

Sheraton Fairplex Hotel provides 'safe haven' for first responders and homeless quarantines, with occupancy figures indicating Pomona may have reached all-time high on COVID-19

By **Jeff Schenkel**
Publisher

Pomona's Sheraton Fairplex Hotel, the first hotel in Los Angeles County to be placed in service for temporary housing for possible coronavirus patients, has become a virtual "safe haven" for first responders, members of the region's homeless population and oth-

ers with no other place to go during treatment or self-quarantine.

And, if daily occupancy statistics are as good an indicator as any other numbers, utilization of the hotel just might show that COVID-19 has reached an all-time high in Pomona.

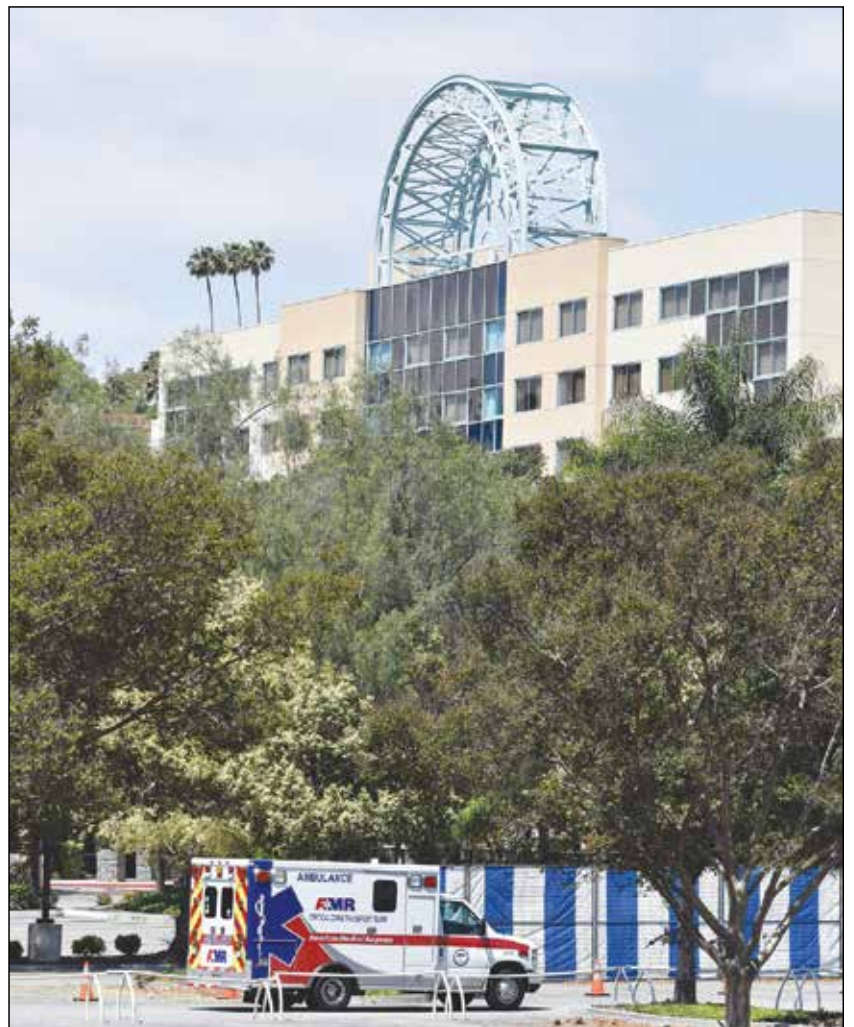
That statistical observation

was based solely on a review of the county's numbers by La Nueva Voz – not by Los Angeles County officials – but if it is valid, it may signal that Pomona and surrounding communities, at their highest levels when La Nueva Voz went to press since the coronavirus outbreak began, have no data to support the beginning of a downtrend here.

Use of the hotel for
Safe haven... pg. 2

Photo by Jeff Schenkel
DROPPING OFF ONE OF THE MORNING'S FIRST PATIENTS

-- An American Medical Response ambulance operated by a critical care transport team drops off one of the morning's first patients this month at Pomona's Sheraton Fairplex Hotel, which was converted to temporary housing for possible coronavirus patients effective March 25. Pictured is the ambulance driving slowly onto the hotel grounds just before it enters privacy screening protecting the patient unloading area from view. Security officers have been preventing unauthorized vehicles from entering the hotel grounds since March when the hotel began accepting COVID-19 patients or others needing to self-quarantine. A security guard told La Nueva Voz the ambulances have been dropping off patients at all hours of the day and night. The hotel itself is pictured at rear. La Nueva Voz captured the photo from across the parking lot using a Nikon D3500 with a Nikkor 70-300 mm telephoto zoom lens set at 86 mm (1/1600 sec at f/10).



Residents line up for Pomona's first 'Pomona helping Pomona' food drive

The "Pomona Food Drive" that served 1,400 families on a Saturday morning early this month at Washington Park – with cars lined around several blocks and backed up several miles down to Mission Boulevard – made it clear that there are Pomona residents out of work with no paycheck coming due to COVID-19 closures, said Pomona City Councilmember Nora Garcia.

Garcia, Pomona's
Food drive... pg. 3



Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis, wearing a face mask, gloves and a Dodger ball cap, passes out baby diapers to parents at this month's 'Pomona Food Drive' that served some 1,400 families driving through Pomona's Washington Park.

PAID ADVERTORIAL

Confronting Stigma during May Mental Health Awareness Month... A message from Tri-City Mental Health

May is nationally recognized as Mental Health Awareness Month to highlight the importance of mental health issues and reduce stigma. While 1 in 5 people will experience a mental health condition during their lifetime, everyone faces challenges in life that can impact their mental wellbeing. During the COVID-19 outbreak, we all have been impacted in different ways. For the first time, individuals who have previously not struggled with mental health are now experiencing increased levels of anxiety, isolation, or loneliness.

Public confusion, anxiety and fear of contracting COVID-19 is affecting the mental wellbeing of individuals and communities alike. It is important to recognize that these factors fuel harmful misinformation and stereotypes. Stigma hurts everyone by creating fear, anger and blame towards people who may or may not have the disease. Many people are facing the stigma attached to COVID-19, including people who have the disease and their family and friends, people of Asian descent, healthcare professionals, as well as people released from quarantine. Stigmatized people may face shame, social exclusion, violence and barriers accessing the resources they need to support themselves and their families, such as healthcare, housing, education, and employment.

Diversity and inclusion are at the heart of who we are as a community. As we face these challenges together, it is important to talk openly about mental health and stamp out stigma in all its forms. Here are ways we can confront stigma, provide support and promote wellness and resilience for everyone.

- Spread facts, not fear, and share reputable public health sources like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) with your friends and family
- Show compassion and solidarity, and reach out to help those who have been affected at this time
- Give voice to people's experiences and share positive stories of recovery
- Join Tri-City's free webinar series and community connections to continue the conversation about mental health and how to support wellbeing

For those who need support, Tri-City is here. Call us at (866) 623-9500 or visit www.tricitymhs.org for resources and upcoming webinars.

Visit Room4Everyone.org for free mental health kits.



Safe haven... from pg. 1

COVID patients was announced in late March in a Los Angeles news conference as a contract between Los Angeles County and Fairplex went into effect.

All 244 rooms of the hotel were to be made available to COVID patients as needed through the end of May and possibly longer, through the end of June.

While the facility opened its doors to COVID patients on March 25, statistics were not reported on the county's daily incident update web site until March 27, when four patients were recorded.

Pomona 'medical sheltering' hotel occupancy highest in county

Numbers jumped to 18 on March 30, 19 on March 31 and 25 on April 1, building to an initial peak of 43 on April 28 before beginning a gradual decline back into the 20s.

But the numbers went back up hitting 67 on May 18, dipping a bit and then topping out at 70 on this publication's deadline day of May 22.

Also of interest, 70 "clients" at the Pomona hotel was the highest number of any of the seven hotels in the county's system of medical sheltering

locations.

According to the county's statistics, David L. Murphy had 26, Mayfair Hotel had 10, MLK Recuperative Center had 18, Bell Gardens had 63, Westchester/L.A. had 3, and

VID-19 emergency operations officials call self-isolation and self-quarantine the "most effective strategies in slowing the spread of this virus and protecting our families and our communities in the midst of

need a place to quarantine or isolate, no matter their socioeconomic or housing status," said Sarah Ardalani, a media relations spokesperson for the county's COVID-19 emergency operations joint information

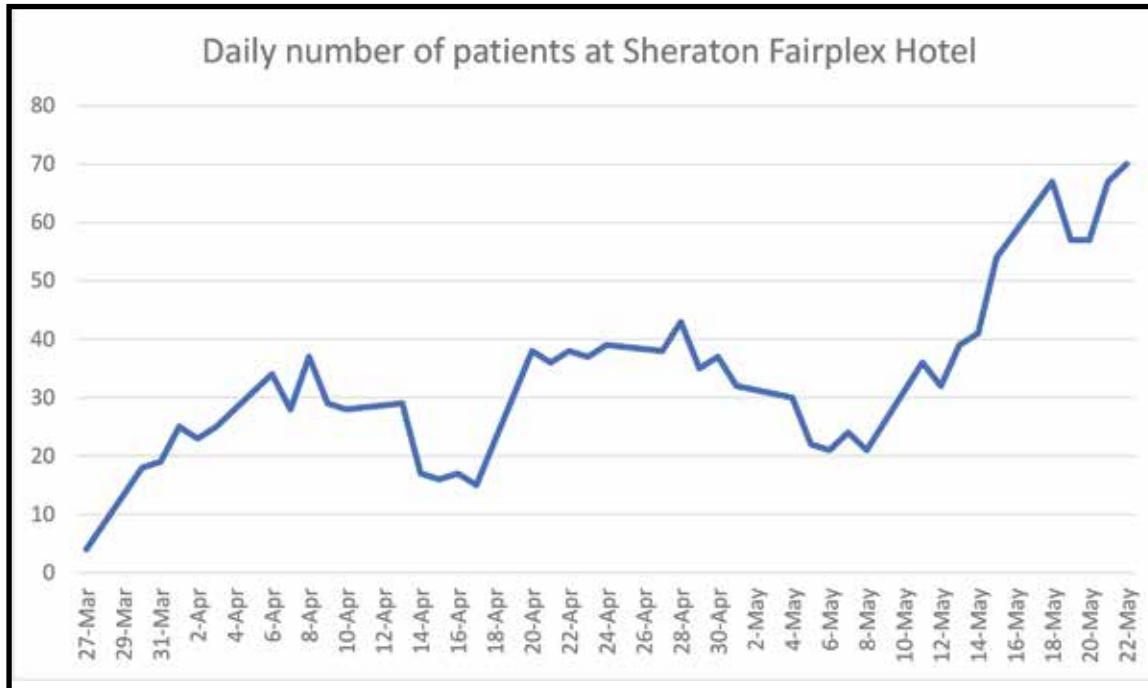


Illustration by La Nueva Voz



County of Los Angeles Photos / Michael Owen Baker
William West of Dignity Health conducts a training with a new ventilator last month for intensive care unit nurses when the recently shuttered St. Vincent Medical Center in Los Angeles was re-purposed as the Los Angeles Surge Hospital, a temporary facility to provide additional beds and expand intensive care capacity for COVID-19 patients. Dignity Health and Kaiser Permanente partnered with the state and county to open the facility which was expected to provide as many as 266 beds.

