

AROUND ALHAMBRA



DECEMBER 2023 | GATEWAY TO THE SAN GABRIEL VALLEY

www.alhambrachamber.org



Unwrap the Magic of the Season with the 2023 Alhambra Holiday Gift Guide

What better way to start spreading joy as the holiday season begins than by supporting local businesses? *Around Alhambra* is here to make this year's gift shopping easy! We are thrilled to present the 2023 Alhambra Holiday Gift Guide, a curated collection of unique gift ideas from right here in our vibrant community.

In our gift guide guide, you'll discover recommendations that showcase the creativity and craftsmanship of local entrepreneurs and workers. From matching pajama sets to a new guitar amp, each recommendation is a testament to the rich offerings available here in Alhambra.

This year's gift guide celebrates the diversity and talent within our community. Whether you're searching for a gift for your favorite foodie, tech junkie, or person who has everything, our guide will point you to that perfect, one-of-a-kind gift. By shopping locally, you not only get to give meaningful presents but also contribute to our city's continued vibrancy and growth.

So, join us in unwrapping the magic of the season with the 2023 Alhambra Holiday Gift Guide. Let's celebrate this holiday season by supporting our local businesses. Happy gifting!

>> **Explore Alhambra's 2023 Holiday Gift Guide on page 12!**



This collage captures the energy and fun moments from the 2023 AUSD Food and Nutrition Services' 19th annual Food & Wellness Fair.

AUSD 2023 Food & Wellness Fair Brings Community Together to Select New Items for School Menus

The evening of October 31 was reserved for trick-or-treating, but the morning was made for plenty of food sampling and novel exercises at AUSD's annual Food & Wellness Fair. Over 200 students, parents, and staff members filled the Monterey Highlands School cafeteria and hallways for the festive occasion.

Each year, the Food & Wellness Fair incorporates nutrition education, physical activity, and taste testing for all to enjoy. The event plays a key role in shaping the school menu. Since 2004, AUSD's Food & Nutrition Services (FNS) has gathered food vendors with prospective new menu items for attendees to taste and rate.

Fair participants sampled a variety of products and completed a survey to determine which items get added to future menus. Among the items vying to be added were: Breakfast Taco, Nashville Hot Tenders, Korean Taco, Spicy Tuna Roll, Whole Wheat Vegetable Dumpling, Pancake Bites, and Walking-Taco Frito Lay. After each tasting, attendees marked it "Love It,"

"OK," or "Don't Like It." The favorites will be featured on the school menu. "Sampling and rating the food samples empowers our school community," said FNS executive director, Vivien Watts. "We especially want our students to voice their opinions on menu offerings."

The Wellness portion of the fair highlighted the FNS Farm-to-School Grant program featuring student Nutrition Advisory Councils (NAC) from around the district. The student-led NACs focus on healthy eating, learning where foods come from, supporting local farmers, and communicating these messages at their school sites.

Baldwin's NAC served the October Harvest of the Month, presenting the health benefits of eating pomegranates and providing delicious samples of arils that cover the seeds. With the help of Mark Keppel High School (MKHS) Woodworking Technology students...

>> **2023 Food & Wellness Fair Brings Community Together on page 14**

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AROUND ALHAMBRA

Published by the Alhambra Chamber of Commerce, *Around Alhambra* is a monthly publication with a circulation of 34,000. *Around Alhambra* is mailed to every business and residence in the City of Alhambra and to all interested local, state, and county officials.

We welcome comments, press releases, and community interest stories and will make every effort to include all appropriate information.

Articles submitted and printed in *Around Alhambra* do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Alhambra Chamber of Commerce or its Board of Directors.

Please e-mail submissions to **AA@alhambrachamber.org**

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Mayor's Corner



By Mayor Ross J. Maza

As we begin the month of December, I would like to wish you a joyous holiday season. May you enjoy this time with your families and loved ones.

As we tend to say every year, this year has flown by, but 2023 has truly been a busy year for City Staff who work tirelessly to plan and execute the many projects that continue to improve our city year after year. This work includes lots of valuable input and cooperation from many of our city boards and commissions, which are made up entirely of volunteer residents. These residents graciously donate their time for a better Alhambra, and I want to say — Thank you.

2023 has seen several important things taking place at City Hall, such as planning for an updated zoning code, which affects our city's present and future local development. This year also saw planning and testing for a permanent dog park, the start of planning for a much-needed community center at the site of the old Alhambra Clinic at 6th St. and Shorb,

and groundbreaking for a brand new affordable housing complex near Main and Chapel. It has been a busy year.

I am excited to remind you that on January 1, 2024, the City of Alhambra will participate in the Tournament of Roses Parade for the 95th time. The design of the 2024 float, "Celebrating a World of Music, the Universal Language," was inspired by one of our young residents, a student at Ramona Elementary School. I encourage residents to volunteer with their families and be a part of making this float come together.

As part of building community and enjoying our Downtown area, I invite you all to attend Downtown Alhambra's traditional Tree Lighting Ceremony on Friday, December 1, from 5 PM to 9 PM at Renaissance Plaza on the northeast corner of Garfield Avenue and Main Street. Santa will arrive by fire truck and be available for photos at 6 PM.

In closing, I would like to offer special thanks to our City staff, our Alhambra



Mayor Ross J. Maza

Fire Department, and our Alhambra Police Department for continuing to keep Alhambra a safe place to live and shop year after year, especially during this holiday season. Special thanks also to the Alhambra Chamber of Commerce and the many volunteers who dedicate so much of their time towards supporting our local businesses. These businesses, in turn, offer our residents many shopping and dining options.

I wish you all a safe and happy holiday season. Enjoy your loved ones, get out and enjoy your city, and support your local Alhambra restaurants and businesses that help make our diverse community that much better. Best wishes for a prosperous and healthy 2024.



ALHAMBRA CONNECTS

Holiday Edition



The Alhambra Chamber of Commerce's
premier networking event
Wednesday, December 13, 2023
5:30 PM - 7:00 PM

Pacific Plaza Premier Members: FREE with RSVP
1611 S. Garfield Ave., Alhambra Non-Members: \$20

Though this event is complimentary for Alhambra Chamber Members, advanced registration is required.

For more information, visit alhambrachamber.org/events



Alhambra's Temporary Dog Park Earns "Paws-itive" Community Feedback

The City of Alhambra's temporary "Paw-Pup Dog Park" pilot project concluded on November 5 after two months of tail-wagging fun. As part of the program, the community was invited to provide input regarding interest in a permanent dog park through a survey, which earned over 1300 responses, with about 99% of participants in favor of a permanent installation in Alhambra.

"We appreciate everyone who came to visit Paw-Pup and provided their input through our community survey," said Mayor Ross J. Maza. "It was a pleasure seeing Alhambra residents enjoying the dog park with their pets and getting to know their neighbors. Though Paw-Pup was temporary, discussions will continue regarding a permanent dog park."

At their regular meeting on August 28, 2023, the Alhambra City Council approved the reallocation of funding for a "Paw-Pup Dog Park." The temporary dog

park concept was located at 630 South Almansor Street, next to the Alhambra Golf Course, from September 5 through November 5. The dog park featured separate fenced play areas for small and large breeds with agility equipment, seating areas, and waste disposal stations.

During the pilot project, the City distributed a community survey to gather input from residents and visitors. The survey earned a total of 1,312 responses, with 98.7% of community members expressing support for a permanent dog park in the city. Over 89% of participants expressed the temporary installation was in a good location, and 85% of participants had no concerns regarding a permanent installation.

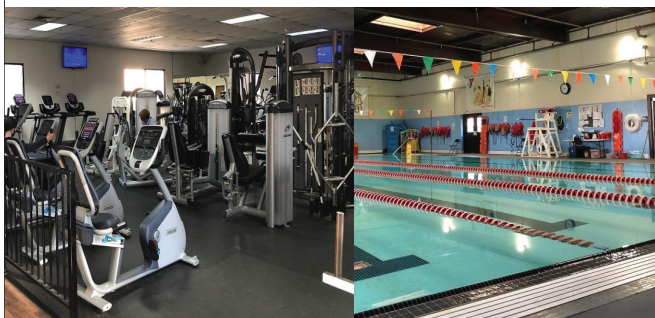
The Alhambra City Council will analyze the survey data and continue discussions regarding the consideration of a permanent dog park location. For more information, visit cityofalhambra.org.



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- Tour our YMCA and New Children's Center, home of our new Licensed Preschool and Afterschool Program.
- Play on our two playgrounds
- Learn about our YMCA memberships, programs, financial assistance, summer day camp and so much more.
- Fill out a raffle ticket on January 6th, 2024 to Win a 2024 YMCA Family Membership-Value \$850.00
- Meet the YMCA Staff and YMCA Board of Directors

Saturday, January 6, 2024
9 am to 12 noon



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NEWS & NOTES



> Alhambra Connects Featuring Mayor Maza a Success

Last month's Alhambra Connects hosted by the Alhambra Chamber of Commerce featured Mayor Ross Maza as the guest speaker. There was an excellent turnout for the November 15 event, which took place at the brand new SoCal Group brokered by exp Realty office. Guests listened to the Mayor's talk, after which there was time for a discussion session and networking opportunities.



> Alhambra City Zoning Update

The Planning Commission Zoning Code Presentation Series and Public Hearing has concluded, and the City Council Public Hearing has continued deliberation on the Zoning Code until December 11 at 6 pm. City Council meetings are live-streamed, and members of the public can participate by Zoom. All meetings are recorded and uploaded onto the City website, allowing the public to view the meeting later if someone cannot attend. Visit alhambracodeupdate.com for more information.



> City Introduces "Compost Charlie" to Promote Organics Recycling Program

The City of Alhambra has announced its new Alhambra Recycles Campaign, an initiative aimed at improving community and business participation in the City's organics recycling program. The City created a robust social marketing campaign to motivate Alhambra's diverse population of residents and businesses. The multi-faceted effort includes videos, flyers, and signs in English, Spanish, and Chinese that offer practical actions that everyone can take to separate food scraps, yard waste, and other organic materials from landfill waste. The campaign also introduces new Alhambra Recycles branding and "Compost Charlie," an animated worm mascot designed for the City of Alhambra. Compost Charlie is featured in the City's free online game. Players earn points by correctly sorting everyday household items into the 3-bin system. Learn more at cityofalhambra.org/720/Alhambra-Recycles-Resources.



> Holiday Home Decorating Call for Submissions Closing Soon!

Holiday Home Decorating applications will be accepted from **November 6 to December 11 at 4 pm!** Interested participants can find the application on the Alhambra City's website. Email parksandrec@cityofalhambra.org or visit the Alhambra Park Office (500 N. Palm Ave.) to submit. Judging will take place between December 12 and 18. For more information, call 626-570-3242.

> ELAC Recruiting Prospective Students at Monterey Park Campus

East Los Angeles College (ELAC) is hosting an event for prospective students called Artic Chill at the Monterey Park Campus on December 7. Get help with new student applications, registration, Financial Aid, admissions, counseling, and more! The event will also feature free food, games, and a Snow Village with sledding! ELAC swag is available for those who register; walk-ins are also welcome on the day of the event.



> Public Park's Restroom Remodel Complete

The Alhambra Park Restroom Project is complete. The Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District funded the upgrades.

