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The New Voice, a Bilingual (English/Spanish) Publication
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Pomona Chamber of Commerce



Member

Issue No. 207

Thursday, October 22, 2026

Cal Poly 'Pumpkin Fest' expected to see 100,000 visitors, largest event in Cal State system

Cal Poly Pomona kicked off its annual "Pumpkin Fest" this month which, as College of Agriculture Dean Ethan Orr said, was expected to attract more than 100,000 visitors from the community over four weekends in October, making it the largest event in the Cal State University system.

And 30,000 pumpkins – all grown by Cal Poly students on nearby off-campus Cal Poly farmland – were covering the hillside of Kellogg Ranch (behind The Farm Store at Cal Poly).

Cal Poly's new President Vanya Quiñones, the eighth president of Cal Poly Pomona and the first Latina president, welcomed the group to the kickoff.

"I'm so excited to be here – I think that this is one of our most exciting traditions," Quiñones said. "It means a lot to me that we're celebrating with members of the community, our youth, members of Cal Poly Pomona . . . and alumni, all of us here together



Cal Poly Pomona
President Vanya Quiñones



Cal Poly Pomona
Dean of Agriculture
Ethan Orr

celebrating what makes Cal Poly Pomona so special."

"We know that we believe in 'learn, do and become,' and this is one of our 'learn, do and become' activities where students are really involved in all of these activities related to this festival," she said.

Quiñones added that she actually heard of the annual festival before taking the job when she looked forward to understanding the traditions and creativity on

campus.

"And, of course, just look at this incredible job of our students and the faculty and the whole department and the whole college," she said, describing the "Pumpkin Fest" as an event that brings the university together.

"And we celebrate the fall,



Kids of all ages find something to do at Cal Poly Pomona's annual "Pumpkin Fest" -- from shopping for just the right pumpkin to hayrides around Kellogg Ranch to finding their way through a corn maze. Pictured are mom and the kids posing for dad, at left, in front of the old farm truck decked out as always just outside the Farm Store at Cal Poly.

'Raindrops keep falling on my head' but show goes on for Pomona Hope

Last year's top story at Pomona Hope's annual gala was the announcement that work was under way for upgrades of the Center Street Community Garden. Fast forward to this month's gala and the news was the garden is thriving

and filled with everything from vegetables to a complete composting operation, worms and all.

The outdoor event was held behind Cal Poly Pomona's historic 1926 Kellogg House and

even intermittent drizzling rain throughout the evening (perhaps the theme for the event "Let Their Light Shine!" was more appropriate than intended) failed to dampen the enthusiasm for Pomona

Show goes on... pg. 6

which is one of my favorite seasons, because in Puerto Rico, we don't have seasons," she said. "So, any time you have seasons, you really get excited when you're out of the island."

"This is important for us because it's a connection from agricultural that we love, from 'learn by doing' to business to the commitment of creating experiences to the community," she said. "So, all of these things, all of these

values of Cal Poly Pomona, are merged within this activity."

And she thanked everyone who made it all possible – "the students . . . the faculty and the staff, and the incredible College of Agriculture that put this together with their time, their creativity and their care," she said, "and more important, to our community members that are here, their families, we look forward to wel-

Cal Poly 'Pumpkin Fest'... pg. 2

Be prepared & make sure your voice is heard if you have a behavioral health crisis.

A Psychiatric Advance Directive (PAD) is a legal document that includes an individual's specific instructions or preferences about treatment during a future behavioral health crisis (mental health and/or substance use) in which they might not be able to **make their own decisions.**

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PROJECT RETURN
PEER SUPPORT NETWORK



Renowned Chicana artist Sonia Romero helps unveil new AltaMed PACE Pomona mural

AltaMed PACE Pomona this month unveiled the company's newest mural – created by famed Los Angeles Chicana artist Sonia Romero – in keeping with its philosophy that art in care settings can support health and well-being.

The health services group, which opened its Pomona location a year ago, knows a little something about the subject – over the past three decades, their art collection systemwide has grown to some 4,000 works with a strong emphasis on Chicano and Mexican art.

They even have both a vice president and associate vice president of arts and wellness. “For decades, AltaMed has invested in artists, believing that the arts are an essential part of our communities, of keeping us healthy, of bringing us together,” said Dr. Susana Smith-Bautista, associate vice president and chief curator. “But what is more recent in our history of art and healing at AltaMed is our mural program.”

That part of the program, she explained, got underway about four years ago with a local



Dr. Roberta Perlman

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Dr. Susana Smith-Bautista



Artist Sonia Romero



Kamille Hemsworth, representing Assemblymember Michelle Rodriguez, presents a certificate to artist Sonia Romero in recognition of her creation, “The Fence Pomona,” now hanging at AltaMed’s offices in Pomona. AltaMed systemwide maintains an art collection which has grown over the years to include some 4,000 works.

artist at PACE Norwalk, followed by West Covina, Sunland and now Pomona.

“What is so important about this mural program and about all murals in general is that they bring people together,” she added. “They reflect their communities, they generate a sense of pride, and they transform public spaces into beautiful, happy areas.”

She said artists selected for the program work with the public, talking with those who work at AltaMed and those who live here, “listening to your stories, understanding your history.”

“This is your mural now, because you were part of the process, and because it speaks to you,” she said to a room filled with patients, staff, elected officials and members of the community.

She thanked the artist for “making the effort to get to know the center, the people and the area.”

“And finally, I always need to thank AltaMed for making art a part of health care and well-being, and for supporting artists, especially Latino artists and all artists of color,” she added.

New AltaMed PACE Pomona mural... pg. 8

Cal Poly 'Pumpkin Fest'... from pg. 1

coming you year after year.”

Quiñones was appointed to her position by the Cal State University board effective July 1 (see March 2026 La Nueva Voz story under “past issues” at www.lanuevavoz.net).

“In the next three weeks, we’re going to have over 5,000 students come,” Orr said. “They’re going to learn about agriculture, they’re going to learn about applied science, they’re going to get a pumpkin and U.S. Bank has sponsored a hundred of those at \$25 each for our PUSD students to come and be a part of our community.”

Nearly 200 guests – including Cal Poly officials, Pomona City Councilmembers, Pomona Unified School District officials and representatives of Three Valleys Municipal Water District – attended the VIP kickoff reception for the event the evening before opening day.

The Cal Poly “Pumpkin Fest” continues on Satur-



A very young but very professional group of Aztec dancers from the Youth and Family Club of Pomona Valley performed at Kellogg Ranch at Cal Poly Pomona this month to open a VIP reception kicking off this year's Pumpkin Fest.

days and Sunday through Oct. 31, bringing students’ work to life and giving thousands of visitors the chance to experience what they grow, create and learn at Cal Poly. For information, visit pumpkinfestival.cpp.edu.

Cal Poly “Pumpkin Fest”... pg. 9



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Pomona: Becoming a global leader in Restorative Justice?

By Rev. Nora Jacob, Member, Compassionate Pomona

Back in 2019, leaders from Pomona's organizations and agencies gathered to promote compassion, encourage restorative justice, and start collaborative efforts to reduce violence and strengthen peace in our city. More than 300 people from all walks of life gathered to discuss how to promote forgiveness and to learn about restorative justice.

Today – in 2026 – that collaborative work continues, building on the connections and insights from the past 10+ years here in Pomona.