LA County Fair becomes latest victim of coronavirus

For only the second time in its nearly 100-year history, the LA County Fair has been canceled this year – this time due to limitations placed on large public gatherings by state and county public health officials because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Fair officials – acting out of concern for the safety and well-being of guests – are following the guidelines of public health officials who are advising against large public gatherings for the remainder of the year.

Fairplex President and CEO Miguel Santana said the decision was made after much discussion between his office and county officials and was not an easy decision to make.

"My heart is heavy – for our guests who come out to make

memories, our vendors who rely on the fair circuit for their income and our employees who work so hard all year long to create this special event," Santana said. "The LA County Fair is an iconic event that celebrates the best of Southern California. It is beloved by many. But we had to take into consideration the health and safety of everyone."

Los Angeles County Fair Association Board Chair Heidi Hanson said her board had no choice.

"The one thing we can promise is that the LA County Fair will be back, better than ever – especially as we plan for our Centennial," she said.

The fair will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2022. It closed only once before – from 1942 to 1947 – for World War II. It closed for the day on Sept. 11, 2001 but reopened

Sherman Hotel had 28 which, combined with Pomona, totaled 218 for the day.

County officials report the entire city of Pomona has recorded a total of 338 cases of COVID-19 and 11 deaths.

Los Angeles County has recorded 43,052 cases and 1,072 deaths.

Los Angeles County COVID-19 cases are expected to rise the following day.

Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis, whose first district includes the fairgrounds, said the closure will be disappointing but necessary.

"Like many of you, I grew up eagerly anticipating each year's opening of the LA County Fair, and I cherish my family memories of this special yearly event," Solis said. "Unfortunately, we have had to make the difficult decision to cancel the LA County Fair due to our current public health crisis."

"We must make these short-term sacrifices to preserve the health of the people we love," she said. "I am certain that once we get through this challenging time, we will come back stronger and even more appreciative of the things we

Latest victim... pg. 8

this deadly pandemic."

To date, a total of seven medical shelter locations – including the Fairplex Sheraton – are operating countywide with approximately 900 beds available to temporarily house those in need, officials added.

Initially, officials said the plan for Pomona reportedly called for housing only first responders – police, fire, sheriff's deputies and the like – who needed to self-isolate or be quarantined and had nowhere to go without exposing either family members or co-workers.

It is unclear when Sheraton Fairplex began accepting homeless individuals, and county officials are not reporting specifics.

"Medical sheltering sites are available to individuals who

center.

All "clients" stay until they are medically cleared for discharge, she said. And no patients requiring ventilators or other intensive care treatment are admitted to the medical sheltering sites (hotels).

"These are individuals who



Stephen Shoopman gets used to his Project Roomkey bed at a hotel in Van Nuys after moving in from a homeless encampment. Project Roomkey is an initiative to bring medically vulnerable people experiencing homelessness indoors during the COVID-19 pandemic.

need limited treatment for the virus but are in isolation or quarantine because they have either tested positive or have been exposed to COVID-19," she said.

All of the county's medical sheltering sites offer staffing

Safe haven... pg. 4

Food drive... from pg. 1

District 3 representative whose district includes Washington Park, said she knew the need was going to be great when she saw the country was “closing down.”

“With 30 million Americans out of a job it only makes sense that people are in need,” she said. “Unfortunately, even this food drive isn’t going to meet the entire need of our community.”

“There are people walking up without cars that we can’t serve today, there are people who are definitely not seeing any cash flow entering their home, so the situation for them is dire,” she added. “I really hope that the government and us as city officials can do more for our people in coming days.”

Even so, she was pleased with the widespread participation in the effort.

“It’s just been amazing,” she said.

Officials said some 750 cars were lined up before volunteers opened the gates. And Pomona police officers were kept busy making everything go smoothly in the area of both traffic control and crowd control.

Pastor Alan Espinoza, director and co-founder of God Provides Ministry and Pomona Valley Food Bank in Pomona, said his organization provided 67,000

pounds of food in two trucks before the event opened at 8 a.m. and brought in another truck loaded with 27,000 pounds at 9:30 a.m. based on the numbers of cars lining up.

Volunteers were on hand setting up as early as 6:30 a.m.

Funding came from the City of Pomona, various elected officials and Espinoza’s family.

He told La Nueva Voz volunteers were handling 20 cars every five minutes, or 240 cars an hour during the morning event.

Included were canned goods, soft drinks, chips, tangelos, cantaloupes and more.

Assemblymember Freddie



Volunteers at this month’s “Pomona Food Drive” prepare bags to distribute to some 1,400 families that lined up literally for miles for the give-away at Pomona’s Washington Park.



Pomona Police Chief Mike Ellis, at right, chats with Three Valleys Municipal Water District Board member Carlos Goytia at this month’s “Pomona Food Drive.” Both were volunteers helping out throughout the Saturday morning event.



Pomona City Councilmember Nora Garcia, organizer of the “Pomona Food Drive” event this month, checks in with volunteers to see how supplies are holding up.



Volunteers from God Provides Ministry and Pomona Valley Food Bank in Pomona unload 27,000 pounds of backup reserves as food supplies at the “Pomona Food Drive” started to run low mid-way through the Saturday morning event.

Rodriguez’ staff was even handing out flyers reminding residents to complete their U.S. Census forms.

Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis and her staff were on hand as Solis, wearing a Dodger ball cap, personally passed out diapers to families that need them.

“It’s devastating to see the need – it’s just increased since the last seven weeks when we started,” she told La Nueva Voz. “You’d start out maybe giving out food to 300 and now it’s up to 3,000, 7,000, so we need to have more donations provided to the L.A. Regional Food Bank as well as to any other pantries that are in need of support, and we still have a ways to go.”

She also cautioned that people need to abide by the public health ordinance to “stay in place and at

home, wear masks and keep your distance, wash your hands, don’t go out unnecessarily . . . until we’re through this, and it’s going to take us . . . maybe more than a month so we have to hang tight.”

“My heart goes out to the health care workers and the first responders but also to the people who work in our groceries and do maintenance and clean and all that because they are exposed as well, and they have to go out and work,” Solis said.

Asked about televised reports of fighting in the streets at the beach in Orange County between those observing the beach closures and precautions and those who were not, she said it was “unfortunate.”

“They’re actually putting more people at risk and if people from L.A. County go out there that’s not helping us either because they’re going to spread it,” she said. “And at least in Los Angeles County . . . we’ve had a drop in the curve so to speak, more stabilization here, but we still need to do more.”

“And we need to get more people tested so people need to go to the Fairplex – before they go there, call 211 and see if you can get an appointment, because we are not serving at our capacity,” she added. “That means people are not going, so they need to go.”

Solis told La Nueva Voz that Los Angeles County just that same day announced a \$3 million allocation to the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank, a partner in the county effort to connect communities and families with needed resources during the COVID-19 crisis.

A county news release later in the day announcing the allocation said an estimated two million res-

Safe haven... from pg. 2

and support, including round-the-clock staffing by physicians and nursing staff and access to specialized care, including mental health services, if needed.

And while the sites – including the Pomona hotel – are available to all county residents who cannot self-isolate or self-quarantine safely, people are referred geographically based on availability.

Ardalani's e-mail comments were in response to a list of 15 questions La Nueva Voz e-mailed to the county.

County hotels – including Sheraton Fairplex – serve 'exposed' homeless, plus people testing positive

"Medical sheltering sites serve individuals who cannot safely isolate or quarantine in their own home," she said.

Ardalani explained those include people who test positive for COVID-19 and need to isolate and shelter in place, symptomatic people who need to be isolated waiting for test results, and people experiencing homelessness who are not symptomatic but have been exposed to COVID-positive individuals.

"Self-isolation and self-quarantine are the most effective strategies to slow the spread of COVID-19, and medical shelter sites operated by Los Angeles County are protecting our families and our communities in the midst of this deadly pandemic," Kevin McGowan, director of the Los Angeles Office of Emergency Management, which heads up the medical sheltering operations effort, said in a prepared statement. "By ensuring all of our residents have a safe place to isolate, Los Angeles County is helping to flatten the curve and protecting all residents."

La Nueva Voz reached out to the county after first contacting Fairplex President and CEO Miguel Santana, who said in an e-mail that "the hotel is 100 percent operated by the county

– they do not share any information on the type of guests staying at the hotel or their condition to us."

However, as recently as in last month's La Nueva Voz, Santana commented on what at the time was a rumor that the hotel was being used for housing the homeless. He said the hotel was not being used for homeless COVID patients.

That rumor created a significant level of concern at the time among nearby residents voicing opposition in e-mails and on social media to

the entire plan to use the hotel as a medical sheltering site.

Either way, the county's acknowledging this month the potential inclusion of homeless individuals at the Pomona hotel was information that previously had not been disclosed.

A separate temporary housing program called "Project Roomkey" was launched by Gov. Newsom in early April specifically to provide safe isolation capacity for tens of thousands of people experiencing homelessness in California in order to protect them and the state from COVID-19.

California became the first state in the nation to secure approval from the Federal Emergency Management Agency for the program with a goal of securing up to 15,000 rooms for this purpose. The state and its county partners initially moved nearly 900 homeless individuals off the streets and out of shelters into isolation.

Pomona Motel 6 may become 'Project Roomkey' facility

A Motel 6 located at 2470 S. Garey Ave., Pomona, reportedly is being considered for inclusion in the "Project

Roomkey" program, according to two sources who spoke with La Nueva Voz but preferred not to be named.

Ardalani explained that program is for homeless individuals who are not symptomatic and have not been exposed but are seniors or medically vul-



Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis speaks about the importance of using a mask during her comments at the opening last month of the San Gabriel Valley's first new Los Angeles County COVID-19 mobile testing site at the San Gabriel Valley Airport in El Monte.

nerable.

"The program protects the most vulnerable in our communities and helps prevent a surge on our healthcare system to ensure that quality care is available to everyone who needs it – a benefit to all of Los Angeles County," she said.

"The individuals served by Project Roomkey do not have a place to isolate at home and are at higher risk for infection and subsequent hospitalization," she added. "This would have a significant impact on the county's healthcare system."

Ardalani said at the Pomona Fairplex Sheraton, the facility initially was staffed by a medical team from the county's Department of Public Health but now is under medical operation by East Valley Community Health Center which maintains a year-round facility in Pomona.

And Pomona's Tri-City Mental Health also provides mental health and client services.

No staff member at the hotel has been diagnosed with COVID-19, she said.

Los Angeles County Super-



County of Los Angeles Photos / Michael Owen Baker
Rod Palmer checks out the view of his new Project Roomkey hotel room in Santa Clarita after moving in last month.

visor Hilda Solis, in Pomona this month for a community food give-away at Pomona's Washington Park, told La Nueva Voz the hotel project is working well.

"From what I hear, they like it, there haven't been any incidents, and it's a guaranteed resource of revenue that's coming in to the city as well as to the Fairplex," Solis said. "It's keeping people employed."

