

## 'Underage drinking' group P<sup>3</sup> takes on marijuana as Pomona issues permits for legal dispensaries

Partnership for a Positive Pomona, or P<sup>3</sup>, a community coalition established to prevent destructive behavior among Pomona's youth, is working harder than ever these days thanks to new federal grant funding as the group tackles marijuana in addition to its signature program to discourage underage drinking.

And its marijuana outreach ef-

fort is especially timely since the City of Pomona just issued its first four operating permits in October in its fledgling cannabis industry (see related story in La Nueva Voz' Nov. 26 issue at [www.lanuevavoz.net](http://www.lanuevavoz.net)).

The group particularly wants to ensure that as legal marijuana dispensaries begin to open in Pomona that there's no spill-over

and that youths aren't being hurt in the process.

P<sup>3</sup> has been known for its programs discouraging alcohol consumption by youth since launching its "Project Sticker Shock" initiative in January 2013 with a kick-off news conference on the sidewalk in front of Pomona Wine Cellar on Holt Avenue (see story in La Nueva Voz' Feb. 28, 2013 issue).

In that program, volunteers and coalition members place red warning stickers on six-packs and liquor store cooler doors to remind adults it is against the law to sell or provide alcohol to minors.

Elected officials, Pomona police officers and representatives of the Pomona Chamber of Commerce joined P<sup>3</sup> at the kick-off event.

Gloria Andino, the coalition's

project coordinator, said the effort to discourage kids from experimenting with marijuana will take a different approach by focusing on amending the city's "social host" ordinance, adopted 10 years ago making it illegal for adults to host parties that allow underage drinking and holding them accountable if they do.

An expanded "social host" ordinance would add the same restrictions and penalties to the use of marijuana by underage youth.

She acknowledged that there are state laws holding property owners liable for underage drinking but said ratcheting down even more at the local level is "a way of saying Pomona is taking a stand on this."

"We have to sometimes do a little bit extra . . . to protect the well-being of the community" she said, adding that the coalition already is working with its fiscal agent the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence of East San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys, Inc. (NCADD-ESGPV) and its collaborating partners.

Those include, she said, Prototypes and Day One, along with

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### HANDING OUT INSPIRATION --

Santa, also known as James Scott of La Verne, hands out inspiration in the form of stuffed animals to kids in one of 2,100 cars driving through this month's Holiday Pantry at Fairplex, sponsored by Fairplex and Sowing Seeds for life based right down the street in La Verne. Scott told La Nueva Voz he was in line for groceries at a Sowing Seeds event in 2008 and 2009 when he was out of work because of the economy. "They literally saved my life with food and they inspired me so much and their Santa Claus couldn't do it that one year so I decided to take over and I've been doing it ever since, since 2010," Scott said. "It fills my heart so much that I have to do this," he said. "It changed my life and I became a different person when I came here." The event was from 8 a.m. to noon but volunteers started setting up as early as 6 a.m. to hand out food donations, frozen turkeys, stuffed animals, a picture with Santa and a \$20 gift card. Fran Robertson of Sowing Seeds said 16,000 people were served at the event. (See related photos page 2.)



**HANDING OUT HOPE --** Metro Honda, Metro Acura and Metro Extreme Car Care in Montclair held their first annual toy drive this month where employees and visitors who wanted to donate placed toys in the back of two Honda Odysseys at Honda or in the MDX at Acura. Owner John Hawkins said that especially during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic "it's terrible to be without hope at this time of year." Pictured holding (what else!) toy cars, from left, are Heidi Hawkins Smoot, Chief Operating Officer and Hawkins' daughter; Hawkins; and General Manager John Lee. (See story p. 5.)

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### How to ease holiday stress during COVID-19 - A message from Tri-City Mental Health

The holidays are traditionally a time for gathering, reconnection and celebration with family and friends. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, many of us are modifying our plans or experiencing the holiday season apart from our loved ones. These shifts in traditions may have you feeling a sense of loss of control and disappointment. Change is difficult, but that doesn't mean the holidays are destined to be a disappointment this year. However you choose to celebrate this holiday season, here are a few tips for celebrating safely while caring for your emotional well-being.

**Create a plan for the holidays and the new year.** If your anxiety rises when the decor goes up, you are not alone. It is common for people to feel more anxious or lonely as the season begins. Create a sense of normalcy in your routine, complete small tasks and engage in activities where you have the power to control things.

**Make time for self-care and acknowledge your feelings.** One of 2020's biggest lessons has been how important it is to be kind to ourselves when things are hard. Self-care is a vital part of moving through grief, getting through difficult times, and restoring yourself so that you can show up for others. Take this time to reconnect with yourself and identify some things you are grateful for.

**Find comfort in traditions.** Taking part in your favorite holiday traditions (while practicing physical distancing) can help bring comfort, joy and positive memories during an uncertain time. Watch a favorite holiday movie, listen to your favorite holiday songs, and cook recipes as you normally would this time of year. Find ways to adapt or even start new traditions – they may add more meaning to your holiday season.

**Reach out for support.** Tri-City Mental Health is here to support individuals and families in Pomona, La Verne and Claremont impacted at this time. We provide free services, including a 24/7 crisis line, linkage and referral to local resources, weekly virtual support groups, peer support and much more to help sustain your mental health during the holidays and the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Volunteers load boxes of food from the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank, by way of Sowing Seeds for Life of La Verne, to some of the 2,100 cars lined up this month for a holiday drive-through food pantry. It was the 14th annual holiday drive-through for Sowing Seeds. Since drive-through food pantries began at Fairplex in April, more than 200,000 individuals have been served more than 1.6 million pounds of food. State Sen. Connie Leyva was a sponsor of this month's pantry which was staffed by more than 50 volunteers.



Southern California Gas Co. Regional Public Affairs Manager Bob Cruz loads a box of groceries into the back of a pick-up truck at this month's holiday drive-through food pantry at Fairplex in Pomona, sponsored by Fairplex and Sowing Seeds for Life. A spokesperson said PetSmart donated stuffed animals for the children and Cruz told La Nueva Voz the Gas Company provided a \$10,000 grant and volunteers for the event.

# Happy holidays, neighbors.

We wish all our neighbors a safe and happy holiday season and the very best in the New Year. It's a true joy to be part of such a wonderful community.

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Photo courtesy of Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center

**POMONA VALLEY HOSPITAL'S FIRST COVID-19 VACCINE** -- Anna Gibson, RT, a respiratory care practitioner at Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center, was the first associate to receive the Pfizer BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine last Thursday -- the day the hospital received its first allotment. The hospital is following state guidance for the phased distribution of the vaccine beginning with its frontline associates and, while the vaccine will not be immediately available to the public, the hospital is working on acquiring as many doses as possible to meet the needs of its healthcare workers and the community. More than 920 vaccinations were administered to the hospital's frontline healthcare workers in the first 30 hours of the vaccine clinic. "It was a proud and historic moment to witness our first associates receive this long-awaited vaccine," said Darlene Scaffidi, vice president of nursing and patient care services. "We are hopeful that this vaccine is the beginning of the end of this pandemic." The process of immunizing all community members who want to receive the vaccine is expected to take about six months. A hospital spokesperson said Pomona Valley is expanding its intensive care unit capacity into other areas of the hospital and has the capacity to expand further as needed. Meanwhile, the spokesperson encouraged members of the public to follow public health guidelines to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

## Pomona Mayor Sandoval, La Verne Mayor Pro Tem Carder re-elected to lead Foothill Gold Line board

Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval this month was re-elected Chair and La Verne Mayor Pro Tem Robin Carder Vice Chair of the Foothill Gold Line Construction Authority board of directors in a unanimous vote of their colleagues.

In addition, Claremont City Councilmember Ed Reece was sworn in for a two-and-a-half-year term on the board after being appointed by the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments last month.

The action comes as the board is working to bring the \$2.1 billion, 12.3-mile Foothill Gold Line light rail project to Pomona. The 9.1-mile link from Glendora to Pomona currently is under construction.

And the construction authority is seeking additional funding needed to complete the entire project segment to Claremont and Montclair.

"I know I speak for Vice Chair Carder

as I thank our colleagues for their continued confidence in us, as well as welcome Councilmember Reece to the board," Sandoval said. "This past year has been filled with uncertainty but, as we look to the future, it is as important as ever to ready our region for growth and prosperity."

"I look forward to leading the board this coming year and continuing to see the significant progress being made on a project that will improve the lives of our communities for generations to come."

Sandoval and Carder have led the board since late 2018. The project segment to Pomona is expected to be completed in 2025.

The Foothill Gold Line Construction Authority was created by the state legislature in 1998 to plan, design and build the Metro Gold Line light rail system from Union Station in Los Angeles to Montclair.



Sri Goerly, MD  
President of the PVHMC Medical Staff

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**Call 9-1-1 if you are experiencing a life-threatening emergency.** Delaying medical attention may increase the severity of your condition and put your health at greater risk. **Please DO NOT WAIT to get urgent or emergency healthcare.**

For urgent care or non-emergency care, visit one of the Pomona Valley Health Centers in Chino Hills, Claremont, La Verne or Pomona. **For more on urgent care or telehealth options, visit [mypvhc.com](http://mypvhc.com) or call 909-378-8865.**

### SAFELY RESUMING NON-URGENT, ELECTIVE PROCEDURES AND SERVICES

If your non-urgent, elective procedure or service was deferred due to COVID-19 restrictions, please call your physician to reschedule your appointment at your earliest convenience. Or if you have a screening procedure or service coming due, such as a colonoscopy, you can feel confident in scheduling your appointment.

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**L.A. County officials remind residents resources are available to help put food on the table**

Officials at the Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services are reminding residents that free resources are available for families struggling to put food on the table.

Individuals and families can qualify for CalFresh, the program formerly known as food stamps, even if they work full time, making it possible for them to buy groceries at any grocery store or farmer's market that accepts EBT cards.

Amounts vary based on income, expenses and family size.

Eligible applicants will receive their CalFresh within 30 days.

Applicants who earn less than \$150 in the month they apply and have less than \$100 in cash can receive benefits in three days.

It is possible to receive benefits even if applicants own a house or a car.

All children born in the U.S. can get CalFresh if they qualify, no matter where their parents

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**La Nueva Voz accepts 'Publisher's Choice Award' from Alpha Kappa Alpha**

La Nueva Voz was presented with the "Publisher's Choice Award" this month at a virtual "gala" and 50th anniversary celebration "A Legacy of Service" of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Epsilon Eta Omega Chapter.

Publisher Jeff Schenkel and V.P. of Marketing and Operations Renee Barbee accepted the award in a brief prerecorded video, thanking AKA for their recognition during a difficult time for all newspapers.

Cal Poly University Pomona President Dr. Soraya Coley and Pomona Unified School Supt. Richard Martinez both received the "Outstanding Educator Award."

