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# East Sacramento News

VOL 33 • ISSUE 15

Bringing You Community News For Over 30 Years

AUGUST 9, 2024

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## Monster Jam Roars into Sacramento



Driver Fernando Martinez returns to Monster Jam at Golden 1 Center as the El Toro Loco driver from Aug. 16 to 18. Photo courtesy of Monster Jam

**Monster Jam News Release**

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - Experience big-time family fun at Monster Jam. An unexpected, unscripted and unforgettable motorsports experience for families and fans returns to Sacramento for an adrenaline-charged weekend at

Golden 1 Center from Aug. 16 to Aug. 18.

At Monster Jam, world champion athletes and their 12,000-pound monster trucks tear up the dirt in wide-open competitions of speed and skill.

The excitement begins at the Monster Jam Pit Party held in

Sacramento prior to the events on Saturday, Aug. 17 and Sunday, Aug. 18. Fans can see the massive trucks up close, meet their favorite drivers and crews, get autographs and take pictures. Activities include the Sand Box play area, UNOH tire demonstration, coloring and temporary

*Continued on Page 8*

## UC Davis Breaks Ground On Medical Tower

**UC Davis Health News Release**

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - UC Davis Health hosted a groundbreaking ceremony for the medical center's California Tower on July 22. The expansion project includes a 14-story hospital tower and five-story pavilion that will deliver superior care for Northern Californians and adapt to meet the evolving needs of the community.

"The addition of the California Tower to UC Davis Medical Center is a testament to our innovative forward thinking across our health system and main campus," said UC Davis Chancellor Gary S. May. "This project will position our researchers, students, faculty and staff to meet and adapt to regional health care needs for the next 50 years."

May spoke in the construction zone to an energized audience of UC Regents, university leaders, elected officials, project collaborators, and construction and facilities management workers.

**California Tower Construction**

Approved by the UC Board of Regents in January 2022, the California Tower will be part of the region's most advanced medical center. The new hospital and pavilion will be in addition to the medical center's existing University and Davis Towers.

The new tower will add nearly a million square feet of space to the eastern side of the existing medical center. It will include new operating rooms, an imaging center, leading-edge facilities for pharmacy and burn care units, and about 334 private rooms for patients.

More than 250 of the rooms are being designed for greater flexibility in the event of a patient surge such as a pandemic, massive wildfire or other disaster. These will easily convert into intensive-care-unit rooms with air isolation to treat patients of any level of hospitalization.

"With the California Tower, we are building a new paradigm of patient care, centered around how a health system can deliver tomorrow's health care today," said David

*Continued on Page 2*

## Non Commissioned Officers Support Area Veterans



Veterans come together for the Irreverent Warrior Silkie Hike in 2023. Photo courtesy of Tammy Sullivan

**By Ormella Rossi**

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - The Non Commissioned Officers Association (NCOA), a military service organization established in 1960, plays a vital role in supporting members across all United States Armed Forces branches and their families from Rancho Cordova and the greater Sacramento area through programs and initiatives.

With a mission focused on enhancing quality of life and supporting the professional development of non-commissioned officers, the association operates under the motto "Strength in Unity." Throughout the year, the organization raises funds through various programs and allocates them to area veterans in need.

The Non Commissioned Officers Association also collaborates with the Rancho Cordova Area Chamber

of Commerce to promote community recycling events, enhancing environmental sustainability efforts.

A cornerstone of the association's support is the partnership with Volunteers of America for the Sacramento Stand Down, a multi-day event providing critical services such as legal aid and medical and psychological treatments to homeless veterans. The Non-Commissioned

*Continued on Page 5*

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# UC Regents Approve New Student Housing at UC Davis

By BreAnda Northcutt

DAVIS, CA (MPG) - UC Davis will break ground on a new residence hall next spring in the Segundo area, following approval this week by the UC Board of Regents. The \$100 million project aims to address the growing demand for on-campus housing and commitments the campus has made with the city of Davis.

The new complex, tentatively titled the "Segundo Infill Project," will span 118,000 square feet and feature 206 rooms, accommodating 494 students in double- and triple-occupancy configurations. The

residence hall will stand five stories tall, offering students modern amenities, study nooks, social spaces and 600 bike spaces.

The university considered building higher than five floors, but in California, buildings six stories or higher fall under different building codes and incur significantly higher costs.

Opting for a five-story structure helps manage expenses and ensure housing remains affordable, while still providing needed supply. The residence hall will feature a concrete podium and steel frame, ensuring durability, longevity and a quieter

living environment.

Constructed on what are currently parking lots 22 and 16, the site will also transform its surroundings; parking will be restored in lot 16 after construction is completed.

"The UC Davis campus has added 6,500 beds since 2017 to meet demand given undergraduate housing guarantees and enrollment growth and to make progress toward Long-Range Development Plan goals and MOU commitments with the city of Davis," Chancellor Gary S. May said before the Board of Regents meeting. "We are pleased that the regents have approved this item so



Pictured here is a rendering of what the new student housing building will look like. Photo courtesy of Katherine E. Kerlin

that UC Davis can continue to make considerable progress toward these important housing commitments and goals."

As of fall 2023, UC Davis provides on-campus housing for 38% of Davis-based undergraduate and graduate students.

The new residence hall will help the university move closer to its goal of housing 48% of its Davis-based students on campus, as outlined in the Long-Range Development Plan (LRDP) and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the city of Davis.

The entire project will be 100% electric and will aim for a minimum LEED Gold certification, with a goal of obtaining LEED Platinum status.

The residence hall is expected to be ready for occupancy by the fall quarter of 2027. ★

# UC Davis Breaks Ground On Medical Tower

Continued from Page 1

Lubarsky, CEO of UC Davis Health. "We are building into this new tower some of the lessons we learned from the recent pandemic. As an example, three out of four of the rooms in this new tower can be easily converted to fully functional ICUs if needed, tripling our ICU capacity."

When the California Tower is open for patients in 2030, Lubarsky added, it will continue the hospital's 150-year legacy of "caring for those who need it most, delivering superior patient outcomes while becoming more sustainable, and keeping our focus on improving health outcomes and equity."

The \$3.74 billion tower will replace parts of the hospital that must close due to state seismic

regulations.

Hospitals across California are in the process of upgrading their existing facilities or constructing new buildings that can withstand major earthquakes.

The current 646-bed hospital, the largest in the Sacramento region, will have a total of 675 to 700 inpatient beds when the project is expected to be completed in 2030.

## Supporting the Community

The California Tower project is expected to create hundreds of construction jobs and thousands of new health care positions for the surrounding community. It's one of many benefits of being home to an anchor institution such as UC Davis Medical Center.