Thanks to efforts by Pomona Community Action for Peace (see its www.pomonacap.org website), a coalition of local organizations, faith groups, educational institutions and individuals has been focusing on non-punitive, community-led healing, safety, and violence-prevention strategies here.

CAP's mission statement is this: *"We envision a Pomona community so strong and united that violence and harm are driven out by*

an unshakeable dedication to empathy, peace, and trust."

At this moment in time, a 2027 conference built on the foundations of the 2019 "Compassionate Pomona" vision is being planned. It's taking shape around the vision and commitment of Azim Khamisa, a globally-recognized author, thought leader, and peacebuilder whose son Tarik was killed in 1995 through gang violence in San Diego.

Pomona's 2027 conference will focus on how to strengthen empathy, peace, and trust; how to use the conflict mediation practices of restorative justice, rather than the punitiveness of criminal justice, to resolve differences; to address crime and harm; and to bring neighborhoods and families back together again after violence happens.

We are looking to choose the difficult work of reconciliation and forgiveness, rather than continuing in rage and vengeance. We believe that this effort promotes peace for neighborhoods and whole cities as

well as for individuals.

Finally, we are asking how our beloved, diverse city of Pomona might become a national leader and role model, to grow to be a more peaceable and compassionate place to live, shop, work, and raise a family. To "catch" our vision, and to hear how Azim Khamisa turned to forgiveness and healing – rather than anger and revenge – after the murder of his son, take 3.5 minutes to watch this video on Facebook about their story: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q4_b3VjdPz4. Compassion is real, and it heals.

Editor's Note: Rev. Nora Jacob retired as library services director at Orange Public Library, went to Claremont School of Theology, and started a new career path in ministry. She serves as Minister of Social Justice at Covina Community Church (United Church of Christ) and also founded and leads the nonprofit Pomona-based Restoration & Resilience Alliance. She has provided restorative justice social-emotional learning groups and classes at California Institution for Men (the men's state prison in Chino) for the past 13 years.



Rev. Nora Jacob

Gov. Newsom signs nine bills introduced by Assemblymember Rodriguez into law

Nine bills introduced by Assemblymember Michelle Rodriguez during the current legislative year have been signed into law by Gov. Newsom addressing everything from public safety and consumer protection to education and childcare.

"Each of these new laws began with a problem facing Californians and my commitment to finding a practical solution," Rodriguez said in a news release. "I am proud of what we accomplished this year and grateful to the advocates, community members, legislative partners and staff who worked alongside me to move these measures across the finish line."

"Most importantly, I look forward to seeing these new laws make a meaningful difference in the lives of the people we serve," she added. "These laws address a wide range of issues, but they share a common goal – making government work better for the people of California."

Included were:

AB 744 – Alcoholic Beverage

Retail Services, expanding services manufacturers and wholesalers may provide to retailers including stocking and maintaining alcoholic beverage displays.

AB 1571 – Child Flotation Devices, changing existing law by replacing the term "puddle jumper" with the more general "swim vest," without changing existing safety standards.

AB 1628 – Safe Surrender of Infants, expanding California's safe surrender period from 72 hours to 30 days, helping prevent unsafe abandonment.

AB 1792 – Dating Abuse and Digital Violence Education, directing state education officials to consider incorporating instruction on these topics into the state's health education framework.

Others were AB 1781 Federal Home Loan Banks, AB 2006 Childcare in State-Owned Buildings, AB 2262 Judicial Disqualification Proceedings, AB 2453 Public Safety Off-Highway Vehicles, and AB 2641 Pawnbroker Sales and Use Tax.

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Show goes on for Pomona Hope... from pg. 1

Hope's 23 years of after school and summer enrichment programs for local students and their families.

And it is those programs, Pomona Hope Executive Director Jeff Johannsen told nearly 200 guests at the event, that have been able to transform young lives "as students realize the potential that they have within themselves."

"We've seen children go on to become teachers, lawyers, parents, nonprofit employees," he added, after hopefully becoming inspired "to develop into adults that will be kind, caring and civically engaged."

One success story he cited was the upgrades at the garden itself.

hopeful it could be a model for more to come."

Part of the funding was provided by the Golden State Environmental Justice Alliance.

The plan was to create a public-private partnership with the city redeveloping the garden space and Pomona Hope managing the property once it was completed.

City of Pomona water department crews went to work in their first week clearing the original garden and constructing both in-ground and raised-bed gardening options complete with irrigation systems.

"As of this past June, the garden officially reopened to gardeners, both returning and some new,"

he said. "There is new solar lighting, extending the workable hours in the garden (and) there is also a new water fountain and a bottle refilling station."

The space also will continue to host weekly garden workshops on topics including the environment, conservation and nutrition, and demonstration areas will showcase water conservation techniques through water-wise irrigation and plant selection.

The garden, located at 192 E. Center Street, Pomona, also offers a shaded area with tables that is already attracting families in for picnics.

"Just a few short years ago, the garden was at extreme risk to be developed for market rate condos and now it's a permanent green space for neighborhoods sorely lacking an accessible green space," he said.

"We are honored to continue to do our part to maintain and care for this corner of Pomona that provides so much to the community."

The garden is conveniently located across the street from Pomona Hope's headquarters where its after school programs are offered in Pomona's First Presbyterian Church.

Garden hours are 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Sunday. Four-foot by 16-foot plots are available for rent at \$10 per month with free compost, seeds, tools, water and gardening advice



Jeff Johannsen

included (for more information, e-mail garden@pomonahope.org).

Johannsen also focused on other programs including a parent support group ("Strong Parents Make Strong Families"), which was launched 15 years ago.

"The goal has remained the same – to provide a place for parents to find community and encourage one another in their parenting journey," he said. "Participants have been enjoying this program so much, they have been inviting their friends and neighbors to join, as well."

Johannsen said a key belief at Pomona Hope is that "where a child is born should not determine their future."

"Each young person has a light to shine, and it is up to them to ignite and share that light," he said. "Our role is simply to help them identify what that light is for them."

This year's recipient of Jonah's Light Scholarship Award was Kenya Blanco, a student at Fremont Academy of Engineering and Design. Interestingly, her brother Jesus was last year's recipient of the award.

Funds for the grant come from Jonah's Light Fund, set up by Jonah's parents to honor his memory and recognize students in Pomona who exhibit superheroism.

Jonah Hwang was killed at the age of 8 in an apparent drive-by shooting into a house in the 1100 block of West 11th Street in Pomona while having dinner with his parents and family friends. He was known for his love of "superhero" adventure characters and their movies.

His parents were very involved in Pomona Hope and each year they provide a \$1,000 scholarship

Show goes on... pg. 10



FEEDING THE WORMS -- And that's really an important part of what composting is all about. Pictured last month at Pomona's Center Street Community Garden is John Craig, an environmental geologist and founder and executive director of the non-profit wecompost2.org, watering a "hot" compost bed he helps maintain as one of his many projects. He receives food scraps from two nearby food pantries. "We feed it to our worms in the worm bed," Craig said. "The worms are happy." Why does he do what he does? "I'm interested in solving climate change," he told La Nueva Voz.



