City Superintendent Dr. Gloria Hernandez-Goff said, "Our schools play such an important role in our neighborhoods and should be a reflection of the pride we have in our students and our community.

"We need not only to ensure our students' safety while on any of our campuses," Dr.

Hernandez-Goff said, "but we also need to provide them with state-of-the-art classrooms and labs that facilitate advancements in curriculum and more rigorous state education standards.

"Our facilities assessment will address all of our needs, from the most immediate repairs required to upgrade aging facilities and systems, to modernizing classrooms to

prepare students for 21st century careers."

According to its website, "the Ravenswood City School District is dedicated towards creating a collaborative learning community, where administrators, teachers and parents work together to support student learning and achievement."

Accordingly, as part of the master planning process, dis-

trict officials and staff will seek input from parents, stakeholders and other staff members as to their vision for the district's facilities.

This input will be used to help develop future priorities as funding becomes available.

Over the coming weeks, the District will announce scheduled meetings designed to solicit input and answer questions about the planning process and its potential implications for local education.

For more information about the district, see: www.ravenswoodschools.org.

Read more about the Ravenswood City School District in this issue of East Palo Alto Today. See article on page 6 titled, Resource fair draws many interested participants.

Community News Briefs



Photo of the Buffalo Soldiers at the MROSD Black History event at Cooley Landing Park on February 22, 2014.

Buffalo Soldiers speak at Black History Month event

Saturday, February 22 turned out to be the sunny day the participants and the planners of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's (MROSD) Black History celebration had hoped for, since the weather at Cooley Landing Park was ideal for the hiking, children's activities and presentations that took place.

During the event, San Mateo County Supervisor

Warren Slocum and the event's master of ceremonies, Henrietta J. Burroughs, editor-in-chief of EPA Today made presentations highlighting some of the contributions that black Americans have made to the field of conservation.

MROSD Board Member Jed Cyr presented some of the vision behind the founding of the open space district.

Members from the California Buffalo Soldiers Association left the audience enthralled with their informative presen-

tation on the history of the Buffalo Soldiers and the role these African American soldiers played in the early 1900's patrolling and protecting California's national parks.

Those attending the event learned that the soldiers saved the life of President Theodore Roosevelt when he led the Rough Riders, and how their protection of Yosemite resulted in its being the park that it is today.

City Manager Magda González and the city's Vice Mayor, Lisa Yarbrough-Gauthier, represented the City of East Palo Alto at the event.

Get more information about MROSD at <http://www.openspace.org/> and about the California Buffalo Soldiers Association at <http://www.californiabuffalosoldiers.org>.

Rev. Jesse Jackson visits East Palo Alto

The Rev. Jesse Jackson, the founder and president of the Rainbow PUSH Coalition, met with East Palo Alto city officials and staff over dinner at the Four Seasons Hotel.

During the meeting on February 20, Jackson expressed his concern about the lack of diversity in Silicon Valley companies and with the lack of diversity on the boards of the valley's high tech companies.

Jackson said that of the 30

leading tech companies in the valley, there is only one that has an African American board member.

He said the lack of minority representation in high tech companies is something that needs to be changed.

Jackson was in the city after attending an earlier event at Stanford University, in which he discussed the American Civil Rights Movement.

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Photo courtesy of the Four Seasons
From left, City Planning manager, Brent Butler; Council member Ruben Abrica; Rev. Jesse Jackson; EPA City Manager, Magda González; Vice Mayor Lisa Yarbrough-Gauthier and Council member Larry Moody.

Creating community photovoices for health

By Brent Butler & Lee Thomas
East Palo Alto Today

A partnership with Head Start, the YMCA, and the City of East Palo Alto is off and running.

Head Start children and their parents digitally photographed their surroundings to express in pictures what they like and don't like about where they live. Cooley Landing, the East Palo Alto Boxing Club, the East Palo Alto YMCA and a statuette of the Virgin Mary were among the pictures photographed.



Statue of the Virgin Mary

To acknowledge the efforts of Head Start children and parents, Lucile Packard Children's Hospital generously funded a \$3,000 grant for their participation. The grant will be used to help improve the health & wellness of Head Start participants within the community.

The City of East Palo Alto collaborated with East Palo Alto YMCA Executive Director, Delayzio Amerson, to help implement health and wellness activities for Head Start.

The YMCA will provide two phases of health and wellness activities by starting with a 2 week program open to all 80 Head Start participants.

This will support Head Start's comprehensive early childhood education, health, nutrition, and parent involvement services to low-income children and their families.

The program's second phase starts on Cesar Chavez

Day in recognition of Cesar Chavez's efforts for fair treatment and wages.

By providing exercise and instruction in how to be safe in water, the partnership wishes to provide opportunities for healthy lifestyles.

Since none of East Palo Alto's schools have a swimming pool, the YMCA is the only safe place in close proximity for children to learn how to be comfortable in water and to swim.

Because funding is limited, the partnership encourages you to give to Head Start under the program named

'Photovoice'. For more information, please contact the City of East Palo Alto Planning Division Manager, Brent Butler, by email at: bbutler@cityofepa.org.

Lee Thomas is the East Palo Alto Interim Youth and Family Service Manager.



Cooley Landing

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

East Palo Alto City Council

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

East Palo Alto City Council Members

Laura Martinez
Mayor
(650) 714-5337

Lisa Yarbrough-Gauthier
Vice Mayor
(650) 387-4584

Ruben Abrica
(650) 380-4987

Larry Moody
(650) 389-7165

Donna Rutherford
drutherford@cityofepa.org

East Palo Alto Agencies, Boards, Commissions, Committees

Planning Commission
Second and Fourth Monday

Rent Stabilization Board
Second and Fourth Wednesday

Public Works & Transportation Commission
First and Third Wednesday

Youth Advisory Committee
First Thursday of each month

Senior Advisory Committee
Meets first Monday of each month 6:30p.m. - City Hall.

East Palo Alto Sanitary District
The East Palo Alto Sanitary District office is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 12 noon and re-opens from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. for service. Regular Board Meetings are held the first Thursday of every month at 7:00 pm.

Menlo Park City Council

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

Menlo Park City Council Members

Peter I. Ohtaki - Mayor
Cell:(650) 328-0300

Ray Mueller - Mayor Pro Tem
Cell:776-8995

Catherine Carlton
Residence:327-5332
Cell:575-4623

Kirsten Keith
(650) 308-4618

Richard Cline
Residence:328-0300
Office:330-6631

Menlo Park Boards, Commissions, Committees

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

San Mateo County Board of Supervisors

Supervisor Warren Slocum Fourth District

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

State Officials

Governor Edmund G. Brown
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Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone: 916-445-2841
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Email: governor@governor.ca.gov

Assembly Member Richard Gordon
District Address
5050 El Camino Real Ste.117
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650 691-2121

State Senator Jerry Hill
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U.S. Government U.S. Congresswoman Jackie Speier
San Mateo Office
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From the Editor's Desk

Learning history can be empowering

Most people in this country might be aware that February is Black History Month, a time in America set aside for recognizing the achievements and contributions of Black Americans.

But how many know how the observance of Black History Month came into being and why February was chosen?

The recognition of February as Black History Month started with Carter G. Woodson, an African-American historian, author and journalist.



