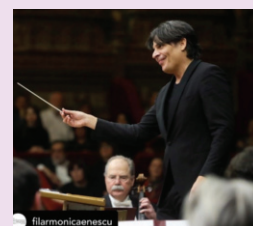


State Senator Cortese's bill gives homeless youth better chances for employment, college education
SEE PAGE 10



Symphony San Jose presents ESPAÑA
June 7-8 Performance to feature
Spanish conductor Jose Luis Gomez
and Spanish guitarist Rafael Aguirre
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MAY 9 - MAY 22, 2025 ■ VOL. 38, NO. 10

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The Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Library in downtown San Jose. City libraries are expected to see minimal cuts during the upcoming budget cycle. File photo.

San Jose public library fights to maintain funding amid budget woes

By Vicente Vera
San José Spotlight

Library advocates say they expect to ride out the upcoming San Jose budget cycle without any major cuts. But trouble could be on the horizon, with the city projecting an ongoing shortfall over the next few years.

San Jose's Library and Education Commission learned April 16 of three anticipated public library budget cuts, which include cutting \$90,000 from library security, suspending the college and career pathways job position and dropping \$500,000 in the city's agreement with San Jose State University for Martin Luther King Jr. Library, Administrative Officer Fiahna Cabana said.

Anticipated cuts for the library appear to be substantially lower than the \$4.59 million suggested by the City Manager's Office in a Dec. 13, 2024 memo.

A city spokesperson said public library officials don't have any additional information to share about the 2025-26 budget beyond Mayor Matt Mahan's March budget message.

"The proposed operating budget is scheduled for release on May 1 that will include the details of all budget proposals," spokesperson Demetria Machado told San José Spotlight. "However, we
See LIBRARY, page 3

US Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. Robert T. McCollum killed in action in 1944 laid to rest with full military honors

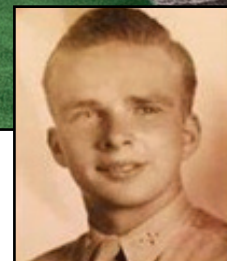
Community turns out for funeral at Oak Hill Memorial Park

By William Bellou
Publisher

The community, many carrying flags, paid their respects during the funeral for United States Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. Robert T. McCollum on Saturday, May 3 at Oak Hill Memorial Park.



Robert T. McCollum was honored among family, friends and officials, including the divers who found McCollum's remains in the Baltic Sea near Denmark at Chapel of the Roses at Oak Hill Memorial Park followed by a public burial to be near his parents and sister.



The fallen soldier's remains were laid to rest at Oak Hill Memorial Park to be near his parents and sister with full military honors. The event included a Rifle Volley by the American Legion Post #419, bagpipes were played, including the song Amazing Grace by the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office Pipe Band and a heartwarming and amazing dove release was provided by GoDoves.com.

The procession from the Chapel of Roses to the burial site was escorted by the Patriot Guard Riders and the Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association (CVMA).

U.S. Army Chaplain Jay Sapaen Watan officiated at McCollum's funeral, leading hundreds of people in the reading of the Lord's Prayer.

History

McCollum was killed in action on June 20,
See MCCOLLUM, page 5

'A true icon': San Jose developer, philanthropist dies at 85

By B. Sakura Cannestra
San José Spotlight

Barry Swenson, the groundbreaking developer who reshaped the city's skyline and became a household name, has died at age 85.

Swenson was the third generation leader of Swenson Builders, one of Silicon Valley's most prominent construction and development firms, known for developing iconic buildings throughout San Jose. Those who knew him remember him for his optimism and encouraging demeanor, as well as his business prowess. His cause of death has not been released.

"That's just first and foremost his real gift to everybody else, is that he was always upbeat and always encouraging people," Ron Swenson, CEO of Solar Skyways and Barry Swen-



Barry Swenson, former chairman of Barry Swenson Builders and a local construction pioneer, died at age 85. *Photo courtesy of the Swenson family.*

son's younger brother, told San José Spotlight.

Ron Swenson said his brother's encouraging nature set him apart in a cutthroat development industry. He recalled a time when the pair ran into a friend at breakfast, who was performing in a live band at the restaurant. His brother invited the band to San Jose to play for one of their family's events.

The Swenson brothers often donned wide brimmed hats, standing out from the crowd. Barry enjoyed gardening and ranching, and raised pheasants and ducks in the family's backyard while in high school. He gave the birds away as Christmas presents to the family's business partners.

