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San Jose District 10 councilman gets early jump on the job

By Vicente Vera
San José Spotlight

San Jose Councilmember-elect George Casey is starting his job a couple of weeks early.

He stepped into his new position before his other colleagues Michael Mulcahy and Pamela Campos, who won their elections in District 6 and 2 respectively, because the District 10 seat had been filled by appointment in January 2023.

Casey attended his first San Jose City Council meeting as a newly-elected city official on Dec. 10 to prevent a gap in district representation after incumbent Councilmember Arjun Batra bid farewell the previous week.

City Clerk Toni Taber said the explanation lies within the city's appointment process. Batra, who lost to Casey in November, was appointed and served for two years after Matt Mahan left mid-term to serve as mayor.

Councilmember Domingo Candelas, who was also appointed last year to fill the District 8 vacancy when voters elected Sylvia Arenas to the county Board of Supervisors mid-term, kept his seat after being formally elected to office in November.

Their appointed terms began Jan. 30, 2023 and were set to end after a candidate was elected in the next regularly scheduled election, and the results were certified. County election officials certified the November election results on Dec. 5.

"Therefore, both Councilmember Candelas and Councilmember Batra's terms end upon certification of the election. This leaves a gap from Dec. 10 to Dec. 31, 2024 where no councilmember is in office," Taber said.

San Jose cyclists unhappy with traffic safety barriers

By Vicente Vera
San José Spotlight

Traffic safety improvements meant to protect San Jose and Los Gatos may have actually made cycling on a busy road more dangerous, bicycle riders said.

San Jose transportation department workers recently added plastic barriers known as "bollards" along Los Gatos Almaden Road to protect cyclists in the bike lane from reckless drivers. City leaders made the decision to add them after approving the City Better Bike Plan 2025, which activated the road as a protected bike lane. But after cyclist Alayne Yellum said a vehicle struck her husband, Don Yellum, in July, she questions whether the plastic barriers are partly to blame.

Her husband has made a full recovery, but Alayne said the bollards are too high and create a blind spot for distracted drivers.



The protected bike lane on Los Gatos Almaden Road. Photo by Vicente Vera.

"The idea behind the bollards is to get you to slow down, look over your shoulder and then make your right hand turn. Well, we all know some people just don't slow down," she told San José Spotlight. "They don't look for bikes."

A Dec. 6 email reviewed by San José Spotlight shows transportation officials responded to the concerns by installing a yield sign above Los Gatos Almaden Road's busiest intersection on Union Avenue, along with doubling the amount of bollards.

Transportation department employees plan

to connect with students at Union Middle and Leigh High schools to educate them on how to navigate the intersection. As part of outreach effort, transportation officials shared flyers promoting San Jose's initiative aimed at achieving zero traffic fatalities.

"It's not really a safe intersection for cyclists or pedestrians, especially kids when they're going to and from school," Don Yellum told San José Spotlight. "Shouldn't the sign be 20 or 30 yards away to alert drivers?"

See BOLLARDS, page 4

Memorial commemorates 197 lives lost to homelessness in Santa Clara County this year

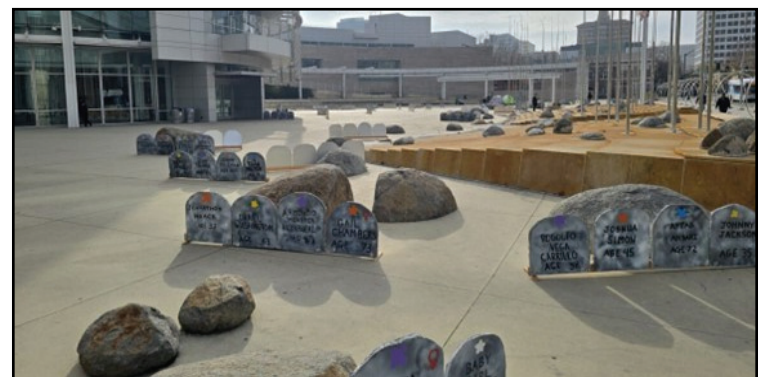
By William Bellou
Publisher

HomeFirst hosted a Homeless Memorial to honor 197 individuals who died while homeless in Santa Clara County in 2024 on December 20th at the Boccardo Reception Center.