Alhambra Events Calendar

December 2023

DEC 1 **Annual Downtown Alhambra Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony**
December 1 @ Renaissance Plaza from 5 - 9 PM
 Join DABA and Santa for a magical evening at the enchanting corner of Main St. and Garfield Ave.

DEC 3-31* **Farmers Market**
***December 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 @ 100 S Second Street from 8 AM - 1 PM**
 The Farmers Market is back in December with five dates this month! Come by to do some of your holiday shopping.

DEC 13 **Mini Boba Ornament Making**
December 13 @ Alhambra Civic Center Library from 5 - 7 PM
 Teens and adults are invited to create ornaments that look like mini milk teas! Space and supplies are limited. Registration is required.

DEC 21 **Citizenship Clinic 入籍援助**
December 21 @ Alhambra Civic Center Library from 12:30 - 5 PM
 服務:一對一保密諮詢、由持牌律師提供的免費入籍申請協助、中英文服務。The clinic will offer one-on-one confidential consultations in English and Chinese. Reservations required.

DEC 28 **Housing Rights Clinic 住房權利法律援助**
December 28 @ Alhambra Civic Center Library from 12:30 - 5 PM
 服務:免費一對一保密諮詢(歧視或者騷擾、房東/租約糾紛、房屋貸款或者法拍屋)。The clinic will offer free one-on-one consultations on tenant rights, discrimination and harassment, and more in English and Chinese. Reservations required.



Alhambra Chamber Committee News

The Youth Services and Education Committee launched on Monday, November 6. This group is dedicated to supporting the young people of Alhambra by bringing together businesses and organizations committed to their well-being and future success. The committee believes collaborating and developing innovative programs can empower youth to thrive in our vibrant community.

Last month, the YSE Committee kicked off with a great roundtable discussion about potential initiatives the committee could take on in the future. Anyone interested in joining in on future monthly meetings is welcome! These meetings will occur on the first Monday of every month.

The next YSE Committee meeting will be on December 4, 2023, at 1 PM. If you have any questions or would like to join, email hreichwald@alhambrachamber.org. Learn more about all Chamber Committees by visiting alhambrachamber.org/chamber-committees.



Alhambra Debate Tournament on Water and Climate Policy

By Mark Paulson, Board of Directors,
Division I – Alhambra
San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District

Congratulations to Alhambra High School and its debate team for organizing a two-day debate tournament that hosted over 200 students from 15 different schools. The debate focused on water and climate policy issues and is sure to cultivate a passion for environmental stewardship among our next generation of leaders.

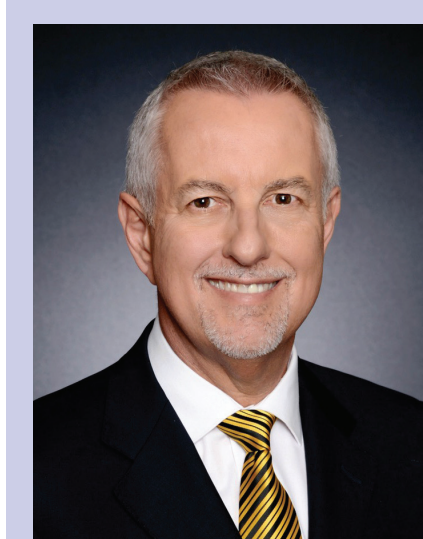
The event was supported by a \$1,500 grant from the San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District through its O.W.L. Community Grant Program. Thank you to all the students, teachers, and administrators who participated in and/or supported the event and to District Board members Steven Placido (Division II – Alhambra and Monterey Park) and Mike Eng (Division III – Monterey Park) for being present to award the grant.

Our O.W.L. Community Grant Program began nearly a decade ago and has funded dozens of water education and conservation projects organized by schools and non-profit organizations. In addition to the Alhambra debate tournament, we are proud to have recently sponsored the following projects throughout our service area of Alhambra, Azusa, Monterey Park, and Sierra Madre:

Monterey Vista Elementary School (Monterey Park) – The grant funds will be used for a retaining wall garden. Students will learn about gardening, water, weather, and erosion.

Alhambra High School – The grant will fund a native plant garden and campus beautification project for the 2023-2024 school year. The project is part of Alhambra High School's environmental science curriculum and advisory program.

Sierra Madre Elementary School



Mark Paulson
San Gabriel Valley
Municipal Water District
info@sgvmwd.com

Farm-to-Table Program – The grant will be used to install a drip-line irrigation system in the school's garden.

Monterey Park Bruggemeyer Library – The grant was awarded to the Library's Junior Friends teen group. The grant will help purchase a collection of books and media about water and water education that can be checked out of the library. The grant will also be used for an Earth Day event that the Junior Friends group plans for Spring 2024.

Complete information about the O.W.L. Grant program, a list of past recipients, and an online application form are available at sgvmwd.com/water-conservation/#owl-grants. **New grant applications are welcome on an ongoing basis.**

Email info@sgvmwd.com or call 626-969-7911 for more information.

All Around the Town



Santa and Me

By Glenn Barnett

My best friend Jack had a varied career. He was a licensed architect in Texas, managed a horse ranch near Santa Barbara, and moved to L.A. to live simply as a handyman. Sometimes, he did handiwork for me, and during lunch, we explored Alhambra's restaurants.

By now, his hair and beard were white. One day, while taking his granddaughter to see Santa Claus, he was approached about being Santa himself. For the next 14 years, he was Santa at L.A.'s premier mall, The Grove. One year, ABC News named him the best Santa in town.

The Grove's owner, Rick Caruso, had Jack appear as Santa at his annual holiday party, where celebrities filled the room. Many of them brought their kids to see Santa and get a picture. He became Santa to the Stars.

When a child sat on his lap, there was no one else in the world. He was an attentive listener to those who wanted to share with him. If a child cried, he did his best to get a good picture.

Once, he took it upon himself to temporarily close the Santa house. When management heard they threatened to fire him until he explained that someone had brought in an aggressive dog. Concerned that the dog might bite a child, Jack, who once owned rottweilers, closed the house for safety until the dog and owner got their picture and left.

Children sometimes asked Santa to bring back a departed loved one. He carefully explained that not even Santa



Glenn Barnett

could do that and suggested that the loved one lived on in the child's heart and memory.

The lines were long for this singular Santa. The wait to get a picture could last for hours. Some families returned year after year, long after their children had outgrown Santa. It had become a Christmas tradition, and they all looked forward to the reunion.

Once, Jack spoke at the Alhambra Rotary Club. He wore his civilian clothes to talk about being Santa, and there was a polite silence from the members. At the end of his talk, he put on the famous red suit, hat, and glasses and became Santa. There was an audible gasp in the room. Cameras came out as these grownups eagerly lined up for pictures.

I was saddened when he passed, and I have to think that his many fans miss him, too. But having known him, I can genuinely say, "Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus."



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Gift-giving brings joy to both the giver and the receiver. Yet, how we choose and present those gifts has environmental, as well as financial, impacts. Eco-friendly gift shopping embraces the heart of giving while considering the planet's well-being.

In searching for the perfect gift, start by considering materials with minimal environmental impact. Look for products made from recycled, upcycled, or organic materials. Gifts crafted from organic cotton, bamboo, or reclaimed wood are not only beautiful but also a nod to environmental stewardship.

You can also think outside the box and consider gifting experiences rather than physical objects. From cooking classes to weekend getaways, experiences can create lasting memories without the need to store or care for material possessions. Subscriptions to services can be a delightful, ongoing reminder of your thoughtfulness.

Finding a gift does not end after the purchase — presentation matters! Opt for reusable or recycled wrapping materials, or get creative with what's already on hand. An old map, a newspaper, or

fabric can be transformed into a unique and environmentally friendly gift wrap.

Eco-friendly gift shopping is a thoughtful, considerate process that goes beyond the traditional act of giving. It's a way to celebrate relationships and special occasions while honoring a commitment to the earth. By considering a gift's source, materials, purpose, and presentation, it becomes easier to make choices that resonate with our values and the larger goal of sustainability.

Ultimately, the essence of gift-giving remains the same: to show love, appreciation, and thoughtfulness. Embracing eco-friendly practices in this tradition only adds to its depth and meaning, allowing us to give in a way that celebrates both the individual and our shared responsibility to the planet.

For tips on handling holiday trees and other waste, look for Republic Services' winter Recycling & Waste Newsletter in next month's *Around Alhambra*. To learn more about local programs, visit RepublicServices.com/municipality/Alhambra-ca, call 800-299-4898, or email Alhambra@RepublicServices.com.



The Alhambra Celebrates Two-Year Anniversary of EVOLve Outdoor Sculpture

In November 2021, local community members joined The Ratkovich Company to unveil a new outdoor sculpture by noted Los Angeles artist Ruben Rojas at The Alhambra. The commissioned artwork, titled EVOLve, marks the expansion of The Alhambra's Public Art Program to include open-air works.

EVOLve is a permanent installation in The Alhambra's Certified Butterfly Garden. The massive 8-foot by 6-foot artwork features Rojas' iconic "love" script, with a realistic depiction of a monarch butterfly gently alighting at the tip. Rojas says, "Taking a page out of the butterfly's journey,

EVOLve speaks to the evolving growth and rebirth of the human community."

The Alhambra Public Art Program was launched in 2019 to serve the community and support local artists. The inaugural exhibition was presented by the Academy of Special Dreams Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to bringing awareness to artists in the special needs community. Since then, The Alhambra has donated gallery space to the Academy for ongoing exhibitions.

The Academy's latest exhibition, "Uniting Borders," currently hangs at The Alhambra.

In Their Own Words: Winter Holiday Traditions

Around Alhambra asked local leaders and community members, "What is your favorite holiday tradition?" Here is what they had to share.



Jean Park, Program Coordinator at API Forward Movement

"One of my favorite holiday traditions is getting together with friends for a game night and playing classic holiday movies in the background. Everyone brings something to share, and it's always a fun and special way to end the year."

James Doyle, Personal Injury Lawyer at Doyle Accident & Injury Attorneys

"My favorite holiday traditions are the local events in Alhambra, such as the Pumpkin Run and the Lunar New Year Festival. The residents have probably seen my advertisements on the front page of *Around Alhambra* by now, but I am trying to run a booth at all these events so I can interact with the community directly."



Joanna Vargas, Downtown Alhambra President

"I have so many holiday traditions that I absolutely love! If I had to choose one, my favorite is waking up early Christmas morning and starting a fire in the fireplace, turning on Christmas music, and opening up gifts. There is a feeling in the air, and I love that feeling."

Elijah Chavez, VP of Vez Guitar Academy

"My favorite holiday tradition is gathering with my loved ones and sharing food, music, and laughter."



Photography by: Arturo Gomez-Molina

Celebrating the 10th Annual Alhambra Pumpkin Run & Halloween Festival

On October 29, downtown Alhambra came alive as the 10th Annual Alhambra Pumpkin Run and Halloween Festival unfolded. Presented by Wondries Automotive Group and organized by the Downtown Alhambra Business Association and the City of Alhambra, this milestone event featured four runs for all ages—a 10K, 5K, 1K, and a half-kilometer "Kiddie Run"—and drew an impressive 2,200 participants and nearly 10,000 spectators.

Despite the day starting chilly, the temperature quickly warmed up. The event kicked off with the Alhambra High School cheerleaders accompanying the entrance of Mr. Pumpke the Pumpkin on the Alhambra Fire Truck to send the runners off. The Mark Keppel High School Marching Band and Fried Music's rendition of the National Anthem set the stage for an unforgettable event.