She also said Los Angeles County is receiving a 75 per-

cent reimbursement on its contract with the hotel from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

"So we're able to do that, I'm encouraged by that, I wish more cities would be like-minded and understand that," she said. "It's a pandemic. And it isn't something that was created by us, by elected officials, it's to provide security and safety to people that are impacted so we don't surge the hospitals."

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Pomona's iPoly High School adapts to COVID with 'grab and go' free meals for the week distributed Tuesdays in front of the school

iPoly High School in Pomona shifted to on-line or "distance learning" classes like everybody else under the coronavirus "stay at home" orders, but that didn't stop the school from continuing the free breakfast and lunch program using what has become known in educational circles as the "grab and go" drive-through approach.

Bryan West, iPoly's Dean of College Admissions, said the school moved the lunches out of the cafeteria and out onto the sidewalk so parents could pick them up – a week at a time.

The Tuesday give-away started the week after the last on-campus day of school on March 13 and continued until this week's end of the school year.

And with five breakfasts and five lunches for each of the 50 participating students, that quickly adds up to 500 meals that are prepared for each Tuesday's give-away.

School secretary Rhianna Franco, who normally prepares lunches only during the regular school year, has been working extra duty because of COVID-19.

She said meals for the week, for example, when La Nueva Voz stopped by included garlic pesto pasta, chicken Caesar salad, turkey sandwiches with fruit and garbanzo salad, a ham sandwich with corn and apple, spaghetti with carrots, cereal with an apple, Mexican concha (sweet bread) with a pear, and coffee cake bread with honey graham crackers and a pear.

West said students in the program – just like students in the school – can come from Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside or San Bernardino Counties. And since some of the families have students that go to other schools, they can pick up two or three bags.

During the year, about 10 percent of the school's 500 students are on the free and reduced lunch list. But for the curbside "grab and go" program, the school reached out to both families already on the list and others who had applied, just to make sure they were getting the meals to the families that need them.

West said the first week, only five families showed up, but it rapidly grew to about 10 times that for the rest of the school

are not, so it makes me feel good knowing that other kids are being fed and they might be hungry while their parents are at work."

The program normally continued from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. each Tuesday.

The meals program was only one of the ways the school started gearing up for COVID in February. Teachers started working on getting their on-line classrooms up and running, along with making sure the technology and wi-fi connections were available to everyone. It turned out only about 15 students did not have the necessary technology when they switched to distance learning, and the school was able to provide computers and mobile hot spots using funding from the Los Angeles County Office of Education, which operates the school.

iPoly (International Polytechnic High School), located on the



iPoly's Dean of College Admissions Bryan West places five breakfasts and five lunches in the back of the car this month at the school's weekly drive-through "grab and go" give-away program.

Cal Poly University Pomona campus, is a specialized project-based school that provides students with a comprehensive high school curriculum as well as with a technological, cultural and global foundation.

The tuition-free public high school operates in partnership

with Cal Poly and juniors and seniors are encouraged to take concurrent college courses at Cal Poly, earning transferable college credits.



School secretary Rhianna Franco bags up lunches for the week before the start of one of the weekly food give-away distributions at iPoly High School in Pomona.

year.

He added that pick-up times are arranged so all of the families don't arrive at the same time.

Some students even come from surrounding school districts if the iPoly program is more convenient.

Then how important is the program during the COVID emergency?

"It's extremely important and it isn't just for the low-income or the families that need financially, it's also for those that work full time and they can't make breakfast and lunch for their kids," Franco said. "These (meals) are pre-packaged ready to go, they don't have to worry about their kids cooking, or getting into the microwave, these literally are ready to eat meals and all they've got to do is open them up and eat them."

"It means a lot because I have two school-aged children and I'm blessed enough to be able to be home with them," Franco added. "Other people

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Students adapt to a different kind of graduation in 2020

Graduation is a little different in Pomona – and around the world – this year, but students seem to be doing a good job of adapting to unusual and difficult circumstances resulting from the COVID-19 restrictions.

Students are not “marching” to the sound of “Pomp and Circumstance” and if they are hearing commencement speakers challenging them to reach for the stars, it is likely they are hearing them over their computers or cell phones.

In Pomona Unified School District, a spokesman said every fifth-grade student at K-5 schools is receiving a congratulatory yard sign, along with sixth graders, eighth graders and, of course 12th grade students graduating from high school.

Pomona Unified will have an

estimated 1,745 students graduating districtwide from high school this year, compared to the 1,611 graduates last year as noted in the June 2019 La Nueva Voz.

Pictured are several examples of how students are celebrating their educational

accomplishments in Pomona Unified School District schools.

The last official day of school this year is May 29.

Congratulations to all the graduates, at all grade levels in Pomona Unified.

Students adapt... pg. 12



An eighth grader at Lorbeer Middle School in Diamond Bar has a sign outside the house on Phillips Drive in Pomona's Westmont.



SEEO grads received yard signs to place outside their home to celebrate their accomplishment.



Pictured is a 'Class of 2020' yard sign for a Pomona High School student who lives just across the street from the school at Sinclair Street and Bangor Street in Pomona.



Even the group Compassionate Pomona got into the graduation spirit this month by buying banners to appear on both sides of the bridge over Garey Avenue in Downtown Pomona. The group wanted to do something as a collaborative effort for the graduates who were missing out on graduation ceremonies this year because of COVID-19. Members of the group donated more than \$700 to purchase the banners and City of Pomona public works employees placed the banners on the overpass. Pictured is the banner hanging over the northbound lanes.



Pictured is a sampling of graduation signs on display in front of Pomona High School.

Pomona Valley Hospital open for business, resumes elective non-urgent procedures

Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center is still providing emergency and trauma care during the COVID-19 crisis, along with specialized treatments for cancer, heart conditions and stroke, and the hospital just resumed elective non-urgent procedures and services, according to an open letter to the community from hospital President and CEO Rich Yochum.

“And as one of the largest birthing hospitals in Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties, we’re still bringing new babies into the world every day,” Yochum said.

He added the hospital’s resumption of elective non-urgent procedures was in line with guidance from the California Department of Public Health.

In addition to that, Yochum said the hospital’s facilities and health centers are safe.

“We are taking extra precautions to keep you safe including following all guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Los Angeles County Department of Public Health,” he said.

Yochum cautioned against waiting to get emergency healthcare but encouraged those in need to call 911 – especially those who might be experiencing a heart attack or stroke.

Ohio law firm offers essay contest for undocumented immigrant essential workers

In an effort to encourage greater appreciation for undocumented immigrant workers, many of whom are working on the front lines of COVID-19 in industries such as health care and food cultivation and distribution, the Herman Legal Group is sponsoring an essay contest for undocumented immigrants (including DACA recipients) working in an essential occupation.

The winner will receive a \$1,000 prize for a submission on the topic “What do you think of when you hear the word ‘immigrant?’”

Essays must be at least 300

“Delaying care may increase the severity of your condition and put your health at greater risk,” he said.

“All of us at PVHMC thank you for adhering to the stay-at-home order,” Yochum said. “Staying home and physical distancing is saving lives.”

But when emergency medical care is needed, patients “should feel confident that it is safe to come to PVHMC – whether you need life-saving care, surgery or are having a baby.”

And for urgent care or non-emergency care and family medicine, he urged patients to visit one of the hospital’s health centers located in Chino Hills, Claremont, La Verne and Pomona.

Yochum thanked hospital supporters for their gifts to the hospital foundation’s COVID-19 fund.

“Your generous philanthropic gifts are directly supporting the hospital’s safety and quality measures including the purchase of additional personal protective equipment to keep our associates and patients safe,” he said. “Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center stands ready to care for you and all your healthcare needs today and always.”

For more information about health options, visit mypvhc.com.

words in length and can be written in any language.

Entries must be submitted by Aug. 1 to immigrantstrongUSA@gmail.com. The winner will be announced on Sept. 1 and will be selected based on originality, responsiveness to the question asked, the quality of the writing and the substantive content of the response.

All personal identification will be kept strictly confidential. By applying, all applicants consent to the reproduction and publishing of their essays.

The Herman Legal Group is an immigration law firm headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio.

Mayor and Crissy Sandoval have their first – it’s a boy!

So if the Mayor of Pomona and his wife have a new baby, does that make the little boy “first kid?”

We’re pretty sure he’s not the “crown prince” in a charter city government like Pomona.

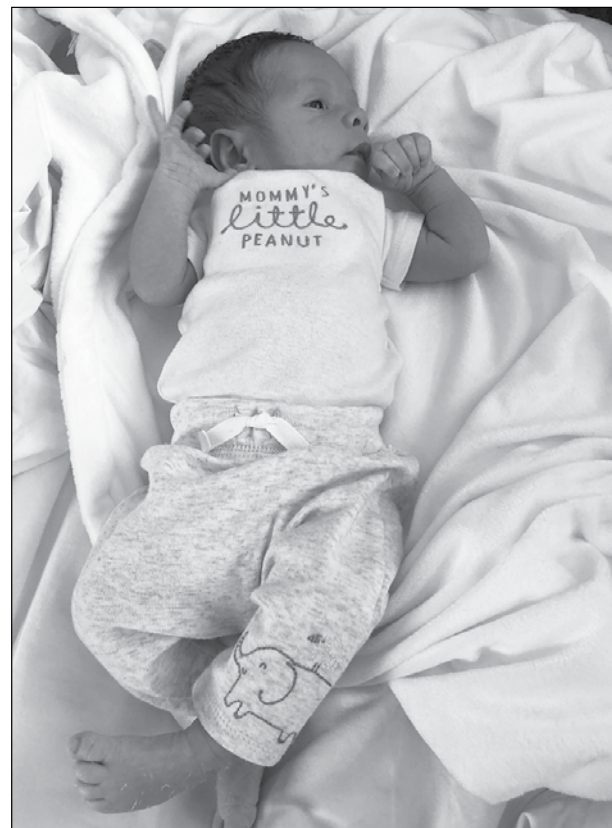
Either way, we probably ought to wait until he’s old enough to vote before we begin talking legacy politics.

But congratulations to Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval and his wife Criselda (Crissy) who had their first child last month.

Officially, Roy Emiliano Lennon Sandoval was born at 11:46 p.m. Thursday, April 16, at Kaiser Permanente Ontario Medical Center.

And he weighed in at 7 pounds 12.9 ounces and was 21 inches long (do they make “Sandoval for Mayor” t-shirts in that size?).

Sandoval, when interviewed by



Roy Emiliano Lennon Sandoval . . .
. . . Tim and Crissy Sandoval’s first

Renee Barbee of La Nueva Voz, said his wife’s spirits are high and her health is good.

“It’s been the greatest experience,” he said.

Then how does he feel about being a father?

“Tired and exhausted,” he said, but he added that they both loved it.

La Nueva Voz has noticed that whole new father thing is only having a slight impact on Sandoval’s duties running the city – he’s been seen leaving a couple of those on-line virtual meetings a little early to go home and help take care of the baby.

Sandoval had a message to the community:

“Thank you to the community for the messages of love and support from both Mayor Tim Sandoval and his wife Crissy

from the bottom of our hearts,” he said.