The event was a remembrance of those lost, highlighting the urgency of addressing homelessness, inspiring action to tackle the ongoing crisis.

HomeFirst's CEO, Andrea Urton, spoke, as did Mayor Matt Mahan, and following this, Reverend Andy Ligot led a short service. The name of every person who passed away was read during the memorial, giving all who attended a moment to reflect upon each life lost.

Numerous local elected officials and HomeFirst staff read the names of those who died aloud one-by-one. For many of the 197 individuals



Tombstones in front of San Jose City Hall commemorate the 197 homeless persons' lives that were lost. Photo courtesy of Todd Langton.

being remembered, the memorial was the only commendation they received.

This year's deaths show a three percent decrease compared to 2023, reflecting the progress made locally in reducing homelessness. However, the numbers also reveal the ongoing challenges, as 197 lives were lost, spanning from newborns to centenarians.

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Times **Local News**

Holiday Giving Event:
Hunger at Home and Many Paths One Destination bring holiday cheer to families at Lincoln Glen Church

Hunger at Home and Many Paths One Destination hosted a Holiday Giving Event to support local families facing food insecurity and struggling economically at Lincoln Glen Church on Dec. 21.

More than 300 families participated and received a holiday meal, grocery provisions, gifts for the children, and more to ensure that everyone in our community, regardless of circumstances, enjoys the promise of the holiday season.

Volunteers and staff distributed complete holiday meals, including poultry, mashed potatoes, and other seasonal favorites, alongside Hunger at Home's regular grocery provisions.

With more than 37 percent of people living in Silicon Valley facing food insecurity and families continuing to struggle with inflation, the event was designed to make sure no one is left behind.

The Holiday Giving Event is more than a food distribution—it's a celebration of community, compassion, and the holiday spirit. At a time when many families face challenges, this event offers a lifeline, ensuring everyone can experience the joy and digni-



ty of the holiday. The event featured a toy distribution that will allow children the opportunity to personally select their gifts.

Santa Claus greeted families and posed for photos to add a touch of holiday magic. Together, these efforts help families obtain the resources they need to celebrate the holiday season with dignity and joy.

About Hunger at Home

Each day in Silicon Valley, tens of thousands of pounds of excess food and surplus goods are dumped into landfills and go to waste. Hunger at Home was created to connect this food to those in need. Hunger at Home partners with local convention centers, hotels, and restaurants to collect excess food and goods to distribute to the homeless and hungry through a robust nonprofit network. To date, Hunger at Home has donated 12.5 million meals locally.

For more information, visit www.hungerathome.org

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Bollards along Los Gatos Almaden Road are raising safety concerns for local cyclists. Photo by Vicente Vera.

Bollards

Continued from page 1

A field investigation determined the existing sign is adequate, transportation officials said.

“We received reports of vehicles driving between the delineators to make the right turn from eastbound Los Gatos Almaden to southbound Union to attempt to bypass cars lined up at the signal,” city transportation spokesperson Colin

Heyne told San José Spotlight. “Based on this information, extra bollards were added approaching the intersection.”

The bollards along Los Gatos Almaden Road aim to slow down drivers and provide a barrier protecting the bike lane, Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition Deputy Director Deanna Chevas said.

Nevertheless, the city’s bicycle safety efforts haven’t been enough to mitigate the high levels of dis-

tracted driving and speeding in recent years, she added. San Jose saw its highest rate of traffic fatalities in recent history in 2022 with 65 reported deaths. That number dropped to 49 last year, according to the Vision Zero task force.

“San Jose’s (Department of Transportation) has also run a communication campaign to inform drivers of how easily they can influence street safety by slowing down and being watchful. Per-

haps more driver education and enforcement are needed to change driver behavior,” Chevas told San José Spotlight.

Alayne Yellum said she’s thankful city transportation officials followed up with safety improvements. But she fears other cyclists might get injured the way her husband did if the 3-foot-tall bollards remain.

“I just don’t go that way anymore. I completely avoid the corner.”



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Times **Community News**

PATH social worker Mei Curry and her colleagues walked up and down Guadalupe River Trail in San Jose on Jan. 24, 2023 to tally the number of homeless people along the waterways. File photo.

