

See page 8 for San Jose's
Spookiest Ghost Stories!

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Elspeth Luu

San Jose Youth Symphony presents its 2025-26 Season Opener Concert to be held November 30

*The Philharmonic
Orchestra Performs Wagner,
Elgar, Shankavaram,
Borne and Borodin*

The San Jose Youth Symphony's Philharmonic Orchestra, under the artistic leadership of Music Director and Conductor Yair Samet, presents its 2025-26 Season Opener Concert to be held on Sunday, November 30, 2025, 5 p.m. at the Mexican Heritage Plaza Theater, See SYMPHONY, page 6



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Silver Creek Academy hosts 15th Back-to-School Creative Writing Contest

By Sean Eastwood
Times staff writer

Silver Creek Academy recently hosted its fifteenth annual Back to School Creative Writing Contest.

The learning center received over 100 submissions from students in first through eighth grade. The theme for this year's creative writing was about a character who receives unexpected news from the school principal, leading to an exciting adventure.

Teachers read and evaluated each student's entry, then chose winners in first, second, and third place from each grade level division. Silver Creek Academy provided prizes,

books, and goodie bags to all participants as a thank you for their hard work.

"We're so proud of our students' creativity and effort," said Reem Coniglio, General Manager of Silver Creek Academy. "Their stories continue to inspire us every year!"

For more information about Silver Creek Academy, call (408) 839-5905 or visit SCAASanJose.com.

2025 Back To School Writing Contest Winners First Grade

1st: "Principals Rock" Daniel R.
2nd: "The School Surprise" Lucas N.
3rd: "A New Principal" Ashley V.

See WRITING, page 4



From left: **Eliza G.** - 3rd Place Winner, Fifth Grade Division; **Ezra G.** - 1st Place Winner, Third Grade Division; and **Mrs. Bobbi Ouellette** - SCA Teacher

Damaged East San Jose youth center demolished

By Lorraine Gabbert
San José Spotlight

A vacant former youth center in East San Jose has been demolished more than a month after a fire halted plans for its restoration.

Excavators knocked down what remained of the Mexican American Community Services Agency (MACSA) building Saturday, breaking the hearts of community advocates who fought to save it. Trustees with the Alum Rock Union School District, which owns the property, previously approved demolishing the building in an emergency vote after the fire, pending a structural report on the damage. The cause of the fire, which happened in the early morning hours of Aug. 29, is still under investigation.

According to the structural report, the blaze destroyed or severely damaged the majority of the main building, with much of the roof having collapsed. At a Sept. 25 school board meeting, Eric Wasinger, senior executive of



Much of the MACSA building, including its arches, had been demolished by Oct. 11, 2025 following a report by structural engineers and a Division of the State Architect recommending it. Photo by Lorraine Gabbert.

bonds, maintenance, operations and transportation for the district, said removing the existing walls a layer at a time to test the rebar would be prohibitively expensive. Due to structural damage, even MACSA's distinctive arches couldn't be saved.

"The (Division of the State Architect) certified inspector has noted that ... 'demolition should occur to the entire site, including the gymnasium,'" Interim Superintendent Sandra Garcia said in a statement. "Therefore, the district will be proceeding with the demolition of

the entire structure and removal of debris to create a safe condition at the site."

The MACSA youth center, which has been empty for about a decade, was built with state funds. Alum Rock Union School District leased the land to the nonprofit for 52 years for \$1 per year, but when the property was turned over to the school district in 2016, it was in a state of disrepair.

Community advocates have been working to raise funds to renovate MACSA since before

See MACSA, page 6

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Times Local News



Diya P. - 3rd Place Winner
Third Grade Division



Rehan S. - 2nd Place Winner
Third Grade Division



Mishika J. - 2nd Place Winner
Fourth Grade Division

Writing

Continued from page 1

Second Grade

- 1st: "The Missing School" Garrett L.
- 2nd: "Untitled" Swara C.
- 3rd: "I Was Principal for the Whole Day" by Reyansh K.

Third Grade

- 1st: "The School Book Wiz" Ezra G.