Henrietta J. Burroughs

In 1915, Woodson traveled from Washington, D.C to Chicago, Ill to see a national celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the emancipation proclamation, which was sponsored by the State of Illinois.

He was so inspired by the three weeks of exhibits that marked the observance, that he formed an organization "to promote the scientific study of black life and history."

He called the organization the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH).

By 1926, Woodson was successful in getting cities and schools across America to celebrate Negro History Week in February.

He chose February because it marked the birth month of both Pres. Abraham Lincoln and that of Frederick Douglas, a former slave, himself, who became a stunning orator, writer and the leader of the abolitionist movement to free the slaves.

According to Daryl Michael Scott, a professor of history at Howard University and the Vice President of Programs for the ASNLH, "Woodson believed that black history was too important to America and the world to be crammed into a limited time frame." Scott said that Woodson wanted the black community "to focus on the countless black men and women who had contributed to the advance of human civilization."

By the late 1960's, during the height of the Civil Rights Movement, Negro History Week was replaced by Negro History Month, which later became Black History Month.

An observance like Black

History Month gives us an opportunity to go beyond our normal routines to learn more about the different ethnicities around us.

It allows us to fill in the gaps in our own education, since educating ourselves is a lifelong endeavor.

When one delves into history, one can come up with some amazing information.

For example, did you know that the State of California was named after a

black woman?

Her name was Calafia (also known as Califia) and she was the 15th century queen of a group of black female warriors who lived in a region now known as Baha, CA.

Mythical or not, a mural of Queen Califia adorns the wall of the Senate Budget Committee Hearing Room in the California State Capitol in Sacramento, in the banquet area in the Mark Hopkins Hotel in San Francisco and in Disneyland at the exhibit on California.

"John William Templeton, an African American historian from California, found through his research that Columbus had a black navigator and that "Africans were seen by Europeans as being culturally advanced in the 1400s. Templeton said that when the Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés explored the Baja, CA peninsula and gave California its name, "he had 300 black people with him."

Historians, like Templeton, try to obtain original documents so that they can get beyond the hearsay and obtain the facts. Being a student of history can be enlightening.

While the facts one learns can sometimes be downright disheartening, they can also be empowering, in that they enable us to understand the influences that shaped the modern world and impact our daily lives.

In studying history, we can see how the past has given rise to the present and what we must do to avoid bringing the errors of the past into our

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Cartoon by Pablo Maldonado for East Palo Alto Today

Letters in East Palo Alto Today

Emergency State Victim Compensation incorrectly denied

Dear Editor:

The family of murdered East Palo Alto teen hard is hit by the delays in the funeral benefit. Lorena Ramirez-Zamora couldn't afford to bury her youngest son. Instead, her low-income Catholic family had to go against its religious beliefs and cremate the body of 19-year-old Josue Zamora, the East Palo Alto resident murdered in January during a drive-by shooting.

The victim compensation funds that could have helped Ramirez-Zamora give her son the burial she wanted remain tied up more than six weeks after she requested them, in violation of state policies and deadlines. And the grieving family remains in financial limbo.

When the families of murder victims have no other resources, the state Victim Compensation Program is designed to speedily provide financial assistance of up to \$5,000 to help cover part of burial and funeral expenses. Locally, Silicon Valley Faces Victim Witness* holds \$100,000 in reserve specifically to make time-sensitive emergency payments on behalf of the state. These disbursements can happen within a few hours, but are required to be made within 30 days. Ramirez-Zamora made her request Jan. 17, just four days

after her son was killed, and is still waiting.

Bottom line, it should not be this hard for grieving families to receive the compensation that state law guarantees. Mothers Against Murder, a nonprofit advocacy group, assisted Zamora's family in filing and following up on its claim. These delays have real and painful consequences for some of our community's poorest families. We can and should do more to support families of murder victims in their time of need.

Without aid from the state, Ramirez-Zamora cut back what she could from Josue Zamora's funeral expenses, including making the decision to cremate. She borrowed money from family and friends and got a local pastor to donate space for a service. And she, her surviving children and supporters washed cars Jan. 18 to raise part of the \$7,121 it cost for the funeral service and cremation of her son.

A Victim Witness advocate recently told Ramirez-Zamora that the fundraiser would prevent her from receiving state assistance at all. The Victim Compensation Program pays for some funeral expenses, but only after other forms of reimbursement are applied to the bill. State policy states that donations do not count as reimbursements unless they are paid directly to the funeral home.

While no final decision has been

made on Ramirez-Zamora's claim, MAM has enlisted the help of Natasha Haney with Stanford University's Parallel Justice Pro Bono project to challenge the verbal denial.

Josue Zamora was far more than San Mateo County's first murder victim of 2014. The teenager graduated from Menlo-Atherton High School and worked full time at Panera Bread to support his mother and two siblings. While walking alone the evening of Jan. 13, just 300 feet from his home, he was killed in a drive-by shooting that police continue to investigate. There are no suspects in custody.

"Josue and his family are exactly the type of victims this program was designed to serve," Haney said.

Margaret Petros, Exec. Dir. Mothers Against Murder
mpetros@mothersagainstmurder.org
www.mothersagainstmurder.org
(650) 248-9529
February 28, 2014

We love East Palo Alto

Dear Editor:

A group of us tenants that live on the Westside of this city, have been meeting on different occasions to talk about the update to the city's plan (Vista 2035) that will

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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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www.epatoday.org and www.epamedia.org

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

In honor of African American Heritage Month

By Ayanna Anderson
East Palo Alto Today



Ayanna Anderson

Every year, I look forward to the month of February as a time for honoring and celebrating the incredible heritage of African Americans.

As this month elevates the importance of our cultural traditions, I began to think about the tradition of "call and response" that permeates the African American experience—especially within the faith community.

Today, my call to you is that

thousands of Bay Area residents are in need of lifesaving organ and tissue donations. In fact, more than 1,200 African American residents throughout Northern and Cen-

tral California are on the national transplant waiting list. Thousands more are in need of life-enhancing tissue donations.

Think about it for a moment. Are you aware of any African Americans whose health is being challenged by diabetes? Hypertension? Obesity?

Many of these health comorbidities are a direct result of long-ranging stressors and health challenges that can be traced back to the historical experience of African Americans.

Over time, these very health issues can cause someone to require a lifesaving transplant.

The good news is, there is an opportunity for you to respond to this healthcare challenge in a very powerful way. As you enjoy all that there is to celebrate this month, take time out to think about your own personal legacy.

By registering as an organ and tissue donor, you can potentially save and/or enhance more than 58 lives.

Go online today: www.donateLIFEcalifornia.org, or you

can register your decision when you go to renew your driver's license or state ID at the DMV. Once you've made your decision, be sure to share it with your friends and loved ones.

For more information on organ/tissue donation, or to explore volunteering opportunities, please contact Ayanna Anderson, Community Development Liaison for the California Transplant Donor Network: aanderson@ctdn.org, (510) 251-7003.

Finding the breaking point to education

By J. Samuel Diaz
East Palo Alto Today

The breaking point to education is a topic we all need to become aware of. It explains many socio-economic factors affecting our lives and it points us to solutions that we need to start developing.