San Jose counts homeless people along creek ahead of sweep

By Joyce Chu

San Jose officials have homed in on a stretch of waterway to clean up debris and ban homeless encampments.

A 12-mile stretch along Coyote Creek is slated to be cleared of homeless people starting in January and an encampment ban will be reinforced following that. The areas include Tully Road to Capitol Expressway, O'Toole Lane to Corie Court, around Coyote Meadows and Kelly, Watson and Roosevelt parks.

City officials visited part of the creek last week with workers from homeless nonprofit People Assisting the Homeless (PATH) to count the population along this section of the waterway. The headcount will help determine how many people need to be moved. The count is still ongoing, and results will be known in January.

"Knowing how many people live along our waterways provides needed insight that will shape our interim housing and shelter strategies, helping us get our unhoused neighbors indoors faster by starting outreach early," Mayor Matt Mahan told San José Spotlight.

"We've made historic budget investments to address homelessness, and accurate data ensures we're putting every tax dollar to good use."

The city is under scrutiny to comply with the Clean Water Act and reduce pollution in the waterways or face a fine. Mahan said roughly 90% of pollution in local creeks and rivers is caused by homeless encampments, and in February the city approved a plan to sweep multiple homeless camps along the Guadalupe River Trail and bar unhoused people from returning.

Officials are also racing to build shelters and tiny homes, though several sites that were supposed to have opened this year face delays. Mahan wants to add 1,500 temporary beds for homeless residents over the next 18 months.

Several tiny home villages are expected to open next year, including the Cherry Avenue site in September, which can house up to 136 people, an expansion of the Rue Ferrari site in October, which can accommodate an additional 134 people, and Via Del Oro early next year, which will accommodate 150 people. San Jose has the largest

homeless population in the county, with approximately 6,340 homeless residents, 4,411 of whom live on the street, along waterways or in tents.

A sanctioned encampment is expected to be up and running by the end of March near Watson Park and will serve as a navigation center, where participants will be given three daily meals, have access to shower and laundry facilities and get connected with supportive services. The goal is to move people within 30 days of placement to another temporary housing site such as a tiny home or congregate shelter — where people share a common space with limited or no privacy — or into permanent supportive housing.

"The city is continuing to build out the housing and shelter supply in our housing continuum so unhoused residents have safe, dignified destinations," city housing department spokesperson Jeff Scott told San José Spotlight. "In this particular instance, we have been engaging with unhoused residents (along Coyote Creek) for many weeks. Case management is available to assist these individuals, and a navigation site will be coming online in 2025 to provide even more assistance to unhoused residents who are seeking shelter and housing."

Santa Clara County's main water supplier, Valley Water, also passed a policy that bans homeless people from encamping along 333 miles of creeks where it owns land rights. The ban takes effect Jan. 2.

There are more than 700 people encamped along Valley Water property, and there are an estimated 1,000 homeless people living along creeks and rivers in San Jose. The city is not coordinating with Valley Water to clear encampments located on the agency's property, Scott said.

There aren't enough shelter beds for all the people living at the waterways, and shelters in the city are often "jam packed," homeless advocate Scott Largent previously told San José Spotlight.

There were 900 emergency shelter beds in the city in 2019, according to a Department of Housing and Urban Development study — though San Jose has ramped up

See *SWEEP*, page 10



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Helpful Tips:

- Know how to download your camera footage
- When mounting cameras, please be aware of places where people may have a reasonable expectation of privacy (examples: their backyard or interior of their home)
- Focus and mount your video on key points of entry or concern
- Exterior Mounting Location Options: Front door, rear door, side gate, driveway/front parking lot, second floor wide view and street view.
- Keep batteries charged in your cameras.
- Consider lighting around your cameras.

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Santa Clara County Office of Education



Cambodian American Studies Conference

January 31 – February 1, 2025 | 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Santa Clara County Office of Education

1290 Ridder Park Drive, San Jose, CA 95131

The Cambodian American Studies Model Curriculum will incorporate diverse perspectives on the Cambodian genocide, including survivor testimonies, to ensure high-quality educational materials. Following the passage of Assembly Bill 167 in 2021, which amended California Education Code sections regarding the Cambodian genocide, the California Department of Education is collaborating with county offices to develop this curriculum. Feedback from researchers, community partners, and Cambodian ancestry community members prompted the model curriculum team to expand its focus to include Cambodian American experiences beyond the genocide, resulting in the curriculum's renaming. The final content will encompass the histories, cultures, and heritages of Cambodian American communities.

