Departments Join Forces for Outreach

When departments collaborate, everyone wins. The Library and Elections Department had two successful joint efforts this month.

The partnership was on display at two local festivals: Aromas Day and the West End Celebration at Sand City.

Election and Library staff at the West End Celebration. Pictured from left to right are Claudio Valenzuela, Registrar of Voters; Greta Arevalo, Elections Program Manager; Liz Bednar, Library Assistant II and Sally Ybarra, library volunteer.
On Aromas Day, held August 26th, the Library opened on Sunday for the event and the Elections Department was there to distribute information and register people to vote.

“The Library and Elections departments have often collaborated over the years to help get the word out to residents about the importance of civic responsibility and encouraging citizens to register to vote, as well as having the library serve as a voting site and a drop off for vote-by-mail ballots,” says Jayanti Addleman, Library Director.

At the West End Festivities earlier in the month, the Library’s Reading Safari van was there with offerings from both departments. Library staff had the ever popular “block party,” books and registered people for library cards. Elections has been stepping up its outreach in advance of the November election and staff shared the space to do their work.

“Elections staff were able to register people to vote and provide information about the upcoming election,” says Claudio Valenzuela, Registrar of Voters. “Our team also answered questions regarding vote by mail and many people wanted to know if they were registered; we were able to verify this information on the spot for them.”

The two departments will be continuing their partnership and taking their efforts 'on the road' as the bookmobile visit events, fairs and celebrations throughout the county.

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Donation Expands Service at Natividad

A local family has made the single largest donation to the Natividad Foundation in its history and it will help Natividad change the way it provides cancer and chronic disease care.

The Matsui family has given $500,000 to create an Infusion Center for patients with cancer and chronic illness plus provide for the equipment needed to compound chemotherapy medications at the
hospital. Natividad does offer intravenous treatments but the new facilities will focus on outpatient treatment and easier access to therapies.

The donation was made in honor of Yasuko Matsui. Teresa Matsui, who is the CEO of Matsui Nurseries, says she, her sister and their mother Yasuko all are breast cancer survivors.

"Under the best of circumstances, going through cancer treatment, whether surgery, radiation or chemotherapy, is a trying process," says Teresa Matsui. "We were thrilled that our contribution could be used to facilitate the treatment process for cancer patients."

The donation will fund immediate updates to Natividad's pharmacy to create a compounding room for infusion therapies, as well as fund an on-site, four-room infusion center that will allow therapy to be delivered in a physician-supervised outpatient setting which will open next fall.

"Everyone needs to be able to get cancer screening tests, high-quality treatment for cancer and health care after cancer treatment," said Natividad CEO Dr. Gary Gray. "The Matsui family's gift is important because it provides the seed funding to get a project started that otherwise would not have been possible."

Giving Campaign Prompts Legacy from County Employee

The fun of the Employee Giving Campaign will continue for another week and hopefully most of us are enjoying it in some way, whether it’s the online bidding or department activities.

But the campaign is really about giving and it turned into so much more for one longtime County employee whose family wanted to share his giving story.
Many of you may remember Steve Lucas who worked for many years in the Information Technology Department. He actively participated in the giving program and made a connection with one particular charity, the United Way. That connection and commitment to giving was so important to Steve that his family shared with us that when he passed away in 2016, he included the non-profit in his will.

“Stephen was a regular supporter of United Way and made regular gifts through payroll deduction. Although not a wealthy man, he chose to give half of his estate to United Way Monterey County. He believed in the social responsibility of each person to provide help to others who need assistance and to provide that assistance without judgement.

Stephen would be glad if his story encouraged others to live more generously.

- Cathy Rodriguez, Steve’s sister.

Steve’s story is a great example of finding an organization that serves or advocates for the issues that are important to you. If you have not already done so, take a look at the giving options in the Employee Giving Campaign and see what good works and causes can be supported through your payroll deduction.

As to the fun activities of the campaign, next week is the final week! There will be one last round of online auction items beginning Tuesday, September 4th and closing September 7th. There are some extraordinary events and must-haves that will be available for bidding next week, so you will want to check back in.