

## HEALTH

### Urban farming

Thanks to the efforts of many in City Heights, the City of San Diego has changed its regulations to make urban farming easier.

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## BUSINESS

### Best tortillas in town

Tortilleria Lilly is famous for its fresh corn tortillas, with patrons lining up before the doors open at 5 a.m.

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## EDUCATION

### Exemplary school

In recognition of its academic excellence, Edison Elementary has been nominated by the state for the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program.

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## SERVICES

### Free tax help

Many community organizations help low-income residents and seniors fill out tax returns and claim tax credits.

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## IN YOUR WORDS

### Dedicated to service

Evie Kosower of Azalea Park retired from a career as an educator and now devotes herself to community causes.

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Raising A Reader rotates bright red bags filled with award-winning books into children's homes on a weekly basis with the goal of helping them become proficient readers by third grade. Photo courtesy of Raising A Reader

# Raising A Reader coming to City Heights schools

By Helen Gao  
City Heights Life

Many City Heights parents may not be aware of how important it is to take time out of their day to cuddle up with their children and read a book together. Having a literacy routine at home can literally be life-changing.

Research has long shown that children's chances for success in life are greatly diminished if they don't know how to read by third grade. Struggling readers are more likely to become high school dropouts and wind up in trouble with the law.

For City Heights parents who need help developing and sustaining reading habits at home,

help is on the way. Raising A Reader (RAR), a national non-profit organization dedicated to improving early literacy, is coming to kindergarten classrooms at four elementary schools in the Mid-City area: Central, Hamilton, Cherokee Point, and Rowan. Central held a parent kickoff meeting Feb. 28 and will hold another one March 1. The other three schools are expected to begin the program in the fall.

At its partnership schools, RAR provides children with bright red canvass bags filled with award-winning books to take home every week to read with their families. Parents receive training on how to effectively share books with their children and promote literacy

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skills.

Central Elementary Principal Cindy Marten said RAR will play a crucial role in helping her kindergartners catch up on their language development. Marten

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## SCHOOLS

# Hoover coach helps athletes find success on and off the court



Under Ollie Goulston's leadership, Hoover has played in five of the last six San Diego CIF Division II boys basketball finals, winning three championships. Photo/City Heights Life

In one of the great turnaround stories in the history of San Diego high school sports, Hoover High's Ollie Goulston has taken a boys basketball program with just 18 wins in three seasons and turned it into a powerhouse. In the past six years, the Cardinals have won more games than any school in San Diego, making five CIF (California Interscholastic Federation) finals and garnering three championship titles.

Before Goulston took over as head coach in 2003, Hoover had not won the city championship in boys basketball since 1962, when John F. Kennedy was president and The Beatles had their first hit song. Upon his arrival, he immediately pulled the athletes' grades and discovered only two of the 25 students participating on the junior varsity and varsity squads were academically eligible. He knew what he had to do.

"We had to change the expectations and the culture," Goulston remembers. "The kids expected to lose." He instituted a tough love approach. He demanded excellence both on and off the court.

"On the court we expect them to be an un-

[ OLLIE, P2 ]

"You can't educate a child who isn't healthy and you can't keep a child healthy who isn't educated."

— Jocelyn Elders, former U.S. Surgeon General

# Bringing immunity to the community

By Amanda Larse

The health center at Rosa Parks Elementary School got some extra helping hands this past fall from San Diego State University nursing students. As part of their community health clinical rotation, they set up and ran a flu clinic every Friday for Rosa Parks students and their families.

Working at the clinic gave SDSU students the opportunity not only to practice their nursing skills, but also

help promote health and wellness in City Heights.

Educational success starts with a healthy child who is able to attend school, and research has shown that children are the primary transmitters of the flu. Vaccinating children for the flu makes their families and the entire community healthier as a whole.

All of the children and family members who lacked insurance or had Medi-Cal were able to receive the vaccine free of charge. Furthermore, the

student nurses put an emphasis on vaccinating high-risk populations, such as those with asthma. Overall, 75 percent of the children with asthma at Rosa Parks received their flu shot at the clinic and a total of 468 flu shots were given to the children and surrounding community.

— Amanda Larse is a San Diego State University nursing student and worked at the Rosa Parks Health Clinic as part of her school training.



SDSU nursing students Jennifer Beltran, Jessica Henderson, Jason Hilario, Janet Hoa, Karina How, Kathryn Hrezo, Lauren Hughes, Kim Lam, Amanda Larse, Laura Lazzareschi, helped out at Rosa Parks Elementary School's health center. Courtesy photo

## OLLIE, from P1

selfish teammate, off the court a gentleman and a class act,” Goulston says.

Those are not just hollow words. Goulston has dismissed three players in eight years who were either all-state or all-county players because they didn't want to represent the school the right way.

The first year of his tenure he had four returning starters from a team that had won only six games the year before. He kicked three of them off the team, including the county's leading scorer, because they couldn't adapt to Goulston's demanding style. The team started from scratch with two freshmen and a sophomore.

What initially looked like a dire situation turned quickly and the inexperienced team made it all the way to the CIF finals, the first time in 40 years, winning more games than they had in the previous three years combined.

Two years later, the team won the city championship and made it to the Elite Eight of the California high school basketball tournament. Since then, they have won two more city titles and been runner-up the past two seasons.

Asked how he turned the program

around, Goulston says “the key to all of this is a foundation of discipline.” That discipline extends beyond the hardwood floor of Hoover's 80-year-old gym.

Before he arrived, Goulston says many of the players were not attending class, getting into trouble, and otherwise not taking academics seriously so he immediately implemented a new system that required all players with a grade point average under a 3.0 to attend study hall (which now includes all freshmen, regardless of their GPA). The results have been staggering.

Of Goulston's 28 graduating seniors, 27 have moved on to college and continued their athletic careers. Eighteen of those seniors have received scholarships to four-year universities. Goulston says these are the numbers he wants his program to be known by.

“I want our program to be judged not by wins and losses, but more what they are doing when they are 25 (years old),” Goulston says.

There are signs that public perception of Hoover has become more favorable. Goulston says Hoover used to be a school kids bused away from but now more are staying and some are even coming from other



Coach Ollie Goulston points to a picture of his most celebrated athlete, Angelo Chol, who plays for the Arizona Wildcats. Photo/City Heights Life

places. They are discovering what Goulston knew before taking the head coaching job, that Hoover was a “hidden gem.”

Before he accepted the job he had built a successful traveling basketball program in Logan Heights coupled with a nonprofit mentorship, leadership, academic program he founded

at the Stockton Recreation Center. While working in Logan Heights, he had admired Hoover's facilities, administrative support, and area talent, which he believed was largely untapped.

Goulston is currently the director of development at Hoover, where he does fundraising, connects with

alumni, and works with Cardinals Connect (a program that connects at-risk students with services). He is involved with the Rising Stars Charitable Foundation and coaching his ninth Hoover team in the San Diego CIF playoffs (ranked third in the county).

— Staff report

# Raising a Reader Llegará a las escuelas de City Heights

Por Helen Gao  
City Heights Life

Muchos padres de familia de City Heights no saben lo importante que es pasar tiempo todos los días acurrucados con sus hijos leyendo un libro. Adquirir una rutina de alfabetización en casa puede literalmente tener un gran impacto en la vida de los niños.

Diversos estudios han demostrado que las oportunidades que tienen los niños tener una vida exitosa disminuyen si no saben leer cuando llegan al tercer grado. Los niños que tienen problemas para leer, son más propensos a abandonar los estudios, no terminar la preparatoria y a meterse en problemas con la ley.

Para los padres de familia de City Heights que necesitan ayuda para desarrollar y mantener hábitos de lectura en casa, la ayuda está en camino. Raising a Reader (RAR), organización nacional sin fines de lucro dedicada a aumentar la alfabetización temprana, estará llegando a los salones de kindergarten de cuatro escuelas primarias en el área de Mid-City: Central, Hamilton, Cherokee Point y Rowan. Central celebró una reunión para el lanzamiento del programa el día 28 de febrero y estará llevando otra a cabo el 1 de marzo. Se espera que las tres escuelas restantes comiencen el programa en el otoño.

En las escuelas que forman parte del programa, RAR les entrega a los niños bolsas de lona de color rojo brillante llenas de galar-donados libros que pueden llevar

**Raising A Reader opera en 30 estados y ayuda a más de 116,000 niños en todo el país. Para más información acerca de la organización, visite [raisingareader.org](http://raisingareader.org).**

a casa cada semana para leer con sus familias. Los padres de familia son entrenados para que puedan compartir los libros efectivamente con sus hijos promoviendo la alfabetización.