After the runners were off, the festivities began. The celebrations would last throughout the day and into the evening as the autumn-themed Pumpkin Run transitioned seamlessly into the exciting Halloween Festival. Amidst the crowd, trick-or-treating kids adorned in a delight-

ful array of costumes added to the festive charm. From classic staples like Queen Elsa and Spiderman to unique ensembles like Wednesday Addams with a Thing on her shoulder and a baby Groot comfortably seated in a stroller, the creativity was a sight to behold.

The festival, which was situated between Main Street and Commonwealth, featured a farmers market and other activities for the whole family. A lively beer garden, sponsored by Ohana Brewery, provided the perfect setting for adults to unwind. Families reveled in the festivities, with kids showcasing their creativity in a spirited costume contest—this year, the coveted first prize went to the Invisible Man! The rock climbing wall emerged as a crowd favorite, providing both challenge and thrill for participants of all ages.

Proceeds from the event benefited The Alhambra Educational Foundation, which contributed to local Alhambra schools. The day was a thriving community gathering, bringing together diverse participants for a day of festivities in Downtown Alhambra for this fun family event!

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Alhambra Civic Center Library

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Mini Health Fair Pop-Up Offers Health Advice & Services

On Sunday, November 12, the Alhambra Chamber of Commerce hosted a Mini Health Fair at the Alhambra Farmers Market. Various Chamber members were present to showcase their businesses and promote health and wellbeing in the community. It was a warm fall morning, and the Alhambra community was out in full force enjoying the weekly event.

Represented at the Health Fair were Welbe Health, Eye Society, Comfort Paradise Training Institute, Life Wave, B&C Physical Therapy, Axis Orthopedics, Chinatown Service Center, and Garfield Health Center, all of whom shared services, demonstrations, and information with the market's patrons.

Garfield Health Center provided folks with flu shots and COVID boosters, while the Comfort Paradise Training Institute ran blood pressure checks. The public also had the opportunity to learn from our local businesses and get more information on their health and wellness products and services. Dozens of people visited throughout the day to talk to those at the booths, keeping the event lively and informative.

Claudia Mbah from Comfort Paradise Training Institute said, "Connecting with other healthcare experts in the community and learning about their outstanding services to the Alhambra community and residents was such a remarkable experience." Nickie Chan from LifeWave remarked that participating in the health fair was a "dream come true" and that it was "such a joy meeting and talking with residents."

Keep your eyes open for future Mini Health Fair pop-ups in Alhambra!

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YMCA of West San Gabriel Valley

Contact Around Alhambra's ad representative, at 626-282-8481 or send an inquiry to aa@alhambrachamber.org to reserve your space today.



Advertisements from the 1911 holiday supplement of *The Alhambra-Advocate* included ads from *The Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company* and *Alhambra's Original Garage*. The full-color cover featured a vibrant lithograph of Santa in a dirigible airship.

Time Travel to an Alhambra Christmas Long, Long Ago

By Joyce Amaro, *Alhambra Historical Society*

“No need for you to be worn out by holiday preparations if you make good use of your telephone.” Sounds like a present-day holiday ad for a cell phone company, right? In reality, this was the opening line of an advertisement from the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company from an Alhambra newspaper more than a century ago.

Grab a mug of eggnog and time travel to the early 20th century to learn more about the holiday season in 1911 Alhambra—the Alhambra Historical Society recently uncovered a Christmas Advertising Supplement from the December 15, 1911 issue of *The Alhambra-Advocate*. Details from some of the delightful holiday ads are below.

The advertising supplement (pictured) features a stunning full-color front page lithograph of a jolly St. Nick, jauntily lounging in what looks like a toy-laden dirigible airship sailing through a clear, moonlit night. Santa tosses toys to eager children waiting below in a snowy town. Upon seeing this full-page cover, you can almost imagine perplexed Alhambra children and parents asking, “Why is Santa in a dirigible? And what happened to his reindeer?”

The promotions inside the Christmas supplement include advertisements for several local department stores. S. J. Pohls Department Store boasts “Sensible Xmas Gifts” like blankets, rugs, and desks. An advertisement for G.O. Johnson’s Department Store, located at 12 North Garfield Ave., features the less-than-creative tagline “Here We Are” but goes on to state that the store features a “fine line of Holiday Novelties” that includes dolls, toys, games, and books. The advertisements for both department stores assure harried holiday shoppers that their stores are open in the evenings.

Other establishments use Santa humor in their 1911 Christmas ads. Alhambra’s Original Garage jokingly quips, “If the old man fails to call on you, telephone us, and we will send Santa around, as he

is working nights in our repair shop.” Again, imagine parents in 1911 trying to explain to their young children why Santa Claus was working nights at an Alhambra garage.

Reading these advertisements from 1911, Alhambra was a very different town than the one we call home today. In the early 20th century, Alhambra’s population was just over 5,000. Census data from 2020 recorded 82,000 residents living in Alhambra. In 1911, printed newspapers were the primary source of news for Americans. Today, the internet and social media are where we get our information. In 1911, kiddos dreamt of receiving dolls, toy soldiers, games, and books. In 2023, children dream of video games and cell phones as holiday gifts.

And, while it’s true that many things have changed, some aspects of the holidays remain the same. Last-minute shoppers will continue to find their favorite stores open well into the night on Christmas Eve. Parents will create holiday magic around Santa and his late-night flight.

And, more than a century later, the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company will be pleased to learn that we’re still making excellent use of our phones during the holidays. Although, they’d be stunned at how we use phones — and apps — in 2023. Santa’s “helper” Amazon will deliver everyone’s gifts, and Canva can create e-vites for a holiday party — all while you sip a cup of peppermint tea. After all, there’s no need to be worn out by holiday preparations if you make good use of your telephone.

From all of us at the Alhambra Historical Society, we wish you and yours a very happy holiday season!

The Alhambra Historical Society Museum is open the first and third Saturdays of each month between 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. For more Alhambra history, follow @alhambrahistory on Instagram.

**Alhambra
Foundation**

Support Alhambra with Year-End Giving

If you believe in the potential of our community the way we do, include the Alhambra Foundation as part of your end-of-year giving. Whether big or small, your donation supports programs that help our neighbors. In the past year, we’ve given out scholarships to Alhambra students, awarded grants to local mom-and-pop restaurants, and supported community programming. We have even more in store for 2024!

Would you contribute today? Because of your support, we can build a strong future for Alhambra!

Scan the QR code below or visit alhambrachamber.org/foundation to donate.



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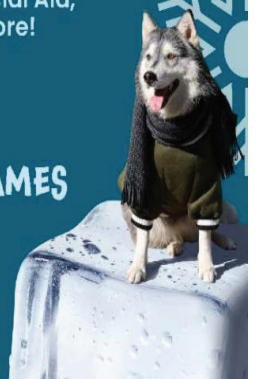
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Tax Tips

Tax Tips: Inflation

By Michael Aston EA

The IRS has released the 2024 inflation adjustments for over 60 tax provisions, encompassing tax rate schedules and other changes. Notable adjustments are noted below.

The 2024 standard deduction for married couples filing jointly is \$29,200, up \$1,500 from 2023. The 2024 standard deduction for single and married individuals filing separately is \$14,600, up \$ 750. The 2024 standard deduction for heads of households is \$21,900, up \$1,100.

In 2024, the top tax rate remains 37% for individual taxpayers with incomes over \$609,350 (\$731,200 for married couples filing jointly).

The 2024 maximum Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is \$7,830 for qualifying taxpayers with three or more qualifying children, an increase of \$7,430 from 2023. The revenue procedure includes a table detailing the maximum EITC amount for various categories, income thresholds, and phase-outs.

For taxable years starting in 2024, the dollar limit for employee salary reductions for health flexible spending arrangements increases to \$3,200. For cafeteria plans allowing the carryover of unused amounts, the maximum carry-over amount is \$640, up by \$30 from 2023.



Michael Aston, E.A.
Alhambra Tax Center
michael@alhambrataxcenter.com

The foreign earned income exclusion for tax year 2024 is \$126,500, up from \$120,000 in 2023.

The basic exclusion amount for estates of decedents passing away in 2024 is \$13,610,000, an increase from \$12,920,000 in 2023.

The annual gift exclusion rises to \$18,000 for 2024 from \$17,000 in 2023.

The maximum credit allowed for adoptions in tax year 2024 is the amount of qualified adoption expenses, up to \$16,810, an increase from \$15,950 in 2023.

Visit irs.gov/newsroom/irs-provides-tax-inflation-adjustments-for-tax-year-2024 or contact your local tax professional to learn more about changes happening in 2024.

This column is provided to Around Alhambra by Michael Aston, E.A., who is solely responsible for the content. Around Alhambra does not endorse the advice from this author or any other provider.

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Your Insurance



What to Do After a Hit-and-Run

By Regina Talbot
State Farm Insurance Agent,
Insurance License # 0G05807

When one party in an accident flees, it's essential to stay to talk to witnesses, insurance representatives, and the police.

As with any collision, you must carefully document hit-and-run accidents for your insurance company and the police. However, that can be tricky since one driver has taken off! Here are some Dos and Don'ts for handling the situation.

DO take down as much information about the driver, car, and accident as possible, including the other vehicle's make, model, and color, license plate number, which direction the other vehicle was headed, and the location, time, and cause of the accident. Immediately writing down as much as you can remember about the fleeing vehicle and taking photos of the accident's aftermath will help bolster your insurance claim.

DON'T follow the fleeing driver. Leaving the scene of the accident could put you in a compromising position: You'll miss getting eyewitness accounts — and police could question who's really at fault.

DO ask witnesses if they can supply additional information about the acci-



Regina Talbot
Talbot Insurance Agency
regina@reginatalbot.com

dent. If they give you or the police a statement, write down their names and contact information. Witness information can be especially beneficial if the hit-and-run occurred when you were not with your vehicle.

DON'T wait to call the police or your insurance company to file a police report or an accident claim. The official accident report will help police look for the missing driver. It will also be helpful when you file your accident claim.

For more information, contact Regina at 626-357-3401.

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Knives Out

By Alexander Tsao, Esq.



Alexander Tsao, Esq.
Venerable Law
atsao@venerablelaw.com

Recently, some have inquired about California knife laws due to their fear of government inaction in the face of growing violent crime, especially against Asian Americans and related communities. Some women asked, “Is it legal to carry a folding knife in California in a purse or bag, or do I have to carry it in a sheath?”

These folks are interested in laws pertaining to concealed weapons because some of them have developed a growing concern about the number of physical assault cases linked to publicly shared mass transit.

There is information on the internet about this; however, much is contradictory or doesn't paint a complete picture. This article will share some of the current California knife laws to supplement what you may find online.

Generally, in California, folding knives are legal for concealed carry. There are no state-level restrictions regarding blade length.

However, be careful about the distinction between a folding knife and a switchblade. Automatic and flick blades are generally illegal unless they contain blades under 2 inches long (e.g., a legal automatic OTF blade such as a Microtech Exocet). Accordingly, wherever you purchase a folding knife, make sure you ask the salesperson about the legality of that knife.

