

The West Valley OUTLOOK



MARCH
Vol. 2023, Issue 03

a vision for our Age Friendly communities



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Overview of the roadmap for older adult services in Los Gatos

By Matthew Hudes,
Los Gatos Town
Councilmember

On February 7, the Los Gatos Town Council unanimously endorsed the Roadmap for Senior

Services in Los Gatos, crowning 15 months of community engagement. The Roadmap document, which can be read at tinyurl.com/seniorservicesroadmap, represents an exciting departure and direction for providing services to older adults in Town—a population who will reach nearly 1/3 of residents over the next decade. Although there has been a substantial effort to

develop the Roadmap, the work of making it happen is just beginning. If you'd like to get involved, please contact Town Manager Laurel Prevetti at lprevetti@losgatosca.gov.

Why was a Roadmap Needed?

The Town's model for delivering services, previously overhauled in 2009, was in need of an update. This need became heightened during the COVID pandemic as senior services shrank while the senior population grew. Funding for nutritional services and adult day care became scarce while the need increased during COVID. Meaningful



Snapshot of "First Fridays," a series of happy hours held at The Palms for older adults. The Los Gatos Senior Services Committee launched the series to foster community involvement.

Photo courtesy of the Town of Los Gato

recreational activities and in-person opportunities were limited, especially for at-risk individuals. Residents were seeking answers to questions about where they could obtain services.

First Steps and Funding

In early 2021, the Town Council established a priority for senior services and took two major steps: 1) it allocated \$500,000 in

see **ROADMAP** pg. 3

To our valued member/ current resident:

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SHS senior wins NY Times award for 2022 personal narrative contest

By Mitchell Chen &
Skyler Mao,
*originally published in the
Saratoga Falcon*

Each year, the New York Times hosts a 100-word personal narrative contest for high school students across the world to tell a miniature memoir about a meaningful moment in their lives. Out of the 12,000 entries, [Saratoga High School] senior Adam Xu's personal narrative was one of 13 winning pieces selected as winners by the judges.

"There were 12,000 submissions so I wasn't expecting anything at all," Xu said. "I actually completely forgot about it. I only found out about it when they emailed

my parents, and it was definitely very exciting. The New York Times is a great publication and I was happy to be selected."

Xu first learned about the opportunity from creative writing teacher Amy Keys. The 100-word narrative concept sparked their interest, as they wanted to write something fun as well as share a humorous experience with others. However, writing the memoir was no easy task. Xu went through numerous revisions trying to get their narrative to the required word limit. They had to utilize their writing abilities to make every word concise and well thought out, while embodying their experiences in a small

amount of text.

"The challenge of it was that it had to be written in fewer than 100 words," Xu said. "I had to cut it down and make sure that it made sense. I also wanted to make sure every word was perfect."

Xu wrote a humorous narrative of how their broken wrist, bound by a colorful cast, gave them celebrity-like recognition in first grade. The memoir demonstrates the power of writing to convey a multitude of expressions.

"The prompt was to address any experience from my life, no matter how big or small, so I decided to do something that was kind of funny," Xu said.

see **CONTEST** pg. 6

juice co. LG - organic, cleansing, & local

By Brandy Maddox,
Managing Editor

Warning... Drinking a bottle of juice from juice co. LG may cause intense satisfaction, a nourished body and a slight addiction. If you know, you know.

Located in downtown Los Gatos at 155 N Santa Cruz Ave, juice co. LG has served the town with fresh, cold-pressed organic juices and plant-based eats since 2015.

The Outlook interviewed co-founder Katelin Slifer on juice co. LG's story, her passion for healthy living, the impact of the pandemic and inflation on the juice bar and some interesting facts you may not know about—like

juice co. LG's doctor-endorsed juice cleanse, its bottle reimbursement program and seasonal menu changes!

Q: When was juice co. LG founded, and what inspired you to create it?

A: juice co. LG was founded in 2015; I co-founded it with my Husband. I have a huge passion for food and helping educate my community on how healing food can be but also how harmful some foods can be to our bodies and the importance of investing in our health. Juice is just an avenue for that for me. I recognize that "healthier" options typically come at a higher price point, so I try to

see **JUICE** pg. 9

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Local History:



A family is enjoying the stream at Azule Springs Resort before the turn of the century. Pacific Congress Springs Resort, along today's Highway 9, was the most famous summer resort in Saratoga. However, a second soda spring was discovered about a mile north of then existing Congress Springs Resort, along today's Mt. Eden Road. A man named R. L. Mills bought the property and developed Azule resort. He sold the bottled water as Azule Seltzer Springs. Although the resort was well-visited, it was never as popular as Congress Springs.

Photo courtesy of the Saratoga Historical Foundation

The Los Gatos Central School was designed by local architect William Lobell and built in 1886 at a cost of about \$9,000. It served the community as the Central Grammar School through 1922. The original grammar school building contained four classrooms, each measuring 32 by 34 feet. In 1893, the wing seen on the right side of the building was added and served as the high school until 1908.

Photo courtesy of the Town of Los Gatos



RYDE Volunteer Opportunity
REACH YOUR DESTINATION EASILY

PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION TO OLDER ADULTS, HELPING THEM MAINTAIN THEIR INDEPENDENCE

“

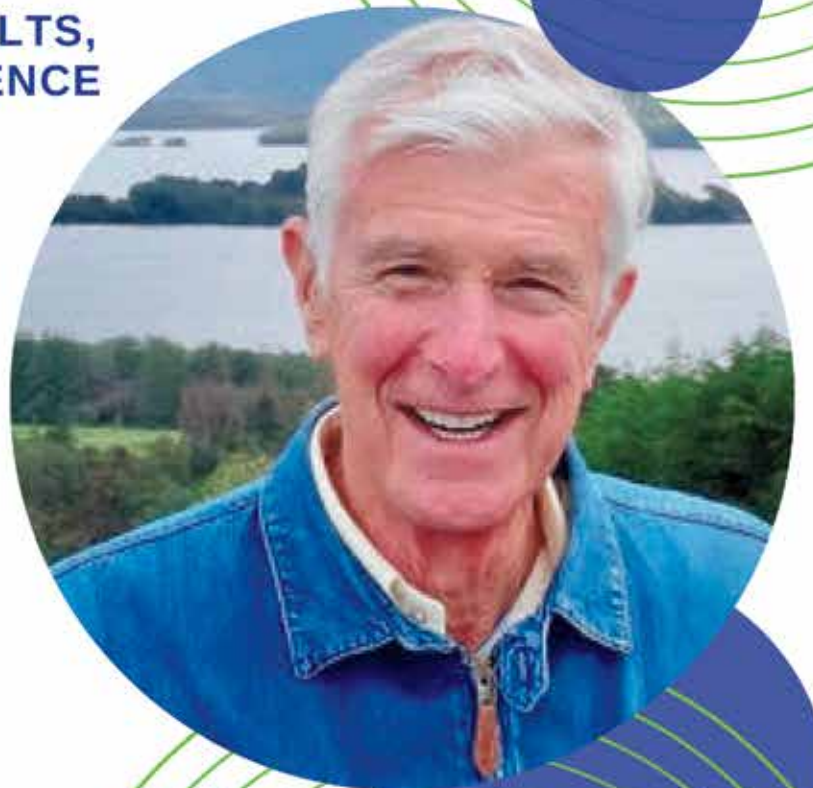
"It was easy to volunteer as a RYDE driver. You meet some interesting people and provide valuable assistance at the same time. The process is painless, and it's definitely worth the time." - Kirch DeMartini, volunteer RYDE Driver

”

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To inquire about becoming a volunteer RYDE driver, email ryde@sascc.org or call (408) 892-9739.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT RYDE, VISIT RYDESCC.ORG



Outlook Disclosure:

The Saratoga Area Senior Coordinating Council (SASCC) is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, founded in Saratoga in 1979. The Outlook is our monthly publication. We are funded by a mixture of income from services, donations, and grants from community foundations and governmental bodies.