La Directora de Central Elementary, Cindy Marten, dijo que RAR jugará un papel importante ayudando a los niños de kindergarten a nivelarse en lo que respecta al desarrollo del lenguaje. Marten también indicó que varios informes preocupantes han demostrado que existe una relación entre el desarrollo del vocabulario y los niveles de pobreza. Uno de los estudios encontró que los niños que pertenecen a familias profesionales de clase media-alta, han escuchado un promedio de 45 millones de palabras al cumplir los cuatro años de edad; en comparación con las 26 millones de palabras que escuchan los niños que pertenecen a familias de clase trabajadora y las 13 millones de palabras que escuchan los niños de familias pobres. Más del 99% de los niños que asisten a Central califican para recibir comidas subvencionadas y el 85% está aprendiendo inglés.

“Creemos que nuestras familias son nuestras aliadas en la educación de los niños y pueden ayudar a llenar este vacío a través del

enfoque sistemático de Raising a Reader,” dijo Marten.

Como promedio, RAR expone a los niños a más de 100 libros a lo largo del programa, que tiene una duración entre 26 a 30 semanas. Dependiendo del patrón demográfico de la escuela, los niños pueden tener acceso a libros culturalmente relevantes en diversos idiomas. “No importa el idioma de las familias de City Heights, podemos ajustar la orden de libros de forma que reciban libros en su lengua materna,” dijo Holly Kreider, Directora de Programas de RAR.

Kreider quiere que los padres sepan que incluso si no hablan inglés o si lo hablan con acento, sigue siendo importante leer libros con sus hijos regularmente. Indicó que las fabulosas ilustraciones de los libros del programa permiten que el padre de familia, sin importar su nivel de lectura, pueda disfrutar compartiendo los cuentos con sus hijos. “El libro se convierte en una plataforma que fortalece la unión entre padres e hijos,” dijo Kreider.

Al final de una rotación completa de libros, las familias reciben información acerca de los recursos disponibles en las bibliotecas locales y los niños reciben una bolsa para libros de color azul para que puedan seguir aprendiendo duran-

te el resto de su vida.

La llegada de RAR a City Heights es posible gracias a la Fundación Masónica de California. La fundación recauda dinero para que el programa llegue a 200 salones de kindergarten a lo largo de todo el estado, con el propósito de transformar la vida de más de 6,000 niños de alto riesgo.

“En los Estados Unidos, desde los tiempos coloniales, los Masones han estado involucrados en la educación pública. En partes del país, las primeras escuelas públicas fueron fundadas por los Masones,” dijo Randy Brill, quien encabeza el Consejo Asesor de las Escuelas Públicas de San Diego, uno de los seis consejos establecido en California por la Fundación Masónica de California. Unos 8,500 Masones pertenecen a 27 logias en los condados de San Diego e Imperial.

Los Masones serán los anfitriones de un evento comunitario que se celebrará en Central Elementary el 26 de marzo para inaugurar el “Mes de las Escuelas Públicas” de su organización, así estarán demostrando su apoyo a la educación pública resaltando el programa RAR.

Para el lanzamiento del programa en City Heights, RAR ha estado trabajando muy de cerca con

Price Charities, uno de los principales patrocinadores de la Alianza para los Niños de City Heights. La Misión de RAR está estrechamente relacionada con la de la Alianza. Una de las metas de la Alianza es asegurarse de que los niños reciban el apoyo necesario, dentro y fuera de la escuela, para que puedan leer de forma competente al llegar al tercer grado. Otro de sus objetivos es promover estrategias basadas en evidencias para aumentar el rendimiento escolar.

Una gran cantidad de estudios independientes que han evaluado el RAR, demuestran que el programa ha ayudado a las familias a aumentar significativamente la cantidad de tiempo que pasan juntas leyendo y ha ayudado a que los niños avancen académicamente.

La Superintendente del Área Distrital, Mitzi Merino, dijo que el RAR complementará los esfuerzos actuales para mejorar la alfabetización en las escuelas. Las escuelas del distrito enfatizan la importancia de la lectura compartida en casa a través de sus maestros, quienes demuestran la conducta apropiada en la escuela.

“El problema es que muchas familias no tienen acceso a libros de alta calidad o no saben cómo ayudar efectivamente a los jóvenes lectores en casa,” dijo Merino. “Los libros son costosos y las oportunidades de aprendizaje son limitadas”. Raising a Reader ayudará a muchas de nuestras familias a desarrollar el amor por la lectura y a establecer rutinas valiosas de alfabetización.”

## Edison Elementary School is nominated for the prestigious Blue Ribbon award

By Helen Gao  
City Heights Life

If Thomas Edison were alive today, the great American inventor would be proud of his namesake school in City Heights. Edison Elementary was recently nominated by the California Department of Education for the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program, which recognizes academic excellence. It was one of only three schools in San Diego County chosen for the prestigious honor.

Edison was selected as a nominee because of the dramatic improvement it's made in recent years. Just a few years ago, the school was in "program improvement," a federal designation that meant student achievement was lagging. Today, Edison has a score of 836 on the California Academic Performance Index, which puts it in the top echelons statewide.

Edison's achievement is especially remarkable given its demographics. All of its students come from low-income families and qualify for free or reduced-price school meals. Three quarters of the students are English learners. Less than half of the students come from families where the parents have completed high school.

Edison Principal Tavga Bustani said the Blue Ribbon nomination is the result of her staff's intense focus on continuous improvement. Grade-level literacy and math teams meet every two weeks to coordinate instruction and discuss student progress. Each and every student's performance is closely monitored. If a student is falling behind, teachers institute an action plan immediately to rectify deficiencies and follow up to see if the intervention is working. Students on the cusp of reaching proficiency levels are targeted for extra attention to help them get there.



A girl reads at Edison Elementary, where Principal Tavga Bustani credits her school's success to an intense focus on continuous improvement. Student performance is closely monitored so those who are struggling get help right away. **Courtesy photo**

"On a two-week cycle, we don't let kids fall under the radar," Bustani said, adding that all the strategies used at Edison are research-based.

Due to the large population of English learners at Edison, all teachers there provide systematic English language development for 30 minutes a day as part of a 2½-hour literacy block. Students are grouped by language level according to results of standardized tests. Strategic language lessons are deployed based on these groupings.

Math instruction is just as rigorous. Teachers use hands-on experimentation with manipulatives, high-tech animation, guided practice and other strategies to explain concepts. To promote critical thinking, students are encouraged to ask open-ended questions, and they are expected to articulate how they arrive at a solution to a problem.

The U.S. Department of Education is expected to announce winners of the Blue Ribbon awards in the

fall. The program recognizes schools in two categories: Exemplary high-performing schools that achieve in the the 85th percentile or above and exemplary improving schools, which have at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds but are also in the top 10 percent of schools showing the greatest improvement over the past five years. Edison was nominated for the latter category.

In the fall, all the winning schools will be invited to Washington D.C. for a ceremony to celebrate their success and receive a plaque and flag to commemorate their achievement.

Bustani said the award nomination came as a complete surprise because her school didn't apply for the honor. "We don't seek out such accolades," she said. "We always keep the students at the center of our work. We do it because we know that the work needs to be done."

ra que ha hecho en los últimos años. Apenas hace unos años, la escuela estaba en "la mejora del programa", una designación federal que significaba el logro del estudiante se estaba quedando. Hoy en día, Edison tiene una puntuación de 836 en el Índice de Rendimiento Académico de California, que lo coloca en los niveles más altos en todo el estado.

El logro de Edison es especialmente destacable teniendo en cuenta sus características demográficas. Todos sus estudiantes provienen de familias de bajos ingresos y calificar para recibir comidas escolares gratis oa precio reducido. Tres cuartas

partes de los estudiantes están aprendiendo inglés. Menos de la mitad de los estudiantes provienen de familias donde los padres han completado la escuela secundaria.

Edison principal Tavga Bustani dijo que la nominación de la cinta azul es el resultado de la intensa atención de su personal en la mejora continua. Grado-nivel de alfabetización y los equipos de las matemáticas se reúnen cada dos semanas para coordinar la instrucción y discutir el progreso del estudiante. Rendimiento de

[ CINTA AZUL, P9 ]

## EDUCATION BRIEFS

### Makeover of Hoover athletic facilities more than 50 percent done

A sweeping makeover of the athletic facilities at Hoover High School is more than half-way done and is anticipated to be completed by the end of the summer.

The \$11.3 million project includes installing a new synthetic turf field, all-weather track, scoreboard and press box, as well as goal posts, lights, bleachers, concession stands, restrooms, and dugouts. The baseball field will feature a new memorial wall to honor baseball great and Hoover graduate Ted Williams.