- 2nd: "The Year of the Robots" Rehan S.
- 3rd: "The Secret Portal" Diya P.

Fourth Grade

- 1st: "The One and Only Principal" Lexi C.
- 2nd: "Project Gaia" Mishka J.
- 3rd: "Runaway Students" Michael R.

Fifth Grade

- 1st: "Only One Principal Allowed" Zayne T.
- 2nd: "The Big Surprise" Vanya K.
- 3rd: "The Power of Friendship" Eliza G.

Sixth Grade

- 1st: "When a Letter Changed Everything" Sahasra M.
- 2nd: "The Un-Welcome Wagon (maybe not)" Sanskriti V.
- 3rd: "The Not-So Great School Day" Austin W.

Seventh & Eight Grades

- 1st: "Our Famous School" Pauline R.
- 2nd: "Principal Promises" Daniel N.
- 3rd: "The Message" Jady N.

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The San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara metro area took the No. 1 spot for the biggest decline in home building permits at 68% when comparing data from July 2020 and 2025. File photo.

San Jose metro area No. 1 in declining home building permits

By Annalise Freimarck
San José Spotlight

San Jose and its surrounding cities have taken the top spot in housing — but the data is nothing to brag about.

The San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara metro area took the No. 1 spot for the biggest decline in home building permits at 68% when comparing data from July 2020 and 2025, according to a recent report from New York-based HomeAbroad. Permits dropped from 1,949 to 623, the largest downturn compared to the nation’s biggest metro areas in the same time-frames.

The Kansas City area ranked second with

2,014 permits in 2020 to 701 permits in 2025, Austin-Round Rock ranked third at 3,979 to 2,917, the Nashville area came in fourth at 3,144 to 2,099 and the Los Angeles area ranked fifth at 2,715 to 1,694.

The analysis examined U.S. Census Bureau building permits survey data for the top 100 metropolitan areas by population.

Silicon Valley advocates and developers said the drop is indicative of high market prices and city fees leading to less housing development in a region that needs it.

Erik Hayden, founder of Urban Catalyst, said the data isn’t surprising because Silicon Valley is one of the most expensive places to build, with city fees costing between \$50,000 and \$120,000 per market-rate home. He said that means the breaks cities give developers aren’t really breaks when the area charges 10 times the rest of the country. Coupled with high inflation and interest rates after the pandemic, he said it leads to fewer permit submittals.

Hayden added his business isn’t immune to the hardships. Urban Catalyst bought eight local properties and has only been able to complete

See BUILDING, page 10



Residents and advocates held a community cleanup day around the MACSA site on Oct. 11, 2025. Photo by Lorraine Gabbert

MACSA

Continued from page 1

the fire. In June, San Jose Deputy City Manager Angel Rios, Jr. said between the city and county, they’ve identified \$2 million in funding. The City Council unanimously approved \$500,000 for the facility contingent on the release of federal funds. Rios, Jr. said the city is committed to the project and if the grant doesn’t come through, it will find alternative funding.

“What we got today is a downpayment in hope,” he previously told San José Spotlight. “Now we got to dial in on what it’s actually going to cost to revitalize it and raise that money. The best response to poverty is access to opportunity and that’s all this is about.”

SOMOS Mayfair and the School of Arts and Culture, representing the Si Se Puede Collective, had been working on an agreement with the school district to lease MACSA. The nonprofits would be responsible for raising funds to renovate the youth center and ongoing operations.

MACSA’s demolition hasn’t destroyed the community’s desire to see it rebuilt as a youth center offering classes, sports and social services. Residents and advocates held a cleanup day on streets surrounding the building Saturday, while also launching a campaign to rebuild it.

“Our hope today is to focus on rebuilding,” Victor Vasquez, co-executive director of SOMOS Mayfair, told San José Spotlight. “If we want to

have the responsibility of a place like this, we must continue to take care of the area around it and be a positive force moving forward... focused on being caretakers. There’s a great need in our community to have a space for youth. If we find a way to collaborate and unify, anything’s possible.”

Vasquez said the clean up is the first step in reaching an agreement with the school district for the Si Se Puede Collective to lease the land and rebuild MACSA through community, private and government funding.