BRAVING THE WEATHER -- Renee Barbee of La Nueva Voz made it through dinner this month with one hand, holding her umbrella much of the evening with the other due to drizzles off and on at the annual Pomona Hope gala outside Cal Poly Pomona's Kellogg House. Although it cleared up from time to time, there was just enough light rain to prompt half a dozen to a dozen umbrellas to appear at the tables at any given time. However, the rain seemed to stop altogether in time for the cheesecake.

"The Center Street Community Garden has been serving our neighborhood for the past 17 years, although for most of that period of time, we were always at risk of possibly being removed from the property" if the city-owned vacant parcel attracted the interest of a developer interested in purchasing the property and forcing the garden out, he said.

"Three years ago, the city was able to identify funding to designate the garden property as permanent green space," Johannsen said. "It's the first city-owned community garden and we're

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Subscriptions by mail \$49 per year.

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‘Living Hope Foundation’ to hold second annual gala at Pomona’s Sospeso

The Living Hope Foundation, a non-profit based in Chino Hills and operator of Sospeso, a café in Downtown Pomona, will hold its second annual fundraising gala next month – this year on a “casino night” theme – showcasing the Sospeso venue which opened in March.

Proceeds will go to services provided by the organization which include offering meals in the Pomona community, counseling services,

health care, a thrift store and more, all to empower families and individuals by providing hope, dignity, and opportunities for lasting transformation.

Set to begin with “open house tours” at 4 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 14, the gala celebration, activities and dinner all get under way at 5 p.m.

Sponsorships also are available.

The non-profit focuses on those who have been underserved or

marginalized in an effort to create opportunities for people to discover their own capacity, dignity and potential.

Sospeso is located at 290 E. 2nd St. in Downtown Pomona. Owners and founders Joe and Sandra Antonelli were recipients of this year’s Pomona Chamber of Commerce “Community Service Award.”

For information, visit the web site at sospesopomona.com/la-festa-del-sospeso.

New AltaMed PACE Pomona Mural... from pg. 2

Artist Romero told the group the mural is called “The Fence Pomona.”

“I wanted to create a work about Pomona which explores the quiet, personal neighborhood moments of home,” she explained. “Walking down the street, you see the evidence of people’s creativity, work and homemaking. The San Gabriel Mountains set the scene, and the garden statues, planters, mailboxes and plants embody the culture of this place. I see the fence . . . as a backdrop for the sidewalk activities, such as this dog walking . . . or as a protective boundary of the home inside.”

She said she combined the techniques of block printing and painting, embedding linocut prints into the painting.

Dr. Jung Han, senior vice president and chief medical officer of AltaMed PACE, has spent more than a decade caring for older adults at AltaMed.

“For more than 30 years, AltaMed PACE has helped older adults maintain their health and independence while still living in their communities with dignity and a sense of belonging,” Han said. “That work is at the heart of what we do at PACE. But PACE is also about caring or the person as a whole. That includes our relationships, the activities that keep us engaged and opportunities to learn and connect with others. For many participants, PACE becomes a second home and a place to build those connections.”

She said that is one reason art is such an important part of the program.

“We know that art in care settings can support our health and well-being,” Han added. “It has been linked to lower stress, reduced perceptions of pain, and improved mood, especially among older adults.”

In addition, she said environments that feel warm and welcoming can help reduce anxiety and encourage people to participate in their care and in their activities.

She said PACE participants take part in art therapy classes that can support memory and motor function.

“Works from the ultimate art collection bring art and culture into the spaces of our participants’ experience every day,” she said. “And participants have opportunities to create art themselves, including through ceramics and painting. It can give us a new way to express ourselves and heal. And sometimes it can simply give us something beautiful to stop and enjoy. And that is what makes today such a special moment.”

Mistress of Ceremonies Pilar Tompkins Rivas, vice president and chief curator of arts at AltaMed, helped explain the connection between health and art.

“At AltaMed, we believe health is about more than what happens in the exam room,” she said. “It’s also about creating environments where people feel seen, respected, connected, and that they belong. Art helps us do that.”

Romero is a Los Angeles-based painter, printmaker, sculptor and public artist whose work reflects the cultural symbols, stories and experiences of the communities around her. Her work can be found in museums and collections around the country, including pieces at the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, D.C., the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and the Cheech Marin Center for Chicano Art and Culture, part of the Riverside



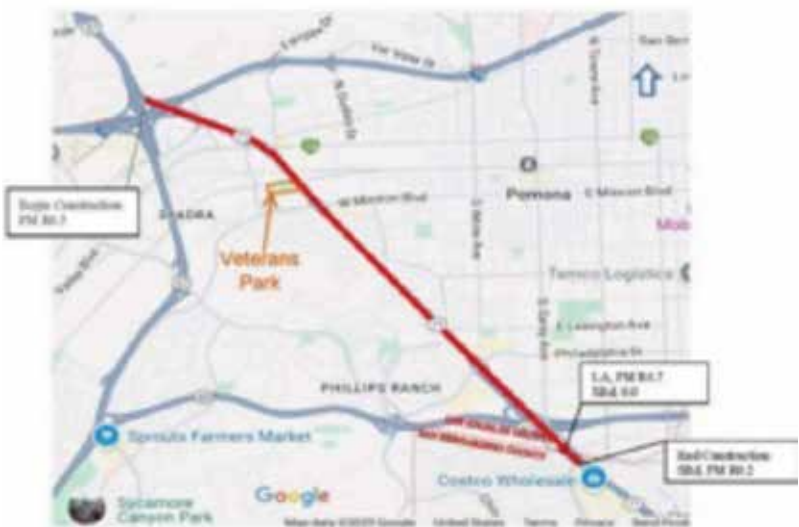
Dr. Jung Han



Pilar Tompkins Rivas

AVISO PÚBLICO

Aviso de disponibilidad del Borrador de la Determinación de Impacto Mínimo (*de minimis*) conforme a la Sección 4(f) — Veterans Park



¿Qué se está planificando?

La construcción del segmento sur del proyecto de mejora de la Autopista Estatal 71 (SR-71) está por finalizar. El proyecto consiste principalmente en transformar la SR-71 —que actualmente combina una vía rápida de cuatro carriles y una autopista de seis carriles— en una autopista de ocho carriles, incluyendo un carril para vehículos de alta ocupación en cada sentido, entre la I-10 y el límite entre los condados de Los Ángeles y San Bernardino. El segmento norte, que se extiende entre la Interestatal 10 (I-10) y Mission Blvd, en la ciudad de Pomona, se encuentra actualmente en fase de diseño y constituye el último tramo necesario para completar la mejora de la SR-71.

¿Por qué se emite este aviso?

Basándose en el diseño actual, se ha determinado de forma preliminar que la ocupación parcial —tanto temporal como permanente— de terrenos supondrá un impacto mínimo (*de minimis*) en Veterans Park. Por consiguiente, el Departamento de Transporte de California (Caltrans) —bajo la delegación de la Administración Federal de Carreteras (Federal Highway Administration), conforme a las secciones 326 y 327 del Título 23 del Código de los Estados Unidos (23 USC 326 y 327)— ha preparado un Borrador de la Determinación de Impacto Mínimo (*de minimis*) conforme a la Sección 4(f) para este proyecto.

El propósito de este aviso es informar al público sobre dicho borrador y ofrecer la oportunidad de revisar y comentar los efectos que el proyecto tendrá en Veterans Park.

¿Qué materiales están disponibles?