In addition, Hoover is getting a new girls' softball field, a walkway (El Paseo) from El Cajon Boulevard to the athletic facilities, a parking lot, and upgraded landscape irrigation systems.

The project is funded by Proposition S, a \$2.1 billion bond measure approved by San Diego voters in November 2008. For additional information, visit [www.sandi.net/props](http://www.sandi.net/props).

### Crawford students put on a mock criminal case

After six months of preparation and with support from the Thomas Jefferson School of Law, 20 high school students at Crawford's School of Law and Business (LAB) recently staged a mock trial based on Harper Lee's classic *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Students assumed the roles of defendant, prosecution, and defense.

Armand Binombe dressed sharply in a tie and suit to play the role of prosecutor. Diego Cruz was the defense attorney, and Jamal Robinson was the defendant. The students wowed the audience with their professionalism.

LAB nurtures students' interests in law enforcement, the legal system, and business by offering specialized courses and hands-on training through programs such as Teen Court, job shadows, and internships.

LAB has a close partnership with the Thomas Jefferson School of Law, which sponsors the Crawford Legal Institute & Mentorship Bond Program (CLIMB). CLIMB involves law students and professors to serve as mentors for Crawford students. The mentors speak to students about their educational and career paths and answer questions about life and law school.

### District launches Education Issues Action Center

The San Diego Unified School District has launched a website called the Education Issues Action Center to fight state budget cuts to public education and provide an easy way for parents to contact legislators to express their views on school funding.

The website, <http://salsa3.salsalabs.com/o/50217/>, provides information in both English and Spanish about key legislative and budget issues affecting public education, a tool to identify and contact elected officials by ZIP Code, and prewritten letters that can be edited and sent immediately to legislators. Also featured on the site is a petition urging the Gov. Jerry Brown and the state Legislature to adopt a budget that adequately funds public education.

To keep up with what is going on with the district's budget, visit <http://www.sandi.net/budget> for regular updates from Superintendent Bill Kowba.

### The San Diego Festival of Science and Engineering is March 17-24

The San Diego Festival of Science and Engineering – a week-long expo with 40 events planned throughout the region for children and families – kicks off on March 17 and will run through March 24. Most of the festival activities are free.

On opening day, the festival will have events at eight locations, including Balboa Park, San Diego State University, and California State University San Marcos. At Balboa Park, more than 20 institutions will offer free hands-on, science-themed activities. At San Diego State, the colleges of sciences and engineering will showcase interactive experiments and exhibits.

The festival culminates with EXPO DAY at Petco Park in downtown San Diego, where scores of companies and organizations will set up booths with fun activities and exhibits. More than 20,000 children with their families, scientists, engineers, educators, and other community members are expected to take part in the free event from 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

For more details, visit [www.sdsciencefestival.com](http://www.sdsciencefestival.com).

## Edison Elementary School está nominado para el prestigioso Premio Cinta Azul

By Helen Gao  
City Heights Life

Si Thomas Edison viviera hoy, el gran inventor norteamericano estaría orgulloso de su escuela del mismo nombre en City Heights. Escuela Primaria Edison fue nominado recientemente por el Departamento de Educación de California para la National Blue Ribbon Schools Program, que reconoce la excelencia académica. Fue uno de los tres colegios en San Diego elegidos para el prestigioso honor.

Edison fue seleccionado como candidato debido a la notable mejo-

# Dozens of local organizations offer free tax help

By Helen Gao  
City Heights Life

Tax season is upon us, and it can be a very stressful time. Given the complexity of the tax code, filing tax returns is daunting for many people, especially if English is not their first language.

But don't fret. Several dozen local organizations offer free tax preparation assistance to the elderly and low-to moderate-income residents who have trouble filling out the forms and figuring out whether they qualify for various tax credits.

In partnership with nonprofit and community organizations throughout the country, the Internal Revenue Service offers the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and the Tax Counseling for Elderly programs (TCE).

## The VITA Program

The VITA program offers free

tax help to people who make \$50,000 or less. IRS-certified volunteers provide free basic tax return preparation and help qualified individuals apply for special tax credits, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, and Credit for the Elderly or the Disabled. Free electronic filing is available at most VITA sites.

According to 2-1-1 San Diego, a free phone and Internet resource, 31 organizations county-wide provide services under the VITA program. Twenty of the 31 have offices within 10 miles of City Heights' 92105 ZIP Code.

One local agency is Home Start. They are located at 5296 University Ave., Suite F2. Assistance is free. The office is open from 9 am to 3:30 pm Monday - Friday. Appointments are available by calling (619) 283-3624.

Other VITA sites in the City Heights area include: The Alliance for African Assistance,

5952 El Cajon Blvd., (619) 286-9052 and Maximizing Access to Advance Our Communities (MAAC), 5410 Bayview Heights Place, Unit 2, (619) 426-3595 ext. 1260.

For a complete list of VITA sites in San Diego County and their hours of operation, visit [211sandiego.org](http://211sandiego.org). You also can dial 2-1-1 or 1-800-906-9887 to find a location near you.

## TCE Program

While the TCE program has no age limits, it is geared toward helping seniors with questions about pensions and retirement issues. The IRS-certified volunteers who provide tax counseling are often retirees involved in the AARP Tax-Aide program.

There are 25 AARP Tax-Aide sites in San Diego County. For a complete list of the sites, visit [211sandiego.org](http://211sandiego.org). You also can dial 2-1-1 or 1-888-227-7669 to find a location near you.

## Documents to bring to a VITA or TCE site

When visiting a VITA or TCE site, taxpayers should bring the following documents:

- Photo ID
- Social security cards for the taxpayer, spouse, and dependents
- Birth dates for spouse and dependents
- Wage and earning statements, such as W-2s and 1099-Rs
- Interest and dividend statements
- A copy of the prior year's federal and state tax returns
- Bank account and routing numbers for direct deposit of tax refunds
- Daycare expense receipts and daycare provider's identifying information.
- Both spouses must be present to sign the required forms if they are filing joint returns as a married couple.

## Earned Income Tax Credit

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) provides tax breaks ranging from a few hundred dollars to several thousand dollars for working individuals and families who struggle to make ends meet. Eligible working people without qualifying children can receive a refundable tax credit of up to \$464. Those with three or more qualifying children can receive up to \$5,751.

To get the credit, eligible taxpayers must file a tax return and claim the credit. For those whose EITC exceeds the amount of taxes owed, they receive a refund.

Anyone who earned less than \$49,078 in 2011 is urged to see if they qualify for the credit by using the interactive EITC Assistant on [IRS.gov](http://IRS.gov). The EITC Assistant asks visitors to answer a series of questions to determine if they meet the criteria for the credit.

## Docenas de Organizaciones Locales Ofrecen Ayuda Tributaria Gratuita

Por Helen Gao  
City Heights Life

La temporada de impuestos se aproxima y puede ser un periodo particularmente estresante. Debido a la complejidad del código fiscal, preparar la declaración de impuestos puede ser una tarea intimidante para muchas personas, especialmente si el inglés no es su primer idioma.

Pero no se preocupe. Varias organizaciones locales ofrecen asistencia para la preparación de las declaraciones de impuesto a personas de la tercera edad y a los residentes de bajos a moderados ingresos que necesitan ayuda para llenar los formularios y determinar si califican o no para los diversos créditos fiscales.

En alianza con varias organizaciones sin fines de lucro y organizaciones comunitarias del condado, el Servicio de Impuestos Internos (IRS) ofrece el

programa "Asistencia Voluntaria al Contribuyente" (VITA) y los programas de "Asesoría Tributaria para Personas Mayores" (TCE).

### Programa VITA

El programa VITA ofrece asistencia gratuita para la preparación de la declaración de impuestos a las personas con ingresos anuales de \$50,000 o menos. Voluntarios certificados por el IRS ofrecen sus servicios para la preparación de la declaración de impuestos básica y ayudan a las personas que califican a aplicar para recibir créditos fiscales especiales, tales como el Crédito Tributario por Ingreso, Crédito Tributario por Hijos y el Crédito para Ancianos y Discapacitados. También podrá enviar la declaración de impuestos electrónicamente al IRS en casi todos los lugares en donde se ofrece VITA.

De acuerdo a 2-1-1 San Di-

ego, servicio gratuito de referencias telefónicas e internet, 31 organizaciones en el condado participan en el programa VITA. Veinte de las 31 oficinas están ubicadas a menos de 10 millas del código postal 92105 de City Heights.