This conference will assist educators by:

1. Introducing the CASMC curriculum to K-12 educators
2. Connecting educators with community members and cultural practices
3. Offering immersive cultural experiences

Register at : <https://scooe.to/CambodianAmericanStudiesConference>

For questions, please contact: **Kristina Ravo**, Coordinator History-Social Science and Civic Engagement at kravo@scooe.org • (408) 453-4354

Times **Local News**



Batra honored at District 10 Leadership Coalition meeting

The District 10 Leadership Coalition met at the Santa Teresa Library for the final D10-LC meeting of 2024. San Jose Councilmember Arjun Batra was honored to accept a proclamation, presented by Richard Crowley in recognition of his last two years of

service on the San Jose City Council. Scott Sherwood, of the Pfeiffer Ranch HOA, provided an informative presentation about the Flock license plate reading cameras that were installed in their neighborhood and SJPD Captain Donohue was in attendance to answer ques-

tions about the program. The next D10-LC meeting will be held on Saturday, March 1, 2025, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Almaden Community Center. For more information and to get involved, visit the D10-LC website at www.SJd10leadership.org.

Complaints against Santa Clara County Office of Education result in ongoing investigations

By Times Media staff
 Santa Clara County Office of Education's (SCCOE) interim superintendent Charles Hinman recently announced new findings in a series of independent investigations he launched due to a number of complaints the office received related to a laundry list of "deeply concerning" allegations. "As time progresses, more complaints and issues have come to light," said Hinman. Hinman would not elaborate what those findings were but said the investigations looked into

claims involving:

- Unauthorized expenditure of public funds
- Unnecessary and suspect contract awards
- Misappropriation of public education dollars for personal legal fees
- Clandestine investigations of Board of Education members and some SCCOE staff, which appear retaliatory in nature
- Suspected unauthorized surveillance
- Misappropriation of federal Head Start funds

SCCOE board members brought in Hinman as interim superintendent after announcing they voted to terminate former Superintendent Mary Ann Dewan without cause in October.

NBC Bay Area asked if Dewan has been implicated in any of these new investigations or findings. Hinman's office said it can't comment on Dewan specifically due to pending litigation. Hinman previously said board members have committed to fully cooperate with any follow-up investigations.

Hinman revealed that board members directed SCCOE attorneys to turn over the new findings to public investigative agencies "such as the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC), the District Attorney, sheriff's department, the attorney general, the inspector general, as well as any other state or federal agencies responsible for investigating potential malfeasance and misfeasance of particular items or actions within the County Office of Education."

In July, NBC Bay Area's Investigative Unit broke the story of the Santa Clara County Office of Education being under a federal review over complaints it misused public Head Start funds. Head Start is a federal program run by the county helping at-risk children with early development. At the time, SCCOE staff told NBC Bay Area the problem was a simple accounting error. The federal investigation is still ongoing. Shortly after that first news report, staff told NBC Bay Area's Investigative Unit they were retaliated for coming forward. Those complaints are a part of the new set of investigations.



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Times **Local News**

TECH JARGON OF THE WEEK

Zero Trust Models

By Shubhi Asthana

Have you ever stumbled into a conversation where everyone is speaking around this “techie” word – and even after you’ve broken in, it is difficult to understand the unfamiliar jargon and acronyms? Well, there’s no need to sweat it. Let me teach you the meaning of some commonly used tech words: **Zero Trust Models**



Zero trust is a cybersecurity approach based on a simple principle: never trust, always verify. Unlike traditional systems that assume users or devices inside a network are trustworthy, zero trust assumes every request could be a potential threat until proven otherwise. Think of it as airport security for your digital systems—everyone, even frequent flyers, must go through checks before they’re allowed in.

How Does Zero Trust Work?

Zero trust applies strict controls at every step. Here’s how:

- 1. Verify Identity:** Every user or device must prove who they are. For example, when you log into an app, it asks for not just your password but also a verification code from your phone.
- 2. Least Privilege Access:** Users and devices

only get access to what they need. For instance, an employee in marketing can see campaign data but not financial records.

