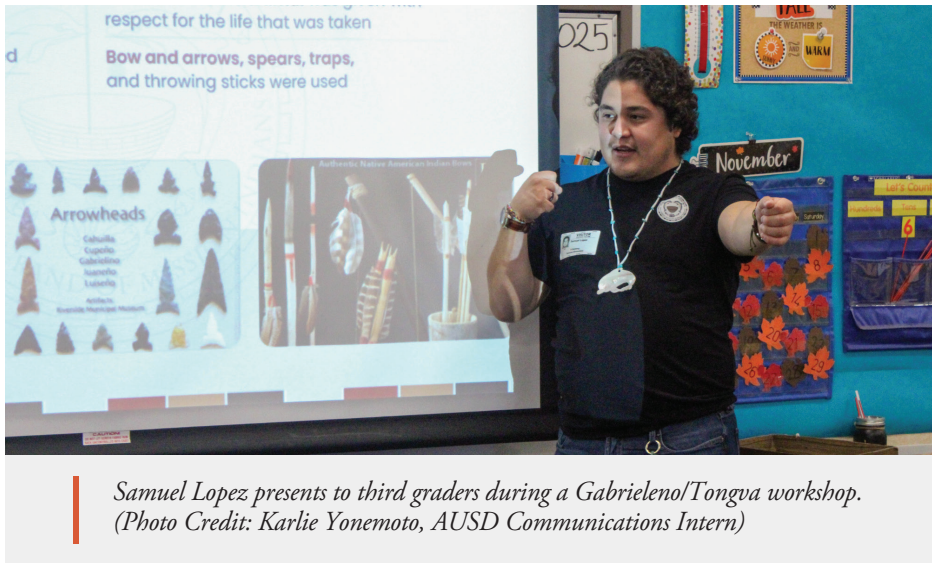


AROUND ALHAMBRA

2026

January - March 2026 | GATEWAY TO THE SAN GABRIEL VALLEY

www.alhambrachamber.org



Samuel Lopez presents to third graders during a Gabrieleno/Tongva workshop. (Photo Credit: Karlie Yonemoto, AUSD Communications Intern)

AUSD Honors Local History through Gabrieleno/Tongva Workshops for Third Graders

by Hailey Chau, AUSD Communications Intern

Third graders across Alhambra Unified School District recently explored the authentic local history of the Gabrieleno/Tongva people, the original inhabitants of the Los Angeles and Orange County Basin. Through the district's partnership with the Band of Mission Indians, the Gabrieleno/Tongva workshop offered students a meaningful opportunity to deepen their understanding and appreciation of the Indigenous history within their community.

"Gabrieleno" is derived from the Spanish name for San Gabriel, while "Tongva," meaning "People of the Earth," is their tribal name from their native language. Both names honor their ancestors who lived in defined territories surrounding the San Gabriel Mission. "Working directly with the Gabrieleno/Tongva community helps us lift up their voices, build authentic relationships, and ensure our students learn from the First Peoples

themselves," said Dr. Lily Jarvis, who has overseen the partnership and played a key role in its development. "By offering the workshop to every third grader, AUSD ensures that all students have the chance to learn this history directly from the original stewards of the land."

The workshop offered students a firsthand look at Gabrieleno/Tongva history, with tribal educators introducing their traditional lifestyle and providing hands-on activities directly connected to their culture. This allowed the third graders to recognize the significance of the Tongva's cultural traditions, emphasizing community and their relationship with nature, specifically their stewardship. Their sense of community was demonstrated through practices of living together in villages, gathering food for everyone, and sharing with their elders

continued on page 3



Alhambra City Council Reorganized, Appointing Mayor Jeff Maloney and Vice Mayor Adele Andrade-Stadler

by William Henderson

On Monday, December 8, the Alhambra City Council held its annual reorganization meeting, marking a transition in city leadership. During the ceremony, Mayor Lee was recognized for her dedication and service over the past year, as the council formally appointed Jeff Maloney as the new mayor and Adele Andrade-Stadler as vice mayor.

