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The New Voice, a Bilingual (English/Spanish) Publication
Pomona's *only* community newspaper!



Pomona Chamber of Commerce



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Pomona, Whittier schools to be models in new L.A. County program increasing student attendance, resulting in millions of dollars in funding

By Jeff Schenkel
Publisher

Two of Los Angeles County's top health and education officials – and local school superintendents representing Pomona and Whittier – held a “back to school” news conference in Pomona this month announcing the county's launch of a new effort to boost student attendance, making the claim that showing up for class is both an educational and a public health issue.

The countywide program will involve everything from door-to-door visits by local school district representatives to approaches addressing the root causes of absenteeism through health, housing and community interventions.

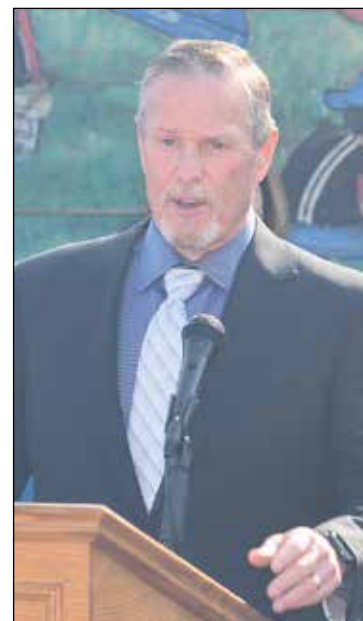
The news conference was held at Pomona's Madison Elementary School – not because Pomona and Whittier schools were in need of the most help but because they were doing a good job at getting kids back in the classroom after increases in absenteeism nationwide during COVID. The two districts will be showcased as models for other districts, the county's top educator said in response to a question from La Nueva Voz as to why Pomona was selected for the event.



South Whittier
Supt. Gary Gonzales



Los Angeles County
Supt. Debra Duardo



Pomona Unified
Supt. Darren Knowles



L.A. County Public Health
Director Barbara Ferrer

“Pomona was selected as a best practice to be able to message the things that a district can do in partnership with other agencies to show that we can always improve,” said Dr. Debra Duardo, Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools. “But even though we've seen some gains in the (two) districts . . . we're still not where we want to be – we still have a serious problem with children not attending school every single day, and we will continue to work on that until we get the data down to a much lower ab-

senteism rate to make sure that our students are able to learn and thrive.”

In a follow-up question, La Nueva Voz asked Duardo if knocking on doors in the neighborhoods will work in communities like Pomona and Whittier where – due to a climate of fear with on-going immigration raids – many residents are not even leaving their homes to go to work, and some are doing grocery shopping late at night.

“The reality is yes, parents are terrified,” Duardo said, “but par-

ents trust their schools, and when they see school representatives with their school badges saying . . . ‘we are here to understand what the challenges you're facing are,’” they will be receptive.

“That's one of the beauties of providing so many services through the schools is that communities love and trust their teachers, their schools and their school community,” she added.

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Director Dr. Barbara Ferrer told news reporters and school district of-

ficials that student attendance is “more than just a school issue . . . it's a foundational issue that affects lifelong learning.”

She told Pomona Unified School District Supt. Darren Knowles that his district's commitment “stands out for supporting students beyond the classroom, and this is exactly the kind of work that we know makes a difference.”

Pomona Unified is the seventh largest school district in Los Angeles County and serves about

Pomona schools to be models... pg. 6



**KNOW THE SIGNS
FIND THE WORDS
REACH OUT**



Together in Hope: Supporting Suicide Prevention Awareness this September

September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month — a time to raise awareness, promote hope, and remind ourselves that help is always within reach. Suicide impacts millions each year, yet too many continue to struggle in silence.

This month is about recognizing the warning signs, having open and honest conversations, and connecting people to the support they need. When people feel heard, respected, and valued, they're more likely to reach out — and to heal. Real connection can help prevent a crisis. A simple check-in, conversation, shared story, or helpful resource can make someone feel less alone — and can save a life.

All month long, join us in strengthening our community through connection, compassion, and care. Scan the QR code or visit tricitymhs.org to explore free local events and resources to support yourself and those you care about. Together, we can help shift the focus from silence to support, and from stigma to understanding.

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Revive Joint Replacement Program



POLICE OFFICER OF THE YEAR -- Pomona Police Detective Diana Hernandez, a veteran investigator currently assigned to investigate family crimes in the detective bureau handling everything from stalking to domestic violence, vandalism and violation of a restraining order, was named "Police Officer of the Year" last week at the Pomona Optimist Club's annual 2024-2025 "Public Safety Awards" program at Fuego at the Metro Event Center in Downtown Pomona. She was honored for displaying empathy, compassion and understanding and was recognized for being a "shining example of a dedicated investigator" (who) reflects the core values of the Pomona Police Department -- "To Protect and To Serve." From left are Optimist Secretary M. Joyce Bakersmith, President Designate Sonia Molina, Hernandez, Pomona Unified School District Supt. Darren Knowles (presenting one of many certificates), and Pomona City Councilmember Lorraine Canales, Optimist President.



FIRE FIGHTER OF THE YEAR -- Los Angeles County Fire Department Inspector Tracy Sizemore, on the job for 12 years and currently serving in the East Region Fire Prevention Office in Diamond Bar, was named "2024-2025 Fire Fighter of the Year" at last week's Pomona Optimist Club's annual "Public Safety Awards" program in Downtown Pomona. In her current assignment, she provides fire prevention services for North Pomona and parts of La Verne including major events like the LA County Fair. She was recognized for her ability to collaborate with local businesses, offering fire safety education training and hands-on instruction in fire extinguisher use. She was recognized for her leadership and innovative thinking and this year was able to implement an enhanced communication for fire prevention personnel which improved coordination with the Pomona Police Department. She and her husband Donnie have two children. From left are Pomona Optimist President Designate Sonia Molina, Optimist Secretary M. Joyce Bakersmith, Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval (presenting a certificate from the City of Pomona), Sizemore, and Pomona City Councilmember Lorraine Canales, Optimist President.

Grant applications available for Eastern L.A. County artists

The Eastside Arts Initiative is accepting applications for grants in its Fall 2025 Grant Cycle, inviting local artists and arts organizations in Eastern Los Angeles County to apply for funding of innovative, community-driven arts programming.

Grants range in size from \$2,500 to \$25,000, and deadline for applications is Sept. 17.

Applications are available on the

web site at www.eastsideartsinitiative.org.

The grants support arts programming and projects that further the Eastern Los Angeles County region's rich talent, diversity and innovative creative spirit.

The initiative, which offers two grant cycles each year, was established in 2015 at LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes, a Los Angeles County museum and an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institute.

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH SEPTEMBER 15, 2025 - OCTOBER 15, 2025

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TOGETHER, WE CELEBRATE A COMMUNITY RICH IN
CULTURE AND UNITED IN SUCCESS.**



#STUDENTSUCCESSISOURSUCCESS

'PEARLS of Service' to hold 7th anniversary event

"PEARLS of Service, Inc.," a Pomona non-profit established in 2018, will hold its seventh annual anniversary celebration featuring keynote speaker mental health advocate Kyoni Cummings next month in Ontario.

The event will be held from 5:45 to 7 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 25, at CASA (Critical Action and Social Advocacy) Pitzer, a Pitzer College "space" in Ontario that brings local residents, organizers, activists, artists and nonprofits together with Pitzer College faculty

and students to build community and enact change.

Cummings, educator coordinator for NAMI Pomona Valley mental health, will speak about mental health advocacy, education and the eradication of "stigma."

The group also announced its 2025-2026 "CDBG On the Spot" essay project for low to moderate family income residents of Pomona in grades 8 to 12. Participants will be able to attend "in person" and "virtual" workshops to learn writing skills, review how

to research for writing ideas, and how to use an essay as part of a scholarship application.

The mission of PEARLS of Service (Promoting Education and Reassuring Loyal Services) is providing service to the local community and promoting scholarship and academic achievement.

For more information on events or donations, contact info. pearlsofservice@gmail.com.

CASA Pitzer is located at 200 S. Euclid Ave., Ontario.

