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La Nueva Voz

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



Pomona Chamber of Commerce



Member

Issue No. 142

Thursday, May 27, 2021

First groups of unaccompanied children seeking refuge in U.S. arrive in new temporary 'home' at Fairplex

The first busloads of unaccompanied children ages 7 to 14 arrived as scheduled after dark at Pomona's Fairplex this month, turning a large portion of the sprawling campus into what was described as a comfortable and nurturing emergency intake site for youth seeking refuge in the United States from countries south of the border.

Some 250 children were expected in the first few days of a temporary care program created by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and its Office of Refugee Resettlement and the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency with the support of Los Angeles County and an entire list of community partners.



"Screen shot" photo, ABC7 Los Angeles television Rumors were coming in from everywhere over a three-day period as local and regional news media began to "stake out" possible arrival points for the first bus bringing unaccompanied children to their temporary "home" at Fairplex. But it appears only Channel 7 captured this video of what was believed to be the first bus turning in to the Fairplex campus at Gate 1.

For at least a period of 60 days in a contract that is renewable until the end of the year, up to 2,500

young people will be living on cots on carpeted floors of select exhibition halls at Fairplex while waiting to be either reunited with family members in the U.S. or referred to foster care agencies for



Pool photo by Jorge Luis Macias, courtesy of La Opinion via Los Angeles County Beds were arranged on newly carpeted floors and even had stuffed animals on top in several of the exhibition halls when officials toured the grounds at Fairplex just before the arrival this month of the first unaccompanied children moving into their temporary home at Fairplex.

Solemn observance by Pomona's Vietnamese community marks anniversary of Fall of Saigon

It was a disastrous and devastating war, Vietnam, a war that continued for years.

In the case of the baby boomers, it was something that happened to us – and to many of our friends – whether we served in the military ourselves or grew concerned about it and perhaps even protested about it while in college during our still formative years.

Yet what happened to our brothers and sisters in South Vietnam... pg.10



Dr. Huu Vo, at right, pauses as a war veteran kneels out of respect for the motherland and for those who died.

Mayor Sandoval, at vigil in solidarity with AAPI residents, pledges to convene task force to address hatred, racism

Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval, speaking last month at a vigil against hatred and racism in the Pomona Civic Center "to stand in . . . solidarity with our Asian American and Pacific Islander brothers and sisters," told an audience of 200 participants "there is more work to be done" and pledged at the end of the event to propose the city con-

placement.

The first kids arrived late Saturday night, May 1, in a chartered bus with darkened windows and

vene a task force to address the issue "in our own community."

The task force would begin to review the issue and make recommendations "that we can continue to be the absolute best community for all our residents," he said.

"We know this is not just something that can happen in a day," he

Solidarity vigil... pg. 8

drove through Gate 1 at Fairplex next to the administrative offices to get to their new – and temporary – home, beds already for their first night's sleep, some complete with stuffed animals to welcome the kids to Pomona.

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Chair Hilda Solis hosted a news conference inside the Sheraton Fairplex Conference Center following a tour of the facilities the day before the arrival of the first busloads of kids, noting it had been exactly four weeks since she announced the plan to house

Temporary "home"... pg. 12

PAID ADVERTORIAL

Help is Available — Tri-City Mental Health is here for you

Though it takes place each May, Mental Health Awareness Month may be more visible, and more vital, this year than ever before. This past year has presented different challenges and obstacles that tested our individual and collective wellness, strength and resiliency. The COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the continued unrest due to social injustice and systemic racism, forced us to cope with situations we never imagined, and reshaped the way many of us view, manage and maintain our emotional well-being. And while the broadening of vaccine distribution gives many people hope, the resumption of pre-pandemic activities and the return to a more normal lifestyle may be challenging and stressful for others. If feelings such as anxiety, exhaustion, depression, burnout, sadness, loneliness or frustration infiltrate your everyday life, it's important to recognize that these feelings are normal and you are far from alone.

Unfortunately, stigma and shame are significant barriers for people accessing mental health help when they need it. Shawn Smith, Crisis Intervention and Medication Support Manager at Tri-City Mental Health, shared the importance of reducing mental health stigma and encouraging people to reach out for support. "People with diabetes or a chronic health condition, generally, do not feel stigma in seeking medical attention. However, individuals with mental health conditions are often placed at arm's length and can feel marginalized. It's important for people to have hope and know they are not alone. It's okay to have mental health struggles and to ask for help."

The good news is there are tools and resources available that can support the well-being of individuals and communities. The 24/7 Supplemental Crisis Line is a free and confidential service which connects callers to emotional support and community resources. "We support individuals wherever they are and help get them back to where they want to be," Shawn Smith continues. "Anyone can call our Supplemental Crisis Line, whether it's a friend or family member who is concerned about a loved one, someone who is homeless and looking for resources, law enforcement, or someone who is having a difficult time and needs support because of the challenges they are facing. We have a team of licensed professionals available weekdays, after-hours, weekends and holidays. Whatever your road to recovery looks like, we are here to help and walk the road with you."

These are stressful times. It's okay to feel anxious, sad or overwhelmed.
Call the Supplemental Crisis Line at 909-623-6131 for emotional and crisis support. Your well-being matters.



An editorial response from Pomona Unified School District

Submitted as a collaborative effort by PUSD

On April 22, 2021, La Nueva Voz published an unprecedented article utilizing false statements and innuendo to create a deceptive narrative unfairly targeting a single district employee, PUSD Public Information Officer Oliver Unaka. Specifically, the article accused him of openly displaying a “lack of decorum during [an] Asian American – Pacific Islander presentation,” insinuating that his alleged actions were insensitive to both “recent events around the country” and the “national conscience.” The article unnecessarily included a photo of Mr. Unaka, potentially leading readers to notice that the alleged cultural disrespect was displayed by a district employee not of that culture. The article was untrue and deceptive on every level. Upon becoming aware of the article, the District immediately demanded a retraction and prevented the article’s distribution on district property from that day forward.

Although the paper has since admitted that the article was factually incorrect, the purported “correction” includes entirely new false

statements and innuendo which must also be addressed. First, the correction falsely alleges the paper gave PUSD Superintendent, Richard Martinez, advance notice of the article and the invitation to comment on it prior to printing. This new allegation is false. Second, the board member comment referenced was merely a question of clarification which the paper attempted to use to manufacture concern over an incident the paper now admits did not occur. This community deserves better.

In stark contrast to the article’s and correction’s false and cynical premise, the PUSD community is one of the most diverse and united in the State of California. PUSD’s team, including Mr. Unaka, strive to serve, support, and rightly reflect the values and concerns of all members of its vibrant community.

Editor’s Note: The above editorial submission was provided to La Nueva Voz by Pomona Unified School District Supt. Richard Martinez, who requested space in this newspaper. Supt. Martinez indicated that the PUSD response

to an article that appeared in last month’s La Nueva Voz was written in a collaborative effort. This submission does not reflect the opinion or position of La Nueva Voz but is included in its original unedited form as a courtesy to the school district. Following are several points of clarification:

- *First, of course, there were no “false statements and innuendo” included in the story. The only issues were due to a reporting error relative to the timing during the meeting that the “open microphone” comments occurred, and those issues were corrected in the clarification that appears on page five of this issue.*

- *Newspapers typically run photos with stories when available and appropriate and that was the case here. The use of a photo had nothing to do with issues of “a district employee not of that culture.”*

- *This newspaper first learned of the issue regarding the timing during the meeting in a telephone conversation with Supt. Martinez when the newspaper was first published and it was the publisher of La Nueva Voz who first volunteered that of course he would run a retraction and clarification in the next issue, long before any demands were made for a retraction.*

- *While this submission indicates that “the paper has since admitted*

that the article was factually incorrect,” that statement is not accurate. The extent of our retraction and clarification, an explanation of an inadvertent error in reporting, is included in the clarification that appears on page five of this issue.

- *And unfortunately, despite the statement in the submission that Supt. Martinez did not receive a request for comment, that statement is inaccurate – the publisher of La Nueva Voz asked Supt. Martinez for his comments in an e-mail at*

8:03 a.m. Friday, April 16, which happened to be “deadline” day for the April issue of the newspaper. We reminded the superintendent of this during our review with him of the school district’s response.

After 12 years of providing PUSD more coverage of its activities, events and successes than any other news media outlet, we regret any concern, misunderstanding, confusion or inconvenience that may have been caused by this “opinion” article that appeared on an opinion page.

Pomona library ‘Mayor’s Gala’ to feature certified wine sommelier from Cal Poly

Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval will “raise a toast to tomorrow” next month at the 2021 Virtual Mayor’s Gala sponsored by the Pomona Public Library Foundation to raise funds for the library.

The annual event is scheduled for 7 to 8:30 p.m. Saturday, June 26. Tickets are available online at pomonalibraryfoundation.org/virtual-gala.

A virtual silent auction begins on June 16 and ends on the night of the event.

Special guest will be Dr. Margie

Jones, a certified wine sommelier and professor at the Collins College of Hospitality Management at Cal Poly University Pomona.

All guests will receive an event package with wine, wine glasses and other wine tasting “pairings” (participants must be age 21 or older).

The evening also will feature a pre-event virtual “meet and greet” and a post-event “after party.”

For more information, e-mail info@pomonalibraryfoundation.org or call (909) 576-4295.

Pomona Valley Hospital cardiovascular ICU earns national recognition

For the second consecutive time, Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center’s cardiovascular intensive care unit has received the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses silver-level Beacon Award for Excellence.

The award, a significant milestone on the path to exceptional patient care and healthy work environments, recognizes unit caregivers who successfully improve patient outcomes and align practices with the organi-

zation’s six “healthy work environment” standards.

Units that achieve this three-year, three-level award with a silver designation meet national criteria consistent with the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award and the National Quality Healthcare Award.

Pomona Valley Hospital first earned this national recognition in June 2017.

“Achieving the silver-level Beacon Award... **Pomona Valley Hospital...** pg. 23

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Each Office is Independently Owned and Operated



Photo by Renee Barbee

SCG America/DoubleTree officials -- including several vice presidents and directors and even CEO Winfred Zhang, who flew in from corporate offices in New York -- sat down for lunch on the patio at the DoubleTree Hotel/Vita Restaurant last month to meet with several Pomona leaders to talk about everything from the company's connection to Pomona to its plans to expand its multiple Pomona properties by building apartments on Temple Boulevard near the Cal Poly University Pomona campus. Also present was Frances Teves, Assistant Vice President for Government and External Affairs at Cal Poly. Pomona City Councilmember Steve Lustro said he looks forward to seeing the company's expansion plans come to fruition and added that he is "very appreciative of SCGA's desire to invest in Pomona." Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval echoed Lustro's comment. "Their warm welcome and hospitality made us feel right at home," Sandoval said. Pictured at right at the meeting are Sandoval, Pomona Community Life Commissioner Donna Houston, and Lustro. The hotel opened in 2018 and hires most of its employees from Pomona.