Anchor institutions are place-based, mission-driven entities such as universities and hospitals that leverage economic power alongside human and intellectual resources to improve the long-term health and social welfare of surrounding communities.

"The hospital tower we're breaking ground on today represents another pivotal investment in our city by UC Davis," said Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg. "Both this tower and the new Aggie Square innovation campus will create thousands of new, high-quality jobs and expand our ability to meet the health care needs of our residents."

UC Davis Health plans to help fuel the economic health and overall wellbeing of the neighborhoods surrounding its Sacramento



UC Davis representatives celebrate at the July 22 ceremony for the California Tower, expected to be ready in 2030. Photo courtesy of UC Davis

campus by hiring and developing local workforce talent, purchasing more goods and services from local vendors, investing in local projects that support vulnerable communities and engaging employees to volunteer in local neighborhoods.

"This project further harnesses the advantages of

UC Davis Medical Center being Sacramento's No. 1 hospital and delivering nationally ranked care," Lubarsky said.

"UC Davis Health is Sacramento County's second-largest employer, and we're making sure we are bringing not only health care but jobs and community wealth-building

to our surrounding neighborhoods. I am so grateful for the collaborative planning effort that has spanned years and required so much hard work and coordination to bring us to this point of breaking ground for this new hospital tower," Lubarsky said. ★

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Marie Mertz enjoys being the executive chef, owner and general manager at Todo Un Poco restaurant. Photo by Matt Jones

# A Squirrel, a Restaurant and a Cause

By Mitch Barber

**ELK GROVE, CA (MPG)** - Marie Mertz, also known as Maria, owns what she considers more than a restaurant. For emphasis, she uses the Spanish, calling her business a “restaurante con causa” or “restaurant with a cause.”

Todo Un Poco is her brainchild eatery, opened in 1999, off of Laguna Boulevard in Elk Grove, just south of Sacramento down Interstate 5. She said, in a recent interview, “I hope people take the time and attention to visit this side of Elk Grove, which is Laguna West.” Mertz considers Todo Un Poco to be a destination restaurant.

Mertz also calls her venture a “restaurant with social responsibility.” The evidence? The restaurant was the site of the initial planning meeting for the City of Elk Grove’s Multicultural Diversity Festival, a celebration with dancing, music and food. The festival takes place this year on Sept. 14 at The Center at District56.

Another cause of Mertz’s is eliminating food waste. She said, “My goal in the restaurant is to have cero (zero, in Spanish) organic waste. We have a partnership with a local garden.” It’s called Cliff’s Garden, which is in Elk Grove on Stone Lake Road and named after Cliff Wilcox. The food waste is fed to the chickens there. Mertz said, “We use food entirely as much as we can.”

She recommends respecting food because not everybody has food, and that there are a lot of people facing food insecurities.

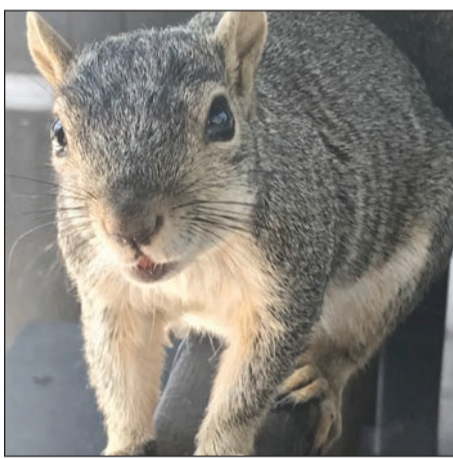
Mertz said her philosophy is, “Buying less. Cooking less. Repurposing as much as we can.” She uses carrot shavings in salad dressing, for example, rather than throwing them out.

She gets much of her produce from the same Cliff’s Garden, making theirs a two-way relationship.

Mertz uses the produce in cuisine that she does not consider to be fusion, expressing that, “Sometimes fusion is confusion.” She considers her dishes to be “integration,” rather, between Italian and Mexican dishes, for example.



“Mama” the squirrel balances on the restaurant’s ledge while eating an almond. Photo by Marie Mertz



“Mama” has an expressive face as she visits the restaurant. Photo by Marie Mertz

There is a chicken mole pizza. She said, “I use chocolate Abuelita. That’s how I learned from my grandmother. It takes us three days to make the mole sauce. ... It’s Mexico on a plate.”

And what of Mexico and India? Manni Singh, Mertz’s husband, is from India’s Punjab region and runs the front of house. They even have a Punjabi pizza. (Singh speaks Punjabi.)

Mertz happens to speak Italian, as well, but majored in business and Spanish literature at Sacramento State University, specializing in magical realism or “realismo mágico,” which combines fantasy and reality.

She originally came to the area on scholarship to UC Davis, studying ESL for a year. Mertz expressed, “I didn’t speak



Original artwork brings to mind el Día de los Muertos. Photo by Matt Jones



A watermelon salad was the special on a summer evening at Todo Un Poco. Photo by Geoffrey Hom



The tostada salad with chicken is quite a meal by itself. Photo by Mitch Barber



The interior of Todo Un Poco restaurant is full of original art and generously spaced seating. Photo by Matt Jones

English when I came here.”

She also expresses herself in the restaurant through the language of music. Her favorite genre is opera but she changes what music plays “according to the food,” she said.

Her education is not limited to only language, though: Mertz was one of 15 cooks to be selected to attend the James Beard Foundation’s Chef Bootcamp for Policy and Change a few years ago, which, according to the foundation’s website, “educates established chefs about the effective advocacy skills that can be leveraged to create food-system change at the local, regional, and federal levels.”

Mertz’s food system benefits even wild animals.

In a way that might seem magical to some, she plays music for a squirrel that can hear the music outside the restaurant’s entrance. Certain music allegedly attracts the squirrel — named Mama — to the front doors, and other music repels the animal. Mertz feeds Mama almonds as a treat outside, giving her restaurant cause beyond being just a restaurant.

“Restaurante con causa,” indeed. Todo Un Poco is located at 9080 Laguna Main St., Suite 1A, Elk Grove. It is open for dinner from 4 to 9 p.m. Tuesdays to Sundays. ★

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# PAWS Mobile Clinic: Lifeline for Pets of Unhoused

**Sacramento County News Release**

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG)** - Sacramento County's Bradshaw Animal Shelter and its dedicated team are making remarkable strides in improving the lives of pets and their unhoused owners. Through the innovative Pet Aid & Wellness Services (PAWS) Mobile Clinic, led by veterinarian Dr. Cynthia Metcalf, and an extensive network of community partners, they are providing much-needed veterinary care, resources and support to a vulnerable population that needs it most.