Linda Wright-Lee of Wright on Time Youth and Family Services and Cynthia Brown of Project Caring and Sharing Family Services both received the "Outstanding Community Service Award."

And Tammy Martin-Ryles, President and CEO of the Black Chamber of Commerce Inland Empire, and Reggie and Rene Webb, of Webb Family Enter-



La Nueva Voz accepted the 'Publisher's Choice Award' from Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Epsilon Eta Omega Chapter, in a virtual award ceremony this month. Pictured is a frame from the on-line 'Zoom' meeting.

prises, both received the "Outstanding Entrepreneur Award."

The event commemorated the group's 50 years in Pomona Valley. The Epsilon Eta Omega Chapter was chartered on Dec. 13, 1970, when 17 members were installed.

Its mission is service through

education, scholarships to high school seniors and community charities.

AKA is the first historically African American Greek-lettered sorority. It was founded by nine college students in 1908 at the historically black Howard University in Washington, D.C. To-

day, it includes nearly 300,000 college-trained members maintaining a focus on lifelong personal and professional development along with working in the forefront of effective advocacy and social change that results in equality and equity for all citizens of the world.

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Proteja a su familia quedándose en casa y usando una mascarilla. Las pruebas de detección y el tratamiento están disponibles sin importar sus ingresos, estado de inmigración o cobertura del seguro.



## ‘Virtual’ services to be held Tuesday for community volunteer Brian McNerney

Brian Joseph McNerney, past CEO of the La Verne Chamber of Commerce, well-known community volunteer, and the unofficial “Mr. La Verne” (even though he lived nearby in neighboring San Dimas), died last month at his home. He was 76.

He helped bring business, community, school and city leaders and volunteers together through projects he either initiated or that the chamber partnered with others to stage – signature programs like local teachers’ awards, an expansion of “A Taste of La Verne,” “Wine Walk,” student outreach and summer programs at the University of La Verne, La Verne Fire Department’s “Spark of Love” toy drive, a “Shop La Verne” promotion campaign and others.

He traveled to all 50 states in his

rate sales market in the office equipment industry and, as a “natural-born” salesman, he enjoyed regional and national success and quickly rose through the ranks to the level of vice president of sales and marketing.

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He grew up as a Brooklyn Dodger fan and, in his early 20s, became a regular at Rockaway Beach, frequenting some of the Irish Pubs like McNulty’s, McGuire’s, and Fitzgerald’s, all famous watering holes back in the day.

In his retirement, he became a regular golfer at Via Verde Country Club in San Dimas but began to volunteer with the San Dimas Chamber of Commerce and was asked to apply for the La Verne Chamber of Commerce position.

McNerney was a huge promoter of La Nueva Voz and made certain

copies of each issue were distributed to members of the Downtown La Verne business community.

He had a particular passion for those who served in the military, and his mentor was his uncle, John Devine, who served in World War II at the Battle of the Bulge.

His daughter, Lee Ann, said she learned many lessons from her dad.

“He was not only my dad but my best friend,” she said. “I gave him every sales award I won and even named my son after him.”

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A virtual memorial service is scheduled Tuesday for community volunteer and former CEO of the La Verne Chamber of Commerce Brian McNerney who died last month at the age of 76. Pictured, at right, is McNerney receiving a retirement plaque in April 2016 from former La Verne Mayor Don Kendrick.

Known for years for his outgoing personality and his willingness to jump in and help whenever necessary, his willingness to serve and build positive relationships was emphasized by his parents, Charles and Anne McNerney, who raised McNerney and his sister, Maureen, in Queens, New York.

Born on Staten Island, he graduated from Archbishop Molloy High School, where he played on the varsity basketball team.

During his senior year, he played against Lew Alcindor (now known as Kareem Abdul-Jabbar of the Milwaukee Bucks and the Lakers) from Greater Memorial High School.

He was quoted in his school newspaper as believing Alcindor “was too lanky and uncoordinated to play in the NBA.”

McNerney received a bachelor’s degree at St. Francis University before beginning his first career as a teacher.

He taught at St. John’s Home for Boys in Rockaway Beach, New York, from 1967 to 1969, leaving out of financial necessity when the teachers’ union leader called the nation’s first teachers’ strike.

McNerney entered the corpo-

career and was known for “taking care” of his successful sales reps, whether through cocktail parties on top of glaciers in Alaska or overlooking Carnival in Rio De Janeiro.

At the age of 9, his daughter was on stage at the Las Vegas Hilton picking the name of the sales rep who would win a Mercedes-Benz.

He remained in sales for 30 years, working on the East Coast and in California for various companies before shifting into the communications field as a Tidbits publications manager in the 1990s.

McNerney was introduced to chamber of commerce work when Tidbits in Diamond Bar, Chino, Chino Hills, San Dimas and Glendora paid for him to represent the company in the San Dimas Chamber of Commerce.

He was named ambassador of the month six consecutive times in 2006 and was named ambassador of the year.

McNerney also volunteered for La Verne programs and, in September 2006, he was named executive director of the La Verne Chamber of Commerce, where he served for 10 years.

## Metro Honda becomes subject of holiday story with a happy ending

As a car dealer, John Hawkins, owner of Metro Honda and Metro Acura in Montclair, knows a little something about making people happy. His company does just that every time his staff delivers a new or used car to a customer.

But this year, of course, with a COVID-19 pandemic changing the way the entire world lives, things are a little different. So, Hawkins, his daughter and Chief Operating Officer Heidi Hawkins Smoot, and General Manager John Lee decided to try to do something about it.

They came up with the idea of their first annual toy drive, right there in the showrooms of Honda and Acura, and they sent an e-mail to their entire team – all 175 team members – telling them they could bring in an unwrapped toy “if your heart is compelled to do so.”

Then, Hawkins told La Nueva Voz, they decided that customers and visitors could bring something in as well.

“If you come in, say you want to add to it, be our guest, add to it,” he said.

“In this time of COVID, a lot of people are saying what are we learning,” Hawkins added. “I hope one of the things we’re learning is about our own humanity, because it isn’t about us.”

“There’s been a lot of people that have been really badly impacted by this that have no hope of a Christmas,” he said. “And it’s terrible to be without hope at this time of year, because that’s kind of what Christmas is about, a hope of things improving and getting better.”

“Well, if we can help people have hope by improving their lot and getting out of our own little world and getting involved in the bigger world of people and things that matter, we’ll all be better at Christmas,” Hawkins said. “Although some of us may have less, those that have nothing will have something.”

John Lee had similar thoughts on the motivation behind the idea. “I think with the period of uncertainty that we’re going through right now with COVID, I think it brings the spirit of Christmas back into the culture that we’re used to,” Lee said. “We’ll bring a lot of smiles to the faces of needy families who actually can’t afford toys right now and I think this is a very good gesture on the part of the Hawkins family and our dealership to support the community, and we’re going to be here many, many years.”

Heidi Hawkins Smoot told La Nueva Voz she has worked at the dealership since she was a little girl. “I am just grateful that our organization can help build and lift our community, that’s the most important thing is to lift those around you and help them feel better, so we’re happy to do this,” she said.

The toys were being distributed to children in need locally and delivered by the City of Montclair.

At La Nueva Voz, we’re pretty sure they’ll be well-received by a lot of appreciative children. And we’re pretty sure those toys will carry with them a lot of hope – for the children, their parents and, just maybe, for some of the folks reading this story.



Photo by Renee Barbee

Metro Honda’s beautifully decorated Christmas tree towers over two Odysseys filled with toys for kids.



## Taking on marijuana... from pg. 1

the law enforcement sector, represented by Corporal Chris Lewis, Pomona Police Department's crime prevention officer.

The goal, she said, is to try to develop a comprehensive recommendation – including both marijuana and alcohol – which P<sup>3</sup> plans to present to the city.

That recommendation may include the current penalties written into the city's social host ordinance – penalties for property owners of a \$100 fine for the first violation, \$200 for the second and \$500 for the third in a one-year period, she said.

Andino explained that the discussion very quickly becomes complicated. For example, there's the issue that the 10-year-old ordinance prohibiting underage drinking – which also addresses loud and unruly parties – apparently hasn't been a priority for police enforcement. She said the coalition hopes to change that.

In addition, while P<sup>3</sup> eventually hopes to expand the ordinance to discourage kids from using marijuana, there is a “social injustice” element involved – undocumented parents who become caught up in the system under new marijuana provisions could have their citizenship status impacted at some point in the future.

And to make things even more interesting, she said data from the California Healthy Kids Survey which is conducted within the Pomona Unified School District shows there are new drugs or substances of choice emerging all the time, sometimes involving new technology such as “vaping.”

Because of all of this, Andino said, nothing yet is “set in stone” and the conversation is continuing.

In a sense, the coalition ap-

## McNerney... from pg. 5

“If you want to live like Brian McNerney, then care about others with all your heart,” she added.

McNerney is survived by his wife of 50 years, Carol Ann; his daughter, Lee Ann Sheridan; son-in-law Matthew Sheridan; grandson Brian Edward Sheridan, four nieces and a nephew.

He was cremated and a virtual

appears to be looking for the right balance – Andino said the group wants to be a support system to the community and prefers to avoid taking a punitive approach to the issue while still being able to achieve some success keeping kids away from both alcohol and marijuana.

“We're collaborating with Alcohol Justice in Marin County,” she said, a national organization that has done a lot of work in the area monitoring the alcohol industry's marketing and public influence activities and exposes harmful practices.

And the coalition is looking at cities that have already amended their “social host” ordinances.

Locally, she said part of the approach will be an informational and educational outreach effort working in three areas – increasing the skill set of members, educating them on how to effect policy changes, and educating members on further building the coalition and reaching out to community stakeholders.

The coalition also will work to rebuild its “parent sector,” essentially an advisory group of local parents, and is attempting to re-establish relations with the news media.

“When you tell parents don't do this, you're going to get fined, it may scare some people into not doing it” but, at the same time, she said, it may not have long-lasting effects.

So, it may take some time – perhaps another year in Andino's estimate – to work out all of the details before going to the Pomona City Council calling for an amendment to the ordinance, but the coalition already has had conversations early this year with City Councilmember Victor Pre-

ceremony is scheduled for noon Tuesday, Dec. 29, via Facebook Live and YouTube. Access will be shared via Brian McNerney and Lee Ann McNerney Sheridan's Facebook page.

Donations in McNerney's name can be made to Sowing Seeds for Life or Haynes Family of Programs in La Verne.

ciado on the issue.

That federal grant, a “Drug Free Communities Grant” awarded by the Office of National Drug Control Policy, is helping make it all possible – it is providing \$120,000 a year for five years.

And only seven other organizations in California have received a similar grant. P<sup>3</sup> was the only coalition in Los Angeles County awarded the grant.

P<sup>3</sup> was awarded the grant in October 2019.

Among other things, it helps fund a part-time project specialist, Juan Soto, who is working with Andino.