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FOR THE RECORD -- CORRECTION

Clarifying 'Around Town' opinion column appearing in April 22, 2021 issue of La Nueva Voz

By Jeff Schenkel

Due to a reporting error, an "Around Town" opinion column appearing on page 6 of the April 22, 2021, issue of La Nueva Voz contained two errors in fact.

The column was based on an on-line Zoom meeting of Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval's COVID task force.

First, an audio recording of the meeting was provided by Pomona City Hall staff to this newspaper at our request after publication of last month's issue. The "open microphone" comment by Pomona Unified School District Public Information Officer Oliver Unaka during that meeting was the subject of the "Around Town" column. After reviewing the audio recording, La Nueva Voz was able to determine that the "open microphone" comment in question actually occurred moments after the conclusion of a planning discussion for last month's Asian American - Pacific Islander community vigil held in the Pomona Civic Center.

In fact, the "open microphone" comment occurred during a general advance planning presentation by Natalie Chaidez of Fairplex - and the committee's work in the future on the after effects of the pandemic in the future of Pomona - and had nothing to do with the Asian American - Pacific Islander discussion.

La Nueva Voz had reached out to PUSD Supt. Richard Martinez by e-mail before publishing the story for his comments and input

but did not hear back from him until after the April issue of La Nueva Voz published.

In a three-way call with La Nueva Voz Publisher Jeff Schenkel and Deputy Supt. of Human Resources Darren Knowles, Mr. Martinez explained the discrepancy in the timing of the comments, adding that Mr. Unaka's "open microphone" comments actually were part of an off-topic conversation between Mr. Unaka and the superintendent after Mr. Martinez happened to walk into Mr. Unaka's office while the Zoom meeting was in progress.

Mr. Unaka immediately muted his computer microphone when asked to do so by another participant in the on-line meeting.

In addition, therefore, any reference to Mr. Unaka's gestures or sitting position on camera should in no way be construed to have any connection with the Asian American - Pacific Islander discussion, community or way of life, and La Nueva Voz regrets any possible inadvertent interpretation of significance or association, whether implied or otherwise.

Second, PUSD Board member Dr. Roberta Perlman was mentioned in the opinion piece as being "surprised" by Mr. Unaka's comments.

This portion of the opinion piece also has become a matter of concern.

To clarify, and following further review, the reference resulted from a text conversation

after the meeting between Dr. Perlman and Renee Barbee of La Nueva Voz, in which Dr. Perlman said, "Is that what Oliver said???"

It appeared to La Nueva Voz at the time of the writing of the opinion column in question that the use of three question marks indicated an element of surprise. Dr. Perlman, therefore, indicated her surprise rather than mentioning later she was surprised, as the story originally stated.

And there was no reference to the Asian American - Pacific Islander vigil or community in the brief text exchange between Dr. Perlman and Ms. Barbee.

Finally, several other references in the opinion column represented, of course, the opinion or opinions of La Nueva Voz and, as such, should not be interpreted or in any way considered to be malicious in nature.

The purpose of this article is to update and correct any information that was incorrect and that may have been misconstrued, and to clarify and retract any such information or statement.

La Nueva Voz regrets any unfortunate inconvenience, concern, confusion or misunderstanding that may have resulted from this opinion column.

Editor's note: This retraction/clarification was also presented in a "special hard copy bulletin format" at La Nueva Voz distribution points and appears on the La Nueva Voz web site at www.lanuevavoz.net.

PUSD to close three schools, relocate the students and "repurpose" the facilities in cost-cutting move

Diamond Point and Montvue Elementary Schools will be closed and the facilities "repurposed" in June 2022, and Palomares Academy of Health Sciences will be relocated at the end of the next school year after years of declining enrollment forced Pomona Unified School District to consolidate student populations in order to "maintain solvency."

The final actions were taken at a regular school board meeting last month.

Students from Diamond Point will be consolidated into the Golden Springs Elementary School

boundaries, and the school site will be used to house the school district's special education program as the new "Diamond Point Center."

In the case of Montvue, the student population will be merged into Allison Elementary School, and Montvue will be redesignated as the "Montvue Center" to house the district's child development program.

And for Palomares, seventh and eighth graders will be merged into the Emerson Middle School and the Harrison and San Jose Elementary School "population" and the

ninth through twelfth graders will be merged into the Village Academy High School area.

The Palomares campus will become the new home of the district's adult education campus and the adult transition program in what will be known at the Adult Education and Adult Transition Program.

This action will open the existing sites of those programs for even more repurposing, possibly resulting in the school district leasing those locations and generating revenue.

Board members approved the **Schools to close... pg. 20**

Caltrans District 7 Director Tony Tavares joins Gold Line Construction Authority board as 'governor's appointee'

Board members of the Foothill Gold Line Construction Authority at a meeting this month welcomed their newest member, Caltrans District 7 Director Tony Tavares, who was appointed by Gov. Newsom as the board's "governor's appointee" to serve a four-year term.

"We are very excited to have Director Tavares on our board," said Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval, who chairs the construction authority board. "We are now under way with major construction on the nine-mile extension of the project to Pomona, while we continue to seek the funding needed to complete the project to Montclair."

"Director Tavares will bring unique experience as an engineer to his position on the board, which will be helpful as he gets quickly up to speed on the project during this very busy period," Sandoval said in a news release.

"I am honored to be serving on this board with such an accomplished group of leaders," Tavares



Tony Tavares

said. "Completing the project to not only Pomona but to Claremont and Montclair is a critical step to improving mobility and the quality of life for our region. I look forward to helping support that effort and being part of this impor-

tant project in the coming years." Tavares, a registered civil engineer and project management professional, was appointed last November as director of Caltrans District 7, which encompasses Los Angeles and Ventura counties and is headquartered in downtown Los Angeles.

Newsom also appointed Tavares to serve on the L.A. Metro board and the Ventura County Transportation Commission board, according to a construction authority spokesperson.

The Gold Line segment to Pomona is expected to be completed in 2025.

The construction authority board is made up of nine elected and appointed representatives from throughout the project corridor.

La Nueva Voz

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Mayor Sandoval presents proclamation to Village Academy's 'Justice Team' members for their work on Asian American Pacific Islander vigil

Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval stopped by Village Academy High School this month to present the city's Asian American Pacific Islander month proclamation to the school's "Justice Team" consisting of eight students for their work helping to produce the last month's AAPI vigil in the Pomona Civic Center – including the creation of an on-line interactive poster.

The "Pomona Stands Against AAPI Hate" poster contains a dozen pop-ups with each describing an incident of hate or a student commentary on the subject.

The proclamation honored and recognized the contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

Sandoval, acknowledging that the level of incidents against AAPI residents "increased exponentially" over the past year, said it was clear "there's a lot more work to be done."

"So, we organized an event at City Hall with a group of universities involved, the city, the school district, the Justice Team, you guys were amazing," he said.

The students also were involved

in a Saturday morning effort at the beginning of the pandemic in which they handed out leaflets on rental assistance programs at homes in selected Pomona neighborhoods.

"We helped hundreds of people, if not thousands," apply for rental assistance, he said.

Pomona Unified School Board member Arturo Jimenez, who introduced himself to students online as "Diego Jimenez' dad (Diego is a student at Village Academy)," said he wanted to help put in perspective the impact of their work in the community, explaining a real-life illustration of justice in the community and society surfaced shortly after Pomona Unified School Board member Dr. Roberta Perlman was elected to office 13 years ago.

"How would you feel if the undocumented parents could not walk onto Pomona Unified School District Schools?" Jimenez said, adding that was the case only 12 to 13 years ago.

"Elections have consequences," he said. "That shifted and many people here in the district . . . be-

gan to see more social justice, more work in that direction."

And he said the district was not "against" the undocumented community, but they were 'fearful of the law.'

"It takes leadership with courage," he said, referring to Perlman. "It took her courage and her commitment to say no to this kind of stance and she challenged the system."

And Jimenez challenged the students to put to use what they learn in their studies "to help change our community."

"In this district, we have not just courage, but we have trust in our youth to do the right thing," he said. "The school district also participates in social justice, not just city hall, it takes everybody working together."

Teacher William Brogie pointed



Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval presents the city's Asian American Pacific Islander month proclamation to the "Justice Team" at Pomona's Village Academy High School for their involvement in helping to produce last month's AAPI vigil in the Pomona Civic Center. Pictured, from left, are Village Academy intern Nancy Rios; Justice Team member Kimberly Cuchilla, 11th grade; school counselor Lorraine Canales; civic engagement class teacher William Brogie; Pomona Unified School District Board member Arturo Jimenez; Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval; and Village Academy Principal Joseph Biagioni.

out it was Perlman who actually sat in on several meetings of the Justice Team and encouraged the students to get involved in both the AAPI issue and COVID-19 activities.

Then, he said, she returned to the class and helped the students with their research.

"It's the students and the teach-



Pomona's Village Academy High School "Justice Team" member Kimberly Cuchilla points out some of the interactive materials her class used in preparation for Pomona's Asian American Pacific Islander vigil activities.

ers and administrators and the city and the school district and every-

Justice Team... pg. 21



Jamboree

Bids Requested for On – Site Job in Pomona

Summary of Work: The Pomona West Mission Apartments Project Consists of: 3 Story Multi-Family Affordable Apartment Building with 1, 2 & 3 bedroom units. Project consisting of 57 dwelling units. Occupancy Groups: Building A: R-2, A-3, B, E, S-2 Building B: R-2, U, S-2 Type of Construction: Building A: TYPE - V-A W/ NFPA 13 sprinkler system Building B: TYPE - V-A W/ NFPA 13R sprinkler system. Quality Development and Construction, Inc. ("QDC") is the in-house General Contractor for Jamboree Housing Corporation and will be bidding out 100% of the trades and self-performing 0% of the trades. **Prequalification/Requirements:** This Project is in the City of Pomona, and preference will be given to local Pomona area businesses for contracting when applicable. The bidder shall be a licensed contractor pursuant to the Business and Professions Code and be licensed in the applicable classifications for the trades for which the contractor is submitting a bid. The bidder represents and warrants that all subcontractors and sub-subcontractors shall always be properly licensed during performance of the Contract. The project is not OCIP Project. **Bid Instructions:** Bid the project per the plans and specifications. Provide all suggestions for alternates and value engineering as alternates with pricing. Any "or equals" need to be identified in the bid if the specifications reference this. Any acceptable "or equals" shall be in contract agreement. List all Qualifications, Exclusions and Assumptions on a separate sheet in Excel. QDCI reserves the right to reject all bids or to waive irregularities in any bid. Please send request to bid to QDCI@jamboreehousing.com. Instructions on how to bid will be provided accordingly.

www.jamboreehousing.com



Notice of Public Hearing of the Mental Health Commission

Aviso de Audiencia Pública de la Comisión de Salud Mental

Tuesday, June 8, 2021 | Martes, 8 de Junio de 2021

3:30 pm - 5:30 pm

- Learn about the status of programs funded by the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA)
- Share your input about the MHSA Annual Update Fiscal Year 2021-22
- Aprenda sobre los programas fundados por la Ley de Servicios de Salud Mental (MHSA)
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County Assessor Jeff Prang visits community COVID vaccination clinic in Pomona

Los Angeles County Assessor Jeff Prang, in Pomona last month visiting a real estate brokerage and stopping by a community clinic for COVID-19 vaccine, told La Nueva Voz he wanted to add his voice to so many others “to encourage people to get their vaccine.”