Los lugares donde se ofrece el programa VITA en City Heights incluyen: The Alliance for African Assistance, 5952 El Cajon Blvd., (619) 286-9052; Home Start, 5296 University Ave., Suite F-2, (619) 283-3624 y Maximizing Access to Advance Our Communities (MAAC), 5410 Bayview Heights Place, Unit 2, (619) 426-3595 ext. 1260.

Para un listado completo de los lugares que ofrecen VITA en el Condado de San Diego y su horario, visite [211sandiego.org](http://211sandiego.org). También puede llamar al 2-1-1 o al 1-800-906-9887 para encontrar el lugar más cercano.

### Programa TCE

Aunque el programa TCE no tiene límite de edad, está dirigido a las personas de la tercera edad que necesitan ayuda relacionada con pensiones y jubilación. Voluntarios certificados por el IRS, quienes usualmente son jubilados que pertenecen al programa de Asistencia de Impuestos de AARP (AARP-Tax Aide), ofrecen asesoramiento tributario.

Más de 25 oficinas ofrecen el programa de Asistencia de Impuestos de AARP en el Condado de San Diego. Para un listado completo visite [211sandiego.org](http://211sandiego.org). También puede llamar al 2-1-1 o al 1-888-227-7669 para encontrar el lugar más cercano.

## Documentos necesarios para preparar declaración de impuestos a través de VITA o TCE

Al llegar a la oficina que ofrece VITA o TCE debe tener los siguientes documentos:

- Identificación con fotografía
- Tarjetas de seguro social del contribuyente, esposa/a y sus dependientes
- Fecha de nacimiento del esposa/a y los dependientes
- Declaración de salario e ingresos, tales como W-2 y 1099-R
- Declaración de intereses y dividendos
- Una copia de la declaración de impuestos federal y estatal del año anterior
- Números de la cuenta bancaria y de ruta para depósito directo de la devolución de impuestos

• Recibos de guarderías/ centros de cuidado infantil e información de identificación del centro

• Ambos cónyuges deben estar presentes para firmar los formularios si están presentando la declaración de impuestos conjuntamente.

## Crédito Tributario por Ingreso

El Crédito Tributario por Ingreso (EITC) ofrece exenciones tributarias que pueden ser desde varios cientos de dólares hasta varios miles de dólares a los trabajadores y familias que están luchando por subsistir. Los trabajadores que califican y que no tienen hijos que elegibles, pueden recibir un crédito tributario reembolsable de hasta \$464. Quienes tienen tres o más hijos elegibles, pueden recibir hasta \$5,751.

Para aplicar para este crédito, los contribuyentes deben presentar su declaración de impuestos y solicitar el crédito. Si el EITC de la persona excede la cantidad de impuestos que debe pagar, recibirá un reembolso.

Es importante que quienes hayan ganado menos de \$49,078 en el 2011, verifiquen si califican para recibir el crédito a través del Asistente Interactivo de EITC que aparece en [IRS.gov](http://IRS.gov). El Asistente de EITC le pedirá que responda a una serie de preguntas para determinar si reúne los requisitos para el crédito.



These young children, shown modeling traditional Karen clothing at the Karen New Year celebration at Crawford, will likely have an easier time adapting to the U.S. than their older siblings. **Photo courtesy of Mid-City CAN**



Eh Eh Wha is a Karen and a senior at Crawford. Gwen Osgard was her teacher at the school's New Arrival Center. **Photo courtesy of Mid-City CAN**

# Community-based team works to reduce truancy among Karen teens

By Adam Ward  
Mid-City CAN

Imagine witnessing the torture and killing of a parent or close relative, then having to flee your homeland, move to a foreign country and go to school to try to make something of yourself.

Many Karen students at the Crawford High Educational Complex have to do just that. These students and their families escaped a brutal military regime in Burma, a Southeast Asian country also known as Myanmar. They are an ethnic group that makes up a small percentage of the country. As recently as 2010, news organizations like the BBC reported that the Burmese military engaged in ethnic cleansing.

After having survived these traumatic experiences, studying for algebra might seem, well, insignificant.

The School Attendance Momentum Team sponsored by The Mid-City Community Advocacy Network (Mid-City CAN) is helping about 10 Karen students adjust and complete their high school education. They are among 100 Karen students at Crawford.

Carolyn Smyth, the team's co-chair and youth department program manager at the International Rescue Committee, and

representatives from several other groups have led the effort. The other groups include the Karen Organization of San Diego, SAY San Diego's Dad's Club, The Union of Pan Asian Communities, and Building Healthy Communities' AmeriCorps members. The groups' focus on truancy at Crawford started in October.

For Karen teenagers, school can be daunting. "At the New Arrival Center (at Crawford), we get kids who are at zero," said Gwen Osgard, an English-as-a-second-language teacher. "They don't have any English, but maybe they haven't even been to school." She often witnesses a frustrating pattern where students leave the New Arrival Center and struggle in regular classes. "They begin to feel very unsuccessful very quickly," she said.

That is what she believes happened to the group of Karen boys who hasn't been coming to school. "The first week of school, [one of them] came to me and said, 'I feel really sad. I just want to sleep all the time,'" Osgard said. "He didn't have the word for depressed, but the first week of school he was depressed because he felt like such a failure."

As with many high school students, the idea of working



On Jan. 14, Crawford students celebrated Karen New Year on campus. **Photo courtesy of Mid-City CAN**

hard for four years to graduate and eventually land a job can be a tough sell, Smyth said. Sometimes the temptation to do something illegal and earn a quick buck is difficult to resist. "They are hungry now," she said. "They need money, now, to feed their families."

Not having parents to model how getting a degree pays off in the end is also a challenge. "Their parents come from preliterate so-

ciety," Smyth said. "Their English skills are progressing even slower than their kids' are."

Earlier in the year, fighting on campus was a problem. Other students singled out the Karen boys for fights. Those boys "just feels unsafe and out of place in so many ways," Osgard said.

Despite these challenges, the School Attendance Momentum Team reports that two of the Karen boys with truancy issues have

started attending school again and they are about to have their first graduation. Eh Eh Wha will be the first Karen student to get her diploma from Crawford this year.

— Adam Ward is the Mid-City San Diego staff writer and a former San Diego Union-Tribune editor. Adam has lived in San Diego for nearly a decade and is the father of a young son. Contact him at [award@midcitycan.org](mailto:award@midcitycan.org) or (619) 283-9624 ext. 210.

## LEER, from P5

noted that there is startling data on the link between vocabulary exposure and poverty levels. One study found that a child from an upper middle-class, professional family will have heard 45 million words by four years old, compared to 26 million words for a working-class child and 13 million words for a child living in poverty. More than 99 percent of the children who attend Central are poor enough to qualify for subsidized school meals, and 85 percent are English learners.

“We believe that our families are our partners in their child’s education and can help close this gap through the systematic approach used by Raising a Reader,” Marten said.

On average, RAR exposes children to more than 100 books through the duration of its program, which averages 26 to 30 weeks. Depending on a school’s demographics, culturally-relevant books are made available in multiple languages. “Whatever the language of the families in City Heights, we will tailor the ordering of the books so they can get books in their home languages,” said Holly Kreider, RAR’s director of programs.

Kreider wants parents to know that even if they don’t speak English or they speak English with an accent, it’s still important for them to share books with their children on a regular basis. She notes that the books selected for the program are wonderfully illustrated so regardless of a parent’s reading level, he or she can still have fun with storytelling. “The book just becomes the launching pad for great parent-child bonding time,” Kreider said.

At the end of a full rotation of books, families are informed about resources at their local public libraries, and children are provided with a blue book bag so they can continue to be lifelong learners.

RAR’s expansion to City Heights is made possible by the California Masonic Foundation. The foundation is raising money to bring the program to 200 kindergarten classrooms statewide, with the goal of touching the lives of thousands of at-risk children.

“Throughout the United States, Masonry has been deeply involved in public education since the colonial times. In some parts of the country, the first public schools were funded by Masons,” said Randy Brill, who chairs the San Diego Public Schools Advisory Council, one of six such councils established by the California Masonic Foundation. About 8,500 Masons belong to 27 lodges in San Diego and Imperial counties.

The Masons will host a community event at Central Elementary on March 26 to kick off their organization’s “Public Schools Month,” demonstrating their support for public education by highlighting RAR.

To launch the program in City Heights, RAR has been working closely with Price Charities, a leading sponsor of The City Heights Partnership for Children. RAR’s mission meshes closely with the Partnership’s. One of the Partnership’s goals is to ensure that children are supported in and out of school to achieve third-grade literacy proficiency. Another is to promote the use of evidence-based strategies to raise achievement.