In other areas, P<sup>3</sup> worked on an alcohol and drug prevention campaign in March, they more recently helped out with annual Red Ribbon Week “Get Smart about Drugs” activities in October, and they've been hard at work rebuilding the coalition by encouraging residents and community leaders to become involved.

The group has a project coordinator in charge of things who ought to know how to work with Pomona residents – Andino grew up in Pomona, graduated from Village Academy High School, received a bachelor's degree in anthropology from UC Riverside and last year received a masters in health sciences (with an emphasis in community health education) from Pomona's Western University of Health Sciences.

She has been on board as the project coordinator for the P<sup>3</sup> coalition for the past year and was a member of the coalition for two years before that.

And that “Project Sticker Shock” program? Andino said it will be back bigger than ever in the last week of January and the first week of February, right around Super Bowl time, so keep an eye out for the stickers and contact Andino to volunteer to help get the stickers distributed around town.

Interested so far? Residents, business owners, community volunteers and others with an interest who would like to get involved in P<sup>3</sup> trainings or monthly coalition meetings can e-mail Andino at [gandino@ncaddsgv.org](mailto:gandino@ncaddsgv.org).

For more information, visit the organization on Facebook and Instagram @partnershipforapositivepomona.

## School of Arts and Enterprise receives first-ever approval vote from PUSD

Pomona's School of Arts and Enterprise – established in 2003 as a state board of education authorized public charter school – for the first time in its history last week received a vote of approval by the Pomona Unified School District board reauthorizing its charter.

In the past, the original petition for a charter and those periodic charter renewal requests had been seemingly almost routinely rejected by PUSD and, each time, The SAE turned to the state board of education for approval.

But not only was it the first PUSD approval for The SAE's charter, and not only was it unanimous – it was the first approval by PUSD's board for any independent charter school. (The district operates two charter schools of its own.)

And on top of that, it was the first time PUSD Supt. Richard Martinez recommended approval of The SAE's petition.

Jon Gundry, executive director of The SAE, told La Nueva Voz in an e-mail response to a series of questions the day after the board's vote that he was very pleased – both with Martinez' recommendation and with the vote.

“The SAE has become part of the fabric of Downtown Pomona and an integral part of the arts community over the last 20 years, and this is a positive step for the entire community,” Gundry said. “We will still be an independent charter school, but the PUSD will become our over-

sight agency and be responsible for monitoring our budget, student academic achievement, and compliance with state and federal law.”

“We are looking forward to working more closely with our local district and believe that a positive working relationship will benefit everyone, especially the children who live in Pomona,” he added.

He explained the renewal of the charter is for five years, so the school will be back in 2025 asking for another five years.

“When the school was founded, we brought the petition to the PUSD and were denied,” he said, and the school appealed to the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) which took no action on the petition.

“So, it was forwarded on appeal to the state board of education where it was approved,” Gundry said. “Since then, we have taken the renewal petition to the PUSD every five years and have been denied each time until last night.”

Because they were authorized by the state, he said, each time their appeal went directly to the state rather than the county.

Martinez told La Nueva Voz in a telephone interview last week that The SAE has shown “success and longevity” and that he looks forward “to partnering with them on what they are trying to accomplish.”

He said many of the issues PUSD had with the school in the past have

Approval vote... pg. 8

### La Nueva Voz

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## Pomona Chamber recognizes first responders for work during COVID, announces this year's 'heroes' at annual event

The Pomona Chamber of Commerce held its annual "Holiday for Heroes" event this month – a "virtual only" presentation honoring first responders – using a prerecorded video enabling the viewer to travel around town from fire department stations to the police department to the American Legion Post 30 headquarters.

"On behalf of the Pomona Chamber of Commerce, we would like to thank our first responders and service members who have all been most at risk during this pandemic," said Pomona Chamber President and CEO Monique Manzanaras. "And to all doctors, nurses, all the medical field, thank you for your continuous service to our community and the sacrifice you have made to be away from your loved ones so that we can all be safe."



Deputy Pomona Police Chief Christian Hsu

Deputy Pomona Police Chief Christian Hsu introduced this year's police department honorees, who this year were the entire seven-member "major crimes task force" team which, he said, "has an emphasis on addressing criminal gang activities and their emphasis is to reduce that activity to improve the quality of life in Pomona for businesses and all residents."

He added that this year alone the team has been involved in more than 100 arrests for gang members, taking violent people off the street.

More than 95 of those arrests were weapons-related and resulted in a reduction of violence.

Sgt. Mark Medellin accepted the honor on behalf of the team, thanking the chamber for the recognition.

"I am glad it is for the entire team and not just one person on the team because we work as a unit and that's the way we operate," he said.

Los Angeles County Fire Department Battalion Chief Steve Bowie of fire station 186 introduced his station's honoree, Fire Capt. Danny Trevizo, who he said has been with the department for the past 28 years, most of that



From left are Pomona Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Monique Manzanaras, Los Angeles County Fire Capt. Danny Trevizo, and Fire Department Battalion Chief Steve Bowie.



Members of the Pomona Police Department's major crimes task force are, from left, Officer Anthony Carlevaro (California Highway Patrol), Sgt. Joe Hernandez, Officer Alex Nguyen, Officer John Gribben (California Highway Patrol), Sgt. Mark Medellin, Officer Eric O'Mahony and Officer Rodney Cavanaugh.

time serving the citizens of Pomona.

He said Trevizo is a physical fitness coordinator, and has provided conditioning for 23 recruit classes, or the equivalent of 1,152 firefighters. In addition, he serves as peer fitness trainer, working with uniformed personnel providing the newest updates on exercises, stretches, and wellness programs "that are vital in our prevention of injuries."

He also serves as Division 8 Explorer advisor and is responsible for overseeing the Explorer program for Battalions 12, 15 and 19, spending his weekends supervising the training of firefighter Explorers.

"It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve the citizens of Pomona," Trevizo said. "To be recognized for this just doing my job is extremely humbling."

And Battalion Chief Al Brewer of station 187 introduced his honoree, Capt. Brian Cielslak, who he said has worked for the fire department for the past 25 years, 14 of them in Pomona.

"He has developed a very innovative program called 'FIRE,'



From left are Pomona's American Legion Post 30 Commander Roberto Arnold, Alejandro Escobedo and Joseph Paczkowski.



From left are Pomona Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Monique Manzanaras, Los Angeles County Fire Capt. Brian Cielslak, and Fire Department Battalion Chief Al Brewer.

(or) Family Instructions for Rapid Escape," Brewer said. "This innovative program will allow Capt. Cielslak to save many more lives with this program than he ever could on a hose line."

"The genesis for Family Instructions for Rapid Escape . . . was right here in the city of Pomona about 17 years ago," Cielslak said, adding that it is "predicated on a simple but perhaps startling conclusion that is that in most apartment or house fires, a properly prepared and maintained window can usually provide your quickest, fastest, safest, most immediate way out."

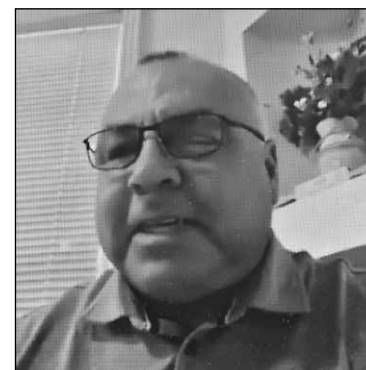
Pomona's American Legion Post 30 Commander Roberto Arnold introduced the post's two honorees, Alejandro Escobedo, a U.S. Marine Corps veteran, and Joseph Paczkowski, a U.S. Navy Veteran.

Escobedo said it has been an honor to serve the American Legion "to make sure we help the people of the community" and "keep the lights on."

And Paczkowski said the American Legion looks forward to partnering with the chamber in the coming year on additional community service and service to veterans activities.

Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez told viewers he worked on an ambulance as recently as only four or five years ago.

"This event is about recognizing those among us, ordinary people who have done extraordinary things and lifesaving work as part of their everyday job and continue to do so day in and day out," said Rodriguez, who served as a first responder for more than 30 years and comes from a family of public safety officers.



Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez



Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval

"You guys are like our angels out there protecting us," he added.

Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval thanked both the first responders and the veterans.

"This has been a very difficult time, on so many different levels," Sandoval said. "People are hurting, people have lost family members, people are concerned about whether they are going to be able to stay in their apartment or their home, people are worried about whether they're going to be able to pay their bills."

But during all of this, he said, the first responders are still on the front line "doing everything they can to make sure that we're protected."

Pomona Unified School Supt. Richard Martinez, also on the call, congratulated the honorees.



## Approval vote... from pg. 6

been resolved – for example, he said they have implemented changes and improvements in areas like providing interventions for English language learners and the special education population.

“They did a really good job in responding (to PUSD concerns) . . . over what they have implemented over the last couple of years,” Martinez said. “They also have shown an improvement in working with their students academically.”

In addition, he said, “they are growing a school and they are not seeing the decline (in enrollment) as most districts are seeing around California.”

Besides, he said the move is something the PUSD board has been wanting to do and that options are good for families and for students.

“We should be wide open for anything it takes for students to be successful,” Martinez said, adding that he believes his board wants to show that the community is not opposed to charter schools.

Part of what happened behind the scenes is that, as Martinez said, the “rules of engagement” have changed.

For example, there are fewer reasons local school districts can deny a charter.

Gundry explained what changed under a revision in California’s Charter School Act is that the state board of education no longer will authorize charter schools.

He was referring to Assembly Bill 1505, which went into effect this summer.

“If our petition had been denied last night, we would have been able to appeal to the (state board of education) only because they are our current authorizer,” Gundry said. “If they approved the petition, they would have assigned us either to the PUSD or LACOE for oversight.”

Many in the educational community statewide had been concerned that the bill would create new regulatory powers for local school districts in ways that could both ban new charter schools and close existing quality schools.

For one thing, of course, the state funds public schools on a per-student basis, which means every child who leaves a local school district for a charter school costs the school district money.

Approval vote... pg. 17

## One-time grants available to help pay gas bills

The United Way and SoCalGas are reminding customers that the Gas Assistance Fund is available to help eligible customers with a one-time grant of up to \$200 per household to pay their natural gas bill.

So far this year, the fund has received more than \$370,000 and benefited more than 3,400 households including elderly, people with disabilities and low-income families in need.

In response to the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, SoCalGas has donated an additional \$200,000 to the fund to support hundreds more people this year.

Since 1983, SoCalGas shareholders, customers and employees have contributed more than \$23 million to the fund, helping more than 225,000 individuals and families.

The fund is administered by United Way of Greater Los Angeles, which partners with nearly 80 non-profits throughout its service area to distribute the grants.

To apply, fill out an application with a participating United Way partner agency. In Pomona, con-

tact Catholic Charities Pomona Community Center, 1460 E. Holt Ave., Suite 98, (909) 629-1331.