Congratulations, Tim and Crissy, from La Nueva Voz and all of Pomona!



Notice of Public Hearing of the Mental Health Commission Virtual Meeting

We may not be meeting in person, but we still want to hear from you!

To prevent the spread of COVID-19 and under Governor Newsom’s Executive Order N-29-20, our meeting will be held virtually.

TUESDAY, JUNE 9, 2020 AT 3:30 PM

- Learn about the status of programs funded by the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA, Prop 63) and Tri-City’s response to COVID-19
- Share your input about the MHSA Fiscal Year 2020-2023 Three-Year Program and Expenditure Plan

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Food drive... from pg. 3

idents in the county experience food insecurity on an on-going basis – more than any county in the nation.

Residents can enroll for food vouchers, find free meals in their neighborhood and request delivery assistance if needed by dialing 211.

Assemblymember Rodriguez, who personally was helping load trucks with food supplies, said the event was Pomona's first drive-through food give-away to families in the community.

"So we want to do our part to help out the community as we face this pandemic and folks in need of some things, so we want to do our part to help them out," Rodriguez said.

He said the event was a partnership between his office, Pomona City Council members Nora Garcia and Victor Preciado, Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval, Solis and Three Valleys Municipal Water District Board member Carlos Goytia, who represents south Pomona.

"We kind of all got together and wanted to donate some food and things of that nature," he said, with everyone "chipping in one way or another."

"It's the community coming together to take care of our folks," Rodriguez added.

He said about five members of his staff also were on hand to help.

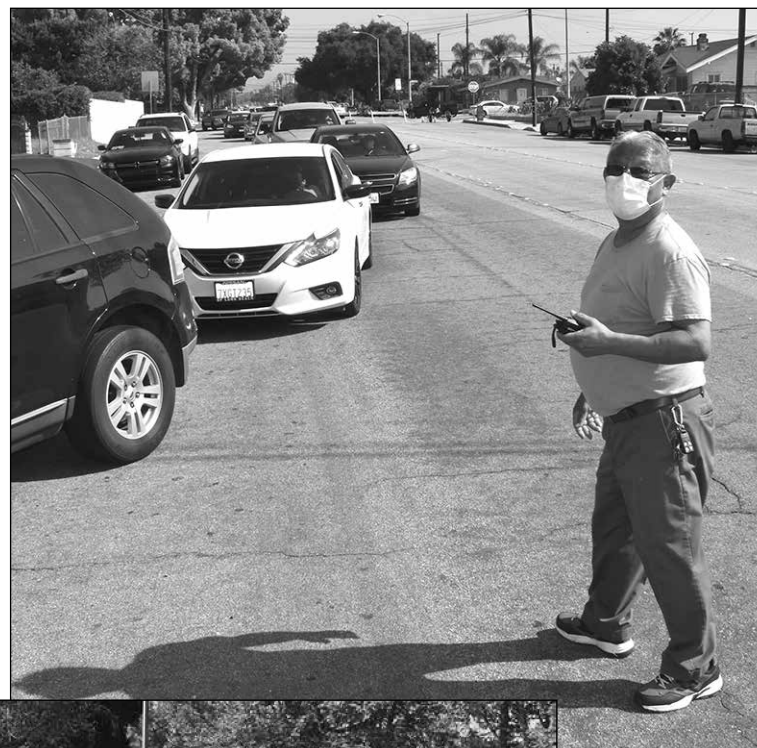
And community volunteers, city commissioners and others were helping out at all of the "easy-up" awnings lined up to serve families in their cars.

Rodriguez estimated a total of about 50 volunteers were on hand to help out.

Pomona City Councilmember Elizabeth Ontiveros-Cole was scheduled to hold a similar food drive after deadline for this issue of La Nueva Voz on May 23 at Pomona's Village Academy High School.



Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez places a bag of food items in the back of a pickup truck during this month's "Pomona Food Drive" at Washington Park. Rodriguez worked throughout the entire morning event along with about five members of his staff who were on hand to help.



Volunteer Pete Garcia, president of Pomona Beautiful, shows off his skills at directing traffic with a line of cars that stretches around several blocks and all the way back to Mission Boulevard.



Pomona City Councilmember Victor Preciado, at right, chats with other volunteers at the "Pomona Food Drive" as he takes a quick breakfast break from handing out food supplies.

YOU CAN'T HAVE TOO MANY BOXES! -- Community volunteer Lorraine Canales, who was on hand at the "Pomona Food Drive" this month at Washington Park, helped out with pretty much everything but was putting her box cutter to work when La Nueva Voz caught up with her, folding up empty boxes so they could be used at another upcoming food give-away event planned by the Pomona Optimist Club. Canales is this year's president of the Pomona Optimists.



Former Pomona City Councilmember Paula Lantz, at right, helps out loading cars at the "Pomona Food Drive" food give-away which was billed as a "Pomona helping Pomona" type of event.

Latest victim... from pg. 2

love and hold dear."

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Director Barbara Ferrer said that working together to slow the spread of COVID-19 "is our new normal for the foreseeable future."

"But I have faith that if we continue to make these difficult but necessary decisions now, we will be able to enjoy all that the LA County Fair has to offer next year," Ferrer said.

The LA County Fair attracts

about 1.1 million guests during its 19-day run each year and has an estimated economic impact of \$324 million annually in Los Angeles County, with \$58 million in the City of Pomona. It also secures more than 500 full-time equivalent jobs.

The 2020 LA County Fair had been scheduled for Sept. 4 – 27.

For information on refunds for advance pass purchases, visit the web site at www.lacountyfair.com/refunds.

Torres reelection campaign offers 'distance learning challenge' and prizes to students

Congresswoman Norma Torres has launched a "distance learning challenge" through her reelection campaign for K-12 students throughout the 35th Congressional District with participating students having a chance to win raffle prizes including Apple AirPods, televisions, Kindle Fire

Tablets and more.

The challenge serves to close out the academic school year and reward students for their year-round work and adjustment to distance learning, according to a news release.

To enter, parents must submit report cards (and win additional

entries for good grades) or various photos of distance learning in action.

"COVID-19 has completely transformed life and learning for students in our community," Torres said. "We're all inspired by how they've adapted."

The challenge continues

through June 1.

For more information, contact volunteer@normatorres.com.

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VISITOR RESTRICTIONS

To keep patients and hospital staff as healthy and safe as possible, we have implemented new visitor restrictions. We know family and friends want to be at the bedside of loved ones. We ask for your patience and understanding and encourage you to stay connected through mobile technology. Women delivering babies are allowed to have one healthy support person with them during their stay. Please visit www.pvhmc.org for details on visitor policies.

POSTPONEMENT OF SOME ELECTIVE PROCEDURES

We have postponed some elective surgeries and procedures that can be safely delayed without risk to patients to limit potential COVID-19 exposure to staff and patients and preserve critical resources such as personal protective equipment. This also allows us to manage hospital beds that may be needed in the event of an increase of patients.

PLEASE DONATE BLOOD

We are facing a regional blood supply shortage. If you are looking for ways to help and you are healthy, please give blood. You can call the American Red Cross at 1-800-RED-CROSS to make an appointment at a location near you. **PVHMC will host a blood drive at the hospital on May 1**, so mark your calendar. You can donate blood safely, even while practicing physical distancing.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY

REMEMBER, YOU ARE SAFER AT HOME

Physical distancing is the most effective way we can all do our part to slow the spread of COVID-19. By remaining at home, you protect yourself and your loved ones, and help reduce the strain on our entire health care system. This helps ensure that all hospitals have sufficient capacity to treat

the most critically ill: Those who require intensive care for heart attack, stroke and trauma—as well as patients who may become seriously ill from the coronavirus.

Physical distancing saves lives. You are safer at home. For more information about physical distancing, visit www.pvhmc.org.

FEELING MILD SYMPTOMS? PLEASE STAY HOME

Our goal is to minimize exposure to the public, vulnerable patients and healthcare workers. To that end, if you're experiencing mild symptoms please stay home and self-isolate.

WHEN TO SEEK MEDICAL CARE

If you are experiencing severe shortness of breath with cough and fever seek medical care. Or if you are experiencing symptoms that could be an indication of a heart attack or stroke, don't hesitate to call 9-1-1 or seek care at our Emergency Department. **Our Emergency Department is safe.** Delaying care may increase the severity of your condition and put your health at greater risk.

TAKE CARE, STAY SAFE, AND KNOW WE ARE HERE FOR YOU.

We will see you on the other side of this pandemic if we each take the recommended precautions to protect ourselves, our families and each other. Stay safe at home. Wash your hands thoroughly and frequently. Keep all surfaces you touch clean and disinfected. And maintain at least six feet between you and others and wear a cloth face covering when going out for necessary supplies.

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School of Arts and Enterprise students, working from their homes, launch new video series despite COVID restrictions

Distance learning, a new COVID-19 term, is still the “new normal” in schools everywhere but that’s not holding back a group of creative high school kids at Pomona’s School of Arts and Enterprise (SAE) who have just completed the first of a four-part video series on line.

That first recently launched episode of “SAE HOME: Behind The Scenes” received an enthusiastic response with more than 600 views in its first 12 hours, according to Phil Miller, SAE’s artistic director. And it logged nearly 1,100 views after the first week.

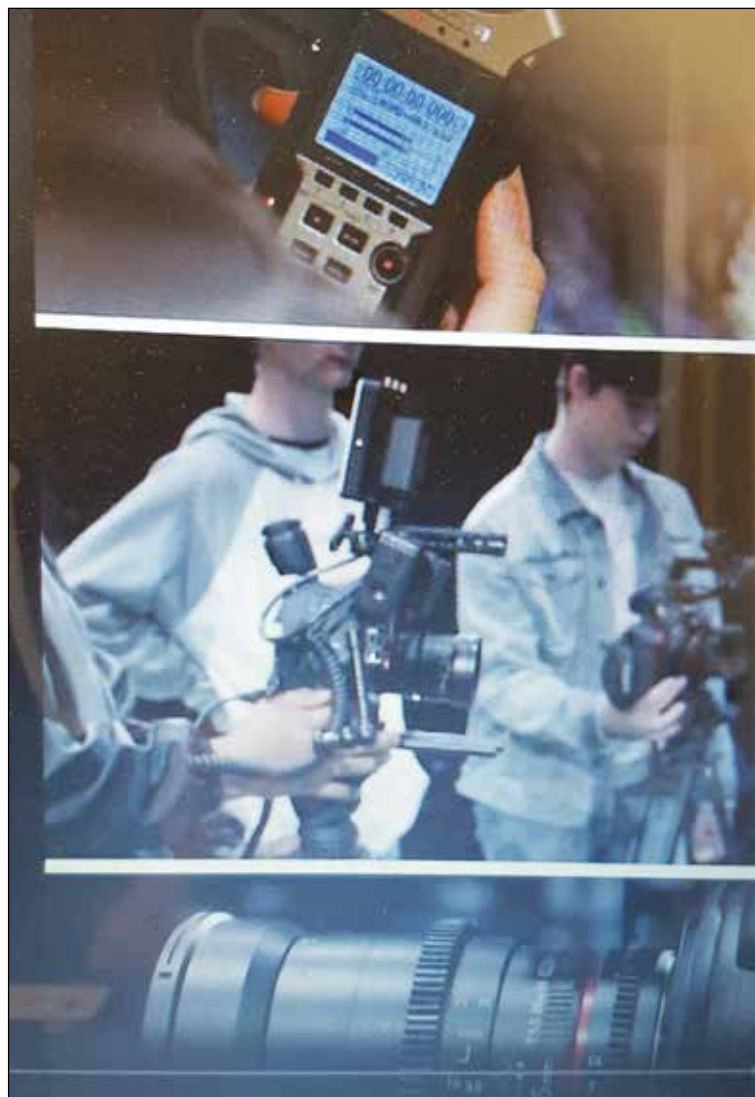
The program is one of many selections available on the school’s official Instagram TV Channel @thesaeschool.