Scores of independent evaluations of RAR have shown that the program has resulted in families spending significantly more time together reading and children making academic strides.

District Area Superintendent Mitzi Merino said RAR will complement existing efforts to raise early literacy. Schools throughout the district already emphasize the importance of shared reading by having teachers model the behavior in class.

“The problem is that many families lack high quality literature or proper training to effectively support their young readers at home,” Merino said. “Books are expensive and training opportunities are limited. Raising a Reader will help many of our families develop a love of reading together and establish valuable literacy routines.”



Raising a Reader alterna semanalmente bolsas de color rojo brillante llenas de galardonados libros infantiles que los niños pueden llevar a casa con el propósito de ayudarlos a llegar a ser lectores competentes cuando entren al tercer grado. **Fotos cortesía de Raising a Reader**



*Raising A Reader operates in 30 states nationwide, serving more than 116,000 children. To learn more about the organization, visit [www.raisingareader.org](http://www.raisingareader.org).*

*For more information about the Masons of California and the California Masonic Foundation’s philanthropic initiatives, visit [www.freemason.org](http://www.freemason.org).*



## The Ocean Discovery Institute celebrated for receiving a prestigious honor

Students and their families celebrate The Ocean Discovery Institute's honor of receiving the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics and Engineering Mentoring. Photo courtesy of The Ocean Discovery Institute

**By Elizabeth Horpedahl**  
Ocean Discovery Institute

In January, scores of City Heights residents and San Diegans came together at two community events to celebrate The Ocean Discovery Institute for receiving the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Mentoring. The celebrations came after a White House ceremony in December, where Ocean Discovery students accepted the prestigious honor on behalf of the nonprofit organization from President Barack Obama.

The first celebration took place on Jan. 7 at the entrance to Manzanita Canyon in City Heights. The event drew more than 100 students and their families, along with other community members, and featured music, homemade tamales, and fun activities. Students explored science career opportunities and drove remotely-operated vehicles. They posed for photos with a cardboard cutout of President Obama and took home replicas of the award. San Diego Councilwoman Marti Emerald addressed the community's achievements and praised the students for their accomplishments.

The celebration continued on Jan. 31, bringing together more than 150 business, scientific, and philanthropic leaders from San Diego. This event filled the Scripps Seaside Forum Auditorium in La Jolla and recognized the first-ever award of its kind for the region. Attendees included basketball star Bill Walton, famed oceanographer Walter Munk, Port Commissioner Scott Peters and representatives from event spon-

sors Life Technologies, Bank of America, and Qualcomm.

San Diego Mayor Jerry Sanders gave the opening remarks. "I can't think of a better investment in terms of giving dollars that are going to return over and over and over again," he said. "We have 100 percent of these kids going to college!"

Founded in 1999 and focused exclusively on City Heights, The Ocean Discovery Institute is dedicated to cultivating the next generation of conservation, environmental, and science leaders.

Perhaps the most exciting part of the La Jolla celebration was when the audience heard the journey of two students chosen to represent Ocean Discovery at the White House ceremony. Anai Novoa, a senior and aquatic biology major at UC Santa Barbara, and Ulisses Barraza, a junior and chemical engineering major at UCLA, are just two examples of the many Ocean Leaders who have overcome barriers, stayed committed, and are now pursuing careers in science and conservation.

"Every experience I've had with Ocean Discovery, I grew personally and intellectually. These experiences not only provided me with valuable skills but gave me the confidence to apply to Ph.D programs," Anai said.

The Ocean Discovery Institute believes in empowering young people and offering opportunities for students to see their full potential, which enables them to believe in themselves. By providing science education to one of the greatest untapped talent pools, Ocean Discovery's model has produced significant outcomes, including increases in science

test scores, college attendance, and the pursuit of science and conservation degrees.

Ocean Discovery is grateful to the community of City Heights for sharing in this belief over the past 12 years and looks forward to the next 12 years as our young people become the next generation of scientific and environmental leaders.

"While receiving [the Presidential Award] was incredibly inspiring, I am equally inspired when I hear our students describe their research, see our teachers take on new challenges in the classroom, and continue to receive generous support from our donors even during these difficult economic times," Shara Fisler, Ocean Discovery's executive director, said.

— *Elizabeth Horpedahl is the communications director for The Ocean Discovery Institute based in City Heights.*



Above: Shara Fisler, founder and executive director of The Ocean Discovery Institute, accepts the award from President Obama in Washington, D.C. Below: A City Heights family poses with a cardboard cutout of President Obama at the award celebration at the entrance to Manzanita Canyon. Photo courtesy of The Ocean Discovery Institute





## THE RULES

- Up to five chickens on most properties, but more are allowed if residents can meet greater setback distances for coops
- Up to two beehives on most properties
- Only miniature goats are allowed
- Roosters are banned

*To learn more about the newly adopted urban-farming regulations, contact the International Rescue Committee's Community Development and Advocacy Coordinator Priya Reddy at [priya.reddy@rescue.org](mailto:priya.reddy@rescue.org) or (619) 641-7510 ext. 308.*

Hoover High students testified before the San Diego City Council to advocate for urban farming. **Courtesy photo**  
Los estudiantes de Hoover High testificaron ante el Consejo de la Ciudad de San Diego en apoyo de los huertos urbanos. **Foto cortesía**

# City Heights residents promote urban farming

Thanks to the efforts of many in City Heights, urban farming has become more widely accessible to residents throughout San Diego.

The San Diego City Council approved changes to zoning laws at its Jan. 31 meeting, effectively opening the door for residents of single-family homes to homestead (live off the land). Residents will now be able to maintain a limited number of chickens, goats, and bees if they meet certain conditions. The changes also reduce the permitting fees and procedures for retail farms, produce stands, and farmers' markets.

Hoover High students from Bryan Voeltner's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) class testified before the City Council using data and maps they created showing the effects of the new laws. Many others from City Heights also testified to the merits of urban farming, which is increasingly seen as a means of improving access to fresh produce and increasing self-sufficiency.

The need for the city to ease regulations for urban farming came to light a few years ago during the International Rescue Committee's efforts to help residents open and operate the New Roots Community Farm on a vacant lot in City Heights. The organization dedicated to helping refugees had to overcome numerous bureaucratic hurdles to establish the farm.

The success of the farm later spurred a visit from First Lady Michelle Obama, national media attention, and more farms, leading city officials to realize that zoning changes have to be made to promote urban agriculture.

— *Staff report*

## Los residentes de City Heights promueven los huertos urbanos

*Gracias a los esfuerzos de muchas personas de City Heights, los huertos urbanos son mucho más accesibles para los residentes de San Diego.*

*El Consejo de la Ciudad de San Diego aprobó varias modificaciones a las leyes de zonación durante su reunión del 31 de enero, permitiendo que las personas que viven en casas de una sola familia puedan autoabastecerse (es decir, que puedan vivir de la tierra). Los residentes que reúnen ciertos requisitos podrán, de ahora en adelante, tener una cantidad limitada de gallinas, cabras y abejas. Los cambios también reducen los costos y el papeleo asociados con las granjas al por menor, puestos de verduras y mercados de*

*agricultores.*

*Los estudiantes de Hoover High inscritos en la clase de Sistemas de Información Geográfica (GIS) de Bryan Voeltner, testificaron ante el Consejo de la Ciudad utilizando información y mapas de su creación para demostrar los efectos de las nuevas leyes. Muchas personas de City Heights también testificaron acerca de los méritos de los huertos urbanos, los cuales hacen que las hortalizas frescas sean más accesibles y aumentan la autosuficiencia.*

*La necesidad de hacer que estas regulaciones fueran menos estrictas comenzaron a ser palpable hace algunos años gracias a los esfuerzos del Comité Internacional de Rescate, quien*

*ayudó a los residentes a instalar y operar la Granja Comunitaria New Roots en un lote baldío de City Heights. La organización, dedicada a ayudar a los refugiados, tuvo que enfrentarse a varios obstáculos burocráticos para poder establecer la Granja.*

*El éxito de la granja atrajo la atención de la Primera Dama Michelle Obama quien visitó el huerto. Su visita y la cobertura de los medios de comunicación nacionales, promovió la creación de nuevas granjas, lo que a su vez hizo que los principales funcionarios de la ciudad se dieran cuenta de que era necesario modificar las leyes de zonación para promover la agricultura urbana.*