Swenson Builders was founded by Barry Swenson in 1961, but Ron and Barry Swenson's grandfather Carl Swenson began the
See SWENSON, page 2

SEE OUR LISTINGS OF LOCAL REALTORS, CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING AND HOME IMPROVEMENT ADVERTISEMENTS INSIDE THE BACK COVER

Times **Community News**

The Planets

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Swenson

Continued from page 1

family's first construction company in 1926. The family has a century-long history of constructing some of San Jose's most iconic buildings, including the De Anza Hotel and San Pedro Square Market.

Urban Catalyst Founder Erik Hayden said Barry's white cowboy hat and boots gave him a laid back first impression — until they started talking about business and he became a sharp and formidable force. Hayden said he supported San Jose's culture, including Christmas in the Park and the San Jose Jazz Festival, among others.

Hayden worked with Barry about 15 years ago when he was with Republic Urban Properties. His company had partnered with Swenson Builders for the Ohlone projects, an 8.32 acre multi-family apartment project at the intersection of West San Carlos and Sunol streets. Hayden said he is fortunate for the opportunity to learn from Barry early in his career.

Land use consultant Erik Schoennauer recalled working with Barry when he was chief of staff to former San Jose Councilmember Patricia Dando, then in his current role as a consultant working with developers on San Jose projects.

He said the Swenson family has impacted Silicon Valley through revolutionary construction projects and their philanthropy.

"He was incredibly generous and engaged in the San Jose community, as a person,"



Those who knew **Barry Swenson** said he was generous and affable. He often stood out in his signature white hat. Photo courtesy of the Swenson family.

Schoennauer told San José Spotlight. "That legacy is of equal importance to any physical building."

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SCAN TO RSVP:

Matt Mahan
Mayor of San Jose

SAN JOSE
City of San Jose

Times **Community News**

Library

Continued from page 1

remain committed to bringing strategies forward that responsibly balance the budget while also doing everything we can to minimize impacts to vital programs and services our community depends on, at the library and throughout the city, and to our employees.”

Commissioner Jose Abastida said he’s pleased to hear the upcoming year’s cuts are expected to have a minimal service impact.

“We know we still have to go through the June budget discussions and things are not done — but the library and education commission’s main point is that we maintain library safety and infrastructure,” he told San José Spotlight. “That’s where we’ll keep advocating and fighting.”

With a 20% increase in foot traffic and more than 3.6 million annual visitors to all San Jose libraries since the pandemic, Abastida said he wants to continue seeing minimal impacts to the public library’s budget in upcoming years.

“Given the increase in library users, I think it would make for a pretty persuasive argument that our San Jose residents need more library services,” he told San José Spotlight. “In the future, we would likely be advocating for an increase in funding so we can maintain staff and also library hours.”

City officials projected a \$60 million 2025-26 budget deficit in December, but after

reshuffling funds, the shortfall was reduced to about \$46 million, with a \$53 million budget shortfall anticipated for the 2026-27 fiscal year.

Cabana said the public library’s future investments will receive limited consideration but is still able to take advantage of prior funding.

“One actual addition we have is a one-time investment of about \$500,000 in our general fund to increase funding for materials acquisitions, which is coming from prior years,” she said.

The city library system has already implemented cost-control measures, including a hiring freeze and limitations on employee promotions. These measures have recently come under fire from labor organizations. Library workers rallied earlier this month to call for an increase in funding for essential city services.

Library and Education Commission Vice Chair Angelica Ramos said libraries are one of the few public spaces where families can gather, learn and grow together. They provide a space for children to learn and prepare before entering school, she added.

“The modern world demands digital literacy, yet in the self-proclaimed tech capital of Silicon Valley, tens of thousands of families lack reliable internet access and/or devices at home. Libraries have stepped in to close this gap,” Ramos told San José Spotlight. “At a time when information access is under attack, we must take a standby protecting our libraries — not gutting them.”



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Goodwill of Silicon Valley opens first outlet store

*New Tully Road location offers
bulk shopping at deep discounts*

By William Bellou
Publisher

Goodwill of Silicon Valley cele-
brated the grand opening of its
first Goodwill Outlet store
located on Tully Rd. in San Jose.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony
included remarks from Goodwill of
Silicon Valley CEO Christopher Baker,
District 7 Councilmember Bien Doan,
and the Tully Road-Eastridge Busi-
ness Association (TREBA) Board
Chair Christina Bui.

