

Electric leaf blower pilot program powers up in San Jose
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Nature preserved
City Council unanimously approves permanent protection of Coyote Valley – **SEE PAGE 6**

Celebrity Chef Joanne Weir to open rooftop restaurant in San Jose **SEE PAGE 9**



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Councilmember Matt Mahan selected as one of nation's outstanding rising leaders

Joins group of officials working to solve America's largest challenges

District 10 San Jose City Councilmember **Matt Mahan** (pictured) has been chosen as one of 20 leaders from across the country to join the NewDEAL (Developing Exceptional American Leaders). NewDEAL is a selective national network of the most talented, forward-looking state and local elected officials with Honorary Co-Chairs U.S. Senator Chris Coons, Congresswoman Marilyn Strickland, and Columbia, SC Mayor Steve Benjamin.

Chosen from more than 1650 nominations over NewDEAL's decade-long history, members of the nearly 200-person network are working to enact pro-growth progressive solutions in a diverse array of communities.

Mahan joins the group at a time when state and local leaders are on the frontlines of responding to the pandemic and as they take on a critical role in implementing the American Rescue Plan Act, recently signed by President Biden, which is

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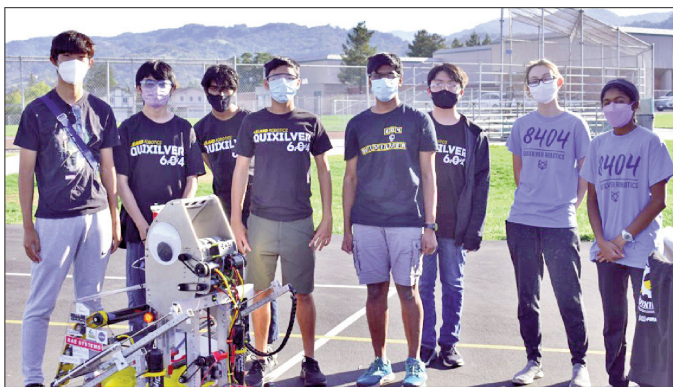
A Festival of Thanks

By Lorraine Gabbert
Senior Staff Writer

Although due to COVID-19, the Almaden Valley Women's Club couldn't host its beloved Art and Wine Festival this year, it continued to serve the community with fundraising events.

In May, a virtual 5k had participants following a pre-made route or creating their own map. In September, a wine pull held at the Farmer's Market at Princeton Plaza had entrants pulling corks to win bottles of wine, as well as a commemorative wine glass. And on Nov. 14, the Women's Club held a Festival of Thanks featuring art, vendors, games and food trucks. All proceeds from the events support San Jose charities and scholarships for graduating high school students.

"As we head into November, and start to think about the holidays and Thanksgiving, we have



Members of Leland High School's robotics club created and piloted a ball-throwing robot at the Festival of Thanks.

created a community event surrounding things we are thankful for," the Women's Club said on its website.

In addition to Thanksgiving, the idea behind the Festival of Thanks was to offer a taste of the Almaden Valley Art and Wine Festival while bringing people together safely. Music played, robots performed, and artists showed off their

creations to passersby. The event was held outside Castillero Middle School.

Denise Myrick, AVWC vice president of fundraising, said the women's club tried to mirror what it offered at the Almaden Art & Wine Festival on a very small scale with sponsor booths, artists and a children's area with games

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Almaden Blossom Valley NCL Class of 2022 selects Little Free Library for senior project

By Tonya Chin
Special to the Times

The Almaden Blossom Valley Chapter of the National Charity League (NCL) Class of 2022 has chosen Little Free Library as its focus for its senior service project this year. This is a new philanthropy focus for the chapter this year.

Little Free Library provides free books for the community and is the largest non-profit grass root book sharing network in the world. Little Free Library helps to build communities by inspiring readers and expanding book access for children and adults.

The senior class will be responsible for building, decorating, and installing four new Little Free Libraries in our community. They will also be filling the libraries with a variety of books that they will continue to restock. The class will also incorporate the "Read in Color"



The Almaden Blossom Valley Chapter of the National Charity League (NCL) Class of 2022. Photo credit: Katie Hardtke

program. This program is designed by Little Free Library to distribute books that provide perspectives on racism and social justice; celebrate BIPOC, LGBT, and other marginalized voices; and incorporate experiences from all identities for all

readers.

Book donations, of all genres and age groups, would be highly appreciated to help fill the libraries. If you have gently used books to contribute to the project, please send an email to ncl@mcgeeclan.org to

arrange for pickup.

Six different nearby San Jose high schools (Leigh, Leland, Mitty, Notre Dame, Pioneer, and Valley Christian high schools) are represented in the 2022 Almaden Blossom Valley NCL class. The group has spent six years together developing leadership skills, taking part in cultural experiences, and performing hundreds of hours of philanthropy throughout our local community.

The Class of 2022 has had the opportunity to become aware and participate in many different charitable organizations throughout our greater area. Each year they have volunteered in a different focus area including supporting animals and the environment in seventh grade, helping families in need in the eighth grade, assisting children in the ninth grade, supporting senior care in the tenth grade, and helping the hungry and homeless in the

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Times **Local News**

The Festival of Thanks featured art, games and food trucks.

Thanks

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like cornhole and crafts like coloring and face painting.

A special addition for this event was the ability to decorate luminaries called "thankful bags."

Myrick said especially with coming out of COVID, it gave people a chance to reflect on what they're grateful for.

Johnny Escobar helped his daughter Capri make a thankful bag. "We live in the neighborhood and like to support local events," he said. "We wanted to come see what was going on."

Although the turnout was small, the Festival of Thanks provided enjoyment for those who attended.

Mayra Evans was happy to watch her children enthusiastically peruse merchandise and watch members of Leland High School's robotics club pilots a ball-throwing robot. Evans said she would like to see more events like this.

"It was an opportunity to come together as a community," she said. "I think it's necessary, especially for the young ones."

Artist Andrea Silva, who creates keychains, coasters, magnets and jewelry, said being able to show and sell her work meant getting to do what she loves. Graphic Designer Claire Koperwas, who sold paintings, stickers, photos and cards, said it was exciting to participate in the event.

"It's really fun," Koperwas said. "I love

talking to people and talking about art with other artists."

Gilbert Serrato, who enjoyed the music, said although he was surprised the event was compact, he had fun playing Cornhole. He and Genevieve Anderson appreciated the service organizations being there such as Live Oak Adult Day Services and Almaden Valley Counseling Service.

Michelle Humke, executive director of Almaden Valley Counseling Service, said any opportunity to get its name out to the community about what it offers is important.

"We're happy to be here," she said. "Especially during the pandemic, people need mental health services."

Rebecca Stene, AVWC vice president of membership, said the Women's Club is already planning for next year.

"We've always been about the community and giving them an event to come out to," she said.

Below: **Johnny Escobar** helped his daughter **Capri** make a thankful bag.

Artist **Andrea Silva** said being able to show and sell her work meant getting to do what she loves.

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