Recently, Pet Aid & Wellness Services received a generous \$100,000 grant from UC Davis California for All Animals. This funding is specifically aimed at enhancing access to veterinary care for pets of the unhoused, covering critical resources that will significantly enhance the program's reach and services.

To ensure unhoused pet owners and their furry friends receive the care they deserve, a collaborative effort called the Compassionate Pet Care Alliance (CPCA) was created. Established in September 2023, the Compassionate Pet Care Alliance brings together various organizations working with the pets of the unhoused in Sacramento County. Members include PAWS (Bradshaw Animal Shelter), Front Street's Homeless Outreach and Assistance Program (HOAP), Sacramento SPCA, Elica Health Services, Animals of the Homeless, Mercer



**Pet Aid & Wellness Services (PAWS) Mobile Clinic has made an effort to care for the pets of the unhoused.** Photo courtesy of Sacramento County

Veterinary Clinic, 4R Friends and Street Dog Coalition. Meeting bi-monthly, these groups share resources, tackle challenges and support each other's missions. The collaboration has been invaluable, leveraging each organization's unique strengths.

With summer in full swing, Pet Aid & Wellness Services, along with the Homeless Outreach and Assistance Program and Sacramento SPCA, has shifted its focus to spay/neuter services to address the surge in puppy and kitten populations. "PAWS has a waitlist for these procedures and is fully booked for July underscoring the

high demand for these critical services," said Dr. Metcalf.

"A touching example of PAWS' impact is the story of Bellamy, a six-year-old neutered male cat suffering from severe oral pain due to stomatitis," explained Dr. Metcalf. Initially treated with pain management and antibiotics by Pet Aid & Wellness Services, Bellamy was later referred to Mercy Pet Hospital for a full mouth extraction thanks to the Cal 4 Animals Grant.

Today, Bellamy is thriving, much to the relief and gratitude of his owner, Elizabeth Osgood.

"Bellamy came to be with me two and a half

**The Compassionate Pet Care Alliance brings together various organizations working with the pets of the unhoused in Sacramento County.**

years ago after being taken to the shelter (Happy Tails) as a kitten where he spent the next three and a half

years before I met him," said Bellamy's owner Elizabeth. "We connected right away. Though he was really shy for a long time, we've become very close. His favorite things are kisses and walks in nature at sunrise, and he's such an amazing friend who brings me so much comfort and strength."

Elizabeth, who has been unhoused for more than a year, shared how Pet Aid & Wellness Services has been a lifeline for her and Bellamy.

Despite her challenges, she continues to support herself by teaching online English lessons and remains devoted to Bellamy, her loyal

companion.

Pet Aid & Wellness Services' success and success stories like Bellamy's wouldn't be possible without partners like California for All Animals and Mercy Pet Hospital.

These collaborations have been pivotal in extending the clinic's reach and effectiveness.

In partnership with the Department of Homeless Services and Housing, Pet Aid & Wellness Services also distributes water to the unhoused and their pets, ensuring hydration and well-being during Sacramento's hot summer months.

Water for pet owners is available at all Pet Aid & Wellness Services mobile events. This initiative will continue throughout the next year.

The Bradshaw Animal Shelter and the Pet Aid & Wellness Services team continue to inspire and uplift the community through their unwavering dedication to animal welfare and support for the unhoused.

Their efforts not only save lives but also foster a sense of compassion and unity within Sacramento County.

The Pet Aid & Wellness Services Mobile Clinic is a full-service veterinary clinic on wheels, serving the pets of unhoused owners across Sacramento County. The clinic offers spay/neuter services, medical treatments, vaccinations, microchipping and pet supplies.

For more information and a calendar of clinics and locations, visit the Pet Aid & Wellness Services Mobile Clinic website or call (916) 876-5215. ★

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# SMUD's \$10 Million State Grant Advances Battery Storage Technology

## SMUD News Release

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - SMUD's long-duration battery storage project in partnership with ESS Tech, Inc. has been awarded a \$10 million grant from the California Energy Commission to demonstrate a groundbreaking 3.6-megawatt, eight-hour iron flow battery project and set the foundation for future large-scale battery deployments and manufacturing at energy centers in Sacramento.

The project aims to showcase the capability and reliability of iron flow battery technology, which complements renewable energy sources like wind and solar by storing energy and strategically dispatching it based on demand to support grid distribution and transmission systems as SMUD transitions to a carbon-free power portfolio by 2030.

"Thank you to California Energy Commission Chairman David Hochschild, fellow commissioners and staff for continuing to lead the way in policy development and investments that make California the leader for others to follow in the transition to a clean energy future," said SMUD Chief Legal & Government Affairs Officer Laura Lewis. "The CEC's partnership and investment in clean technologies are

critical to advancing and bringing them to scale, while helping SMUD keep its rates among the lowest in California."

SMUD continues to make great strides toward its goal to eliminate carbon emissions from its power supply by 2030 through investments in renewable energy projects, customer programs and cutting-edge technologies, such as its partnership with ESS to deliver and grow long-duration energy storage and other zero-carbon innovation.

This technology not only captures and stores clean energy, ensuring it's available around the clock and maximizing the use of renewable resources, but it also enhances resource adequacy, especially during peak demand times, providing a stable, reliable and clean energy supply for its community.

"The California Energy Commission is proud to support this exciting, long-duration energy storage project which will help drive this new clean energy industry into the mainstream," said California Energy Commission Chair David Hochschild. "It's a technology that's needed to harness excess renewables for use during peak demand and overnight, especially as we work toward a goal of 100% clean electricity."

The partnership and

technology offer several anticipated benefits, including accelerating the commercialization of iron flow batteries, improving the cost-competitiveness of non-lithium long-duration energy storage, bolstering grid reliability, complementing SMUD's renewables, and supporting workforce development and the local economy through clean-energy jobs.

Currently, the ESS iron flow long-duration energy storage project is in its early phases at SMUD's Sacramento Power Academy. In September 2023, ESS commissioned six Energy Warehouse™ systems for SMUD as part of a 2-gigawatt-hour framework agreement. The existing 450 kilowatt/2,400 kilowatt-hour Energy Warehouse system at SMUD's Sacramento Power Academy continues to provide SMUD and ESS with valuable insights through risk and benefits analysis, use case studies and performance testing.

Alongside the California Energy Commission's grant, SMUD is committing approximately \$19.5 million in cost-sharing for labor and material expenses for the combined 4-megawatt ESS Tech, Inc. long-duration energy storage project, which includes the existing 450-kilowatt installation and the newly grant-funded 3.6-megawatt addition. ★

# Address Homeless Camps with Urgency, Dignity, Governor Says

## Office of Governor Gavin Newsom News Release

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - Building on California's ongoing work and unprecedented investments to address the decades-long issue of homelessness, Gov. Gavin Newsom issued an executive order on July 25 ordering state agencies and departments to adopt clear policies that urgently address homeless encampments while respecting the dignity and well-being of all Californians. With the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Grants Pass v. Johnson*, local governments now have the tools and authority to address dangerous encampments and help provide those residing in encampments with the resources they need.

