

News

Carolyn Livengood: Volunteers sought to be court-appointed special advocates

By CAROLYN LIVENGOOD |

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Ten greater San Francisco Bay Area nonprofit organizations that recruit, train and support CASAs (Court Appointed Special Advocates) have kicked off an awareness campaign to recruit more volunteers — especially men and minorities — to serve as volunteer advocates, mentors, and role models for children in foster care.

The following agencies have formed the Bay Area CASA Collaborative to spread the word of the dire need for more men and minority volunteers to serve along with the women who readily volunteer: CASA of San Mateo County; San Francisco CASA; Child Advocates of Silicon Valley (Santa Clara County); Alameda County CASA; Contra Costa County CASA; CASA of Santa Cruz County; CASA of Sonoma County; Marin Advocates for Children; Napa CASA; CASA of Solano County.

“We’re looking for a few good men to volunteer as Court Appointed Special Advocates,” says Phil Ladew, associate and legal director for California CASA Association, in a news release. “Nearly half the children in foster care are male — so we definitely need more male role models.”

Also, Ladew says all CASA programs in the Bay Area are committed to recruiting more people of color to better reflect the children and families they serve.

There are 7,190 foster children in Bay Area communities who have been removed from their homes through no fault of their own. Last year, the Bay Area CASA Collaborative served a network of more than 1,902 volunteers who advocated for about 2,431 foster children. The goal of the collaborative is to serve an additional 180 children this year, resulting in serving 2,800 children by 2017.

The campaign is funded by a grant from the National CASA Association and also funds contributed from CASA agencies that comprise the collaborative. The marketing firm, Mogo Interactive in Corte Madera, is overseeing the \$50,000 six-month-long campaign to get the word out about CASA volunteer opportunities for men and women in the above mentioned counties.

The slogan of the campaign — “Be the Change in a Foster Child’s World” — includes geo-targeted online display and search ads. “We hope people will click on one of CASAs online ads to learn more about this important work,” Ladew added.

While there are many different mentoring programs available to volunteers, CASA’s Advocates are court-appointed, and they can thoroughly research every aspect of a child’s case, including meeting teachers, doctors, social workers, counselors, biological family members and foster parents, thereby gaining a comprehensive perspective on what the child need in order to thrive.

In a life full of uncertainty and endless change, CASAs are consistent and caring adults who help their child in accessing needed resources, follow their school progress, and speak up for their best interests in court. They also maintain complete records about the case, submit reports, attend court hearings, and stay with their case until their child has a safe, loving home.

If interested in learning more about becoming a CASA volunteer, visit the collaborative’s page on the California CASA website at www.californiacasa.org to find a CASA organization in their area. Prospective volunteers are urged to register online to attend a Volunteer Orientation session in their county to learn more about the role and requirements of a CASA volunteer.

Peninsula Guitar Series to present Belgian guitarist Raphaella Smits

The Peninsula Guitar Series will present Belgian guitarist Raphaella Smits, an ardent advocate of the eight-stringed guitar, who will perform works by Ponce, Giuliani, Barrios, and more, at 7 p.m. June 18 at St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church, 1600 Santa Lucia Ave., in San Bruno.

Smits will also give a master class at 11 a.m. June 19 at the California Conservatory of Guitar, 2905 Stender Way, No. 72, in Santa Clara.

Playing worldwide in her unique way on eight-string guitars and historical instruments, Smits gives solo recitals as well as performances in duo with the most distinguished colleagues. Besides stage work, she has also made 20 albums, many of them being listed as indispensable to refined music lovers.

Ticket cost is \$50 per person general admission and \$20 per student at the door. For discount tickets in advance, go to www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2450943.

This is the last chance to buy \$10 raffle tickets for a Kremona guitar, The Famous Rib Shack gift card, and more. The winner will be chosen at the concert.

Rebuilding Together Peninsula seeking young people for Future Leaders Council

Rebuilding Together Peninsula is seeking young professionals between the ages of 22 to 37 with a genuine interest in philanthropy and community engagement in the Bay Area to serve as members of the organization's inaugural Future Leaders Council, which will be comprised of 10 to 15 members.