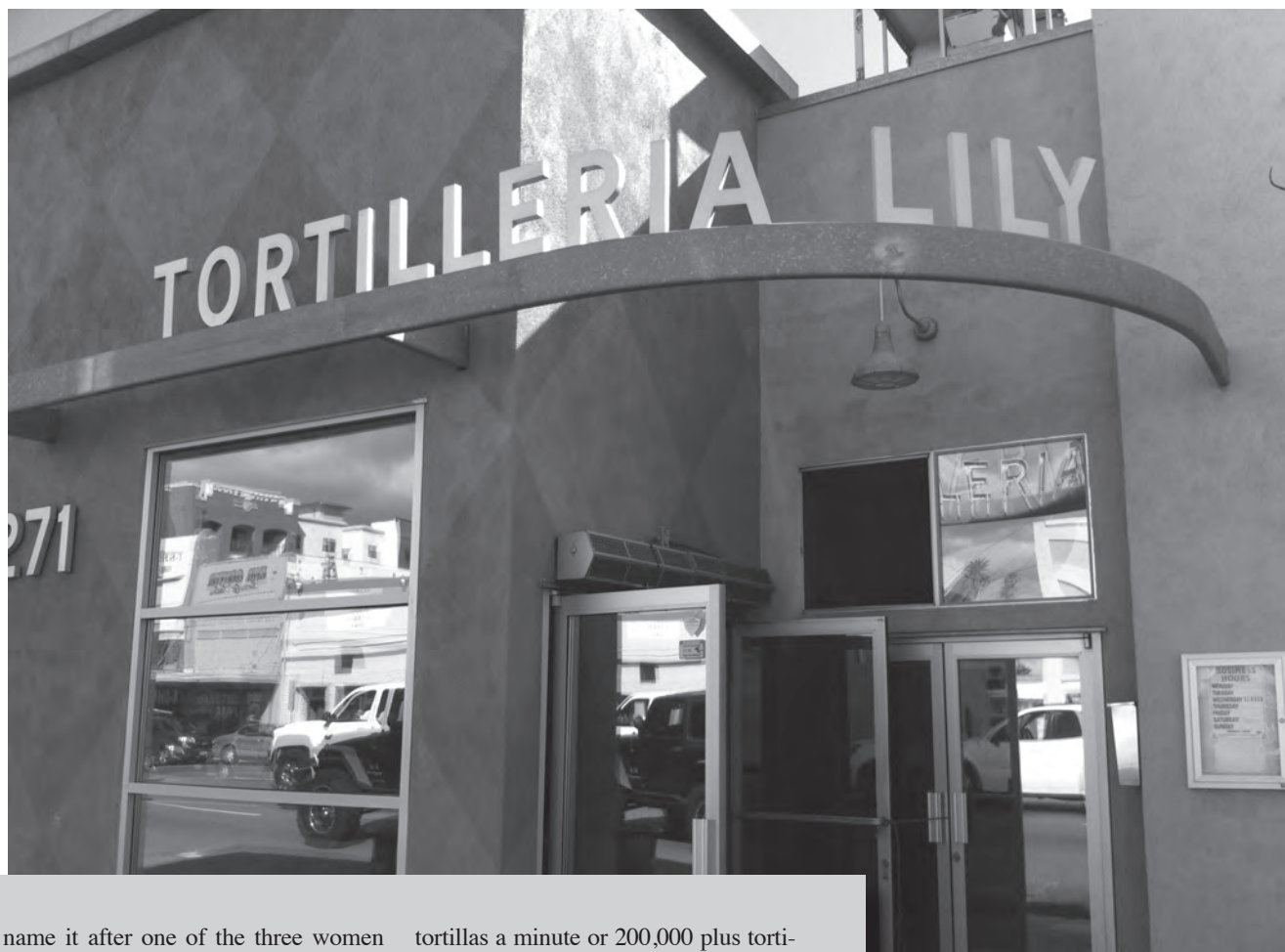
## REGLAS

- Se permiten hasta cinco gallinas en la mayoría de las propiedades, la cantidad puede aumentar si los residentes cumplen con los requisitos de espacio para los gallineros.
- Hasta dos colmenas de abejas en la mayoría de las propiedades.
- Solo se permiten cabras miniatura
- Se prohíben los gallos

*Para más información acerca de las nuevas regulaciones de agricultura urbana que fueron adoptadas recientemente, contacte a la Coordinadora de Desarrollo y Apoyo del Comité Internacional de Rescate, Priya Reddy escribiendo a [priya.reddy@rescue.org](mailto:priya.reddy@rescue.org) o llamando al 619-641-7510 ext. 308.*



# Tortilleria had a unique beginning



Heads I win, tails you lose. A coin flip was what it came down to. Francisco and Delia Amezcuita sat around the table with their two daughters, Dalia and Jeannette (otherwise known as Lily), deciding what to name their new tortilla factory. The year was 1988.

The Amezcuitas came to the United States from Tijuana, Mexico in the early 1960s, eventually settling in City Heights. Francisco was a painter and Delia a secretary. They wanted to own their own business and observed their neighbors traveling to Tijuana for fresh tortillas.

Despite their inexperience in the tortilla business, they felt a good tortilla factory would be a hit with the growing Latino population in City Heights and surrounding area. At first they tried to borrow money from family and friends but found no takers. The idea of a painter opening a tortilla factory may have seemed a bit too risky. Francisco and Delia bet on themselves and were able to secure funding from a local bank.

They found a suitable place on University Avenue and 35th Street and as they sat around the table, were now deciding on a name. Francisco wanted to

name it after one of the three women in his life but they all resisted. As wise husbands do, Francisco didn't push the issue with his wife so it was down to Dalia and Lily. A coin flip ensued and Dalia won, meaning the factory would be named after her little sister Lily.

Francisco hired two men to teach him how to operate the tortilla-making machines, working from midnight to 4 p.m. every day. He soon learned that having paid employees eliminated his profit margin so he took over the business and ran it himself, with a little help from family members.

Over the years Lily's has become famous for its fresh corn tortillas, with patrons lining up before the doors open at 5:00 a.m. Lily's uses no preservatives, which improves the taste and health benefits but doesn't allow for grocery store sales. Many of the tortillas are purchased by local restaurants and taco shops.

Lily's keeps its product line small, offering only corn tortillas (flour tortillas require a different machine), chips, tostadas, and masa (dough used for making corn tortillas). Three machines run 10 to 12 hours a day, producing 330

tortillas a minute or 200,000 plus tortillas a day.

Lily's moved to its current location on University and 43rd about 20 years ago, remodeling it in 2005. The business is now managed by Dalia (Hunt) and her cousin Jose Banuelos from an office above the factory. Francisco and Delia stop by on occasion to give advice.

Both Dalia and Lily went to medical school, with Lily focusing on pediatrics and Dalia on adult medicine. Dalia practiced in City Heights community clinics as an internist before she returned to Lily's to run the business for her aging parents.

Dalia and Jose say business has shrunk over the past five years as other tortilla factories have opened and their profit margin has shriveled as the cost of corn has risen. They have 30 people on the payroll, down from the peak years but still a valuable employer in the community. They say they will continue operating Lily's as long as people keep lining up at the door

— Staff report

## CINTA AZUL, from P3

maestros de instituto de un plan de acción inmediata para rectificar las deficiencias y hacer un seguimiento para ver si la intervención está trabajando. Los estudiantes en la cúspide de niveles de competencia que alcanzan son objeto de atención especial para ayudarles a llegar allí.

"En un ciclo de dos semanas, no deje que los niños caigan por debajo del radar", dijo Bustani, y agregó que todas las estrategias utilizadas en Edison están basados en investigaciones.

Debido a la gran población de estu-

diantes de inglés en Edison, todos los maestros allí un desarrollo sistemático de idioma Inglés durante 30 minutos al día como parte de un bloque de alfabetización de 2 ½ horas. Los estudiantes son agrupados por nivel de idioma de acuerdo a los resultados de las pruebas estandarizadas. Lecciones estratégicas de idiomas se han desplegado sobre la base de estas agrupaciones.

Enseñanza de las matemáticas es tan riguroso. Los maestros utilizan las manos en la experimentación con objetos manipulables, la animación de alta tecnología, práctica guiada y otras estrategias para explicar conceptos. Para promover el pensamiento crítico, los es-

tudiantes son alentados a hacer preguntas abiertas, y se espera para articular la forma en que llegar a una solución a un problema.

El Departamento de Educación de EE.UU. tiene previsto anunciar los ganadores de los premios Blue Ribbon en el otoño. El programa reconoce a las escuelas en dos categorías: los ejemplos de escuelas de alto rendimiento que obtienen en las escuelas de las 85<sup>a</sup> percentil o por encima de la mejora y ejemplar, que tienen al menos un 40 por ciento de sus estudiantes procedentes de entornos desfavorecidos, pero también se encuentran en el 10 por ciento de las escuelas que muestran la mejora más importante

en los últimos cinco años. Edison fue nominado para la última categoría.