“We want to show progress and that there’s a pathway forward,” Vasquez said. “Hopefully, they also see the benefit of this development. Once we agree, we’re going to be out there together figuring this out.”

ARUSD Trustee Minh Pham is hopeful negotiations with SOMOS Mayfair and the School of Arts and Culture will lead to an agreement benefiting Alum Rock students and the East Side community. Trustee Corina Herrera-Loera said while the fire and demolition brought a physical end to MACSA, this is an opportunity to reimagine what’s possible for youth and families.

“When a committed group comes together with clear intention and love for the community, incredible things can be accomplished,” she told San José Spotlight. “I know with the commitment, effort and desire we will be able to build something lasting and transformational. We owe it to our youth and future generations to create the conditions where they can thrive.”



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Symphony

Continued from page 1

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This concert will also feature two winners from last season’s 2025 Young Artists’ Competition, proudly sponsored by the San Jose Symphony Foundation*. Outstanding young soloists, Elspeth Luu, will perform Elgar’s famous Cello Concerto in E minor, and Claire Kim, will perform Borne’s Carmen Fantasy for Flute and Orchestra.

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Claire Kim (L) and Saarthak Shankavaram (R)

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For Bakery



Ghosts of San Jose – Fascinating tales centered on non-human spirits on Quimby Rd.

By Matt Fraizer
Special to the Times

In the vibrant city of San Jose, the air is alive with tales of the supernatural that spark the imagination of both residents and visitors.

While many narratives delve into traditional human ghosts haunting historical buildings, a fascinating undercurrent of tales centered on non-human spirits and cryptids pulses through the city's streets and natural landscapes. These captivating stories blend folklore, urban legend, and deep personal experiences, enriching the local culture with a profound sense of wonder and mystery.

Ghost of Quimby Rd.

One standout story is that of the Quimby Road Jogger, an enigmatic figure often spotted gliding effortlessly in Evergreen Valley along Quimby Road.

Eyewitnesses report feeling a mix of curiosity and apprehension as they watch this spectral presence. The jogger appears to stop briefly, casting an unsettling gaze that lingers in the air before resuming its fluid motion and vanishing as if swallowed by the night.

Locals often engage in spirited discussions about the identity of this ghostly figure, some speculating that it might be a lost soul yearning for the life it once knew. In contrast, others believe it to be a protector of the area, silently reminding residents of the past. For many in the community, this ghostly presence serves as a centerpiece for eerie conversations, representing not just a haunting but a broader enigma of what lies beyond our perception.

As the sun begins to set over San Jose, transforming its skyline into a canvas of oranges and purples, the aura surrounding Quimby Road shifts dramatically. The vibrant chatter of the city fades, replaced by a haunting quietude that seems to wrap around those daring to tread along the road. It is during these twilight hours that groups of curious thrill-seekers gather, armed with flashlights and hushed whispers, eager to experience the possibility of crossing paths with the legendary jogger. They paint vivid images of their encounters, sharing tales that ebb and flow like the fog rolling in. Some recount a sense of urgency they felt when the jogger passed them, others describe a chill that went down their spine as they locked eyes with the spectral figure. This shared excitement enhances the allure of the jogger's presence, creating a communal sense of mystery and intrigue that ties together those who share these experiences.

In addition to the jogger's tale, the area around Quimby Road has become a gathering point for individuals intrigued by the supernatural. On misty evenings, groups of friends may embark on ghost walks, recounting local legends and sharing their own inexplicable experiences. Tour guides skilled in the art of storytelling lead these excursions, weaving historical facts with haunting narratives to conjure a vivid picture for eager listeners. As stories of the jogger dance on the air, the night deepens and shadows loom larger, creating a palpable tension that sends shivers down spines. Participants recount feeling an electric charge in the atmosphere, imbued with the stories of those who wandered before them. It becomes evident that the jogger is more than just an isolated tale—it's part of a larger tapestry of the unknown that adds to the rich lore of San Jose, drawing people together in the thrill of the supernatural.