The Outlook is distributed monthly to every home in Saratoga and Los Gatos. Our publication, like our organization, is nonpartisan and strives to provide an equal voice to all in the communities we serve. We allow submissions from a variety of entities and individuals. Opinions expressed in The Outlook are not necessarily a reflection of the opinions or mission of SASCC. The views contained herein are intended to be reflective of our community, therefore we encourage all feedback and comments from our readers. We take all feedback seriously and will always do our best to incorporate it into our finished product.

To submit feedback or questions to our team, please email outlook@sascc.org. Thank you for reading The Outlook!

From 'least-coordinated efforts' for senior services to a 'thriving age-friendly Town'

continued from
ROADMAP pg. 1

American Rescue Plan Act funds to restore key senior services and 2) it requested the development of a report—a Roadmap for Senior Services and recruited a team that eventually grew to 18 individuals. The newly formed Senior Services Committee has been led by Tom Picraux and Maureen Heath, both experienced and committed community leaders who were joined by the Mayor and a Councilmember, key service providers, Santa Clara County leaders, service club representatives and eventually the full membership of the Community Health and Senior Services Commission (CHSSC).

What is the Roadmap?

Of course, if you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there. So the first step was to establish a bold vision and mission to guide the Roadmap:

Vision

Our vision is to create a community where older adults are engaged, valued and provided equitable opportunities to thrive in an environment that protects against isolation and promotes inclusion.

Mission

Our mission is to provide an age-friendly community that:

- Provides resources and facilities for older adults to live full and healthy lives with volunteer and leadership opportunities that provide a sense of purpose, connection and belonging.
- Promotes physical activity and physical, cognitive, mental and spiritual health for socially enriching lives.
- Promotes adequate and healthy nutrition through community programs.
- Embraces walkable spaces with

- safe, accessible and affordable transportation.
- Promotes increased participation and communication with the older adult community.
- Partners with local agencies that provide services and assistance for older adults, creating a network that supports public information that delivers services in a coordinated and collaborative manner.
- Ensures accountability by measuring and monitoring the results of our efforts to provide services for older adults.

This direction was established as result of extensive community outreach, including 12 workshops, survey participation by over 600 residents, numerous sub-committee working sessions, meetings with regional leaders and established Committees and Commissions, benchmarking against seven other communities, and three checkpoints with the Town Council along the way. Members Nancy Pearson and Catherine Somers conducted the workshops using a theme of re-imagining senior services. The Saratoga Area Senior Coordinating Council (SASCC) managed

the administration of the Community Assessment Survey for Older Adults (CASOA) by POLCO in partnership with the National Resource Center (NRC).

Some elements of the objective assessment were not positive and laid bare the shortcomings and gaps that needed to be addressed. The Roadmap guides the community in moving from a town with one of the regionally-lowest, least-coordinated efforts for senior services to a thriving age-friendly Town where older adults provide substantial contributions and support.

Seven goals were chosen to achieve the vision of the Roadmap:

- 1) Appealing and Inviting Facility (renovate or build)
- 2) Core Senior Services
- 3) Communication and Engagement
- 4) Volunteer Support and Engagement (be a volunteer/seek a volunteer)
- 5) Enhanced Transportation Options for Older Adults
- 6) Senior Housing—Information on Approaches and Options
- 7) Integrated Governance, Funding and Accountability

For each of these goals, the team identified 1-, 3- and 10-year activities that

were organized into 29 recommended projects, each with measurable and achievable milestones.

First steps recommended to achieve these long-term objectives are to:

- Engage Town Commissions (especially CHSSC which will play a leadership role) and
- Boards, including transportation options for older adults, creation of a community garden, and inventory of housing options for seniors.
- Sustainably support core senior services, including social, educational, healthy living activities currently provided by Los Gatos Saratoga Recreation and provide grants for services from appropriate service providers.
- Create an Age-Friendly Coordinator position as the central point of contact for coordination of Town and community older adult services, initiatives, and accountability.
- Recognize and encourage community-led efforts to enhance support for senior services, including a planned 501(c)(3) nonprofit foundation to raise

funds for senior programs and for a community facility with space for senior activities.

- Transition from planning to action by engaging the Senior Services Committee to assist the Town in publicizing and jumpstarting year 1 projects and then sunset the committee in 2023.

The Town Council will consider these steps during their March 7 regular Council meeting. Additionally, the Council recently approved an additional \$675,000 of ARPA funds that will mainly focus on services for older adults.

The Roadmap recommendations have been guided by the Town's diversity, equity and inclusion goals. The Roadmap strives to ensure all community members feel safe, respected and comfortable to be themselves and express all aspects of their identities and oppose any attempts to undermine the safety, security and rights of any members of our community. In addition, the Roadmap has embraced the previous goals of Los Gatos in becoming an Age-Friendly City and the WHO and AARP Age-Friendly Cities initiatives.