Fireworks violations in Pomona 'exponentially increased' over last year

Fireworks – legal and otherwise -- lit up the skies last month before, during and after the Fourth of July celebration in Southern California with newly-released numbers in Pomona that show violations have "exponentially increased" from last year, according to the Pomona Police Department.

Lt. Jaime Martinez of the department's operations division, responding to a request from La Nueva Voz, said nine fireworks citations were issued, and two "administrative" ci-

tations were issued.

The fine for fireworks violations is \$1,000, according to Martinez.

In addition, a search warrant "related to firework sales" was served that resulted in the confiscation of 7,000 pounds of illegal fireworks with an estimated street value of between \$8,000 and \$12,000.

A portion of the police department's fireworks enforcement this year incorporated the use of drones in tracking locations, Martinez said.



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The California Hispanic Chambers of Commerce (CHCC) Annual Statewide Convention took place this month at Pomona's Sheraton Fairplex Conference Center which brought together over 1,250 executives, entrepreneurs, elected officials, and corporate, chamber, and community leaders. The event offered networking, a business matchmaking program, panels and speakers, and an awards ceremony. Its objective was to strengthen key partnerships and generate economic opportunities for Hispanic business. Pictured, from left, are Maribel Colin of PHP Financial Services of Riverside, Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval, and Patricia Luna of PHP Financial Services. Colin and Luna also represent The 12 Powers of Family Business.

San Gabriel Valley Conservation Corps golf tournament set for November

The San Gabriel Valley Conservation Corps is scheduled to present its third annual nine-hole fundraiser golf tournament on Monday, Nov. 3, at the Glendora Country Club.

The event, designed to support workforce development programs that uplift both youth and the surrounding communities, will be held from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m.,

with breakfast beginning at 7:30 a.m. and a "shotgun" start set for 9 a.m.

A luncheon and awards ceremony will follow.

Registration will remain open until Oct. 10.

Cost of the event is \$250 per person.

Sponsorships are available at www.sgvccorps.org.

For more information, call (626) 655-0015.

For ads, call (909) 629-2292

Honorees, families gather for unveiling of Gold Line station photos of Pomona history

Representatives of the Foothill Gold Line Construction Authority hosted a community event last month to unveil station art – permanent photos of some 56 Pomona residents, past and present – as a literal page out of history that attracted as witnesses complete families of those honored and, in many cases, the honorees themselves.

The concept, created by city-selected Pomona North Station artist Stephen Farley, displays for future generations a likeness of each honoree along with a “power statement” expressing how each made a difference in the community.

Those honored were selected from an original list of more than 100 nominations.

Their likenesses are mounted along the walls of the new station which will begin serving paying customers of the Gold Line, now known as the Metro A Line, beginning Sept. 19.

La Nueva Voz asked Pomona artist Gary Lett, one of those honored and appearing on the wall, what it means to him to receive this type of recognition.

“As a multimedia artist, I do this very type of work – ceramic tile murals – and for my image to be on a type of medium on which I put other individuals, it’s just like Pomona history... pg.10



Artist Stephen Farley



Pomona’s Stephanie Campbell poses with a photo honoring her late husband, Trevor Campbell, who was a professor at several local colleges and was part of a consulting team that prepared a plan for the City of Pomona that envisioned the arts colony. He was appointed to the city’s Cultural Arts Commission by then-City Councilmember Nell Soto.



Khalif and Victoria Rasshan, co-founders of the African American Museum of Beginnings in Pomona, pose with Khalif’s picture honoring him for his work.



Former Pomona City Councilmember Cristina Carrizosa, third from left, and members of her family pose with a photo honoring Carrizosa’s work in the community.



Jonah Hwang, the victim of a drive-by shooting who was fatally wounded at the age of 8 in 2017 as he sat eating dinner at the home of a family friend, was memorialized on the photo wall. He will always be remembered for his love of super heroes and children to this day continue to wear super hero costumes in his memory at community events -- just as they were asked to do at his funeral.



Long time Pomona community volunteer and history buff Farrell Chiles is memorialized at the Pomona North train station collection of photos for his work. Chiles, a retired Chief Warrant Officer Four in the U.S. Army, was present at the event.



Well-known Pomona artist Millard Sheets was memorialized on the photo wall at the Pomona North train station.

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DOORS OPEN AT 5 PM

This material was made possible by the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health, Substance Use Prevention and Control.

Pomona schools to be models... from pg. 1

20,200 students.

And speaking to South Whittier Elementary School District Supt. Dr. Gary Gonzales, she said his leadership “reminds us that the smaller districts are actually powerful incubators of innovation and care.”

“Although absenteeism may sound like a school district metric, it’s also a critically important public health issue,” Ferrer said. “Decades of research confirmed that education is one of the strongest predictors of long-term health. The more years of education a person completes, the more likely they are to have access to health care, secure employment, safe housing and supportive networks that foster mental and physical well-being.”

Citing the data, Ferrer said in 2023 the age-adjusted mortality rate for Los Angeles County residents who did not complete high school was 29 percent higher than those who had a bachelor’s degree or higher.

“And for many families, the public health connection is painfully clear,” she added, citing a 2022 National Health Interview Survey that showed children with disabilities were three times more likely to experience chronic school absenteeism.

She said the American Academy of Pediatrics reports illnesses that contribute to higher rates of absenteeism include asthma, Type 1 diabetes, chronic fatigue, chronic pain, poor dental health and obesity.

“One in 10 children with asthma missed nine or more school days during the academic year, and when children miss school, they lose more than academic instruction – they lose access to meals, mental health services, trusted adults, peer connections and opportunities that shape their futures,” Ferrer said.

And the longer they are out, the harder it is to get back on track academically, emotionally and physically, she said, adding that students who miss school frequently face higher rates of anxiety, depression and worsening health.

She said missing school is rarely about a lack of motivation – “it’s more often about challenges no child or family should face alone” whether it is unstable

housing, lack of transportation, untreated illnesses, caretaking responsibilities, immigration, trauma or the absence of a safe, stable adult in their lives.

“That’s why this collective work we do to meet families where they’re at is so critical – we believe that attendance can’t be improved by schools alone, and that it will take an entire village, and that village includes us at the health department,” she said.

Ferrer said the county already has invested in more than 40 student well-being centers at middle and high school campuses, all staffed by trained public health professionals offering mental health support, substance use prevention and leadership opportunities for students “to be heard and helped.”

And the county has launched a parent ambassador leaders program at all the schools where parents are trained to talk to other parents about the things that matter most in helping their children learn, thrive and be healthy.

She said more than 200 parent ambassadors were trained during the past year alone.

“When we see high absenteeism at a school, it tells us something’s out of balance,” Ferrer said. “And it gives us a chance to respond early before students fall through cracks.”

She said telling families to just get their kids to school “especially in this climate” is not enough and often ignores the “structural barriers” they face.

“In public health, we often say that prevention is the most powerful tool we have, and schools are the primary prevention-oriented institution in our country,” she said.

“We pledge to keep working together to make sure every student not only has a seat in the classroom but the support they need to stay and succeed at school,” she added.

La Nueva Voz asked Duado if added ADA (Average Daily Attendance) funding to the school districts from the state was an intended or unintended consequence associated with the new absenteeism push and, when she said of course it was, La Nueva Voz asked how much revenue was involved.

“It’s millions and millions of

dollars,” she said. “I mean, besides the fact every day that a student misses school, besides the fact that they’re missing out on opportunities to learn, they’re missing out on their meals and socializing with their friends and getting services at school, the district is losing dollars.”

She said she previously worked for one of the largest districts in Los Angeles County and was responsible for their attendance.

“Every year we were talking about millions and millions of dollars that were lost due to (reduced) attendance,” she said. “So when you see that money is slipping out of your district for poor attendance and you know that poor attendance has such negative consequences on children, I mean, it’s a no-brainer, we need to address this issue.”

Pomona Unified’s Darren Knowles said his district understands that consistent attendance is the foundation of learning, growth and future success.

“Over the past few years, through our tireless efforts, our staff, students and families and community partners have made remarkable strides in improving our attendance,” he said.