The launch welcomed hundreds of
eager shoppers to the new Tully Road
location, which offers bulk shopping
at deeply discounted prices.

"Outlet stores are proving to be a
wise investment for Goodwill organ-
izations across the country, and, in
turn, a wise investment for commu-
nities," said Baker. "By donating and
shopping, customers help fund vital
programs like job training, reentry
support, and housing assistance,
empowering individuals to achieve
self-sufficiency and easing the bur-

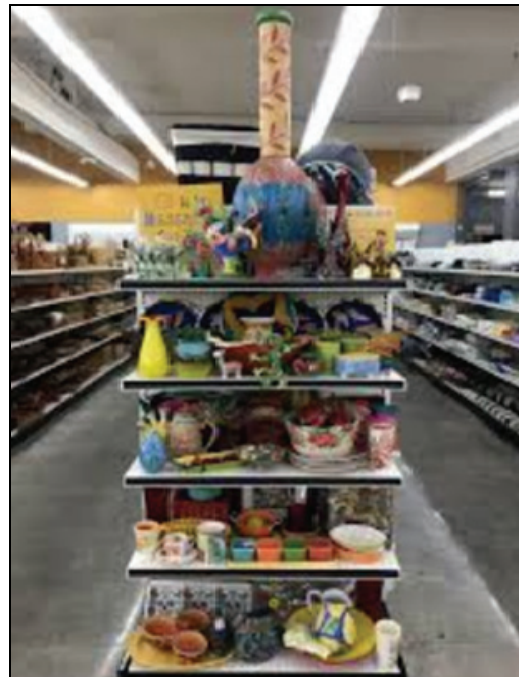
den on public resources. Patronizing the outlet store is an easy way to give back, reduce landfill waste, and save taxpayer dollars."

The 25,000-square-foot store at 1685 Tully Road is open seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Goodwill Outlet stores offer deeply discounted secondhand items, with most merchandise sold by the pound or at low per-item prices. Bargain hunters can browse large bins organized by category that are refreshed hourly, uncovering a rotating selection of clothing and textiles, housewares, books, electronics, glassware, toys and furniture.

Goodwill of Silicon Valley's network of donation centers and retail stores fund essential job training, inmate-reentry programs, and employment opportunities for those in need while also reducing waste in the region. Every donation and purchase directly supports workforce development for individuals facing employment barriers – including veterans, those experiencing homelessness, individuals with disabilities, and the formerly incarcerated – helping them build skills, secure meaningful jobs, and achieve economic independence.

"The store will help train many people, will help many community programs and that's what makes a dif-



ference in our community," said Councilmember Doan at the ribbon-cutting ceremony. "Thank you so much to Goodwill, thank you to their staff and thank you to our community members for supporting."

Added TREBA Board Chair Bui: "Goodwill of Silicon Valley's mission for providing job training, workplace development and economic opportunity aligns with our vision for our Tully Road East-Ridge Business Association. It's also a hub for hope, empowerment and community building."

Goodwill Outlet stores have gained

popularity nationally among resellers on platforms like Amazon, eBay, Poshmark, Etsy, and Bonanza. The new store is one of 142 Goodwill Outlet stores nationally and 18 in California. Unlike traditional Goodwill thrift shops, outlets feature large bins filled with donated items that either didn't make it to store shelves or did not sell. At the Goodwill of Silicon Valley Outlet, furniture, bicycles, and over-sized items will be priced individually at steep discounts, with a dedicated furniture section offering even more great finds.

Outlet stores typically have a lively, competitive atmosphere, with shoppers sorting through bins to uncover hidden gems. The store will have shopping carts, but there is a limited supply.

"As bargain hunters, resellers, and thrifting enthusiasts know, outlet shopping is a unique experience – fast-paced, ever-changing, and full of surprises," said Jessica Castello, Vice President of Retail at Goodwill of Silicon Valley. "Goodwill aims to make it a true shopping adventure where every minute counts. With patience and a keen eye, shoppers can uncover high-value treasures for just pennies."

For more information, please visit www.goodwillsv.org.

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Times **Local News**

The burial site at Oak Hill Memorial Park for 2nd Lieutenant Robert T. McCollum who died when his B-24J Liberator plane crashed into the Baltic Sea on June 20, 1944, due to a mid-air collision, was laid to rest May 3.