Individual cities may have stricter laws regarding knives. For instance, the City of Los Angeles has an arguable prohibition against any knife, carried open or concealed, with a blade length of over 3 inches. There is always an argument to be

made whether a city has the authority to further restrict the rights of its citizens, in this context, from where the State has already set them.

More important than all the “laws” is the reality of carrying a knife. Like any weapon, if you don't have any training on how to carry, conceal, deploy, and utilize the weapon in many different scenarios, then you are potentially holding that knife for someone else to use against you.

The State of California has some basic ownership requirements that must be met before someone can purchase a handgun, including the demonstration of basic weapon handling skills. The same does not hold true for a knife, although it is much more challenging to use one properly. Before you carry a knife, get some instruction on knife fighting, blade manipulation, and/or offensive and defensive knife tactics. Many local martial arts schools and weapons training facilities may provide you with real confidence in bladed self-defense. The confidence you develop may prevent you from ever having to deploy the weapon to begin with.

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DECEMBER 2023



ALHAMBRA
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Enjoy delicious,
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The Alhambra Restaurant of the Week (ROTW) highlights the unique flavors of our community. Every week, we showcase a diverse culinary offering that represents the best of local dining in the City of Alhambra!

December 4 to
December 10



Tacos Ensenada offers fresh, quality Mexican food. Favorites include Taco Gobernador, Burrito de Pescado, Torta de Pescado, Quesadilla Solo Queso, Coctel Chico de Camaron, Caldos de Pescado, and Burrito con Frijol y Queso. Don't miss out on the special \$1.25 fish tacos every Taco Tuesday! Outdoor seating and delivery are available, and pets are always invited.

Visit them at 1142 W Valley Blvd, Alhambra



December 11 to
December 17



Chili Mee Noodle Bar will keep you warm this December. The recently opened Asian noodle restaurant is already making waves locally as a go-to spot for delicious, flavorful, and affordable noodle dishes. Featuring classics like spicy Mala Mee to the mild and savory Original Mee, the menu caters to every spice preference. Conveniently located in Valley Square.

Visit them at 1261 E Valley Blvd. Alhambra



December 18 to
December 24



Chicken Bun Bun is for all the chicken lovers out there. Whether you're craving your chicken as a sandwich, wrap, or wings, you can get it cooked to order and seasoned how you like it. Despite the name, they also offer seafood, sides, and more. Plus, they sell milk tea! Order at the self-service kiosk or get delivery. This trendy, casual spot is open daily and great for any meal.

Visit them at 222 W Main St, Alhambra



2024

January 1 to
January 7



Chengdu Taste is a Michelin-starred, Sichuan-inspired restaurant that is sure to satisfy anyone looking for authentic Chinese food on this side of the Pacific. Serving unapologetically spicy, tongue-numbing Sichuan food has earned this spot a reputation, so visit outside regular meal times to avoid the line. Open daily for lunch and dinner.

Visit them at 828 W Valley Blvd, Alhambra



Follow the Alhambra Chamber of Commerce on Facebook and Instagram to learn more about these restaurants or visit alhambraeats.com.





Local Entrepreneurs Bring Sky Zone Trampoline Park to Alhambra

Alhambra is about to experience a leap in family fun with the arrival of Sky Zone, an indoor trampoline park and entertainment venue. Thanks to the dedication and vision of local entrepreneurs Greg Olbrich and Mo Zia, Alhambra residents no longer need to travel far to find a safe, exciting place for their kids to play. With its unique blend of fun and fitness, Sky Zone is set to become the new hotspot for local families when it opens early next year.

Greg and Mo recognized a need in Alhambra for a community space where kids of all ages can have fun and make friends while also moving their bodies. Together, they envisioned a place where safety, entertainment, and physical activity could converge to create an unforgettable experience for anyone who visits.

Greg's path to opening the first Sky Zone in Alhambra started because of his son, who loves to bounce. While enjoying a fun day with his family at another Sky

Zone location, he realized that this kind of active, family-friendly entertainment was something he should bring closer to home. He immediately set out to do just that.



His business partner Mo had spent time in the tech industry before changing his life path to focus on improving communities as a serial entrepreneur. He has since successfully opened three Sky Zone locations; the one coming to Alhambra will be his fourth.

Sky Zone offers a wide range of benefits for all age groups — from toddlers to high

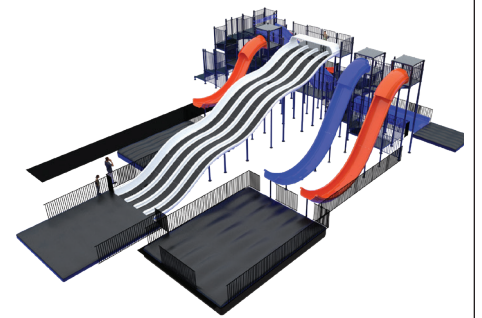
schoolers — providing an opportunity to socialize, make friends, and develop physical fitness.

Sky Zone Alhambra will offer a wide array of activities, like freestyle jumping, indoor slides, and basketball and soccer air courts. And what's a fun day without some delicious food? Sky Zone will have you covered with a range of snacks and meals to keep you energized. Want to throw a birthday party? Or how about a corporate event or a fundraising initiative? Sky Zone Alhambra provides versatile spaces for all your needs.

Greg and Mo envision the benefits expanding even further. Like its other locations, Sky Zone Alhambra will be where local youths find employment — maybe even their first job. Here, they can acquire valuable leadership skills and learn about safety procedures, cleanliness, and essential social skills. All while having a blast at work!

It all comes down to creating a fun and

safe community space where friends and neighbors can connect. Sky Zone is set to be an escape where Alhambrans of all ages come together to celebrate or simply loosen up. For those who can't get enough of the excitement, Sky Zone Alhambra will offer memberships so you can jump to your heart's content.



Sky Zone Alhambra is gearing up for an eagerly awaited opening in February 2024 at 1021 S Meridian Ave. For more information, visit [SkyZone.com/alhambra](https://www.skyzone.com/alhambra).

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Alhambra Holiday

2023 Gift Guide

To help you find the perfect gifts for everyone on your list, *Around Alhambra* has rounded up these must-have items that you can find right here in our community!



1.

Apple iPhone 15 Pro
AT&T, \$999.99



2.

Custom 3D Figurines
CoKreerate, prices may vary.



3.

Gel Battle Blaster Water Gel / Hydro Ball Blaster (Model: Tsunami)
Evike, \$39.95



4.

Tulip Elegance
Fanny's Flower, \$99.99



5.

X39 to elevate GHK-Cu Peptide
LifeWave, \$149.95 for 30 day supply*



6.

Holiday Living 7.5-ft Hayden Pine Pre-lit Flocked Artificial Christmas Tree with LED Lights
Lowe's, \$378



7.



Discounted Vehicle Service Specials
New Century BMW & New Century Mazda, Discounts vary, contact dealer for exact pricing.**



8.

Holiday Adult Pajama Set
Raising Canes, \$44.99



9.

Five Mini Masking Essentials
Sephora, \$20



10.

Advantage Tri-Blend Space Dye Mens Polo
The Alhambra Golf Course, \$79.99



11.

Orange Crush 20RT
Vez Guitar Academy, \$199.99



12.

16oz Housemade Chili Crisp
Yang's Kitchen, \$21

This holiday season, discover the joy of shopping locally for everyone on your list. Whether you're searching for entertainment, self-care, apparel, or something truly one-of-a-kind, Alhambra's businesses have you covered. This gift guide is just a starting point — only by exploring the city for yourself will you fully uncover all Alhambra has to offer. By choosing to shop locally, you not only uncover unique gifts but also contribute to the growth and vitality of our community. Create a positive impact by supporting the businesses that make Alhambra special!

- 1. AT&T: 810 E Valley Blvd. att.com
- 2. CoKreerate: 919 South Fremont Ave. cokreerate.com
- 3. Evike: 2801 W Mission Rd. evike.com
- 4. Fanny's Flowers: 5947 Oak Ave. fannysflowers.net
- 5. LifeWave: 560 W. Main St. lifewave.com/nickie
- 6. Lowe's: 2000 Empire Ave., Burbank lowes.com
- 7. New Century BMW: 1139 W Main St. newcenturybmw.com
New Century Mazda: 1325 W Main St. newcenturymazda.com

- 8. Raising Canes: 1300 E Valley Blvd. raisingcanes.com
- 9. Sephora: 2 S Garfield Ave. sephora.com
- 10. The Alhambra Golf Course: 630 S Almansor St. alhambra.golf.troon.shop
- 11. Vez Guitar: 34 W Main St. vezguitaracademy.com
- 12. Yang's Kitchen: 112 W Main St. yangskitchenla.com

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at Emmaus Lutheran Church

840 S. Almansor St. Alhambra
(626) 289-3664
www.EmmausAlhambra.org



CHRISTMAS EXTRAVAGANZA

Sunday, December 10th

Concert & Praise Service at 2:00 p.m.
Petting zoo, bouncer, crafts & more following the service--all FREE! Bring a new unwrapped toy to donate to Sparks of Love.

CHRISTMAS EVE

Candlelight Service

Join us to worship the newborn King
Sunday, December 24 at 8:00 p.m.



New Honors Symposium at Ramona Convent Introduces Freshmen to Art Appreciation

The Freshman Honors Humanities Symposium is a new yearlong project designed to push the strongest, most engaged freshmen students at Ramona Convent towards exploration of and appreciation for the arts. Each quarter, the students participating in the symposium will rotate through one of their four English teachers. Each teacher will hold an event, discussion, or gathering as an opportunity for intellectual growth, investment in the arts, and community building. The group will be able to discuss engaging works, create an intellectual community, and attend field trips to some of the best art spaces in Los Angeles.

Dr. Matthew Carrillo-Vincent, En-

glish department chair, recently hosted the first-quarter symposium. Students read and discussed Aristotle's *Poetics*, a book about what makes good art and what makes it beautiful. Then, the group supplemented their studies with a trip to the Getty Museum.

Ramona Convent Secondary School, celebrating a legacy of 134 years of distinction, is a welcoming Catholic college-prep high school for young women committed to excellence in education. Graduates are empowered, resilient, socially conscious leaders prepared to meet life's challenges.

To learn more about Ramona Convent, call 626-282-4151 or visit ramonaconvent.org.

Local Sports News from AUSD High Schools

Submitted by Mike Koski, President
Alhambra High School Sports Hall of Fame Committee

Let's end the year with a 2023 local high school sports news roundup.

2023 Varsity Football

San Gabriel was the only team from the three AUSD high schools that qualified for the CIF Southern Section Playoffs. The Matadors defeated Alhambra 21-3 in the last game of the regular season after previously defeating Keppel 41-8 two weeks earlier to finish the season at 6-4 and second place in the Almont League at 4-1. They were placed in Division 13 and hosted Los Amigos from Fountain Valley in the first round. Unfortunately, the Matadors lost that game 28-20 to end their season.