“I got my vaccine a few weeks ago,” he said. “I feel a lot better. I am able to go out and start seeing people again.”

Prang said it was actually a Pomona Chamber of Commerce suggestion that he stop by a vaccination clinic in Pomona’s Washington Park made possible by a Kaiser Permanente mobile unit.

“Being vaccinated is freedom,” Prang said. “It means there are times you can take your mask off, you can start getting together in groups, you can start going places, and we’re all eager to do that.”

La Nueva Voz asked the assessor how Los Angeles County is doing on assessments as it comes out of extended pandemic conditions.

“Believe it or not, we’re doing relatively well,” he said. “The



COUNTY ASSESSOR PRANG VISITS POMONA -- Los Angeles County Assessor Jeff Prang, at left, stopped by a community COVID vaccination clinic at Pomona’s Washington Park last month to encourage people to get their shots. Pictured during brief comments in front of the mobile unit operation are, from left, Prang, Pomona City Councilmember Elizabeth Ontiveros-Cole, Kaiser mobile health vehicle manager Nalani Coleman, and Pomona City Councilmember Robert Torres.

property values, the single-family residents, actually increased over 15 percent over the last year. And while we’re not expecting as strong a growth this year in the assessment roll, we’re expecting growth in the black.”

Speaking to the group, Prang thanked Kaiser Permanente and the City of Pomona for organizing the vaccination clinic – for “doing some really important work here in the community.”

“The easy work on the vaccinations is almost behind us,” he said. “Everybody who wants a shot has gotten one, but we still have a few more people that we need to get vaccinated for the safety of our community and for our country.”

“This sort of innovative, creative and neighborhood-based outreach is going to be critical to get us to that next level of vaccine and herd immunity for the

country and I’m really happy to be here to help promote that message,” he added.

Roosevelt Elementary students honored as Optimist ‘Students of the Month’

Four students at Pomona’s Roosevelt Elementary School have been honored by the Pomona Optimist Club as “Students of the Month” for April and May.

Anthony Avalos, kindergarten, and Armando Avalos, sec-

Nalani Coleman, manager of Kaiser’s mobile health vehicle for Southern California, told La Nueva Voz after the presentation that hers is the only unit of its type here, although Kaiser has one in San Diego, one in Kern County and three in Northern California.

She said they were open until 6 p.m. that night offering vaccinations without appointments.

“We’re doing 1,000 doses a week and we started in mid-March,” she said. At that point, she added, her crews had administered right about 5,000 doses in six weeks and expected to continue.

In non-COVID times, she said, the mobile unit goes to employer group sites for various health screenings and doctor visits.

ond grade, received the honor for April, and William Wang, first grade, and Amy Lopez, fifth grade, were the honorees for May.

The achievements of the students were recognized during on-line “virtual” awards ceremonies.



*St.
Madeleine
School*



A FAREWELL FROM ST. MADELEINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

A Prayer for the Children

Grant them O Lord not to mind earthly things, but rather to love heavenly things, that as all things around us pass away, they even now may hold fast to those things which abide forever.

I speak for the parish when I say we will miss the children and their innocence. They teach us to be pure and Christlike.

Padre Manuel Leon Bravo

“Amen, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 18:3

Solidarity vigil... from. pg.1

said. “This (hate and bigotry) has been around for a long time.”

But Sandoval said that the “love and compassion in this community” will be “the only way that we’re going to end this.”

“All of you have been witness to the vitriol, the violence and hatred directed toward the AAPI communities, particularly since the beginning of the pandemic when, in fact, the president of the United States unabashedly and ignorantly called the COVID-19 virus the China virus,” Sandoval said.

“As all of you know, words have consequences,” he said. “Lives are impacted because of this hatred and racism. Since the founding of our country, we have lived under a system rooted in hatred and bigotry. It has to end.”

“In no way am I going to say that it doesn’t exist in this community, but I have to tell you that the tremendous amount of love and compassion in this community, and it’s exemplified by the people who are out here,” he added. “And we have to continuously spread that love, spread that compassion, because that’s the only way that we’re going to end this.”

“And certainly, while the argument can be made that we have made progress, one hate act against another or a system that perpetuates this should never be acceptable or tolerated, particularly and certainly not in the year 2021,” Sandoval said.

The “Pomona AAPI Vigil – Pomona Stands Together” was presented by the City of Pomona, the Pomona Unified School District, and the Pomona COVID-19 Action Committee.

Jonathan Chan, representing the Community Engagement Center at Pitzer College in Claremont, recounted for the group several per-

sonal incidents including one that occurred when he was a student in college and a couple came to his apartment door asking for money – something he later learned was most likely a ploy to see if the occupant is inside before burglarizing the home.

He told them he had nothing, and they became irritated and said “shouldn’t you have money, you are Asian,” and became confrontational.

Chan tried to close the door and the couple tried to kick the door down.

“Even within our own homes we do not feel safe,” he said, adding that part of the “attacking of this problem” needs to happen within communities.

“We have to be able to stand together against the hate, we also have to be able to stand together in resilience,” Chan said.

He encouraged vigil participants to support AAPI businesses.

“So in essence we ask you to stand with us not only in this time but when it isn’t convenient, when we aren’t there, when things are being said about us on social media,” Chan said.

Jose Calderon, a professor emeritus of sociology and Chicano – Latino studies at Pitzer College, cited a recent experience in which he saw a group in front of a local Albertson’s collecting

signatures to recall the governor and calling the Coronavirus the “China Covid” and “telling people not to wear masks or to get vaccinated because it violated their democratic rights.”

“The only reason they moved them out is because I went in and talked to the manager,” he said.

“It is this kind of thinking that is scapegoating our Asian American Pacific Islander communities placing the safety of our communities in jeopardy,” Calderon added. “That is why today I laud all of you that are here today and taking a stand.”

Daniela Santana, client services director for the San Gabriel Pomona Regional Center, explained that the state’s entire Regional Center system of 21 facilities throughout California serving individuals with developmental disabilities began through a social justice movement to address the ways that people with disabilities were being mistreated.

“I stand here today to let you know that San Gabriel Pomona Regional Center acknowledges what is occurring to the AAPI community,” she said, “and we want to express to you that we stand with you, with all of you, all of our Asian brothers and sisters, we support you regardless of gender, race, religion or where anybody comes from.”

Santana added that this posture is in line with their mission “to serve and preserve the cultural uniqueness of all of those that we serve.”

Rimmi Hundal, director of Mental Health Services Act and Ethnic Services at Pomona’s Tri-City Mental Health, told the group that in 1991, she moved to the U.S. from India, which, of course, is a part of Asia, as a teenager with her parents.

She spoke of her father who was proud to wear his turban and “was so excited and proud that he is going to give his daughter a quality education in the best country in the world.”

Hundal said she only knew that she was in America, a land where all people are treated equally.

“Yes, my dad wore a turban every day of his life because that was his identity as a Sikh man,” she said.

Hundal related



Daniela Santana

San Gabriel City Councilmember
Jason Pu

incidents of shootings at houses of worship around the country and how Sikhs have helped – even providing free food to people during the pandemic to those who have lost their jobs.

“Despite a long history of contributions to the United States, Sikh Americans have been the target of discrimination, particularly following the 9/11 terrorist attack,” she said. “Sikh communities sponsor love, equality and acceptance for all. We have a commitment to equality, service and justice.”

“The shooting in Atlanta (eight were killed in March including six Asian women in shootings at three Atlanta-area spas) was a tragedy beyond comprehension – we are mourning with the families of the victims,” Hundal said. “We stand together, and we stand strong.”

Dr. Mike Manalo-Pedro, Pomona College associate dean and director of the Asian American Resource Center at the college, also cited the Atlanta slayings.

“In those women I saw my own families, my own parents who left the Philippines for a better life here in the United States,” he said. “Since the pandemic started, nearly



Dr. Mike Manalo-Pedro

4,000 incidents of hate against Asian Americans have been documented in the U.S.”

And, he said, Asian Americans are being harassed and killed locally, as well, citing an example of a Chinese woman in Riv-

erside who last month was stabbed to death while out walking her dog.

He said nearly a quarter of a million Asian Americans live in the Inland Empire alone, a large portion of whom are essential workers caring for patients in area hospitals.

“We are exposed to the virus of COVID but also the insidious virus of racism,” he added.

Looking back into history, he said Chinese railroad workers were brought to the U.S. to provide labor and then excluded from citizenship in another example of racism.

He called on participants “to push for ethnic studies in our cities.”

San Gabriel City Councilmember Jason Pu, a member of the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments, said that as a Chinese American he remembers being bullied, beaten and “picked on” as a child.

Claremont Mayor Pro Tem
Jed LeanoDeputy Police Chief
Christian Hsu

“I am so appreciative a grateful to each and every one of you . . . for showing your solidarity and support,” he said. “In the immortal words of the late great Congressman John Lewis, it is time for us to cause ‘good trouble.’”

Claremont Mayor Pro Tem Jed Leano, a first generation Filipino American, told of how he has been asked to explain that he is “American enough.”

He said he often thought to himself how his father was on a U.S. Navy ship during the Cuban missile crisis when they turned his ship around in the South Pacific to head for south Florida.

“And I would often think to myself, is that American enough for you?” he said.

Pomona’s own Deputy Police Chief Christian Hsu, introduced by Sandoval as one of the highest-ranking police officers in the state, told the group he is a first genera-

Solidarity vigil... pg. 20

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Mensaje auspiciado por el Condado de Los Angeles

UNA NOTA DE LA DOCTORA SOBRE LAS VACUNAS

Dra. Eloisa González, Departamento de Salud Pública del Condado de Los Angeles

P: ¿Puedo recibir la vacuna Pfizer para mi 1ra dosis y la de Moderna para la 2da dosis, o viceversa?

R: No. Debes recibir el mismo tipo de vacuna para ambas dosis. La eficacia de la vacuna se verá afectada si no recibes el mismo tipo de vacuna para ambas dosis.