He pointed out that during COVID their “chronic absentee rate” was 42 percent but, after COVID, it went down to 36 percent and leveled off.

But after working with families, the district’s rate dropped down to 23 percent.

“Prior to COVID, we were in the single digits and we need to get it below, so our goal is to get that below 10 percent,” he said, “to make sure that our kids develop healthy routines and that they’re coming to school and they’re learning.”

He said the district now has been recognized by California’s School Attendance Review Board as a model school district.

“These are not just statistics – it represents thousands of students who are now consistently in their classrooms and engaged in learning and building a brighter future for them,” Knowles said.

He added that part of this success has been due to the parents partnering with the schools.

“Pomona was recognized a couple of years ago nationally for our parent engagement and our

parents . . . understand the importance of a valuable education,” Knowles said.

He said the district’s attendance campaign for the new school year will kick off on Sept. 5 at the Mendoza Center.

“We’re confident that with these new tools and strength and partnerships and unwavering support of our community that we will achieve this goal,” he said.

South Whittier’s Dr. Gary Gonzales told the group his district educates about 2,260 students, with 98 percent of them Hispanic and 30 percent of them identified as English learners. About 92 percent are identified as low socioeconomic.

“In South Whittier, we believe that when students miss school, they miss out not just on academic but on the social, emotional and developmental support they

need for long-term success,” he said. “That’s why South Whittier has made student attendance a top priority.”

He said a team-based approach has reduced chronic absenteeism significantly, with the rate dropping to 22.2 percent last year down from 30.7 the previous year.

That shows, he said, the strategy is working and “reflects a cultural shift on our campuses.”

“We are creating environments where students feel connected and supported,” he said. “Our schools are becoming vibrant, welcoming spaces to draw students in.”

He said attendance “teams” include everything from the principal and the secretary to a community liaison, child welfare and attendance clerk and a site social

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La Nueva Voz

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New Pomona advisory committee looking at small business issues

Nearly a dozen community leaders and business operators met this month in the opening meeting of a new “Pomona Area Community Advisory Committee” formed by Ali Ataya, general manager of Pomona’s Vita Italian Bar & Grill. And perhaps unsurprisingly, the results centered around on-going immigration raids in Los Angeles County more than anything else.

Ataya convened the meeting, which was moderated by Renee Barbee of La Nueva Voz, following his appointment in June by Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis to the Los Angeles County Small Business Commission.

He told advisory committee participants in an opening ZOOM meeting that his goal was to begin to learn the concerns of the local business community so he can convey those concerns to the full Small Business Commission for review.

“I see that the community needs our help,” Ataya said. “I want to reach out to all of us here . . . on this call and listen to what we need and how we can support our community.”

Denise Moran, a “rapid response coordinator” with the Pomona Valley America’s Job Center, said her organization has seen a lot of big companies with large numbers of employees laying people off.

She mentioned one small business owner in Pomona who told her the ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement) raids that have targeted the community have kept away a lot of the customers.

She added that her own agency has provided support to many employees who have lost their jobs in both Pomona and throughout Los Angeles County.

Benny Ayala of Pomona’s Fairplex said when people hear the term “small business,” they think of companies that are generating money for profit.

“But also there is the nonprofit side that there are small businesses in a way that they have to have a marketing plan,” he said, adding that even the nonprofits are impacted by what is happening in the local economy and on the street.

Michelle Mitchell, of the Fairplex Learning and Development Center, also on the ZOOM meet-

ing, said her group actually represents the 501(C)(3) branch of the nonprofit at Fairplex.

Ayala said Fairplex has seen about a 20 percent reduction in attendance at the LA County Fair.

“We have a lot of small mom and pop shops that do want to be part of the fair and it’s become very challenging because everything’s getting more expensive and as things get more expensive, it’s really harder for them to compete in other areas,” he said.

Eva Thiel-Maiz, who represents Supervisor Solis in Pomona and lives in Pomona, said she has noticed a difference “in every single aspect of the business and economy out there” because of the ICE raids.

“I know the street vendors are terrified to really go out, I know a lot of restaurant owners (and) supermarket owners, just businesses don’t know when people are going to show up and force themselves through to detain folks,” she said.

“It’s definitely an issue, and I know the supervisor has really stepped up to help all of our mom and pop businesses that are losing income,” she added. “It’s impacting the families, it’s impacting everything . . . we really want to hear from everyone to see what is it that the businesses need to become more successful, what is it that can be done, or how can we assist.”

Pomona Unified School District Board member Dr. Robert Perlman told the group she was a small business owner for 45 years with an optometry practice in Chino. She said she retired this past year “so I get the small business perspective.”

She told Ataya she understands the fears and concerns of parents in the community because of the current climate.

“Our parents are frightened even to drive their children to school,” Perlman said, adding that she runs field trips during the summer through the Pomona Public Library Foundation. “A lot of our families that normally come are afraid to even drive to the school district building where they are safe.”

She said people don’t realize how much the spending of undocumented residents provides to the economy.

“They’re saying Las Vegas right



Renee Barbee

now is down 12 percent,” Perlman said. “Between our undocumented population, Canadians and Mexican citizens, they don’t come. So by making enemies all over the world, it’s not helping us.”

“You can just imagine how like car washes are suffering, I mean they lost all of their workers,” she said, adding that everything from farms to the swap meet at the Village at Indian Hill are seeing an impact.

“ICE has been over there a lot and . . . these are people that own these small businesses within that swap meet,” she said. “I don’t know what is going to happen to them, but a lot of our parents have already signed up for independent study for their children in the fall.”

“So that tells you the fear in the community,” she added. “I don’t know exactly what the answer is other than getting the word out that we’re against this kind of behavior.”

Thiel-Maiz said the supervisor herself has been taking action throughout this immigration crisis in a number of ways including directing the county’s Department of Economic Opportunity to collaborate with other agencies to provide supportive services to both families and businesses that have been impacted.

She said the county based on Board of Supervisors action has filed legal action against the federal government, challenging the ICE actions as unconstitutional.

And she has moved to expand health and social services for immigrant families, including offering telehealth services since many residents are afraid to go out for medical treatment.

“So those are just a couple of the



Ali Ataya

things that we have been working on,” Thiel-Maiz said. “She’s still going strong – she knows the need is still out there (and) we don’t know what’s to come in the future.”

She added that residents can dial 211 to learn how to get in touch with county health and human services. And for small business, she said to reach out to the county’s Department of Economic Opportunity, beginning with their web site.

Plus the county’s Office of Immigrant Affairs is a branch of the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs.

Heidi Ortega, of the Downtown Pomona District representing downtown property owners, said there’s less foot traffic downtown.

She said what once was a typical “Art Walk” event in June that attracted 4,000 to 6,000 people now is generating half that

amount.

“A lot of our vendors were scared to come out, they canceled last minute,” she said. “I have two businesses now that came together and they are collecting donations from residents . . . for food or even toiletries to deliver to these people who are scared to come out of their homes.”

Thiel-Maiz added that she happened to be shopping for groceries in WinCo recently around midnight and noticed that the store was packed “and I noticed that they were all the Hispanic families.”

She asked a couple why so late and was told that they know ICE is not working at midnight.

Others participating on the call were Claudia Soto, director of development and communications for East Valley Community Health Center, and Jeff Schenkel of La Nueva Voz.

The advisory committee will continue to meet monthly.

The county’s Small Business Commission, part of the county’s Department of Economic Opportunity, was created by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors in 1999 to advise the department director and the Board of Supervisors on both small business contract utilization and small business development in the county.

It makes recommendations to supervisors at least once a year and is made up of 20 voting members, four appointed by each member of the Board of Supervisors. The commission meets quarterly.

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Adventures in Babylon was this year's theme at the annual Vacation Bible School held at Prince of Peace Church in Pomona this month. Based on the book of Daniel Chapter 12, Verse 3, kids learned how the prophet Daniel was wise and led many to righteousness. Kids participated in arts and crafts and indulged in treats and food. At the conclusion, the kids enjoyed a water slide party. To join Sunday school classes and learn about prominent people of the Bible, visit the church at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Sundays at 895 E. 7th St., Pomona. For further information, call (909) 750-0331.