Marsh Rd. encounters

The excitement doesn't just end with the jog-



ger. The phenomenon of ghostly encounters extends beyond Quimby Road, spreading to neighboring Marsh Road, which has also become a hotspot of paranormal activity. Residents share eerie encounters with a phantom girl wandering the vicinity, often accompanied by unsettling screams that echo through the night. The legend says that she is searching for something—or perhaps someone—and that her presence is a warning to those who tread too close to the boundaries of the unknown. Local youths, alive with adrenaline and dare, often challenge one another to walk along Marsh Road after dark, fueled by tales of the ghostly girl's mournful cries. As they step into the shadows, the very air thickens with anticipation, a rush of fear and excitement propelling them forward.

It is said that on particularly haunting nights, when the moon hangs high and ominous clouds drift lazily across its face, one can hear the faint sound of her weeping carried by the wind. Those who have ventured down Marsh Road alone often recount a gut-wrenching feeling of being watched, as if the girl herself were lurking just beyond their line of sight, assessing their bravery. The tension peaks at this intersection of belief and skepticism; some claim she is a figment of collective imagination, born from the fears that fester in the dark, while others are unwavering in their belief in her existence, sharing spine-chilling stories that ripple through the community.

A shared camaraderie forms among those who have encountered the mysterious girl, their stories intertwining to create a rich narrative that fascinates outsiders and residents alike.

Hicks Road non-human entities

Then there's Hicks Road, which is steeped in a rich tapestry of urban legends about a variety of non-human entities. Tales of witches, secretive hermits, and ominous forces—rumored to be linked to satanic cults or blood-sucking beings—have persisted through the ages. Locals recount stories of haunting sounds, strange lights, and encounters with creatures that seem like figments of nightmares. Over the years, Hicks Road has witnessed its fair share of adventurous souls who have ventured into the night, only to return with tales that blur

the line between reality and myth. One particularly famous story involves a group of teenagers who braved a night on Hicks Road with the sole intention of documenting their experience. Armed with cameras and smartphones, they recorded not only their nervous banter but also several unexplained phenomena—flashes of light that seemed to dance just at the edge of visibility, whispers that brushed against their ears as they passed various landmarks, and an undeniable feeling of being followed.

As the night wore on and their bravado began to wane, the group noticed distortions in the air around them, as if the very fabric of reality was fraying at the seams. They claimed to have witnessed shadowy figures darting between trees, figments of imagination morphing into something all too real. By the end of their escapade, they emerged with unsettling footage that not only ignited local curiosity but also fueled ongoing debates about the hidden truths lurking within the area's folklore. Although skeptics often dismiss these accounts due to the lack of hard evidence, classifying them as merely urban legends, the stories resonate deeply within the community, capturing the fears and imaginations of those who dare to venture into these shadowy regions. For many, Hicks Road represents more than just a place on the map; it symbolizes a threshold to the unknown, a juncture where reality and myth intersect in breathtakingly eerie ways.

Sarah's Winchester Mystery House

The supernatural charm of San Jose's paranormal landscape is further enriched by historical sites of significance, such as the iconic Winchester Mystery House—an architectural marvel constructed by Sarah Winchester, the widow of a firearms tycoon. This sprawling mansion, renowned for its bizarre architecture and perplexing designs, is shrouded in mystery and said to be haunted by the spirits of those lost to Winchester rifles. The legends surrounding the house suggest that Sarah, in mourning for her departed loved ones, constructed the mansion to appease and communicate with the restless spirits. The stories of spirits trapped within the labyrinthine halls invite countless paranormal enthusiasts eager to explore the realms of life after death, inter-

twining tales of human spirits with the broader unknown.

As visitors walk through the labyrinthine corridors and extravagant parlors, they can't help but feel an atmosphere thick with energy—a reminder of the lives that intersected in this very space and the troubles that plagued Sarah. A palpable tension hangs in the air; many have reported feeling cold spots, sudden chills, and even a sense of being watched. Part of the allure comes from the compelling history intertwined with the supernatural, as Sarah's tragic tale resonates not just as a story of loss but also as a manifestation of her efforts to escape the grip of grief through a physical reality.