RTP's goal is to develop the next generation of philanthropic leaders who are committed to ensuring their neighbors in need are living in safe and healthy homes.

The Future Leaders Council will support RTP's mission by demonstrating advocacy for safe and healthy homes, preserving affordable housing, and community revitalization through activities that contribute to building prosperous communities through volunteer opportunities, fundraising initiatives, and member-led events.

Meetings will be held eight to 10 times annually, including an all-day board retreat with the Rebuilding Together Peninsula board of directors, at the RTP office in Redwood City.

To learn more about the expectations of and benefits for a Future Leaders Council member and to download an application, interested candidates may go to <http://www.rebuildingtogetherpeninsula.org/about-us/future-leaders-council>.

Donations being accepted for backpack and school supply drive

Donations for the Children's Fund of San Mateo County Backpack & School Supply Drive 2016, which is underway to benefit more than 1,800 homeless, foster and low-income children entering grades K-12 throughout San Mateo County, will be accepted until Aug. 1.

New school supplies, such as backpacks, pens, pencils, crayons, notebooks, binder paper, highlighters, markers, glue, folders, rulers, scissors, USB drives, 10-key calculators, and more are urgently needed. (Go to www.roonga.com/childrensfund16 for the supply wish list.)

The Children's Fund especially needs backpacks for all ages, 5 to 18 years old; however, it is requested that none of the backpacks be in red or blue.

Gift cards from stores (e.g., Kmart, Kohl's, JCPenney, Macys, Target, and others), and check donations are also welcome (make check payable to Children's Fund and write "school drive" in the memo section of the check). Mail donations to Children's Fund, 1 Davis Drive, Belmont, Calif., 94002. If a receipt is desired for donations, be sure to provide a return address.

Also, it is appreciated if donors include their email address so the County can change from paper to email to save money in mailing costs.

The purpose of the Children's Fund of San Mateo County, established in 1973 as a grass roots effort by social workers of the Children's Protective Services, is to provide goods and services, otherwise unavailable through public funding, to foster and low-income children in San Mateo County. Many of the children are victims of child abuse and neglect.

Since there is no administrative cost to the program, 100 percent of every donation goes directly to needy children and their families. The Backpack and School Supply distribution is one of seven programs run by the Children's Fund of San Mateo County.

"We believe that every child should have the opportunity to succeed in the classroom and not be held back by circumstances over which they have no control," Rebecca Asch, executive director, Children's Fund, wrote in a letter. "Our Backpack and School Supply program helps ensure that every low-income and foster youth in San Mateo County can start the school year feeling prepared and ready to learn. As one social worker told us, 'The backpacks you provide relieve a stressor for struggling families who are regularly forced to choose between eating less for one day or purchasing school supplies and other basic necessities.'"

* \$100 funds backpacks filled with supplies for four elementary school students.

* \$75 gives backpacks filled with school supplies to three middle school students.

* \$50 provides school supplies to three foster youths in high school.

* \$30 sponsors a backpack filled with school supplies for one kindergartner.

* \$15 can provide a backpack to one elementary school student.

To host a backpack or school supply drive (collection materials and pickup of donations provided), donate or volunteer, email childrensfund@smcgov.org, call 650-802-5152, or go to <http://childrensfund.smcgov.org>.

Donations can also be brought to 1 Davis Drive in Belmont. You can also join the Children's Fund Facebook page at www.facebook.com/childrensfundsmc.

Harley Owners Group to celebrate its Flag Day event

The Golden Gate Chapter of the Harley Owners Group will celebrate its 24th annual Flag Day Extravaganza on Saturday starting with registration between 8 to 9:45 a.m. at Dudley Perkins Harley-Davidson, 333 Corey Way, in South San Francisco.

The pack-led ride will then leave at 10 a.m. from Dudley Perkins and arrive about 10:30 a.m. at Golden Gate National Cemetery, 1300 Sneath Lane (Veterans Way), in San Bruno for a short ceremony with local dignitaries.

Funds raised are donated to the local American Legion and San Mateo Medical Center. The H.O.G. chapter also stages other rides throughout the year to provide cash, food, clothing, backpacks, and toys to other charitable organizations in San Mateo County.