McCollum

Continued from page 1

1944, where he was serving in the U.S. Army Air Forces with the 565th Bombardment Squadron, 389th Bombardment Group.

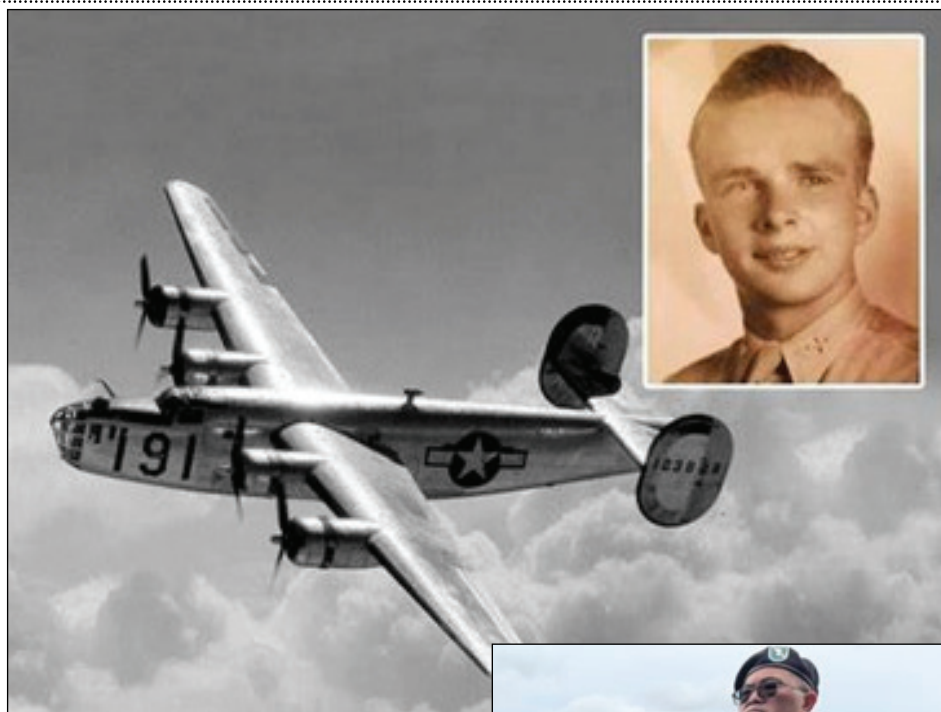
On June 20, 1944, he was the bombardier aboard a B-24J Liberator (serial number 42-100351) during a bombing mission targeting enemy facilities in Politz, Germany.

While flying over the Baltic Sea near Langeland Island, Denmark, McCollum's aircraft collided with another B-24 in the formation and spiraled into the sea. Of the ten crew members on board, two survived, were captured, and later returned to U.S. custody. The remaining eight, including Lt.

McCollum, were declared missing in action.

After several unsuccessful searches, in May of 1950, McCollum's family was notified that Robert was deemed non-recoverable.

In 2019, Danish divers discovered a WWII-era aircraft wreck in the area where Lt. McCollum's plane was lost. After the site was cleared of unexploded ordnance, teams from the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), the University of Delaware, and the Royal Danish Navy conducted an underwater survey. Human remains and other significant evidence were recovered, ultimately leading to the identification of Lt. McCollum. There was an overwhelming and undeniable abundance of evidence.



A rosette has been placed by Robert's name at "The Walls of the Missing" Memorial in Cambridge, England to show that he has been accounted for.