As mentioned in my previous two-part article, busing is an antiquated holdover that never fully addressed the problem of segregation and it, in fact, led to the accelerated divestment of education from East Palo Alto. That led to a problem that residents in Belle Haven and East Palo Alto alike have had to deal with since the 1970s and that is: The breaking point to education.

DISTANCE TO EDUCATION

Urban geography and economics classes teach us that consumers of products and services are willing to travel a maximum distance before opting for other solutions. Territoriality and other loyalties play

into this as well. At some point in this equation is the breaking point, whereby consumers stop traveling that distance and try to find more reasonable alternatives. That has happened in education already and explains many statistics we are familiar with today. But first, let me present the statistical distances from the Gateway 101 shopping area to various schools and colleges:

Distances from East Palo Alto:

Menlo-Atherton High School	3.2 miles
Sequoia High School	6.5 miles
Redwood High School	7.0 miles
Woodside High School	8.2 miles
Carlmont High School	11 miles
Cañada College	13 miles
College of San Mateo (CSM)	17 miles
Skyline College	24 miles
Cubberly Campus (Foothill	



J. Samuel Diaz

College)	4.8 miles
Foothill College (main campus)	11 miles
De Anza College	12 miles

As you know, Gateway 101 stands where Ravenswood High School once stood. For local residents, it is their ground zero. The first set of distances explains why it is so difficult to reach the hinterland high schools that replaced Ravenswood H.S.

Consider that to walk one mile usually takes 20 minutes and so a 20 minute walk is reasonable for many students.

Once you pass the 3 mile threshold, mass transportation comes into play, since many high school students do not drive and so have to then rely on either SamTrans public transportation ... or busing.

In either case, that adds up to about 1.5 hours to travel to any of the high schools and 1.5 hours for the return trip; that additional time detracts from a student's schedule and limits their options.

Another factor playing into this is that anyone who is bussed to one of the other high schools usually gets reset to remedial classes. Sadly, tracking is another sinister holdover associated with busing.

Yet on the positive side, making Menlo-Atherton H.S. the home school for Belle Haven and East Palo Alto students is erasing some of that bias in education.

On the negative side, the distances to educational facilities, along with tracking stu-

dents for failure, explain why 20% of East Palo Alto high school students are categorized as truants – a fancy word that just means they cut classes and so opt out of education.

The next two sets of distances show how truly far away San Mateo County's community colleges are from local residents! When you factor in the stigma students have to deal with for being from E.P.A. and the hassle involved in traversing other gang territories, it is no wonder that hardly any E.P.A. students go to CSM and next to none attend Skyline College. In fact, more students from Belle Haven and East Palo Alto attend Foothill College's main campus and its Cubberly Campus on Middlefield Road. Not only are the distances shorter, but there is also no need to traverse rival gang territories to get to those educa-

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Is a reverse mortgage right for you?

By Andrea Aker
East Palo Alto Today



Andrea Aker

Seniors are living longer than ever before. Medical advances and a focus on healthy living have dramatically improved longevity, but living longer presents a complication: the potential to outlive savings.

Older adults often do not anticipate the high costs of health and long-term care, or the uncertainty of Social Security and Medicare. As a result, many are exploring reverse mortgage loans.

A reverse mortgage, also referred to as a Home Equity Conversion Mortgage (HECM), enables homeowners 62-years and older to con-

vert part of their home equity into tax-free cash.

"The economy has been tumultuous in recent years, and seniors have been particularly affected," said Mike Sullivan, chief education officer for Take Charge America, a national non-profit credit and housing counseling agency. "For some, a reverse mortgage may prove a good solu-

tion for generating extra cash and living more comfortably in their golden years."

To help seniors understand whether a reverse mortgage is appropriate for their financial situations, Sullivan offers five considerations:

Loan fees: Borrowers are tasked with paying upfront mortgage insurance, origination fees and closing costs. It's critical for seniors to read the fine print and understand the fees they're paying.

Taxes and insurance: With a reverse mortgage, seniors borrow money against the equity of their homes and are not required to make loan payments. However, they still must pay property taxes and homeowners insurance, or

they risk foreclosure.

Home maintenance: Seniors are responsible for home maintenance, but cannot take out a home equity loan or second mortgage to cover repairs.

Home equity: The borrower's home equity is reduced by the amount of the reverse mortgage. The estate will receive whatever equity hasn't been borrowed.

Loan repayment terms: The loan is due when the borrower sells the home, lives away from the home for 12 consecutive months, fails to pay property taxes or insurance, or passes away.

The principal, interest and closing costs are repaid from the proceeds of the sale of the

house. If the heirs elect not to sell, the money is paid from the estate.

To obtain a reverse mortgage, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development requires seniors to undergo reverse mortgage counseling from an approved third-party organization like Take Charge America, a non-profit credit counseling and debt management agency.

To learn more, call Take Charge America at 1-866-987-2008 or see <http://www.takechargeamerica.org>.

Andrea Aker founded Aker Ink in 2007. She has an extensive background in PR and media. She provides services for firms like Take Charge America.

Lifecycles

The Dream Lives On: Honoring King and Mandela

By Jane Theresa Jones
East Palo Alto Today

The Community Church of East Palo Alto's Deaconess Ministry sponsored the 11th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration.

The celebration was an interfaith celebration that took place on the federal holiday honoring King. There were tributes to the late Nelson Mandela and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to recognize two great leaders who devoted their life's work to pave the path for equality and civil rights for all.

Members of the community collaborated to echo the event's theme "The Dream



Photo courtesy of the Community Church of East Palo Alto. This photo represents a portion of the cover montage that was used on the Community Church of East Palo Alto written program

Lives On."

The celebration commemorated the work that Dr. King accomplished through the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) which had a significant role in the American Civil Rights Movement.

Presentations during the celebration acknowledged the life, character and leadership of the late Nelson Mandela, (July 18, 1918 - December 5, 2013), who was South Africa's first black president, for his dedication to the South African anti-apartheid movement.

The youth's involvement in the celebration was the highlight of the event. There were tributes to Dr. King, presented by Jonah Williams and Napoleon Reeves from the Abundant Life Christian Fellowship.

Twins Jordyn and Nia Bostick, from the Community Church of East Palo Alto performed readings about the assassination and legacy of Dr. King by Makhai McHarris from the Abundant Life Christian Fellowship gave and oral tribute to Mandela, and the group, Praise In Motion, from the Praise Dance Ministry at the East Palo Alto Seventh-Day Adventist Church presented "praise dances."

The youth's performances

were designed to express their gratitude for the privileges available to them because of the struggles that their ancestors endured.

East Palo Alto's Poet Laureate Kalamu Chache & Sandra Curry gave joint presentations of their creative work.

A combined choir with members from Faith Baptist Church, Jerusalem Baptist Church and Pilgrim Baptist Church joined to sing with the Community Church choir.

A twenty two year old named Adonis played the keyboard and 16 year old James Collins played the drums, all under the direction of Minister Arthur Flamer from the South Bay Baptist Church.

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Resource fair draws many interested participants



Photo courtesy of Ford & Bonilla. In this photo, Dr. Gloria Hernandez-Goff is seen addressing the attendees at the Ravenswood School District Resource Fair.