Una copia digital del Borrador de la Determinación de Impacto Mínimo (*de minimis*) conforme a la Sección 4(f) se encuentra disponible para su consulta pública en el sitio web del Distrito 7 de Caltrans (<https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-7/district-7-programs/d7-environmental-docs>). Asimismo, hay una copia impresa disponible en la siguiente dirección, de lunes a viernes, de 8:00 a. m. a 5:00 p. m.: Caltrans District 7, 100 S. Main Street, Los Ángeles, CA 90012.

¿Tiene preguntas o comentarios?

Los comentarios o respuestas del público pueden enviarse por escrito y/o por correo electrónico a más tardar el 21 de noviembre de 2026 a:

Dawn Kukla, Jefa de Oficina
Departamento de Transporte de California (Caltrans)
División de Planificación Ambiental
100 S. Main Street – MS 16A
Los Ángeles, CA 90012

SR71_GapClosure@dot.ca.gov

o

Contacto:

Para obtener más información sobre este estudio, comuníquese a través de SR71_GapClosure@dot.ca.gov.

Cal Poly 'Pumpkin Fest'... from pg. 2



Funny thing about kids and pumpkins -- they learn very quickly which ones are, well, going to be on the heavy side carrying them back to the car.



Pictured is a possible future Cal Poly agriculture major trying out a 1948 tractor -- and she seems to be doing a pretty good job of it. We're thinking College of Agriculture Dean Ethan Orr probably had somebody over there with a clipboard (OK, sorry, a laptop) jotting down names for college recruiters of the future. We'd call it an antique tractor, by the way, but since that's the same DOB as our publisher, we weren't allowed to do that.



Funny thing about moms and pumpkins -- apparently getting their kids anywhere near the pumpkins produces an automatic maternal instinct to pull out the cell phone for pictures.



A popular attraction at the Pumpkin Fest was this "explainer" who described how this late 1800s piece of farm equipment works -- it takes used corn stalks which, he said, cows cannot eat, and slices them in half-inch-thick sections that can be mixed in with food for the cattle.



The annual corn maze was one of the offerings at the Pumpkin Fest. And it looked, fortunately, like just about as many people as we saw going in were able to make their way around and make it out. (Good thing, too, since they don't allow overnight parking.)



Renee Barbee of La Nueva Voz found her favorite -- the sunflowers field at the Pumpkin Fest. (If anybody is taking notes, that's her favorite flower, it was her mom's favorite flower, you get the idea.) Pictured is Renee standing in front of about half of the field (you could actually walk up and around the flowers).



Another popular attraction was, well, the balloon guy. His "animal" creations and what, a Star Wars sword, perhaps, could be found everywhere at the event.



Thinking about heading over to Cal Poly for the pumpkins, either through the end of the month or maybe next year? Keep this handy tip in mind -- a lot of the dads were using wagons brought from home for the long haul back to the car.

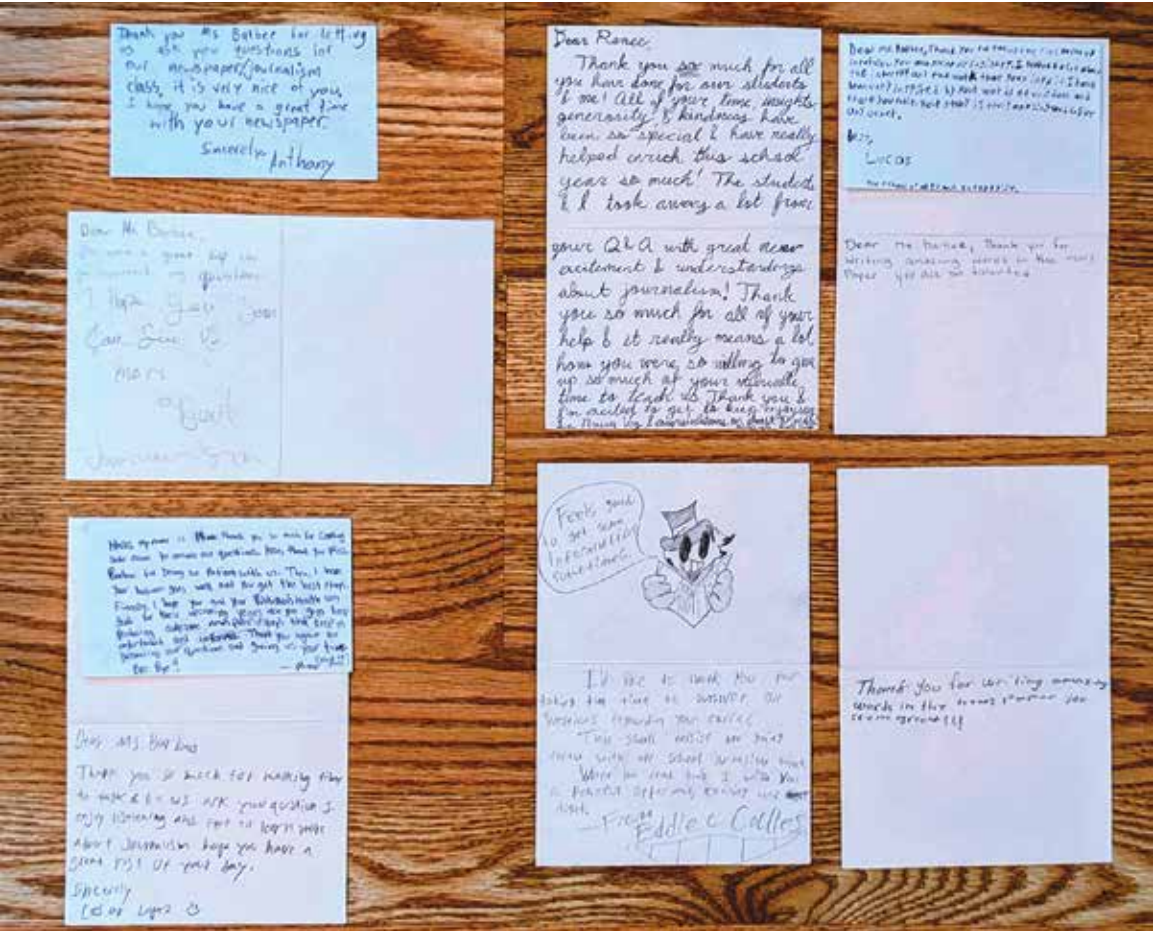


Kids and pumpkins on the hillside were really what it was all about at the Cal Poly Pumpkin Fest. Some 30,000 pumpkins were on that hillside at the beginning of October. And the leftovers? A team of Cal Poly's animal science majors will bring some of the cattle residing on campus over to the Pumpkin Fest grounds for a treat -- just a little pumpkin snack. Several engineering majors were already at work building a catapult to sling the pumpkins over. We're pretty sure nobody will get hurt, plus many of the pumpkins should burst open when they land, making it easier access for the cows, right? Hey, it's Cal Poly, where the students "learn by doing."



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Lisa Christie, lead organizer of the Pumpkin Fest, told La Nueva Voz this patch of flowers is a "first" this year at the event -- they represent some of the flowers to be used on Cal Poly's float entry in the Tournament of Roses Parade down Colorado Boulevard in January. The Cal Poly "Rose Float Laboratory," where half of the float is constructed each year until the other half is completed, brought down from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, and assembled, is located completely on the other side the Pomona campus. Christie promised the flowers will be ready in time.