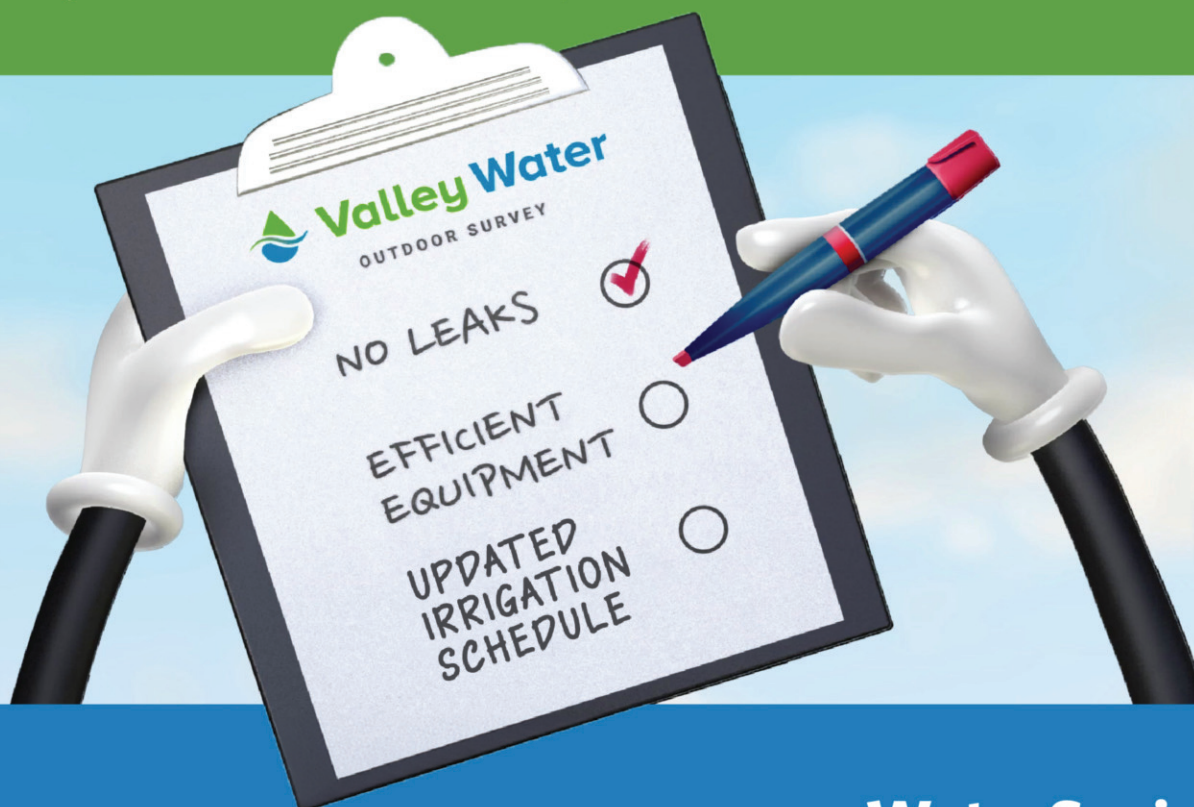
Recovery operations continue for the remaining crew of airmen lost at sea on McCollum's plane.

Media may request video footage of the funeral and planeside honors by calling Laura Herzog at 714-904-0253 or e-mailing – laura@honoringourfallen.org.

At right: U.S. Army Chaplain **Jay Sapaen Watan** officiated at McCollum's funeral, leading hundreds of people in the reading of the Lord's Prayer.



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'Leno's Law' offers solution for car collectors who have difficulty complying with state's smog law

By William Bellou
Publisher

SB 712, also known as "Leno's Law," offers a practical solution for owners of collector vehicles that have difficulty complying with the state's smog check law. Leno's Law is sponsored by renowned car enthusiast and television icon Jay Leno.

California's Senate Bill 712 aims to exempt classic cars from California's smog check requirements. Specifically, the bill would exempt collector vehicles that are 35 model years or older from the state's smog check law.

The Bill states that vehicles insured as collector vehicles and at least 35 years old would no longer need to pass the smog test for biennial registration or when changing ownership, as they currently do.

Here's a more detailed breakdown:

• **Current Law:**

Currently, collector vehicles (those insured as such) that are 35 years or older are already partially exempt from certain smog check requirements.

• **Leno's Law (SB 712):**

This bill extends the exemption to include all collector vehicles 35 years or older, fully



Leno's Law is sponsored by renowned car enthusiast and television icon **Jay Leno**. Photo courtesy of Jay Leno

exempting them from smog checks.

• **Why it's needed:**


The bill aims to reduce bureaucratic burdens on classic car owners and collectors, while also recognizing the lower emissions impact of these vehicles, which are typically driven less frequently.

• **Support:**

The bill is supported by individuals like Jay Leno, who is also a sponsor, as well as organizations like SEMA and the specialty automotive aftermarket industry.

• **Impact:**

The passage of SB 712 would allow classic car enthusiasts to enjoy their hobby without the added expense and hassle of smog checks and would also preserve California's automotive history.



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Celebrate Older Americans Month: Almaden Community Center
Join the Almaden Community Center along with the Almaden Senior Association for a Barbeque Bash in celebration of Older American's Month. Come for a BBQ with hot dogs, chips and cold lemonade. The Almaden Senior Association will have ice cream and toppings for you to Build Your Own Sundae. Music by Blue Sky Musical Group.
\$8 members, \$16 non-members. Register online at <https://www.sjregistration.com> using number 251.4.2002. Or... register for this event and for a free membership at the Almaden Community Center front desk. Call 408-268-1133 for more information.