Since March, SoCalGas has donated more than \$3.2 million to non-profit organizations for CO-

VID-19 recovery efforts and has provided COVID-19 relief grants to more than 200 non-profit organizations throughout its service area.

## Heroes... from pg. 7

“These are normally the unsung heroes, these are the ones that don’t do it for a plaque, they don’t do it for a certificate, they do it for compassion, the heart of love of our community,” Martinez said.

Eva Thiel-Maiz, representing

the office of Los Angeles County Supervisor’s Board Chair Hilda Solis, thanked the community heroes “for all the hard work you perform . . . especially during these hard times,” putting their lives on the line to make our streets safer for families.



Eva Thiel-Maiz



Pomona Unified School Supt. Richard Martinez

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Photo by Renee Barbee  
The Downtown Pomona Owners Association was more creative than ever with their window display at their Downtown Pomona office on Second Street.

## Cal Poly Foundation to donate holiday ham dinner packages after distributing free Thanksgiving meals to students, staff in need

The Cal Poly Pomona Foundation is working on donating nearly 300 meal passes to the Poly Pantry, the on-campus food pantry, and another 132 holiday ham dinner packages to Cal Poly students, faculty and staff experiencing food insecurity, according to a news release from the foundation.

The give-away comes on the heels of a Thanksgiving dinner give-away of more than 130 turkey dinners to students last month.

The dinner package was val-

ued at \$84.95 and included a fully cooked oven-roasted turkey, home-style turkey gravy, herb stuffing, mashed potatoes, farm to table harvest vegetables from Cal Poly's Spadra farm and more.

In addition, the foundation donated two meal passes to the Poly Pantry for every purchase of a full turkey dinner.

While the foundation's dining services team has sold Thanksgiving dinner packages in the past, this year's effort included the oppor-

tunity to "gift" a complete dinner package to a colleague or donate to a student or employee in need.

Cal Poly's new Centerpointe Dining Commons and the foundation partnered with Poly Pantry and the "Basic Needs Initiative" within the Division of Student Affairs on the project.

The Cal Poly Pomona Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that operates as a recognized auxiliary of the California State University.

## Pomona Day Labor awarded L.A. County grant for COVID outreach support

The Pomona Economic Opportunity Center, also known as the Pomona Day Labor Center, was one of 51 community-based organizations selected to receive funding to provide information on COVID-19 in communities disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

The funding, announced this month and made possible through Los Angeles County's COVID-19 Community Equity Fund, will provide for a range of services in-

cluding outreach, education, case investigation and contact tracing.

A reduction of the disproportionate impact of the pandemic by partnering with organizations and providing them with funding, training and technical assistance is the program goal.

Organizations will raise awareness in their communities on how to prevent spreading COVID-19 and will connect residents to health care, social services and COVID-19 testing when necessary.

Some also will conduct case investigation and contact tracing to inform people who have been exposed to or are infected with COVID-19 about their risks and the need to isolate and quarantine.

"We are thrilled to partner with the (Los Angeles County) Department of Public Health and our trusted community-based organizations in hard-hit neighborhoods throughout Los Angeles County," said Dr. Christina Ghaly, director

COVID outreach support... pg. 21



Melissa Ayala



Vince Carpio



John Clifford



Mickey Gallivan



Jorge Grajeda



Debra Martin



Denny Mosier



Andy Quiñones



Duane Smith



Jose Vadi



Fred Van Allen

Thank you District 1 Commissioners and Committee Members for your many years of dedicated volunteer service to the City of Pomona. Each of you is knowledgeable, dedicated and vital to the positions you have served. The city cannot succeed without solid leaders like yourselves. I am humbled to be part of such a phenomenal team in our journey to help improve the city that we all love.

A special thanks to Parks & Recreation Commissioner Melissa Ayala. You promised a Little Free Library in every District 1 park, and you delivered!







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There was no official Pomona City Hall tree lighting ceremony this year with student choral groups, dancers and the countdown to throwing the switch. But COVID-19 did not keep the city from getting into the holiday spirit. Pictured on the Mission Boulevard side of the building for all to see is, well, a pretty good-sized Christmas tree with Santa and a few friends hanging out, as well.



Holiday lights adorn Downtown Pomona's Garey Avenue at Third Street during the holidays. Lights and other decorations also can be seen along Second Street.

### Resources available... from pg. 4

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# A La Nueva Voz special “pull out” section: The 2020 Pomona Christmas Parade

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Yes, Virginia, there IS a Christmas parade in Pomona!

Just like some of those children’s Christmas stories, this is the story of a Christmas parade that almost didn’t happen.

They didn’t cancel the Christmas parade in Pomona because of COVID-19, they just did it backwards.

Actually, they almost canceled it – in fact, one e-mail to parade committee members Thursday afternoon two days before the parade said, “parade canceled 10 minutes ago.”

But, you know, it’s funny what a few phone calls from members of the Pomona Christmas Parade committee can do.

Here’s the short version (and Lorena Parker, executive director of the Downtown Pomona Owners Association, which produces the parade, we’re sure would have preferred the short version in real life – after all, it was her first Pomona Christmas Parade after coming on the job in May to replace Larry Egan, who retired) – it was two days before the beginning of Downtown Pomona’s 12th annual Christmas parade and Pomona City Manager James Makshanoff was

forced to cancel the parade and withhold a city permit because Los Angeles County had not finalized its approval by Thursday and Pomona City Hall is closed on Fridays.

Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval was even working on a contingency plan for the city to help DPOA on getting the word out if the parade did not receive approval from the county.

Telephone calls were made to the city manager and the county, supplemental information was provided to the county, and voila! During a second emergency parade committee meeting on Friday, the day before



The Valley Vista Services “float,” some years a full-sized waste disposal truck and sometimes this “mini,” is always a “lighting spectacular” and this year was no exception, designed on the theme “Merry Grinch-mas!” Valley Vista, serving Southern California’s waste disposal and recycling needs since 1957, is the sponsor of this year’s La Nueva Voz special parade section, just as it has been every year since 2010. Good job as always, Valley Vista!



Pomona’s Fox Theater knows how to give a parade a “show business” kind of treatment -- the parade theme is on the marquee on the right, there is a video presentation on the screen at center “stage,” there are hanging snowflakes and projected snowflakes on the building, wreaths and Christmas trees, and there are even smoke machines stage left and stage right operated by remote control. And, on a sad note, the marquee on the left is in memory of La Nueva Voz friend Graciela Nardi, founder of the Latino Art Museum located downstairs right around the corner. And yes, she was the Arts Colony “madrina” (Godmother).



Boy Scout Troop 818, which serves Claremont and Pomona and is a parade regular in Pomona, sets up their exhibit before the parade begins.



As things were different with the parade this year, things also were different with the parade grand marshal which this year was Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center and all their front-line workers taking care of COVID-19 patients every day. The parade’s first front-line worker (they were taking turns one family at a time and then going back to their cars as a COVID precaution) was Griselda Herrera Arellano, a health information management and referral coordinator at the hospital’s Pomona Valley Health Center in Claremont, and her daughter, Sofia. At left is Jim Dale, the hospital’s vice president of development. Oh, and that banner on the DPOA trolley behind them says “Thank you to our Local Heroes -- Pomona Christmas Parade Grand Marshal -- Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center.” La Nueva Voz agrees with that 100 percent. And great hat, Jim.

the parade, both city and county permits were approved.

So yes, boys and girls, there is a Santa Claus and there is such a thing as a Christmas miracle!

And what a parade it was! COVID or no COVID, Pomona ended up having a two-hour Pomona Christmas Parade as usual this month, right on schedule (parade theme this year was “Dashing thru Downtown”) with a couple of doz-

to increase social distancing safety.

For example, the parade participants set up their entries along the side of the street and spectators remained in their cars – wearing face masks – driv-

**Editor’s note:** Because of the need to comply with COVID-19 safety and social distancing precautions mandated by both the City of Pomona and Los Angeles County, this year’s Pomona Christmas Parade was a little different -- there were no crowds along the sidewalks, there were no marching bands and, well, a lot of things were different. Parade spectators drove through the parade area in their vehicles without getting out of their cars and entries in the parade were stationed along the parade route for all to see, in or on their own cars or trucks. La Nueva Voz was able to drive through the parade route first, while things were being set up, to capture photos and video of this “reverse” parade. Those pictures are featured in this special Pomona Christmas Parade pull-out section – just like always but, of course, not QUITE like always. We hope you enjoy our coverage.

en parade entries lined up on Third Street, Park Avenue and Second Street – all with COVID precautions to comply with city and county permit requirements.

Of course, the entries were spread out over the 11-block route

ing the parade route traveling westbound on Third, north on Park and eastbound on Second Street, the exact opposite direction of a normal Downtown Pomona parade, making it possible for cars to turn left or north on Garey Avenue to

safely drive away from the parade area which, of course, was closed to normal vehicular traffic.

Unfortunately, high school bands were not able to participate this year due to the size of the groups in a COVID environment, but Pomona’s School of Arts and Enterprise played an amazing “virtual” video performance throughout the night on a huge big-screen on the sidewalk in front of its Second Street campus.

Grand marshal this year was Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center and the hospital’s front-line COVID workers who, as a safety precaution, took turns standing





## Special Valley Vista Services “pull out” section -- The 2020 Pomona Christmas Parade

### Parade . . . from pg. 11

one family at a time in front of the DPOA trolley parked outside the Fox Theater to wave at spectators.

The DPOA team did a great job adding to the already festive holiday lighting for the parade, and special generator-powered portable street lighting towers were brought in to shed a little more light on the parade route.

How was this backwards or “reverse” Christmas parade received? From La Nueva Voz’ viewpoint in a loaner golf cart generously provided by D&D Golf Cars in Pomona (and La Nueva Voz signage also generously provided by Pomona’s FASTSIGNS), everybody had a good time – both participants and spectators – and all agreed that, again, COVID or no COVID, the Pomona Christmas Parade succeeded in providing enough holiday spirit and excitement to properly kick off the holiday season in Pomona.

Of course, since this was a reverse parade, pedestrians and normal parade viewers sitting and standing along the parade route were not allowed due to social distancing requirements. Even so,

despite numerous forms of advertising and promotion well ahead of the parade, everybody did not get the message.

One Pomona Police Department Civilian Volunteer on Patrol member helping with traffic control told La Nueva Voz that quite a few residents were walking in carrying chairs to watch the parade.

He said he just had to explain to them that it wasn’t like that this year, that spectators had to drive through and remain in their cars. Sadly, he said, most of them just turned around and went home.

But for the more than 300 families in cars that received free tickets in advance and drove the route, the parade just worked – and it brought a little holiday magic into the hearts of children and adults alike.

“Part of the reason why I literally pushed with everything I could to make this happen is because even though it was tiny, it was mighty,” Parker told La Nueva Voz after the parade, borrowing a phrase from a social media reviewer.