2023 Varsity Basketball

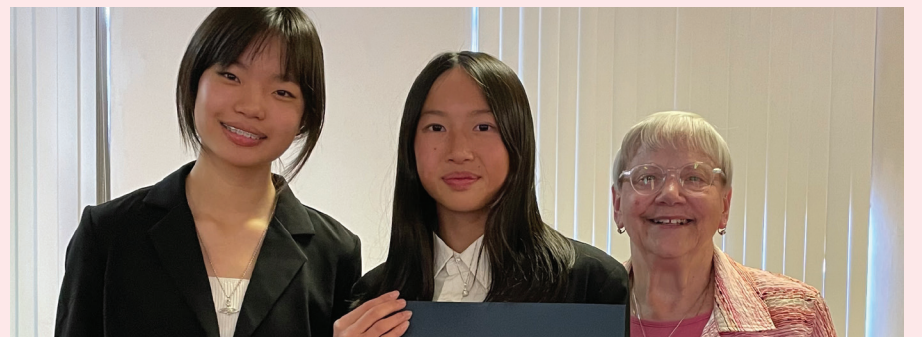
The 2023-24 Basketball season began the week of November 13. Alhambra started their season losing to Whittier Christian 55-45 and Covina 70-39 at the Doug Watt Memorial Tournament hosted by Sierra Vista HS in Baldwin Park. San Gabriel hosted Rosemead in a non-league game, while Keppel defeated Temple City 75-46 in a non-league game before heading to the Lion's Den Blue & Gold Classic at Edgewood HS in West Covina. Keppel will play 18 non-league and tournament games in November and December before opening up Almont League play on January 2.

2023-24 Varsity Baseball

Alhambra Moors Varsity Baseball player Jacob Rodriguez doesn't let his



disability interfere with playing the game of baseball. Jacob has been deaf his entire life but has played baseball since he was five years old. He started in T-Ball at Alhambra American Little League at Granada Park and played there through his 12-year-old season. He was the Most Valuable Player on the Frosh-Soph team his freshman year at Alhambra and the Pitcher of the Year last year on the Junior Varsity team. This year, he is poised to be the starting second baseman on the Moors Varsity team and will see action on the mound as a right-handed pitcher. At 5'3", 115 pounds, Jacob makes up for his lack of size with a great understanding of the game, talent, hustle, and heart. Good luck, Jacob!



Left to Right: Angelina Yip, Bernice Deng, Kathleen Doty

Local Student Wins Speech Contest, Moves to State-Wide Competition

Two eloquent high school freshmen won the top prizes in the first round of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) California Speech Trek, an annual speech contest, on Saturday, November 11, at the Alhambra First United Methodist Church.

Angelina Yip from Mark Keppel High School and Bernice Deng from Arcadia High School delivered their insightful five-to-six-minute speeches on the following question: How can we ensure a robust public school curriculum that is accessible to all and teaches historically accurate information?

The event was sponsored by the Alhambra-San Gabriel Branch of AAUW and moderated by Kathleen Doty, the branch's Speech Trek Coordinator. Both girls prepared us for the coming season of giving by sharing their creativity and discernment.

Judging the students for content, organization, and delivery were Sheila Grether Marion, who had careers in professional fundraising and money management and has recently written a book; Noreen Sullivan, Pasadena City Council District 4 Liaison; and Veron-

ica Alvarez, a lawyer and currently the branch's Membership Vice-President.

Alhambra representatives took home the top prizes. Angelina was the first-place winner overall! She will receive \$100 and advance to the state-wide competition. Bernice, who came in second, will receive \$50.

The winner of the state contest will receive \$1500. The second-place winner will receive \$1000, and the third-place winner will receive \$500. Finalists with honorable mention will also receive cash prizes: \$250 for fourth place and \$150 for fifth place.

Finalists from the Alhambra-San Gabriel Branch have placed in the top three positions seven times since Speech Trek was established in 2007. They are Peggy Truong (3rd in 2007), Tiffany Chia (3rd in 2008), Alexandra Lossada (2nd in 2009), Pavin Trinh (1st in 2013), Sharon Lu (1st in 2016), Sabrina Sy (3rd in 2017), and Elizabeth Ma (2nd in 2023).

To learn more about Speech Trek and other fascinating community projects of AAUW Alhambra-San Gabriel Branch, please visit ahsangab-ca.aauw.net.

2023 Food & Wellness Fair Brings Community Together *from page 1*

the MKHS NAC created several raised bed gardens, which are filled with flourishing vegetables and herbs. They hope to harvest enough produce to distribute to their school community.

“It’s exciting to see the student Nutrition Advisory Councils participate in Farm-to-School events and watch them embrace agriculture in their everyday lives,” said Judy Huffaker, Farm-to-School Coordinator.

San Gabriel High School’s NAC emphasis was on health, the importance of daily physical activity, and the value of adding fruit to your diet. They took physical activity seriously, getting guests to blend fruit smoothies by furiously pedaling on their unique smoothie bike. Monterey Highlands’ students hosted physical activity booths. They recruited fair participants for hula hooping and a

“Shake It Out” challenge.

Farmer Teresa from Old Grove Orange was on hand with local farm harvests, including pomegranates, rainbow carrots, cucumbers, and sweet peppers. Attendees were thrilled to sample the fresh produce and especially excited to bring home the delicious organic fruits and vegetables.

“All of us in Food & Nutrition Services are proud to host this fun districtwide tradition for the 19th year.” Mrs. Watts said. “By bringing everyone together, we can increase awareness of the school meal programs and underscore the benefits of building a healthy lifestyle. We hope the Food & Wellness Fair continues for many years to come.”

What will the 20th Food & Wellness Fair bring? We will just have to wait until next year to find out.



Fremont Elementary, home of AUSD’s Spanish Language Dual Immersion Program, famously hosts a glorious multicultural Dia de los Muertos celebration every year that draws hundreds of children, families, educators, and neighbors from the San Gabriel Valley who joyfully immerse themselves in customs and traditions from around the world.

Fremont’s Dia De Los Muertos Festivities Celebrate Departed Beloveds With Multicultural Art, Beauty, Music, and Dance

As the afternoon sun started going down on November 3rd, the Fremont school yard was filled with the sound of singing, the pan flute, and guitar music as hundreds of be-costumed children and adults in gorgeous masks and painted faces joyfully embraced the many ways to celebrate departed loved ones at the school’s famously beautiful 5th annual Dia de los Muertos carnival.

The auditorium, a flower-filled riot of color, interspersed with skeletons and skulls, was transformed into a museum of altars or ofrendas created by students who decorated with photos, candles, and symbols of the earth to honor their ancestors, family members, and sometimes their pets.

In each classroom, families were applauding the cultural performances their

children had prepared especially for Dia de los Muertos. Students were immersed in learning the cultures and customs of Mexico and countries throughout Central and South America, and around the world that surround death while having great fun.

Fremont elementary is also the home of AUSD’s Spanish Language Dual Immersion program. It is easy to see why hundreds of Fremont and district families, friends, and neighbors are gathered to participate in the memorable fiesta. The lively atmosphere, the cascade of color, and the stunning ways to remember and honor departed loved ones made learning cultural traditions and celebrating beloveds an evening that the whole community looks forward to — and learns from — each year.

NATIONAL PTA REFLECTIONS

School Site Winners

- | | |
|--|---|
| Grace Alo, Alhambra High School - Gr. 11 | Hayden Lin, Martha Baldwin School - Gr. K |
| Nicole Del Villar, Alhambra High School - Gr. 10 | Jett Lin, Martha Baldwin School - Gr. 5 |
| Emmett Lee, Alhambra High School - Gr. 10 | Nina Tierney, Martha Baldwin School - Gr. 5 |
| Jada Leung, Alhambra High School - Gr. 12 | Ethan Chatzipantsios, Monterey Highlands School - Gr. K |
| Kora Chang, Brightwood School - Gr. 4 | Abby Chen, Monterey Highlands School - Gr. 4 |
| Kylie Chang, Brightwood School - Gr. 6 | Desiree Chong, Monterey Highlands School - Gr. 7 |
| Olivia Gagnon, Brightwood School - Gr. TK | Valerie Chong, Monterey Highlands School - Gr. 8 |
| Alexis Ho, Brightwood School - Gr. 6 | Elise Date, Monterey Highlands School - Gr. 4 |
| Emilia Kao, Brightwood School - Gr. 2 | Sarah Demus, Monterey Highlands School - Gr. 6 |
| Mila Lim, Brightwood School - Gr. 1 | Chloe He, Monterey Highlands School - Gr. 5 |
| Paige Okita, Brightwood School - Gr. 4 | Michelle Lee, Monterey Highlands School - Gr. 8 |
| Cadence Tanaka, Brightwood School - Gr. 6 | Marisa Park, Monterey Highlands School - Gr. 7 |
| Emily Wong, Brightwood School - Gr. 5 | Desmond Roura, Monterey Highlands School - Gr. 2 |
| Ellie Yao, Brightwood School - Gr. 2 | Chloe Suh, Monterey Highlands School - Gr. 4 |
| Nathan Yao, Brightwood School - Gr. 6 | Matthew Wong, Monterey Highlands School - Gr. 4 |
| Nicholas Lee, Emery Park School - Gr. 8 | Scout Wong, Monterey Highlands School - Gr. 2 |
| Imani Prieto, Emery Park School - Gr. 1 | Queenia Yang, Monterey Highlands School - Gr. 8 |
| Hannah Vasquez, Emery Park School - Gr. 7 | Aaron Zheng, Monterey Highlands School - Gr. 4 |
| Kadence Au, Mark Keppel High School - Gr. 10 | Zuyuan Zhou, San Gabriel High School - Gr. 11 |
| Angeline Chau, Mark Keppel High School - Gr. 10 | Eileen Wang, William Northrup School - Gr. 3 |
| Marissa Helguera, Martha Baldwin School - Gr. 3 | Kaylee Chan, Ynez School - Gr. 1 |
| Yuxin Lai, Martha Baldwin School - Gr. 8 | Bella Rojas, Ynez School - Gr. 4 |

I am Hopeful Because...

Explore the arts and express yourself!



Each PTA put together a remarkable 2023 Reflections art program, inspiring twice as many AUSD students this year to find their artist within. The students listed won first at their school site level. These entries are now being reviewed by the Alhambra Council PTA Reflections judges to select First District winners — some of whom could continue to State or National level.

Entries for AUSD’s PTA 2023 Reflections Art Contest Double This Year

For more than half a century, PTA’s annual Reflections arts contest has underscored their commitment to arts education. Reflections helps students explore their own thoughts, feelings, and ideas, develop artistic literacy, build confidence, and discover a love of learning to become more successful in school and in life. Each year, over 300,000 students nationwide create original works of art in response to a student-selected theme. This year’s theme, “I am Hopeful Because...” was submitted by Alice Meko, a student from the state of Alabama.

Alhambra Council PTA announced that twice as many Alhambra Unified School District schools and students participated in the 2023 Reflections program as last year. Almost 200 entries from 10 school site PTAs submitted works of art in the categories of film production, music composition, visual arts, dance choreography, and photography.

Every AUSD PTA created a selection committee to choose their site winners in each division and grade-span. The com-

mittees had the difficult job of narrowing their choices to 46 winning school-level entries, with Brightwood’s Mina Lin and Mark Keppel’s Angeline Chau each winning in two categories. Alhambra PTA Council now reviews those 46 entries to determine which submissions will move to the First District level...and possibly even to the State and National levels.

The First District winners will be announced in January along with photos and videos showing the amazing artistic abilities of the students. “In our view, every student who participated in the PTA’s Reflections art contest deserves applause for their creativity,”

Janet Lees, assistant superintendent of education services, said. “We urge them to keep exploring their artistic talents. We are cheering PTA members, school staff, and families for their efforts in making the Reflections program such a success. Through their art, these students are connecting all of us, enlarging our world, and making it a more harmonious place.”