Pomona Unified schools to participate in National School Lunch and School Breakfast programs

Pomona Unified School District will continue to have all schools participate in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast programs called the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) for the 2025-2026 school year.

All students will be served

lunch and breakfast at no charge at 22 elementary schools, four middle schools, and seven high schools.

For more information, contact Pomona Unified's Food and Nutrition Services office, 1460 E. Holt Ave., Suite 160, Pomona, at (909) 397-4711, ext. 21100.

Pomona schools to be models... from pg. 6

worker.

"These people are trained to use a tiered system of support to monitor and respond to attendance needs," he said. "They analyze attendance data, set specific school goals and intervene early."

Gonzales said in 2023, foster youth and students with disabilities were among the groups with the highest rates of chronic absenteeism.

"But in just one year we saw transformational results for foster youth – absenteeism dropped from 50 percent to 10 percent," along with a drop for students with disabilities from 41.3 percent to 32 percent.

Duardo said chronic absenteeism is one of the biggest challenges facing all 80 school districts countywide, adding that students missing only two days of school a month experience learning loss that can prevent them from being

able to graduate.

She said the new program needs to involve the entire community.

"We rely on local businesses that can post signs about school when they see students coming into their store during school hours (and) we want our pediatricians to ask children how they're doing at school and how often they're attending," she said. "Schools must foster a climate of belonging and engagement."

The new countywide attendance campaign includes a toolkit to boost engagement that has been sent to all 80 districts in the county and includes posters, social media templates, family resources and more.

Duardo said in addition to the health department, her office is working with parks, libraries and agencies that serve children and family.



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OPINION

Palomares Cemetery cannot be sold away

By Benny Ayala

I was born at Pomona Valley Hospital, and like many of you, I have lived my entire life in this community. I now serve as a board member of the Historical Society of Pomona Valley, but today I am writing not with a title, but as a Pomonan who loves and respects the history we share.

At the corner of Towne and San Antonio Avenues sits Palomares Cemetery, Palomares Memorial Park, one of our city's oldest sacred sites. It is the resting place of our pioneers – including members of the Palomares and Vejar families, the founders of the Pomona

Valley. The Catholic Church once owned the cemetery and moved many of the pioneers who rested there to Holy Cross Cemetery in Pomona. But the cemetery was not managed well through the early 1900s, and it has never been known for sure how many people were buried there. And unfortunately, over the years people have stolen the headstones so now it is impossible to know where the remaining graves actually are. In 1978, the Historical Society of Pomona Valley entrusted this land to the Native Daughters of the Golden

West, recorded in 1979, with faith that it would be preserved. In 1981, the City of Pomona declared it a historic landmark at the request of the Native Daughters themselves.

Now, decades later, that promise has been broken.

In May of this year, the Native Daughters sold the cemetery to an Islamic group under the belief it could be used as a Muslim cemetery. But several developers before them have walked away for the same reason: neither the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, Holy Cross Cemetery, Pomona Valley Memorial Park nor anyone else is

willing to confirm who was moved, where they were moved to, and who still rests there. Without a massive archaeological dig, we will never know for sure.

It is not fair to those who were laid to rest. It is not fair to their descendants. And it is not fair to our community.

When the Historical Society of Pomona Valley gave this cemetery to the Native Daughters in 1978, one of our own board members was both a descendant of the Palomares family and a member of the Daughters. That act was made in good faith, with trust that

this land would always be protected. And instead of returning it to the Historical Society to be preserved, the Native Daughters decided to profit from its desecration.

The Palomares family descendants have already been through decades of frustration – told one thing by two cemeteries in Pomona (both Holy Cross and Pomona Valley Memorial Park currently are reviewing their records to determine if any Palomares or Vejar decedents have been reinterred there), another by the Archdiocese, and now left without answers again. They cannot even be certain where their ancestors lie. For this sacred ground now to be marketed for housing developments – 350 units, four stories high – is unthinkable.

I do not believe the Islamic group who purchased this land set out to desecrate it. They were misinformed, and now they are left with property that cannot be used as promised. My hope is that they will do what is right: protect this sacred place, and work with the community to return the cemetery to those who will honor it.

This is not simply about land. This is about dignity, respect, and memory. It is about the founders of Pomona Valley, whose lives and legacies are tied forever to this soil.

I call on my fellow residents to take action. Write to the City of Pomona and remind them of their duty to enforce landmark protections. Write to the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and demand they not allow this cemetery to be lost. Get involved with the Historical Society of Pomona Valley – join us in fighting for preservation.

Pomona's story is written in Palomares Cemetery. If we allow it to be erased, we erase part of ourselves. Let us stand together to protect it – for those who came before us, and for the generations yet to come.



Photos by Maricela Moreno

POMONA'S 'HOT AUGUST NIGHT' TAKES IT OUTSIDE -- "Hot August Night," one of Pomona Rotary's biggest and best-known fundraisers each year, took it to the parking lot at Pomona's Derby Room this month for a Beach Boys summertime California-style car show on the theme "Driven to make a difference." Included was everything from classic cars, trucks, jeeps, and even a classic roadster, a 1965 Ford Mustang and a VW with a surfboard on top. Pictured is Rotary President Monique Robles of the Pomona Chamber of Commerce giving the live DJ a helping hand on the microphone. The car show was followed by dinner under the stars (if you don't count those canvas sun shades they have out back behind the sports bar). A portion of the proceeds will benefit Pomona-area organizations supporting human trafficking survivors.

Pomona history... from pg. 5

the cherry on top of the whipped cream,” he said. “Here I am on a ceramic tile, the very medium that I am presently working in, and so I just think it’s a full circle . . . to where now I can be commemorated in the manner in which I commemorate other individuals.”

“I really feel special, especially this being my hometown, and so for years to come . . . my grandchildren . . . can come and see their grandfather and great grandfather being immortalized in a work of art,” he added.

Pomona physician Dr. Huu Dinh Vo, who came to the United States in 1975 from Vietnam with the “boat people” and now heads the Vietnamese Community of Pomona Valley, said he is “very grateful for this city.”

He added he is very honored, but “the key thing is not only for me, but for all people who want to show the diversity, the compassion, the courage, the knowledge, and they work together for a better community . . . and a better America and a better world.”

Also honored was Khalif Rasshan, CEO of the African

Pomona history... pg. 20



Pomona physician and community leader Dr. Huu Dinh Vo poses with his picture at the train station. Vo, who is president of the Vietnamese Community of Pomona Valley, came to the United States in 1975 from Vietnam with the “boat people.”



Members of the Manzanares family pose with a picture of long-time Pomona resident Stephen Manzanares, who helped the family cement business build Pomona -- from St. Joseph Catholic Church to the Los Angeles County Fairgrounds, where he was a long-time employee. Pictured at left in the stroller is his great granddaughter, Justasea, 2. Manzanares, who died last year at the age of 95, was a U.S. Army veteran who served in the 82nd Airborne Division.



Lisha and Gary Lett pose with a photo honoring Gary for his work as an artist and his work in the community.

Four More Stations Open Sept. 19, 2025



New Pomona North Metro A Line Station

The Glendora to Pomona project was funded by LA County’s Measures M & R, along with state funds (including SB1).



Foothill Gold Line

The Foothill Gold Line is extending LA County’s Metro A Line light rail system to the cities of Glendora, San Dimas, La Verne, **Pomona**, Claremont and Montclair – and is being built in segments. The four-station Glendora to Pomona segment is now complete and will open for passenger service on September 19, 2025.

The final two-station Pomona to Montclair segment is now underway with the procurement process to hire the designer and contractor. Once the contractor is hired and construction begins, the project is expected to take about four years to build to Claremont and Montclair.

Learn More at foothillgoldline.org

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On behalf of the County of Los Angeles and the First District,

HAPPY HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH!

As Los Angeles County continues to navigate through devastating family separation, targeted racial profiling, and violent immigration actions that disrupt our communities, we must lean into resilience, orgullo, and resistance.

This Hispanic Heritage Month, we uplift the people, stories, and cultural contributions of our Latino communities, and we cement ourselves in the truth that our communities are stronger together. May we always be guided by equity, justice, and pride in who we are and where we come from.