3. Continuous Monitoring: Activity is constantly checked. If unusual behavior occurs—like someone trying to download all the company files—it’s flagged immediately.

Let’s take an example: Imagine a bank’s vault. In a traditional system, employees inside the bank might have easy access to the vault because they’re “trusted.” But with zero trust, even employees must prove their identity, justify their need to enter, and only access the specific valuables they’re authorized to handle.

So why does it matter?

In today’s world, cyber threats are more sophisticated, and sensitive data can be at risk even from insiders or compromised accounts. Zero trust adds layers of protection to ensure that no one gets more access than they truly need, reducing the chance of data breaches.

Zero trust isn’t about being paranoid—it’s about being careful. By verifying everyone, limiting access, and staying vigilant, organizations can keep their systems secure in a constantly changing digital landscape. Whether it’s protecting your bank account or your company’s trade secrets, zero trust is the modern way to stay safe.

About the Author

Do you enjoy reading this column? Send in your comments or feedback to the author at shub.saxen@gmail.com. Shubhi Asthana works as a Research Senior Software Engineer at the IBM Almaden Research Center, San Jose.



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Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose to host El Día de los Tres Reyes Magos cultural event

Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose will host its 27th annual El Día de los Tres Reyes Magos cultural event on January 11, 2025 from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The special programming starts at 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

The celebration will fea-

ture art activities, tortilla making, Rosca de Reyes tasting, photo opportunities with the Three Kings, ballroom dancing with Studio M, and lively folklórico dance performances and instruction from local dance groups Los Lupeños Juvenil, Brenda Lopez Folklori-

co Group, and El Grito de La Cultura.

Attendees are encouraged to perform their talents at our open mic event. Miss World America 2024, Athena Crosby, who is a San Jose native and proud Latina-American, will host an engaging bilingual storytime about the Tres Reyes for attendees.

The Día de los Tres Reyes Magos event was originally conceived and designed in partnership with an advisory board composed of local leaders from the Latino community. Twenty-seven years later, it has become a much anticipated and popular program, and the Museum is thrilled to continue this joyful tradition.

"We believe it is important to create programs where people from all backgrounds can explore the rich customs and traditions that represent the diverse cultures in Silicon Valley," said Jéssica Torres, Director of Education and Programs at the Museum. "It's critical



that children and families see themselves and their culture represented in the community and in community organizations such as ours."

About El Día de los Tres Reyes Magos

The Three Kings (or Epiphany - the Feast of the Three Kings) is widely celebrated by many cultures around the world and is observed in many Spanish-speaking countries. The holiday celebrates the three kings' arrival in Bethlehem with gifts for the baby Jesus.

Our program brings to life these rich traditions of family gatherings, gift giving, music, dance, and art activities.

Admission: \$18 for children and adults; \$16 for seniors; infants under one & members are free. Tickets: <https://www.cdm.org/event/el-dia-de-los-tres-reyes-magos>

About Children's Discovery Museum

Kids lead the way at Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose, exploring and discovering through open-

ended, play-based learning. More than 150 hands-on exhibits and programs in sciences, humanities, arts, nature, and health spark curiosity and ignite family fun where children build life skills in creative and critical thinking, problem solving, and confidence. The non-profit celebrates people and diverse cultures, creates authentic connections, and builds global understanding.

For more information about the Museum, visit www.cdm.org

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Times **Local News**

Election results show voter frustration, revolt against political establishment

By Matt Mahan

This week, election results were finally certified here in California. I know this election cycle felt endless for many of us and, like me, you're hopeful that the propositions and leaders we supported will create the change we need.

In case it wasn't already clear, this election sent a message that voters are frustrated and want to see results. Here in California, for example, Prop 36's more than 2-1 margin of victory was a voter revolt against the political establishment's complacency on public safety and addiction. I heard this same frustration when I ran for mayor three years ago and committed to focusing City Hall on the basics and increasing accountability for better outcomes.

The people of California are continuing to send the message, and we need our elected officials up and



From the Mayor
Matt Mahan
Mayor, San Jose

down the state, from the local level to Sacramento, to listen. Voters are telling us they want their government to focus on reducing crime, ending homelessness, cleaning up the state, and reducing our high cost of living, especially by addressing rising housing and energy prices. They are not interested in partisanship and political posturing.