P: ¿Cuándo empieza la protección que dan las vacunas?

R: Estarás completamente vacunado/a luego de 2 semanas después de la 2da dosis de Pfizer o de Moderna, o 2 semanas después de la dosis única de Johnson & Johnson.

Durante ese periodo de tiempo, debes seguir tomando precauciones como si no hubieras recibido ninguna dosis de la vacuna.

P: Recibí mi 1ra dosis pero no recibí la 2da. ¿Tengo que volver a recibir la 1ra dosis?

R: Si te pusieron la vacuna de Pfizer, debes recibir la 2da dosis 21 días después de la 1ra dosis.

Si te pusieron la vacuna de Moderna, debes recibir la 2da dosis 28 días después de la 1ra dosis.

Si no te ponen la 2da dosis en ese plazo, debes recibirla lo antes posible.

Si no recibes las dos dosis, no estarás completamente vacunado/a.

P: ¿Puedo visitar a mi familia, incluidos los parientes mayores, una vez que me haya vacunado?

R: Depende. Las personas totalmente vacunadas pueden reunirse en interiores con otras personas totalmente vacunadas sin necesidad de utilizar máscaras o distanciamiento social.

Las personas totalmente vacunadas también pueden reunirse con personas de un mismo hogar que no estén vacunadas o que no estén totalmente vacunadas, siempre y cuando no corran el riesgo de enfermarse gravemente debido a COVID-19.

P: ¿Quién puede recibir la vacuna?

R: Todas las personas de 12 años o más que vivan o trabajen en el condado de Los Angeles son ahora elegibles para recibir la vacuna contra COVID-19. Las personas menores de 18 años sólo pueden recibir la vacuna de Pfizer, según la guía de la FDA.

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Dr. Eloisa Gonzalez
Los Angeles County
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Solemn observance... from pg. 1

Vietnam was so much more than disastrous – it was unspeakable, and it was life-changing.

Entire families lived through it every day in what was left of their home and their country.

They lived through it, that is, until the game-changing moment in history – the Fall of Saigon, the capital of South Vietnam, which was captured by the People’s Army of Vietnam and the Viet Cong on April 30, 1975.

The event marked the end of the Vietnam War and the start of a transition period to the formal reunification of Vietnam into the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Some families had been destroyed, others were spread apart, some forever.

And more than 120,000 people fled Vietnam following the Fall of Saigon -- they left on foot, through jungles, and in the case of the famous boat people, in small watercraft, dangerously crossing oceans – leaving their homeland with little if any thought of ever being able to return.

This day, the Fall of Saigon, was commemorated this month by Pomona’s Vietnamese com-



Participants in this month’s commemoration of the Fall of Saigon perform a flag-raising ceremony for flags of both South Vietnam and the United States of America.

munity – a solemn event yet one full of hope that they will one day be able to return to see their homeland once again.

The day in history was referred to simply as “the day that we lost our country to the communists,” in the words of the master of ceremonies at the event commemorating the somber anniversary for the 46th year.

Commemorative flag-raising

ceremonies in the parking lot of Pomona’s Hoa Binh Plaza were held first for the flag of the United States and then for the flag of South Vietnam.

And there was a moment of silence to remember and honor the “efforts of our ancestors who built and defended our country, the heroes who have died for our country and the thousands of our people who lost their lives at sea.”

A special incense ceremony was held for those who died “fighting for freedom” – both South Vietnamese soldiers and more than 58,000 American soldiers.

Dr. Huu Vo, president of the Vietnamese Community of Pomona Valley and the United Council of Vietnamese Homeland and Overseas, told his story

of fleeing Vietnam with the boat people in August of 1975 to escape communism.

He became a medical doctor here in 1980 and continues to practice today – across the street from Hoa Binh Plaza.

“Some day we come back to Vietnam,” he told an audience of

Solemn observance... pg. 19







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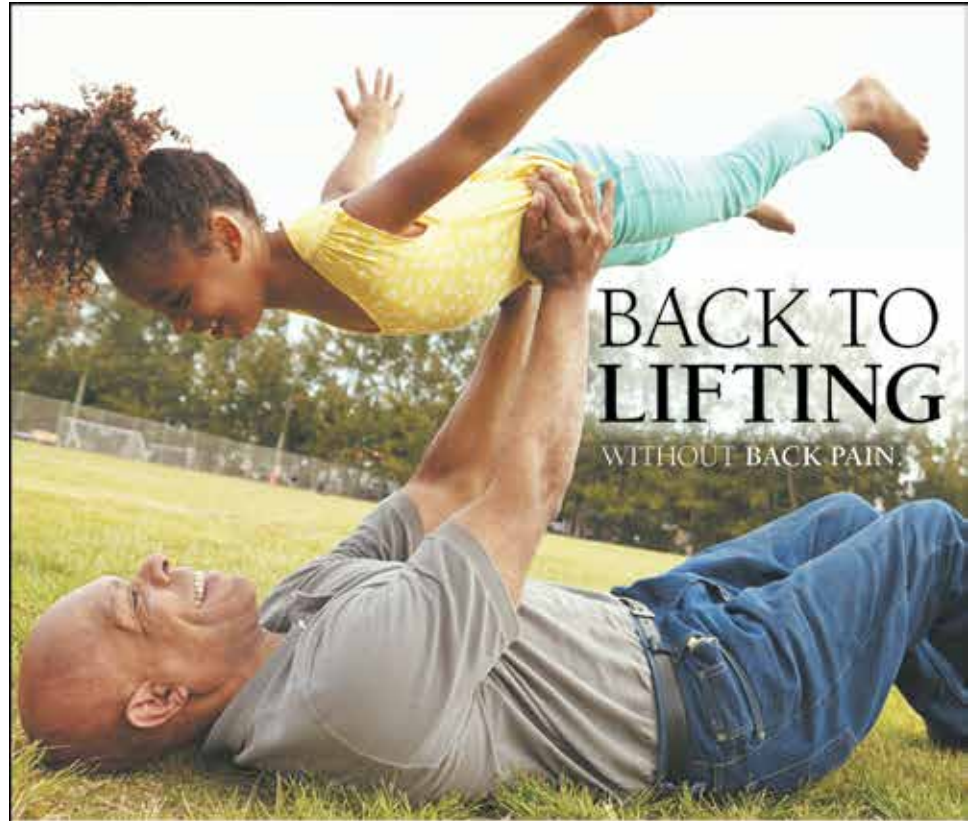
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Temporary “home”... from pg. 1

the children at Fairplex (see April 2021 La Nueva Voz in “past issues” at www.lanuevavoz.net).

“When we talked about the possibility of coming to Pomona Fairplex and serving as an emergency intake center, I knew in the back of my mind that this would be a safe and a temporary facility because we don’t have an intention to keep those children here long,” Solis said. “They will be reunified and unified with family members.”

“But also, the mission here is to provide whatever support we can once those children come into our arms,” she added. “As a daughter of immigrants, myself, I know how very important it is to be open and accepting of people of different cultures and particularly different languages.”

Solis said for some it may be their first opportunity to enter a classroom, adding that services besides education will include mental health, trauma counseling and complete medical attention.

“We will have many, many volunteers from the County of Los Angeles who have already agreed to step up and provide services here,” Solis said. “These children as you know have endured abuse, persecution, deep poverty and violence.”

“And they are seeking simply refuge, here in the United States, like so many of our ancestors, they come to this country seeking a better way of life and hope.”

She said in her tour of the facilities, she saw first-hand how the children will have access to recreational activities including four soccer fields set up in the infield below the Fairplex grandstands.

The kids will enjoy outdoor dining under canvas covers where they will receive three meals a day, and they will have toys and books, they will be exposed to mentors and more.

“The beauty here is we want to strengthen and empower these young people,” Solis said, adding that the kids will even be exposed to local artists from Pomona and other parts of Los Angeles County.

“We have so much here to offer,” she said. “Many of these children are going to learn how beautiful it is to be able to read and hear and understand and that they are just going to be a part of our fabric of life for many years to come.”

“This is going to be a comfort-

able environment,” Solis said. “The best care I believe is going to be provided here.”

“The goal of this emergency intake site is to be able to partner and to provide a dignified, safe, comfortable and caring environment and I want to underscore temporary venue,” Solis said. “The message today is about hope, about having a team of hope and growing that and wrapping our arms around our children.”

Congresswoman Judy Chu

Joining Solis at the news confer-



Richard Mylod of “Team Home,” the service providers for the children at Fairplex, describes the outdoor covered dining area to officials touring the emergency intake site before the arrival of the children.

ence was Congresswoman Judy Chu, who told a conference room filled with television cameras she was impressed with the facility and with the thought, care and concern that went into its construction.

“I personally visited the detention centers all around the nation,” Chu said. “One thing I can say from my experiences . . . you never want to have children put under the care of CBC, (U.S.) Customs and Border Patrol, because they were put in a horrible pit all with one another not able to get basic things like soap, toothpaste.”

“That is why it is so important to have transition facilities,” Chu added. “To come here and see such a contrast is really something, to see the care and concern that is being given to the children where they have so much space.”

“It is a huge contrast and also the huge contrast is the support of the community,” she said.

“The Biden administration has ensured the resources will be there this time around to get the children where they need to be with their homes, with their families, so that they can live a productive and high-quality life,” Chu said.



Pool photos by Jorge Luis Macias, courtesy of La Opinion via Los Angeles County A tour guide from “Team Home” describes the amenities included in the sleeping quarters in an exhibition hall at Fairplex during the tour. Participants in the tour included State Sen. Connie Leyva and her staffer Benny Ayala, at right rear, and Jose Calderon, Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis, and Congresswoman Judy Chu, at right.



Latino and Latina Roundtable President Jose Calderon and State Sen. Connie Leyva tour a tent complete with individual rooms and new flooring to be used to provide services to the children staying at Fairplex.



“Hula hoops,” frisbees, playground balls and, of course, soccer balls and goals, at rear, were all ready for the arrival of the kids in the infield in front of the grandstand (at back left) at Fairplex.

Congressman Jimmy Gomez

Also taking the tour and attending the news conference was Congressman Jimmy Gomez.

“We as Americans have a responsibility to ensure we are providing safe and clean accommodations that recognize the dignity and humanity of individuals in our custody, especially when it comes to children,” Gomez said, adding that he actually slept at the door of a gateway into the U.S. at the border with asylum seekers to see what they experienced.

“This facility here was a big shock,” Gomez said. “You can see the sky. You have trees. You have open spaces. You have an ability to recreate.”

“The trauma that these children experienced is deep, it is real, and they need the support of not only a welcoming government but a government that understands that they need help with that transition,” he said. “This is an immigration system that has been broken for a long time . . . and it is going to take a little bit of time to turn it around.”

Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights

Angelica Salas, executive direc-

tor for the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights in Los Angeles, echoed her appreciation for the “welcoming spirit” and “caring environment” for the children.

“We know, however, that the best place for these children is in the hands of their parents,” she said, and in a home, which is why

Temporary “home”... pg. 18



MILLION MOTHERS MARCH -- Ethel Gardner, founder of Pomona's Kennedy Austin Foundation, speaks to participants at this month's 15th annual Million Mothers March at Ganesha Park. The day each year is a day of celebration and remembrance by those who have lost a child -- from COVID-19 and all other causes. The day started with an actual march that returned to the park for speeches, presentations, dancers, music, vendors and more, wrapping up with an emotional balloon release with each balloon representing a lost child. The foundation offers grief and loss, domestic violence and anger management workshops with a main goal of serving disadvantaged families in a tri-city area.



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The evening will feature special guest Dr. Margie Jones Ph.D, certified wine sommelier and professor at the Collins College of Hospitality Management, Cal Poly Pomona.

All guests will receive an event package with wine, wine glasses, and other wine tasting pairings (all participants must be age 21+).

The evening will also feature a pre-event virtual "Meet & Greet" and post-event "After Party".



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POMONA JACK IS BACK!

-- Pomona's Jack in the Box restaurant on West Mission Boulevard is back, it is brand new and, according to its franchisees, it is better than ever! The owners held an official re-opening last month and invited La Nueva Voz in for a photo. The store was built in the early 1990s but was destroyed by fire in August 2019. It took a year and eight months to rebuild and now the location boasts better technology, better equipment and more -- even some of the former staff members came back to work. Pictured in front of the menu boards are, from left, Dick Williams, of DWC Builders, the contractor on the project; Jack in the Box District Manager Mario Perez; Victoria Tenorio, director of operations; District Manager Pablo Guzman, franchise operators Hai Zaidul and Irfan Ahmad; and District Manager Javid Bholat. The owners operate a total of 27 Jack in the Box locations, although the Mission Boulevard store is their only business in Pomona. And how is the fast food market doing these days? District Manager Bholat said it is "outstanding -- right now, fast food is the way to go." The restaurant is located at 1670 W. Mission Blvd. just east of the 71 Expressway.



Photo by Renee Barbee

ELECTED OFFICIALS, COMMUNITY LEADERS PROVIDE PERSONAL ITEMS FOR KIDS AT FAIRPLEX -- State legislators, local elected officials and community leaders have raised \$35,000 to buy 5,000 duffel bags filled with personal supplies and clothing for the unaccompanied minors transitioning through temporary housing at Pomona's Fairplex. Included was everything from masks and hand sanitizers to toothbrushes and toothpaste. State legislators included State Sen. Connie Leyva and Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez, along with five other members of the assembly and three other state senators. Pictured at Fairplex this month dropping off the donated items are, front row, from left, Acting Regional Director of U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Region 9 Bonnie Preston; Debbie Chen, director of volunteer training for the Tzu Chi Foundation in San Dimas; Sabrina Ho, program manager of Tzu Chi; Tzu Chi CEO Jackson Chen; State Sen. Connie Leyva; and Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval. Back row, from left, are Fairplex Interim CEO Walter Marquez (at rear); Tzu Chi Director of Charity Sam Yang; Mark Hughes, of U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency Region 9's incident management assistance team; San Bernardino Community College District Board member Frank Reyes; Assembly Majority Leader Eloise Reyes; Alex Obregon of God's Pantry in Pomona; Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Chair Hilda Solis; Pomona Unified School District Board member Arturo Jimenez; and Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez.

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It was a serious Cinco de Mayo celebration at Downtown Pomona's El Jefe Cocina Mexicana & Cantina with authentic musicians attracting the attention of the audience throughout the afternoon. Owner John Pena told La Nueva Voz the guests were maintaining social distancing throughout the day.

AROUND TOWN

'James' helps La Nueva Voz observe 'Mental Health Awareness Month'

Here at La Nueva Voz, we hear from our readers often and in many ways – on the street, by mail, e-mail, telephone calls – and, frankly, we always like it, whether the comments are good or bad.

After all, everybody has an opinion, and it shows us people are reading us.

But this is a story about James.

James was there last month when we were placing some of the last copies of our March issues on one of our racks at the North Pomona train station.

We're usually pretty easy to spot – the name of the paper is on the van.

It was quiet next to the tracks that day – it was a cool and gray

Mental Health Awareness... pg. 21



Free books like this one, "Aloha is" were popular at a Cinco de Mayo celebration in the Pomona Civic Center plaza this month. The "Dia de los Ninos" celebration, a live socially-distanced cultural music event, was presented by the Pomona Public Library.

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Members of the Polynesian Paradise Dancers based in Santa Fe Springs danced authentic Hawaiian hula dances at this month's Cinco de Mayo celebration in the Pomona Civic Center plaza. The dance theme was chosen during Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month, celebrated throughout the month of May. Pictured, from left, are Ramona Marshall and Julie Kawena Kirsch, both of Anaheim Hills.



Pomona City Councilmember Nora Garcia, at left, learns a few hula dancing moves right along with the kids, under the direction of the Polynesian Paradise Dancers at this month's Cinco de Mayo celebration in the Pomona Civic Center plaza. Library Board of Trustees member Mike Suarez also attended the event.

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The Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Pomona Valley invited La Nueva Voz to cover a ribbon-cutting at a new restaurant in town and we're glad they did -- we ended up not only covering but going back for lunch a few days later and breakfast about a week after that. And we're giving it excellent reviews, as are a lot of others we've seen talking about it on social media. Dana's Gourmet Cafe is just that -- gourmet selections that are both fancy and beautifully arranged. Plus the owners and staff are professionals. You've got to give them a try! The restaurant is located at 1087 E. Holt Ave., Unit A, in the Hoa Binh Plaza. Pictured with their entire team, beginning fourth from left, are owners Norma and David Perez and partners Abe Laguna and Miguel Santiago. Pomona City Councilmember Elizabeth Ontiveros-Cole is pictured third from right and Minerva Hernandez, of Minerva's Flowers, President of the Hispanic Chamber, is second from right. For information, call (714) 876-7307 or e-mail Danagourmetcafe@yahoo.com.



Norma Perez of Dana's Gourmet Cafe shows off a sampling of selections at a new restaurant in Pomona's Hoa Binh Plaza. Pictured is a bacon wrapped jalapeno. The restaurant -- open Tuesday through Sunday for breakfast, lunch and dinner -- offers excellent service, reasonable prices and top quality selections.



Photo courtesy of Irene Murray, Emma Jacqueline Photography
DEBUTANTE SCHOLARSHIP BALL -- Pearls of Service, a non-profit entity of the Epsilon Eta Omega chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, has scheduled its annual Debutante Cotillion Scholarship Ball to be held on June 26 at the Ontario Airport Hotel & Conference Center. This year's theme is "Pearls - Poised, Polished, Prepared." Nine girls participating in the event met virtually over the last 12 months attending workshops, volunteering, and planning and presenting a virtual talent show. They will receive scholarship awards for high grade point average, "personal statement" essay writing, virtual volunteering and more. Pearls of Service supports education, scholarships and community charities. Pictured at rear, from left, are Meisha Sharp and A'mya Randolph, both 11th graders; Taelen Cobb and Chloe Jones, both 12th graders; Jaylen Barrios, 11th grade; and Kimberly Humphrey and Daysia Kee, both 12th graders. Seated, in front, from left, are Morgan Watson and Lynnae Manghane, both 11th graders. All are from high schools in eastern Los Angeles County, San Bernardino County and Riverside County. For sponsorships, contact info.PEARLSofService@gmail.com or call or text (909) 973-4791.

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Congresswoman Torres tours emergency intake facility at Fairplex after arrival of kids, says it is delivering quality care the children deserve

Congresswoman Norma Torres toured the Pomona Fairplex emergency intake facility for unaccompanied children crossing the border this month and, in a news conference following her tour, gave it a glowing report card and pledged to return weekly going forward to make sure nothing changes.

Torres, accompanied by four fellow members of Congress, answered questions from the media in a news conference in Pomona's Sheraton Fairplex Hotel – the first news conference inside the hotel for a very long time since the hotel had been shuttered for exclusive use as a COVID quarantine facility for the past year.

“As an elected representative for our community and as an appropriator myself responsible for funding facilities like this one, it is my job to provide oversight and to make sure the resources go where they are needed and spent how Congress intended it to be spent,” Torres said in her opening comments.

“It’s how we don’t just say we’re taking care of these children, it is where we say we are making sure we are taking care of these children,” she said.

And, she pointed out, visits like hers are taking place in facilities like these around the country every day by members of Congress.

She pointed out that the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement, operator of the facility, is running more than 200 facilities in 22 states with some 22,500 children in their custody.

“These facilities are performing a crucial role right now,” she said. “(U.S.) Border Patrol facilities at entry points are overcrowded, under resourced and, frankly, not fit to meet the needs of vulnerable children,” Torres said. “The kids need a caring community. And the Biden administration deserves credit for working closely with localities across the country to find willing partners.”

She pointed out that San Diego County responded, offering its San Diego Convention Center,

and Los Angeles County responded, offering the Long Beach Convention Center and Pomona's Fairplex.

“Pomona, my home city, has a long and proud history of welcoming refugees in their moment of need,” Torres said. “Just last

week I attended a memorial with our Vietnamese neighbors who were welcomed here after the Fall of Saigon. And when the previous administration signed a disastrous Muslim ban executive order, our community here in Pomona joined faith groups in welcoming Syrian refugees.”

“So, this facility is a reflection of our long-standing values in Pomona, and I have every expectation that it will deliver the quality of care that these kids deserve,” she added.

On her plans to continue to come back every week, she said, “the stakes are much too high for these kids who have already endured so much and for our community which embraces this facility with open arms but still expects strong administration and clear communication.”

Torres said she has toured a total of five such facilities over the past two months, including centers in Texas and San Diego, and she has seen that “the Biden administration is committed to providing the best care possible.”

“So the bar is set high for this facility,” she said.

“But from everything that I have seen, it is locked in step with others I visited,” Torres said, “specifically, I want to mention the classrooms that I visited here run by a principal from Barfield Elementary right here in North Pomona.”

“There is a clinic on site to en-



Congresswoman Norma Torres

sure that children that are sick are cared for, we visited the dormitories and we played soccer with the girls in the open space,” she said.

“So, we’re off to a very good start and I am very pleased at what we saw today,” Torres said. “This con-

gressional delegation can confirm that these efforts far meet our values as a caring and compassionate community, state and nation.”

“As someone who came here as a child from Guatemala myself, I am incredibly proud to see Pomona residents stepping up to help these incredible, vulnerable children receive the dignity, security and bright future that each and every one of them deserve,” she said.