Open to the public no matter what bike one rides, the run is expected have more than 300 motorcycles and passengers. Most of the members of the Golden Gate H.O.G. reside in San Mateo County but members also live in Alameda, Marin, and Santa Clara counties.

Ticket cost is \$25 per person, which includes coffee, donuts, lunch catered by Antonella's Ristorante, of San Jose, and a raffle ticket. A bonus run pin and bike flag will be available for the first 250 participants.

"This run was the idea of Jim Obsitnik, the 1993 director of the San Mateo H.O.G. Chapter," John Becker, a Golden Gate H.O.G. member, wrote in a press release. "As the San Mateo Chapter, now Golden Gate, was and still is very patriotic, what better way to show it than to conduct a ceremony and "poker run" honoring our nation's flag.

"Ken "Sarge" Metcalf, the 1995 director, got the American Legion involved that year. Until 2011, the ride would start at Peninsula Harley-Davidson in Redwood City. As part of the ceremony, Sarge would recite the now famous Old Glory poem, which is a tearjerker. Although Sarge passed away three weeks after the 2001 event, the poem is still part of the ceremony." After the ceremony ends, all the riders mount their motorcycles and begin a scenic ride down the San Mateo County coast where they will end up among the majestic redwoods in Memorial Park to enjoy an outstanding BBQ, conversation with other bikers, and playing games.

Golden Gate Chapter is sponsored by Dudley Perkins Harley-Davidson, which has been family-owned since 1914, and chartered by the Harley Owners Group, a division of Harley Davidson Motor Co. in Milwaukee, Wis. Harley Owners Group currently has a worldwide membership of more than 1 million members.

For more information about the Golden Gate Chapter of the Harley Owners Group, go to www.goldgatehog.net.

Citizens Environmental Council of Burlingame invites public to sustainability event

The Citizens Environmental Council of Burlingame invites the public to three programs this summer that will delve into the sustainable food movement, the sharing economy, and composting, all of which will be held from 7 to 8:30 p.m. in the Burlingame Public Library Lane Room at 480 Primrose Road.

Admission is free, and door prizes will be given out, including extras for those who do not drive alone to these events.

The following is the program lineup:

* Wednesday, "Edible City." This 55-minute, fast-paced film introduces a diverse cast of Bay Area locals who are challenging the U.S. model of food production based on cheap fossil fuel energy by supporting food grown close to where it is consumed. The goal is a new paradigm of food production and distribution, which will not only promote good health, but also improve local economies and bring communities closer together. (View a preview here: <http://bit.ly/25u6fjZ>)

* July 14 (date changed from July 28), The Sharing Economy. More people are realizing that sharing saves time and money, helps the environment, and creates lasting friendships. Neal Gorenflo, founder of Shareable, will explain the two sides of the sharing economy, one led by "disruptive" for-profit companies like Uber and Airbnb, and another with a strong public interest bent.

* Aug. 17. Composting 101. Experts from San Mateo County Office of Sustainability will demonstrate how easy it is to begin using leaves, yard trimmings, and food scraps to produce compost. The payoff: Less waste in the landfill and a lower garbage bill.

The Citizens Environmental Council of Burlingame, a nonprofit organization, provides tools to help Burlingame residents, and others, live more sustainably. To learn more about CEC, visit:

www.cecburlingame.org or email info@burlingamecec.org.

SamTrans offering free fare for National Dump the Pump Day

On Thursday, SamTrans is offering free fare all day on routes ECR (El Camino Real from Daly City BART to Palo Alto) and 294 (San Mateo Medical Center – Hillsdale Mall – Half Moon Bay) in honor of National Dump the Pump Day to give the public an opportunity to ride public transportation or try a new route.

For more information about routes ECR and 294, go to <http://www.samtrans.com/schedulesandmaps>.

To learn more about 11th annual National Dump the Pump Day that Sam Trans, Caltrain, the American Public Transportation, and public transportation systems across the country are celebrating on Saturday to encourage people to ride public transportation instead of driving, go to <https://peninsulamoves.org/dump-the-pump>.

For more information, go to www.Facebook.com/samtrans or socialmedia@samtrans.com or email socialmedia@samtrans.com.