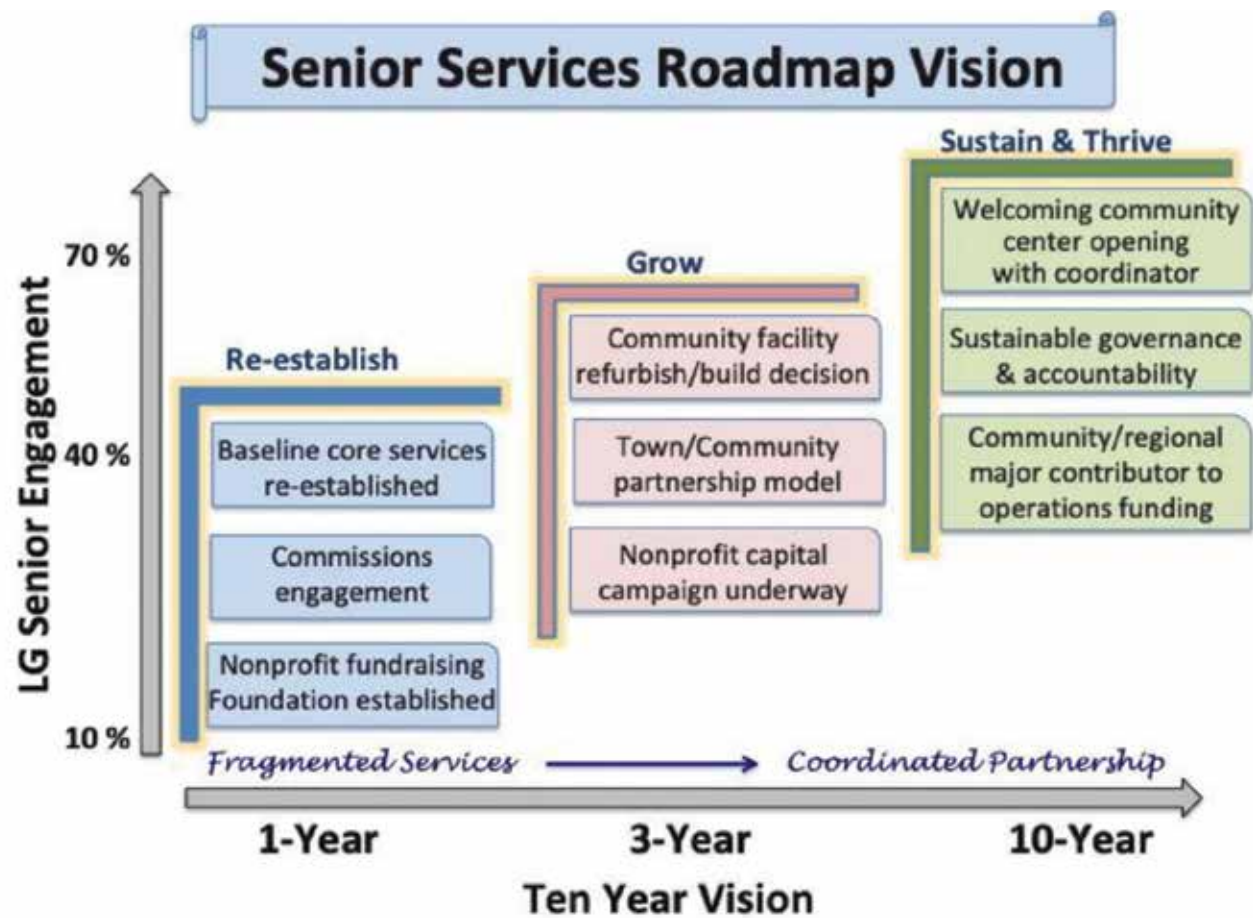


Image from the Los Gatos Senior Services Roadmap.

News briefs

Saratoga

St. Paddy's Day party on March 11 in the Village

Celebrate St. Patrick's Day at the Saratoga Village Development Council's annual party in the Saratoga Village from 2-4 p.m. on Saturday, March 11. Search for green gold, nibble on green popcorn and enjoy fun for the whole family.

Learn the rich agricultural history of the Santa Clara Valley on March 14

"The Valley of Heart's Delight: True Tales from Around the Bay" is a collection of true and rarely-told tales Robin Chapman has uncovered about the green and golden Santa Clara Valley and has published in her new book by the same name.

Sponsored by the Saratoga Historical Foundation, Chapman's talk is scheduled for Tuesday, March 14 at 7 p.m. at the Saratoga Foothill Club, located at 20399 Park Place in Saratoga. Chapman will also be signing all three of her books at the event including her new book as well as "California Apricots: The Lost Orchards of Silicon Valley" and "Historic Bay Area Visionaries."

The talk is open to the public, and is free to Saratoga Foothill Club members and \$10 for nonmembers. For more information, visit saratogahistory.com or call 408-867-4311.

Saratoga Creek Bridge rehabilitation project begins this month

Beginning in March, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), in partnership with the City of Saratoga and the County of Santa Clara, will begin construction of the Saratoga Creek Bridge Rehabilitation Project on Highway 9. The project is currently scheduled to be completed in December 2023. One way lane closures will occur during construction activities between 6 a.m. and 7 p.m. Motorists are advised to expect delays and allow extra time for travel. Please drive with caution through the construction zone. Learn more on the Caltrans project website at tinyurl.com/saratogacreekbridge.



Los Gatos

'Heal Yourself, Heal The Planet' event at Los Gatos Library March 20

Are you curious about the role the standard American diet plays in your health and our environment? Amy Halpern-Laff, policy director of Factory Farming Awareness Coalition, will discuss the impacts of factory farming on climate change, the environment, human health and animal suffering on March 20 from 5-6 p.m. at the Los Gatos Library. This is part of the Los Gatos Library/Plant-Based Advocates speaker series. There will be a free drawing at the end, giving you a chance to win delicious chocolate or beautiful cookbooks! The Los Gatos Library is located at 100 Villa Ave. Meet upstairs in the tech lab.

Los Gatos High School Theatre to perform 'The Lightning Thief'

The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical is an endearing family-friendly musical adaptation of Rick Riordan's bestselling novel and features an original rock score. As a son of Poseidon, Percy Jackson has newly discovered powers he can't control, monsters on his trail, and is on a quest to find Zeus' lightning bolt to prevent a war between the Greek gods. Enjoy a performance on March 24, 25, 30, 31 or April 1 at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$12 for students and seniors 55+, \$15 for general admission and \$20 for reserved seating and can be purchased at lghs.net.



Los Gatos second annual Poetry Contest

Don't miss a chance to make Los Gatos literary history! Judged by Town Poet Laureate Jen Siraganian, this contest will award prizes to the first, second, and third-place winners in the following age categories: youth (ages 0-11); teens (ages 13-18); and adult (ages 19+).

Writers must live, work or attend school in Los Gatos, Monte Sereno or the Los Gatos mountain communities. Prizes include generous gift cards and items from Los Gatos local businesses. Submit your poem today at forms.gle/z9zHLB67eaNjndHd9. Deadline to submit is March 24.

Questions or need more information? Email poet@losgatosca.gov.

Jen Siraganian, Los Gatos Town Poet Laureate. / Photo from the Town of Los Gatos

AHA HEARTSAVER CPR/AED ONLINE BLENDED LEARNING COURSE, \$65

VIRTUAL/IN-PERSON SKILLS TESTING

American Heart Association (AHA) Heartsaver® CPR/AED blended learning course (online and in-person) includes learning adult, child and infant CPR, how to use an Automated External Defibrillator (AED), how to assist someone who is choking. This course has two parts: 1) First complete online videos and guided interactive exercises (2 to 3 hours to complete), may be completed in one session or broken up into several sessions, 2) Bring completed certificate to an in-person skills practice and testing session (approximately 30 minutes), offered every Wednesday from 2 to 6 pm. at a training site in Los Gatos, CA. No appointment is necessary. Course fee includes a 2-year Heartsaver® CPR/AED AHA course completion card and a CPR key-chain rescue mask.

Instructors: Santa Clara County Fire Dept.

Register at ondemandheartsavercpr.eventbrite.com. For more information, visit sccfd.org.



The Outlook wants to hear from you!

Have a story idea for The Outlook? Want to voice your input on a community issue? Care to share your opinion on a story we covered?

**WRITE US
A LETTER!**

SEND YOUR LETTERS TO
OUTLOOK@SASCC.ORG

Stay informed - March/April

City of Saratoga and Town of Los Gatos Council, Commission & Committee Meetings

In-person meetings are beginning to resume, while online Zoom meetings and calling in continues to be an option for community members.

Meeting places, Zoom links and call-in information are contained in each respective meeting agenda.

Agendas are typically uploaded the Friday before the respective meeting.

Please note, all council, commission, and committee meetings are subject to change or cancellation.

Check the meeting links prior to each meeting or call your local town clerk for questions.

Los Gatos Town Clerk's office: 408-354-6834 / Saratoga City Clerk's office: 408-868-1216



Los Gatos

Finance Commission: March 13, 5 p.m.
View agenda and meeting info at www.losgatosca.gov/2643/Finance-Commission

Development Review Committee:

March 14, 21, April 4, 10 a.m.

View agenda and meeting info at www.losgatosca.gov/188/Development-Review-Committee

Note: these meetings are often canceled. Please check the webpage for updates.

Arts and Culture Commission: March 15, 5 p.m.