STUDENTS SEND 'THANK YOU' CARDS TO LA NUEVA VOZ -- Pictured are "thank you" cards sent by high school students at The School of Arts and Enterprise in Pomona after Renee Barbee of La Nueva Voz met recently with the students in a half-hour Zoom meeting to answer their questions regarding entering the field of journalism as a career. Questions from the students ranged from "How does one enter the career of journalism" and "How do you figure out everything so fast" to "Where do you see the future of journalism in five or more years." English teacher Sean Hass invited Barbee to participate in the dialogue and the two worked together on questions and arrangements.

Show goes on for Pomona Hope... from pg. 6

to a Pomona Hope student.

The recipient is selected by Pomona Hope staff to recognize a student who has gone above and beyond in service at Pomona Hope and in the community.

Pomona Hope was founded 23 years ago to "provide hope to the residents of Pomona, regardless of their background," and to address the challenges of youth growing up in the city through after school programs, summer enrichment programs and more.

For more information, visit www.pomonahope.org.



READY FOR ITS FIRST HARVEST -- The Center Street Community Garden appeared all set for its first harvest last month following its first growing season after work crews leveled the former garden and completed upgrades. Plots are still available for rent. For information, e-mail garden@pomonahope.org.

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POMONA OPTIMIST'S BOARD MEMBERS SWORN IN -- Board members of the Pomona Optimist Club were installed for their one-year terms this month in ceremonies at the Eagles lodge in Pomona. Pictured, from left, are President Sonia Molina, Vice President Devynn Stein-Marquez, Secretary M. Joyce Bakersmith, and Treasurer Fernando Meza. They were installed by Pomona's Vernon Price, currently president of the Optimist Club of Los Angeles, founded in 1917 after the first Optimist Club was formed in 1911 in Buffalo, N.Y., and the movement started spreading west. The Pomona club was established in 1954.

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Los Angeles leaders launch ‘A Count You Can Trust’ coalition to build voter confidence in elections

Exactly three weeks before the November general election and in a moment in history that election integrity is being questioned nationwide, former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and California Community Foundation President and CEO Miguel Santana last week launched “A Count You Can Trust,” an independent, nonpartisan coalition of Southern California civic leaders working to build voter confidence by showing how Los Angeles County’s election process protects

every eligible vote. According to a news release, the coalition will highlight the established safeguards that help ensure elections are secure, transparent and verifiable, including ballot verification, public observation and audits as they work to increase public trust and voter confidence in elections. Leaders also will explain why counting continues after election day and how ballots are verified before results are certified. Representatives announced the

formation of the new group in a news conference held next to an official ballot drop box in La Puente. “Our democracy works best when people understand it and trust it,” said Villaraigosa, co-chair of the new coalition. “There’s nothing more sacred than the right to vote, and people need to know they can trust that these votes, their votes, are going to be counted accurately and fairly.” “A Count You Can Trust” brings together leaders from neighbor-



City of Pomona - Neighborhood Services

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Photos courtesy of "A Count You Can Trust"

OFFICIALS STAGE ELECTION INTEGRITY NEWS CONFERENCE -- Regional officials held a news conference next to an official ballot drop box in La Puente to announce the formation of "A Count You Can Trust," a new nonpartisan coalition working to build voter confidence by assuring them that every vote is counted. Pictured, at right, is former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa as Miguel Santana, president and CEO of the California Community Foundation, which launched the initiative, looks on. Also pictured is Villaraigosa placing what appears to be an official ballot in the ballot drop box at the kickoff at Avocado Heights Park in La Puente.

hoods, cities, and communities across the county to share fact-based election information. The coalition does not support or oppose any candidate, political party, or ballot measure, and it is not affiliated with the official county elections office.

"Los Angeles County has real safeguards in place, and the public can watch them work. ‘A Count You Can Trust’ is about meeting people where they are, answering their questions with facts, and making sure every Angeleno knows their ballot is protected and counted," said Santana, whose California Community Foundation launched the initiative.

He is also co-chair of “A Count You Can Trust” and former president and CEO of Pomona’s Fairplex.

"This is not about the results of the election. It’s about making sure every voter in Los Angeles County understands the process, and knows that their vote will be counted," Santana said.

The coalition’s

New AltaMed PACE Pomona Mural... from pg. 8

Art Museum in Riverside.

She also has created more than 13 permanent public works including Mariachi Plaza in Boyle Heights, and the Westlake and MacArthur Park Metro stations in Los Angeles. She also works in community arts, teaching, leading workshops and helping make art accessible to communities throughout Southern California.

Romero was trained at the Los Angeles County High School for the Arts and the Rhode Island School of Design. Her studio is in Echo Park.

The AltaMed PACE program provides medical, social, nutritional and rehabilitative services

to participants ages 55 or older who have been certified by the state as needing nursing home level of care.

The program makes it possible for them to remain in their own homes and communities while receiving the care they need.

AltaMed operates 18 PACE centers serving residents of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. It serves more than 5,600 seniors each year, making it the largest program of its type in California.

The Pomona center is located at 2277 N. Garey Ave., Pomona.

A Count You Can Trust... from pg. 12

members, known as 'Champions of the Count,' are leaders from business, labor, philanthropy, civil rights, faith, media, and academia who serve as truth-tellers and myth-busters, explaining how elections work and the safeguards that protect the count, including why counting continues after election day, according to the news release.

In addition to Villaraigosa and Santana, members include representatives of Asian American/Pacific Islanders groups, the YMCA

of Metropolitan Los Angeles, various African American organizations, Latino organizations, the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, faith-based organizations, the Los Angeles Urban League, labor organizations, the League of Women Voters of Greater Los Angeles and others.

Voters can learn more about how Los Angeles County elections work, including ballot verification, public observation, and the counting timeline, at accountyoucantrust.org.

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There were a lot of baby calves at Cal Poly Pomona last month as seen in these photos. While most baby calves are born in the spring, allowing calves to grow on spring grass and be weaned in the fall, many also are born in the fall, depending on the farm's management schedule. Some commercial or specialized operations manage herds so calves are born throughout the year, though most prefer a controlled window of 45 to 90 days for better efficiency, according to a quick on-line search. The gestation length of cattle is around 285 days, in case any readers are taking notes.

City of Pomona - Neighborhood Services

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Claremont Colleges students first group to tour Pomona's new Nuestra Casa Museum

About 20 students from Pomona and Pitzer Colleges in Claremont – the first group of students ever to take a tour – last month visited the new Nuestra Casa Museum of History and Culture in Downtown Pomona.

The hour-long tour was arranged by Associate Professor Arely M. Zimmerman, who teaches intercollegiate Chicano/Chicana/Latino studies at Pomona College.

Museum board member Angela Sanbrano and museum volunteer Donna Otero, among others, spoke to the group during the event.

The museum is filled with cultural artifacts and historical summaries, all depicting the history of the region and the families who live here.

Board member Cristina Carrizosa said last month that the museum project took several years to complete with many of the meetings held around her kitchen table.

Members of the board include President Luis Juarez, along with Carrizosa, Angela Sangrano, Mike Suarez, and Francisco Espinosa.

The museum, which held its grand opening ceremonies in August (see story page 16, September 2026 La Nueva Voz, under “past issues” at www.lanuevavoz.net), is located at 101 W. Mission Blvd., Suite 108, Pomona.