By Jane Theresa Jones
East Palo Alto Today

Over 100 philanthropy partners attended the resource fair that was held by the Ravenswood City School District. The purpose of the fair was to discover and fill the current gaps in student services and to provide solutions that could be implemented immediately. The school district is seeking support in the form of investments and volunteers.

The idea for the resource fair was the brainchild of the Ravenswood City School District

Superintendent, Dr. Gloria Hernandez-Goff, who partnered with Ravenswood Foundation Executive Director, Renu Nanda, to produce the fair in an effort to positively change the experiences of students in the school district.

Rolando A. Bonilla, of Ford & Bonilla, the spokesperson for the event, stated that the attendance and participation from the community displayed support as well as confidence in the new superintendent.

Superintendent Hernandez-Goff has been in her job for six months. She and Nanda sought to connect personally with community partners.

According to Bonilla, they are aggressively working with the district's board of trustees and with community partnerships to increase the necessary tools to help students to be competitive in their

academic performance; thereby enhancing their educational experiences.

Facebook was not represented at the fair. But, Bonilla pointed out that the company is an example of how a community partnership can work, since it has provided laptop computers for the eight graders in several schools in the Ravenswood City School District.

Bonilla, an East Palo Alto resident, himself, recalled that he did not own a computer until he was able to purchase one in his twenties.

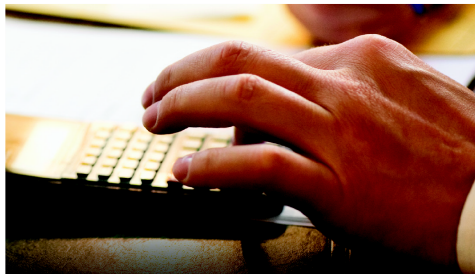
He said that he was pleased that eighth graders in the school district can now own a laptop because of the generosity of Facebook.

"Actually, that's the kind of support our students need," Bonilla said.

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Photo courtesy of Ford & Bonilla. This photo shows some of the attendees at the Ravenswood City School District Resource Fair that was held on January 29, 2014.



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Lifecycles

A glimpse at the founder of Mi Pueblo: Juvenal Chávez

By Pablo Maldonado
East Palo Alto Today



Photo courtesy of Mi Pueblo- Juvenal Chávez

In 2011, Guerrero Juvenal Chávez, the owner of the Mi Pueblo grocery chain, was a finalist for the Entrepreneur of the Year award.

In 2010, he was the recipient of the Yucatecutly award, which is presented to outstanding entrepreneurs. This award is just one in a long list of awards that Chávez has received.

Chávez was given the Yucatecutly award in Acapulco by the National Chamber of Commerce, Services and Tourism of Mexico City. He was recognized as a businessman who boosts job opportunities and who shares the Mexican culture in the Mi Pueblo stores through its displays of Mexican customs and goods.

Through the award,

Chávez was cited as a role model for the thousands of Mexicans who have emigrated to the United States, leaving many of the customs of the country of their birth behind them.

For those in the National Chamber of Commerce, who chose him for the award, he is a former immigrant who overcame the challenge of getting ahead in his new country by

committing to his goals and by having great support from his family.

Chávez, said that the Yucareculi award is very important to him, since it recognizes him for being a symbol of success for Mexicans in this country and for many in Mexico.

Chávez opened the Mi Pueblo store in East Palo Alto on November 7, 2009. See the online EPA Today article about the store opening at http://epatoday.org/news/2009/nov_2009/mi_pueblo.html

He opened the first Mi Pueblo Food Center in 1991 in East San José and has 20 other stores in California.

Throughout his business career, Chávez has received the following awards: Company outstanding community (National Grocers Association 2009); Outstanding Independ-

ent Company (Progressive Grocer, 2009); Excellence in Hispanic Business (Hispanic Retail 360 Summit 2009); Best

Latin Department of Fruits and Vegetables (Best of Silicon Valley 2008, San Jose Mercury News)

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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, go online to:
www.epatoday.org/treasured_memories/index.html

Juvenal Chávez:

el dueño de Mi Pueblo



Trans. por Roberto Gutierrez Perez
East Palo Alto Today

En 2011, Guerrero Juvenal Chávez, el dueño de la cadena de supermercados de Mi Pueblo, fue finalista para el concurso Empresario del Año.

En 2010, fue el ganador del premio Yucatecutly, que se presenta a destacados empresarios. Este premio es uno más en la larga lista de premios que Chávez ha recibido.

Chávez recibió el premio Yucatecutly en Acapulco por la Cámara Nacional de Comercio, Servicios y Turismo de la Ciudad de México. Fue reconocido como un empresario que aumenta las oportunidades de trabajo y que comparte la cultura mexicana en las tiendas Mi Pueblo a través de sus pantallas de las costumbres y los productos mexicanos.

A través de este premio, Chávez fue citado como un modelo a seguir para los miles de mexicanos que han emigrado a los Estados Unidos, dejando a muchas de las costumbres del país que los vio nacer tras ellos.

Para aquellos en la Cámara Nacional de Comercio,

quien lo eligió para el premio, es un ex inmigrante que superaron el reto de salir adelante en su nuevo país, comprometiéndose a sus metas y por tener un gran apoyo de su familia.

Chávez, dijo que el premio Yucareculi es muy importante para él, ya que le reconoce por ser un símbolo de éxito para los mexicanos en este país y para muchos en México.

Chávez abrió la tienda de Mi Pueblo en East Palo Alto, el 7 de noviembre de 2009. Él abrió la primera Mi Pueblo Food Center en 1991 en el este de San José y tiene otras 20 tiendas en California.

A lo largo de su carrera de negocios, Chávez ha recibido los siguientes premios:

Empresa destacada comunidad (Asociación Nacional de Supermercados 2009)

Empresa Destacada Independiente (Progressive Grocer, 2009)

Excelencia en Negocios Hispanos (Hispanic Retail 360 Summit 2009)

Mejor Departamento de Frutas y Hortalizas de América (el mejor de Silicon Valley 2008, San Jose Mercury News)



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RFHC groundbreaking draws overflow crowd

By Henrietta J. Burroughs
East Palo Alto Today



Photo by Meda Okelo
U.S. Congresswoman Anna Eshoo is seen speaking at the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Ravenswood Family Health Center medical building.

Two U.S. Congresswomen, local public officials, foundation CEOs, and several philanthropists were among the nearly 400 people who attended the official start of construction for the new Ravenswood Family Health Center's (RFHC) medical building that will be located on Pulgas and Bay Roads in East Palo Alto.

The planned 38,000 sq. ft. facility will be able to accommodate 22,000 patients a year and will contain 58 exam rooms and 13

counseling rooms. It will provide X-rays, mammograms, sonograms, a pharmacy, optometry, podiatry and a large lab.

In welcoming attendees to the center's groundbreaking event on

January 22, Luisa Buada, RFHC's CEO said, "This will be a legacy building for the City of East Palo Alto. It will be a community owned building.... We are very excited. It will be a green sustainable building

with solar and water conservation. We will all benefit from it," she said.

Dr. Emmett Carson, the president and CEO of the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, made a surprising announcement during the event. "I am very pleased to announce ... Mark Zuckerberg and his wife Dr. Priscilla Chan have made a grant of \$5 million toward closing out the construction phase....