Students picked something they know a little something about for the opening episode – the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on their lives as students.


Presented in almost “news magazine” or “documentary” fashion, the seemingly professionally produced five and a half minute piece incorporates comments from students like Jakob Olmos, a senior dance major, who makes it clear that transitioning to on-line schooling makes it “very difficult to put my life on hold.”

And for high school seniors, Olmos said their entire senior year really was placed on hold because of COVID-19.

New video series... pg. 14



A screenshot collage from the introduction to the opening segment of a new video produced by students at Pomona’s School of Arts and Enterprise shows the various types of work going into the production of the video. The students were working at home so they decided to continue their creativity and produce a video about how that “distance learning” is working out in “SAE HOME: Behind The Scenes.” And it is definitely worth taking a look on the school’s Instagram TV Channel.



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Tzu Chi Foundation donates 5,000 masks to Pomona police

Representatives of the U.S. headquarters of the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation stopped by the Pomona Police Department last month to donate some 5,000 face masks and other personal protective equipment for use during the coronavirus crisis of Pomona police and fire as well as homeless residents of Pomona's Hope for Homeless services center.

The gesture started when the office of State Sen. Connie Leyva realized there was a need and started asking around.

"Tzu Chi answered our call," said Benny Ayala, a spokesman for Leyva. "It's one of those groups that you can't believe they do so much. If there's a need, they find a new way to come up with it."

Jackson Chen, national CEO of the foundation, said the gift was provided by their donors.

"They are concerned about this pandemic and they are willing to donate their money to buy the masks," he said. "We are doing the delivery job."

He added that working with Pomona – especially during difficult times – is important to the foundation "to help the local society."



A delegation of about a dozen volunteers from the U.S. headquarters of the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation in nearby San Dimas stopped by the Pomona Police Department last month to donate some 5,000 face masks for use during COVID-19 by Pomona police and fire and homeless residents at the Pomona homeless services center. Pictured, from left, are Pomona Police Sgt. Vince Terrell, Tzu Chi national CEO Jackson Chen, and Donyielle Holley, homeless program supervisor for the city of Pomona.

"We have two principles (and the one principle, we always supply our love, without any strings attached," he said.

And they provide their help with no boundaries using volunteers, all willing to spend their time in any capacity "for the benefit of others."

"That's the circle of the Tzu Chi

Foundation," Chen said.

Pomona Police Sgt. Vince Terrell accepted the contribution on behalf of the police department and the community, thanking the group for their volunteerism and their involvement "not only with the Pomona Police Department but primarily with the citizens in the community of the City of Pomona."

"So on behalf of the Pomona Police Department and on behalf of the citizens we accept this gracious gift and we thank you for your time and effort and products that you delivered to us today," Terrell added. "We will make sure they are distributed accordingly."

Also accepting the masks was

Donation of masks.. pg. 14

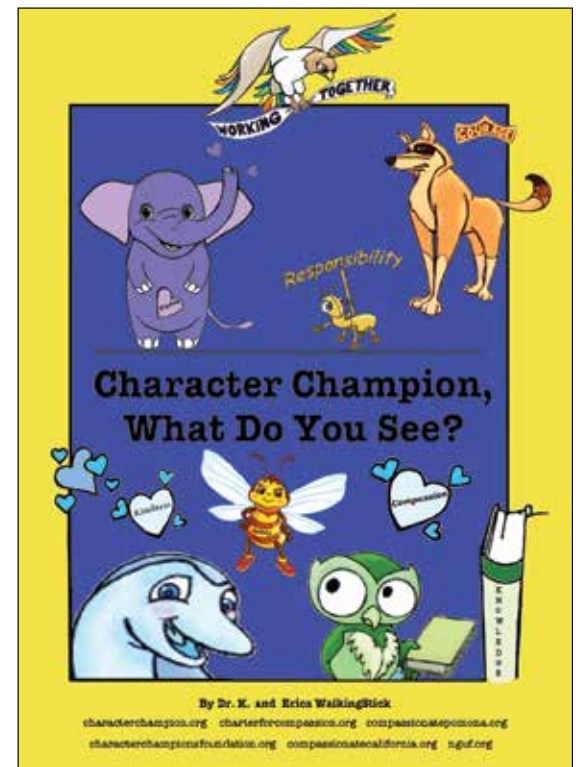
Compassionate Pomona teams up with groups on new coloring storybook project to help children deal with coronavirus

Compassionate Pomona has teamed up with five other organizations to help distribute a new coloring storybook to children to enable them to learn about compassion and coronavirus with the superhero "character champion" mascots.

The 34-page coloring book "Character Champion, What Do You See," which can be downloaded at no cost at www.characterchampionsfoundation.org, was created for children of all ages. It addresses the current challenges of the coronavirus and provides direction for the young or young-at-heart about how to cope successfully during quarantines and the global pandemic.

The seven "character champions" engage their strengths for resiliency, understanding, and gaining compassion toward self and others, according to the authors.

Ketterman said the goal is "to make social-emotional learning and moral development education available to all at no cost."



Compassionate Pomona teams up with coronavirus coloring book project.

The book helps readers explore what makes a person a character champion, what is a compassionate community and city, and how do character champions live, work, and play together in compassionate communities and cities to fight the coronavirus pandemic across the globe.

"A compassionate city is an uncomfortable city, a city that is uncomfortable when anyone is homeless or hungry . . . if every child isn't loved and given rich opportunities to grow and thrive . . . when as a community we don't

Compassionate Pomona.. pg. 13



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Students adapt... from pg. 6



La Nueva Voz saw the easy-ups in front of Pomona's School of Extended Educational Options at the Village at Indian Hill and stopped in to discover it was day two of a two-day process of handing out yard signs for graduating seniors, dressing them up in caps and gowns and having them pose for the "official" photographer for a senior class photo. Pictured in front of the school are Jocelyn Gomar and Isaiah Hernandez. Hernandez attended SEEO classes at the Diamond Ranch High School campus, while Gomar attended classes at both Diamond Ranch and at the Village at Indian Hill campus. Both plan on going on to community college locally. SEEO also has campuses at Garey, Pomona and Ganesha High Schools, another at Diamond Point Elementary School in Diamond Bar, and a sports academy at Fremont Academy of Engineering and Design. A total of 160 SEEO seniors are graduating this year.



Jocelyn Gomar, a graduating senior at Pomona's SEEO, has her official class photo taken in front of a backdrop as school officials wrapped up two days of distributing yard signs and getting students set for their close-up.



Two "custom" signs are visible in the front yard of a house on Phillips Drive in Pomona's Westmont -- one announcing a graduate from Pomona's Decker Elementary School and the other graduating from Lone Hill Middle School in San Dimas.

A proud graduate of Pomona's Palomares Academy of Health Sciences has a graduation sign planted in the front yard of a house on Alvarado Street near Gibbs Street in Pomona.



Please visit our web site at www.lanuevavoz.net

to see the latest issue of La Nueva Voz, past issues and more!



Victory Outreach distributes 1,000 hot meals in Saturday drive-through

Pomona's Victory Outreach Church – in partnership with Uniquely Blessed Ministries – held a free drive-through food give-away this month serving 1,000 hot meals to those in need.

"We had it in our hearts to be able to bless the community with some food and so it worked out together that we teamed up with them," said Pastor Robert Garcia. "We're giving away some

each week during the COVID-19 lockdown.

The "vegan-friendly" meal included pasta with tomato sauce and vegetables.

"We wanted to give just a little bit of help but a lot of hope," said Garcia, who has been with Victory Outreach for the past 19 years. "We wanted people to know that God loves them and we wanted people to know that during these



A volunteer hands two hot meals to a "customer" this month at a free drive-through food give-away organized by Pomona's Victory Outreach Church in partnership with Uniquely Blessed Ministries. The event distributed a total of 1,000 meals.

free meals today, hot meals, and also with water, to all the families that come through."

He said a second drive-through event will be held from noon to 2 p.m. on Saturday, May 30, also at the church, located at 177 W. Monterey Ave., Pomona.

"Especially during this time of so much change and uncertainty we wanted to bring even a little help to families in Pomona," Garcia told La Nueva Voz.

He said the church got the word out on the event primarily using Facebook and Instagram.

Garcia explained that Uniquely Blessed Ministries arranged for the meals through the Sikh ministry foodbank, which has a goal of serving up to 20,000 meals



Volunteers come in all sizes with two volunteers of the shorter variety pictured here helping out bagging water bottles for the food give-away.

changing times that one thing is unchanging, and that is God loves them and God is in control."

Marty Lopez, CEO and a founder of Uniquely Blessed Ministries and its affiliated Uniquely Blessed Car Ministry, said his group provides food year-round to those in need.

And the car ministry, he said, is a Christian car club-based ministry.

"We low ride for the community with Jesus, we reach out to the homeless, the drug addicts, and the prostitutes," he said.

About 30 volunteers partici-

Hot meals... pg. 14

State Farm agent John Forbing plans move to Claremont to share offices with State Farm's Nona Tirre

Pomona State Farm agent John Forbing, always actively involved in the communities of both Diamond Bar and Pomona throughout his entire career, will move on July 1 into available space in the Claremont office of State Farm agent Nona Tirre after some 30 years at his Pomona location.

Forbing, who was the second tenant in 1989 in a new strip mall at Temple Avenue and Mission Boulevard, said there will be no change in office operation and his staff will remain the same.

He added he has been in the same agent group with Tirre since she started in August 2009 and, because she had space in her office for another agent, it made sense for him to move in and share expenses.

The Claremont office is located at 154 W. San Jose Ave., a block east of Indian Hill Boulevard just north of the San Bernardino Free-

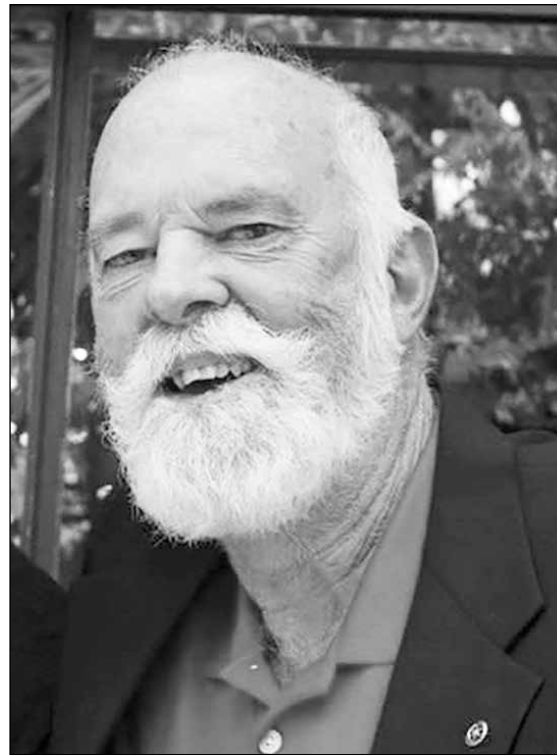
way.