View agenda and meeting info at

www.losgatosca.gov/352/Arts-and-Culture-Commission

Housing Element Advisory Board: March 16, April 6, 7 p.m.

View agenda and meeting info at

www.losgatosca.gov/1735/General-Plan---Housing-Element

Town Council: March 21, April 4, 7 p.m.

View agenda and meeting info at

www.losgatosca.gov/16/Town-Council

Historic Preservation Committee: March 22, 4 p.m.

View agenda and meeting info at

www.losgatosca.gov/190/Historic-Preservation

Community Health and Senior Services Committee:

March 28, 5 p.m.

View agenda and meeting info at

www.losgatosca.gov/2398/Community-Senior-Services

Council Policy Committee: March 28, 5 p.m.

View agenda and meeting info at

www.losgatosca.gov/1962/Town-Council-Policy-Committee



Saratoga

Community Events:

Let's Work Volunteer Day:

March 11, April 8, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Quarry Park

Heritage Preservation Commission: March 14, 8:30 a.m.

View agenda and meeting info at

www.saratoga.ca.us/285/Heritage-Preservation-Commission

Parks and Recreation Commission: March 14, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

View agenda and meeting info at

www.saratoga.ca.us/364/Parks-Recreation-Commission

City Council Study Sessions: March 15, March 27, 6 p.m.

View agenda meeting info at www.saratoga.ca.us/241/City-Council

City Council: March 15, April 5, 7 p.m.

View agenda meeting info at www.saratoga.ca.us/241/City-Council

Public Art Commission Paint The City Subcommittee:

March 15, 3-4:30 p.m.

View agenda and meeting info at

www.saratoga.ca.us/510/Public-Art-Commission

Public Art Commission Paint The City Subcommittee:

March 20, 6-8:30 p.m.

View agenda and meeting info at

www.saratoga.ca.us/510/Public-Art-Commission

Youth Commission: March 28, 7-9 p.m.

View agenda and meeting info at

www.saratoga.ca.us/337/Youth-Commission

FREE Adult Day Care Services

If you or a loved one needs adult day services for a spouse or family member, please reach out to the Saratoga Adult Day Program today!

Qualify for the program by meeting the following 3 requirements:

- be 65 or older
- have an individual income of less than \$78,550
- meet Saratoga Adult Day Program requirements

The Saratoga Adult Day Program is now providing in person services, Monday-Friday. Remote services are also available.

For more info, or to apply for program, please call Raj Kaur at (408) 868-1254 or email raj@sascc.org.



Help native species and have fun by making your yard a wildlife refuge



By Lisa Wade

Spring is my favorite season. It's the time of year I find myself planning visits to the nursery and pulling my gardening gloves out of the shed. As many of us contemplate how to create a resilient landscape that can withstand both drought and flooding, we may also wonder how we can support our native wildlife.

Climate change, loss of habitat, drought, and

dwindling populations of native species could, without collective action by residents, make the environment of our future much different than what we enjoy today. The web of life is intricate and fragile, and losing any species has ripple effects that damage the whole ecosystem.

The good news is that residents can help sustain native species while at the same time creating a beautiful landscape to enjoy. You can create a wonderful wildlife

refuge whether you have a big yard, a small patio area, or even a container balcony. Schoolyards and businesses can also participate.

Learning to transform your yard into a wildlife refuge is at your fingertips. The National Wildlife Federation has developed a simple step-by-step process for creating a refuge in any outdoor space, as described on their website at nwf.org/CERTIFY.

If you follow the process, you will see results. You can even apply to have your yard become a Certified Wildlife Garden by the National Wildlife Federation. My family and I rolled up our sleeves and created the necessary conditions to have our yard certified. We love the results and can see with our own eyes native species enjoying our yard.

With some learning under your belt, let your imagination loose. Think like a bird, a monarch butterfly, or a ladybug! Think like a squirrel or one of those quick-scurrying little lizards that hide under rocks! The National

Wildlife Federation provides handy checklists with many options for you to consider.

First, you'll need to provide at least one source of clean water for wildlife to drink and bathe. Examples include a backyard pond or bird bath that should be scrubbed out frequently in the summer to prevent the spread of disease.

It is important to provide at least three sources of nourishment for your backyard friends. Options include fruits, nectar, and seeds from native plants. Bird and squirrel feeders also count.

You'll also need places where animals can raise their young—mature trees, dense shrubs, and native plants that host caterpillars can serve this purpose. You can also hang nesting boxes from your trees. Nest box kits can be purchased from the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society store, located at 22221 McClellan Rd, Cupertino.

Lastly, you'll need to employ sustainable gardening practices, such as soil and water conservation, planting natives and eliminating chemical pesticides and fertilizers.

We have watched our yard transform into a beautiful, busy bird and butterfly sanctuary. We have been able to identify many different bird species from our window, and our milkweed plants attract rare, endangered monarch butterflies.

Our natural-looking yard is flexible enough even to support misunderstood yet critically important species, such as opossums, who control Lyme disease by feasting on ticks, and gophers, who are crucial for soil aeration and keeping insect populations in balance.

Equally important, wildlife gardens are a beautiful and ecologically-sound alternative to traditional lawns. Manicured lawns are not just water-thirsty, they drive us to eliminate moles and gophers. They can also cause some stress

when we see crows pecking holes in our lawns while foraging for food—a natural activity that can be enjoyable to watch in a native landscape.

Living in harmony with nature is satisfying and beautiful, and you can help. The diversity of plants and animals is far richer and more interesting than in gardens with non-native lawns.

Just adding native plants to your current landscape can go a long way, and most of the criteria for creating a certified wildlife habitat can be fulfilled by planting natives.

"It's not just about saving water," Saratoga resident and past chapter president of the California Native Plant Society Madeline Morrow said. "Native insects need native plants and can't survive on exotic plants. For example, butterfly caterpillars can only eat native plants, with a few exceptions. Planting natives brings more butterflies of all kinds. If insects need native plants, so do the birds, lizards and frogs that eat the insects."

Together, we can repair and protect our precious biodiversity by supporting our wildlife.

As Jane Goodall so wisely said, "My mission is to create a world where we can live in harmony with nature."

We can all move in this direction by creating a habitat that nurtures our fragile earth and its animals.

To certify your yard, visit nwf.org/CERTIFY.

For inspiration, consider attending the Growing Natives Garden Tour, a free, self-guided tour of over 50 home gardens from San Mateo to San Jose landscaped with California native plants. The tour is April 1-2 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Register at gngt.org.

Adam Xu is one of 13 winners selected

continued from
CONTEST pg. 1

Despite the time dedicated to the piece, Xu wasn't expecting any substantial recognition due to the vast amount of submissions. They were pleasantly surprised when the final standings came out and they were selected as a winner.

"Overall I'm just super excited about the work and it's really awesome for it to be published in the New York Times," Xu said. "In the future I want to write more works, especially in cross-genres like prose and poetry and submit them to various literary journals and publications."



Image by Annie Liu

When it comes to nutrition, small changes add up

By Wil Yu,
General Manager, CCA
Health California

Food is something everybody has in common. We need its nutrients to survive, but food also brings families and friends together, enriches holidays and traditions and provides enjoyment through growing, cooking and sampling it. Food helps define our culture and identity. During my time at CCA Health California, I've seen the importance of approaching food, and care in general, not just from a medical perspective, but from a social and community perspective as well.