Pacifica to hold Kops & Kids annual family event

The Kops & Kids annual family event is being planned from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. June 18 at Sea Bowl Bowling Center (www.seabowl.com), 4625 Coast Highway, in Pacifica, said Pacifica Chamber of Commerce CEO Vickie Flores in an email.

Designed to educate and entertain children of all ages, the event offers families an opportunity to meet first responders and see up close the emergency vehicles they operate. In addition to interfacing with police officers, firefighters, rescue personnel, and members of the Armed Forces, the public will be able to view police cars and motorcycles, fire trucks, military equipment, rescue vehicles, police dogs, and an emergency helicopter.

Children are also invited to bowl for free that day at Sea Bowl.

For more event details and to learn about lodging options in the low budget to moderate price range and located a short drive from Sea Bowl or walking distance to Pacifica's beaches to make a weekend out of the festivities, call the Pacifica Chamber of Commerce at 650-355-4122 or go to www.pacificachamber.com.

Local artists to be featured at Art Center of Redwood City & San Carlos

The Art Center of Redwood City & San Carlos is presenting an Art Show featuring local artists showcasing and selling art from noon to 4 p.m. June 18 at the Domenico Winery, 1697 Industrial Road, in San Carlos.

Admission is free to the event, which will be highlighted by live music played by blues piano great Sid Morris, and a wine tasting at \$10 or wine by the glass at \$7 to \$10.

If questions, call Domenico Winery at 650-593-2335 or go to www.domenicowinery.com.

City of Redwood City celebrating the Classical Series concerts

The City of Redwood City is celebrating the 10th anniversary of its Classical Series with two free concerts being held for the public's enjoyment at Courthouse Square, 2200 Broadway, in downtown Redwood City.

At 7 p.m. June 18, the Redwood Symphony, under the direction of founder and music director Eric Kujawsky, will perform a one-hour program of favorites from the concert and movie worlds, such as:

- * Rossini, "William Tell Overture" (excerpt).
- * Hollywood Blockbusters (Music of James Horner).
- * Beethoven, "Symphony No. 5," first movement.
- * Williams, "Olympic Fanfare and Theme" with George Yefchak, conductor.
- * Tchaikovsky, "1812 Overture."

At 6 p.m. July 17, Bay Shore Lyric Opera will entertain the audience with passionate, inspiring opera for a special two-hour show. The greatest singers in the Bay Area will perform the world's most beloved opera arias and ensembles from master composers like Verdi, Puccini, Bizet, Gounod, Mozart, and Mascagni. This year features "The Marriage of Figaro" by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, which will be sung in Italian with spoken dialogue in English with members of the Winchester Orchestra and conducted by Michael Di Giacinto.

The Classical Concert Series, presented by the City of Redwood City, is wheelchair accessible and open to the public of all ages.

For more information about Redwood City events, go to www.RedwoodCityEvents.com.

Pinterest manager of Online Partnerships to be commencement speaker at NPower Technology Service Corps

Jimmy Sopko, Pinterest manager of Online Partnerships, will be the commencement speaker at the Class 3 Graduation being held by NPower Technology Service Corps San Francisco Bay Area from 6 to 9 p.m. June 21 at the historic San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center, 401 Van Ness Ave., in San Francisco.

Sopko, a former naval officer and U.S. National Team rower, is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy in 2005 and the Naval Postgraduate School in 2006.

To attend the graduation, which will include student awards, honoring NPower partners and funders, and a post-graduation reception, register at <http://npowersbay.area-graduation-mixer.eventbrite.com>. For inquiries, email Pedro Remotti at Pedro.remotti@npower.org.

NPower, which is committed to building brighter futures for military veterans by providing access and opportunity to tech skills to help them achieve their potential, offers the free technology training and career development program at the College of San Mateo, 1700 W. Hillsdale Blvd., in San Mateo.

Training is available in four curriculum tracks: CompTIA A+ Certification; Active Directory; ITIL; and ServiceNow.