Ramona 7th Grader's "Dragon Music" Design Inspires City Of Alhambra's 2024 Rose Float

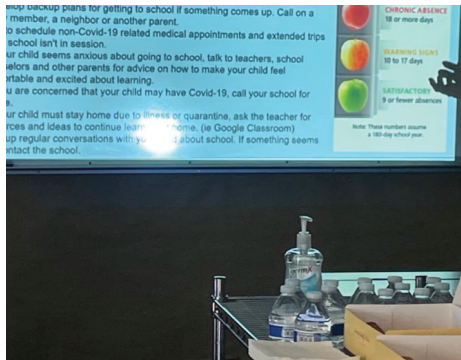
The city of Alhambra invited Alhambra USD students to create their own float designs to inspire the city's Rose Float in representing the 2024 Tournament of Roses theme. Ramona 7th grader, Shannon Tan's float design "Dragon Music" was selected because it reflected the creativity of AUSD students, the culture of the city of Alhambra, and the theme of the 2024 Tournament of Roses, "Celebrating a World of Music, the Universal Language."

Mike Macias, director of Alhambra's Parks and Recreation, said, "Shannon's drawing truly inspired the City of Alhambra's Rose Float, a giant dragon with a globe perched in its claw... standing protectively over a sleeping baby dragon in the shadows of the classic City of Alhambra sign; the floral-covered dragons are surrounded by beautiful music and traditional musical instruments. We are grateful to all the students who submitted their designs."



National School Lunch Week Brings a Little Extra Fun to the Cafeteria

In October, AUSD Food and Nutritional Services (FNS) team members celebrated National School Lunch Week by creating incentives to encourage students to eat in the cafeteria daily. At each elementary school, students used their "Frequent Diner" cards to collect stamps each day during lunchtime. At the end of the week, students who filled their cards turned them in for a chance to be selected to receive a grand prize bag, full of games, activities, and much more. Thank you to everyone who participated and to the FNS team for adding these little touches to make mealtimes more fun. Here are photos of a few of our elementary school winners.



At the Ramona School Community Conversation, director of Student Support Services, Jim Schofield, was passionate in explaining to parents and caregivers why attendance matters. He told them, "If a child misses two days of school a month for one whole school year they will have missed a total of a month of school. Multiplied by nine years of school K-8, the absences equal approximately 180 days. By that calculation, it means by the time a student enters 9th grade, the student will have lost a whole year of instruction. That accumulation of loss in classroom learning and relationship building will significantly diminish student achievement, depress wellbeing, reduce a sense of belonging, and often result in students dropping out of school altogether."

AUSD Student Support Services Hosts Community Conversations at Every School to Connect With Parents & Caregivers, Answer Questions, Offer Guidance

On Friday mornings, AUSD Student Support Services (SSS) hosts a Community Conversation, one school at time, inviting parents and caregivers to an interactive visit over breakfast bites about how to best support their child. By mid-November, the SSS teams visited ten schools: Granada, Ramona, San Gabriel High, Northrup, Ynez, Marguerita, Brightwood, Baldwin, Emery Park, and Fremont. These conversations are among the many events planned for Student Support Services' "Year of Fostering Connectivity and Belonging."

Assistant superintendent of SSS, Lindsey Ma, said, "We are getting a lot of positive feedback from parents, caregivers, and the schools on our Community Conversations. Even local businesses are supporting Community Conversations by gifting treats for parents and caregivers. We are grateful to Starbucks on Main Street, 85° Bakery, Denny's, Bagel Exchange, Raising Cane's in Alhambra, Burgers & More, Trader Joe's in South Pasadena, Ralph's in Monterey Park, and IHOP for their generosity."

Initially the topics for Community Conversations were student wellness, health, and attendance. SSS director Jim Schofield is especially passionate about student attendance as the foundation for student success in academics, relationships, and life. These topics expanded as parents asked about pediatric dentistry, nutrition, campus safety, positive discipline, punitive consequences, and the transfer permit process.

At each campus, the principal and mental health counselor worked closely with the SSS teams for the 60-minute Community Conversations. The site coordinators personally invited parents and caregivers. At Marguerita, parents and caregivers were so pleased, they asked the team return during spring kindergarten orientation to help those with young children understand the importance of wellness checks.

Lead nurse Damaris Pessina discussed how medical wellness visits evolve. "Wellness visits are a positive experience for the family as the pediatrician gets to know you and your child and documents their growth from year to year," said Ms. Pessina. "The doctor spends time with the parent or caregiver, asking questions, and sharing observations on the child's mood and physical growth."

In the teen years, she pointed out, wellness visits shift, and the parent will leave the examination room at one point to allow the doctor to talk to the child about more personal questions to gauge his or her social emotional maturation process.

The SSS teams also talked about the confidentiality of school discipline protocols with reassurances that all protocols are followed, and discipline is assigned. They discussed the impact of new California legislation mandating that schools and administrators use discipline to teach students new behaviors and implement restorative approaches, in place of practices designed to only extinguished negative behaviors without teaching positive skills.

"We are deeply grateful to each school site for their coordination for the Community Conversations," said Mr. Ma. "And thankful to our whole SSS team who make the Community Conversations possible. Jackie Valle, Lisa Sanchez, Carol Perez, N'kysha Johnson, Vanessa Sandoval, and Blazhia Parker were key in the development of the concept, with their boots on the ground."

"Coming up on May 4, 2024, is the Parent and Caregiver Empowerment Summit which will be our conversation of conversations," according to Mr. Ma. "We want parents and caregivers to join us for this incredible opportunity to learn from professionals the many ways they can build pathways for success and wellbeing for their children, improve family relationships, and take better care of themselves."



Opened on October 29, 1923, Park School celebrated its 100th birthday with an all day party! Superintendent Dr. Denise Jaramillo joined Principal Gasca to welcome student alum Danal Snyder, who attended Park from 1949-1958 while one of youngest current park students was in the centennial mood with his bejeweled 100 eyewear. Three former Park principals Marsha Gilbert, Rachael Simidian-Nicoll, and Barbara Wong added to the festivities

Park School Centennial Celebration: Happy 100th Birthday!

On Sunday, October 29, Park School was officially 100-years-old. To celebrate this milestone, Park held a day-long celebration on October 27th that included a school wide assembly, live music, a time capsule, arts and crafts, games, treats, and birthday cake. Special guests included three former Park principals Marsha Gilbert, Rachael Simidian-Nicoll, and Barbara Wong; staff and student alumni including

Mr. Danal Snyder, who attended Park 1949-1958; and Alhambra City Council members Adele Andrade Stadler and Jeff Maloney.

“Congratulations to Principal Carin Gasca and the entire Park School Family for a fabulous celebration!” Superintendent Dr. Denise Jaramillo said. “We look forward to seeing what the next 100 years will bring at Park!”

OCTOBER 2023

GAME CHANGERS



JENNIFER MARTINEZ
IA/OH AIDE
MOOR FIELD EARLY EDUCATION CENTER



MALINDA AUSTIN
KINDERGARTEN TEACHER
PARK SCHOOL

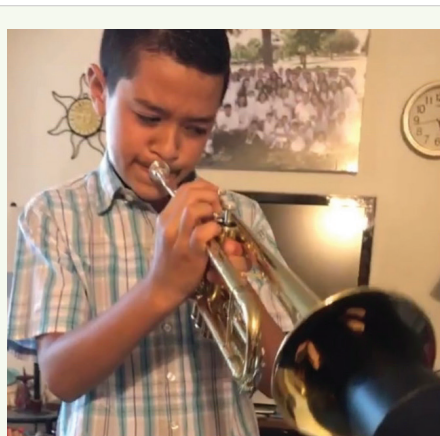
Celebrating October Game Changers Jennifer Martinez and Malinda Austin

Each month of the school year, the Board of Education recognizes two Game Changer Award winners — a classified and a certificated employee — for their astonishing gifts of connection, care, and the special wisdom that they bestow on all those in their orbit. Game Changers are nominated by colleagues, parents, students, and community members to say thank you to those whose contagious good will and willingness to go out of their way to make a difference help create a culture where everybody belongs. You can thank an AUSD employee: Go to www.ausd.us/badges. Click on “recognition,” click on one of two badges you want to choose, fill out a short, fast form with your name,

nominee, what they do, how you know them, and very briefly why you want them to be recognized, and submit.

Here are our October Game Changers: Jennifer Martinez, IA/OH Aide at Moorfield was nominated by colleague and teacher Stephanie Dunne

Ms. Dunne wrote: Jennifer started in my classroom this school year as an aide and has made my life as a teacher so much easier! She originally served as a 1:1 aide for a previous student of mine and I had heard great things about her. Jennifer not only professionally performs her job duties as a classroom aide, but she also displays and provides care and compassion with all of the students in my



Since he was very young, Mark Keppel High School junior Aidan Gomez wanted to play the trumpet like Louis Armstrong. On January 1, 2024, Aidan will lead off the Pasadena Tournament of Roses Parade as one of nine Herald Trumpets marching and playing

Mark Keppel Junior to Lead off 2024 Pasadena Tournament of Roses Parade Playing Fanfares for the Queen’s Float as District’s First-Ever Rose Court Herald Trumpet

Earlier this school year, at the suggestion of his band director Justin Lee, Mark Keppel junior Aidan Gomez auditioned for a chance to play in the Honor Band of the 2024 Pasadena Tournament of Roses New Year’s Day Parade of Roses. To his surprise, Aidan was instead selected to be one of only nine high school Herald Trumpets, who together with a snare drummer, will lead off the Parade of Roses, marching and playing fanfares ahead of the Rose Queen’s float. The position of Rose Herald Trumpet is considered the highest honor.

That honor has meant that Aidan spent long weekends in November at Herald Trumpet Ensemble practices and will spend most of his winter break in intense rehearsals. “I love it,” said Aidan. “All of us are excited, learning a lot, and grateful to be working together for this incredible experience.”

“Music is so important to our family,” Aidan’s mother Carmen Dalziel said. “Aidan grew up in a house filled with great music, listening to singers like Frank Sinatra and Tony Bennett.” From a very young age, Aidan knew he wanted to play the trumpet like the legendary jazz icon Louis Armstrong. By the time he was six years old, he was practicing his trumpet at home every day.

As fifth grader, Aidan became the youngest member of AUSD’s middle school honor band under the direction of Dave Batti. Now Aidan goes to honor band practices to help Mr. Batti coach young musicians. He is a scholar athlete, became a member of MKHS’s varsity swim team as a freshman and contributed to its 2022-23 Almont League CIF State Qualifier Championship season. Aidan, the only band member to play a sport, maintains a 4.2 GPA.

Aidan is so quietly humble — it is not easy to learn much about his accomplishments from him. At home, he is coaching his sister Mia Flores to play the trumpet. She is a Brightwood fifth grader who plays the guitar and is auditioning to be in a mariachi band. On December 5th, Aidan performs at the Rose Court Luncheon hosted by the Alhambra Chamber of Commerce where he will join the 105th Rose Queen Naomi Stillitano and the six members of her Royal Court for lunch.

“The whole district is so proud of him,” Superintendent Dr. Denise Jaramillo said.