Forbing's telephone number will remain the same – (909) 623-8571.

His office provides automobile and fire insurance (both personal and commercial), in addition to life insurance and health insurance.

Tirre, also active in both Pomona and Claremont and a board member of Claremont Rotary, opened her first office in Pomona 11 years ago before relocating to the Claremont location eight years ago.

Forbing, a former Diamond Bar City Councilmember and Mayor and a former Walnut Valley Unified School District Board member and board president, has long been active in circles ranging from the world of chili cook-offs and golf tournaments (he has won more than 125 trophies) to his current position as secretary of the Western University of Health Sciences



John Forbing



Nona Tirre

Pomona City Council allocates more than \$2 million in federal funds for COVID-related residential and business needs

Pomona city councilmembers approved the allocation of more than \$2 million in federal Community Development Block Grant and CARE Act Coronavirus funding to assist residents and businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The grant funds will provide \$750,000 in rental, mortgage and utility assistance for up to three months for low-income households impacted by COVID-19 loss of income, and an additional \$500,000 in homeless prevention funding, motel vouchers and assistance to extremely low-income households.

For businesses, more than \$500,000 in business relief grants will be available for small busi-

nesses impacted by COVID-19 related loss of income.

An additional \$300,000 will be made available for food provision to low-income households.

And funding will be made available for COVID-related equipment and services for city employees, facilities and programs.

Money also will be available for burial costs for family members lost to COVID-19 related illness, and more than \$190,000 will be made available for homeless street outreach.

Applications were expected to be available this month. For more information, call (909) 620-2368 or visit the city's COVID-19 resources page at www.ci.pomona.ca.us/covid-19.

Compassionate Pomona... from pg. 11

treat our neighbors as we would wish to be treated," said Karen Armstrong, founder of the global movement Charter for Compassion.

The book, developed to help "spread compassion, not coronavirus," was written by psychologist Dr. Diana Chavez Ketterman and her colleague Erica Walking-Stick.

Compassionate Pomona teamed up with Character Champion, Charter for Compassion, Char-

acter Champions Foundation, Compassionate California and the Never Give Up Foundation on the project.

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board of trustees, where he has served as a board member since 1993.

He received the Pomona Chamber of Commerce "community service award" in 2012 – the highest honor the chamber bestows.

He served on the Pomona Chamber board from 1983 to 1986 and from 1993 to 1996.

And he has served on the board of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Pomona Valley, now known as the Youth and Family Club of Pomona

Valley, since 1978 and has served as president three times.

He has served on the board of Pomona Rotary since 2001 and served as president in 2008.

Forbing has served as a State Farm agent for the past 45 years.



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New video series... from pg. 10

For students who were regularly appearing in musical productions and plays, this “virtual” presentation – incorporating segments recorded by individual students from their homes and other off-site locations – was obviously the result of classmates looking for a creative outlook to fill the gap created by COVID-19.

While the resulting presentation came without an opportunity for “in person” interaction, it got the message across in an effective manner.

Plus the students themselves said in the segment they are adapting in other ways – Harmony Nichols, a junior with a dual major in vocal music and musical theater, said she is beginning to read more during the COVID-19 restrictions.

Some like Guinevere Silva-Deaton, a senior with a theater and musical theater dual major, are continuing their studies even though some are now tasked with caring for their younger siblings while working toward their own educational goals.

Even so, their message is clear – they miss the social interaction and going to rehearsals.

“All of this is going to be crazy and a learning experience but so far I’m doing OK,” Nichols said. “I think it’ll get better.”

Interested in taking a look? Download the Instagram “app,” and “follow” @thesaeschool. Then, each time you log on, search for @thesaeschool and select “SAE Home: Behind The Scenes” or any of the other 46 (so far!) selections of videos, collections of pictures and artwork and more already posted on the site.

Ryan Metzler, the school’s film instructor, is producing and directing the series and Miller is executive producer.

Donation of masks... from pg. 11

Donyielle Holley, homeless program supervisor for the City of Pomona who also facilitates the Pomona Continuum of Care Coalition for the community which addresses the issue of homelessness.

She told the group assembled in front of the police department that Pomona is a community “working together as a team and doing whatever it takes to support our

pated in the event.

Following the drive-through, church members delivered 500 meals to the nurses at Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center.

The event was their first hot meal program, although they have provided boxes of food in the past. The congregation reaches out to the community several times each year with shoes, school supplies and hundreds of Christmas gifts during the holidays.

The church also operates a men’s recovery home in Pomona and a women’s recovery home in Ontario, and participants in both were on hand at the drive-through to help.

Both programs are free one-year drug and alcohol dependence programs.

Victory Outreach, with its congregation of 250 members, has been in its new location on Monterey Avenue for the past five years.

Services are at 10:30 a.m. Sundays. For information, call (909) 865-0373 or visit www.vopomona.org.



Volunteers bag up the hot plates of pasta at this month’s drive-through food give-away at Pomona’s Victory Outreach Church.

homeless individuals as well as our residents at large.”

“This (pandemic) is new, it’s huge, and it’s going to take us all working together as a team in order to get through this and to thrive afterwards,” she said.

A spokesman for Tzu Chi said a team of about 50 employees and volunteers staff the San Dimas national headquarters of the organization which includes 10 million



Organizers and volunteers are pictured in front of the free drive-through food give-away this month at Pomona’s Victory Outreach Church. From left are church members Art Acevedo and Mia Lujan, Marty Lopez of Uniquely Blessed Ministries, volunteer John Mendoza, a Board member with Three Valleys Municipal Water District, and Pastor Robert Garcia, senior pastor of Victory Outreach Church. The church is pictured in the background.



Members of Pomona’s Victory Outreach Church congregation staffed a prayer booth at the drive-through food give-away for those who wanted to stop by.

Cal Poly Career Center continues serving area employers

Cal Poly University Pomona’s Career Center is continuing to serve area employers during the coronavirus pandemic by offering virtual career events during summer and fall semesters.

A virtual final hiring fair will be held on Tuesday, July 21, for all majors and industries, and a virtual part-time jobs and volunteer fair is scheduled for Wednesday, Aug. 19.

In addition, a virtual fall career fair is set for Thursday, Sept. 24

for all majors, and a virtual engineering and high-tech career fair is set for Friday, Sept. 25.

A virtual graduate and professional school fair is scheduled for Tuesday, Oct. 6.

Cal Poly will continue all virtual instruction for summer classes and fall semester with faculty and staff working remotely.

For more information on Career Center resources, visit the web site at www.cpp.edu/career.

Congresswoman Torres announces COVID testing funds for Pomona health centers

Congresswoman Norma Torres has announced \$1,070,551 in grant funding to two health centers with locations in Pomona to expand COVID-19 testing capacity.

Park Tree Community Health Center will receive \$290,329 for testing plus an additional \$209,933 for a “telehealth” program, and Unicare Community Health Center will receive \$570,289 for expand-

ed testing.

The funds are part of the larger “Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act” passed last month by Congress.

“With these funds, (the health centers) are expanding their reach, and helping those who are most susceptible to the disease receive the care they need without risking exposure,” Torres said.

Hot meals... from pg. 12

Lose your job and your health insurance? Pomona's Inter Valley Health Plan has a solution!

Losing a job due to the COVID-19 pandemic – and losing medical insurance benefits that go along with it – is not unusual in today's difficult economy.

But if you're over 65 and eligible for Medicare, a solution for supplemental insurance may be right at your fingertips and easier than you think -- or, as one observer put it, almost like a "silver lining" waiting to be tapped.

Paul Brownell, sales manager of Pomona's Inter Valley Health Plan, a not-for-profit organization, told La Nueva Voz the COVID crisis has impacted so many residents that the company has created an entire series of "virtual" step-by-step classes for people to review.

He said the unemployment rate among people age 65 and older quadrupled between March and April – from 3.7 percent to 15.6 percent.

During that same period, 1.2 million adults age 65 and older lost jobs, along with another 2.4 million people ages 55 to 64.

"We definitely understand the importance of health insurance . . . (to) folks who potentially are affected by the COVID situation whether they are laid off or (have had) a non-planned retirement," Brownell said.

And he said his sales team is

seeing an increase in calls asking for information about the next steps to take. His virtual meetings have been increasing in attendance, as well, as residents look for information to become educated on health care.

"We want to be that resource for those folks, and we can walk them through those next steps," said Brownell, a 29-year veteran of the industry. "You can hear relief in their voice that they have someone to turn to to help them in the next step."

How does the plan work?

Then how does it work? The short version is Medicare Part A, of course, is free to Medicare-eligible individuals who have worked a minimum of 10 years or 40 quarters.

And Medicare Part B costs \$144.60 per month.

Brownell said as long as the customer has both Part A and Part B, he is entitled to get into a Medicare Advantage Health Plan like Inter Valley Health Plan at no additional cost.

By comparison, that no cost feature stacks up nicely in comparison to full-ticket conventional health insurance plans or even COBRA (offered by employers to employees leaving the company and generally considered temporary or interim coverage).



Paul Brownell

COBRA (Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act) continuation coverage is administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and can cost anywhere from \$600 to \$900 per month, depending on what the employer is offering.

Then when can you switch to Inter Valley Health Plan?

Brownell said if you are over 65 and lose your job – and your health coverage – you are entitled to a "special election" to apply at once for Part B Medicare and get into a health plan as well.

Normally, the annual enrollment period is limited to Oct. 15 through Dec. 7, and another extended period for open enrollment is from Jan. 1 through March 31.

And, once you have Part B Medicare and a health plan, you can keep it even if you become

employed once again after all of this COVID uncertainty settles down and things begin to return to normal.

"It's going to take a while to get back to some normalcy," Brownell said. "The population that we deal with here from my understanding is the population that was affected the most – the folks that are 65 plus or the folks with certain conditions."

"So, we need to handle things a little bit differently – we have more phone call interactions, we have more virtual meetings . . . it's going to be different," he

said.

"It's just the time that we're going through now," he added. "I feel that we're going to pull through this but it's going to be an adjustment period."

Upcoming classes

On-line classes explaining all of the details are scheduled for 12:30 p.m. Wednesday, June 3, 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, June 9, and 12:30 p.m. Wednesday, June 17.

While the classes are free, an RSVP is required to get the login information. To RSVP, or to find a complete list of scheduled classes, visit the web site at www.ivhp.com/step-by-step or call (800) 886-4471.