Senior Safari will be back this summer. Visitors ages 50 and up are invited to visit San Jose's iconic Happy Hollow Park & Zoo for free on the 4th Thursday of each month from May to October. The first date is Thursday, May 22nd. Get some fresh air and exercise as you enjoy free admission, free parking, early entry to the park, the zoo, animal meet and greets and much more. To get in free, you must arrive between 9 and 10 am.

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Symphony San Jose presents **ESPAÑA** June 7-8 Performance to feature Spanish conductor Jose Luis Gomez and Spanish guitarist Rafael Aguirre

By William Bellou
Publisher

Pre-concert events will be held one hour before the performance: Spanish tapas and flamenco dance show on Saturday, June 7 at 6:30 p.m. and Sunday, June 8 at 1:30 p.m.

The season closes with España — a musical trip through Spain led by Spanish conductor Jose Luis Gomez and featuring Gabriela Lena Frank's Escaramuza, and Joaquin Rodrigo's Concierto de Aranjuez performed by Spanish guitarist Rafael Aguirre.

España is Rodrigo's best-known work, and it has cemented his reputation as one of Spain's most significant composers. We'll also view the Iberian Peninsula through the lens of two "visiting" composers, Ravel (France) and Rimsky-Korsakov (Russia) and hear how each portrayed Spanish music through their distinct writing styles.

Pre-concert festivities occur one hour prior to the concert.

Join Symphony San Jose for an unforgettable pre-concert experience. Indulge in delicious Spanish tapas while enjoying a mesmerizing flamenco dance show. Sip on refreshing sangria and immerse yourself in the vibrant and passionate atmosphere of Spain.


California Theatre, 345 South First Street, downtown San Jose.

Convenient, inexpensive parking is available at a city-owned garage one-and-a-half blocks from the theater at San Carlos Street with entrances on Second and Third streets.

SINGLE TICKET PRICES: \$35 to \$121.50 (Ticket prices include \$2.50 City Fee and Order Fee of \$4.00; Special Youth Ticket price: A ticket for concert goers, age 17 and under, can be discounted up to 50 percent when purchased along with a full-price ticket.

TICKETS: Phone: 408.286.2600
Website: www.symphonysan-jose.org
Email: jmeyers@symphonysan-jose.org

Walk-Up Box Office: 325 South First Street, San Jose, 95113. Located between San Carlos and San Salvador Street next to the California Theatre. Ticket Office Hours: Monday through Friday, 10am to 5pm.



Conductor: **Jose Luis Gomez**



ARTISTS
Conductor: Jose Luis Gomez
Rafael Aguirre, guitar

THE PROGRAM:
Gabriela Lena Frank: Escaramuza
Joaquín Rodrigo: Concierto de Aranjuez

Maurice Ravel: Rapsodie Espagnole
Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov: Capriccio Espagnole
Spanish tapas
Indulge in delicious Spanish tapas while enjoying a mesmeriz-

ing flamenco dance show that will captivate your senses. Sip on refreshing sangria and immerse yourself in the vibrant and passionate atmosphere of Spain.
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Santa Clara County Office of Education appoints Toston new superintendent

By William Bellou
Publisher

Santa Clara County Office of Education's embattled elected board has found a new superintendent, David M. Toston.

Santa Clara County Board of Education Trustees have appointed David M. Toston as the new superintendent after five months of political upheaval. Toston will begin his new role May 1.

Toston previously served as senior advisor at the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence. The organization focuses on statewide education initiatives focused on school equity and community engagement. Toston also served as Associate Superintendent at the El Dorado County Office of Education and Assistant Superintendent at the Sutter County Superintendent of Schools.

Santa Clara County Office of Education has been plagued with instability and division following the controversial firing of former superintendent Mary Ann Dewan



last October.

Dewan's firing came after a federal investigation in February found that \$135,370 in federal funds were misallocated. The funds were earmarked for preschool education program Head Start but ended up paying for non-Head Start staff and credit card purchases while Dewan was superintendent.