"This executive order directs state agencies to move urgently to address dangerous encampments while supporting and assisting the individuals living in them — and provides guidance for cities and counties to do the same. The state has been hard at work to address this crisis on our streets. There are simply no more excuses. It's time for everyone to do their part," Newsom said.

Newsom's executive order directs state agencies and departments to adopt humane and dignified policies to urgently address encampments on state property, including by taking necessary and

deliberate steps to notify and support the people inhabiting the encampment prior to removal. Newsom has made record-level investments to address the housing crisis, investing over \$24 billion across multiple state agencies and departments, including billions of dollars in funding to assist local jurisdictions in providing services and wrap-around support to people living in encampments. In Fiscal Year 2022-2023, these investments helped lift more than 165,000 people out of homelessness and into interim or permanent housing.

## California Blueprint

Newsom's order directs state agencies and departments to adopt policies and plans consistent with the California Department of Transportation's (Caltrans) existing encampment policy.

Since July 2021, California has resolved more than 11,000 encampments, and has removed 248,275 cubic yards of debris from encampments along the state right of way in preparation for Clean California projects. Prioritizing encampments that pose a threat to the life, health and safety of the community, Caltrans provides advance notice of clearance and works with local service providers to support those experiencing homelessness at the encampment, and stores personal property collected at the site for at least 60 days.

The order encourages local governments to emulate the state's successful model to adopt local policies and to use all available resources, including those provided by the state's historic investments in housing and intervention programs, to address encampments within their jurisdictions.

## Prop. 1 Funding Available for Local Governments

Newsom also encourages local governments to apply for the newly available \$3.3 billion in competitive grant funding from Prop. 1 to expand the behavioral health continuum and provide appropriate care to individuals experiencing mental health conditions and substance use disorders — with a particular focus on people who are most seriously ill, vulnerable or homeless.

Prop. 1 includes two parts: a \$6.4 billion Behavioral Health Bond for treatment settings and housing with services, and historic reform of the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) to focus on people with the most serious illnesses, substance disorders and housing needs.

The state also recently released the Proposition 1 Behavioral Health Services Act: Housing Supports Primer (July 2024) for counties, which explains how to spend the projected \$950 million annual BHSA revenue on housing interventions. ★

# Non Commissioned Officers Support Area Veterans

*Continued from Page 1*

Officers Association contributed more than 500 towels for veterans in need at the event.

"It's an opportunity to help those veterans to be cared for," said Non Commissioned Officers Association International Auxiliary President Tammy Sullivan. "It happens all over Sacramento. Some of our most recent locations include Placer County and Elk Grove."

Another significant program involves the association's partnership with the Veterans Administration (VA), where representatives actively assist in securing homes and furniture for homeless veterans. The association operates four warehouses in Rancho Cordova for storing donated items. Members meticulously maintain a list of veterans' needs and available resources, ensuring efficient matching and furnishing of homes with appliances and furniture. Additionally, they facilitate direct delivery of these essentials to veterans' residences, further enhancing their support efforts.

Association members also plan to increase

outreach efforts to connect with the Veterans Village residents in Sacramento.

The Non Commissioned Officers Association members had an informational booth June 20 at the annual Rancho Cordova Business Expo & Job Fair.

"As a result of the business expo, we were able to start a partnership with JumpKing to acquire used, yet functional beds and mattresses for donation," Sullivan said. "We see a huge demand for these items when it comes to this program."

The Non Commissioned Officers Association also collaborates with Move America Forward, a non-profit military charity based in Sacramento, to assemble and send care packages for troops overseas, showcasing the organization's commitment through practical, community-driven initiatives.

"I'm proud of our collaboration with the Veterans of Foreign Wars where we raise money to buy appliances such as grills and commercial toasters," said Scott Rodowick, the auxiliary chapter treasurer, reflecting on some of the association's initiatives. "These items are integral

to our participation in barbecues, which serve as outreach programs aimed at keeping everybody connected."

Sullivan highlighted unique challenges faced by veterans in the region, including the need for stronger peer-to-peer connections due to the absence of active military bases nearby. To address this, the Non Commissioned Officers Association organizes events such as the Irreverent Warrior Silkie Hike, an annual veteran-only hiking event in Rancho Cordova, fostering camaraderie and support among veterans. Additionally, members emphasize support for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) treatment and aim to improve coordination among veterans' organizations for more effective outreach.

Area residents, businesses and volunteers interested in supporting the Non Commissioned Officers Association's mission can engage through volunteering opportunities listed on the association's website at [ncoausa.org](http://ncoausa.org) or by following its social media presence. Sullivan emphasized the importance



**Retired Chief Master Sergeant Sullivan presents Noncommissioned Officers Association Vietnam Medallions.** Photo courtesy of Tammy Sullivan

of community awareness and involvement in bolstering their efforts to assist veterans effectively.

"There are so many ways and varying levels of degrees to get involved," Rodowick said. "It's a great group of wonderful people, and the greatest gift is when you are helping others. Especially those that put their lives on the line to give us the freedoms we enjoy today."

The Noncommissioned Officers Association meets regularly in Rancho Cordova and other locations throughout Sacramento, with monthly gatherings aimed at fostering community and support among members. Two local chapters include the Central Valley and the Spirit of Sacramento

Auxiliary Chapters comprising about 90 members in the Sacramento area.

When asked why residents should join the Non Commissioned Officers Association, Sullivan emphasized the organization's responsibility to veterans and the community.

"We enjoy the freedoms of today because of those veterans and sometimes this gets lost," Sullivan said. "We all have someone or know someone that has put that uniform on, and that uniform represents this country and everything this country stands for. We should honor that."

Rodowick said that members do not have to be connected to the military to join. Anyone can be a part of the organization. ★

Active Noncommissioned Officers Association members are throughout the greater Sacramento region, according to Sullivan, including in Rancho Cordova, Citrus Heights, Placerville, Lincoln, Plumas Lake and Elverta.

The Noncommissioned Officers Association Central Valley Chapter Number 1551 and Spirit of Sacramento Auxiliary Chapter Number 270 host meetings at 7 p.m. the first Wednesday of every month at Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4647, 3300 U St. in Antelope. All are welcome to attend.