Inter Valley Health Plan is a not-for-profit, federally qualified, community-based HMO contracted with Medicare and dedicated to providing quality senior health care coverage. Headquartered in Pomona, it is one of the oldest managed health care plans in Southern California with some 40 years in business.

The company handles the health care needs of nearly 40,000 individuals from Los Angeles to Orange County and to Palm Springs, Riverside, Hemet, Victorville, and Temecula.

For more information, visit www.ivhp.com or call (800) 500-7018.

Statewide United Way receives \$25 million to help with COVID

Inland Empire United Way has announced that California United Ways have received a \$15 million anonymous gift in addition to \$10 million in fundraising efforts statewide, some of which will be used by the local organization to provide relief to the most vulnerable residents, support for crisis information and "safety-net" resources.

The organization said in a news release it will work in partnership with the communities they serve to determine how to best use these resources.

"The need is already so great in our region during this time," said Shirli Driz, interim president and CEO of Inland Empire United Way.

The organization's statewide fund and a directory of local funds can be found at www.unitedway-sca.org/coviduw.

Pomona Public Library Foundation launches 'Learning Links' to provide resources to students and families during COVID-19 closures

Joining library organizations across the country in keeping library and educational services alive, the Pomona Public Library Foundation has announced "Learning Links," a way to provide Pomona students and families a variety of library and learning resources.

The program launch last month was timed to coincide with National Library Week in April.

"During recent years, the Pomona Public Library Foundation has worked hard to support and build programming in partnership with the Pomona Public Library," said Duane Smith, president of the foundation. "We are pleased to provide the Pomona community continued access to some of our treasured library services and other learning resources while the library is closed due to the pandemic."

"Learning Links" are available on the foundation's web site at www.pomonalibraryfoundation.info and Facebook at www.facebook.com/pplfbc/.

- Homework Club – For information about numerous academic resources, visit the Pomona Unified School District at proudtobe.pusd.org and go to the "academic resources" tab. Scroll down to "grade level."

- Pomona Public Library – Audio books, magazines, and on-line language learning resources for library card holders are available at www1.youseemore.com/Pomona.

- On-line Book Club – Learning resources, readings, book reviews and conversation is available at www.facebook.com/pplfbc.

- Storytime Anytime – Ms. Crystal presents a new story every Wednesday afternoon at www.facebook.com/pomonapublicli

brary.

- Language Instruction – Library card holders can learn a new language or brush up on an old one at www.pomonaca.rbdigital.com.

- Pomona Treasures Library Collection – Digital images from the Frasher Foto Postcard Collection and the Citrus Label Collection to Pomona Landmarks Collection are available at content.ci.pomona.ca.us/.

Library late fees are being waived while the library is closed and library materials may be returned at the book drop located on Garey Avenue at 7th Street.

"The Pomona Public Library Foundation Board of Directors is committed to keeping the spirit of the library alive," Smith said. "As Ray Bradbury once said, 'Without libraries what have we? We have no past and no future.'"

He added that because of the COVID-19 mandates the foundation was forced to postpone its annual gala this year. Those interested in supporting the foundation's efforts may donate at www.pomonalibraryfoundation.org/donation or mail checks to the Pomona Public Library Foundation 101 W. Mission Blvd., Suite 110-219, Pomona, CA 91766.

For more information contact Smith at duane@pomonalibraryfoundation.org or call (909) 717-8381.

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

Pomona Compassion Fund created to help residents struggling during COVID-19 crisis

A group of Pomona residents and civic leaders – with the support of Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval and members of the Pomona City Council – have created the Pomona Compassion Fund to help Pomona residents who are struggling to get through the coronavirus crisis.

“We know that many people are struggling due to lack of work, and our goal is to be able to provide help to those who are in need,” Sandoval said in a news release.

The project was an outgrowth of the Pomona COVID-19 Action

Committee. Funds will be distributed to families and individuals based on need. Recipients must be residents of Pomona and must be able to show a demonstrated impact of economic hardship due to COVID-19.

Contributions are needed to help supplement funding from other city, county, state and federal sources.

Checks can be mailed to the Pomona Community Foundation, 101 W. Mission Blvd., Ste #110-201, Pomona, CA 91766.

For more information, visit pomonacommunityfoundation.org.

Supervisor Solis, Sen. Leyva back Newsom on May budget revision

Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis and State Sen. Connie Leyva both released statements this month focusing on the importance of supporting struggling California families in their reactions to Gov. Newsom’s May revision of the 2020-2021 state budget.

“In the face of a global health crisis that has spurred a global financial crisis, Gov. Newsom’s revised budget prioritizes our most pressing concerns – the health and safety of our communities impacted by the COVID-19 crisis, and the need to support all people whose lives and livelihoods have been affected,” Solis said.

“The governor’s budget is a moral statement reflecting our collective values,” she added. “Gov. Newsom’s new \$203.3 billion budget proposal would draw down reserves, borrow money from internal accounts, and temporarily increase some revenues while at the same time tighten the belt of state operations.”

“These mitigating efforts are necessary to make up for a projected \$54.3 billion budget deficit brought on by the coronavirus crisis,” she said. “We recognize we will all be called upon to make sacrifices.”

She said the governor’s budget “conveys an unwavering commitment to hardworking families who have been hurt the most by the pandemic.”

“There is no doubt that California faces a difficult period ahead and the governor’s May revise reflects that,” Leyva said. “The pandemic-related impacts have

caused tremendous economic damage to individuals, families, businesses, organizations, government entities and communities across California.”

“Fortunately, the state’s ‘Rainy Day Fund’ will help to buffer some of the on-going impacts and I am confident that our proactive and continuing work will help to again lead California to prosperous times,” she said.

“Clearly, the unemployment numbers and on-going impacts to workers and employers across our state are staggering, so I agree with the governor that – while we need to continue to protect public education, public health and public safety – we also need to help those most impacted by COVID-19,” Leyva added. “The need is great

Budget revision... pg. 18

Students are never too young to start a career in business!

By Jose Bermudez

High school juniors and seniors focus on completing their required school subjects. This prepares them for graduation and the next step as young adults.

It may be college, vocational school, military service or a career in business or industry. Not often do you hear of a student choosing to go into business, and rarer still does he or she start a business while still in high school.

While teaching at Pomona’s Park West High School, I met Emilio Lucero who is such a student. Lucero started working with his father washing cars at \$10 an hour on weekends.

As a freshman, he decided that car washing was hard work with long hours and not for him. Emilio had saved \$2,000 from car washing to start his own business.

With support from his family, he conducted internet research and talked to people about business opportunities. At 16, he flew (first flight - alone) to New York to attend a business conference for networking.

He also participated in another business conference event in Arizona. In May of 2019 he was featured as a young entrepreneur in Kivo Daily Magazine, which describes itself as “a global digital media, technology and brand-building company, with a primary focus on actionable knowledge in business, entrepreneurship, and thought leadership.”

A self-described introvert, Emilio often takes a friend along to intro-

duce him to other participants when attending business functions. He was initially interviewed via video in 2019 by Jia Bragado and Sushil Bohara, students at Pomona’s Garey High School. The interview was updated in February of this year. The following is the interview:

Please describe your business. I use the internet to market my clients’ business services and products. I run video and photo ads for my clients in social media. Currently, my client base is within a 50-mile radius of Pomona. I contract videographers to develop the advertising material. Eventually, with the business growing, I will hire a few employees to operate the business.

What platforms do you use for your business? I use Google, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

What are your principal challenges? I have no worries about failing since I am young and live with my parents and do not have much to lose. I can always start over. Then again, because of my age, most people might be hesitant about working with me since they do not usually conduct business with someone my age. Also, I am

awkward and an introvert when working with people.

What do you plan to accomplish in the next five years? Over time and with more money coming in, I plan on buying one or two rental properties. I can then leverage the buying of other income properties from my rental income. I would also like to help others get into business.

What is your motivation for going into business? I want to achieve financial freedom for myself and help my family.

What advice do you give to anyone who wants to go into business? As simple as it may sound, if you want to start a business just do it – start it and stay focused.


Emilio is a great example of a young person who is motivated, focused and disciplined to succeed very early in life.

Due to our coronavirus restrictions, he will not finish his school year, but he has an advantage – a business that is internet operated and does not require constant human/social interaction to succeed.

One is never too young to start a career in business if there is a will, a plan and discipline to get it done.

The following public service ads are courtesy of La Nueva Voz:

Project Sister Family Services
Sexual Assault and
Child Abuse Services
909-626-4357
or 626-966-4155
www.projectsister.org

**Feeding the Hungry,
Sheltering the Homeless**
Grocery Distribution at
209 W. Pearl St.
Pomona

Volunteering: 909-622-3806
www.inlandvalleyhopepartners.org

HOUSE OF RUTH
Abused by your partner
and need help?
24-hour hotline:
**(909) 988-5559 or toll
free at (877) 988-5559**

Pomona Public Library Hours
Mon., Tues., Wed. Thurs.:
1 to 7 p.m.
Sat.:
Noon to 5 p.m.
Fri., Sun.:
Closed

Info on student group programs at AGRiscapes:

www.agriscapes.cpp.edu

4102 S. University Drive, Pomona (next to the Farm Store)

Sign up for Pomona Unified School District’s

Free ‘Early Learning Literacy’ App!

It’s a fun way to improve reading skills.

Register at www.myf2b.com/register/pomona
footsteps2brilliance

La Nueva Voz is a proud member of PUSD’s Literacy Collaborative.

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
- Pomona Unified School District administration building lobby
- 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
- Jicamex Tacos Y Carniceria, 604 E. Mission Blvd., 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
- American Legion Post #30, 239 E. Holt Ave., Pomona
- Pomona Eagles, 854 W. Mission Blvd., Pomona



American Legion Post 30 conducts 'virtual' Memorial Day ceremony at Pomona Cemetery

Memorial Day ceremonies at Pomona Cemetery were a little different this year – there were no bleachers full of veterans and their families (and others honoring our nation's veterans), there was no bandstand with patriotic songs from the Pomona Concert Band, and there were no speeches from our elected officials.

COVID-19 has a way of changing the way we do things like that.

But Pomona's American Legion Post 30 takes these things seriously. And personally. They showed up to pay tribute to our veterans anyway, in the words of Post 30

do.”

Ceremonies started with a solemn half-mast ceremony in which Radcliff and Jack Peterson lowered the American flag and then raised it at half-mast in honor of those who lost their lives.

“Let us always honor the memory of those brave soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines who made the supreme sacrifice so we may live in a country that is free,” Guevara said in his opening prayer.

As is the tradition, the Memorial Day ceremony ended with the playing of taps.



Chaplain Daniel Guevara
American Legion Post 30



Pomona's American Legion Post 30
Commander Roberto Arnold



Pomona's American Legion Post 30 members who conducted this year's Memorial Day observance at Pomona Cemetery pose for a group photo after the ceremonies. Post 30 Commander Roberto Arnold is pictured at left.



Members of Pomona's American Legion Post 30 honor guard fire a traditional 21-gun salute during Memorial Day ceremonies at Pomona Cemetery as their commander, Post 30 Second Vice President Bob Radcliff, at left rear, calls the commands.



Second Vice President Bob Radcliff, at right, hoists the flag back up to half-mast as Post 30 honor guard member Jack Peterson salutes.