The program hosts two class cycles per year, beginning in January and July. The classes, held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 2 to 6 p.m., run a total of 20 weeks, including 13 weeks of class-based training and 7 weeks of paid internship. After completion of classroom work, students are placed in internships with area corporations, government agencies, and nonprofits that lead to full-time careers in the technology field. More than 80 percent of NPower alumni are employed or pursuing higher education within one year of graduation.

To be eligible for the program, successful applicants must be either a veteran or currently serving in the military; honorably discharged or discharged under honorable conditions; legal to work in the United States; more than 21; and able to demonstrate a clear need for services. Graduates are required to successfully complete all course work, including a seven-week apprenticeship.

Applications are now being accepted for the July class. To apply, go to www.npower.org/Our-Locations/San-Francisco.aspx.

To learn more, call Jeanine Cowan, NPower program manager, at 650-378-8272 or email Jeanine.Cowan@npower.org.

Access to Capital and Lender's Fair to be held in San Mateo

The San Mateo Small Business Development Center, with sponsorship from the Brisbane, Burlingame, Foster City, Half Moon Bay, Menlo Park, Millbrae, Pacifica, Redwood City, San Bruno, San Carlos, San Mateo, and South San Francisco chambers of commerce, is hosting an Access to Capital and Lender's Fair event on June 22. The workshop will be held from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the College of San Mateo, College Center Bldg. No. 10, 1700 W. Hillsdale Blvd., in San Mateo.

Small businesses represent 99.7 percent of all employer firms, employ just over half of all private sector employees, pay 44 percent of total U.S. private payroll, and have generated 64 percent of net new jobs over the past 15 years. Clearly the health of small business is critical to the U.S. economy. Small business owners continually indicate that one major obstacle to entry or expansion of their business is the availability of sufficient intermediate and long-term capital to support their working capital and fixed asset requirements.

This dynamic workshop, focused on small business credit needs, will include remarks from Elizabeth Laderman, senior economic outreach economist from the San Francisco Federal Reserve, and Mark Quinn, director for the Small Business Administration San Francisco District Office. In addition, there will be four panel discussions on "Traditional Sources of Capital," "Emerging and Alternative Sources of Capital," "Global Access: Export Financing and Services," and "Pre-IPO Funding, Seed Capital, Angel Investors, Venture Capital and Growth Equity." Throughout the day, there will be a resource fair where attendees will be able to interface with resource providers regarding products and services.

The event will focus on growth strategies that can transform San Mateo County small businesses by adding resources to expand, increase sales, and create and retain jobs locally. One of the primary reasons that businesses fail is lack of capital, which access to capital has a positive and significant effect on small business revenue growth, revenue levels, and number of employees.

The San Mateo Small Business Development Center is a federal program stemming from the Small Business Administration that is hosted at the San Mateo County Community College District. Its role is to advise small businesses that can demonstrate economic impact in their communities in any of the following four areas: increase in sales, increase in staff, retention of staff, and increase in capital.

The SBDC assists small businesses directly through one-on-one counseling and its counselors are businesses owners like yourself and not federal employees. The cost of counseling services on a private basis would be about \$300 an hour, but as a SBDC client you pay nothing, as long as you continue to demonstrate economic impact.

Ticket cost is \$10 per person. For tickets or more details, call Robert Shoffner, director, San Mateo Small Business Development Center, San Mateo Community College District, at 650-574-6402 or go to <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/access-to-capital-lenders-fair-tickets-25415285804?aff=ebrowse#tickets>.

Skyline College in San Bruno awarded a two-year grant to start shuttle service

Skyline College in San Bruno has been awarded a two-year grant to establish free, non-stop, round-trip shuttle service between the Daly City BART station and the campus, thanks to the San Mateo County Transportation Authority and the City and County Association of Governments of San Mateo County.

Both organizations approved the grant submitted by the San Mateo County Community College District for Skyline College in response to the San Mateo County Shuttle Program Call for Projects at their May board meetings.

The “Skyline College Express” shuttle service will launch in time for the start of the fall semester classes beginning Aug. 17, and will run every hour from 7:25 a.m. to 6:44 p.m., Mondays to Fridays.

The 28-person shuttle service will be open to Students, faculty and staff as well as community members using the services available on the campus such as SparkPoint, (<http://www.skylinecollege.edu/sparkpoint/>), the library, and the Veterans Resource Center. Those who come to the campus to attend performing arts, athletics, guest lectures or other college events are also welcome to use this convenient service.