For more on the Non-Commissioned Officers Association and how to get involved, visit its website at [ncoausa.org](http://ncoausa.org). ★

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# Default Love

By Captain Zachary Bales

I imagine that you might have taken a look at the title of this article and then did a double take at the author to make sure it was correct. Some may think it unusual for a former Army armored cavalry officer and police captain with more than two decades of police work in our fair city to write an article about love. Well, you may be right, but hang with me.

Every day, Sacramento police officers respond to situations where frustration transforms to an overwhelming feeling that results in a negative outcome. I've seen firsthand how frustration can escalate situations, strain relationships, morph to rage, induce extreme depression and generally push people to do things that they otherwise would never consider. Frustration is a universal and natural feeling. Whether it's dealing with someone cutting us off in traffic, being rude for no discernable reason or encountering the daily grind of small irritations that pile up

to be the last straw, we all experience it. But what should we do with that? My suggestion: Let yourself get triggered.

In becoming and remaining police officers here in Sacramento, we do extensive training in de-escalation. Among the first lessons taught are exercises that refine the trainee's understanding of what frustrates them and personally "triggers" them. Once a police trainee understands themselves well on the very basic level of noticing that feeling of frustration early on, we use that as a tool for them to learn to pivot and "trigger" a trained response instead of a natural, but possibly negative one. I would like to take the opportunity of this article to train all Sacramentans to use frustration as a trigger for default love.

Default love of our fellow humans is an expectation of Sacramento police officers and a value that all of us could endeavor toward to help our collective goal of reducing violence in our community. Now, you won't catch this old cop hugging everyone. That is not the kind



Captain Zachary Bales. Photo courtesy of Sacramento Police Department

humans guides you to a place of treating them with dignity, respect and empathy.

Easier said than done. I know; I have teenagers! But here are a few tips that work for me to shift from frustration to love and empathy.

**Pause and Breathe.** When frustration hits, take a moment to pause and breathe deeply. This simple action helps you regain composure. **Acknowledge Your Emotion.** Recognize that you're feeling frustrated. Admitting this can be empowering and is the first step toward transformation. **Empathize with Others.** Try to understand the perspectives and feelings of those involved. The old saying, that you never know what battles people are fighting, is a universal truth. **Choose Love:** Consciously decide to respond with respect, dignity and empathy. This choice can de-escalate situations and promote positive outcomes.

While most of our Sacramento police officers might not use the word love in relation to their daily service, that is exactly what they are out there doing 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Let's all join them.

Default Love. ★

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# Hot Jazz Jubilee 2024 to Sizzle

## Hot Jazz Jubilee News Release

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - The ninth annual Hot Jazz Jubilee will feature four days of music and entertainment over Labor Day weekend, Aug. 30 to Sept. 2, under one roof.

Five rooms in the DoubleTree by Hilton Sacramento will offer music, ranging from the large Grand Ballroom to the more intimate Garden Terrace and RJ's. Dancers will want to be in the three ballrooms that offer a dance floor.

The annual extravaganza will feature more than 20 bands and guest artists.

"We are excited to offer some new featured performers, plus some bands returning by popular demand," said Hot Jazz Jubilee festival director

Pat Jones. "And the variety can't be beat. We have jazz, swing, zydeco, rock 'n' roll and R&B. Something for everyone."

Performers include Brian Casserly, Todd Morgan & The Emblems, San Lyon, Katie Cavera & the Lost Boys, and many more. Some exciting special sets are "Boogie Woogie Extravaganza" on Saturday, Aug. 31 and a "Back to the Future" Old Time Rock 'n' Roll set on Sunday, Sept. 1.

In addition, Shaymus Hanlin will present his "Tribute to Frank Sinatra" and High Street Band will honor veterans with its "Salute to the '60s" on Friday, Aug. 30. There will be two gospel sets on Sunday, Sept. 1, one set with Yve Evans and Company, and the other set with High Street Band. Special guest pianist Nicole



High Street Band plays jazz, Motown, R&B, blues and funk tunes that bring their audiences to the dance floor.

Pesce will perform two sets, "Two Pianos, Six Hands," with Stephanie and Paolo.

Single-day tickets are \$65 for Aug. 30, \$85 for Aug. 31 or Sept. 1 and \$65 for Sept. 2.

A four-day event pass is \$155. Admission is free for children 18 and under.

Tickets are available online at [hotjazzjubilee.com/purchase-tickets](http://hotjazzjubilee.com/purchase-tickets).

For special group rates, visit [info@hotjazzjubilee.com](mailto:info@hotjazzjubilee.com). ★



Brian Casserly is a regular featured all-star at jazz festivals throughout the country and a session musician for commercials, professional recordings and musicals in the U.S. and Canada. Photos courtesy of Hot Jazz Jubilee

# 13th Annual Banana Festival Aug. 17-18

## Sacramento Banana Festival News Release

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)**-

The Sacramento Banana Festival is back for its 13th year with more multicultural arts and interactive exhibits, live entertainment, banana cuisine and fun than ever for all ages! The two-day, family-friendly festival celebrates the many cultures in Asia, Africa and the Americas where the banana is a source of food, art and culture.

The festival is on Saturday, Aug. 17, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.; and Sunday, Aug. 18, 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The festival is at William Land Park Village Green, 3855 E. Park Drive, Sacramento.

Admission for Adults is \$8 in advance; \$10 at gate.

Children 6-17, Seniors 65-plus and Military with ID are \$6 advance and \$8 at the gate. Kids 5 and under are free.

Advance and VIP tickets are at [bananafestivalsac.org](http://bananafestivalsac.org).

org.

Live entertainment features Brazilian Center Harry Belafonte Tribute, Caribbean band Pan Extasy, Prophecy Band, Midnight Players, Element Brass Band, Latin musician EL Jamexican, hip hop group Krudxs Cubensi and DJ Gino, as well as Zumba, Pickle Ball demonstrations, designer GOS Fashion Show dedication to Richard Pannell Gold Ribbon Fashion Show, Best-Dressed Banana Dog Contest, Limbo and banana eating contests. Check [bananafestivalsac.org](http://bananafestivalsac.org) for schedule and updates.

Banana Festival Food Pavilion and Court, featuring delicious Banana Bean Pies, frozen Chocolate-covered Bananas, Fried Banana Fritters, Banana Lumpia, Banana-glazed Turkey Rolls, Banana Guacamole, as well as Banana 7-Up, Banana Wine, Banana Beer and Banana Cocktails for a refreshing break.

Kids' Zone, featuring free children's stage with

live performances and interactive dance, banana-themed art projects, banana gardening, game station, character performances, storytelling, banana mural painting, interactive STEM education activities, and bubble making workshops, as well as ticketed attractions including mazes, slides, bounce house, rock climbing and bungee bounce.