"They've been thinking and involved in this project since July of last year. It is very important to them personally. They are very involved in any

and all opportunities that are about expanding opportunity within our local community and elsewhere, and we are working with them at Silicon Valley Community Foundation on other projects that will reflect their interest around expanding opportunity."

"Never doubt," Carson said, "what leadership and vision together can accomplish."

There was repeated praise given throughout the event for the center's leadership and the vision its board of directors has demonstrated over the years.

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Letters

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be implemented in our area in the future.

In the first meetings we had this past year, we commented on the changes that said plan could bring. We the residents: would like to live in a neighborhood with wider streets, with parks for our children to play in, with enough parking, with community centers, to live in nicer buildings that are newer and modern, to live in an environment free of danger and violence for our youth.

We are not against modernization, against development. Our worries stem from the fact that such changes could also have negative consequences for our community. The increase of rents; and the potential reduction in habitable units in order to create green spaces and other types of service. Our fear is that our low income families will be displaced.

We have lived here for many, many years, we have contributed to the economic development of this city. This is why we consider this potential displacement unjust.

We have analyzed the problems and insufficiencies in our neighborhood; and we have also agreed that: we do not want to be displaced, that we want to continue to live on the west side of East Palo Alto. And for that we need to keep the apartments we have with accessible rents or for affordable housing units to be built for our low-income families.

We know that this is not easy, that we need to get involved in order to learn about this process, that we need to participate and provide our opinions and suggestions. This is why as a resident of the Westside, I ask my neighbors that we continue attending the different meetings and trainings that are happening, those of the tenants committee (Mondays at 6 p.m., 501 O'Connor) and those of the Westside Advisory Council, which are held at City Hall.

We the residents of the Westside would like the community of East Palo Alto to support us. This is why I try to capture their voice in these lines. We want the city's plan (Vista 2035) to maintain apartments with accessible rents and/or that there be affordable housing

units built for low-income families.

Doroteo Garcia

East Palo Alto Resident, Note: The opinions stated above are solely those of the author and are not expressed on behalf of the West Side Advisory Council.

Un grupo de residentes que vivimos en el lado Oeste (West Side) de esta Ciudad. Nos hemos reunido en diferentes ocasiones para hablar sobre el plan de modernización (Vista 2035) que en un futuro se implementara en nuestra área.

En las primeras juntas que tuvimos, el año pasado comentamos los cambios que puede traer consigo dicho plan. Nosotros los residentes: si nos gustaria vivir en un vecindario con calles más anchas, con parques para que jueguen nuestros niños, con suficientes estacionamientos, con centros de servicios comunitarios, vivir en edificios más bonitos y modernos o nuevos, vivir en un ambiente fuera de peligro y violencia para nuestros jóvenes.

No estamos en contra de la modernización, del desarrollo. Nuestra preocupación radica en que dichos cambios traiga tam-

bién consecuencias que afecten negativamente a nuestra comunidad: El encarecimiento de la renta; y la posible reducción de unidades habitacionales para crear áreas verdes u otro tipo de servicios. Y nuestro miedo es que por ello existan desplazamientos o desalojos de las familias de bajos ingresos.

Nosotros hemos vivido aquí por muchos, muchos años, hemos contribuido al desarrollo económico de esta Ciudad. Por eso consideramos injusto que esto pueda suceder.

Hemos analizado todas las carencias y problemas que tenemos en nuestro vecindario; y también hemos coincidido que: no queremos ser desplazados, queremos seguir viviendo en el west side de East Palo Alto. Y para eso necesitamos que se mantengan viviendas con rentas accesibles o que se construyan unidades habitacionales de bajos recursos para las familias de bajos ingresos.

Sabemos que esto no es fácil, que necesitamos involucramos, para aprender sobre este proceso, y participar dar nuestras opiniones y

sugerencias.

Por eso como residente del west side, le pido a mis vecinos que sigamos asistiendo a las diferentes asambleas y entrenamientos que se están realizando, tanto el comité de vecinos (Lunes 6p.m., O'Connor 501), como el West Side Advisory Council, que se llevan a cabo en el edificio del City Hall.

Los residentes del lado Oeste queremos que la comunidad de East Palo Alto nos apoye por eso hago enfasis en plasmar la voz de ellos en estas líneas. Que el plan de modernización (vista 2035) mantenga vivienda con rentas accesibles y/o que se construya viviendas de bajos recursos para las familias de bajos ingresos.

Doroteo Garcia

Resident, 466 East O'Keefe

Note: The opinions stated above are solely those of the author and are not expressed on behalf of the West Side Advisory Council.

Nota estas opiniones son el sentir de la comunidad latina del west side y responsabilidad del autor que las escribió no reflejan la opinión del comité West Side Advisory Council.

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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Black history museum features a wealth of exhibits

By Jane Theresa Jones
East Palo Alto Today

Parents, teachers and anyone else who was interested in American history had a chance to see a lot of history on display in the black history museum, which opened on Saturday, February 8 in Menlo Park.

The museum is officially named the Dominic Hoskins Black History Exhibit and Learning Center and it is an amazing display of black culture and history.

The museum's exhibits featured a plethora of African



Photo courtesy of Jane Theresa Jones
This picture shows photos of some of the prominent African Americans who are featured in the Dominic Hoskins Black History Exhibit and Learning Center, which will be open in Menlo Park until February 28.

American history from the slave ships to the election of President Obama. There were rooms built around themes such as: inventions, sports, dolls, and music. In the music

room, for example, one could see a real jukebox which played music and showed album covers. Magazines like Ebony, and Jet and 45 rpm single records decorated parts

of the walls.

The museum, which was located at 190 Independence Drive in Menlo Park, was founded by Carolyn Hoskins, who is its executive director and curator. Hoskins is the widow of Robert "Bob" Hoskins, a former S.F. 49er defensive tackle. She is also a member of the NFL Alumni Northern California Chapter executive committee.

Hoskins named the non-profit museum after her grandson, 22-year-old Dominic Hoskins. The idea for the museum occurred to Hoskins when her grandson was work-

ing on a Black History report.

Hoskins explained, "My grandson said, 'It seems like we write about the same people all the time. Are there any other people we can write about?'"

That's when she began teaching him about the African-American culture and decided that this knowledge needed to be shared with others. "This is very, very passionate for me," said Hoskins. "Kids in school are just not getting the knowledge about black history, which may be

continued on page 10

Finding the breaking point

tional facilities. This leads into the next topic: The principle of least effort.

THE PRINCIPLE OF LEAST EFFORT

The principle of least effort explains why consumers – students, in this case – will take the shortest path to get to their goal: Education. It explains why it makes sense to

make Menlo-Atherton H.S. the home school for our Belle Haven and East Palo Alto students.

And it explains why it would make even more sense to reestablish Ravenswood High School so that the distance to education truly became feasible for all local residents and taxpayers.

The principle of least effort

explains why local college students would rather travel to one of the two Foothill College campuses than traverse rival, hostile territories to get to even the closest of San Mateo County's colleges, Cañada, which is located way on the far side of Redwood City.

TO DIVEST OR REINVEST

To conclude, our high

school and college districts have divested from our local communities. We can see the decreased economic efficiency and disruptive effect on social welfare in our communities and erroneously conclude it has to do with increased gang violence and what not.