"I am deeply honored to serve as Superintendent of the Santa Clara County Office of Education," Toston said in an Office of Education statement announcing his appointment. "This role is both a privilege and a responsibility, and I look forward to partnering with our trustees, SCCOE teammates, districts, students, educators, families and community partners. Together, we will demonstrate what is possible through the strength of our diversity—ensuring every educator is supported in preparing students to achieve the hopes and dreams of their families and communities."

Report: 2024's Top 10 states with the Best Early Education Systems

California ranks 29th in nation

With early education shown to boost future earning potential but few states offering free preschool programs, the personal-finance website WalletHub just released its report on 2024's States with the Best & Worst Early Education Systems, as well as expert commentary.

In order to determine the best early education systems in America, WalletHub compared the 50 states and the District of Columbia across 12 key metrics. The data set ranges from the share of school districts that offer a state pre-K program to the number of pre-K quality benchmarks met and total reported spending per child enrolled in pre-K.

Quality of Early Education in California (1=Best; 25=Avg.):

- Overall Rank: 29th

- 18th – Share of 3- and 4-year-olds Enrolled in pre-K, pre-K Special Education and Head Start
- 1st – Income Requirement for State Pre-K Eligibility
- 1st – Total Reported Spending per Child Enrolled in Preschool
- 14th – Total State Head Start Program Spending per Child Enrolled in Preschool
- 1st – Monthly Child Care Co-Payment Fees as a Percent of Family Income



Top 10 States with the Best Early Education Systems

Overall Rank	State	Total Score	Access Rank	Quality Rank	Resources/Economic Support Rank
1	Arkansas	81.83	5	2	4
2	District of Columbia	74.47	1	24	6
3	Nebraska	74.46	7	4	24
4	Maryland	72.66	14	2	22
5	Oregon	70.08	13	19	1
6	West Virginia	67.84	8	11	20
7	South Carolina	67.41	19	4	34
8	New Jersey	66.75	10	11	19
9	Vermont	65.31	2	45	12
10	Connecticut	63.58	21	6	40

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For assistance call the Crime Prevention Unit (408) 277-4133.

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Times **Feature**



Cortese to serve on Senate Committee to assure 2026 World Cup and 2028 Olympics run smoothly

State Senator Dave Cortese has been appointed to a special committee on International Sporting Events including the 2028 Olympics and the 2026 World Cup by California Senate President Pro Tem Mike McGuire.

The bipartisan committee of 11 Senators is tasked with ensuring the state’s preparedness to host both the 2026 World Cup and 2028 Olympics. The FIFA World Cup is estimated to bring in more than half a billion dollars to both the Bay Area and Los Angeles. Meanwhile, the 2028 Olympics are projected to create nearly 80,000 new full-time jobs with an \$11 billion economic impact. Millions of spectators are

expected to flock to the state for both events.

“California is going to be on the world stage for these two monumental sporting events and I will do everything in my capacity to ensure public safety, transportation and infrastructure are in the best shape possible to make these events go smoothly,” said Cortese, Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee.

The Senate Special Committee will be holding a series of hearings in the coming months.

The Special Committee will be chaired by Senator Ben Allen (D-Santa Monica), vice-chaired by Senator Maria Elena Durazo (D-Los Angeles), and will include the following Senators: Senator Bob Archuleta (D-Pico Rivera), Senator Dave Cortese (D-San Jose), Senator Lena Gonzalez (D-Long Beach), Senator Laura Richardson (D-South Bay), Senator Susan Rubio (D-Baldwin Park), Senator Lola Smallwood-Cuevas (D-Los Angeles), Senator Tom Umberg (D-Santa Ana), Senator Suzette Martinez Valladares (R-Santa Clara), and Senator Aisha Wahab (D-Silicon Valley).