A Multicultural Marketplace has 100-plus retail, artisan, community resource and craft vendors and 30-plus multicultural food vendors.

The Sacramento Banana Festival was established in 2009 as a community celebration of arts and culture and as a fundraiser for Sacramento's Sojourner Truth Museum and the National Academic Youth Corp., which serves some 15,000 Sacramento-area youth and adults annually with arts education and cultural awareness programming.

For more, visit [www.bananafestivalsac.org](http://www.bananafestivalsac.org). ★

**SATURDAY 17 AUGUST (10:00AM-7:00PM)** **13TH ANNUAL SACRAMENTO BANANA FESTIVAL** **SUNDAY 18 AUGUST (10:00AM-5:30PM)**

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- +ADULT AND KIDS FASHION SHOW
- +BEST VENDOR BANANA FOOD ITEM CONTEST
- +KIDS ZONE TO INCLUDE KIDS ENTERTAINMENT STAGE, INFLATABLE OBSTACLE COURSES, JUMPERS, ROCK CLIMBING, BUNGEE TRAMPOLINE, ARTS & CRAFTS PLUS MORE!

TICKET INFORMATION LOCATED AT [WWW.BANANAFESTIVALSAC.ORG](http://WWW.BANANAFESTIVALSAC.ORG) VENDORS/VOLUNTEERS/SPONSORS PLEASE VISIT THE WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOW YOU CAN PARTICIPATE!

**3855 E. PARK ROAD, SACRAMENTO, CA 95822**

Image courtesy of Sacramento Banana Festival

# Monster Jam Roars into Sacramento

Continued from Page 1

tattoo station, and new photo ops, including the chance to take a photo with the Series trophy. This fun-filled experience is the only place that allows people to get up-close access to the Monster Jam teams and get an insider's look at how these trucks are built to stand up to the competition.

Fans will be on the edge of their seats as the world's best drivers show off massive stunts, big air, backflips, crazy skills and all-out racing in fierce head-to-head battles for the Event Championship. Engineered to perfection, the 12,000-pound Monster Jam trucks push all limits in Freestyle, Skills and Racing competitions.

Fans are encouraged to get to their seats early to experience Monster Jam Trackside approximately one hour before

the event start time. Featured festivities include competition previews, driver interviews, giveaways, opening ceremonies and power rush truck introductions.

Monster Jam drivers are trained, world-class male and female athletes. They have mastered the physical strength and mental stamina needed to compete, and the vital dexterity to control 12,000-pound machines capable of backflips, vertical two-wheel skills and racing at speeds up to 70 mph to produce jaw-dropping, live motorsports action seen throughout the world.

Enjoy big-time family fun at Monster Jam. The competitions start at 7 p.m. Aug. 16, 7 p.m. Aug. 17 and 1 p.m. Aug. 18.

Also on Aug. 17 is a pit party from 4:30 to 6 p.m., which requires an event ticket and pit pass for entry.



Megalodon returns to Golden 1 Center this Aug. 16 to Aug. 18 with driver Angelina Nock at the wheel. Photo courtesy of Monster Jam

On Aug. 18, the pit party from 10:30 a.m. to noon requires an event ticket and pit pass for entry.

Tickets are affordably priced for the whole family. Tickets and pit passes are

available for purchase at the Monster Jam website at [MonsterJam.com](http://MonsterJam.com), which will direct you to [Ticketmaster.com](http://Ticketmaster.com).

If not sold out, tickets will be available at the door. ★

**Jennifer Hayes, Realtor**  
Executive Associate LIC#01343344

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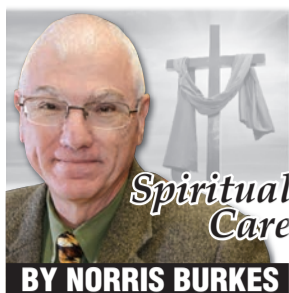
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# My Limitless Limitations



BY NORRIS BURKES

Feeling, and Prospecting” and, according to the test, an INFP “tends to be quiet, open-minded, and imaginative, and they apply a caring and creative approach to everything they do.”

As an INFP, I sometimes feel like I’d rather run to my car after my sermon than stay around and hug people.

I’m unable to think of the word that fills in the “fill-in-the-blank” sermon outlines found in many church bulletins. These outlines are akin to karaoke and were popularized by the now-retired evangelical pastor Rick Warren.

I’m too rhythmically challenged to clap to the beat of contemporary church music. I have to make a choice: sing or clap. And since people tend to get hurt when I clap, I stick to singing.

Three situations where my faith is stronger

because it’s limited:

On a more serious note, I’m a man who acknowledges his faith limitations.

I cannot, will not, tell you that your faith and beliefs are wrong and mine are right. Some Christians are fond of quoting John 14:6 concerning Jesus being the only way to God. But if you are reciting the verse to other faiths, you are not sharing your faith, you’re shouting your condemnation.

I won’t impose my faith on you in a public situation by giving a public prayer when I know that the audience may not be of my faith. Because, if I only pray what doesn’t offend me and -- you can only hear what doesn’t offend you -- then we dilute both of our faiths.

I won’t debate you. I’m not going to argue religion with you. Neither will I engage in disputes over abortion, the death

penalty, theology, politics, evolution or the existence of God. I will, however, engage in a thoughtful examination of the issues. Maybe it’s the INFP personality, but my dad taught me that it can take more courage to walk away from an argument.

That’s enough of the negative limitations. Before I finish, let me tell you where I tend to be limit-less.

I try to be an example of struggling faith. “What is that?” you ask. Struggling faith recognizes that no one has faith completely figured out. God is too big to be contained in one religion.

We can learn things about faith from people of other faiths, and even from people who profess no faith at all.

I want to follow the direction of I Peter 3:15: “Be ready to speak up and tell anyone who asks why

you’re living the way you are and always with the utmost courtesy.”

Finally, if you ask me, I will pray with you without limits. My prayers are voiced in plain English without the “thee” and “thou” from King James’s Old English. However, given my touch of ADD, the prayers won’t be a grande or a venti size prayer, just a small one.

Just don’t ask me to do one of those huggy prayers. After all, a pastor really should know his/her limitations.

Join Norris’ mailing list at [www.thechaplain.net/newsletter](http://www.thechaplain.net/newsletter) or leave voice-mail at (843) 608-9715 or email [comment@thechaplain.net](mailto:comment@thechaplain.net) or @chaplain. Snail mail occasionally checked at 10566 Combie Rd. Suite 6643 Auburn, CA 95602. All his books are also available on his website. ★

## Kings Korner

By V.G. Harris



The NBA summer league is over, but changes to the Kings ultimate roster for the upcoming season are not nearly over.