Congresswoman Karen Bass compared the facility to the ways of the previous administration.

“It is just a world of difference having visited facilities under the last administration where children were used as pawns and to punish families, and to be here and to see this facility, to go to the classrooms . . . to spend a couple of minutes talking to the children who across the board were so happy to be here and clearly being cared for,” Bass said.

She added that the first comments she heard from staff were that they “want to make sure the children were treated like their own, and that is exactly the way we should treat children.”

Congressman Mark Takano said he was “very moved” by the effort of Los Angeles County and Pomona Unified School District (and) “the amazing resources of

this community to be able to address the needs of these young

people, these children who have come mainly from the northern tribal countries of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras.”

Takano, who said he was a teacher in public schools for 24 years, said he was “very impressed that we had an actual principal from the public school system and certificated teachers here to meet the needs of these young people.”

“The teachers were really, I think, very skilled at what they were doing,” he said.

“I am very hopeful that the bottleneck that we’re seeing on the southern border and south Texas is going to be untangled and unraveled as we find more remarkable communities such as the one

we see here in Pomona coming together to welcome young people with humanity,” Takano said.

“I want to assure the American people and all of the people of our region who care about the welfare of young people that this (Biden) administration is moving forward with very compassionate and caring policies,” he added.

“We’re going to continue to ask questions, we’re going to continue to visit, we’re going to continue to make sure that the highest level of care is provided to the young people here,” said Congressman Pete Aguilar. “And I’m heartened that the Biden administration, that their policies of compassion and responsibility and care toward

these children, that is what we felt as we walked away from our visit and our tour.”

“This is a very difficult time and difficult conditions,” he added. “And we should also be clear that our southern border is closed, we’re dealing with the pandemic, and so we want to make sure that, to the extent possible, individuals stay in their home countries. However, there is so much work that we can do.”

Congresswoman Sara Jacobs



Congressman Pete Aguilar

said it is clear that having more facilities like this “is key to ensuring kids don’t stay in detention for a second longer than they should.”

“So, I want to thank the folks at FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) and HHS (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) who are leading a government-wide effort to make sure that we move these kids quickly out of (U.S.) Customs and Border Protection and Border Patrol facilities and into facilities like these that are meant to care for these kids,” Jacobs said.

“We know that the policies of chaos and fear of the previous administration are not only inhumane, they are ineffective,” she added. “Cruelty does not deter migration.”

She said this seeking asylum is legal under international law, and it is legal under U.S. law.

“I’m proud that in Congress we’ve already prioritized legislation that puts dignity and humanity back into our immigration system,” she said. “I have been really heartened by what I’ve seen here today.”

Responding to questions from the media

Responding to questions from the news media, Torres said the capacity of the facility is able to handle ages from 0 up to 17 years, although the ages of those in the first group at the facility was from 5 to 17.

La Nueva Voz told Torres that residents have voiced opinions on both sides of the issue of housing the kids at Fairplex and asked what message she has for those in the community who object to using the facility for this purpose.

“I’m not sure what other use we would have for Fairplex at this time during this pandemic,” she said. “The Sheraton Hotel, where we are, was home to homeless individuals that were COVID positive

up until two months ago, so they are already in cue to be a disaster center, a gathering location, so this is a perfect facility for that.”

Torres said there were 280 children



Congresswoman Sara Jacobs



Congressman Mark Takano

Temporary “home”... from pg. 12

it is important to quickly reunite the children with their parents and with caring adults.

She said tour leaders told the group the goal is to complete reunification within 14 days, and she said this can be an example to the nation “of what it means to be welcomed into the community.”

La Nueva Voz, asking the first question at the news conference regarding procedure for Pomona businesses to become involved in providing support for the intake site, heard from John Boyle, group president of defense and civilian solutions for Cherokee Federal, selected by the Department of Health and Human Services as the chief contractor for the project dubbed “Team Hope.”

“Most of the services that are being contracted out are local,” he said, adding that companies can reach out to his office through the Department of Health and Human Services Region 9 in San Francisco.

Boyle said local companies were involved in providing everything from carpeting to case management and from toys to electronics, adding that one company owner himself was an immigrant who came into the U.S. as an unaccompanied minor.

In response to another media question about security, officials said volunteers without background checks will not be allowed on site and the entire area housing the kids has been closed off.

The project team was prepared to handle kindergartners up to age 5 as 10 percent of their effort, ages 6 to 12 as 45 percent, and from 13 to 17, 45 percent.

Bonnie Preston, acting director of Region 9 of the Department of Health and Human Services, said



Supervisor Hilda Solis



Bonnie Preston



Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval



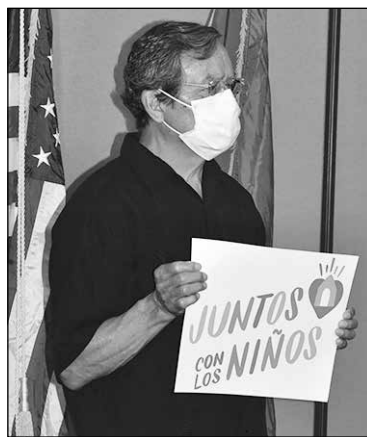
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Congressman Jimmy Gomez



Congresswoman Judy Chu



Jose Calderon

the majority of the children coming into the facility are expected to be from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, with some from Nicaragua.

Buses carrying the children were expected to be driving in from both San Diego and Arizona, although there were reports on Saturday that some of them could be arriving at airports in Ontario and Long Beach.

Once the Fairplex facility reaches capacity, new arrivals essentially will be on standby until existing children are reunited with their

families making room at Fairplex in a rotation system.

Interpreters will be on hand at Fairplex for a variety of languages and dialects.

Solis said it is expected that 80 percent of the arrivals will have family members or sponsors in the U.S.

State Sen. Connie Leyva and Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez issued a joint statement following their tour of the facility.

“This morning’s visit provided reassurance that, under these dire circumstances, HHS has kept its word to provide adequate shelter, education, health care and legal services for these children,” the statement said. “We appreciate the Biden administration’s efforts to increase the quality of care for children awaiting placement with vetted sponsors.”

“We will continue to engage with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to ensure that this facility is properly caring for the needs of these vulnerable youth, who have arrived on our borders to seek a better life,” they said.

Events leading up to the arrival of the first children

Evidence of preparation for the kids was everywhere at Fairplex in the days leading up to the arrival of the first group of children – from trucks pulling trailers loaded with portable bathroom facilities to truckload after truckload of temporary fencing to a general atmosphere of more security guards than usual at the various entrances to the Fairplex campus.

And security guards at various points of entry were taking an unusual posture that they could not “confirm or deny” anything related to the kids.

By the time the arrival date rolled around, the morning started out with several television news vans and La Nueva Voz on hand to catch a glimpse – and perhaps a photo – of the first bus, although



Fencing has become more important than ever at Pomona’s Fairplex as preparations were under way for busloads of unaccompanied children moving in to temporary quarters at the Fairplex emergency intake site for youth seeking refuge in the U.S. Pictured is new fencing around the Millard Sheets gallery and along McKinley Avenue, and even a flatbed truck bringing in even more portable fencing.

hours later it became apparent the arrival time would come after dark.

During the day, however, another new occurrence was a periodic “sweep” of the Fairplex perimeter by a caravan of marked Federal Protective Service Police from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Also, the morning of the arrival of the children, a group of four demonstrators from “We the People Rising” based in Claremont (www.wethepeoplerising.com) was on hand outside the main Gate 1 entrance to Fairplex carrying placards including “Stop Child Trafficking” and “Secure Borders Save Lives.”

Robin Hvidston of Upland, the group’s executive director, explained why they are concerned.

“We don’t know who is coming into our country,” she said, adding that the U.S. has its own problems in the areas of homelessness, child poverty and sex trafficking.

“We would like to see federal dollars spent

on fixing the community instead of bringing more issues into the community,” she said.

“They are not crossing the border legally. They are jumping the fence . . . to get into this country,” said member Raul Rodriguez, Jr., of Apple Valley.

“Health and Human Services is spending millions of dollars on these smuggled children,” Hvidston said. “Why aren’t they spending that on our own foster kids? We have over 400,000 foster kids in the U.S.A. right now. Where’s the help for them? The children whose parents are in prison, there are millions, where’s the help for them? Our veterans. That money should be going to our own citizens.”



Demonstrators representing the group “We the People Rising” gather their signs in the Ganesha Park parking lot before moving up to the Gate 1 entrance at Pomona’s Fairplex on the day the first children were expected to move into the temporary emergency intake site. Pictured, from left, are “We the People Rising” executive director Robin Hvidston, Greg Allan, and Raul Rodriguez, Jr.

Somber observance... from pg. 10

nearly 100.

But in his always pro-American manner, he said, "First, I want to thank America for welcoming us – we become members, active and contribute to the growth of America."

"Thank you, America, from deep in my heart," Vo said.

Those who remained behind, he said, either went to prison, many without a trial, or were tortured and killed.

"We never forget those left behind," Vo said. "Please support us for the price of freedom and together here, work together to make America an even better country and community."

Congresswoman Norma Torres, joining Vo at the event, thanked him for "inviting me and embracing me as your family."

"Vietnamese people here in the Inland Empire, in the Pomona Valley, have been such a great as-

set," she said. "You have come a long way, but you have worked really, really hard for everything that you have accomplished and now every year, multiple times per year, you give back to the community that gave you so much."

"So thank you for your continuous support to the City of Pomona," Torres added.

She presented Vo with a certificate of congressional recognition of his contributions to the Vietnamese community of Pomona Valley and for his leadership in organizing the commemorative event.

Torres noted that today more than one million members of the Vietnamese community are making a contribution here.

Pomona City Councilmember Robert Torres told Vo he has fought hard for freedom for "many decades."

"And it's important that we as a community, the entire City of Pomona . . . get behind our Asian communities today," he said. "And we all stand against Asian hate. And we support you 100 percent."

Eva Thiel-Maiz, representing Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Chair Hilda Solis, presented Vo with a certificate of recognition and, on behalf of Solis, thanked him for remembering all those who fought – not only in Vietnam to gain freedom but everywhere in the world.

"Many people continue to come to our country to find that freedom and that pursuit of happiness and we're happy that the Vietnamese community of Pomona Valley gained that, and it is a huge contribution to our community now in this First District," she added.

Paul Chang, regional anti-human trafficking coordinator for the U.S. Department of Labor

Wage and Hour Division, thanked Vo for his leadership.

"You are actually a beacon for democracy here in the United States and I want to say that our immigrant population is that strength, our immigration population is that beacon of democracy, not just for folks here in the United States but for everyone in the world," Chang said.

"As long as we are that home

for immigrants, we are that home for that beacon for democracy," he added.