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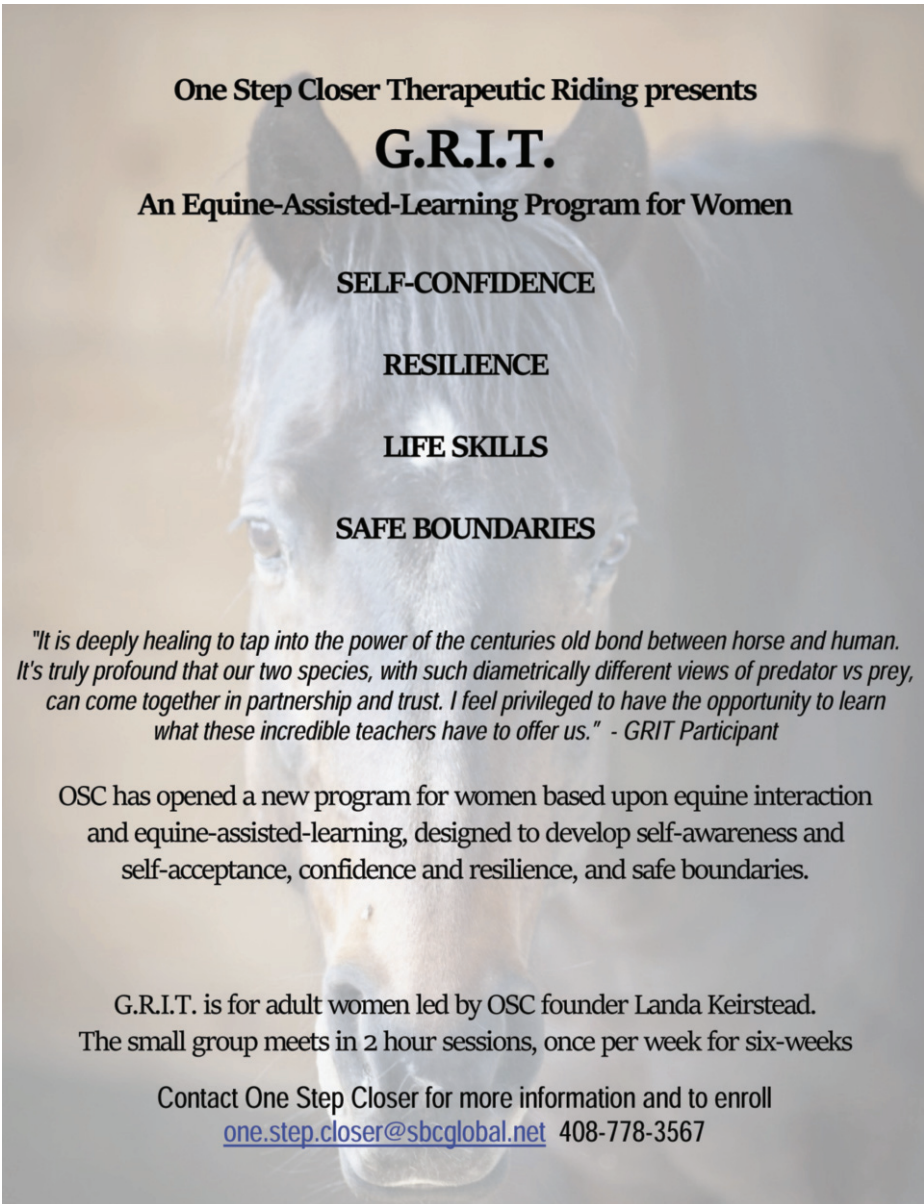
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State Senator Cortese's bill gives homeless youth better chances for employment, college education

Bill passes by senate human services committee

State Senator Dave Cortese's SB 33, which would establish a statewide guaranteed income pilot program providing homeless students with direct cash assistance to support their transition out of high school, cleared the Senate Human Services Committee today on a 5-0 bipartisan vote and now heads to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

"The goal of my bill is to give unhoused students access to employment and college," said Senator Dave Cortese. "The pilot program would provide \$1,000 in direct cash assistance to youth from May 1, 2026 through August 1, 2026."

"More than 270,000 students within California's K-12 school system are experiencing homelessness, a number that has increased by over 48 percent in the past decade. About 17,000 of these students are in the 12th grade, an increase of about 2,000 students since the committee saw this bill in the last legislative cycle."

DJ Anthony Gaffield, a former high school unhoused youth, now a youth advocate for Young Invincibles, testified that having a guaranteed income would have had a big impact on his life.

"Every day was a battle, not just for survival, but for any sort of hope. The weight of uncertainty and survival often overshadowed my ability to focus on my education, career goals and my mental health," he told the committee members. "I know how easy it is to become invisible when you're on the margins of society."

• In Santa Clara County, approximately 5,000 students in K-12 were homeless in 2023-2024, a 500 student increase from the previous year, according to the California Department of Education.

• The guaranteed income pilot program is titled the California SOAR (Success, Opportunity & Academic Resilience Guaranteed Income Program.)

• The bill also directs the Department to measure student employment and education attainment outcomes.

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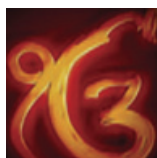
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