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Government must be answerable to the people it serves

By Roberta Perlman and Kathryn Martens
Members, Compassionate Pomona

We hold these truths to be self-evident: Being grabbed off the street by masked, anonymous, strangers who force you into their vehicles and rush you away to who-knows-where is the scenario of a brazen kidnapping, a plot point in a gangster movie. The people of the United States should never be asked to accept these actions as legitimate government. Our state and federal lawmakers need the courage to stand strong against these terrifying abuses of basic human rights that have become commonplace in our places of business, parks, and, yes, churches.

Police officers, FBI agents and other law enforcement officials are trained to perform dangerous duties while maintaining their professional identity and accountability. Every person in the U.S. who is being detained has the right to know who is detaining them and why. It's more than just courtesy – it's a foundational pillar of our democracy, part of our hallowed tradition of due process, of transparency, of respect for basic human rights. When these foundations of

our democracy are ignored or destroyed, every one of us is threatened.

Thankfully, change is possible. California's Senate Bill 627 (No Secret Police Act) and SB 805 (No Vigilantes Act) demand law enforcement remain identifiable and prohibit bounty hunters from immigration enforcement. And at the federal level, the U.S. Senate's Visible Act would require immigration agents to show identification and ban the use of masks to hide their identity.

These bills defend something sacred – the belief that government exists to serve the people, not intimidate them. After celebrating America's 249th birthday last month, we recognize that real courage and wisdom are, and have always been, needed to foster our precious democracy. In a democracy, there can be no secret police. There can be no hidden faces wielding government power. The government must be answerable to the people it serves. This is not a partisan issue – it is an American issue, and it demands our immediate attention.



“I carry my passport in my own country – because I have brown skin

By Cedric E. Elias

I am a third-generation U.S. citizen. I was born and raised in Pomona, California. My parents were born here, and my grandparents migrated to this country seeking opportunity and safety. I have practiced law in the United States for 45 years, sworn to uphold the Constitution and serve justice.

And yet today, in the country where I was born, I carry my passport – not for travel, but as a shield.

Why? Because I have brown skin.

Let me be clear: my family has earned our place in this country many times over. Eight of my uncles – on both sides of my family – fought in World War II. My brother, cousins, and friends served in Vietnam. One of my cousins was killed in that war. We've worn the uniform, paid the price, and upheld the ideals of American democracy. And still, I walk through airports and down streets in my own country with fear that my brown skin

makes me a target.

In recent years, this country – under the guise of law and order – has empowered agencies and individuals to detain, interrogate, and even abduct U.S. citizens who look undocumented. Armed federal agents have operated with impunity in cities like Portland and Chicago. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) have detained people with full legal documentation, ignoring passports and birth certificates. The only explanation? Skin color. Language. Heritage.

After four and a half decades in the legal system, I know its potential – and its limits. I've defended the Constitution in courtrooms. I've seen it suspended in practice. And so now, at this point in my life and career, I carry my passport. Not because I question my citizenship – but because I've seen how easily others do.

I carry my passport... pg. 16

Senator Susan Rubio DELIVERING FOR US

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Representing the 22nd District

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I carry my passport... from pg. 15

This is not just my story. It is the story of millions who belong here but are treated like outsiders. Brown citizens, Black citizens, Indigenous, Asian, and Arab Americans – all too often viewed as suspects first and people later, if at all.

I’m speaking out because silence no longer protects us. I will not be quiet while this country treats those who have defended it – on battlefields and in courtrooms – as if we don’t belong.

No one should have to prove their right to exist in the place they call home. Not with a passport. Not with a plea. Not ever.



SIGN OF THE TIMES -- La Nueva Voz spotted this sign on the front door of Al Estilo Michoacan Carnitas restaurant in Downtown Pomona.

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of the San Gabriel and Pomona Valley

The Latino and Latina Roundtable celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month by honoring our diverse community and those who have educated, organized, and worked to improve the quality of life for Latinos.

Founded in 2001 by local community leaders, LRT is a community-based organization rooted in organizing, leadership, immigrant rights, and civic engagement. We work for political, social, and economic justice in the San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys through committees on education, immigrant rights, and new economy.

Our members are activists dedicated to building a more just and vibrant future.

Join us and be part of the change.

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Latino & Latina Roundtable

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- **DO NOT SIGN ANYTHING** without first speaking to a lawyer. You have the right to speak with a lawyer.
- If you are outside of your home and have a red card, ask the agent if you are free to leave and if they say yes, leave calmly.

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- Si tienes una tarjeta roja, muéstrala desde dentro de tu casa—por la ventana o por debajo de la puerta.
- **NO FIRMES NADA** sin antes hablar con un abogado. Tienes el derecho de hablar con un abogado.
- Si estás fuera de tu casa y tienes una tarjeta roja, pregúntale al agente si eres libre de irte y, si dice que sí, vete con calma.

For more info or questions, contact:
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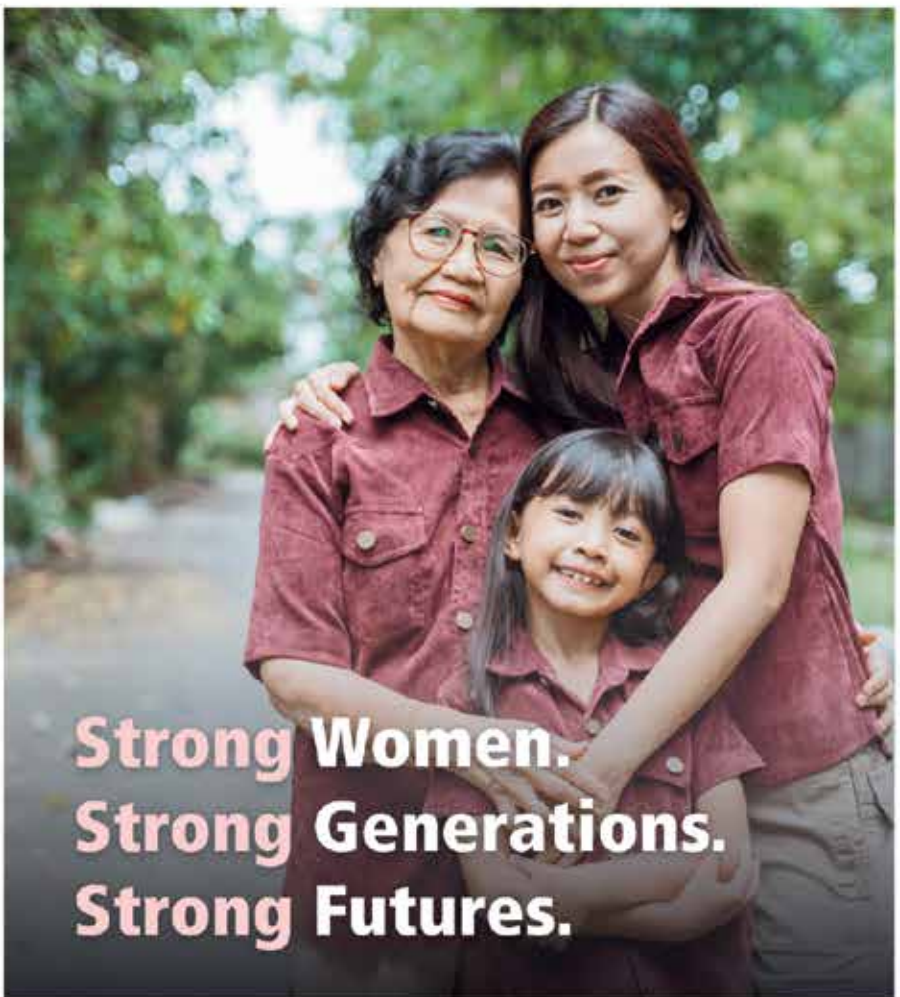
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OBITUARY

Services scheduled for Stella Alvarado Quiroz

Stella Alvarado Quiroz, a lifelong resident of Pomona, passed away peacefully in her sleep at the age of 90 on Aug. 13 in the home where she raised her children and goddaughter, alongside the love of her life.