Then again, we can look at the breaking point to education, realize our neighbor-

hoods have lost a key part of their infrastructure – education – and that we have divested from education.

So, do we resign ourselves to fully divesting from our local communities and sending all of our taxpayer dollars to hinterland high schools and colleges? Or do we begin to reinvest in local education? The choice is ours to make.

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The dream lives on

continued from page 6



Photo courtesy of Jane Theresa Jones
In this photo, the Praise in Motion dancers from the Seventh Day Adventist Church are shown during their performance of a dancer in honor of the late Nelson Mandela.

Vice Mayor, Lisa Yarbrough-Gauthier, brought greetings on behalf of the East Palo Alto City Council. She quoted Dr. King, "If you can't fly, then run, if you can't run, then walk, if you can't walk, then crawl, but whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward."

Yarbrough-Gauthier challenged the city to continue to keep the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., moving forward. Council members Larry

Moody and Donna Rutherford were also in the audience.

Reverend Theodore P. Fields, Pastor Emeritus of the New Hope Baptist Church in Union City, CA delivered the spoken word on the topic "An Ordinary Man," and his message ignited the congregation.

Deaconess Chair, Terri Vines made the closing remarks. She informed the audience of the connection between the Langa Township

in South Africa with the Community Church of East Palo Alto. The residents of the Langa Township, like the late Nelson Mandela are Xhosas, and the township is the location of Community Church's sister church Langa Baptist Church.

The Langa Township is the location where Deacon James Gardley installed the Township's first telecommunications line in 1978 to provide the people with telephones. The line continues today. It was pointed out how the impact of Gardley's deed is an excellent example of Reverend Fields' message about how "An Ordinary Man" can make an extraordinary difference.

In his closing remarks, Pastor Johnnie Thompson stated, "It's fitting that we honor Dr. King, with an interfaith celebration since Dr. King was a man of God, and he would be pleased to see these presentations of appreciation from our youth."

Reverend Thompson also

commended Mary Flamer for continuing to coordinate the annual event.

In an interview following the event, Mary Flamer told how she became interested in coordinating the Dr. Martin L. King, Jr., birthday celebration at the church.

She said, "In 1986, when Dr. King's birthday was officially observed in all 50 states for the first time, she was on the East Palo Alto city staff working in the Community Relations Department.

"I was one of a number of city staff members who helped to organize this event in collaboration with the Ministerial Alliance of East Palo Alto and the Peninsula Ministerial Alliance of Palo Alto," Flamer said.

By the early 90's the City of East Palo Alto was experiencing financial difficulties and could no longer underwrite the lion's share of the expenses of sponsoring such an event.

While serving as administrative assistant to the new pastor of the St. John Missionary Baptist Church in

East Palo Alto, Flamer coordinated two events in 2001-2002 honoring Dr. King's birthday.

After moving her membership to the Community Church of East Palo Alto, she asked, as she had in the past for the opportunity to coordinate an event to celebrate Dr. King's birthday.

The first event was held in 2004. Since that time Flamer has continued to coordinate the Annual Celebration of Remembrance and Legacy of Dr. King.

"It is such a blessing to organize this event/celebration and bring old friends together," Flamer said. Besides she said that this is just one of her callings to educate those who may not learn about Dr. King any place else.

She says, "I am looking forward to next year's celebration..."

Flamer said that there have been several individuals in the community who have approached her showing interest in being a part of planning the event in 2015.

Learning history can be empowering

present and future decision-making. Having a knowledge of the past can even influence the decisions made at a city level.

For example, East Palo Alto residents, mindful of their city's history with regard to police brutality and the city's struggle to be independent spoke up overwhelmingly at the February 4 East Palo Alto City Council meeting to keep the services provided by their police department from being outsourced.

Community members told the council and the staff that giving up the city's police department, even if it meant saving hundreds of thousands of dollars, would be a step backwards.

They said that during East Palo Alto's independence movement, community residents fought to have an autonomous, self-governing city with a police department that would be accountable to city residents.

They showed that whether we

continued from page 4 are conscious of it or not, we all have a rich heritage to draw upon and knowing that heritage enables us to make informed choices that can shape our community.

The arguments the residents presented show why knowing ones history can be important and why the study of history can be invaluable, since history impacts us all on a daily basis.

We shouldn't need an observance like Black History Month to explore the background of the eth-

nicities around us, but it helps tremendously since it encourages us to delve deeper into history to

learn more about ourselves and the world around us.



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Free at Last celebrates twentieth anniversary

By Jane Theresa Jones
East Palo Alto Today

Co-founder Vickie Smothers, was excited to celebrate twenty years of service to a program that she, David Lewis, and other community members started.

"In 1992, when drug turf wars led to the murder of 42 people in the City of East Palo Alto, the media called it "the murder capital of the U.S.," Smothers said.

Then, when the Urban Health Study reported that the city had the highest incidence of HIV infection among IV drug users of any city west of Chicago, Smothers said that another epidemic needed to



David Lewis



Photo by Jane Theresa Jones
A cross section of the audience at the Free at Last anniversary event

be addressed. Free At Last was founded in 1993, because its founders wanted to make a difference in the community. "Our mission" Smothers stressed, "was to rebuild the community from within, reclaiming lives. Thank you to all of our friends who have supported our work over the past 20 years."

When Free at Last was created, its founders envisioned a community recovery center for substance abuse treatment, intervention and prevention services with special focus on those affected by incarceration, HIV/AIDS, and intergenerational addiction.

The agency's 20th anniversary celebration was an evening of reflection, appreci-

ation and enjoyment! Smothers presented Pjaji Haji with the David Lewis award. Haji, is the female CEO and co-founder of SaveUp, the nation's first free rewards program that encourages Americans to save money and pay down debt with the chance to win life-changing prizes. Haji is the second recipient to receive the award. The first recipient was Robert Hoover, a longtime East Palo Alto activist, who served on the agency's board. He worked with Lewis since the agency's inception. (Read about last year's award program in EPA Today at http://www.epatoday.org/news/2013/jan_2013/memorabile_le_gacy_celebrated_2044.html.)

Free at Last's Executive Director, Susan Cortopassi, stated, "Although I have only been on the job six months, I am looking forward to the programs' continued success. My priority is to secure funding to keep our current programs, and to help others battle addiction." With that, Cortopassi talked about the agency's programs. "We offer group support for DUI First offenders. There's a Drop in Center that provides a safe place to hang out while waiting for the 12 step meeting. The meetings are held each day in English and Spanish.

"Our Residential Treatment Program for women & women with children, offers a 3-month stay. The men's program provides 6-month residential treatment. Clients must complete treatment goals, secure housing, gain employment, or enroll in a job training.

"The Transitional Housing Program offers 3-months shared supportive housing to establish stable employment, credit and tenancy.



Photo by Jane Theresa Jones
From left, Janet Thomas, Vickie Smothers and Susan Cortopassi

"We need the community's support to carry on our efforts. We can accept online donations at www.freeatlast.org," Cortopassi said.

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.)

Community tells the council continued from page 1

spectful and racist. "The East Palo Alto Police Department evolved into being a partner with the community. It funded many community organizations." He said that if we lose our police department, we lose PAL [the Police Athletic League] and so many other programs for the youth.