En el otoño, todas las escuelas ganadoras serán invitadas a Washington DC para una ceremonia para celebrar su éxito y recibirá una placa y la bandera para conmemorar su logro.

Bustani dijo que la nominación al premio fue una sorpresa completa debido a que su escuela no se aplican por el honor. "We no buscan tales elogios", dijo. "Nosotros siempre mantener a los estudiantes en el centro de nuestro trabajo. Lo hacemos porque sabemos que el trabajo que hay que hacer".

# A Hoover Cardinal recognized by NBC San Diego as 'Student of the Month'

By Ashley Quintero  
Hoover High School

On Jan. 17, the media spotlight shone on Hoover High senior Brittany Black Jones. A classroom of excited students watched as NBC San Diego and a representative from the San Diego County Office of Education named Brittany "Student of the Month."

"Brittany is an inspiration to other students, adults and even to myself," said Principal Dr. Charles Podhorsky, who nominated her.

Her outstanding academics and school and community involvement were the reasons why she was given the award. Brittany is in the top ten percent of her class. She is involved in multiple school activities. She is the opinion editor for the school newspaper, *The Cardinal*, and is part of Cardinals Interact, a program that provides social, emotional and academic support to help students reach their full potential.

Outside of school, Brittany is part of the choir at her church and its youth program, where she tutors youngsters and advises them on how to get on the road to college. This has earned Brittany much respect from fellow members of her church.

In her community, she is known for other contributions as well. She writes for *Urban Teen*, a magazine written by teens for teens. She volunteers at her local YMCA and is a member of the transcDANCE Youth Arts Project, whose goal is to help teens discover their own possibilities through creative self-expression.

Out of students from 250 schools in San Diego County, Brittany stood out as the choice for February's "Student of the Month" selection. Dr. Podhorsky, her teacher Ms. Leslie Hardiman, and fellow classmates were very proud of Brittany when she was handed the award. They clapped, screamed and cheered for her, which could be heard coming from the A buildings.

Although this was supposed to be a surprise for Brittany, Ms. Hardiman could not keep it a secret and told the whole class as well as Brittany that she had won.

"I'm just elated. I'm happy. I'm proud. I have seen her grow up and she has become a fine young lady. I can't wait until she graduates and does great things," said Ms. Hardiman.

Despite the media spotlight, Brittany remained humble. "I'm honored and speechless," said an elated Brittany.

All eyes were on her as she was interviewed by NBC reporter Rory Devine. Senior Asinn Kim was also interviewed by Devine and had nothing but praises for Brittany. Asinn talked about how



Brittany Black Jones, a senior at Hoover High School, was featured on NBC San Diego as "Student of the Month." Photo courtesy of Hoover High School

Brittany helped him with filling out his college applications.

Brittany has big plans for the future and wants to become a lawyer and work for the government, specifically in the education field. She says there needs to be a change in the public school system. She feels the budget needs to change and students should be put ahead of everything.

This is the first time a Cardi-

nal was named "Student of the Month" since NBC began awarding and featuring students for their hard work. The segment on Brittany was aired the first week of February. If you missed it, you can view the segment at NBC-sandiego.com.

— Ashley Quintero, class of 2012, is the editor in chief of *The Cardinal* at Hoover High School

## City Heights Square dedicated amid a community celebration

By Albert Sarinana  
Contributor

A celebration was held Feb. 18 to dedicate the newly-finished City Heights Square, a retail, office and residential complex located on University Avenue between Fairmount Avenue and 43rd Street. The occasion brought a lot of smiles to residents in the community, many of whom expressed appreciation for a project well done.

The project was the result of a public-private partnership between the City of San Diego Redevelopment Agency and Price Charities, which has a long history of spearheading economic revitalization efforts in City Heights.

The ground floor of City Heights Square houses a 10,000-square foot Walgreens plus 11,000 square feet of commercial space. Above the commercial space are 92 apartment units that come with washers and dryers, secured underground parking, private balconies, a rooftop barbecue, and other amenities.

The dedication event featured performance by a magician, entertainment by a DJ, and catering



Left: Jorge Belez, who has lived in City Heights since 1998, moved into City Heights Square with his wife and son in November. He calls the newly-opened development "beautiful" and "wonderful." Right: Veronica and her son moved from La Jolla to City Heights Square in December. She likes the cultural and family feel of the community. Photo courtesy of Albert Sarinana Photos courtesy of Albert Sarinana

by Super Cocina. Oluwatopeh Kupoluyi spoke on behalf of all the residents, thanking Price Charities and other parties for their hard work in getting City Heights Square built.

Many of those who attended the event were tenants in City Heights Square apartments who have fallen in love with the multicultural and family feel of the

community. At the celebration, people from diverse cultures and backgrounds mingled easily with each other despite language barriers. They were surrounded by children having a good time.

Veronica and her son moved to City Heights Square in December from La Jolla. "The management has been really cooperative working with us, the staff is



really good, and the maintenance team has been really adamant about keeping everything in a neat and timely manner, so I'm really satisfied," she said.

Jorge Belez, who has lived in City Heights since 1998, moved into City Heights Square with his wife and son in November. He sees the complex as another sign of progress in the community.

"Beautiful! wonderful! The best place right now so far," he said.

— Albert Sarinana is studying journalism and hopes to become a science reporter upon graduation. Conveying the truth with riveting writing is the pinnacle he hopes to achieve with each and every piece.

# City Heights club advocated for 'green movement' in 1916

By Jon Luna

City Heights Life History Columnist

Almost 100 years ago a City Heights club launched a tree planting program that inspired the mayor of San Diego to start a movement for the entire city. In March 1916, the Progress and Prosperity Club of East San Diego developed a plan to put 400 Acacia trees along University Avenue from Boundary Street to La Mesa. The program was paid for with 50-cent donations from residents, businesses, and anyone else willing to fork over half a dollar.

Mayor E.M. Capps was so

impressed he immediately called upon the City Council to institute a similar program for the city. He told the San Diego Union that trees thrive in San Diego and gave Balboa Park as an example. The Park was less than one year removed from hosting the Panama-California Exposition at the time. Mayor Capps was quoted in the paper saying, "I hope that this movement, started by the boosters of East San Diego, will force San Diego to see the light."

The first trees planted were christened "E.M. Capps" and "Mayor Pfahler" in honor of the mayor and president of the board of trustees for East San Diego, the original name for City

Heights which was then its own incorporated city.

The San Diego Union reported the trees sold rapidly at 50 cents apiece. The Marston Company, Pacific Building Company, San Diego State Bank, United States National Bank, Simon Levi Company, and William Clayton each bought enough trees to plant an entire block. Members of the Progress and Prosperity Club of East San Diego continued planting the trees each Saturday until 400 Acacias were in place.

Acacia trees similar to this one were planted along University Avenue almost 100 years ago.



## IN YOUR WORDS

# A life devoted to teaching, education, and community activism

By Evie Kosower



I was born in New York City to Russian immigrants. In my early years, I watched kids playing in the yard of the elementary school across the street from my parents' store. The school let me participate in a kindergarten class before I was legally enrolled, so I spent two years in kindergarten. Perhaps that's the reason for my success in school from then on – you learn a lot in kindergarten!

When I was 12, my parents moved to Los Angeles, where I went to junior and senior high schools. Since I enjoyed school, I did well. I decided early to be a teacher. I supported myself through UC Berkeley on work-study programs and recreation department jobs. I began teaching in nursery school and private kindergarten when my two girls were young and went on to teach elementary school, Head Start, and teacher and organization in-service classes.

Along the way, I've held university positions at USC's education department and the UCLA Medical School, the latter while working at a county hospital and the Veterans Administration Healthcare System (VAHS). I ended my full-

time career as chief education officer for VAHS in Los Angeles. Along the way I returned twice to higher education for advanced degrees.

After joining a movement to increase excitement and creativity in learning in the 1970s, I found myself working to bring change to schools. I created successful new programs, which were dropped when the champion or money for the programs disappeared. As I became active in teacher education over the years, I noticed that similar ideas to better engage "reluctant learners" arise and disappear every 20 years or so.

My daughter, Vicki Leon, an Azalea Park resident for over 16 years, suggested that I bring my passion, excitement, and creativity to the active community here. She envisioned a tile project related to the Azalea Park Neighborhood Association (APNA) signage proposal. This project needed someone to write a grant, which I completed soon after arriving. It's now been eight years since I moved here and I love it. The tiles are waiting to be installed, pending the completion of the signage structure on the new

median at Fairmount Avenue and Poplar Street. People of all ages and backgrounds gathered to work on the tiles. I later became the APNA rep to the City Heights Town Council for several years.