Initial discussions on the project originated in 2013 at the inaugural Success Summit (<http://www.skylinesuccesssummit.com/>) that was hosted by the President’s Council (<http://www.skylinecollege.edu/presidentscouncil/index.php>) where a breakout session entitled “The Last Mile” spurred much enthusiasm. The discussions showed a clear need for a solution to the problem of transportation to and from the campus from major transit hubs.

A comprehensive transportation survey conducted in 2014 highlighted that due to the long travel time and lack of convenience, 67 percent of students and 74 percent of faculty and staff drive alone to the campus or have someone drive them.

The new shuttle service will create first and last mile connections for more than 5,000 students and employees residing in Daly City, San Francisco and East Bay vicinities, which represents close to half of the campus population.

The shuttle program will assist students in getting to the college in a timely fashion at no cost, helping to mitigate socio-economic barriers to education and decrease commute times.

Potential students who otherwise have no means of transportation to attend college will now have access to world-class educational opportunities, with about 100 degrees and certificates to select from, for only \$46 per unit.

Belmont resident Marilyn Johnson given Clara Barton Award

Belmont resident Marilyn Johnson is the proud recipient of the Clara Barton Award for Meritorious Volunteer Leadership presented by the American Red Cross of the Bay Area at its Volunteer Awards and Recognition Event held May 15 at the Foster City Fire Station.

This prestigious award recognizes a volunteer for service in a series of leadership positions held over a period of years, enabling the American Red Cross to provide valuable service to the community.

“Marilyn is the embodiment of the mission of the Red Cross,” wrote Pooja Trivedi, American Red Cross spokeswoman, in a press release. “She’s involved at the local, regional and national levels, in deployments, and in developing nationally recognized training vehicles for client caseworkers. Marilyn is always available, generous with her time, experience and knowledge. She is a true leader who teaches and encourages and follows up to ensure that true learning takes place.”

Other volunteers and the award they received are:

- * Susan Groetchen, of South San Francisco, Administration and Support.
- * Jim Holley, Half Moon Bay, Community Engagement.
- * Lynda Frattaroli, Moss Beach, Disaster Cycle Service, Outstanding Support.
- * Betty Fleming, Daly City, Disaster Cycle Service, Exceptional Response.
- * Colleen Sasso, Daly City, Disaster Cycle Service, Exceptional Leadership.
- * Beverly Cabrera, Redwood City, Disaster Cycle Service, Extraordinary Commitment and Dedication.
- * Ken Diaz, Daly City, New Volunteer.
- * Jill Kuendig, Montara, Volunteer Leadership.
- * Go Funai, San Francisco, Volunteer Supervisor.
- * Joe McAndrew, Moss Beach, Volunteer of the Year.
- * Janet Liu, San Mateo, Youth Services.

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies about 40 percent of the nation's blood; teaches skills that save lives; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families. A not-for-profit organization, the Red Cross depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission.

To learn more, call 1-888-4-HELP-BAY (1-888-443-5722) or go to www.redcross.org/bayarea, Facebook and Twitter.

More than 2,750 San Mateo County children get health care coverage

More than 2,750 San Mateo County children transitioned to health coverage on May 16, ensuring they will have high-quality health coverage that provides access to healthcare across California. San Mateo County agencies and partners helped make this seamless transition possible as an example of their commitment to making sure that there are no gaps in health coverage for those who need it most.

San Mateo County is one of three counties in California that provides health care coverage to all children regardless of immigration status through a local Healthy Kids program. The State's implementation of full-scope Medi-Cal gives all children in California health coverage and allows San Mateo County residents enrolled in Healthy Kids to transition into a statewide program funded by the State.

In anticipation of the State's implementation of Senate Bill 75 (Medi-Cal for All Children), San Mateo County Health System and community partners began transitioning eligible children from the Healthy Kids program to restricted Medi-Cal so they would be ready for full transition once the state implemented full-scope Medi-Cal.