March is National Nutrition Month, so it's a good time to think about the state of nutrition in our country and how we can embrace all the enjoyment it brings us, while also being mindful of how it impacts our health. This is so important to do because in the last 50 years, obesity rates have nearly tripled globally, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). Unfortunately, these risks are also hitting close to home. Local data from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) show that 21 percent of adults in Santa Clara County are obese.

Obesity is not a simple issue

One of the main contributors to obesity is an unhealthy diet. Studies show that approximately half of adults and more than half of children have poor-quality diets.

Although the United States is one of the richest nations, most states still have food deserts, which are geographic regions where people cannot get access to affordable and nutritious food.

Furthermore, government regulations are still woefully behind the times. The USDA's Food and Nutrition Service has only recently announced new rules for the maximum amount of sugar in school lunches, and it won't go into effect until 2025.

Obesity can bring with it many health complications—including diabetes, strokes, cancers and heart disease—and can create even more complications in older adults specifically. We can mitigate some of these risks by raising awareness about access to the value of nutrient-dense food. Luckily, there are a lot of smart tips that pack a big punch when it comes to food and health.

Tip 1: Rethink food on-the-go

Life is busy, which means we often turn to the convenience of fast or processed foods. Many people think that healthy food is more expensive and harder to prepare, but that doesn't have to be the case. With some smart shopping and planning ahead, you can create healthy options that reduce your reliance on processed food options.

But why do healthy unprocessed options matter? According to researchers from Imperial College London, eating ultra-processed foods



A balanced meal consisting of soft boiled eggs, vegetables and avocado.

Photo by Brooke Lark on Unsplash

increases a person's risk for developing all cancers, specifically ovarian and brain cancers. These foods also heighten a person's risk of dying from cancers, especially ovarian and breast cancers. Packing snacks from home, like fruit or vegetables, for when you're on the run can minimize your reliance on these faster, less-healthy options. If you do find yourself in a jam, there are now healthy alternatives like hummus cups, string cheese or bananas available at most convenience stores, and salad or fruits as sides at many fast-food restaurants.

Tip 2: Shop smarter, often at lower cost

This is not to say that we all need to eat only salmon and lettuce for every meal, but we should shop smart so that we are in control of our diets day-to-day. One good guideline for food shopping is to aim to have the bulk of your food come from the outer edges of the grocery store, prioritizing fruit and vegetables. Frozen fruit and vegetables are perfectly adequate and typically have the same nutritional value as fresh, assuming you don't see any added sugar on the label. These options might also be less expensive, and don't spoil as quickly.

Many canned meats and vegetables are lower in price but offer similar nutritional benefits as their fresh counterparts. Canned salmon, tuna and clams are a great way to get the health benefits from fish without spending half

your grocery budget. The caveat here is to confirm there is no added salt so that you can monitor the sodium levels.

The good news is that, while many of us struggle with not eating enough vegetables, fruit often has similar nutritional value. Some examples:

- While chopped peppers may be the goal, strawberries have a similar amount of vitamin C.
- Don't want to eat grilled squash at a BBQ? Mango has a comparable amount of vitamin A.
- While green beans aren't everyone's favorite, kiwi fruit has similar levels of vitamin K.

Tip 3: Remember your resources: local food banks

Groceries are expensive, and inflation has made this even worse. Items that we use regularly have become cost-prohibitive for families, such as eggs (quick tip: for baking, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of mashed banana or $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of applesauce works as a substitute). For many folks, groceries can feel out of reach in general, leading folks to reach for unhealthy, processed options.

Second Harvest Food Bank of Silicon Valley is an excellent resource for people seeking ways to feed themselves or their families. West Valley Community Services in Cupertino is another great resource, and they serve Saratoga, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, Cupertino, West San Jose and the

surrounding mountain regions. It even has a mobile food pantry that makes stops at several conveniently-located community spots, like West Valley College in Saratoga and Open Doors Apartments in Los Gatos. These organizations often pair their food provisions with recipes and healthy eating tips that you can utilize at home or share with friends and family.

In conclusion, we can continue to embrace food for all the enjoyment it can bring to our life, while still making sure it's fueling our bodies in ways that keeps us healthy and well as we age. In fact, there's no reason not to keep this fun. Why not find a family member, friend, or neighbor who might commit to making these healthy changes with you?

This article contains dietary advice reviewed by the medical director at CCA Health California. Dietary needs vary from person to person. Always consult with your doctor before making dietary changes.

About Wil Yu: As General Manager of CCA Health California, Wil Yu cultivates relationships with providers, community organizations and government officials to advance CCA Health's mission of improving the health and well-being of individuals with significant medical, mental health, and social support needs.

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Letter to the editor

Dear editor,

Regarding your February article, "Keeping your heart healthy: advice from Dr. Clapper," please consult again with Dr. Clapper regarding the "ABCs of heart health."

"First, Aspirin...." Doctors have changed their thoughts on this and have taken many patients off aspirin.

I personally am one of those patients.

The rest of the article is currently up to date and accurate. Mention could also be made as to diet, keeping one's weight down, and exercise.

Sincerely,
Dan Turkus

Snow from around the bay



Snow across the peaks - Downtown San Jose Feb 2023.
Photo by Jamal Edwards



Sunset from Mount Hamilton taken on February 24, 2023.
Photo by Joseph M Halay

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Exclusive interview with juice co. LG co-founder, Katelin Slifer



juice co. LG founders Josiah and Katelin Slifer.

Photo courtesy of Katelin Slifer



Juice lineup at juice co. LG.

Photo courtesy of Katelin Slifer

continued from
JUICE pg. 1

encourage our products as an eye opening experience, to introduce people to a new way of thinking about food, so they can make certain choices and practice those elements at home. I am very passionate about making healthier food taste phenomenal, to again, get a new demographic thinking about certain foods differently. I often have first time customers drinking our citrus juices and then within a few months they are onto the greens. It's super exciting to watch that evolution of consumer habits. When we first started, there was nothing like us in the South Bay. There was Jamba Juice and the Whole Foods juice bar, which don't really exist much in our area anymore. We needed a local, organic juice bar.

Q: What's it been like being a part of the downtown Los Gatos community?

A: Los Gatos is a very unique and wonderful community. We started

at the farmers' market and I still have regular customers that were there at our booth on day one. This is an extension of my family, basically. I feel so fortunate to be doing business in this town and to have received the support we have received thus far, both from the community and other businesses in town.

Q: Are you a Los Gatos resident?

A: Yes! My husband moved to Los Gatos in 2008 and I moved here with him when we got married in 2010. In 2020, we found out we were pregnant with twins + we ended up moving right onto the border of Los Gatos and San Jose to grow our Family. Our oldest son goes to Alta Vista Elementary.

Q: How has juice co. LG fared throughout the pandemic?

A: The pandemic has both helped us and hurt us. We are still feeling industry impacts unfortunately. The supply chain and inflation has perhaps had the biggest

impact on us. We have made many shifts and had to adapt but we're still here chugging along, and we are so proud of what we have been able to accomplish over these past few years!

Q: How have inflation and rising organic produce costs impacted your business?

A: It's both the rising cost and the scarcity of products at times.

Because we make raw juices that have a four-day shelf life, we have to scramble at times to sort through the rising costs and shortages. We now have many back-up plans in place that we can easily turn to when issues arise, but there are always new things happening!

Q: Where do you source your ingredients?