“It was a small parade, but it had a mighty meaning to it based upon what we had,” she added.

“And honestly, that ‘meaning’ part of it was really what inspired me

and I was determined more than ever because I did not want COVID to take away so much from so many people all year long, but I did not want it to take away our holiday spirit,” Parker said.

She said she heard many comments during the parade from residents who were “thankful that we were able to give them a reason to come out of their house for a little bit.”

“Overall, we achieved our objective in bringing the community together in a safe manner,” Parker said. “That’s really what it is all about.”

She said it was the best they could do based on limitations that were obviously difficult.

Congratulations to Lorena Parker and her entire staff – and to the entire parade committee, the volunteers, and Pomona police officers



Wow! Here are three photos of one of our favorites (it took three photos to do them justice) -- cape, high bar and rings -- courtesy of The Stage Global, known for, what else, circus arts, fitness and dance. Interested? They will be offering online and outdoor classes next year in the Pomona Arts Colony. And, as their sign said, “There’s no better time to run away with the circus!”

– on a job well done under difficult circumstances!

*Editor’s note: To see the video, go to the Facebook timeline of Renee Barbee of La Nueva Voz, and scroll down to Dec. 12 – it had more than 500 views and eight shares in its first two days. (The page is “public,” but if you are un-*

*able to view the entire hour-long video, just send Renee a “friend” request.) Renee, an executive board member of the Pomona Chamber of Commerce, was on the Christmas parade committee again this year as she has been for the past seven years.*



Shaun Diamond Plaza was decorated with reindeer for the parade.



The Pomona Police Department was well represented at the parade to make sure everything ran smoothly and, with their help, everything did just that. Pictured at the end of the parade route in the middle of Garey Avenue (at Second Street) are, from left, Officer Andrew Bellis, Officer Erik Ramirez, and Officer Michael Varnum.



The Girl Scouts of Pomona were represented in the parade as always -- as the banner says, they are known for “Strength, Girl Power, and Leadership” and, of course, COOKIES as seen in that decorated tower of cookie boxes.



There were no bicycle riders in the Downtown Pomona Christmas parade this year but the bicycles were there on Second Street just the same, courtesy of Six P’s Bicicleros Bicycle Club -- “Por Amor de la Bicicleta.”

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The Electric Vehicle Association of Southern California was represented with several cars for the parade -- some of them showing off, what else, electric holiday lights!



Chara Swodeck, who created Pomona's first-ever Kwanzaa celebration last year at Fairplex, shows off her "booth" in the parade before the cars started rolling through. This year, of course, the Kwanzaa celebration will be "virtual" on Dec. 27, inspired by African celebrations of new beginnings, heritage and unity. For information and free tickets, go to [kwanzaajoy2020.eventbrite.com](https://www.kwanzaajoy2020.eventbrite.com).



Representatives of the Pomona Pride Center wave to passing cars from their truck while, just far enough over beyond the next tree is Frank Guzman, waving the rainbow flag of the LGBTQ community. And each color has a different meaning -- red is life, orange is healing, yellow is sun and green is nature. Guzman is the founder and board president of the center, which has a mission of supporting LGBTQ+ people to thrive as healthy, equal and complete individuals while creating an inclusive community.



Chris and Jill Reiff (Jill is with Valley Vista Services), upper right, Lorraine Canales (of Village Academy High School and president of the Pomona Optimists) and her son Dijon Tabrizi, above, and Ed Tessier with his wife, Alejandra, and son Victor, at right (Ed's on the Christmas Parade Committee, was the founding board president of the School of Arts and Enterprise, and is vice president of Arteco Partners in Pomona) knew just how to enjoy the parade from their vehicles.



Pictured are some of the decorations on display in Downtown Pomona's Shaun Diamond Plaza during the parade.



Toys for Tots? In front of Ink'd Chronicles on Second Street? Hmmmm . . . maybe that should have said Toys for Tats, huh.



Richard Martinez, son of Minerva Hernandez, who is President of the Hispanic Chamber, poses during the parade as one of the three kings outside chamber offices. Martinez is a board member for the Hispanic Chamber. Hernandez said five chamber volunteers worked for 18 hours to set up the display for the parade.



Minerva Hernandez, President of Pomona Valley's Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, poses for La Nueva Voz in front of part of the chamber's exhibit outside their offices on Second Street during the parade.

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Photo by Renee Barbee

Renee Barbee of La Nueva Voz puts the finishing touches on the La Nueva Voz golf cart before the parade, courtesy of our good friends D&D Golf Cars of Pomona with a special thank you to FASTSIGNS of Pomona, located right around the corner from D&D (both are in the neighborhood of the intersection of Pomona Boulevard and Temple Avenue). Thanks, gang, we couldn't have covered the parade quite as well without you!

There she is, one of the real stars of the show, Lorena Parker, Executive Director of the Downtown Pomona Owners Association, who probably put many miles on her utility cart named "Betty" during the parade, pictured with her handy bullhorn that got a lot of use on parade night organizing, well, pretty much everything. Oh, and don't forget she was wearing a holiday face mask with her antlers and official parade sweatshirt. Good job Lorena!



The Pomona Public Library was on display in the parade recognizing members of the Board of Trustees, Friends of the Library, the Pomona Public Library Foundation and SOPPL (Support Our Pomona Public Library).



Holiday lights were projected onto the side of the Chase bank building during the parade. Ho! Ho! Ho!



Pomona's own Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe was represented as always in this year's Pomona Christmas Parade. And don't forget, as the banner reminds us, the annual Pow Wow will be held Friday, Saturday and Sunday the last weekend of April at Tony Cerda Park in Pomona.



Hmmm . . . Darth Vader from Star Wars delivering the Christmas presents? Maybe we'll get somebody to open them for us just to make sure they are OK, huh. Good job on the entry, Rancho Transmissions! We actually waited a moment to see if there was any movement but we're still not sure if those guys were real.



Spectators in a passing car stop to listen to another amazing concert, this time produced virtually in a professional production by Pomona's School of Arts and Enterprise.



Pomona's School of Arts and Enterprise just had to walk outside in front of their Second Street campus to set up their parade entry which included a big screen that covered a lot of different topics. Pictured is an important topic -- a letter to Santa along with the milk and cookies to make sure somebody actually opens the letter.

Send your news tips to:  
[reneebarbee7@gmail.com](mailto:reneebarbee7@gmail.com)





OK, kids, here's the one you've been waiting for at the very end of the parade, but you have to look up to see Santa waving from his sleigh at Second Street and Garey Avenue. Santa worked the crowd for two hours straight from high atop the cars. He later switched to a bullhorn -- just to keep Santa's voice from giving out when he needs it most later this month when he'll be, well, busy. Thanks again this year to Jeff Keating of Western University of Health Sciences for volunteering for the duty.



Who knew? Santa's Workshop was in Downtown Pomona for the parade (and maybe its been there all along).



Two snowmen and Snoopy helped deck out Second Street.



Members of Pomona Valley Runners were dressed for the weather AND for a little running at their exhibit in the Pomona Christmas Parade.



Victory Outreach of Pomona turned their van into a huge billboard for the parade.



Three Pomona Christmas Parade volunteers take a break and pose for La Nueva Voz before the spectators started making their way through.

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Photos by Renee Barbee

This year's "La Nueva Voz Best and First Christmas Lights for an Entire Street" award goes to the residents of Columbia Avenue (between White Avenue and Wisconsin Street). First, literally the entire street was lit up and clearly visible when driving by on White on the way to Bravo Burgers. And second, La Nueva Voz snapped this shot on Nov. 23, three days before Thanksgiving which, apparently, was part of a trend during COVID-19 to get the lights out early. A big thumbs up to our friends on Columbia.

**Cuentito for Today**

**Hope, Christmas and the Tumultuous Season of COVID-19**

By Susie Perales

This has been a year like no other for many of us. I thought when I fell and split my head wide open a few years ago was a devastating time for me. Well, it was, and it changed my life

forever. Then when my hubby broke his leg in September, we were both overwhelmed with that drama, too. But, looking back on this last year, it's been one heck of a nightmare.

When COVID-19 first broke out in China I was upset about it, but not too worried. When one person contracted it in the United States, I was a bit more concerned. But I was still at ease about the whole COVID-19 thing. After all, me and my hubby had survived the swine flu and many other deadly flus throughout the years.

In the beginning of March, I heard that the ruthless, killer COVID-19 virus had arrived in Pomona a few miles away from us. I freaked out. I went into full anxiety and panic mode. People were dying in record numbers all over the world. That was beyond frightening. Unfortunately, taking a trip to the moon wasn't an option. We were chained to this planet and forced to face this horrific quandary.

Our son, Danny, called us and told us to stay locked down, because we were on the list of high-risk people. I felt like we needed to build a bomb shelter ASAP! I couldn't believe this was our new reality.

We went from part-time homebodies to total hermits. Believe it or not we've only needed to gas up our car four times since the madness of this virus lockdown began!

I slapped myself back into sanity and realized things could be far worse. Then things got crazier. The hunt for essentials became

a huge dilemma.

We were stuck at home and we had to depend on others to deliver all our food and medications. But the treasured and precious toilet paper, bleach and Lysol were nowhere to be found! It was pretty surreal. I couldn't believe that a virus led people to hoard TP, paper towels and disinfectants among other things. It's not like it was the stomach flu!

That experience taught us a lesson. Like squirrels, we started buying things little by little to make sure that by next winter we would be OK.

To deal with that shortage of supplies we improvised. I used essential oils, peroxide, mouthwash and Vodka to disinfect things.

I hunted for toilet paper online. The only thing I could find was four rolls of toilet paper from China! We waited patiently for it only to get four half full rolls that were smaller than my palm!! I guess toilet paper wasn't in abundance in China, either, or it was a sick joke.

We were so bored after four months of being trapped at home that we looked forward to our first short trips to the doctor. We happily rolled down the car windows and stuck our heads out the window like our pups do. I know now why they love to do that! There's nothing like the wind hitting you in the face and letting

your hair fly freely. I just prayed that the little red virus wasn't flying around out there waiting to attack us!

We've always loved keeping ourselves busy doing projects around our house. But it was a challenge since we were starting to run out of ideas. You can only do so many murals and we were running out of walls in our backyard!

Cooking has been my passion since I was a young bride, but after seven months of cooking at home constantly I realized that my waist was exploding, and I was getting spiced out and burnt out. I even stopped posting dinner pictures on Facebook! I was done trying to be creative with my cooking. I was obviously getting depressed. Then we discovered Uber Eats! My kitchen went on lockdown indefinitely! What a life saver that was for me.

Well, July rolled around, and things got even more terrifying! I got a call from my sister, Sita. She sounded horrible. She told me that her entire family was infected with COVID-19, all eleven of them!

I was beside myself with fear for them. I prayed they pulled through it safely. I didn't want to lose my little sister and her husband to COVID or any of my nieces and nephews.