Patsy Character said that East Palo Alto now had less gunshots than ever before and there is a big difference in the city. "This city has been through so much.

"Why," she asked, "would we want to go back to yesteryear?"

Other speakers like Braulio Gonzalez cited the understanding that the East Palo Alto Police Department had with the immigrant community and said the sheriff's

department and other police departments worked with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and targeted the immigrant community. So, he was fearful that many within the community would be profiled and deported. He said that East Palo Alto was one of the most progressive communities since the city's police department recognized immigrant ID's.



Patsy Character

Rev. John Liotti argued that it was important for a city to have a police department that understands the community. He stated that many East Palo Alto police officers "provide services above and beyond the call of duty," because of their knowledge of the community and their rapport with the city's residents.

"The police department is much more engaged. We stand in solidarity with our police. They're not perfect," Liotti said. "But they're ours."

Other speakers, like Heather Starnes, wanted to know where the idea for outsourcing came from and what prompted it. She too, said that the city had come a long way. "We can't go back to giving over accountability for our community. This idea would "strip our community of power and force and I'm not for it," she said.

As one of two speakers who was open to the outsourcing idea, Isaiah Moody said that East Palo Alto could be better and he



Assistant City Manager. Barbara Powell

questioned why when he has seen one person in a car pulled over, at least three police cars show up. He said that this tactic leaves other areas of the city without police protection.

Michael Francois said that if the San Mateo County Sheriff's Department provided the city with safety services they would use the officers who already patrol the city, so officers familiar with the city would still be utilized.

Richard Tatum, who described himself as a young resident, having lived in the city for 40 years, didn't mince words in telling the council and the staff that the outsourcing idea was a waste of time. He told the council that it had hired staff members who only wanted to enhance their resumes and the outsourcing idea was a sign indicating, "There is something wrong with how the city is going."

Council members Laura Martinez, Lisa Yarbrough-Gauthier and Larry Moody said that they had the fiduciary responsibility to look into ways that the city could save money and had the obliga-

tion to get information as to how the city could provide police services and at the same time use public dollars wisely, especially since the city was facing a one million dollar deficit.

Bucking the community tide that was overwhelmingly against outsourcing, Moody, praised the city manager for even presenting the idea. He said she would have been remiss if she did not seek other options for reducing the budget deficit. So, he said he supported directing the city staff to gather information about other policing options.

In the end the council was not only swayed by the passionate community speakers it had heard, but also by Council member Ruben Abrica, who argued that if the budget deficit was the main consideration, then the council and the city staff should look at the total budget and not just single out the police department.

He said it was true that the city could save money with outsourcing, but it would lose so much more if it gave up its police department.

Council member Yarbrough-Gauthier who originally advocated for having the staff gather information so that the council could look at the numbers, was instrumental in bringing the dis-

ussion to an end. She said that after "hearing from the community, I would not be interested in wasting staff's time."

With that Abrica made the motion that ended the idea of outsourcing the city's safety services. The council voted 4 to 1 to table the idea. Council member Larry Moody voted against the motion.

With the 4 to 1 vote, the East Palo Alto city staff did not get the city council's approval to go forward in getting information to outsource the city's police services. It was a clear win for those who wanted to keep the East Palo Alto Police Department intact.



Larry Moody

Black history museum

featured in school one month out of the year."

Not surprisingly, Dominic's favorite part of the museum is the sports collection.

Although, Ms. Hoskins is affiliated with NFL alumni, the exhibit does not have a per-

manent home. The Mayor of Menlo Park, Ray Mueller, located the building in which the museum was housed, and Hoskins put the exhibit together in two weeks, with the assistance of her daughter Kathy and her son Steve.

California State Senator Jerry Hill presented a proclamation in Hoskins' honor commending her on the display.

Visitors to the museum's exhibits, which could aptly be described as spectacular, were advised to allocate at

least an hour to see the entire show. For some it took two hours, maybe even a second trip just to see the entire exhibit.

Now, Hoskins' goal is to secure a permanent location for the extensive exhibit.

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She requested that community members interested in assisting her reach this goal write, call or email Senator Hill at <http://sd13.senate.ca.gov/s> end-e-mail to ask for his assistance in finding a permanent home for the exhibit.

Community Calendar

East Palo Alto City Council meeting. First and third Tuesdays of the month

East Palo Alto City Council meeting in the Community Room at 2415 University Avenue, East Palo Alto, CA.

Public session starts usually at 7:30 p.m.

For more information, call (650) 853-3100 or go to the Agenda Center on the City of East Palo Alto's website at <http://www.ci.east-palo-alto.ca.us/agendacenter>

East Palo Alto Community Prayer Walk for Peace Saturday, March 8 from 9 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

Starting at St. Francis of Assisi Church at 1425 Bay Road, East Palo Alto. Rev. Lawrence C. Goode, other faith clergy, community leaders and the survivors of violent crimes will join in a Prayer Walk for Peace in an effort to stop the violence in East Palo Alto. For more info., contact Julio Escobar at 415-861-9579 or Rev. Goode at 650-322-2152.

Covered California Enrollment Fair - Saturday, March 15 from 9 a.m.- 2 p.m.

Ravenswood Family Health Center, 1807 Bay Road, East Palo Alto. Call for appointment 650/330-7416. Walk-in will be first come, first served.

St. Patrick's Day Celebration! - March 17, 2014

Join the festivities at Little House in Menlo Park, CA. Enjoy some traditional Irish food, fun, and entertainment! 9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Bake sale and Irish Coffee

11:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m. Traditional cornbeef and cabbage lunch and live entertainment. Go to <http://www.pervol.org/little-house/culture.cfm>

these issues, and hud certified housing and credit counselors. For more information/paramas informacion:call/llame: Hera (510) 271-8443 x 307.

Foreclosure & Debt Workshop: Saturday, March 22, 10 a.m. -12 noon, San Mateo Library, 55 West 3rd Avenue, San Mateo - Free workshop for renters and homeowners facing foreclosure, eviction, debt collection, or credit problems. Learn from non-profit attorneys who are experts on

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

Community New Briefs

City posts RFP to hire a new chief of police

At its meeting on February 18, 2014, the East Palo Alto City Council approved a resolution appointing Lee Viollet as the interim police chief.

It was discovered after he was hired by the City Manager, Magda González that his appointment needed the approval of the city council.

During the meeting, the council learned that a job posting had been made on Thursday, February 13, officially listing the job opening for the chief of police position.

At the February 18, meeting, Council member Ruben Abrica requested, as he has in the past, that the city staff provide council members and city residents with a plan that will define their role and involvement in the police chief's selection process.

Abrica said that he felt frustrated when residents asked him what was going on and he didn't have any information to give them,

He was told by the staff that an RFP had been released to an executive search firm, which would present a plan to the city by March 3 that would explain the council and the community's involvement in the process for the police chief's selection.

EPA youth celebrate Black History Month



Photo by Jane Theresa Jones The young dancers wore pink butterfly wings. Sherona Harris, the lady in front, was the choreographer for their praise dance.

The First Annual Kids Black History Program was held in East Palo Alto on February 15, under the guidance of Ebonni Black. The youth who participated gave memorable performances.