A: We source our organic produce from Earls Organics in San Francisco; they are a local organic food distributor. Sometimes we source certain products from Spade & Plow. We source our organic dry ingredients from a variety of high-end organic food purveyors: Pitaya Foods, Copra, Nanna Joe's Granola, Terrasoul and e3Live. We are always 100 percent organic.

Q: Can you talk about why "organic" is important?

A: Organic is important for us because in the juice, there is about 4-6 pounds of produce in every 16 oz bottle. That's a lot! Who wants to consume 4 pounds of conventional produce with pesticides and chemicals? I don't think people think about what they are eating as much when they eat out, because they only see the finished product; they don't see where it comes from and how it's made. Using organic ingredients is very expensive, and often the first thing to go when a food company is sourcing ingredients. For all of our other ingredients, organic is

equally important to me because as a company we are committed to enhancing the health and lives of our consumers. We simply couldn't do that with using non-organic products in my opinion.

Q: What are your most popular items?

A: Our most popular items are still our juices: C01 (apple, lemon, ginger) and G01 (cucumber, spinach, apple, lemon, ginger), plus our seasonals and specials.

Q: Could you describe how a juice cleanse works and the benefits of it?

A: Our juice cleanse is actually doctor-endorsed—another thing you just won't find at other juice companies. We collaborated and worked closely with Dr. Young, a local naturopathic doctor right here in Los Gatos. I wanted to ensure our promotion of a juice cleanse was truly backed by a medical professional and something I could be confident in recommending to customers as a true health benefit.

A cleanse can serve many purposes, so it truly depends on the individual's health journey. Generally speaking, a cleanse gives your digestive system a break. It can help detox your system, help heal your gut, blast your body with micronutrients (think about that 4-6 pounds of produce in one bottle), help shed water weight, reduce bloating, improve mental clarity and boost your energy. It's a great way to reset your body, mind and soul!

Q: Can people find juice co. LG products anywhere else besides the downtown shop?

A: Yes! We only work with other small, local, like-minded businesses in this capacity, but you can find us currently at Los Gatos Coffee Roasting Company (since 2015!), The Club Los Gatos, Montebello Market, Zanotto's Family Market (Willow Glen location), Shop Locale and

we are also on DoorDash and offer home delivery within a 20 mile radius from our shop!

Q: Is there anything else you'd like the community to know about juice co. LG?

A: On a tactical level, I want our community to know:

- We make new specials and seasonal juices every week. Our menu rotates and evolves with the seasons. Think farm-to-bottle!
- We use glass bottles and they can be returned for cash redemption!
- We make our juice in-house, so it's super fresh and provides a 30 percent increase in nutritional value than pasteurized juice you might see from our competitors. We have a commercial cold-pressed juicer on-site and then that juice goes straight to our shelves.
- We also make in-house smoothies, bowls and salads—all 100 percent organic.
- We have a subscription program that makes it easy to stay on track!
- We also do corporate catering!

On a more high-level note:

I would love our community to know that we love serving our guests here in town. We are so grateful for everyone's support. Making our products is truly a labor of love and we have an incredible team that is dedicated to what we do!

juice co. LG is located at 155 N Santa Cruz Ave in Los Gatos. Its hours are Monday-Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Sunday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Visit juicecolg.com to learn more.

A glimpse into our water system



Photo of a decarbonation tower at the Silicon Valley Advanced Water Purification Center. According to its tour brochure, "the water produced by reverse osmosis contains a lot of carbon dioxide (CO₂), which would make the water corrosive to pipelines. Decarbonation removes CO₂ and raises the pH of the water, reducing corrosion in downstream facilities, including the distribution pipelines. Water cascades from the top of the tanks and the air blowers, adjacent to each tower, provide an upwards of airflow, which removes excess CO₂."

Photo courtesy of Silicon Valley Advanced Water Purification Center

By Dinah Cotton

You may think that every drop of the many bouts of rain we've been receiving, or each glass of water you drink, is brand new. It is not.

It has always been here, and is a part of Earth's water cycle.

About 68 million years ago, a thirsty triceratops bent down to get a drink of water. It didn't know that it would be its last drink before the big asteroid hit, but that's for another story.

The water that the triceratops bent down to drink is the very same water that we drink today. Yes, our water today is the same water that has been here on Earth for nearly 5 billion years!

The hydrologic cycle, or water cycle, is the process of the continuous movement of water between the Earth and our atmosphere. The sun evaporates water, it becomes water vapor and then it condenses into clouds.

Those beautiful wispy clouds surrounding Earth

have tons of water weight within them. Eventually, this cloud water will fall back to Earth in the form of precipitation—rain or snow.

As the precipitation collects in our state and local reservoirs, it becomes the main source of water that we drink, or potable water. Other sources of our water, like recycled wastewater, are considered non-potable, but are used for things like landscaping and industrial processes.

I was reminded of this miraculous natural process when I took a tour of the Silicon Valley Advanced Water Purification Center, one of the vital entities involved in getting water to our homes in Santa Clara County. On the tour, I learned about the fascinating operation that purifies our wastewater.

This state-of-the-art process utilizes microfiltration, reverse osmosis and ultraviolet light to produce up to 8 million gallons of water per day of highly purified water. This water is distributed

to the South Bay Water Recycling distribution system and onto customers that use recycled water for non-potable uses.

Valley Water, the entity that manages the overall flow of water into Santa Clara County, is in the process of adding advanced oxidation to Silicon Valley Advanced Water Purification Center's system, which would meet drinking quality standards.

The hour-long tour was easy walking and worthwhile. For more information or to sign up for a tour visit purewater4u.org or call 408-630-3533.

Your family or organization can also "Adopt-A-Creek" to help clean our local creeks and learn about wildlife. A creek provides lessons from nature! You can be a solution and help protect wildlife and waterways. For information about the Adopt-A-Creek program, visit valleywater.org/adopt-a-creek or email volunteer@valleywater.org.

Student-run nonprofit hosts concert to support underprivileged special education students

By Anika Kapasi,
originally published in the
Saratoga Falcon

The captivating voices of senior Anastasia Ramirez and sophomore Diya Iyer filled the air as they sang "Somethings Are Meant To Be" from the movie "Little Women." Numerous quartets, small ensembles and singing trios proceeded to charm the audience during the concert hosted by Music and Good in Concert (MAGIC), a nonprofit organization run by various students on campus, on Jan. 14 in the music building. The night closed out with a performance from Tamasha, the school's competitive Bollywood dance team.

Hosting around 100 attendees, the event began at 7 p.m. with around 45 performers taking part in

the evening. For the event, MAGIC partnered with the nonprofit Best Buddies using the help of the school Best Buddies Club to get in touch with the organization's CEO and support further communication and promotion of the event on the nonprofit's social media.

They raised \$1,300 of their \$2,000 goal to support resource-challenged special education students and are in the process of distributing the proceeds.

The idea to support special education students emerged when senior officer Caden Lee wanted to hold a concert that included the special education students he used to teach saxophone.

"We would have had a special section featuring those special education students who've been learning," junior founder Vidur Sanghi said.

"Unfortunately, that was not possible [due to musician availability], but we decided that we wanted to continue with the idea of supporting and helping special education students."

Founded during the pandemic, MAGIC has held around 10 concerts and most have been online, so officers, Sanghi, Lee, juniors Mohit Gandluru, Taylor Chu, Shrey Jain, Arjun Rajee and senior Helen Kao really pushed to make it possible for this event to be live.

Along with supporting this cause, MAGIC has raised around \$20,000 total throughout the years to benefit healthcare workers and restaurants impacted by the pandemic, children in India who couldn't afford life-saving surgery and those who have suffered from the conflict in Ukraine.