By the grace of God, they all

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Unity of Pomona Wishes you Health, Strength, Peace, Prosperity, and Compassion now and throughout 2021.



## Top state housing official ‘mindful’ of impact of COVID on Latinos, African Americans

A top state housing official is “very mindful” of the disproportionate economic and public health impact the COVID-19 pandemic is having on people of color and understands the need for “protections” to reach these populations.

Secretary Lourdes Castro Ramirez of the California Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency was the key participant at this month’s virtual “webinar” conversation on the challenges COVID-19 has posed to Californians and the importance of collaborations to ensure hard-to-reach communities are provided with trustworthy information on programs, services and policies.

She said that it is because of that disproportionate impact on Latinos, African Americans, Asians and Native Americans “that we must do more to ensure that the protections, the relief, funding, the resources that are available are reaching these populations,” Ramirez said. “And I think that working together with the Latino Media Collaborative and ethnic media, we believe we can get closer to reaching the populations that we are here to serve.”

The event was sponsored by

### Approval vote... from pg. 8

Legislators had hoped a compromise built into the new bill would give local districts more power to reject bids to open new schools but existing schools with strong test scores should have an easier time being renewed.

In addition, another significant change built into the new law is that community support for the school was added as a significant factor in determining whether a petition should be approved, Gundry said.

“This is a plus for existing schools but makes it difficult for a new school to be approved with no history in the community,” he added.

Gundry said PUSD’s new board members – Lorena Gonzalez and Arturo Jimenez – were supportive of The SAE charter renewal “but it is significant that the other members of the board also voted to approve the petition.”

the Latino Media Collaborative, along with the Los Angeles Media Roundtable and the Inland Empire Media Roundtable, in collaboration with the state Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency, with participants including representatives of ethnic news media outlets from throughout California.

The collaborative plans to work with community media and ethnic news media to connect with hard-to-reach communities which often are marginalized from mainstream media, according to a spokesperson for event organizers.



Zachary Olmstead

Zachary Olmstead, director of the state Department of Fair Employment and Housing, said his agency has been dramatically reducing the time required during the pandemic to place 150,000 homeless individuals in housing, in addition to work his agency is doing in the area of protections for renters’ households.

And some of these efforts, he added, were made possible through federal grants in addition to the state’s efforts developing Project Homekey, the “next phase” in the state’s response – after Project Roomkey – to protect Califor-

He pointed out that at a public hearing last month, not one member of the public spoke in opposition to the renewal petition.

“I believe that the superintendent is satisfied with the academic progress that The SAE has made, and he has expressed confidence in the leadership at The SAE,” Gundry said. “I believe he also recognizes the importance of The SAE to the arts community in Downtown Pomona and understands how deep the community support is for the school.”

He said whatever concerns the PUSD board has had in the past appear to be resolved.

Some of those concerns were discovered in a quick romp through the internet by La Nueva Voz.

As recently as 10 years ago, for example, a resolution denying a re-

nians experiencing homelessness who are at high risk for serious illness due to the pandemic.

Tia Boatman, executive director of the California Housing Finance Agency, said about two thirds of the home loans they are currently making are going to African American, Native American, Asian and Latino borrowers.

“On our homeownership side, we’ve helped more than 200,000 families buy their first home with affordable first mortgages and down payment assistance,” Boatman said.

In addition, she said her agency has financed more than 70,000 affordable housing units working with localities, non-profits and developers.

“Currently, I would say that our homeownership programs probably are taking up about 5 to 7 percent of the first-time homebuyer market,” she added. “They



Secretary Lourdes Castro Ramirez

have steadily increased over the last six years.”

“We’ve bid something like over 13,000 first-time homebuyers last year,” she said, which she added was a huge jump from when she started with zero.

“Our single-family homeownership program has really taken off and we’ve really leaned in and really worked with our ethnic media to try to get the word out about our programs and there’s more to do,” she said.

And on the state of housing in communities of color, “I think what COVID has done is that it has really laid to bare the vulnerabilities in the housing . . . our most vulnerable populations have, especially our black and brown communities, so when we look at the population of Latino versus the number of deaths and cases, you can see that there is a real disparity between black and brown people and our most vulnerable

populations, because a lot of them are essential workers and they are out there and they are facing some housing insecurity,” she said.

Boatman said her agency is looking at the challenges and working to fill the gaps.

“We know that the black homeownership rate in California is down to 33 percent which is what it was . . . in 1934,” she said. “It is ridiculous how much we’ve gone backwards as a community.”

She added she will be working on an initiative to increase black homeownership and will be working with the ethnic media to reach black, Latino and Asian communities with an educational message.

She said her agency also provides direct lending on the multi-family residential side.

Representatives of six departments under Ramirez participated in the event including Department of Consumer Affairs, Fair Employment and Housing and Financial Protection, Real Estate and others.

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## Two more Western University officials receive ‘no confidence’ vote, faculty ‘deeply concerned’ about new board member

Two more high-ranking officials at Pomona’s Western University of Health Sciences received “votes of no confidence” late last month from the school’s faculty senate, where members also are “deeply concerned” about the appointment to Western’s board of trustees of a medical professional linked to allegations he violated a court order numerous times in a scheme to increase hospital billings in Chino.

The new revelations, provided to La Nueva Voz, came to light in a memo early this month to faculty from Academic Senate Chair Malika Kachani and Vice Chair Raj Kandpal who claimed the appointment of Dr. James Lally, formerly chief medical officer of Chino Valley Medical Center, shows a “lack of due diligence and oversight” in the selection of a board member and “does not reflect well” on the board and the university.

Lally currently serves as chief medical officer at Health Service Alliance and is a clinical professor of family medicine at Western University. He serves as a trustee of the American Osteopathic Association, which is based in Chicago, according to the association’s web site.

Lally reportedly also was appointed to the university’s search committee charged with finding a replacement for Dan Wilson, president of the university, who will be stepping down on July 1 after five years in the position following his own vote of no confidence by the faculty this summer.

Wilson’s decision to step down was reported in last month’s issue of La Nueva Voz.

The latest to receive votes of no confidence – reportedly in a meeting of the faculty senate late last month – were Devendra Agrawal, the university’s senior vice president for research and biotechnology and a professor in the school’s Department of Translational Research, and Dr. David Baron, the university’s senior vice president and provost in the Office of Academic Affairs Administration.

Agrawal received a 95 percent no confidence and Baron received a 94 percent vote.

Resolutions for each were passed on to the board by members of the faculty senate, both using the same wording indicating that the “Academic Assembly expresses no confidence in the lead-

ership” of both Baron and Agrawal, adding that they have not “lived up to the tenets of shared governance” and have “shown blatant disregard for faculty rights and the faculty handbook.”

Board Chair Linda Crans acknowledged receipt of the two resolutions in an e-mail to Academic Senate Chair Malika Kachani.

“The board has forwarded them to the university president for his review and has requested that he take appropriate actions to address them and report back to the board,” Crans said in the e-mail which was obtained by La Nueva Voz.

La Nueva Voz reached out to both Baron and Agrawal by e-mail and telephone voice mail for their reaction to the votes of no confidence and an accompanying demand from faculty that they resign immediately.

This newspaper received brief e-mail responses from both, although they referred requests for comment on the actual action by the faculty to Jeff Keating, the university’s chief of community and governmental affairs, citing university policy.

Keating, in turn, referred La Nueva Voz to the board’s outside public relations firm for comment.

Agrawal would only say that he is “passionate to build distinctive profile at WesternU through the pursuit of excellence in research and innovation, excellence in health sciences academic programs, and the continued development of interdisciplinary research and training initiatives.”

“My vision is not only consistent with the mission of WesternU but take it to a higher level,” he added. “My office will continue

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serving as the centralized hub providing a supportive and rich environment to faculties and investigators/collaborators at WesternU.”

Baron responded in similar fashion in a nine-line e-mail, indicating he is “very proud of the success” of the university in its dealing with the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, but referring requests for comment on the votes of no confidence to Keating.

The board’s response to a request for comment from La Nueva Voz on the latest votes of no confidence, and the board’s view of what might have led to these developments, its reaction to requests for immediate resignations, an explanation of what Wilson’s role will be for the rest of the school year and a reaction to the faculty request for an external financial audit all came in a three-line e-mail from the board’s outside public relations firm.

“The Board of Trustees at WesternU is aware of recent Academic Senate actions,” the prepared statement said. “At this time, the Board’s focus remains steadfast on finding its next President. Last week (early December), the Board announced the formation of a presidential search committee, which will work with a search consultant to find qualified candidates.”

Only Wilson did not respond as of a Dec. 18 deadline for this issue to Dec. 2 voice mail and e-mail messages from La Nueva Voz requesting reaction comments.

However, a lengthy board response received from the public relations consultant, published in last month’s story in La Nueva Voz, said that “President Wilson’s

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vision and leadership have propelled the institution to greater heights and his mark on the university is indelible.”

“Upon broad and deep reflection, he wishes to enjoy a different mode and tempo in personal and professional life,” the statement continued.

Wilson’s own vote of no confidence by the faculty senate came on July 5 when 78 percent of the voting members approved a resolution that was presented to the board.

Meanwhile, in an update to faculty early this month from Academic Senate leadership that was obtained by La Nueva Voz, faculty members were told that an e-mail was received from the board on Dec. 2 announcing the formation of a search committee in the selection process for a new university president.

“While we welcome such a decision, the process outlined by the (Board of Trustees) is in sharp contrast with the principles of Shared Governance,” the memo said.

The memo cited a 1966 “Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities” of the American Association of University Professors that said, “the search for a new president is one of the most significant instances of shared governance in the life of a college or university.”

“Although governing boards have the legal responsibility for

selection of a president, the process of selection is fundamental in determining which candidate has the appropriate academic leadership and administrative skills needed to lead the institution,” the statement continued.

The (board) failed to recognize the primary role of the faculty in the search process and appointed four (board) members and one faculty representative on the committee,” the faculty senate memo said. “The numbers of members and the composition do not reflect the primacy of faculty concerns in determining the university leadership.”

The memo also pointed out that the decision was made without consulting the faculty or faculty leadership.

“We demand that faculty participate in the determination of the search committee size and composition,” it continued.

And on the appointment of Lally to the board and to the search committee, the memo said faculty leadership is “deeply concerned about his appointment, considering the past of Dr. Lally and associations, some of which were publicly reported several years ago.”

“Dr. Lally does not embody the morals, ethics and spirit that this university and its colleges strive to uphold,” the memo said. “This decision is contrary to the assurance that the faculty had received from the (board) for their inclusion in

No confidence... pg. 20

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## Pomona's 'COVID' hotel, close to hanging out a 'no vacancy' sign, hits new record high in patient load

There wasn't a "no vacancy" sign hanging outside Pomona's COVID hotel this month, but it got very close.