Stella was born on Oct. 5, 1934, in her family home in Pomona. She was the daughter of Nellie Hernandez of Lagos de Moreno, Jalisco, Mexico, and Steve Alvarado of Pomona. On June 5, 1955, she married her soulmate, Louis Quiroz. Together they raised three children – Louis II, David, and Janice – and were blessed with the honor of helping raise their goddaughter, Maritza.

Stella dedicated over 30 years of service to the Pomona Unified School District as a teacher’s aide, where she cared for each student as if they were her own. Madison Elementary always held a special place in her heart. Known for her generosity and nurturing spirit, Stella’s kitchen was a place of comfort and love. She and her husband Louis lovingly fed not only their family but the entire neighborhood – no one was ever turned away from their home. She often cooked breakfast for her students, saying children could not learn on an empty stomach. Everyone who knew her remembers her food, her warmth, and the way she made people feel welcome.

She was also deeply proud to be a parishioner at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, the same parish her father and uncles helped build when the original church was first established. Her faith and her Pomona roots were a source of pride throughout her life, and she carried them with her in everything she did.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Nellie and Steve; her beloved husband of 44 years, Louis, whom she missed dearly for the past 25 years; her eldest son, Louis II; her great-grandchildren Dominic and Arianna; and



Stella Alvarado Quiroz

her sister, Alice Gutierrez.

She is survived by her daughter-in-law, Sally Quiroz (Louis II); her son, David Quiroz (Beatriz); her daughter, Janice Rodriguez (Danny); and her goddaughter, Maritza Lopez. She leaves behind 14 grandchildren – Louis III (Mercedes), Sonya (Moses), Robert, Desiree (Sal), Angelica (Anthony), Yolanda, Vanessa (Richie), Victoria (Armando), Daniel (Maria), Gabrielle, Adriana, Christina (David), Brianna, and Destiny – and 21 great-grandchildren. Stella is also survived by her sister, Sally Galindo, and her brother, Steve Alvarado, whom she lovingly called Sunny until her final days.

The family welcomes all who loved and cared for their grandma to join them in saying their final goodbyes.

- Viewing: Tuesday, Sept. 2, from 5 to 8 p.m. at Todd Memorial Chapel, 570 N. Garey Ave., Pomona

- Funeral Mass: Wednesday, Sept. 3, at 11:30 a.m. at St. Madeleine Catholic Church, 931 E. Kingsley Ave., Pomona

- Burial: Holy Cross Cemetery, 444 E. Lexington Ave., Pomona

Her legacy will live on through her family, her faith, her food, her Pomona roots, and the endless love she poured into everyone who ever sat at her table.

Services held for Jennifer Marie Perales

Memorial services were held last month for Jennifer Marie Perales who died following a sudden illness. She was 53.

Born to Sue Johnson at March Air Force Base, Perales lived most of her life in Pomona and made her home in Chino Hills with her husband, David Perales.

The two were together for 40 years, 36 of them as husband and wife.

Her family called her life a reflection of the love the Perales and Diaz family gave her, and admired her for her kindness, her gentle spirit and the joy she brought to their lives.

And her husband said her favorite song was “I hope you dance,” which is a “reminder to keep living, loving and dancing through the tears.”

Perales graduated from Park West High School in Pomona,



Jennifer Marie Perales

where she was recognized as “outstanding student.” She once worked at See’s Candies before

pursuing a career as a customer service specialist for both Wells Fargo Bank’s corporate offices and Kaiser Permanente’s call center in Corona.

Services were held at First United Reformed Church in Chino.

Perales is survived by Juan and her daughter, Jacquelyn Martinez, her son Josh and Kristi, and a granddaughter, Copelynn “Coco” Perales.

In addition, she leaves an extended family including Angel and Susie Perales, Danny and Lori Perales, Steven and Andera Perales, Brian and Kim Perales, Jonathan and Marissa Velasquez, Steve and Alysa Perales-Yahns, Andy and Annmarie Perales-Thompson, Zachary and Sydney Perales and the Pewsey, Payan, Dias, Miller, Martinez and Magers families.

Pomona history... from pg. 10

American Museum of Beginnings in Pomona. He was nominated by Pamela Hutchinson, a volunteer at the museum.

“That’s my goal is to keep serving until everybody’s fed,” Rasshan said. “And that’s why I do the work I do.”

His great niece, Shayla Williams, an educator in Moreno Valley, told La Nueva Voz that it means everything to the family that he has been acknowledged for the greatness he has contributed to the community.

Artist Farley, on hand at the event, told the audience he has been working on the project for the past 20 years.

“This is about celebrating the everyday heroes, it’s about the people who quietly build the foundation of everything that makes life meaningful, and not because they’re going to get recognized,

but because it’s the right thing to do,” he said. “These are the uncelebrated people who mean the most to all of us.”

“I’m hoping that all the folks who ride this fantastic light rail, this connector of people, are going to see these powerful components at this station and be inspired to discover more about this incredible community,” Farley added.

“They will share this experience of the power of this community . . . and they will see Pomona as the inspiration that it is,” he said.

In one of his many stories, Farley said someone was in the audience from Seattle to see his great grandparents.

“I knew there was someone else who said that was their grandparents,” Farley said, and it turned out the two had never met.

“So, these two cousins have reunited today because their grand-

parents are on that wall,” he said. “This is a Pomona family reunion and in every sense of that it’s amazing.”

The opening of the new Pomona station is part of the nine-mile Foothill Gold Line light rail project from Glendora to Pomona that now has been turned over to Metro for actual operation.

The light rail system will make it possible for riders to board in Pomona and ride to Union Station in Downtown Los Angeles and on to Long Beach. It also will allow for transfers to and from the Metrolink San Bernardino Line that travels between the Inland Empire and Downtown Los Angeles.

For information regarding passenger service, fares, schedules, parking, bike lockers and more at the new station, visit www.metro.net/alinetopomona or call (323) GO METRO (323-466-3876).

Interested in who has been arrested by Pomona Police in Pomona?

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‘National Night Out’ a success in Pomona bringing residents and police together

Several hundred residents participated in this month’s National Night Out activities just outside the Pomona Police Department headquarters in an event “designed to strengthen the bond between law enforcement and the neighborhoods we serve.”

Pomona Police Corporal Jeff Hayward, head of the department’s Community Services Unit, said the event each year enables the police department to “celebrate special people, special partnerships and pride in our community.”

“Being here in Pomona, that relationship is much more than one night a year,” he added.

“It’s felt every single day, in big and small ways, when residents take time to look out for each other, when officers stop to play basketball with neighborhood kids, when community organizations such as yourselves step up to support our most vulnerable,” Hayward said.

He said it is also a time to recognize that “public safety is a team event.”

“Tonight is a celebration of that partnership, it is a moment to recognize that true safety doesn’t come from patrol cars or police stations alone, it comes from trust, communication, and a spirit of unity that stretches across the



Pomona Police Chief Mike Ellis chats with a resident at this month’s National Night Out observance held just outside police department headquarters in the street due to on-going construction in the Pomona Civic Center.

street,” he added.

Pomona Police Chief Mike Ellis thanked the Community Services Unit for organizing the event held this year in a closed off Park Avenue due to new park construction where the event normally is held in the Pomona Civic Center plaza.

And he told guests there were police officers there representing everything from traffic units to SWAT teams.

“Make sure you find someone, make that connection, have a conversation, and hopefully we can

help you out with whatever you need in the community,” Ellis said.

Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval said he appreciated the fact that the police department presents National Night Out each year, adding that it brings people together “so we have a chance for you to get to know our police department, a chance to bond, a chance to access resources, to meet with your elected officials.”

Pomona Police Explorer car-

National Night Out... pg. 23



Visitors to this month’s National Night Out in Pomona had their questions answered at the Crime Scene Investigation booth.



Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center employees, with the help of Amber Breisen, the hospital’s public relations and community outreach manager, second from left, hand out a pair of free safety glasses to a Pomona resident at National Night Out.



Pomona City Councilmember Debra Martin, wearing her Pomona hat, strolls through the exhibits at this month’s National Night Out.



Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval chats with the kids at National Night Out, presented by the Pomona Police Department.

A new La Nueva Voz publishes each month on the fourth Thursday of the month.

Pick up your free copy of La Nueva Voz at these locations and dozens more:

- Pomona City Hall lobby
- Pomona library
- Claremont library
- Claremont City Hall lobby
- La Verne City Hall lobby
- La Verne Senior Citizens Center
- Pomona Chamber of Commerce, 101 W. Mission Blvd., Pomona
- Downtown Pomona Owners Association, 119 W. 2nd St., Pomona
- Western University of Health Sciences Patient Care Center
- Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center maternity, lobby, outpatient services, emergency room
- Gold Strike Market Carniceria, 412 N. Park Ave., Pomona
- Fairplex Chevron, Fairplex Drive and San Bernardino Freeway, Pomona
- Discount Market, Philadelphia Street and Towne Avenue, Pomona
- LaunderLand Coin Op Laundry, 744 E. Holt Ave., Pomona
- Pomona Eagles, 854 W. Mission Blvd., Pomona



Head injuries: When to seek help and how to recover

By Neha Dhadwal, DO

Board certified Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation physician specializing in brain injury medicine
Casa Colina Hospital and Centers for Healthcare

“I fell and hit my head.”
“I was rear ended and still feel dazed.”

“Since I took that hit during the game a few days ago, I don’t feel quite like myself.”

Does any of this sound familiar?

The CDC reports that nearly 600 traumatic brain injuries (TBI) or concussion related hospitalizations are reported daily, but this number is likely much higher because the diagnosis is often missed on an initial evaluation or because people may not seek care.

TBI or concussions are common injuries that often go untreated and can result in a variety of symptoms that can have a profound impact on a person’s life including:

- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Memory issues
- Concentration issues
- Fatigue
- Behavioral changes including depression, anxiety, or difficulty controlling anger

This can adversely affect day-to-day living, including a person’s performance at school, work, or sports.

Recovering from brain injury or

concussion involves working with healthcare professionals to take care of your whole self. Here are three components to achieve optimum recovery:

Step 1: Targeted Therapies

- Physical therapy: Rebuilding strength and coordination
- Vestibular therapy: Addressing dizziness and balance problems
- Vision therapy: Improving vision changes after TBI or concussion
- Speech/cognitive therapy: Helping with memory, concentration, and communication

Step 2: Healthy Lifestyle

- Exercise: Regular physical activity
- Nutrition: Eating a healthy diet
- Sleep hygiene: Getting enough quality sleep
- Psychological support: Talk therapy and mindfulness to manage stress and emotional well-being

Step 3: Medicine and supplements

Help with specific symptoms and support brain health and recovery: Prompt treatment is cru-



Neha Dhadwal, DO

cial for recovering from TBI or concussion. Studies show that delays in seeking care reduce the likelihood of a full recovery and increase the risk of long-term complications that may signifi-

cantly affect quality of life. If you or someone you know experiences a head injury and has any of the symptoms noted in this article, please seek medical attention immediately.

Editor’s Note: Casa Colina Hospital and Centers for Healthcare’s physician specialty clinics offer coordinated outpatient medical care across a wide range of medical specialties all conveniently located next to Casa Colina’s Outpatient Rehabilitation Center in Pomona. Physician specialists provide diagnosis, treatment, and care management for a variety of medical conditions including brain injury and concussion. For more information, call 909/596-7733, ext. 3800.

State Sen. Susan Rubio voices redistricting support

State Sen. Susan Rubio, in a statement this week, called California’s voter redistricting legislation “historic.”

Calling the move action to empower voters to protect California, Rubio said the move to redistrict Congressional seats “puts the power back in the hands of Californians.”

“At a time when our communities are under attack from unlawful raids, unjust federal cuts and nationwide efforts to silence voters, California is standing strong,” she said, adding that the legislation will ensure that redistricting “will be decided by the people, not by politicians or partisan interests.”

Gov. Newsom signed the “Election Rigging Response Act” last week. It will be decided by voters in a special election Nov. 4.

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24-hour hotline:
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Noon to 7 p.m.
Saturday
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www.agriscapes.cpp.edu
4102 S. University Drive, Pomona (next to the Farm Store)

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National Night Out... from pg. 21

dets provided a color guard for the event and the department's dispatch supervisor, Kimberly Marquez, performed the national anthem.

A live DJ provided music and officers presented a K-9 demonstration following the opening ceremonies, giving guests an opportunity to visit the various resource organizations on hand.

National Night Out is observed by nearly 20,000 communities in all 50 states in an effort to help law enforcement organizations build trust in the areas they serve by bringing police together with neighbors to spend time together under positive circumstances.

It was first held in 1984 and originally included only 400 communities across the country.



Pomona City Councilmember Nora Garcia, at left, chats with Pomona Police Chief Mike Ellis, center, and Corporal Jeff Hayward, head of the police department's Community Services Unit and organizer of National Night Out.



Members of the Pomona Police Department's traffic services unit were on hand to answer questions at National Night Out. And yes, that's Pomona Police Officer Trevor Stevenson, second from right, who was severely injured when his motorcycle was struck by an alleged drunk driver in 2017 on Garey Avenue while on a call to save someone's life but has fully recovered and is back at work on his bike.



Pomona's Assemblymember Michelle Rodriguez chats with Pomona Police Lt. Alyssa Bostrom, Pomona's District 3 Area Commander, at this month's National Night Out. Bostrom once served as one of the first female motorcycle police officers in the nation.

Pomona Police Lt. Ryan Rodriguez and Lt. Alyssa Bostrom pose for a La Nueva Voz photo during this month's National Night Out.



Public service ad courtesy of La Nueva Voz



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keep kids on track.
Together, we can lift
up our youth.



Pomona's Pedro Payne, head of the city's Office of Violence Prevention and Neighborhood Wellbeing, at left, works his booth at National Night Out with the help of Megan Anderson, a consultant to his office.



RIBBON CUTTING FOR NEW COMMUNITY KITCHEN -- Pomona City Councilmember Nora Garcia, at center with scissors, cuts the ribbon last month at a grand re-opening after remodeling of the Washington Park Community Kitchen in Pomona's Washington Park, 865 E. Grand Ave., Pomona. The kitchen supports the senior lunch program and other community activities at the Washington Park Community Center. Renovations included installing new cabinets, sink, flooring, range hood and range. Holding the ribbon, at left, is City Councilmember Lorraine Canales as City Manager Anita Scott and Mayor Tim Sandoval add a little support (second and fourth from right). The senior lunch program operates from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday through Friday. For information, call (909) 620-2324.



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RIBBON CUTTING AT NEW HOME OF NEWLIFE CHURCH FOOD BANK -- La Nueva Voz covers a lot of ribbon cuttings but this one last month was impressive -- NewLife Church at 275 E. Foothill Blvd. in Pomona opened a newly constructed nearly \$1 million building next to the church that now houses all of the food donations that had been stored in the church lobby and other areas of the church for years awaiting their weekly drive-through food distributions on Fridays. Included is warehouse storage space, a huge grocery store-style walk-in refrigeration room, and more. The facility doubles storage capacity from 45 to 90 pallets. The food distribution program started 20 years ago with a single minivan full of bread, according to church officials. Today, the program serves about 760 families, although during the pandemic the number averaged 800 families each week, becoming one of the largest food banks in Los Angeles County. Pictured cutting the ribbon is food bank director Thiago Lein, holding the scissors, with Senior Pastor Craig Lawrence holding the ribbon at left. For more information, visit the web site at newlifepomona.com.

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CAR SHOW EVERY TUESDAY -- It was car show night this month at Mr. D's Diner in La Verne as the family friendly car show series continues from 5 to 7 p.m. Tuesday nights. Pictured admiring one of the entries outside the restaurant are two visitors from the neighborhood. Mr. D's is located at 919 W. Foothill Blvd., La Verne, (909) 593-0111. For car show or sponsor information, e-mail mrdsdiner@gmail.com. The show is open to muscle cars, customs, classics, rods, bikes and trucks, plus the event includes a 50/50 raffle, trophies and even 10 percent off your dinner with your show car.