Commander Roberto Arnold, “to remember all of those that have fallen.”

And they turned it into a “virtual” ceremony over the internet. And they even followed that up with recorded messages from everybody – Congresswoman Norma Torres, State Sen. Connie Leyva, Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis, Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval and Pomona City Councilmembers Victor Preciado, Nora Garcia and Elizabeth Ontiveros-Cole.

Post 30 Chaplain Daniel Guevara offered an invocation and Second Vice Commander Bob Radcliff even led seven post members in an honor guard in a 21-gun salute.

“Memorial Day has a lot of significance to those that have served,” Arnold said, who added that Post 30 appreciated “all of the hard work that has been put together by our current heroes, all of the healthcare workers that are battling COVID-19.”

“We appreciate you and we really want you to know that,” he said “Everything that is being done is a sacrifice, a sacrifice that not many people are willing to

Pomona Council votes to censure Councilmember Rubio Gonzalez and seek his resignation following his arrest alleging possession of child sexual abuse material

Members of the Pomona City Council in a special virtual meeting Saturday night voted unanimously to censure their colleague Councilmember Rubio Ramiro Gonzalez in a swift public response to Gonzalez' arrest last week on suspicion of alleged felony possession of child sexual abuse material and allegedly annoying or molesting a child.

No charges have been filed in the case, according to a spokesman for the Los Angeles County District Attorney's office.

The action came on a motion from Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval. Councilmembers voted 6-0 to approve the censure.

Gonzalez was not present at the 30-minute meeting.

Sandoval said in a prepared statement that the city was aware that Gonzalez “was arrested for possession of child pornography.”

By acting to censure Gonzalez, members of the council were able to memorialize the council's severe disappointment, remove him from his appointed local and regional positions and direct City Manager James Makshanoff to remove all non-public access to city hall and

city facilities.

The city also would be able to seek the return of all city equipment and resources.

Also as a part of the motion, which was seconded by City Councilman Robert Torres, the council directed staff to draft a letter to Gonzalez from the full council collectively, asking him to resign his position effective immediately.

Sandoval said the city has not received an indication from Gonzalez whether he plans to resign or remain on the council while facing charges.

He said Gonzalez' remaining on the council would be a “distraction from the significant work the council has to perform for the community,” particularly involving the re-opening of the city during the COVID-19 crisis.

“I'd like to ask that we as a city

council continue to monitor very carefully the circumstances should Councilmember Gonzalez decide that he does not want to resign and continue on in his position,” Sandoval said, adding that at that time the council could consider any next steps and whether he could be removed for “willful or corrupt misconduct in office,” as outlined in available options presented by Makshanoff.

Gonzalez was arrested by San Dimas Sheriff's Deputies at 11 a.m. May 21 and booked at the San Dimas Sheriff's Station at 11:45

a.m. following an investigation by the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Bureau of Investigation that resulted in the allegations.

He was released on \$20,000 bail pending his initial appearance in court, according to sheriff's booking information. No court date has

been set, according to a spokesperson for Los Angeles Superior Court.

“While it is important to allow the legal system to determine his innocence, we are stunned and deeply concerned by Mr. Gonzalez' arrest and the extremely serious nature of the criminal allegations,” Sandoval said in a prepared statement he read into the record.

Gonzalez was elected to the council to represent the first district in November 2016 with 57 percent of the vote. Ismael Arias received 24 percent and Hector Quevedo received 19 percent of the vote.

He is a native of Pomona and a graduate of Ganesha High School. He received an undergraduate degree from Cal Poly University Pomona and a master's degree from Cal State University Fullerton.

He worked with various groups in volunteer service for 19 years before his election to the council and has taught students in Pomona Unified School District and at Pomona's School of Arts and Enterprise.

Gonzalez did not immediately respond to a request for comment from La Nueva Voz.



Rubio Gonzalez



Photo by Jeff Malet, Western University of Health Sciences College of Graduate Nursing Master of Science student Brian Pearring volunteers at the COVID-19 testing site at Pomona's Fairplex this month. About 20 nursing and physical therapy students from Western University are receiving valuable experience as they prepare to graduate and enter the front lines of the COVID-19 response. Pomona's Fairplex is providing the testing site for Los Angeles County in cooperation with Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center, the Los Angeles County Fire Department and other entities. Residents are able to self-administer a free COVID test.



Photo by Renee Barbee
Been out of the house lately? If you have, you've probably noticed there's a new street sales business going on in Pomona -- masks and, if you find the right spot, other "personal protective equipment" like face shields and hand cleaner. Pictured is one "regular" spot on the sidewalk in front of Cardenas Market on South Garey Avenue.

Pictured is another mask vendor working the southbound lanes of Indian Hill Boulevard just south of the San Bernardino Freeway a stone's throw over the line into Claremont. Prices vary around town so look for "specials." This one was four bucks.

When California rebuilds its economy, Latinos must be included this time

By Mindy Romero and Juan Novello, Special to CalMatters

California's Latino community is experiencing the brunt of the COVID-19 pandemic's impact. About 50 percent of the state's more than 62,000 cases, and 33 percent of its total deaths, are Latino, more than any other racial or ethnic group in California.

While early economic data is limited for demographic groups, we know that as the largest racial or ethnic group in the state, Latinos are almost certain to feel the greatest economic impact, too. As we rebuild the California economy, we must not leave Latinos behind as we did in the Recession of 2008. California will not fully recover if its Latino community does not.

Within the two months since COVID-19 descended on our state and nation, we have already entered into what appears to be the beginning of deep global recession. Millions of Californians have suddenly found themselves out of work, businesses are in peril and the state is likely facing significant budget cuts to services and staffing for some time to come.

All Californians are economically affected in some way by the pandemic and many to a devastating degree. Workers least able to weather the financial storm are those who are being impacted most. Latinos are overrepresented in this group.

We recently documented that pre-COVID-19, Latinos have long-experienced disparate outcomes in every indicator that contributes to economic well-being – employment rates, income levels, educational achievement, housing affordability and entrepreneurship. Many Latinos live paycheck

to paycheck and experience suffocating barriers to entering the middle class and beyond.

Now COVID-19 is directly impacting industries where Latinos are employed the most. A quarter of Latino employment is in service occupations and nearly another quarter in sales and office occupations. In many of these jobs, Latinos don't have the ability to stay home.

Fifty-five percent of students in our K-12 public school system are Latino. These students along with Latinos enrolled in college are now navigating through the complications and uncertainty of distance learning with potential long-term impacts on their educational trajectories.

Latinos own less than 24 percent of all businesses in the state, but they experience far less revenue – pre-COVID-19 – than non-Latino owned businesses. Many of these Latino entrepreneurs are now being forced to adapt quickly to a new market with little to no help, or facing the reality of closing their doors.

Recently, Gov. Newsom formed the Task Force on Business and Jobs Recovery to develop recommendations for an economic plan of action that works for all of California, focusing on regions and communities hit hardest by the pandemic.

We look forward to learning more about their approach and urge them to hold their work ac-

countable to tangible outcomes for the Latino community.

As the current crisis continues to unfold, a more complete picture of the workers and industries affected will emerge. We must avoid the failed policies of the past and ensure economic data inclusive of the Latino community drives new policy creation.

But California's leaders should not just be focused on economic recovery from this current recession. They must commit to eliminate the entrenched structural causes of economic inequality felt by Latinos and other racial or ethnic groups – the same long-standing systemic inequality that has been laid bare by COVID-19.

Strengthening the Latino community for the long run – not just helping it survive – must be a core part of their efforts and those of the Legislature. Only then will more Latinos, nearly 40 percent of the state's population, be able to reach the California dream, enter the middle class and have equitable economic representation in our state.

Mindy Romero is a political sociologist and director of the California Civic Engagement Project at the Price School of Public Policy at the University of Southern California, msromero@usc.edu. Juan Novello serves as chief operating officer at the California Latino Economic Institute, juan@californialei.org. They wrote this commentary for CalMatters.

Budget revision... from pg. 16

but so is our resolve to support California families struggling to make ends meet in the midst of this crisis."

"I will continue working with my legislative colleagues in the

weeks ahead to pass a balanced state budget that – even in the midst of an unprecedented fiscal emergency – helps residents across the 20th State Senate District and California.

Salvador A. Armijo
Real Estate Broker Lic 01278864

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Western University grads receive diplomas by drive-through

Capping an academic year unlike any other due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Western University of Health Sciences graduates picked up their diplomas via drive-through this month after celebrating virtual commencement and oath ceremonies.

The university's Office of the Registrar and University Student Affairs distributed 98 diplomas to graduates of the colleges of optometry, veterinary medicine and pharmacy in a system designed

to minimize contact and ensure safety.

College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific and College of Podiatric Medicine graduates picked up their diplomas the following week.

Diplomas were mailed to graduates unable to pick them up in person.

Students said they enjoyed the experience.

"I felt like I was with my classmates on Zoom," said College

of Veterinary Medicine graduate Avia Ben-Simon. "It was nice to send links to family and friends who wouldn't have been there in person. I'm very sad but I'm trying to see the silver lining and be thankful that we still had a ceremony."

"I'll probably miss the professors and my classmates the most, just having that community," said College of Veterinary Medicine graduate Teresa Gifford. "It's one adventure I've worked toward the last 10 years of my life that's just coming to an end."

College of Pharmacy graduate Alison Agustin said she appre-



Photos by Rodney Tanaka, Western University
Western University of Health Sciences College of Veterinary Medicine graduate Teresa Gifford picks up her diploma via drive through this month.

ciated being able to pick up her diploma instead of waiting for it in the mail.

"It was nice to actually get it in person," she said. "It was kind of like we were walking on stage but we're just driving through and getting the di-

ploma."

She added she realized the drive-through was to ensure the safety of everyone.

"The hardest part is just not being able to see my friends, especially because we haven't seen each other in a long time because we went off on rotations," she said. "But I understand, and I know something good will come out of it. Hopefully we'll get to celebrate soon in the future."



Well, there was no California Poppy Super Bloom this year like we saw last year out in Alberhill and Lake Elsinore (mainly during March -- see page two of La Nueva Voz, March 2019, under "past issues" at www.lanuevavoz.net) but we had a few poppies blooming in Pomona. You just had to look a little harder this year to find them. Pictured is a small patch in Westmont.



Avia Ben-Simon, a College of Veterinary Medicine graduate at Pomona's Western University of Health Sciences, shows off her new diploma after receiving it in a drive-through presentation.



PEARLS OF SERVICE DONATES MASKS -- Pearls of Service, Inc., a Pomona non-profit organization (an acronym for Promoting Education and Reassuring Loyal Services), is providing COVID-19 face masks like those pictured here to families picking up food from food pantries in Pomona and need a mask. The project began this month at the Beta Food Center, PCS Family Services and the Urban Mission. Pearls Executive Director Mattie Johnson and Director Endy Farrow delivered the masks to the facilities. The group also is providing scholarships to graduating seniors and has an annual mixer planned for Sept. 24 on the Sheraton Fairplex Hotel patio. For information, contact the group at P.O. Box 1917, Pomona, CA 91769 or visit the web site at www.epsilonetaomega.org.

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