GM Monte McNair has earned his stripes by consistently making solid moves that will give Sacramento Kings fans potentially the best NBA team they’ve seen since the Webber/Bibby era, in which the Kings won a gaudy 61 games in 2021/22.

At this juncture, making predictions that would rival that season seems ludicrous, but make no mistake about it, McNair has his sights on a 60-win season, and he’s scouring the NBA and beyond to find components that will get this franchise to that end.

The power forward position continues to be a point of focus, and although the Kings recently acquired Orlando Robinson, the search continues for a true rim protector that can play defense and add even a modicum of scoring while he’s on the hardwood.

Potentially, that player could be a bench player for the Portland Trailblazers by the name of Robert Williams III. At 26 years of age, Williams’ best playing days are still in front of him, and his seven points and six rebounds a year ago for the Trailblazers doesn’t tell the full story. At 6’9” and 250 lbs., Williams is a true shot blocker, and the thinking here is given more playing time, this young man could become a true double-double threat.

The Kings are all too familiar with a double-double threat, as big man Domantas Sabonis has led the NBA in double-doubles the past two seasons, while leading the entire NBA in rebounding at the same time. Imagine if the Kings could surround this stevedore with just a little more support around the rim!

The only Sacramento King currently playing basketball in the Paris Olympics is none other than Trey Lyles, and although he’s had a less than stellar performance so far for his home country of Canada, I remain convinced that if used correctly for the Kings, Lyles not only could give the Kings a boost in the upcoming season, he could actually break into the starting lineup.

Most pundits think I’m crazy, but I have

always seen a higher ceiling in Trey, and the only way we will ever know if I’m right, is to increase his playing time.

Trey is a consistent three-point shooter and solid rebounder behind Domantas, and I believe as the Kings continue to search for power-forward solutions, they should look no further than their own bench.

I have to believe that Monte McNair shares some of my zeal for this talented big man, or we would have already seen him in either a trade or trade rumors.

The real question is not McNair, but coach Brown. During last season’s campaign, there was no consistent rotation for Lyles coming off the bench, and he went through stretches in which his minutes were sparing to say the least.

For any player, and particularly a big man, there must be that vote of confidence, that is demonstrated by his consistent time on the court, and that includes hardwood time during the last five minutes of a game. Show him that you trust his game when it means the most, and watch his confidence grow.

I give Mike Brown high marks for understanding how to bring along Keon Ellis, but his reluctance to use Trey Lyles when the Kings are starving for front-court players, remains a mystery to me.

The summer league did reveal that the Kings have a burgeoning star in your Boogie Ellis, who did pretty much what he wanted to against opposing summer league players. Boogie has been invited to training camp, and although the Kings remain guard heavy, Boogie’s instant offense and frenetic defense means he deserves a closer look. At only 23 years of age, the Kings want to make sure they don’t pass on a guard that may very well portend happy times for their future.

The big man/power forward rumors are ubiquitous, but I’m convinced that Monte McNair has at least one more notable move to make, and it’s my educated guess it will come in the form of a power forward.

Stay tuned this off-season as its roster moves aren’t over yet!

All the best, Kings fans! ★

Your thoughts are always welcome at [vgharriskingsfan@gmail.com](mailto:vgharriskingsfan@gmail.com)

## ABOUT TOWN

### Elks Lodge Calendar of Events

**Farmer’s Market**, 9 am-1 pm every Saturday.

**Elks Lodge Sunday Breakfast**, 8:30 am-11 am every Sunday. Bring your friends and family; \$15 tax included. Best deal in town. Made to order Omelets or eggs any way you want.. Bacon, sausage, potatoes, biscuits and gravy, pancakes, waffles, coffee large parties should call for reservations. Guests are VERY welcome!

**Water Aerobics**, Monday 10 am, Wednesday 2 pm, Friday 10 am

**Yoga**, Monday 12 pm, Wednesday 3:30 pm. Lodge members free.

**Martial Arts**, Monday 5 pm

**Pickleball**, Mon & Wed 9 am-12 pm, Thu 4:30-7:30 pm, Sun 4-7 pm

To sign up or confirm schedule, join playtimescheduler.com

**Improv Night**, 2nd & 4th Wednesdays, 6-8 pm

**Wednesday Night Dinner**, 5:30 to 7 pm. See above and [elks6.net](http://elks6.net) for weekly menu.

**Karaoke** Thursday 7 pm Saturday 7:30 pm

**Friday Happy Hour**, Friday 4-7 pm

**Line Dancing**, 2nd and 4th Fridays

### Sacramento Area Museums Offer Plenty of Summertime Experiences

The Greater Sacramento region is rich with museums and popular destinations that offer plenty of must-see and must-do experiences to explore during the long and lazy days of summertime. The community is encouraged to show support for local museums by making plans to visit favorite locations (or discovering new ones).

A sampling of must-see and must-do experiences and special activations offered by local museums this summer include the following:

**Aerospace Museum of California** – Due to popular demand, the museum’s Math Alive! exhibit has been extended to Labor Day (Sept. 2) with games, music, fashion, robotics, movie making, and more. Museum visitors have the opportunity to ride in a live-action snowboard

race, control a Mars rover, record a weather telecast, design a video game, or try out systems engineering for a city. For details, visit [www.aerospaceca.org](http://www.aerospaceca.org).

**California State Railroad Museum & Foundation** – Always a summertime favorite experience, the California State Railroad Museum & Foundation are proud to offer the only train ride experience behind an authentic, historic locomotive in the Sacramento region.

Weekend excursion train ride guests delight in the sights, smells, and sounds of an authentic, historic locomotive as it rolls along the levees of the Sacramento River for a six-mile, 45-minute round-trip excursion.

Appealing to all ages, the experience offers guests the chance to enjoy train travel from an earlier era. For more details and/or to book a train ride, please visit [www.californiarailroadmuseum.org](http://www.californiarailroadmuseum.org).

**Crocker Art Museum** – The community is invited to celebrate local hometown heroine Greta Gerwig with “Movies Off the Wall,” the Crocker’s summer film series screened in the outdoor courtyard against the Teel Family Pavilion’s iconic architecture.

Guests are encouraged to arrive early to grab a seat and a bite to eat from Majka at the Crocker while grooving to film-inspired DJ sets. Then, attendees can sit back and relax under the stars for iconic films screened at larger-than-life scale. Films start at sundown and include “Lady Bird” on Thursday, Aug. 15. For more details, visit [www.CrockerArt.org/events](http://www.CrockerArt.org/events).