So far, I'm not sure the message has gotten through. Last week, I sat down with Elex Michaelson, host of "The Issue Is," to talk about Sacramento's distraction and how I'd like to see California move forward, led by

pragmatic cities like San Jose.

I hope you'll take a moment to watch the interview and tell me what you think: <https://youtu.be/pQ8hzHJkPDw>

I also hope you and your loved ones have a chance to relax this holiday season, enjoy each other's company, and celebrate your blessings. I know I'll be taking a few days with Silvia, Nina and Luke to catch up on some of the board games and family hikes I've missed this year.


Read on below to hear more about what's happening in San Jose this month. In early January, our newsletter will recap some of our collective accomplishments in San Jose this past year and share an early preview of what we have planned for 2025.

Happy holidays and a very Happy New Year to you and your family!

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CAM REGISTRATION

Security Camera Registration with the San Jose Police Department is now available. The registration program enables CAM registrants who are using video in an area in which a crime occurred. Police would ask CAM registrants to check their video surveillance system for a specific date and time for video that may show activity involved with a crime, such as a getaway car or the direction that a person of interest was headed. Visit <https://tinyurl.com/3y8a97fft> to learn more about the program, including how to register!

Sweep

Continued from page 5
efforts to house homeless residents. Since then the city has built six emergency temporary housing sites with nearly 500 beds.

Homeless advocate Todd Langton, executive director of Agape Silicon Valley, was at Coyote Creek with his organization a cou-

ple weeks ago to distribute food and tents. He said he's shocked by the amount of trash he saw.

"I do feel like the waterways needs to be cleaned up," Langton told San José Spotlight. "But the ratio of (people getting abated) doesn't keep up with the number of transitional housing that is available. So it's the same old question — where are they going to go?"

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A) Islam is a faith and way of life. Islam began in the 7th century. People who follow Islam are known as Muslims. The Quran is the Divine book that guides Muslims to

practice Islam. "Hufazik Allah Waeayilatak" the English meaning is " May Allah (swt) protect you and your family". Please visit our website to learn more.

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God is One
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SAN JOSE GURDWARA
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The word Sikh (see-kh) means "disciple" or "student." A Sikh is a practitioner of the faith founded in the 15th century by Guru Nanak in Punjab of old British India. A Guru who is a "teacher" or "enlightener" completes the relationship of teaching and learning. Sikhism is monotheistic and stresses the equality of all men and women. Sikhs believe in three basic principles; meditating on the name of God (praying), earning a living by honest means and sharing the fruits of one's labor with others. Currently there are close to one million Sikhs living in the USA and Canada and 25 million Sikhs living around the world. Sikhism is the 5th largest religion in the world. At the Gurdwara (House of God) in San Jose we welcome all. We pray daily for peace and prosperity for everybody in the world. Come to visit and enjoy Langer (food) in our kitchen which is open 365 days of the year and serves complementary vegetarian meals. We also encourage you to enter our history room

on site and walk the beautiful grounds. Learn more about us and community events we sponsor by visiting our website; <http://www.SanJose-Gurdwara.org>

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and marginalized of San Jose. Our Pre-school is the only Catholic Preschool offering quality family oriented service in the Evergreen and Silver Creek areas. Our Chapel, Gathering Hall, Parish Office, Mission Center, Parish Gift Shop, Memorial Garden and Preschool are all located at 5111 San Felipe Rd. Please come join us to worship at one of the following times and locations:
St. Francis of Assisi Chapel: Saturday 5:00PM, Sunday 8:30 AM, 10:30 AM, 12:30 PM, 4:00 PM (Mass in Vietnamese), 6:00 PM Youth Mass
St. Francis of Assisi Gathering Hall
Sunday 9:00 AM, Sunday 11:00AM, Igbo Mass - Second Sunday of the month 12:30 PM
Mt. Hamilton Grange - 2840 Aborn Road
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The Villages Gated Community (Cribari Auditorium) Sunday

8:15 AM
For more information, please call or visit us at the Parish Mission Center open M-F 9:00 AM -12:00 PM; 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM. Come join us and share your presence with us so that together we may grow and share our gifts to help build God's Kingdom!

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