Nuestra Casa Museum of History and Culture volunteer Donna Otero, at left, and museum board member Angela Sanbrano speak to students from the Claremont Colleges last month during the first official student tour of the new museum.



Students from Pitzer and Pomona Colleges in Claremont, pictured in the museum last month, were the first student tour group to visit the new Pomona museum.

Photos by Renee Barbee

House of Ruth honors lives of 50 victims lost to domestic violence this year in Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties

Nearly 100 supporters, volunteers and friends of Pomona's House of Ruth attending last week's annual candlelight vigil honoring lives lost to domestic violence heard presenters read a list of some 50 victims – ranging in age from 65 to two weeks old – who have died in Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties – in 2026 alone.

And there are two more months in the year before the statistics are complete.

The theme of this year's vigil – marking the organization's 50th anniversary next year – was “Lighting the Way.”

“Tonight we gather first and foremost to honor and remember the lives taken by domestic violence, especially those lives lost at the hands of a partner,” said House of Ruth Executive Director Pat Bell. “Each person we remember was more than a name or a statistic – they were someone's child, someone's parent, a sibling, friend, neighbor or a loved one.”

“As we light our candles this evening, may each flame carry a name, a memory, and a love that endures,” she said. “May this vigil hold space for grief, surround families and loved ones with compassion, and affirm a promise from all of us – these lives mattered, they are remembered and they will not be forgotten.”

She said the group also stands beside every survivor “who has

endured, healed and risen.”

“In times of uncertainty, especially as federal funding cuts threaten vital services, House of Ruth remains steadfast in its mission to prevent domestic violence and ensure the safety and well-being of those impacted,” she said.

Bell said for nearly five decades, people have come to House of Ruth during some of the most frightening and uncertain moments of their lives looking for safety, for someone to listen, and for a place to stay for help protecting their children.

“Right now, the ability of organizations like House of Ruth to continue providing these critical services is being challenged,” Bell said. “House of Ruth received 75 percent of our funding from the government. And we've experienced uncertainty surrounding federal funding, significant delays in government reimbursements, reductions in funding for programs that serve victims of domestic violence and their families that are experiencing homelessness.”



Participants in last week's candlelight vigil at Pomona's House of Ruth take part in the candle-lighting portion of the program at the end of the evening's activities.



Guests at last week's candlelight vigil at House of Ruth had an opportunity to meet with representatives of a variety of resource organizations on hand at the event.



She said when funding is reduced or delayed, it impacts the organization's ability to help a survivor remain safely housed, to provide emergency shelter to a family fleeing violence, to offer counseling to a child who has

experienced trauma or to answer a call from someone who does not know where else to turn.

“Yet even when government funding is delayed, the need does not stop and neither can we,” Bell said. “When a survivor calls our

hotline tonight, we must answer. When a family needs a safe place to sleep, we must be there. When someone needs help paying rent so they do not have to choose between homelessness and returning

Lives of victims honored... pg. 19

Letter to the Editor / Carta al Editor

A Mi Querida Comunidad de Pomona:

Hola, soy Jacky Elizalde, como mamá, hoy tengo la dicha de criar a mi pequeño de cinco años y me siento honrada de tener la oportunidad de servir a nuestra comunidad.

Entiendo lo que enfrentan muchas familias en Pomona. Sé lo que significa trabajar, cuidar de nuestros hijos y buscar un mejor futuro para ellos. Como mamá, también sé que todos merecemos criar a nuestras familias en una ciudad segura, donde nuestros hijos puedan crecer sin miedo y nuestros hogares sean un lugar de tranquilidad. Porque, aunque el camino sea difícil, nunca debemos perder la esperanza de construir un mejor futuro.

Yo decidí postularme para Concejal de la Ciudad de Pomona para el Distrito 2 porque vemos una gran necesidad de cambio y visión. Después de 8 años con la misma representación y promesas rotas, creo que ya es tiempo de dar paso a un nuevo liderazgo. ¿Y quién mejor que una mamá, que siempre pone las necesidades de los demás antes que las suyas y lucha cada día por nuestro futuro?

Pero, desafortunadamente, muchas veces parece que quieren hacer a un lado a las mamás y silenciar nuestra voz cuando defendemos a nuestros hijos y luchamos por sus derechos.

Cuando una mujer decide dar un paso al frente y busca una posición de liderazgo, parece que tiene que demostrar mucho más para recibir el mismo respeto. Les digo algo: este camino no es para todos. Se necesita Valentía, Fortaleza y la capacidad de mantener la calma aun en medio del caos.

Durante esta campaña, más de 30 de mis anuncios publicados han sido vandalizados. En varios de ellos he encontrado cera de veladoras, colocada de una manera que me ha hecho sentir que podría tratarse de algún tipo de ritual negativo. También he encontrado mi foto cortada con algún objeto en las partes íntimas de mi imagen. Para mí, estos actos han sido profundamente degradantes, especialmente cuando uno de ellos ocurrió frente a la iglesia del Sagrado Corazón, un lugar de fe que nuestra comunidad respeta.

Estos actos parecen estar motivados políticamente y buscan intimidar a una mujer que decidió dar un paso al frente para servir a su comunidad. Nadie debería sentirse amenazado por atreverse a liderar. ¡Eso no está bien. Hoy alzo mi voz y pongo un alto!

Pero mi fe en Dios y el cariño de la comunidad me dan la fuerza para seguir adelante, porque ninguna mujer – ni nadie – debería tener que enfrentar este tipo de obstáculos por atreverse a servir a su comunidad.

En cada puerta que toco, encuentro motivos para continuar: familias que me reciben con cariño, vecinos que comparten sus preocupaciones y que me dicen: “Estamos contigo, Jacky”, “Que Dios te acompañe” y “Jacky, estamos orando por ti”. Sus palabras llegan a mi corazón. Ese apoyo ha crecido hasta convertirse en una gran comunidad que camina conmigo.

A quienes me han abierto sus puertas, ofrecido una oración o brindado su apoyo: gracias.

Por más de 13 años, he dedicado tiempo y trabajo a esta hermosa ciudad. Mi experiencia en el gobierno federal, del condado y en el ámbito comunitario me ha enseñado a escuchar, resolver y dar seguimiento. Con humildad, pongo esa experiencia al servicio de ustedes. Pero involucrarse también significa Votar, Participar y Defender el respeto que todos merecemos.

Desde 1888, ninguna mamá ha representado al Distrito 2 de Pomona. Si es la voluntad de Dios y con el apoyo de la comunidad, será la primera y abriré el camino para muchas otras mujeres que también sueñan con servir y liderar. ¡Que Dios los bendiga a cada uno de ustedes y a sus familias, muchas gracias por tomarse el tiempo de leer!

Jacky Elizalde Candidata
Pomona City Council District 2

As we celebrate Veterans Day and the Buffalo Soldiers legacy

By Donna Jackson-Houston

This year as we celebrate Veterans Day, we also commemorate the 160th anniversary of the United States Buffalo Soldier regiments and recognize the significant contributions of Black soldiers to our nation's history.

In 1866, after the Civil War, Congress established six all-Black Army regiments, which were later consolidated into four: the 9th and 10th Cavalry and the 24th and 25th Infantry. These regiments became known as the Buffalo Soldiers. They served with distinction, including the expansion and protection of the American West, and played significant roles in the nation's military history until the integration of the armed forces began in 1948.