"The needs of the Alhambra community continue to be a priority as a policy maker and councilmember," shared former mayor Katherine Lee. "As the mayor, I saw how much work it took behind the scenes to run the city around the clock... I thank all of you."

Mayor Jeff Maloney spoke to residents attending both in person and online, reflecting on the city's progress and the work that lies ahead. "There's so much that has been done and so much that we

still need to do." He emphasized that city leadership is an ongoing effort rather than a finite task. "Things are not easy – running a city is not a list of checkboxes where you finish and are done. It's a continuous job of maintaining, making sure that we are keeping up the good work that we've already done, planning for the future, and addressing issues that are coming down the line." Mayor Maloney highlighted the importance of collaboration between City staff, leadership, and residents in addressing Alhambra's challenges. "That's the model for Alhambra. We can solve these problems – we can't do it alone, staff can't do it alone, but we need the residents of our community."

He concluded by thanking his fellow councilmembers for their continued support and partnership. "[To] my colleagues, thanks for always being here... I could not be more thankful for you and the work you allow all of us to do."

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- > Alhambra Chamber Celebrates Alhambra Rose Princess at Annual Rose Queen and Court Luncheon **2**
- > Mayor's Corner **3**
- > Little Dimples Brings Indoor Play to Alhambra **4**
- > Alhambra Valley Bowl Reopens After Two-Year Closure **9**
- > Eat, Play, and Celebrate at the Alhambra Lunar New Year Festival on February 28 **11**

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A Bigger Home for a Growing Community: Fried Music Moves to 3rd and Main

by William Henderson

Walking down Main Street, Alhambra residents will notice that the formerly vacant bottom floor of 7 N 3rd St has sprung to life with a newly opened Fried Music. Beautiful music pours out into the neighborhood, and the large glass windows showcase musicians of all ages practicing together inside.

Previously located on 2nd Street next to Alhambra High School, the store is the brainchild of Ben and Connie Fried, the married co-owners of Fried Music, who decided that a step up was long overdue for their growing community. Just over a month ago, they officially opened the new location, moving their classes and practice rooms to the larger space. "Everything has been organic - the business grew, the community grew, and it was time for an upgrade," shared Ben.



Along with private lessons, Fried Music has become a community hub for many residents. "We have a lot of people, especially adults, who consider this a second home." Ben and Connie met while they were students at USC Thornton and bonded over their shared love of music. From the start of their careers, they've been welcoming all types of musicians into their spaces. Initially, this meant opening the doors to their home. In 2022, they opened their first business location on 2nd Street and have now finally landed at their newly opened location on 3rd Street. They're excited to have a new kitchen where students can spend time together over meals. As local residents and parents, Ben and Connie have focused on caring for the kids in the community.



"We started to do our Music Sprouts, which is early education, and we've actually added a dedicated room here for that. It's definitely something for the community that we want to encourage, as it's proven to be a program that really immerses kids." After kids age out of Music Sprouts, Fried Music offers their Musical Jumpstart Program that gives parents a feel for what private lessons would be like for their children, without making a significant commitment. For the couple, staying in Alhambra for their new move was essential. "We love this community. There are so many things we love about Alhambra as a young business, too. Everyone's really kind, but also feels like serious, hustling people that are really intent on doing well for their families," shared Ben. Connie resonated with the sentiment. "Alhambra really impressed us, and the community is beautiful. Downtown Alhambra has a lot of potential; it's really an up-and-coming neighborhood. It's a hidden gem," she added.

Beyond their impressions of the community, Ben and Connie shared that both the landlord and the city have been easy to work with and helpful throughout the moving process. The move went off without a hitch, the landlord was accommodating, and, as Ben shared, the whole neighborhood has been supportive. "For raising our son too, it's a beautiful place... all the small businesses are right there, people come in, there's a sense of support... the city's been really helpful with us and our business, with all the things that happen when you're starting a business."

With their new location, Fried Music is pushing to make more opportunities for the community to get involved for free. They host free concerts regularly at their secondary location, Shop Yuju (226 W Main St), where they also sell art and gifts, supporting nearby artists and creatives. Fried Music also partners with the library for regular "instrument petting zoos," encouraging more Alhambra kids to start learning their first instruments.