For the first time since the pandemic's beginnings in March, the

occupancy rate at Pomona's Sheraton Fairplex Hotel, now used to house COVID-related patients, climbed above the 200 mark – not once but on eight separate days during the month.

As of last month, the record occupancy at the 244-room hotel had been 173 occupants on Nov. 19, according to official Los Angeles County COVID-19 emergency operations center figures.

This month, however, beginning on Thanksgiving and continuing through this newspaper's deadline for the December issue, levels first climbed over the 200 mark to 225 on Dec. 1, rose to 228 on Dec. 2, dipped a bit to 220 on Dec. 3, and jumped up to 238 on Dec. 4 for a new pandemic record.

The number dropped to 208 on Dec. 7.

Occupancy bounced around for

a few days to 186, 190, 195 and 174 before again reaching the 200 threshold – right at 200 – on Dec. 14. The number dropped to 196 on Dec. 15 but bounced right back up to 204 on Dec. 16 and dipped to 201 on Dec. 17 before settling down a bit to 180 on Dec. 18, deadline day this month for La Nueva Voz.

The hotel, one of only a handful used by Los Angeles County for COVID-19 cases, houses patients not severe enough for hospitalization or others exposed to COVID who need to be in quarantine.

La Nueva Voz has used the occupancy rate at the hotel as an index of how COVID is really

doing in Pomona based on the assumption months ago that the hotel occupancy rate is as good as any other available figures. Each month, the "COVID hotel index" has consistently mirrored countywide data as the numbers continue to climb.

The Pomona location, under a Fairplex contract with the county throughout the pandemic, was the county's first temporary location to open its doors when it began accepting patients on March 25, and it continues to house more COVID patients than any other facility in the county's system of temporary locations.

**No vacancy... pg. 21**

### No confidence... from pg. 18

matters that impact the faculty and the future of WesternU."

The memo also stated that the board has not provided the faculty with "satisfactory answers" to questions related to recent developments.

Among its demands, faculty leadership called on the board to reconsider Lally's appointment to both the board and the search committee.

The issues faculty senate leadership has with Lally are related to allegations in a 2014 case in San Bernardino Superior Court that he violated a court's preliminary injunction more than 300 times while on staff at Chino Valley Medical Center.

Doctors at Inland Pulmonary Medical Group obtained a preliminary injunction in 2013 requiring Lally and the medical center to notify the medical group when their patients were admitted to the hospital. Instead, the medical group alleged, Chino Valley was preventing the doctors from treating their patients in order to increase billing by the hospital's resident doctors.

La Nueva Voz was unable to access court records on the outcome of that case due to problems with the San Bernardino Superior

Court's on-line document portal system.

In an e-mail to the board regarding Lally, a spokesperson for the faculty said they were "deeply concerned about Dr. Lally's past records, the process for his appointment and his associations with President Wilson."

"If this information is correct, this will not sit well with the university community," she added. "It would be highly inappropriate for an individual with such a record to represent an academic institution."

Board Chair Crans and Judge Consuelo Callahan, Chair of the board's governance committee, acknowledged receipt of the message on behalf of the board, also in an e-mail.

"As you know, selection of board members is a unique function of the board, and the board unanimously supports Dr. Lally and believes that he will be a valuable member of the board," the two said in their response.

Wilson is only the second president of Western University. Its founder and original president Phil Pumerantz died in 2017 at the age of 85 after serving as president since launching the school in 1977.

survived it. But my sister was traumatized by that horrible experience. I don't blame her. I hadn't seen her in almost a year. I missed her so much. But finally, I got to see her in late October.

We were in tears when our grandson, Steven, got the dreaded virus, too. He said it was the worst feeling that he had ever experienced, especially when he couldn't breathe normally. I'm happy to say that he is also doing fine.

The holidays are upon us and we are still on COVID-19 watch. I will never get used to this COVID-19 life with all its rules and regulations. We are trying to make the best of it, though. Me and my husband spend our time together having movie marathons, making Christmas projects, eating and taking care of each other and our beloved pets. It's become our new normal. Ex-

### Hope... from pg. 16

cept, we aren't too thrilled with all the weight we've gained! But better a little plump than fighting COVID, ¿que no?

We miss going to our favorite restaurants, plays and concerts, but most of all we miss our friends and family get-togethers and our parties.

Now that Christmas is around the corner, we are ready with our stack of favorite Christmas movies to fill our evenings with the spirit of Christmas.

We are blessed that we pulled through so far and that our marriage and health are still intact. We bickered, fought, I nagged a lot, so did he, but in spite of it all we will be celebrating our 56th anniversary on Dec. 16. It must be that for better or worse, in sickness and in health that our love for each other never faltered. We have been able to keep our joy and love for God as He is the

main focus of our relationship.

This pandemic has brought many of us to our knees. I pray that God will have mercy on us all and that He will end this scourge that has inflicted so much pain and sorrow in the world.

We have friends and relatives who lost loved ones. It has been devastating for so many.

I pray that the new year is brighter and that things go back to the good old days of mask-less life and that we can breathe God's fresh air once more.

We wish you all a Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year!

We want to thank our great friends of La Nueva Voz, Jeff Schenkel and Renee Barbee, and our family for all the prayers, help and goodies they dropped off to brighten our days.

The little unexpected things in life can turn darkness and fear into laughter.

### Approval vote... from pg. 17

newal petition from The SAE in a 3-2 vote was concerned about such things as "an unsound educational program" or that "the petitioner is demonstrably unlikely to successfully implement the program as set forth in the petition."

Gundry called PUSD's petition approval "a new beginning for us and an opportunity to have a better working relationship with our local district."

Martinez agreed, saying that as a parent, he understands it is important to have a choice.

As an example, he said some Pomona families have children in both PUSD schools and The SAE. While he said one child may want to

be in a marching band or play football at a comprehensive high school, a brother or sister may be interested in the arts.

Gundry said the next step will be to develop a memorandum of understanding between The SAE and PUSD that will define the working relationship.

"I am hoping that we will have a partnership that goes beyond the monitoring required by law because I think we are all one community and can benefit each other," Gundry said. "Supt. Martinez' support means a lot and I believe this can happen under his leadership and the leadership of the PUSD board."

The SAE is a publicly funded

charter high school and middle school and there is no cost to attend.

The school has a passion for academics and the arts and has a distinguished history of producing talented, creative individuals who pursue life with a fervent desire to make a difference, according to the school web site.

It offers a college preparatory academic program for grades six through 12 with an artistic focus in business, visual arts and performing arts.

The school averages about 440 students in grades nine through 12 and 320 in grades six through eight at its three campus locations in Downtown Pomona.

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

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- LaundryLand Coin Op Laundry, 744 E. Holt Ave., Pomona
- American Legion Post #30, 239 E. Holt Ave., Pomona
- Pomona Eagles, 854 W. Mission Blvd., Pomona







**SWEARING IN FOR TWO NEW SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS** -- Lorena Gonzalez, at left, and Arturo Jimenez, both surrounded by family members, were sworn in as Pomona Unified School District board members last week. State Sen. Connie Leyva installed Jimenez and PUSD Board member Dr. Roberta Perlman installed Gonzalez. Jimenez defeated incumbent Frank Guzman in the election and Gonzalez defeated Alfredo Camacho for Jason Rothman's seat on the board. Rothman did not seek reelection. "I want to thank the community and all of you for your trust in me and my ability to do the job," Gonzalez said. "I look forward to serving now in this capacity alongside a dynamic team that I know that we have in our district." Jimenez said he was excited to be on the board. "We are a PUSD family through and through," he said, adding that he thanked "everyone for placing their trust in us." And he thanked Leyva for supporting his candidacy. Leyva said she and Jimenez actually went to high school together at Don Lugo in Chino. Board member Andrew Wong was selected by board members at the annual organizational meeting to serve as board president for the coming year.

### COVID outreach support... from pg. 9

of the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services. "We believe the grassroots effort will help educate our residents, link them to much-needed services, and help slow the spread of COVID-19."

"We know the neighborhoods that are highly impacted by CO-

VID-19 are most vulnerable due to historic and present-day inequities," said Barbara Ferrer, Director of the Department of Public Health. "This investment recognizes the need to support new and existing community-centered interventions to combat these injustices and take

action to reduce the inequities we are seeing in our communities."

"We concur with the excitement and the prospects of this contract to support our community," said Fernando Romero, executive director of the Pomona Economic Opportunity Center, adding that the center will be working with Tri City Mental Health and ICON (Inland Communities Organizing Network) as partners in Pomona.

The Community Equity Fund is a joint effort by the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health in partnership with Community Partners, a non-profit organization that will coordinate with the 51 community organizations.

The organizations were selected because of their experience in providing culturally and linguistically

appropriate services in historically underserved communities. They also have a demonstrated history in advancing equity and experience in outreach and engagement.

"Community-based organizations are trusted messengers that share the ethnicity, language, and life experiences of the residents they serve," said Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors

**COVID outreach support... pg. 22**



**Ethel Gardner, founder of Pomona's Kennedy Austin Foundation, poses with the turkeys and with a small-sized helper at last month's holiday food give-away. The group held its 10th annual toy drive this month at the Village at Indian Hill. The Kennedy Austin Foundation, founded in 1993, is a non-profit family crisis intervention center.**

### No vacancy... from pg. 20

Guests have included everything from first responders to members of the region's homeless population.

According to official Los Angeles County update figures, Pomona has reported a total of 13,243

confirmed cases of COVID-19 – nearly double last month's cumulative figure of 7,441 cases in this newspaper's monthly report. To date, Pomona has recorded 187 COVID-related deaths, up from last month's figure of 147.



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## Los Angeles County targets rising hate crimes as kick-off to ‘United Against Hate Week’

By Mark Hedin, Ethnic Media Services

Los Angeles city and county officials, educators, health care providers and community-based organizations in an “LA vs Hate Coalition” are teaming up to provide resources against hate and hate crimes, a problem worsened by the stresses of the COVID-19 pandemic.

To highlight this effort, a group of city and county officials and private sector executives announced the first “United Against Hate Week” in Los Angeles County which ran through the first week of December. The campaign comes less than a year after the county introduced the nation’s first hate-crime telephone hotline, 211. In its first six months of operation, 13 percent of the calls to 211 were COVID-related.

More than 700 reports of possible hate crimes have been received through the hotline.

The goal of the campaign was to promote inclusion, equity and safety throughout the region in a time of anxiety and fear.

“Hate is on the rise nationally, not just in our region,” said Robin Toma, executive director of the county Commission on Human Relations. An FBI report released in mid-November found that 2019 had the

most hate crimes recorded in more than 10 years, and the most hate-motivated killings since the 1990s.

“This has been a tough year in many ways,” Toma said. “We know that this is a time of anxiety and fear that can lead to scapegoating and stereotyping.” But at the same time, he said, people are standing up for each other and their communities. The campaign was looking forward to bringing together millions of people in that effort.