**Museum of Medical History** – Filled with medical artifacts and curiosities (such as a working iron lung!) that demonstrate the evolution of the health care industry and how quickly advances in medicine have taken place, the Museum of Medical History will be open on Second Saturdays in July and August from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Free for all visitors, more information is available at <https://museumofmedicalhistory.org/>

**Sacramento History Museum** – Debuting Aug. 9, the museum is proud to present a limited-time exhibition titled

“America’s Monsters, Superheroes and Villains: Our Culture at Play” from SuperMonsterCity. The engaging exhibition will be filled with 400+ vintage and original toys, comic books, games, posters, packaging, TV commercials, movie trailers and more. For details, visit [www.SacHistoryMuseum.org](http://www.SacHistoryMuseum.org).

**SMUD Museum of Science & Curiosity (MOSAC)** – The museum is excited to present a new exhibition, Health Connections presented by UC Davis Health. Health Connections showcases a variety of hands-on interactive activities that engage guests of all ages in many aspects of health, from the wonders of the latest medical discoveries happening in our community to topics ranging from muscles to mindfulness. Health Connections is the first exhibition at the museum to be featured in English and Spanish.

For more details, visit [www.visitmosac.org](http://www.visitmosac.org).

For more information about upcoming activities offered by Sacramento area museums, visit the user-friendly website at [www.SacMuseums.org](http://www.SacMuseums.org).

### Elks 6 Volunteer Opportunities

PM Crew - We welcome anyone willing to work but especially if you have experience in mechanical, electrical, general contracting, painting, or plumbing the lodge really needs you.

- Bar Back - Help out the paid bartenders for large events.

- Bartender - Riverside bar for Elks events

There will be a meeting for volunteer bar tenders some time this week. email or text Sue Hill if you want to be on the meeting list

- Sunday Breakfast - Cook, Serve, bus tables

- Wednesday Night Dinners - Help or adopt a night one time or once a month.

- Join the membership committee. Attend events and be available to give tours

- Help at membership booth at Farmers Market

- Man a membership booth at the Craft Fair or Parking Lot Sale

- Make phone calls to members

If any of the above sound like something you would enjoy doing, please text Kathy Smith, 916-606-9313. ★

## Brighten a Senior's Day

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# Kids Learn Language of Good Eating

Story and photos by Kristina Rogers

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Getting children to eat vegetables can become a battle of the wills in many households. Sometimes parents hide vegetables in pizza or a smoothie. They play games to encourage a few “try bites” of a radish. In some households, there isn’t an opportunity to reject a new vegetable or fruit because they are not in the home. But the Food Literacy Center is changing that.

Right before summer break, the Food Literacy Center organized a kids farmers market at John Still Elementary School. The event was the culmination of a 10-week after-school program of cooking and nutrition classes for kinder through sixth-grade students. Community Engagement Manager Gerine “Tangerine” Williams and Sabrina “Soybean” White, cooking class educator and coordinator, organized the event.

The covered patio was bustling with activity as volunteers swiftly opened boxes of seasonal produce. Simple and attractive displays offered strawberries, peaches, onions and beets. Volunteers wore badges with names such as Khale Kevin and Nectarine Nadia. The upbeat, friendly energy was a perfect environment to greet students.

Williams clarified, “All the food has been purchased with grant funds, and nothing will be left over. No one takes any of the food home but the kids.” She had little time to speak as the first group of students made their way to receive their “money” and bags donated by Nugget Market. As they walked in, volunteers called out, “Hey, friend, I have fresh lettuce for sale!” or, “We have a special two-for-one on garlic today. Would you like to try it?”

Some students were hesitant but quickly exchanged their dollars for the goods offered. This is part of the beauty of the



Sabrina White holds a card for a Food Literacy event while Gerine Williams shows off jicama, which is a root vegetable.

program: The kids are in control and make their own choices.

The event may have been fun, but the goal is serious business. The Food Literacy Center website notes that 25% of kids need to eat more fruits and vegetables. In Sacramento, 40% of kids struggle with obesity. In addition, many families don’t know how to cook. The result can lead to poor food choices, such as regular fast-food dinners instead of a cooked healthy meal. The after-school program changes this dynamic. Classes are designed to immerse kids in how food choices impact health, the environment and the economy.

Sacramento City Unified School District partnered with the Food Literacy Center in 2021 to bring an on-campus garden and kitchen to Leataata Floyd Elementary School in Upper Land Park. Students plant, care for and harvest from their garden. Then, they learn how to cook healthy meals.

Williams said, “It was one of the most requested after-school programs last year.” Eighteen schools currently offer the program, and the goal is to have it in all forty Title I Sacramento schools.

Sabrina White explained, “We bring a new fruit or vegetable every week. Kids



Jujubee Jan helps a student buy beets and put them in her bag.



The kids farmers market sign welcomes parents who want to join their children.

try uncommon produce like watermelon radish, daikon or purple cauliflower.” Although most students are enthusiastic, some are hesitant. That’s why positive affirmation is important. White said, “If kids won’t eat something but are willing to hold it in their hands or touch it with their tongue, that’s still a celebration.”

And attitudes shift over the course of the lessons. Williams said, “I’ve seen kids come into class and change their whole idea about vegetables. By the end, they want to be Iron Chefs.”

The Food Literacy Center pays attention to its audience. 58% of Title I students rely on free and reduced-price lunch programs. Recipes are inexpensive, using simple ingredients found in food pantries or the WIC program. When the pandemic

occurred, the program provided meal kits available for pickup at the school. Each kit contained dry goods, fresh produce and recipe cards. The project was so popular that funding was secured to continue meal kit distributions when schools reopened.

During summer break, the Food Literacy Center keeps the momentum going with on-campus kids’ farmers markets. They also have a table at the Oak Park Farmers Market. Staff provides monthly cooking demonstrations from local chefs, along with cooking courses and meal kits. In addition, kids are given \$5 to buy produce at the market.

White explained, “The EBT market match program at Oak Park is the highest match of any farmers market. And it helps both families and local farmers.”

In addition, the Food Literacy Center partners with food banks and local grocers to provide produce for events like the kids farmers market at John Still Elementary.

As the event wound down, volunteers ensured every bit of bok choy, apricots and onions ended up in student bags. In the end, 58 students left for summer break with a nice passel of fresh produce and new plans for the family dinner.

To learn more about the Food Literacy Center and how to volunteer or donate, go to [foodliteracycenter.org](http://foodliteracycenter.org). It is located in Leataata Floyd Elementary School at 401A McClatchy Way, Sacramento. ★

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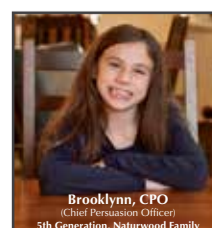
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