Events held at the mansion, especially around Halloween or during moonlit tours, often amplify this eerie presence. As the eerie glow of artificial lights dances through the windows, casting long shadows across the ornate architecture, attendees recount feelings of dread intermixed with excitement. This blend ignites aged tales with renewed fervor. During these events, it is not uncommon for guests to share their ghostly encounters, likening their experiences to those of the famous jogger or the girl on Marsh Road. These exchanges cultivate an in-depth appreciation for the cultural tapestry of San Jose, grounded in a shared yearning to understand the mysteries of the afterlife.

Throughout the city, these interwoven stories create a rich tapestry of experiences for both long-time residents and newcomers. They invite exploration and disdain, skepticism and belief, ultimately encouraging everyone to embrace the unknown. With each retelling, the tales of the jogger, the phantom girl, and the secrets of Hicks Road become part of a collective memory that lingers like mist in the early morning light. The paranormal landscape of San Jose serves as a poignant reminder of the thin veil that separates our world from unseen realms, prompting us to question the very nature of reality.

As if in harmony with this ongoing narrative, local festivals often embrace the haunting elements that characterize San Jose's folklore. Ghost tours abound, themed events attract curious minds, and local artisans craft pieces inspired by these age-old stories, allowing for a continual celebration of mystery that keeps the spirit of the city alive. Community gatherings offer opportunities for storytelling, as residents share their encounters or speculate about the identities of the enigmatic figures that roam the night.

Consequently, of all the legends and tales that seep through the streets and woods of San Jose, perhaps the most poignant lesson lies in the unyielding spirit of curiosity and the desire to understand what we cannot see—what dwells just beyond our perceptions. Whether through the eerie experiences on Quimby Road, the cries of the phantom girl on Marsh Road, the urban mysteries of Hicks Road, or the haunting atmosphere of the Winchester Mystery House, San Jose stands as a testament to the captivating interplay between history, folklore, and the ever-enigmatic nature of existence.

As night falls and the veil between the worlds thins, the city invites all to unlock the mysteries of the supernatural that dwell in the shadows, waiting to share their secrets with those brave enough to seek them out.

With each passing year, these stories continue to evolve, proving that while the figures and legends shift, the allure of the unknown remains an enduring part of the San Jose experience.

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Building

Continued from page 6

two due to financing troubles.

"Cities went, 'These developers are making all the money... We'll solve the housing crisis by making them pay for it,'" Hayden told San José Spotlight. "All that does is make it so our projects don't pencil out, we don't build any units and now you're in double trouble. Now there's no market or below market (homes built)."

The data emphasizes those challenges.

The report also places the San Jose metro area in the No. 1 spot for the highest declines in five-plus multifamily home building permits, dropping drastically from 1,697 permits in July 2020 to 449 in 2025, or 74%. The Los Angeles metro area ranked second, dropping from 1,728 permits to 556, or a 68% decline.

Marika Krause, spokesperson for San Jose's planning, building and code enforcement department, said the city has implemented some breaks for developers, including the multifamily development incentive programs that reduced construction taxes and inclusionary housing and parks fees. She said the city will focus on housing in its general plan review, adding market conditions and costs make it difficult to spur development.

"It's created a perfect storm that makes it tough for investors to make projects pencil out," Krause told San José Spotlight. "The study... shows this isn't just happening in our city. It's something our region is grappling with. We're committed to doing everything we can to make it easier and more appealing to build here."

Housing advocates said giving developers incentives is good, but it's not enough to address the housing crisis. San Jose, Sunnyvale and Santa Clara need to build 62,200, 11,966 and

11,632 homes respectively by 2031 to meet state housing mandates — and are all behind schedule.

Alex Shoor, executive director of nonprofit Catalyze SV, said cities must do more than offer the financial breaks they've already given to combat poor market conditions.

"Local governments need to do as much as they can to build the amount of housing needed because the problem continues to get worse," he told San José Spotlight. "It's getting harder and harder every single day, every single year we don't build the housing."

The San Jose metro area isn't the only region struggling with housing production in California.