My personal journey began in 2021 when I discovered that my grandfather, Lucius Franklin Monroe Jackson, proudly served as a Buffalo Soldier in the Army's 25th Infantry. He was stationed at Camp Little in Nogales, Arizona, where Buffalo Soldiers patrolled and protected the U.S. – Mexico border during the Mexican Revolution and the Mexican Border Wars (1910 - 1919).

lution and the Mexican Border Wars (1910 - 1919).

Discovering my grandfather's service inspired me to establish the Nogales Buffalo Soldiers Legacy Association. Over the past five years, it has been very rewarding to share the history and legacy of these remarkable soldiers at the local, national, and international levels.

This year, I was honored to visit Sonora, Mexico, in collaboration with the U.S. and Mexican Consuls General of Ambos Nogales (twin cities of Nogales in both Arizona and Sonora), recognizing the shared history of the border communities. On July 28, National Buffalo Soldiers Day, I also met with U.S. Sen. Mark Kelly in Washington, D.C. (see page 22, La Nueva Voz, August 2026 issue at www.lanuevavoz.net), to commemorate the 160th anniversary of the Buffalo Soldier regiments and highlight their contributions to our nation.

I am grateful to the Pomona community and everyone who has supported me throughout this journey. A very special thank you goes to La Nueva Voz, which has

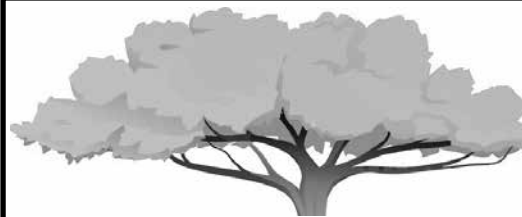
been instrumental in sharing the important history and legacy of the Buffalo Soldiers with the community.

As we reflect on Veterans Day, may we honor the courage, service, and sacrifices of the Buffalo Soldiers and all the brave men and women who have served our nation.

Editor's Note: Donna Jackson-Houston is the founder and president of the Nogales Buffalo Soldiers Legacy Association. She and her family have been residents of Pomona for more than 30 years. She also serves as a Community Life Commissioner for the City of Pomona. For more information, visit www.nogalesbuffalosoldiers.org.

La Nueva Voz...

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From the Assessor

Technology has been a huge asset for the office

By Jeff Prang
Los Angeles County Assessor

“A technological dilemma facing the most populous county in the nation was how to take a massive amount of data wedded to an antiquated mainframe, green screen, technologically four-decade behind-the-times system and bring that into the 21st Century.”

I wrote that seven years ago when it was first published in a local newspaper with a county-wide reach. Furthermore, that was the dilemma I faced as the newly elected Los Angeles County Assessor back in 2014. Let’s not forget that I manage an agency that catalogues 2.4 million real properties and 300,000 business property assessments. Much of this data was still being processed by hand, maintained in paper files and microfiche, displayed on flickering green screens that continually broke down. I didn’t have to be a rocket scientist to know that a technological upgrade was long overdue.

We began by designing and implementing a new, cloud-based platform, including the digitization of 2.4 million property files. That modernized system, inter-

nally known as the Assessor’s Modernization Project (AMP), officially went live two years ago, and the transition was seamless, free from the bugs and setbacks that often accompany large government tech projects.

Having said that, AMP’s success has been nearly immediate. My main constitutional mandate of the annual Assessment Roll was completed in days when it used to take weeks to months. Also, our new technology was the subject of a national case study, “Trial by Fire,” that analyzed the office’s role in helping thousands of homeowners secure property tax relief following the devastating 2025 wildfires.

This case study explores how the Assessor’s Office leveraged cloud-based infrastructure, data analytics and AI/ML tools (artificial intelligence and machine learning tools) to rapidly reassess more than 18,000 properties in just 90 days – a process that would have taken more than a year using legacy systems – delivering faster



Jeff Prang, Assessor
Los Angeles County

tax relief to thousands of impacted residents while preserving critical county revenue.

In January, we started using another new technology that improves the process of finding and identifying private and commercial aircraft. Since the program

was initiated, it has identified nearly 1,000 previously unassessed aircraft. These aircraft discoveries are projected to generate nearly \$2.5 billion in assessed value from prior year escaped assessments and more than \$1 billion in new assessments for the 2026 tax year. Together, they are expected to produce about \$38 million in additional property taxes that support

schools, public safety and other vital local services.

That’s not all. You can now sign up for a free service to receive a “homeowner alert” by e-mail any time a document, such as a grant deed, loan, or lien, is recorded in connection with your property.

When you sign up for an Assessor E-Service account and register your email address with your property, we will notify you within 48 hours of activity recorded on your

property. This can be an important tool for identifying potentially fraudulent deeds and other unauthorized recordings and acting as quickly as possible.

Every day we are discovering new technologies that enhance our ability to provide quality services to the public along with a more efficient working environment for our employees.

I want to take a moment now
Technology a huge asset... pg. 17

Need an income tax deduction? Donate your car!

Contact Pastor Doug Brissette, Greater New Foundation Fellowship Church, 841 S. Main St., Pomona, in a building designated a historic landmark by the Pomona City Council!

(The church building, constructed in 1922 and 1923, originally was the home of Pomona’s Mount Zion Baptist Church, believed by historians to be the city’s first Black church to hold on-going programs.)

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Officials cut ribbon to open upgraded facilities at Pomona's JFK Park

Pomona City Councilmember Debra Martin held a ribbon-cutting ceremony this month to officially open a newly upgraded restroom and snack bar building at Pomona's John F. Kennedy Park.

The \$840,000 project includes air conditioning in the snack bar, new landscaping around the building, handicapped-accessible parking and new concrete and sidewalks throughout the improved areas.

"The upgrades will make Kennedy Park more comfortable, accessible and welcoming for the families, athletes, and residents who use this park every day," Martin said. "Investments like this are about more than infrastructure — it's more than a

building, they are about creating quality public spaces where community can gather, play, spend family time, and feel like they're at home away from home."

She said seeing the kids actually playing ball is "such a magical feeling."

"I have four children and they all play baseball and softball, so I'm a baseball mom myself and did all of our sports in Pomona," she added.

Jorge Marquez, who represents Pomona on the Three Valleys Municipal Water District board of directors, said he lives just behind the walls surrounding the park. His daughter Matilda accompanied him to the event.

"This is my daughter, she's eight years old," he said. "This is our park. We love coming to this park. I'm really excited to see the new developments that are happening here and the future of what's going to happen here, especially along with what's going to happen back here with the bike trail."

"Congratulations to the city," he added. "I just want to let you know that Three Valleys Municipal Water District



RIBBON CUTTING FOR UPGRADES AT JFK PARK -- Pictured cutting the ribbon to officially open an upgraded park restroom and snack bar at Pomona's JFK Park -- along with just lots of youth baseball and softball players of various ages and sizes -- are, from left, Pomona Chamber of Commerce Executive Board member Barbee of La Nueva Voz, also a Pomona Public Library Board of Trustees Commissioner, Pomona City Councilmembers Lorraine Canales and Debra Martin, Three Valleys Municipal Water District Director Carlos Goytia, and, at far right, Pomona Parks and Recreation Commission Vice Chair Sonia Ballardo and Three Valleys



Pomona City Councilmember Debra Martin, whose city council district includes JFK Park, gets an up-close look at new sinks and counters in the new snack bar that were part of a major upgrade recently completed by the city.