There were twenty five young people who participated. They were: Mkhai McHarris, Jonah Williams, Napoleon Reeves, Lonnell James, Tajhee Ali, Jovanna Carter, Ajani Jama, Amira Jama, Justin Anderson, Jahnya Anderson, Eric Stuart,



Photo - East Palo Alto Today From left, Ebonni Black, the event organizer and host stands beside the award recipients: Eric Stuart, Lee James, Carolyn Khojasteh, Henrietta J. Burroughs, Lisa Yarbrough-Gauthier, Kalamu Chache, Frank(Tebo) Thibeaux, Jym Marks and Rev. Henry Rainer, Sr.

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Emoni Stuart, Raymond Price III, Symone Price, Bryce Ammons, Jala Auzenne, Giovanni Maldonado, Lawan Berouen Patterson, Vanessa Berouen Patterson, Seaunne Sephers, Ida Sephers, Ahmayjah Sephers, Darnell Earby, Jeremiah Earby Naveah Als and Ariauna Caparida.

Their parents were, obviously, very proud of them. The guest speaker, Anthony Muhammad, grew up in East Palo Alto and spoke of his experiences growing up. The Wobogo Jazz Ensemble presented several musical selections during the program.

Afterwards, community recognition awards were given to nine recipients for their service to the community.

The awards were given to Eric Stuart, Lee James, Carolyn Khojasteh, Henrietta J. Burroughs, Lisa Yarbrough-Gauthier, Kalamu Chache, Frank (Tebo) Thibeaux, Jym Marks and Rev. Henry Rainer, Sr.

Talking with Henrietta Creative and Affordable Housing Solutions



Photo courtesy of the Talking with Henrietta show From left, Lena Pitts, show host Henrietta J. Burroughs, Sue Johnson and Kate Comfort Harr are shown on the set of the Talking with Henrietta show after their discussion on the creative and affordable housing options that are currently available. Get more information about this show at www.epatoday.org/tv.html#creativeoptions.

Mi Pueblo works on a plan to get out of bankruptcy

Mi Pueblo and its real estate firm, Cha Cha Enterprises appeared in bankruptcy court in San Jose on February 19 to request the court's approval of the financial arrangement that it had made to get out of bankruptcy. The chain filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in July 2013 after its financial agreements with Wells Fargo were deemed unacceptable.

Wells Fargo claims that the chain owes it nearly 39 million dollars.

Mi Pueblo said in court that it had reached a financial agreement with Victory Park Capital, a Chicago-based firm that would allow it and its real estate firm to pay off their debts.

It is reported that one group, the Official Committee of Unsecured Creditors of Mi Pueblo San Jose, Inc., requested that the court reject Mi Pueblo's financial plans because the group did not think the plans would adequately cover the company's debts.

If Mi Pueblo's financial plans are not approved, then the grocery chain could go out of business.

The next hearing in the case is scheduled for April 3, 2014 at 2:30 p.m. in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in San Jose.

The U. S. Bankruptcy Court in San Jose is located at 280 South First Street.

Judge Arthur S. Weissbrodt is presiding over the case. [Editor's note: See the article on Mi Pueblo's owner, Juvenal Chávez on page 7 of this issue].

Time is running out

colonoscopies without charging copayments or deductibles for these services.

Why Covered California needs your financial information.

By providing information about your income, Covered California can determine whether you qualify for Medi-Cal (income less than 138% of Federal Poverty Level—which, for 1 person would be less than \$15,856.).

If you are not eligible for Medi-Cal, then Covered California will determine if you qualify to receive premium assistance that will reduce the amount you pay monthly for your health insurance.

How can you access Covered California.

If you have a computer at home, in your search engine (Google, Yahoo, Safari, etc) type in www.CoveredCalifornia.org. Follow the prompts and type in your personal in-

formation.

You will be asked to provide your income and number of members of your household. This is important. Very important: To fill out the application online, you will need to have an electronic (scanned) copy of your tax information or monthly income.

Or, you can take advantage of the fact that Ravenswood Family Health Center is a Certified Enrollment site with 8 trained enrollment counselors and 5 self-service computer

stations and a scanner set up in Center for Health Promotion where you can scan your documents and go online and enroll yourself. An enrollment counselor will be available to answer your questions.

Call (650) 330-7416 to make an appointment to come in. Make sure you bring with you the required documents to verify your income, citizenship and residency that need to be scanned and submitted with your application.

This includes your social se-

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curity numbers, proof of citizenship or immigration status, employer and income information of everyone in your family, and federal tax information.

Take advantage of this opportunity to make sure you and your family are covered. [Editor's note: See the ad on page 7 of this issue.].

Kathleen Alexander is the director of communications and public relations for the Ravenswood Family Health Center.

RFHC groundbreaking

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Before Carson's surprising announcement, East Palo Alto's Mayor Laura Martinez expressed East Palo Alto's gratitude for the Ravenswood Family Health Center's contributions to the community.

She said, "We are very proud of the organization's accomplishments, growth and grateful for the clinic's successful efforts in improving the health of our community by providing high quality, primary, and preventive health care for our residents." Martinez said that 93% of the clinic's patients are at or below the poverty

level and 97% are ethnic minorities. She said, "The clinic is a compassionate organization," since the clinic's services are provided to the community regardless of insurance, immigration status or ability to pay.

Congresswoman Jackie Speier asked the audience, 'Are you tingling? This is so exciting for each and everyone one of us.... We are fortunate to have the kind of leadership in this community that will help it thrive.'

"When this clinic is completed," Speier said, "It will rival the capabilities of Stan-

ford and Kaiser, and Sutter and we will be proud. She said that "it will provide culturally competent medicine for the needs of the people of East Palo Alto."

U.S. Congresswoman Anna Eshoo, who was involved with the center's creation when it started said, "We're overjoyed. This is a day that is so special and it was created by a group of visionaries....by community people who really cared about people....They not only dreamed, they knew how to get it done."

Eshoo cited the fact that in 2012, RFHC was chosen out

of 3,000 applicants to be one of 26 facilities in our country to receive a \$7.3 million grant to continue its healthcare efforts through the Health Resource Service Administration of the Federal Government through the Affordable Care Act.

"It's one of the reasons I voted for the Affordable Health Care Act," Eshoo said. "That money came out of the Affordable Care Act and today the center is enrolling people in Covered CA. What gratification this is for Jackie and I to see this in our community and the benefits that people are enjoying as a result of it and in

2013 and into this year, people are being enrolled."

With that the speakers on the dais walked off the stage to pick up shovels for the symbolic groundbreaking ceremony.

Afterwards, the program resumed with presentations by a host of distinguished speakers including, RFHC Advisory Council members Patricia Breesee and John Sobrato, San Mateo County Supervisor Warren Slocum, members of the Sutter Health Board of Directors, the Deputy Chief of the San Mateo County Health System and the Rev. Paul Bains.

Free Events

Exciting Activities for the whole family!
Springtime fun!

Come enjoy your local open space preserves with our family friendly hikes. Explore from the hills to the shore with experts at our 26 open space preserves!

Find our free weekday and weekend hikes at www.openspace.org/activities

This spring YOU can become a wildlife photographer, a wildflower hunter or a bird watcher! Our expert docents can lead your family on a new adventure!

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Join us today!

For directions to nearby preserves and hike information go to www.openspace.org/activities