Currently, I serve on the Coordinating Council for the Mid-City Community Advocacy Network, also known as Mid-City CAN, and co-chair the Senior Momentum Team working to establish a senior center. We want space to expand our activities.

Recently, I joined Women Occupy San Diego, in which women of all ages and backgrounds support the Occupy Movement and the issues of the 99 percent. I am active in the group planning outreach to educate and engage the community. You can ask the Occupella Chorus to sing for your organization!

I believe we need to connect all groups in our communities to bring about changes in our democracy that work for us all!

— *Evie Kosower is a City Heights resident.*

Evie Kosower started out as a nursery school teacher and ended her career as the chief education officer for Veterans Administration Healthcare System, Los Angeles. In her retirement, she has become a community activist. **Courtesy photo**

# What's going on?

## ¿Qué está pasando?

# March

**7 9 to 10 a.m.**  
4305 University Ave. Suite 540  
Clean & Safe Committee Meeting  
Contact: (619) 906-4443

**4 to 6 p.m.**  
City Heights/Weingart Library  
3795 Fairmount Ave.  
Homework Help for Grades K-12  
Contact: (619) 641-6100  
Bring homework questions and local college students will help you in a fun and relaxing environment.

**8 9 to 10:30 a.m.**  
4305 University Ave. Suite 540  
Collaboration to Keep City Heights Youth Safe Meeting  
Contact: (619) 906-4443

**6 to 7:30 p.m.**  
Rosa Parks Elementary School  
4510 Landis St.  
Dad's Club  
Contact: Kenneth Woods (619) 795-2036

**9 10 to 11 a.m.**  
City Heights/Weingart Library  
3795 Fairmount Ave.  
Preschool Story Time  
Contact: (619) 641-6100  
Parents and kids listen to a story and learn songs!

**3 to 5 p.m.**  
Azalea Recreation Center  
2596 Violet St.  
Tutoring/Homework Center  
Contact: (619) 235-1162

**10 9 a.m. to noon**  
Hollywood Canyon  
Columbine & Olive streets  
San Diego Canyonlands: Friends of Hollywood Canyon  
Contact: (619) 284-9399  
Trail Maintenance. Please bring water and sunscreen and wear sturdy, closed-toe shoes.

**noon to 12:45 p.m.**  
City Heights Recreation Center  
4380 Landis St.  
Singing and Movement Class  
Registration fee: \$25 per session (10 weeks)  
Ages 5-10  
Contact: Renee Calvo (619) 204-9306

**12 6 to 7:30 p.m.**  
UPAC Program Office  
5348 University Ave., Suite 202  
Expect Respect Group  
Young women ages 18-24  
Contact: Cherise Young at cyoung@upacsd.com or (619) 265-2777

**6:30 to 7:30 p.m.**  
Joe & Vi Jacobs Center  
404 Euclid Ave.  
17th Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Community Breakfast  
For tickets, call (619) 264-1213

**13 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.**  
Mid-City Police Division  
4310 Landis St.  
Youth Voice  
Leadership opportunities for youth ages 12-24

**6 to 7:30 p.m.**  
Monroe Clark Middle School  
4388 Thorn St.  
Dad's Club  
Contact: Kenneth Woods (619) 795-2036

**14 8 to 9 a.m.**  
4305 University Ave. Suite 540  
City Heights Business Association Board of Directors Meeting  
Contact: (619) 906-4443

**noon to 2 p.m.**  
City Heights Wellness Center  
4440 Wightman St.  
Food Justice Momentum Team  
Contact: (619) 283-9624

**15 5 to 7 p.m.**  
Azalea Recreation Center  
2596 Violet St.  
Arts & Creativity Class  
Ages 5-12  
Contact: (619) 235-1162

**6 to 7:30 p.m.**  
Central Elementary School  
4036 Polk Ave.  
Dad's Club  
Contact: Kenneth Woods (619) 795-2036

**16 10 to 11 a.m.**  
City Heights/Weingart Library  
3795 Fairmount Ave.  
Preschool Story Time  
Contact: (619) 641-6100  
Parents and kids listen to a story and learn songs!

**3 to 5 p.m.**  
Azalea Recreation Center  
2596 Violet St.  
Tutoring/Homework Center  
Contact: (619) 235-1162

**17 9:15 to 9:45 a.m.**  
City Heights Recreation Center, 4380 Landis St.  
Introduction to Violin Class  
Registration fee: \$25 per session (10 weeks), Ages 5-10  
Contact: Victoria Eicher (858) 442-0237

**1 to 4 p.m.**  
Myrtle Avenue and 46th Street  
47th Street Canyon Cleanup  
Habitat restoration, maintenance, and clean-up. Please bring water and sunscreen and wear sturdy, closed-toe shoes.  
Contact: Brent Carter at brent@sdcanonlands.org or (619) 261-2385

**19 3 to 5 p.m.**  
Azalea Recreation Center  
2596 Violet St.  
Tutoring/Homework Center  
Contact: (619) 235-1162

**6 to 7:30 p.m.**  
2121 El Cajon Blvd.  
The Boulevard Cooking Class  
Eclipse Chocolate  
Contact: (619) 283-3608 to register \$150 for all six cooking classes

**20 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.**  
Mid-City Police Division  
4310 Landis St.  
Youth Voice  
Leadership opportunities for youth ages 12-24

**21 6 to 7 p.m.**  
Colina del Sol Park Recreation Center  
5319 Orange Ave.  
Colina Park Recreation Council  
Contact: (619) 235-1145

**22 5 to 7 p.m.**  
Azalea Recreation Center  
2596 Violet St.  
Arts & Creativity Class  
Ages 5-12  
Contact: (619) 235-1162

**3 to 5 p.m.**  
Azalea Recreation Center  
2596 Violet St.  
Tutoring/Homework Center  
Contact: (619) 235-1162

**23 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.**  
Teralta Park  
Orange Avenue & 40th Street  
Movie in the Park: Toy Story 3  
Free popcorn provided!

**24 9 a.m. to noon**  
4605 Chollas Parkway  
San Diego Canyonlands: Chollas Creek  
Habitat restoration, maintenance, and clean-up. Please bring water and sunscreen and wear sturdy, closed-toe shoes.  
Contact: Jason Allen (619) 235-5262

**9:30 to 10 a.m.**  
City Heights Recreation Center  
4380 Landis St.  
Introduction to Guitar Class  
Registration fee: \$25 per session (10 weeks)  
Ages 5-10  
Contact: Chan Jennine (760) 533-8245

**26 6 to 7:30 p.m.**  
4280 El Cajon Blvd.  
The Boulevard Cooking Class  
El Borrego  
Contact: (619) 283-3608 to register \$150 for all six cooking classes

### CALENDAR EDITOR: JULIE LE

— Julie Le was born and raised in San Diego. She graduated at the top of her class from Hoover High School. Julie is attending the University of California, San Diego, majoring in urban studies and planning while working at Price Charities.

## We want to hear from you!

Please submit photos taken in City Heights to [editor@cityheightslife.com](mailto:editor@cityheightslife.com) to be included in our Community Photo Showcase! Story ideas, articles, letters to the editor and comments are also welcome.



**27 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.**  
Mid-City Police Division  
4310 Landis St.  
Youth Voice  
Leadership opportunities for youth ages 12-24

**6 to 7:30 p.m.**  
UPAC Program Office  
5348 University Ave., Suite 202  
Love and Life Group  
Young Ladies Ages 13-18  
Contact: Cherise Young at cyoung@upacsd.com or (619) 265-2777

**28 4 to 6 p.m.**  
City Heights/Weingart Library  
3795 Fairmount Ave.  
Homework Help for Grades K-12  
Contact: (619) 641-6100  
Bring homework questions and local college students will help you in a fun and relaxing environment.

**29 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.**  
3:30 p.m. — 5:30 p.m.  
Mid-City Police Division  
4310 Landis St.  
Youth Voice  
Leadership opportunities for youth ages 12-24

**31 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.**  
Fairmount Avenue and Wightman Street  
City Heights Farmers' Market  
Contact: Lorrie Scott (760) 751-4193

**9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.**  
Rosa Parks Elementary School  
Field  
4510 Landis St.  
Multicultural Aging Expo  
Contact: (619) 471-2681



For a more complete list of events, visit [www.cityheightslife.com](http://www.cityheightslife.com).