"San Mateo County's partners work tirelessly every day to make the enrollment process as easy as possible and earn and keep the trust of families seeking access to healthcare for their children," said Srija Srinivasan, SMC Healthy System's interim deputy chief, in a press release. "This milestone could not have been possible without the network of agencies, community organizations, safety-net clinics, schools, and hundreds of individuals across San Mateo County who came together in 2002 to assure universal coverage for children."

San Mateo County Health System, Human Services Agency, and the Health Plan of San Mateo have provided coverage to our youngest and least advantaged residents through Healthy Kids since 2003. During those years, community partners like Peninsula Health Care District, Sequoia Healthcare District, and First5 of San Mateo County have played an important role as core funding partners what embraced the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors' vision of health coverage for all kids. Healthy Kids will continue to support children whose families are not eligible for Medi-Cal so they will still have high-quality health coverage.

For more information about affordable health coverage, go to www.smchealth.org/insurance.

Portola Elementary School in San Bruno celebrates 50 years

Portola Elementary School in San Bruno celebrated 50 years of providing excellence in education for the community of San Bruno at a Spring Family Dinner held May 20 at the school's multi-purpose room.

About 300 adults and children, including Portola Principal Barbara Alford; co-chairwomen of the event, Renee Callantine, treasurer of the San Bruno Education Foundation, and Catherine Mitsunaga, School Site Council president; Portola PTA President Pam Gamble; and Charlie Rohrbach, former Portola principal who is now dean at Terman Middle School in Palo Alto, participated in the celebration.

The event included a Book Fair where families enjoyed buying books from a huge selection and also a self-serve

photo booth where people could use their own camera and then have the photo emailed to them.

Established in 1965 in the former Laguna Salada School District (now known as Pacifica School District) as a K-8 school with 430 students and officially dedicated in February 1966, Portola was annexed into the San Bruno Park School District in 2000.

“The school was originally designed as an ‘open plan’ layout, with movable walls and open wings in which ‘team teaching’ took place with approximately 150 kids per wing,” wrote Barbara Alford in an email. “The school was remodeled in 2001 after annexation to incorporate a more traditional classroom layout.” Recognized as a California Distinguished School in 2006 and 2014, Portola experienced much Academic Performance Index growth between 2007 and 2013, increasing from 871 to 929, which led to much interest and growth at the school.

“Although Portola started strong with 430 students in 1965, enrollment declined with class size reduction in the late 1990s,” added Alford. “Portola’s enrollment was at an all-time low in 2001 with 180 students, but we have steadily grown since then as interest in our school has grown, and have almost doubled to over 350 students presently.” Portola has always been engaged in the community and strives to help others. Some examples are:

* Water for Life, Bringing Hope to the World. Started by the 4th grade class in 2007 in conjunction with the nonprofit organization Ramdomkid, the class bottled and sold their own water to raise fund for a “Play Pump” to provide water to children in Pretoria, South Africa. The Play Pump was installed at Masana Primary School in August 2007, and the class was recognized on the Senate Floor in Sacramento for their efforts.

* Jump Rope for Heart. On March 25, Portola participated in its 34th year of Jump Rope for Heart to benefit the American Heart Association. To date, the school has raised more than \$130,000 to help fight heart disease.

* Hike-A-Thon Fundraiser. Proud of their school name, every fall the students hike up to Sweeney Ridge to visit the location where Gaspar de Portola discovered the San Francisco Bay in 1769. In 2010, the hike was named in honor of Michael Casey who spearheaded the first trek in 1984 and retired after 39 years of teaching at Portola. He still continues to lead the hike.

“Each year, the students raise \$50,000 to \$60,000 for the Portola PTA which helps fund music, library books, field trips, assemblies, instructional aides, afterschool tutoring, and supplemental PE classes that the California State can no longer support,” said Kristie Postel, Portola media aide and office clerk. “The hike also emphasizes physical fitness.”

* STEM, Coding and Makers Club, started by Alford, encourages the students to create something from everyday items that people throw away.

To learn more about Portola Elementary School, go to <http://sbpsd.k12.ca.us/portola>.

If you have any news tips about our county communities, call or fax Carolyn at 650-355-5533 or e-mail her at carolynlivengood@sanbrunocable.com.



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