And Renee Barbee, representing La Nueva Voz, said the newspaper was "honored to be here and cover this event for your community and your organization."

"We are here for you at any time," she said. "We are your newspaper, and we will be supporting you forever."



Visiting officials participate in an incense ceremony in memory of those who died in the Vietnam War. Pictured are Eva Thiel-Maiz, representing Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis, and Paul Chang, representing the U.S. Department of Labor, second and third from left; Dr. Huu Vo, president of the Vietnamese Community of Pomona Valley, and Congresswoman Norma Torres, fifth and sixth from left, and Pomona City Councilmember Robert Torres, at far right.



Several of the guests pose for photographers at the Fall of Saigon commemoration event.

A memorial paying respect to those who died and to the motherland in Vietnam, complete with candles, flowers and incense, was displayed at the event.



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Solidarity vigil... from pg. 8

tion Chinese immigrant who came to the U.S. with his parents from the Philippines in 1981 because they believed the country “was a place for opportunity, hope and to give us a future.”

“I believe that the sentiment about America still exists today,” he said. “I believe that’s why immigrants still come and still flock to America.”

Hsu, who said he was a product of the public schools, went on to attend the University of California and continued to be exposed to different points of view. For the past 27 years, he has devoted his professional life to the Pomona Police Department.

“I am thankful for what the City of Pomona has meant to me,” he said. “I want to assure you that Police Chief Michael Ellis and I are working to make your police department a professional and inclusive organization,

one that you will be proud of, one that when you look at the make-up, the ethnicity, the color of our skin, looks like our community.”

He added that they are promoting an organization that “does not tolerate hate or bigotry and encourages the public to report such things to us and not be fearful of what the outcome may be.”

Sandoval introduced Pomona’s Dr. Huu Dihn Vo, president of the Vietnamese Community of Pomona Valley and the United Council of Vietnamese Homeland and Overseas, as “a pillar in this community for a long time” and “a strong supporter of the City of Pomona.”

Vo spoke of how he became a refugee in America 46 years ago after the Fall of Saigon and was welcomed to this country with open arms.

“Thank you, America,” he said, adding that 25,000 years ago Asia and America were one big conti-

nent and people from Siberia in Asia came to America where the Bering Strait is today, moving from Alaska south.

“So, the first people that came to America were from Asia,” he said.

“When they tell you go back to your country, say we were here first,” he added with a laugh.

Vo said hate crimes are nothing new but that the solutions include intervention like blowing a whistle, reporting the incident so that accurate statistics can be compiled, and using education to help stop hate crimes.

“Some day we live in harmony,” he said. “Our skin cannot change – we still look Asian.”

He said immigrants from eastern Europe are different – “you land here in the airport, you look like an American already.”

But “America is still the best country in the world, no matter what,” Vo said. “The hate is only the minority.”

Both the Pomona City Council and the Pomona Unified School District Board approved proclamations officially observing AAPI Heritage Month in Pomona for the month of May and denouncing the



Dr. Huu Dihn Vo, fourth from left, and other participants in Pomona’s AAPI vigil, pose for photos.

Nancy Rios, an intern at Village Academy High School, hands out a wreath to a participant in Pomona’s AAPI vigil last month. Compassionate Pomona, Unity Church, The Quest Youth/Adult Group, the dA Center for the Arts, the Justice Team at Pomona’s Village Academy High School and Tri-City Mental Health created wreaths to show their appreciation and respect for the AAPI community.



violence and harassment that AAPI residents have had to encounter.

Pomona Unified School District Board members Dr. Roberta Perlman and Arturo Jimenez attended the event along with Pomona City Councilmembers John Nolte, Victor Preciado, Nora Garcia and Steve Lustro.



Signs helped communicate the message of the day at Pomona’s AAPI vigil.



Participants at Pomona’s AAPI vigil included, from left, Pomona Unified School Board member Arturo Jimenez, Pomona Police Chief Mike Ellis, and Pomona City Councilmember Victor Preciado.

Schools to close... from pg. 5

recommendation from staff – following a year-long process involving community meetings – based on the interest of staff to “provide students and programs with the

best possible facilities in order to maximize student achievement.”

Motions to facilitate all the changes became a little complicated – even for PUSD’s seasoned board members – but after amendments and even amendments to amendments, the final actions were approved on 4 to 1 votes with Board President Andrew Wong voting in opposition.

The original staff recommendation was to make all of the changes

effective next month, something Wong appeared to agree with since the community already had been given an opportunity to provide input.

A “friendly amendment” on the first two items by board member Dr. Roberta Perlman – and by Board member Adrienne Konigar-Macklin on the Palomares site – bumped it over a year to give families extra time to prepare for the consolidations.



PUSD Supt. Richard Martinez



Dr. Huu Dihn Vo

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Justice Team... from pg. 6

body working together to create something that none of us could do by ourselves,” Brogie said.

Village Academy Principal Joseph Biagioni pointed out that while Brogie is retiring effective June 1, “his legacy will live on” because of his work with the students.

Brogie explained that Village Academy five years ago became part of the California Democracy School civic learning initiative, originally funded by the Bechtel Foundation to institutionalize civic learning in high schools to help prepare students for college, career and citizenship.

The grant, received by the Los Angeles County Office of Education, paid for training a team of teachers over two summers. Village Academy submitted an application to participate and was one of the first schools in the state accepted to the program, Brogie said.

The result was the creation of a civic engagement class by a team of teachers and students since have

been doing everything from writing letters to elected officials and organizations to creating some 30 public service announcements – including one on COVID-19 – that have been viewed throughout Pomona at churches, civic organizations and even prisons.

The Justice Team was an outgrowth of the civic engagement class.

For example, students sent letters to State Sen. Connie Leyva on topics including plastic pollution, vaping, increased taxation for health care, homelessness and the drought.

Letters to Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez were on topics like marine pollution, gun violence, immigration and human health.

“The students learn to speak their truth to people in power,” Brogie told La Nueva Voz.

Pomona City Councilmembers Elizabeth Ontiveros-Cole and Victor Preciado both have participated in the program.

Students sitting in on the on-

line presentation in Brogie’s U.S. history and civic engagement classroom at Village Academy thanked Sandoval for listening to their thoughts on the on-going AAPI issue.

“The students feel empowered when the Mayor of the City of Pomona comes in and listens to their concerns – that is a lifetime changing thing for the students” in terms of their feeling maybe they made a difference, Brogie said.

Sandoval told the students the AAPI observance was first celebrated in 1978 and became a month-long event in the United States in 1992.

Members of the Justice Team included Village Academy students Kimberly Cuchilla, Narlyn Rodriguez, Anna Pleasant, Marisol Diego and Juliana Naag, all 11th graders; Genesis Lopez and Karla Hernandez, both 12th graders; and Natalie Vidarte, 10th grade.

To view the interactive poster developed by the students, visit the web site at tinyurl.com/AAPI-PosterVAHS2.

dren at the intake facility at the time of the tour – 60 percent from Guatemala, 30 percent from Honduras, 5 percent from El Salvador and 5 percent from other countries.

And, she said, it “seems like they are enjoying their time here.”

Takano said that as the facility ramps up to its capacity of 2,000 to 2,500 kids, the staffing ratio of 1 to 6 will mean “a lot of opportunities for youth workers to be . . . well paid here,” making it possible for the local community to offer its talents to serve the children.

Torres said as of the time of the news conference, two children already had been reunited – and they just arrived in the facility that Saturday night.

“Their goal is to get them reunited within the first two weeks,” she said.

She said there is no set schedule for future arrivals as it all depends on the numbers of kids arriving at the border and presenting themselves to border agents.

“That is why the call went out to 50 states, all municipalities across the U.S. to volunteer to host children in their communities,” she said. “We have gotten away from the old way of forcing these facilities on communities by hosting kids in cages. There are no cages here.”

“They (the kids) are very happy . . . the kids here because they are being treated humanely, they are being fed three times a day and they are being given the attention that they need,” she said. “We saw kids playing, smiles on their faces, they already know how to say good morning, good afternoon . . . they want to be a part of our

American life.”

A dozen children joined the members of the congressional delegation in playing a little soccer on the infield in front of the Fairplex grandstands.

Torres emphasized there are no Border Patrol personnel at the Fairplex location.

Commenting on the fact that some of the children have tested positive for COVID-19, Torres said it is not unusual to have 6 to 7 percent of the population test positive and that they are placed in a separate area of confinement. She also said the children wear face masks and are tested twice weekly.

After the news conference, Bonnie Preston, acting director of Region 9 of the Department of Health and Human Services based in San Francisco, told La Nueva Voz that none of the children testing positive had become symptomatic.

She added that if one of the children in a sibling group becomes positive, the siblings are kept together unless they prefer to be out of isolation.

“There are 20 children who are separated from the rest right now but they may not all be COVID positive because they are siblings (who are negative),” she said.

She said the youngest child on campus at the time was age 5 although none of the younger children were in isolation – only the older children generally ages 12 to 17.

The use of a portion of the Fairplex campus as an emergency intake facility was negotiated between Los Angeles County and the Biden administration.

Claremont Center for Spiritual Living opens its doors on Sundays for ‘live’ services

Claremont’s Center for Spiritual Living, closed indoors due to the pandemic for the past 13 months, has opened its doors once again on Sundays, subject to all Centers for Disease Control guidelines, to honor “all paths to God” and provide on-going educational programs and spiritual enrichment courses to Pomona and surrounding communities.

Spokesperson Regina Reynolds said the center, a Church of Religious Science, supports the belief that “every life is sacred and valuable” and its campus allows members to “connect with like-minded people in the greater Claremont area.”

Classes are taught by local “New Thought” teachers to enable members to discover their “inherent creative power.” On-going topics range from “love and grief” and “meditation is more than you think” for personal and spiritual development to “discover,” an exploration of the spiritual principles taught at the campus.

There’s even a “laughter yoga therapy” workshop, a light-hearted interactive group event showing how laughter can be a healing energy in life.



The Claremont Center for Spiritual Living, nestled among the trees not far from both Downtown Claremont and the Claremont Colleges, has opened its doors once again for Sunday services following all pandemic-related guidelines.

Wednesday night “GATEway Services” offer small group presentation and discussion of applying spiritual principles in everyday life – from social justice and managing change to the creative process, forgiveness, science and spirituality and more.

Due to CDC guidelines, some programs are continuing via Zoom, although plans call for moving to hybrid programs, some future outdoors events and then adapting to indoor functions.

“We believe that people are on a spiritual journey that will

ultimately lead to their greatest good,” Reynolds said. “Our teaching incorporates affirmative prayer, meditation, healing, visioning and other spiritual tools to help us lead a spiritual life, think positively and love deeply.”

The Claremont Center for Spiritual Living is located at 509 S. College Ave., Claremont, (909) 624-3549. It welcomes all who are searching for a spiritual “home.”