Debra Duardo, superintendent of the Los Angeles County Office of Education which oversees 80 school districts, emphasized the importance of students “knowing that they’re welcomed, loved and included . . . (and) making sure that bullying is never ignored, always addressed and never tolerated.”

“The earlier we start, the better,” she said. That means that education should be inclusive of a multicultural community in its subject matter, such as ethnic studies, in a faculty that reflects the community, in empowering children to love themselves and their culture, to know their culture and to teach empathy and relationship building, sometimes beginning as early as preschool, she said.

She welcomed the campaign as a way of “decreasing students’ fears (and) uncertainties . . . (and providing) a way to assure that we can assert that every single student, every single person in L.A. County is welcome regardless of where they were born, where you come from, what you believe.”

She added she would share her resources with school district superintendents across the county representing some 80 school districts and more than 1.5 million students.

It’s not only the right thing to do, said Maria Salinas. President and CEO of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, it’s good business to help ensure “a safe, inclusive and respectful workplace.”

“The chamber recognizes that supporting our business members to find ways to promote the ideals of diversity, equity and inclusion supports a thriving economy, one that creates upward economic mobility for the county’s front line work force,” she said.

“This is our future workforce. The most important infrastructure that business has is people,” she said.

“It’s something we are going to have to deal with for a long time,” cautioned Capri Maddox, the first general manager and executive director of the City of Los Angeles’ new Department of Civil and Hu-

man Rights. The LGBTQ and Asian American Pacific Islander communities are particular targets, she said, but she cited also, as recently as the Saturday after the Nov. 3 election, having to respond to hateful imagery painted at the African American church of which she herself is a member.

John Baackes, CEO of L.A. Care Health Plan, which has 2.3 million members in the county and is the nation’s largest public health plan, cited the toll that the stresses of hate and intolerance add to people’s burdens and also called for increased emphasis on mental health care.

“Hate is harmful to public health,” he said. “Hate we know often leads to discrimination and racism and discrimination can be a barrier to good health outcomes.”

He added that many of his members are people of color who during the pandemic have been infected, hospitalized and died at four times the rate of their white neighbors.

“So therefore, any discrimination that is occurring at the same time we are fighting a pandemic is unacceptable,” Baackes said.

Toma emphasized that the 211 line is not just for reporting incidents, but also a guaranteed portal for getting help. “Anyone who calls 211 will get an offer of assistance,” he said. Although “we know that many more acts occur than are reported,” he said, the 211 line is “not just reporting.” Although many calls do result in police interventions, there are also dozens of community organizations that provide assistance. The line is open 24 hours daily and is capable of

handling numerous languages.

“What I . . . hope this week does is to invite everyone . . . to take an action that is going to raise awareness,” he said.

“We really urge people to take any action big or small so that we together as a community can establish that we are a county of love, not hate, we are a county of inclusion, not exclusion, that we are a county of acceptance, not prejudice,” he added.

“And I think that through this work together we can really push ourselves to a new day where nobody has to experience a level of hate and bigotry that unfortunately far too many people are experiencing today,” he said.

The United Against Hate Week program, endorsed so far by 25 cities, features workshops, screenings, concerts and art installations up and down the state. A list of events is available at <https://unitedagainsthateweek.org/find-events>.

The LA vs. Hate Coalition was led by the Los Angeles County Department of Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services and the Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission.

And the LA vs Hate initiative was established following a motion from the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors in September 2019 to address the rise in bias and hate acts.

The original United Against Hate Week was born in 2017 as a “poster project” in response to white supremacist groups who were planning rallies in Berkeley. Since then, it has spread to more than 60 communities

**United Against Hate... pg. 23**

### County agencies look to ethnic media to get word out on COVID services

A handful of key Los Angeles County agencies teamed up with representatives of ethnic news media outlets in the county this month in what was called a “ground-breaking ethnic communications initiative” known as LAC4You to help focus during the COVID-19 pandemic on getting the word out on county services available to the immigrant population and communities of color.

The collaborative effort was organized by Los Angeles County officials working with representatives of Ethnic Media Services of San Francisco.

Topics included everything from housing, homelessness prevention and hate crimes to support programs for small business during the pandemic and health care and food security during a pandemic.

A total of eight hour-long briefings or “webinar” workshops were held twice a week during the month, all in a campaign funded by the federal CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act), a more than \$2

trillion economic relief package which provides direct economic assistance for American workers, families and small businesses and preserves jobs for American industries.

Representatives participating in the series were from the county’s Department of Consumer and Business Affairs, the county’s Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services Department, the Department of Public Health, the Department of Public Social Services, doctors from county hospitals and others.

The series kicked off with a news conference, followed the same week by a kick-off of “United Against Hate Week” in Los Angeles County (see story this page).

The briefings and a companion print and electronic advertising campaign were developed to support the ethnic news media as “trusted messengers” in tracking the pandemic for their audience and informing them of the services available through the county and how to access them.

### COVID outreach support... from pg. 21

Chair Hilda Solis. “I am pleased to see many organizations, with long-standing histories of fighting for healthcare access, immigrants’ rights and social justice, serving as the bridge between care and our families in a culturally appropriate manner.”

“Their work to provide education and outreach in underserved neighborhoods, which are predominantly communities of color, hardest hit by COVID-19, is vital to address long-standing health inequities,” she added.

Over the course of the next year, the organizations will receive funding ranging from \$100,000 to \$500,000, as well as capacity building, training and technical assistance.

A group of additional funders came together on the project under “Together Toward Health,” a project of the Public Health Institute.

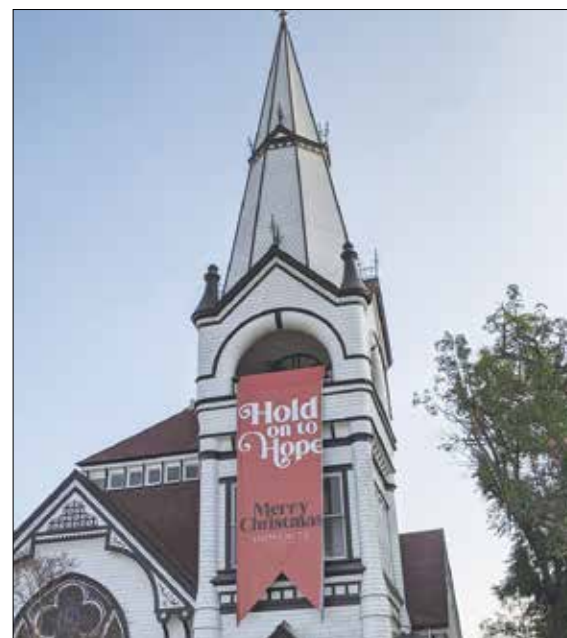


Photo by Renee Barbee  
Now here's a timely message from Humanity Church in Downtown Pomona.



## Upland Church of Christ 'blanket ladies' donate to Pomona's House of Ruth

It will be a warmer winter at Pomona's House of Ruth thanks to the "blanket ladies" of the Upland Church of Christ Blankets of Love Ministry.

The group this month donated boxes of handmade quilts, bags and knit hats -- for the second year -- to House of Ruth, which assists families victimized by domestic violence.

Donated items were expected to be distributed to families at House of Ruth's annual Christmas holiday event.

"A warm blanket can soothe a vulnerable, hurting heart and we wanted to support their cause when we heard about the great things the House of Ruth does for families," a spokesperson said in a news release.

The ladies also have volunteered to teach classes for House of Ruth clients and staff on how to make knit hats.

The Blankets of Love program was launched in the fall of 2014 when the "blanket ladies" heard of a need for warm

blankets in Appalachia, Virginia, and sent them over 60 blankets.

Since that time, they have made more than 1,000 blankets for the neonatal intensive care unit, pediatrics and emergency departments at San Antonio Regional Hospital in Upland, patients at Upland's Heritage Park Nursing Center, the Restoration Ministries family shelter in Pomona, West Covina Citrus Valley Hospice, Stephens Hope for Children, Crime Survivors

in Irvine, and the Churches of Christ Disaster Relief Effort in Nashville.

The Blankets of Love Ministry typically meets at the Upland Church of Christ on Tuesday mornings to quilt and sew the blankets, although they are sewing at home due to COVID-19 restrictions.

"Our rewards are the smiles we receive when we deliver our gifts and knowing that we have touched another heart," the spokesperson said.

## United Against Hate... from pg. 22

throughout California.

The campaign's website, LAvsHate.org, offers an array of downloadable graphics, some tailored to specific communities, that is available for sharing.

*Editor's Note: Mark Hedin is a reporter for Ethnic Media Services. He has previously written for the Oakland Tribune, the Central City Extra, the San Francisco Chronicle, El Mensajero, the San Francisco Examiner and other newspapers.*



Four 'blanket ladies' from the Upland Church of Christ Blankets of Love Ministry show off their work as they donate handmade quilts to families at Pomona's House of Ruth.



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Volunteers place bags of toys for the kids in a car at last Saturday's Operation Santa Cop. Pictured, from left, are community volunteer Lorraine Canales and Officer Gerardo Cervantes.



Pomona Police Capt. Eddie Vazquez, head of traffic/operation services and a volunteer who spent a day setting up toys in categories on the floor by age, boy/girl, etc., before last Saturday's Operation Santa Cop, shows La Nueva Voz how the program works.



**POSING WITH SANTA** -- What better time to pose with Santa than during the Pomona Police Department's annual 'Operation Santa Cop' toy give-away, this year a drive-through event, at the Village at Indian Hill. Pictured, from left, are Pomona Police Crime Prevention Corporal Chris Lewis, elf number one, Enrique Rios, Santa (also known as dad of elves and Pomona Police Corporal Ernesto Rios), and elf number two, Judy Rios. Lewis told La Nueva Voz residents driving through for toys were either on a list provided by the school district or simply learned of the event and submitted an application to participate. He said the give-away was open to anyone and expected it would provide toys for about 1,700 kids in some 400 families.

**Do you have a news story?**  
We want to hear from you or your organization.  
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**A special message from newly elected PUSD Board Member Arturo Jimenez:**

## Gracias Pomona and thank you for your support!

Now that the election is behind us, please join me in the next phase as we all go to work to ensure that Pomona Unified School District is a school district that truly works for everyone!

*As a long-time Pomona resident, parent of four children who graduated from PUSD schools and owner of a technical college in Downtown Pomona, I am humbled and honored that you elected me last month to represent you on the PUSD school board. Now it is time for all of us to begin working together to confront the district's many challenges and truly recognize the amazing capabilities of our public school system.*

*During the campaign I promised to work to ensure that our school district is responsive to the values, beliefs and priorities of our communities. Now it is time to make the dream a reality. Working together, we can make it happen.*

For more information or to become involved, contact **Arturo Jimenez** by e-mail at [Arturo@votearturo.com](mailto:Arturo@votearturo.com) or call (909) 938-5061.

Paid for by Arturo Jimenez