Ali Sapirman, Housing Action Coalition advocacy and policy manager, said housing production and permitting has slowed statewide because of the market. They said that means now is a time to improve governmental processes needed for development so when the market returns, it's easy to push housing through. They added San Jose has been a leader on that front, using artificial intelligence to assess backyard homes.

"That's really the next path, meeting the moment of where we are with technology — not to replace or displace workers, but to supplement the technology that staff and planners have in order to streamline permitting," said Sapirman.

It's not all doom and gloom in local housing. Hayden said he sees signs the market is bouncing back, including banks calling him to invest in projects.

"Real estate typically goes in cycles," he said. "Hopefully two years from now, permits (will) have shot up, and we credit cities for streamlining permitting and doing small fee reductions to make it happen."

San Jose Museum of Art presents 'ektor garcia: loose ends'

In the artist's first solo museum exhibition in California

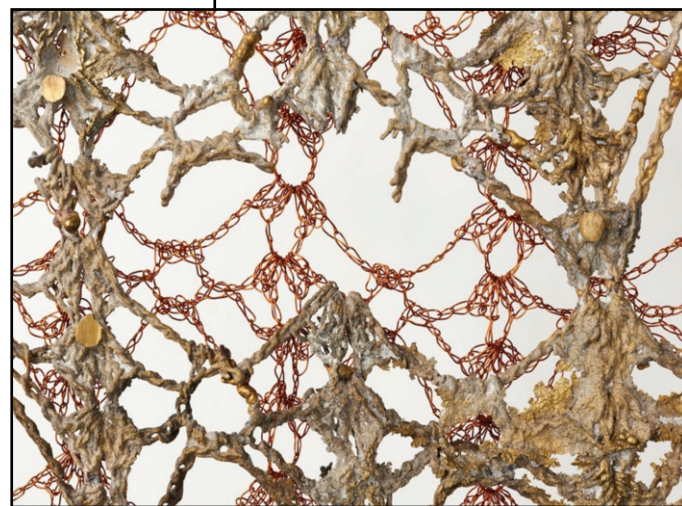
The San José Museum of Art (SJMA) will present *ektor garcia: loose ends*, the first solo museum exhibition in California by Mexico City-based artist ektor garcia (artist's spelling) from Oct. 17 – June 7.

This exhibition marks a homecoming for Garcia, who was born in California and spent his formative years in the Bay Area. It brings together existing and newly created sculptures in a single installation that reflects Garcia's ongoing exploration of transformation, labor, and identity through material and process.

Garcia's work is shaped by a rich and eclectic array of influences, from Mexican handcraft traditions passed down by his grandmother to a DIY sensibility shaped by his Bay Area upbringing. His practice also incorporates techniques learned through YouTube tutorials

and global travel. He often weaves in symbols from Mexican folktales and colloquialisms, queer subcultures, and transitional architectural forms like portals, windows, and curtains. Through this layered approach, Garcia challenges social and cultural hierarchies, particularly those tied to gendered and racialized labor, while rejecting fixed definitions of existence or identity.

As part of SJMA's partnership with Bloomberg Philanthropies, the exhibition will also feature new and original multi-



media content hosted on the free Bloomberg Connects app. The arts and culture app will host a digital guide of the exhibition, which will include an interview with the artist and commentary relating to the new installation.

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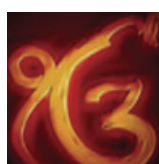


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God is One
ੴ ਇਕ ਹੈ
Rab Ik Hai

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3636 Gurdwara Ave.
San Jose, CA 95148

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

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Hall, Parish Office, Mission Center, Parish Gift Shop, and Memorial Garden are all located at 5111 San Felipe Rd. Please come join us in worship at any of the following times in our Chapel: Weekdays (M-Sa) at 8:30 AM; Saturdays at 4:00 PM (English) and 5:30 PM (Vietnamese); Sundays at 8:00 AM (English), 10:00 AM (English), 12:00 PM (English), 4:00 PM (Vietnamese), and 6:00 PM Youth Mass (English). The Villages Gated Community also features a Mass on Sundays at 8:15 AM at the Cribari Auditorium. For more information, please call or visit us at the Parish Office 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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