Rev. Tracy Earlywine is senior minister and Sunday morning services are held at 10:30 a.m.

Quality care... from pg. 17

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Mental Health... from pg. 15

day, not a lot of people back on the trains yet because of the pandemic and the west entrance to the parking lot was still closed because of construction on the crossing getting ready for the Gold Line extension into Pomona.

James approached us and said he’s a regular reader. In fact, he wanted to know the schedule for when the new issues come out each month (the answer is we publish on the fourth Thursday and the papers are on the street basically the Wednesday before through the Friday after).

The interesting thing about James was the reason he became a regular reader – brilliant writing, topical, hard-hitting news coverage of Pomona and surrounding communities?

Nope, in fact he said he picked up a copy at the train station because he was bored. Hey, we’ll take our readers for whatever reason that works.

It turns out it was that front page “advertorial” in there every month that hit him at just the right time and made him aware of the

Cal Poly students graduate in 20 in-person ceremonies – for the first time ever conducted as a ‘drive-in’ event

Cal Poly University Pomona last week celebrated its Class of 2020 and Class of 2021 with a total of 20 in-person commencement ceremonies over a four-day period – for the first time ever conducted as a “drive-in” event courtesy of the parking lot at Pomona’s Fairplex.

The 2021 class was the largest graduating class in university history, according to a news release, with just more than 7,400 students. The Class of 2020 had 6,153 graduates.

Cal Poly President Soraya Coley, speaking at ceremonies for students in Cal Poly’s College of Business Administration, congratulated the students on their “life changing accomplishment.”

“It is no small thing to earn a college degree,” she said. “It takes perseverance and a sense of purpose. But what you have accomplished is indeed even more. To reach this goal under uniquely challenging circumstances demonstrates a level of commitment and resilience that will remain with you long after today.”

She added that their strength in the face of adversity “now be-

comes part of the bedrock that will sustain you for the rest of your life.”

And she urged them to carry “the joy you feel today into the world of work or to further your education.”

“You will continue to exemplify the three ideals on our university seal – creativity, discovery and innovation,” she said. “Your success here is only a harbinger of what you will achieve going forward.”

Cal Poly’s College of Business Administration Dean Erik Rolland told students their graduation was the “culmination of so many remarkable achievements, many on your end.”

“I am most proud of how our students, faculty and staff grew closer in pursuit of one common goal regardless of the slightly challenging circumstances,” he added.

Since spring of 2020, students encouraged the university to hold “real” ceremonies that their families could attend – and they wanted to walk across the stage.

The drive-in approach took more than a year of planning to make



Cal Poly President Dr. Soraya Coley



Erik Rolland, Dean College of Business Administration

it work.

Graduates were allowed to bring one car of family and/or friends. Large LCD screens



Cal Poly students walked across the stage and down the ramp after receiving their diplomas at Cal Poly’s first-ever “drive-in” graduation ceremonies.



Cars filled with family and friends lined up in the Fairplex parking lot for Cal Poly Pomona’s series of graduation ceremonies this month. And yes, there was a little hornhonking at the end. The 2021 class was the largest in university history.

showed close-ups of the ceremonies and videos of guest speakers, although Coley and the dean “du jour” were “live” on the

stage.

More than 5,500 students participated in the series of ceremonies.

Jehovah’s Witnesses, during a year without knocking on doors, turned to other approaches with surprising results

As yet another unintended consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, Jehovah’s Witnesses have spent the past year without doing something they have become known for – knocking on doors – and some of the results have been surprising.

For many – including Pomona residents Javier and Betty Cervantes – the change from ringing doorbells and knocking on doors to telephone calls and writing letters expanded and invigorated their ministry, according to a news release.

The two – along with their daughter, Emma, 13 – before the pandemic spent time regularly preaching – from laundromats to the local transit center.

And while the pandemic has forced them indoors, it has not curtailed their work. If anything, they said, it has generated new-found appreciation.

“One man responded to my letter, saying “Thank you so much for staying active, even if you can’t come to my door,” Emma said. “My letters are going somewhere, so I try to keep in mind with a

prayer that whoever gets that letter is going to get exactly what they need.”

The face-to-face public ministry by some 1.3 million “Witnesses” was suspended in March 2020 and congregation “meetings” became videoconferencing.

“It has been a very deliberate decision based on our respect for life and love of neighbor,” said Robert Hendriks, national spokesman for Jehovah’s Witnesses. “But we are still witnesses, so we must testify about our faith. It was inevitable that we would find a way to continue our work.”

Many have checked in on neighbors as well as distant friends and family, sometimes sharing links to Bible-based articles from the organization’s web site.

If anything, the pandemic has heightened their concern for others,

Hendriks said.

“We are finding that people are perplexed, stressed and feeling isolated,” he added. “Our work has helped many regain a sense of footing at a very unsettled time.”

Topics of conversation with neighbors now are ranging from COVID-19 to civil unrest and government.

And virtual attendance at meetings is actually up.

Nearly 51,000 people in the U.S. last year made a request for a Witness to contact them.

Jehovah’s Witnesses has a congregation or “Kingdom Hall” in Pomona – 1546 S. Garey Ave. – and others in nearby Chino, Ontario and Montclair.

For more information, visit the web site at jw.org with content available in more than 1,000 languages.

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



Mental Health... from pg. 21

services at Tri-City.

Now picture this – our new friend James is probably in his late 30’s, African-American, and apparently homeless, but kind of off and on. In fact, at one point he was working with Tri-City to try to get into a housing facility.

Today, he said he loves La Nueva Voz because it gave him Tri-City. He became aware of the mental health facility that serves Pomona, Claremont and La Verne because of La Nueva Voz, got involved in their programs, and, in his words, the staff there changed his life.

Of course, we already knew that was among Tri-City’s capabilities – in fact, that’s what Executive Director Toni Navarro, Mental Health Services Act Director Rimmi Hundal and the rest of the staff over there do for a living is change lives. But we’re guessing they like hearing comments like that once in a while (actually, we told the gang about

this incident in an e-mail and Toni responded with her own e-mail, calling it SUCH a great story, and added that the timing was interesting because, if we were running something in our May issue, May is observed as Mental Health Awareness Month – break the stigma! – in the U.S., and has been since 1949).

James told us he has access to e-mail and we invited him to send us a few paragraphs explaining in greater detail how Tri-City changed his life and what Tri-City means to him.

We told him the staff at Tri-City would love to see it and his letter might do some good for somebody else.

We actually thought he would send us something and, of course, he still might. If he does, we’ll put it right in our next issue.

You know, we tell people all the time that Pomona has a population of 157,000 people, is the seventh



Photo by Renee Barbee

RAMP CLOSURE IN WESTMONT -- That little on-ramp and off-ramp at the southern end of Phillips Drive where it meets the 71 Expressway -- you know, the one where you have to put your airplane wing flaps down to slow down on a short runway when exiting -- closed permanently this week (note the K-rail at rear blocking vehicles). The move is part of the on-going "71 Expressway to Freeway Conversion Project" that will convert the roadway from four lanes to eight lanes including a carpool lane in each direction. Construction begins winter of 2022 and completion is set for summer of 2025.

**Mental Health...
from pg. 22**

largest city in Los Angeles County, but really is just a big small town.

It certainly seemed like just that when we had our conversation with James.

So happy Mental Health Awareness Month to all of our readers, including James, wherever you are, and, James, we hope you pick up this month's issue of the paper. And for everybody else, if you get a chance, stop into the Tri-City Wellness Center on Garey Avenue (just south of the San Bernardino Freeway) – or any of the Tri-City offices – just to see what they have to offer – for you or for someone you know.

Because you never know – it might change your life, just like it did for James.

**Pomona Valley Hospital...
from pg. 2**

con Award for Excellence for the second consecutive time demonstrates our deep-rooted commitment to providing exceptional, evidence-based care to our patients," said Darlene Scaffidi, RN, Executive Vice President of Patient Care Services. "Our nursing team cares for patients with compassion and an uncompromising dedication to quality."

The cardiovascular unit earned the award by meeting rigorous criteria for leadership structures and systems, appropriate staffing and staff engagement, effective communication and knowledge management, evidence-based practice and processes and outcome measurement.

"These dedicated healthcare professionals join other members of our exceptional community of nurses who set the standard for optimal patient care," said Elizabeth Bridges, PhD, RN, president of the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses.



JUST LIKE OLD TIMES! -- It was just like old times -- almost -- this month at a grand re-opening at Downtown Pomona's Metro Ale House. And not only did owner Jason Abboud cut the ribbon and receive a "certificate of accomplishment" from the Chamber -- he packed the side patio with guests and had two amazing live musicians -- "Soundwave Band" (Jun and Willie) -- who played a spot-on version of "Hotel California." Pictured at the ribbon-cutting ceremony are, from left, Melik Wilds, of the non-profit Momentum Youth Sports Training in Pomona; Pomona Chamber President and CEO Monique Manzanaras; Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval; Metro Ale House General Manager Daniella Franco; Pomona City Councilmember Victor Preciado (at rear); owner Jason Abboud; Pomona City Councilmember Elizabeth Ontiveros-Cole; Ronald Gonzales Lawrence, representing Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez; Gus Arias, of Pomona's Inter Valley Health Plan; and Pomona Chamber Executive Board member Renee Barbee, of La Nueva Voz. Metro Ale House is located at 197 E. 2nd St., Pomona.



WESTERN UNIVERSITY HOSTS ITS FIRST COMMUNITY-BASED COVID VACCINE CLINIC -- Pomona's Western University of Health Sciences teamed up with Pomona Unified School District to host its first community-based COVID-19 vaccine clinic this month at Garey High School. PUSD spokesperson Melissa Ayala explained that with the recent approval for those 12 to 15 years old to receive the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, the effort was designed to reach local Pomona students and their families. She said the clinic was well received, resulting in nearly 600 vaccinations in the four hours the clinic was operating. In addition to the vaccine, participants were offered everything from school district and city resource information, face masks and more. Pictured getting his shot is Jesse Solorzano, a sixth grader from Elite Soccer Institute. Helping out are, from left, Audrey Tam and Cynthia Panderla, both second year College of Optometry students at Western University, and Dr. Rodney Hicks, professor at Western's College of Graduate Nursing. Additional Western University clinics are scheduled for Saturday, May 29, at Brown Memorial Temple and back at Garey High School on Saturday, June 5. For information, contact vaccine@western.edu or visit myturn.ca.gov to select a clinic location. Walk-ins are welcome.

Questions about Medicare?

I am here to help

Hablo Español

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SALUTES THE SAE CLASS OF 2021 ON THEIR GRADUATION!

*KNOWLEDGE IS POWER AND PASSION IS PURPOSE -
AND EACH OF YOU REPRESENTS THE BEST OF US!*



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