Parks and Recreation Commission Vice Chair Sonia Ballardo

will always be a partner with Pomona."

Pomona City Councilmember Lorraine Canales told the group she is a life-long educator who works for Pomona Unified School District.

"I'm really committed to the families and the youth of our city," she said. "My goal is to make sure that we have safe places for our families, so I'm glad to see the girls here and you go, girls."

She thanked the city employees "for all you do to make safe places for our youth and our families."

Pomona Parks and Recreation Commission Vice Chair Sonia Ballardo expressed thanks to all involved.

"I just want to say congratulations to all of you residents because this is a facility that's

going to be accessible to you now moving forward," she said. "And congratulations to our councilwoman here for making the effort to make this a reality, and, of course, staff, because I know sitting on the commission all the projects that are in the works and all the work that goes in behind actually making this pos-

Upgraded facilities... pg. 18

Technology a huge asset... from pg. 16

to highlight our employees. None of the accomplishments I've mentioned in this column happened just because of a new system or a piece of technology alone. No, they happened because employees showed up and did the work. Technology is a tool. A tool is only as effective as the people working it and the Assessor's Office has the best.

These accomplishments not only reflect well of my staff, but to the county's continued commitment to innovation, public

service, and responsive government.

Editor's Note: Los Angeles County Assessor Jeff Prang has been leading the largest local public property assessment agency in the nation since 2014. His office of about 1,400 appraisers and support staff is dedicated to creating an accurate and timely "property assessment roll." This year, the office conducted more than 2.5 million real estate and business assessments valued at more than \$2.2 trillion.

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Assemblymember Michelle Rodriguez pauses for a La Nueva Voz photo with Manny Dawabi, owner of Canani Coffee, at this month's "Coffee with a Cop," hosted by the Pomona Police Department. Canani's opened for business in January and has become a popular spot in Downtown Pomona.



COFFEE WITH A COP -- If you're going to have coffee with a cop, it might as well be with the police chief, right? Pictured in this "selfie" taken at the event this month at Canani Coffee in Downtown Pomona, clockwise from bottom right, are Pomona City Councilmember Debra Martin, Renee Barbee of La Nueva Voz, Kamille Hemsworth representing Assemblymember Michelle Rodriguez, and Pomona Police Chief Mike Ellis, holding the coffee. The Pomona Police Department hosts the "Coffee with a Cop" events from time to time at various locations around town to enable businesses and residents to meet police officers and build a stronger community. Canani's is located at 101 W. Mission Blvd., Suite 106, in Downtown Pomona.



Representatives of the Pomona Police Department were on hand outside this month's "Coffee with a Cop" offering "Pink Patch" merchandise for sale. The Pink Patch Project asks police officers to wear a "pink patch" on their uniform identifying the name of their police departments in recognition of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Pictured, from left, are Pomona Police Civilian Commander Kendra Farmer, Dispatch Manager Carmen Greenwood, and Management Analyst Natalie Diaz. The Seal Beach Police Department launched the Pink Patch Project in 2013, and in 2015 the Irwindale Police Department took it a step further and sold patches to the community, raising more than \$20,000 for the City of Hope. In 2016, then-Irwindale Police Chief Anthony Miranda took the idea to the Los Angeles Police Chiefs Association and 25 local agencies came on board. Today, the program has expanded to several hundred partner agencies throughout the world and includes police, sheriffs, fire, EMS responders and federal departments. Breast cancer accounts for about 30 percent of all newly diagnosed cancers among women in the U.S. and about one out of eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in her lifetime.

Photos by Renee Barbee

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Upgraded facilities... from pg. 17

sible.”

Three Valleys Municipal Water District Director Carlos Goytia, who also represents Pomona on the water board, said he was a former president of the Pony United Youth Baseball League that once played on the Kennedy Park field.

He said he worked with the late Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina to obtain grant money to pay for lighting for the field.

“But the vision of this was to really activate this place for the community,” Goytia said. “This community means it’s something special for me because I grew up here. I grew up down the street. My dad was a coach here. My mom was a board member here. We had many, many great times of playing on that field. And this was the hub for the community, for us, a place to come where we feel safe, where we were able to come and build relationships and play baseball.”

He thanked Martin for her work and for “sharing the vision with us to activate this park as well, because this park belongs to you, the community.”

Participating in the ceremonies were elected officials, city public works and parks officials,



Three Valleys Director
Carlos Goytia



Pomona City Councilmember
Debra Martin



Pomona City Councilmember
Lorraine Canales



Three Valleys Director
Jorge Marquez

and parents and kids from several youth baseball league teams who play on the field.

Work on the project got under

way in December 2025 and was completed in August.

Kennedy Park is located at 1150 Fairplex Drive, Pomona.

Lives of victims honored... from pg. 14

to an abusive situation, we must do everything we can to help.”

The event is held each year during the month of October which is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Bell said throughout the month House of Ruth works to raise awareness about domestic violence and how to recognize the signs of abuse.

“We can teach young people about healthy relationships, we can support survivors without judgement, and we can make sure people in our community know where to turn when they need help,” she added. “As we prepare to celebrate our 50th anniversary, I think about the thousands of survivors and families who’ve walked through our doors over the years and the community that has stood beside House of Ruth through changing and challenging times.”

“This work is hard, it’s very hard,” she said, and yet I’ve never worked with a fiercer, more dedi-

cated group of people in my entire career.”

“We’re all here for one reason – to help survivors and their children find safety, healing and hope,” she said. “For 50 years, House of Ruth has been here and with your help we will continue to be here. Thank you for believing in this work.”

Melissa Pitts, chief program officer for House of Ruth, told the group she has served the organization for more than 25 years.

“You know what I think hope looks like?” she asked the group. “Sometimes I think hope looks like getting a key to an apartment, sometimes hope looks like a child sleeping peacefully through the night. Sometimes hope looks like a survivor



Pat Bell
Executive Director
House of Ruth

finding their voice again. Sometimes hope looks like a woman who has been told for years that she is worthless, finally recognizing her own worth. And sometimes hope is simply saying, ‘I don’t know what tomorrow will look like, but I know I don’t have to do it alone.’

“That’s the kind of hope that House of Ruth has been helping with for 50 years,” she added.

House of Ruth assists families victimized by domestic violence.

For more information or to donate or volunteer, contact House of Ruth at (909) 623-4364 or visit the web site at houseofruthinc.org.

Victims in need of help can call the confidential 24-hour hotline seven days a week at (877) 988-5559 for support, safety planning, resources and hope.

(909) 629-2292

www.lanuevavoz.net



Pomona City Councilmember Lorraine Canales presents a certificate from the City of Pomona to House of Ruth last week at its annual candlelight vigil honoring lives lost to domestic violence. Pictured, from left, are House of Ruth Director of Community Services Sabrina Almaraz, Executive Director Pat Bell, and Canales.



Sandra Lopez, representing State Sen. Susan Rubio, presents a certificate to House of Ruth recognizing their work in the community. Pictured, from left, are House of Ruth Chief Program Officer Melissa Pitts, Executive Director Pat Bell, and Lopez.

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