A saxophone ensemble, consisting of musicians from the Saratoga High and Redwood Middle music programs, played the famed "Can You Feel The Love Tonight" during the concert.

Photo by Isabelle Gecils

The organization aims to host another concert in early August to kick off the new school year and continue to find new causes they are passionate about. They hope to expand their reach past the school as they have done during past online concerts and invite outside musicians to collaborate with them during live events.

"[Being a part of MAGIC], I think that what's most

exciting to me is being able to have the opportunity to collaborate with other artists internationally," Sanghi said. "Although this is a lot more difficult to put together in person, it will help us grow as we continue to get more people involved around the world."

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in America have
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*In adults who are 65 or older, the
rate of gum disease rises above 70%*



People with gum disease are...

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70% higher risk of developing Alzheimers

More likely to have osteoporosis and tooth loss

**5 Tips
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- Brush 2x a day with soft bristle toothbrush for 2 minutes each time
- Choose an electric toothbrush if joint or muscle weakness makes brushing uncomfortable
- Use handheld flossers, water flossers, or interdental brushes to make flossing easier
- Stay hydrated--review your medications with your physician if you experience dry mouth
- Visit your dentist every 6 months for an exam and a cleaning. [Or, call us for an appointment!](#)

JAMESLINDMD

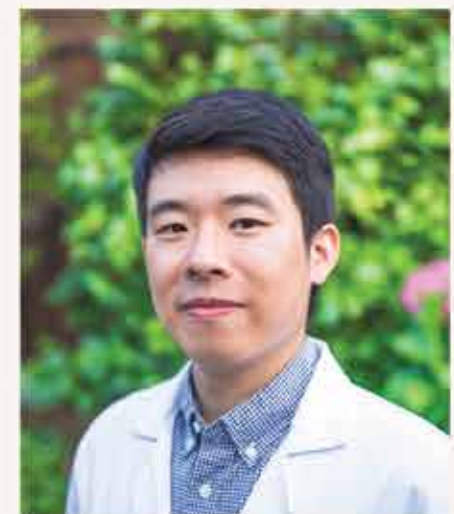
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Dr. James Lin



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Los Gatos, CA 95032
Visit www.apjcc.org/contact-us/hours-directions/ for hours.
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Campbell, CA 95008
(408) 866-2146

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SENIOR ADULTS LEGAL ASSISTANCE (SALA): (408) 295-5991

SALA is a non-profit elder law office whose mission is to support older persons in their efforts to live safely, independently, non-institutionalized and with dignity.

ADVOCACY PROGRAM (HICAP) - Funded by Sourcewise: Call (408) 350-3200, and select option 2.

HICAP is a FREE volunteer-based program from Sourcewise that assists seniors with Medicare as a supplements to Medicare, long-term care and managed care insurance plans.

VTA ACCESS: Office: 8am to 5pm daily / (408) 321-2380

www.vta.org/go/paratransit#accordion-applying-for-vta-access-paratransit-service

**MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES**

NAMI - The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) offers practical experience, support, education, comfort and understanding to anyone concerned about mental illnesses and their treatment in Santa Clara County. Call from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at (408) 453-0400 option 1, or option 4 for after-hour support.

NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE - Provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress and prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones. Call the line at 1-800-273-8255 or visit suicidepreventionlifeline.org to learn more.

CASSY - Counseling and Support Services for Youth (CASSY) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that partners with Bay Area schools to provide resources and professional, on-campus mental health services to students free of charge, plus staff training on mental health issues, and parent consultations. Learn more at www.cassybayarea.org.

ASIAN AMERICANS FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES - Founded in 1973, AACI serves individuals and families with cultural humility, sensitivity and respect, advocating for and serving the marginalized and ethnic communities in Santa Clara County. 2400 Moorpark Ave., Suite 300, San Jose, CA 95128 / (408) 975-2730 X204

SOCIETY FOR ADOLESCENT HEALTH AND MEDICINE

Founded in 1968, the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine (SAHM) is a multidisciplinary organization committed to improving the physical and psychosocial health and well-being of all adolescents through advocacy, clinical care, health promotion, health service delivery, professional development and research. Call 1-888-705-4392 or email info@adolescenthealth.org with any questions.

START YOUR RECOVERY - Provides information for people who are dealing with substance use issues, and their family members, friends, and coworkers too. startyourrecovery.org/

CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUPS Offered through Vitas Healthcare

To join, please visit www.vitas.com/family-and-caregiver-support/caregiving/caregiver-support-groups.

GRIEVING SUPPORT GROUPS: REMOTE, VIRTUAL, AND ONLINE Offered through Vitas Healthcare

To join, please visit www.vitas.com/family-and-caregiver-support/grief-and-bereavement/remote-grief-support-groups.

To learn more about Vitas Healthcare support groups, please call 888.804.0387.

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CALL 211 or visit 211scc.org : Food, Senior Care & Child Care, Counseling, Legal Aid, Housing & more (free, confidential, multi-lingual)

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Photo by Hannah Busing on Unsplash

"Nothing can make our life, or the lives of other people, more beautiful than perpetual kindness."

- Leo Tolstoy

Get Your Taxes Done for Free - AARP Tax-Aide

The AARP Foundation Tax-Aide program will be partnering with SASCC again this year to provide free tax preparation at the Saratoga Senior Center. AARP Tax-Aide is a nationwide organization of over 25,000 IRS-certified volunteers. We have a special focus on taxpayers who are over 50 and have low/moderate income. However, the service is open and free to everyone.

The Tax-Aide volunteers will be on-site at the Saratoga Senior Center on Thursdays starting February 9, with appointments starting at 8:30 AM. Taxpayers bring their tax documents to the appointment. A Tax-Aide volunteer will prepare the tax return, review with the taxpayer, and then e-file that same day. Our volunteers are trained in many areas of tax law, but there are certain tax situations that are out of scope for our service.

To make an appointment at the Saratoga Senior Center, please call the SASCC team at 408-647-9023.

AARP Foundation

TAX-AIDE

Free tax assistance for those who need it most

ASK the EXPERT

Dr. Christine Throm, Audiologist
Past President-California
Academy
of Audiology (2018)



Hearing Aids – Yesterday & Today

Christine Throm, Au.D.

Today's hearing devices are incredible: they fit inside of our ears, and they can help restore some lost hearing to us when we can no longer hear clearly.

If you have hearing aids and have ever been somewhere without them, you may have come to appreciate them to a whole new level.

The history of hearing devices is fascinating. Did you know that the first hearing aid prototype was invented over 3 centuries ago?

Hearing Aids: A Brief History

“Ear trumpets,” the first hearing assistive devices, were created in the 18th century. Working as a physical funnel into the ear to amplify sound, the first hearing devices were large, like holding a traffic cone to your ear. This horn-shaped device was developed slightly throughout the 1700's, though technology for amplification of sound would come later.

With the nineteenth century came an explosion of modernization, which included both telephones and electricity. This innovative technology was also employed with hearing aids. Thomas Edison's carbon transmitter made the electrical transmission of sound a reality in 1878. That innovation led to technology in amplification that was later adapted for hearing devices.

1920 brought the invention of the vacuum tube, which granted a more compact size of hearing aid. Now that the technologies of improved frequency and amplified sound were in play, hearing device size was reduced to a small box with an accompanying receiver. Hearing devices were much easier to use at home, but it wasn't possible to use them in public.