“Let’s all wake up early on New Year’s Day to cheer Aidan as he leads off the 2024 Tournament of Roses Parade!”

self-contained special day class on a regular basis. I was impressed with how quickly she built rapport with my students. She works well with classroom paraprofessionals, service providers, and support staff on Moor Field’s campus. She’s been a welcome addition to the classroom and I look forward to continuing to work with her!

Malinda Austin, Teacher at Park School was nominated by parent Tina Mov Ms. Mov writes:

Mrs. Austin is an amazing, hard working, and caring teacher/educator. My son has autism and was in her class last year for kindergarten. With her extraordinary guidance, her wealth of knowledge and tremendous amount of patience with us and with my son, we could see how much he grew and how much he loved going to school and learning. Colleagues also agree that Mrs. Austin’s instructional program is engaging and exceptional.



MARGUERITA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



ALHAMBRA
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



TIME *Capsule*





COME JOIN US TO CELEBRATE
A TIME CAPSULE CEREMONEY AND
REDEDICATION OF OUR SCHOOL

JANUARY 19, 2024
4:00pm - 6:00pm

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OPEN TO ALL COMMUNITY
DISTRICT MEMBERS, BOARD MEMBERS,
AND CITY OFFICIALS

WILL TAKE PLACE IN FRONT OF SCHOOL
NEAR FLAG POLE

Marguerita alumni and employees will always be part of the Huskies Family. If you worked or attended Marguerita School, you will want to be part of this special opportunity to celebrate, reconnect, and continue being part of the school's history.

Marguerita is Celebrating! And Wants You to Join the Fun & Festivities for the Next Chapter in Its 93-year History

Ninety-three years after Marguerita Elementary School opened its doors, Marguerita is ready for a party. The school wants you to join their celebration to mark the end of recent construction and modernization projects at a festive rededication of the school campus. Students, families, and staff members — past and present — and the whole community are invited to this momentous occasion and to be part of the installation ceremony for time capsules to commemorate the rededication.

Principal Thomas Kohout said, "Make plans to join the Huskies Family on Friday, January 19, 2024, from 4:00 pm until 6:00 pm at the flagpole in front of the school for this celebration of our school community and all who have made it such an amazing place to work and learn." The afternoon will be filled with student-led music, refreshments, a social hour to get

to know one another, and time to hear from different members of the Marguerita community.

The evening will come to a close when memorable items are placed into several time capsules, which will be reopened fifty years from now in the year 2074. Principal Kohout adds, "We hope many who attend will mark their calendars to join us again in fifty years."

Do you know any Marguerita alumni or retired employees? Help spread the word and encourage them to be part of the festivities. The school is in search of photos from Marguerita's past. To share your photos, please email principal Tom Kohout at: kohout_h_thomas@ausd.us. More details to be announced soon, so stay tuned and follow Marguerita School and Alhambra Unified School District through their websites and social media platforms.

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Spark of Love

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For the 31st Year, the Spark of Love Toy Drive Brings Holiday Cheer to Struggling AUSD Families

During the holiday season, the Alhambra Unified School District continues its partnership with the Alhambra Fire Department and other community organizations for their 31st annual Spark of Love toy drive campaign.

Each year, AUSD staff, students, and families generously fill dozens of boxes with toys, games, and sports equipment to make the holiday season a little brighter for struggling families and neighbors. "Look for the donation boxes at each school site and the district office, and help us fill them to overflowing," urges Superintendent Dr. Denise Jaramillo. "Because of your kindness and generosity, hundreds of AUSD families have a much happier holiday each year."

As you head out to do your holiday

shopping, please consider purchasing a few extra toys to deposit in the boxes at AUSD school sites. Donations will be accepted at AUSD sites through Friday, December 8th and will directly benefit students in the local community through the Alhambra Fire Department's annual Spark of Love event.

"AUSD is excited to announce a new way you can help students during the holidays. Our goal is to send some of our students to camp this year, so we are launching our Adopt-a-Camper sponsorship campaign very soon," said Janet Lees, assistant superintendent of education services. "Please be on the lookout for more information through email, local papers, social media, and our digital newsletter."

Mark Keppel Junior Selected as Student Board Member Semi-Finalist for California State Board of Education

Alhambra Unified School District students who are seeking out opportunities to take on community leadership roles are also role models for their peers. This includes Mark Keppel High School junior Kailia Garfield, who was recently named a semi-finalist for the position of 2024-25 student board member for the California State Board of Education.

Since 1969, a California public high school student has been selected to serve a one-year term on the State Board of Education as a full voting member to represent student voices in developing policies for all of California's school districts.

With the important responsibility of representing almost six million diverse students in over 10,000 schools in California, the selection process to become the sole student representative of the state's education governing board can be intense. The process begins early in the

student's junior year for a term that covers their senior year of high school.

Kailia was selected as one of the 12 semi-finalists invited to attend the California Association of Student Councils (CASC) Student Advisory Board of Education (SABE) conference in Sacramento November 5th through 8th. The delegates worked diligently to identify six areas of priority for students, and then shared their presentations at the State Board of Education meeting on November 8th.

Although Kailia was not selected as California's 2024-25 Board of Education student member, she demonstrated strong initiative and outstanding leadership skills. "Keep your eye on Kailia Garfield," MKHS acting principal Amy Wu predicts. "We're certain we will see her in many leadership roles now and in the future. Bravo, Kailia... Well done!"



Kailia Garfield, Mark Keppel High School junior and Brightwood School alumna, was selected as one of the 12 semi-finalists for the essential role of California State Board of Education student board member. She was privileged to travel to Sacramento in early November where she learned from student leaders from across the State.



Mark Keppel High School recently welcomed distinguished delegates from the South Korean Yeoncheon County Regional Office of Education under Gyeonggi Province Office of Education. Ms. Mi Kyung Kim, Mr. Deoghyun Kim, and Mr. Sunken Ahn were at MKHS to sign a Memo of Understanding with AUSD officials to establish a new student cultural exchange program. MKHS Acting Principal Amy Wu said, "Cultural exchanges like this one offer our students, staff, and families a unique opportunity to become better citizens of the world."

AUSD Partnership with South Korean Educators Expands to Include Student Exchange Program at MKHS

The world-widening benefits of the strong, already established Alhambra High School cross-cultural program with fellow educators from South Korea have rippled out across the district. They have each hosted multiple student and staff visitors, delighting all involved, and now Mark Keppel High School will join this partnership.

Just as AHS did in 2021, MKHS re-

cently welcomed distinguished delegates from Yeoncheon County Regional Office of Education under Gyeonggi Province Office of Education. Ms. Mi Kyung Kim, Mr. Deoghyun Kim, and Mr. Sunken Ahn were at MKHS to sign a Memo of Understanding with AUSD officials to establish a new student cultural exchange program.

Mark Keppel staff members, AUSD

administrators, and Board of Education members hosted the South Korean delegation and escorted them on a tour of the school campus. After the tour, the group enjoyed lunch together, followed by a performance by the MKHS Marching Band.

"All of us at MKHS are excited to host a group of students from South Korea," said Acting Principal Amy Wu. "Cultural exchanges like this one offer our students,

staff, and families a unique opportunity to become better citizens of the world. By sharing our classrooms, our homes, and our community, we amplify learning, enlarge our perspectives, gain greater understanding, and quite possibly create lifelong relationships that make a more harmonious world, one person at a time."



Garfield's Dr. Stephanie Richardson Selected for AUSD's Latest Excellence in Leadership Award

The most recent honoree for AUSD's rotating Excellence in Leadership Award is Dr. Stephanie Richardson, principal at Garfield Elementary School. The award celebrates those who go beyond, applauding their ability to guide, inspire, and create positive change.

Dr. Richardson is an accomplished leader who was also the AUSD 2022 Manager of the Year. She and assistant principal Jennifer Alcalá, right, work together to lead the amazing team at Garfield School.

Park Principal Carin Gasca selected Dr. Richardson who will choose the next award recipient at the upcoming general principals meeting.



PHOTO CREDIT: Jazmin Palacios, MKHS cheerleading coach

Mark Keppel Honors Local Military Service Veterans at One of Their Final Football Games

In September, Mark Keppel High school football players invited some of their favorite teachers to wear their jerseys during the game as they honored them on Educators Appreciation Night. It was such a huge hit that MKHS wanted to celebrate another important group by designating the October 20th varsity football game (which was also senior night) as Military Appreciation Night. The Aztec football players and cheerleaders were thrilled to have the opportunity to thank these brave and dedicated military service veterans for their service to our country.



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Ask Dr. Dara, D.D.S.

How Can a Bad Bite Affect Your Teeth?

by Dr. Krasnodara Gashparova, DDS
(also known as Dr. Dara)

A bad bite, also known as malocclusion, occurs when the teeth do not align properly. This misalignment can have various impacts on the teeth, including those noted below.

Wear and tear: A bad bite can cause teeth to rub against each other unevenly, leading to excessive wear on certain teeth. This can result in chipped, cracked, or fractured teeth and may require restorative dental treatments.

Tooth decay: Malocclusion can make it difficult to properly clean the teeth and gums, as overlapping or crowded teeth create areas that are hard to reach with a toothbrush or floss. Inadequate oral hygiene can increase the risk of tooth decay and cavities.

Gum disease: Like tooth decay, a bad bite can contribute to the development of gum disease. Misaligned teeth make proper oral hygiene more challenging, leading to a buildup of plaque and tartar along the gum line, potentially causing gum inflammation, bleeding, and periodontal disease.

Temporomandibular joint (TMJ) disorders: A bad bite can lead to uneven distribution of forces on the teeth, causing excessive wear on certain teeth and misalignment of the jaw. A misaligned jaw can cause muscle strains and headaches because it can put excessive strain on the temporomandibular joints, which connect the jaw to the skull. This can result in TMJ disorders, causing jaw pain, jaw popping or clicking sounds, headaches, and difficulty opening or closing the mouth. For example, deep bite, a condition referred to as an excessive overlap of the upper and lower front teeth, causes the lower jaw to close further back than it should. This could lead to increased stress on the temporomandibular joint (TMJ) and significant pain in the joints.

Grinding and clenching teeth, also known as bruxism: This often occurs when the teeth are misaligned. The uneven bite leads to the body's natural response of grinding the teeth to try to find a more comfortable position. This grinding can result in further misalignment and other dental issues, like severe teeth wear, fractures, and muscle pain.

Speech difficulties and aesthetic



Dr. Dara, D.D.S.
Advanced Dentistry Alhambra
daradds@yahoo.com

concerns: Malocclusion can affect speech, as misaligned teeth can interfere with proper tongue movements and airflow, leading to lisps, slurring, or other speech impediments. A bad bite can impact the appearance of teeth, affecting one's smile and confidence.



Fixing misaligned teeth can bring numerous benefits, including improved oral health and hygiene, enhanced appearance and self-confidence, better bite and chewing function, reduced risk of dental issues such as decay and gum disease, reduced emergency appointments, and less pain overall.

Orthodontic treatments such as braces, Invisalign, or other clear aligners may be recommended to address the effects of a bad bite. It is essential to consult a dentist or orthodontist who can assess the bite and provide appropriate treatment options to prevent further dental issues and improve oral health.

This column is provided to Around Alhambra by Dr. Krasnodara Gashparova, DDS who is responsible for the content. Around Alhambra does not endorse medical advice or any remedies recommended by this author or any other provider.