There was even an authentic "woodie" in the Mr. D's car show this month.



Pomona Optimist Club member Hugo Molina poses with his 1965 Chevy Corvair at the Mr. D's car show. He told La Nueva Voz the car is his daily driver. The car was the subject of the Ralph Nader book "Unsafe at Any Speed." Drive safely, Hugo.



Frank Di Pietra of La Verne, at left, poses for a photo with his 1971 Chevy Nova with La Nueva Voz reader Elias Castro of La Verne, who had his 1968 Pontiac Tempest in the show. La Nueva Voz Publisher Jeff Schenkel's first car was a brand new 1969 Chevy Nova with a 350 cubic inch two barrel carburetor, red with a black vinyl top. He bought it in Encino and drove it back to school at the University of Tennessee.

Pomona Chamber to host 'A Toss for Success' cornhole tournament fundraiser

The Pomona Chamber of Commerce is looking for sponsors for its "A Toss for Success" cornhole tournament fundraiser scheduled for October at The Derby Room at Pomona's Fairplex.

The event is scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 11, as a fun-filled activity bringing together community members, local businesses and cornhole (pitching bean bags into holes in a slanted board) enthusiasts for a day of friendly competition and network-

ing.

A portion of the proceeds will benefit the Chamber's Young Ambassador's Program, which produces programs that promote young entrepreneurs, foster community growth, and strengthen the Pomona economy and business relationships.

Teams will be grouped into pools, playing "round robin" within their pool. The top two teams from each pool will advance to a "double elimination" bracket for

the championship.

"This tournament is more than a day of fun," said Chamber President and CEO Monique Robles. "Every participant, every sponsor, and every bag tossed helps us build a stronger, more connected Pomona."

For registration or sponsorship information, visit the Pomona Chamber web site at www.pomonachamber.org, call (909) 622-1256 or e-mail info@pomonachamber.org.

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Photo courtesy of the Los Angeles County Assessor's Office

TRANSFERRING THE 2025 ASSESSMENT ROLL -- Los Angeles County Assessor Jeff Prang, at right, this month transfers the official 2025 assessment roll -- this year valued at more than \$2 trillion in net value -- to Los Angeles County Auditor-Controller Oscar Valdez. The assessor's office assesses the value of all taxable property in the county (including some 2.4 million taxable real property parcels), compiles those values in the assessment roll and hands it all over to the auditor-controller who attaches a monetary tax rate to the values. Those rates go to the county's treasurer-tax collector for preparation of property tax bills. The annual process nets the county more than \$20 billion to pay for vital public services including first responders, hospitals, teachers, infrastructure and more. The assessment roll this year increased by \$82 billion, or 3.91 percent over last year, marking 15 years of continuous growth, according to a news release. Taxable property includes land and buildings, along with business property, including furniture, machinery and equipment. The assessment roll provides insight into the state of the real estate market and the local economy and is considered a valuable tool for local governments as they prepare their annual budgets in anticipation of property tax revenues. Housing market sales and other property transfers served as the single most significant factor contributing to this year's roll growth, adding \$51 billion in additional value. Most property owners will see only a 2 percent adjustment on their annual property tax bills as prescribed by Proposition 13.

Pomona Valley Pride announces fifth annual fundraiser 'gayla'

Pomona Valley Pride has scheduled its fifth annual fundraising "gayla" on the theme "Behind the Mask, United by Pride – Masquerade Ball" for Saturday, Oct. 4, at Pomona's Sheraton Fairplex Conference Center.

The event, set for 6 to 11 p.m., is being billed as a night of celebration, unity and support for the LGBTQIA+ community.

It will combine elegance, entertainment and empowerment to raise funds for the organization's year-round programs and services throughout the Pomona Valley and Inland Empire, according to CEO Frank Guzman.

Founded in 2019, the group serves thousands of people each year through more than 25 programs including youth mentor-

ship, gender-affirming care, free therapy services, clothing and hygiene product distribution, advocacy efforts and events like the Pomona Valley Pride Festival.

The event in a masquerade setting will feature live entertainment, a gourmet dinner, and a celebration of community leaders and allies who embody the spirit of unity and pride.

Attendees are encouraged to wear their most creative and elegant masks.

Guzman said the event "is about showing that when we come together, we can create a powerful force for change, visibility and acceptance."

For tickets and sponsorships, visit the web site at www.pomonavalleypride.org or call (909) 326-0482.

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www.casacolina.org



Lopez Urban Farm celebrates five years, opens new half-acre expansion

Volunteers and operators of Pomona’s Lopez Urban Farm celebrated their fifth anniversary last week inviting in the community for a day of volunteering and workshops and even a ribbon-cutting of their new half-acre expansion on the theme “Ignacio Lopez: Realize the Dream.”

Farmer Stephen Yorba, executive director of Community Partners 4 Innovation, which operates the farm, said the event – conducted in partnership with Pomona Unified School District, which owns the land and supports the project – attracted dozens of students and family members highlighting the legacy of Ignacio Lopez.

The farm itself – and Lopez Elementary School located next door – is named in honor of Lopez (1908 – 1973), a Mexican-American activist and founder and publisher of the Spanish-language newspaper El Espectador, which published from 1933 to 1960 in Pomona.

The half-acre expansion, just across the driveway from the main farm site, is already growing melons and 50 trees, Yorba told guests.

David Salinas, who Yorba said has been “leading that team to make that dream a reality,” told the group that when he arrived the garden expansion area was barren with weeds everywhere.

“The weeds were so tall, I couldn’t see you, you couldn’t see me, and so it was quite intimidating,” he said. “But nevertheless, we had people that were committed . . . to the mission, they were committed to being involved, to getting their hands dirty.”

He said the cutting of the ribbon would not be a “finish line” but would be “the beginning of some-

thing.”

Salinas, director of the farm expansion, said the essence of the farm is health and wellness, adding that Farmer Stephen and Bianca Ustrell, director of operations for the farm, have “done an incredible job to lead . . . and now it’s flourishing after five years.”

He said the new expansion represents “opening something that is full of life, it is full of relationships, it’s a place where we can come together to build something that is so bigger than us.”

Bianca Ustrell told the group that “one really important thing to us is partnering with our community and creating,” partnering both with Pomona Unified School District and with others in the community.

She added that Salinas and his team were able to “make (the expansion) a reality and to beautify it, and to create something where nothing was growing, and that’s really the spirit of what we do today.”

Yorba also introduced urban agriculture advocate Randy Beken-dam who he said has had a hand in the creation of every urban farm and garden in Pomona.

Lopez Elementary School Prin-

cipal Marlo Aubert told the group she is honored to partner with the farm “where the kids, the students, your family, your children are able to continue experiencing (a) legacy by combining their education, their community where they live and then being able to learn and thrive and as the farm is designed . . . to nurture, to give back, to feed families.”

Lopez Urban Farm is located at 1034 W. Mission Blvd., Pomona. Hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.



Farmer Stephen Yorba of Lopez Urban Farm congratulates winners of the raffle prizes at last week's fifth anniversary celebration.



A NEW HALF-ACRE FARM EXPANSION -- Team members at Pomona's Lopez Urban Farm cut the ribbon last week to officially open a new half-acre expansion on the occasion of the farm's fifth anniversary celebration. From left are Randy Beken-dam, who worked with the former Amy's Farm, which was an educational non-profit in Ontario; volunteer Ricardo Sanchez of La Puente; Bre Archambault, assistant director of operations for the farm; David Salinas, director of the farm expansion; Lopez Elementary School Principal Marlo Aubert; Bianca Ustrell, director of operations for the farm; and Farmer Stephen Yorba, executive director of Community Partners 4 Innovation, which operates the farm.



It looks like you just can't have a good working farm without a good looking swing for the kids. Kids and adults visited the farm last week for a five-year anniversary celebration.



Melons in the foreground -- and some 50 trees in the background -- are all doing well at the new half-acre farm expansion at Pomona's Lopez Urban Farm.

Please visit our web site at
www.lanuevavoz.net
to see the latest issue
of La Nueva Voz,
past issues and more!