Portable, wearable hearing devices were developed a few years later. The earpiece would be attached by a small wire to a battery and receiver unit, usually worn on the torso or leg. During WWII circuit board technology was developed, which made hearing devices even more portable.

In 1964, Zenith Radio developed hearing devices that were worn behind the ear and by 1996 the digital revolution had modernized hearing aids. Since then, we have seen rapid advancements in technology. Now our hearing devices are tiny and nearly invisible, some (when medically appropriate) fitting deep into the ear canal. They can be adjusted discreetly and easily with a smart phone, and 90% of hearing devices are entirely digital. With the rate of technological advancement, we can anticipate only better hearing aid technology in the future. **Your audiologist will help you figure out what is medically appropriate for your lifestyle and hearing loss.**

Resolve to optimize your hearing, if necessary. If you have even minimal hearing loss, consider hearing aid options. Hearing aids can help to keep your brain active and prevent further hearing loss, so if you have minor hearing loss, hearing aids are a worthy investment to prevent it from progressing.

We're proud to have served Los Gatos, Saratoga, Campbell, Cupertino, and the entire Bay Area for 50 years! We're here to provide the right solution for Your Life, Your Style.

If you already have hearing aids, check out the latest options in smart hearing devices—you may be shocked what the newest hearing aids can do! Your quality of life may be due for an upgrade – so come in today!

Want more information about hearing health?

Dr. Throm is bringing back her acclaimed, medically based, “Listen Up Café” lecture series! Please join us for these FREE events.



Friday, Mar 10, 2023: A Brief History of Hearing Aids!
Friday, Apr 7, 2023: Ototoxicity & Sudden Hearing Loss
Friday, May 12, 2023: Better Hearing and Speech
Friday, Jun 9, 2023: Hearing Loss and Dementia
Friday, July 7, 2023: Noise Induced Hearing Loss
(Dates and location subject to change)

We'll have light refreshments, good coffee, and a great discussion—see you there!

Seating is limited for these FREE events.

Please RSVP (408) 673-4052

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(on the corner of National and Los Gatos-Almaden Rd.)

www.LosGatosAudiology.com



A Series of Unfortunate Events
(2017-2019)
After the loss of their parents in a mysterious fire, the three Baudelaire children face trials and tribulations attempting to uncover dark family secrets.

TV-PG | TV Series | Action, Comedy, Drama

Treason (2022)
Adam Lawrence was trained and groomed by MI6; his career seems set. When the past catches up with him in the form of Kara, a Russian spy with whom he shares a complicated past, he is forced to question everything and everyone in his life.

TV-MA | TV Mini Series | Action, Drama, Thriller



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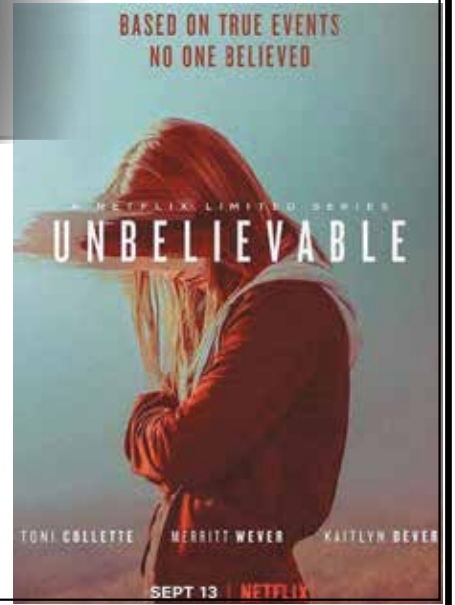


The Informer (2019)
An ex-convict working undercover intentionally gets himself incarcerated again in order to infiltrate the mob at a maximum security prison.

R | 1h 53min | Action, Crime, Drama

Unbelievable (2019)
A teenager is charged with lying about having been raped, but two detectives follow the path to the truth.

TV-MA | TV Mini Series | Crime, Drama



PLAYING NEAR YOU

* Please call theater(s) for most up-to-date info.



Scream VI
In the next installment, the survivors of the Ghostface killings leave Woodsboro behind and start a fresh chapter in New York City.

R | 2h 3min | Horror, Mystery, Thriller

Stars: Melissa Barrera, Courteney Cox, Jenna Ortega

Champions
A former minor-league basketball coach is ordered by the court to manage a team of players with intellectual disabilities. He soon realizes that despite his doubts, together, this team can go further than they ever imagined.

PG-13 | 2h 3min | Comedy, Drama, Sport

Stars: Woody Harrelson, Kaitlin Olson, Matt Cook



John Wick: Chapter 4
John Wick uncovers a path to defeating The High Table. But before he can earn his freedom, Wick must face off against a new enemy with powerful alliances across the globe and forces that turn old friends into foes.

Releasing March 24.

2h 49min | Drama

Stars: Keanu Reeves, Donnie Yen, Bill Skarsgård

Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves
A charming thief and a band of unlikely adventurers embark on an epic quest to retrieve a lost relic, but things go dangerously awry when they run afoul of the wrong people.
Releasing March 31.

2h 14min | Action, Adventure, Fantasy

Stars: Chris Pine, Michelle Rodriguez, Regé-Jean Page



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www.cineluxtheatres.com/cinelux-los-gatos-theatre



REAL ESTATE CASE STUDY

Lessons Learned from School of Life

The moment Dick's battle with cancer finally ended, Shirley came face to face with the stark reality that her best friend and husband were gone forever. And yet, in her moment of grief, sorrow and loneliness, there were mounting responsibilities awaiting her attention each and every day. When we met Shirley she was overwhelmed and decidedly underprepared to manage all of the details for which she was now solely responsible.

We were introduced because she needed an experienced real estate agent to manage the sale of an investment property she did not have the fortitude to maintain. She needed to simplify her life and reconcile her finances, and selling this property was a significant part of that equation.

In helping Shirley with the sale, we carried out a range of activities. We helped her understand the requirements of selling an investment property. We advised her regarding her local real estate market and the value of her property. We created a plan, including a simple "to do" list, that enabled her to address items one at a time - not all at once. Together we looked at possible tax implications of the sale and figured out how the sale would affect both her short- and long-term financial goals. We also helped translate Legalese and High Finance into Plain English by participating in conversations with her trust attorney, tax planner, and financial advisor.

In addition to managing and performing the tasks associated with doing our "job", we also learned

another valuable lesson. Yes, Shirley needed a real estate agent to sell her property and help manage the financial impact of the sale. But more importantly, she needed someone to take time and listen - to sit quietly, push through the tears and uncover the myriad tasks that needed to be done. As much as this was about putting a "for sale" sign in the yard, it was also about caring for another human being - a person coping with a devastating life event and managing the details that can overwhelm home sellers even in the best of times.

Through it all, we sold the house at a favorable price and tied up dozens of loose ends regarding her estate and financial planning. Shirley gained some security in her later years, and we gained important lessons that have shaped our careers as a real estate professional. We learned that life can (and often will) take us by surprise. Sometimes these surprises are magnificent and other times catastrophic. Few of us will escape those moments where life appears so hopeless that we think it impossible to recover. During these most vulnerable moments, it is profoundly comforting to have people we can rely on to provide solace, strength, and trusted guidance. It meant a great deal to be those people at that moment in Shirley's life and we continue to honor her by taking the time with each client to understand the underlying human needs that accompany the process of selling and buying homes.

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