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These examples show how Dr. John Chao saved a hopelessly loose tooth in ONE EASY COMFORTABLE VISIT and at a fraction of the cost of implants!
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John Chao, D.D.S.

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美國紐約州立大學牙週病研究教授(SUNY)



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Your Insurance



It's Time to Shop & Compare Plans For 2023



Katherine Yu Simms
Medicare Insurance Agent
lovemygoldenyears@gmail.com

By Katherine Yu Simms

Medicare's open enrollment period ends on December 7. Before then, you should review your Medicare health and drug coverage and compare it with other plans that may better meet your needs.

Review Your Options

Even if you're happy with your current Medicare coverage, reviewing your coverage options for 2023 is essential for many reasons.

Your needs may change. You may find you're going to the doctor more or less often, your prescription drugs may be different, or you may need better access to health care services.

Benefits and costs can vary. Not all Medicare coverage options offer the same benefits. Plan benefits and costs can change from year to year. If you have a Medicare plan, check your Annual Notice of Changes (ANOC) to see what's changing.

Additionally, new, more affordable Medicare plans may be available. The total cost, provider network, and services offered differ between plans. Check if other plan options could better meet your needs or lower out-of-pocket costs.

If you like your current health care coverage and it's still available in 2023, you don't need to take any action.

Shop & Compare Plans In Your Area

Compare 2023 coverage options and shop for plans. Get estimates of costs and review benefits offered by Medicare health and drug plans in your area. You can even compare plans based on their star rating for quality and performance.

If you log into or create a secure Medicare account, you can save your current prescriptions and favorite pharmacies, get cost estimates for each plan based on the drugs and pharmacies you use, and see your costs if you get extra help with prescription costs.

If you have questions about your current plan or want to explore other plans that may suit you, don't hesitate to contact a Medicare professional for a free consultation.

Only some plans are available in your area. Any information provided is limited to plans offered in your area. Please contact Medicare.gov or 1-800-MEDICARE to get information on all your options.

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I speak Mandarin and Cantonese

Katherine Yu Simms
Medicare Insurance Agent
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1 How well does my current plan meet my needs?

2 What are my other Medicare plan options?

3 I'm turning 65 soon, where do I go and what do I do?

4 What is the difference between Original Medicare and Medicare Advantage?

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From the Desk of Rev. Craig Statton



The Christmas Truce

During World War 1, an extraordinary event happened on Christmas Day, 1914. There was a pause in combat, and fighters from both sides emerged from their trenches to share stories, exchange gifts, and even play soccer. The war resumed a couple of days later, but the pause was a gift of respite at a time of heartache and despair.

Holiday celebrations at this time of year are meant to bring joy. However, in many cases, these times are filled with heartache and sorrow — loved ones are lost, friends are gone, or financial and health concerns are high, draining the joy of the season from our lives. For many seniors, the holidays are a challenging time because of all these reasons. Here are some ideas to help those around us who may be struggling to experience happiness and excitement this holiday



season.

First, listen when they talk. Helping an older loved one remember even the pain of life helps them work through their sorrow. An empathetic ear, a kind word, and a gentle touch are always reassuring.

Visiting someone in an assisted living

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Engaging in seasonal activities like baking cookies, making special treats, or crafting together provides time to talk and enjoy your friend or loved one. Adding a few decorations to an apartment or a room can lift the spirits. Even going on a drive or walk to see the festive decorations around the city or neighborhood can lift a friend's spirits. (I always include hot chocolate with marshmallows, a holiday delight.)

The holidays are not a season of joy for everyone, but you never know when a miracle can happen. Who would have thought of a truce during the middle of a war?! May your holiday season be bright this year as you share your joy with others around you!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

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Alhambra Senior Resource Guide

The Senior Resource Guide is a one-stop resource for Alhambra locals to discover experiences catering to the elderly community. The guide is designed to serve as a lifeline for the elderly, offering opportunities, savings, and resources that cater specifically to their unique needs and interests. It also provides a sense of belonging and support, ensuring that the elderly residents of Alhambra are active participants in the community.

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The Joy of Gift-Giving for Seniors

The winter holidays are a time of joy, celebration, and shared moments with loved ones. This season provides seniors a fantastic opportunity to cherish relationships and create lasting memories. Whether you're a senior looking for thoughtful gift ideas or someone searching for the perfect present for an elderly friend or family member, here are some suggestions to make this year extra special.



generations. Consider gifting a tablet or a digital photo frame pre-loaded with family pictures and user-friendly video calling apps. This way, people can stay connected with distant loved ones, making memories despite the miles that separate them.



Experience-Based Gifts
Sometimes, the best gifts are experiences rather than tangible items. Treat your loved one to a day out, whether visiting a favorite restaurant, show, or spa. For those who prefer staying indoors, consider a subscription to a streaming service, an audiobook provider, or a puzzle game for hours of cozy entertainment.

Cozy Gifts
Winter is the season of warmth and comfort, and who wouldn't appreciate a gift that could enhance this fuzzy feeling? Consider items like heated blankets, soft slippers, or a cozy sweater to keep your loved ones cozy. These gifts not only provide physical warmth but also convey a message of love and thoughtfulness.

Culinary Gifts
Winter holidays often revolve around delicious meals. Consider gifting a basket of gourmet treats, homemade cookies, or a selection of specialty teas and coffees. Cooking together or sharing a meal can also be delightful ways to bond and create lasting memories.



Personalized Gifts
As we age, memories become treasures, and what better way to celebrate them than with personalized gifts? Consider creating a scrapbook filled with photographs, mementos, and handwritten notes recounting cherished moments. Alternatively, customized calendars, photo albums, or custom-made blankets featuring family pictures can serve as daily reminders of love.



Technological Gifts
Technology can be an excellent tool to bridge the gap across oceans as well as

Gardening Gifts
For those with a green thumb, consider presents that cater to their love of gardening. Indoor plants, personalized gardening tools, or even a subscription to a gardening magazine can bring the beauty of nature indoors during the colder months.

The essence of the holiday season lies in the thought and care behind each gift. Whether it's a simple gesture or a grand surprise, the joy of giving and receiving is best when it comes from the heart!

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Real Estate

What Is Your Home's Architectural Style?

By Gary Frueholz
Engel & Volkers Real Estate

Home architectural styles Craftsman, Prairie, Spanish-Mediterranean, Ranch, Mid-Century, Colonial, Tudor, and Victorian are often seen in Southern California. In reality, most homes do not fit cleanly into one style — older homes are often remodeled into a hybrid of many styles — but this article will introduce the basic themes of significant styles.

Start with the roof when analyzing a home's style. Some apparent characteristics will be easy to identify, such as the roof's pitch, the overhang of the eaves, the building materials used, and the elements and details on the roof.



The roof's pitch will give you an idea of the home's style. Roofs are either flat or pitched. Victorian and Tudor homes will have a steep pitch to the roof. Smaller Tudor homes called cottages also have steep roof pitches. There is logic to this — some European-style homes, called Chalets, benefit from a steeply pitched roof to deflect snowfall.

Craftsman and Prairie homes have a very gentle roof slope. The eaves of

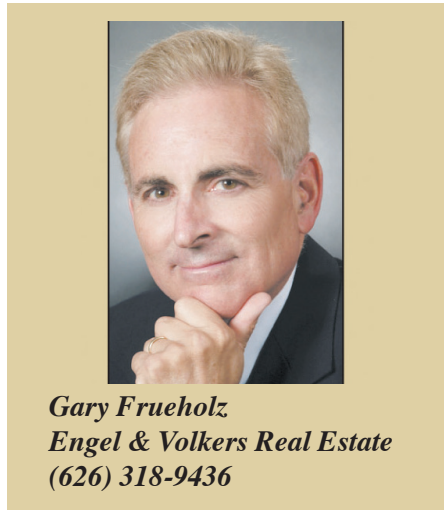


Craftsman and Prairie homes have a wide overhang from the vertical walls. Alhambra's La Marguerita-Souders Tract, in the northwest section of our city, has numerous examples of these homes.

Craftsman architecture evolved into Ranch, which kept the low-pitch roof and elongated curb profile but added large windows in front and removed the porch. These homes tend to be more wide than deep. Alhambra's Bean Tract displays many Ranch homes.

Spanish and Spanish-Mediterranean homes also have a shallow pitch to the roof, often made of red tiling. The styles above historically used wood or straw for roofs, but with modern fire codes, a composition fire retardant material is used today.

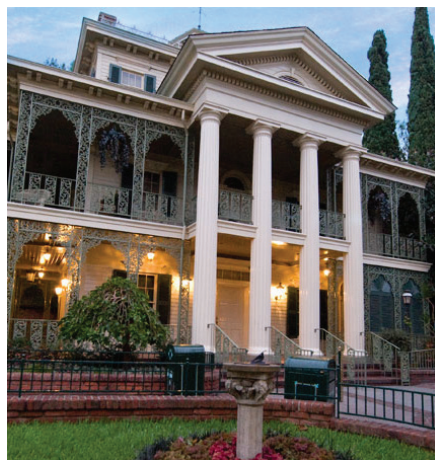
Colonial-style homes became popular in the late 1700s and are influenced



Gary Frueholz
Engel & Volkers Real Estate
(626) 318-9436

by classical Greek architecture — think large columns and marble — which values symmetry and order. As America started its experiment with democracy, it embraced the architectural design of Greece, the cradle of democracy.

Victorian homes have complicated roofs with ornamental objects such as weathervanes, roof caps, and dormer windows to give them a somewhat "busy" appearance. Think of the Haunted Mansion at Disneyland.



Victorian homes became popular during the Industrial Revolution. These homes have elaborate detail in their roof ornaments, wooden facades around the porches, and fanciful wooden shingles. These ornaments became popular because the Industrial Revolution created ways to economically mass produce these items, which previously had been prohibitively costly to make.

A specific type of Victorian is the Queen Anne style. These homes often have towers or turrets incorporated into the design, wrap-around porches, wood construction, and bay windows. The County Arboretum in Arcadia has a lovely example of Queen Anne architecture by a small lake, which was used during the filming of Fantasy Island.

These guidelines will help you appreciate the local architecture in Alhambra. Remember, many beautiful homes do not neatly fit into any architectural style!

Gary Frueholz is a realtor with Engel & Volkers Real Estate, a past member of the Alhambra Planning Commission, a Certified Senior Real Estate Specialist, and a Certified International Property Specialist. He can be reached at 626-318-9436. See his stories at garysstories.com.

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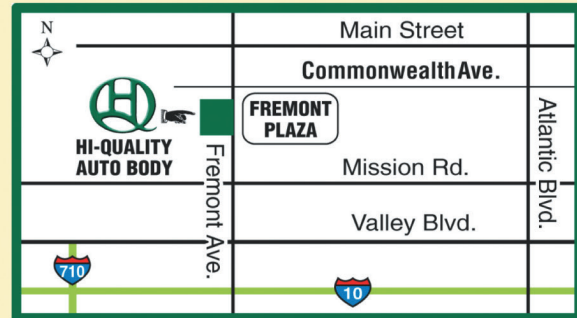
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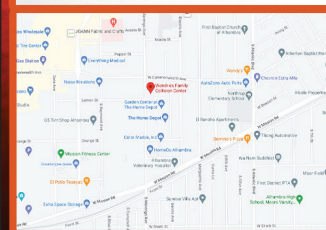
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