To learn more about Fried Music or their upcoming concerts, programs, and more, visit www.friedmusic.com.



Alhambra Chamber Celebrates First Alhambra High Student on Rose Court at Annual Luncheon

by William Henderson

Over 35 years after Alhambra's first Rose Queen and Court Luncheon, the Chamber of Commerce celebrated history on December 2 by honoring Alhambra High senior Keiko Rakin, the first student attending Alhambra High School selected for the Rose Court. At this year's annual luncheon, over 100 local Alhambra business leaders, elected officials, and community members gathered at Almansor Court to celebrate the Alhambra Chamber's annual Rose Queen and Court Luncheon. Lynette Romero from NBC4 kicked off the event with a panel of the outstanding young women selected for the Rose Court and the Rose Queen, Serena Guo. "The 2026 Rose Court is a shining example of young leaders from all across the San Gabriel Valley, including right here in Alhambra," she shared. For over a century, the Tournament of Roses Court has highlighted seven young women each year, selected for their achievements, leadership, and community service. In 1988, Dr. Annie Siu, the first female president of the Alhambra Chamber of Commerce, invited the Rose Queen and Court to its first luncheon in Alhambra. Her initiative started what is now a beloved community tradition, continuing to this day. For most of its history, the Rose Court has selected seniors exclusively from the Pasadena Area Community College District. After advocacy from Keiko Rakin and Susan Pilcher, a member of the Alhambra Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, eligibility was expanded to several nearby cities last

year, opening the opportunity for many more remarkable women. Rakin, addressing attendees of the luncheon, shared the following, which is excerpted from her remarks.

"This is the event that started it all. Two years ago, I was a sophomore in high school, and I was invited to an Alhambra Chamber of Commerce Rose Court Luncheon. It was the first time that I had ever seen the court, and I was blown away. I asked how I could be part of it... and was heartbroken that I wouldn't even have a chance to try out. I decided to write a letter to the Tournament of Roses Association, and it went all the way up, expanding the geographic eligibility.

I owe it all to the amazing supporters in this room. This event means so much to me because it's really a culmination of all the things that I've worked really hard for, and I'm so excited to see many future Alhambra girls on the Court." As attendees enjoyed a beautifully prepared lunch from Almansor Court, the room buzzed with pride and excitement for the remarkable young women representing the region. The luncheon served as both a celebration of the Court and a reminder of the city's longstanding commitment to uplifting young leaders and creating opportunities for future generations.

"I want to thank you all for supporting and giving back to the community that we all love," said Maria Gao, president of the Alhambra Chamber of Commerce. With the Tournament of Roses Parade standing as one of the most-watched New Year's Day events in the nation, Rakin's presence on the 2026 Rose Court marks a proud moment for Alhambra, and her fellow Court members were featured in the 137th Tournament of Roses Parade on New Year's Day.

continuation from page 1

out of sincere respect. The Tongva established villages located near streams and marshlands with fishing sources, with Ya'anga being particularly notable for its access to the Los Angeles River and strong pre-colonial influence. Samuel Lopez, a descendant of the Gabrieleno/Tongva tribe who led the workshop for third graders at Ramona School, said he hopes students "gain a deeper respect for this area and an understanding of our culture of reciprocity." Lopez also mentioned the importance of teaching the younger



Students examine artifacts shared by tribal educators. (Photo Credit: Karlie Yonemoto, AUSD Communications Intern)



Ramona third graders receive soil and seeds as they learn to become caretakers of the land. (Photo Credit: Karlie Yonemoto, AUSD Communications Intern)(Photo Credit: Karlie Yonemoto, AUSD Communications Intern)

generation about the more challenging chapters of Tongva history. "There's beauty in reflecting on the hardships that aren't talked about as much, but not dwelling on them." By highlighting the tribe's value of communal responsibility, students were able to learn how the Gabrieleno/Tongva people honor respect and reciprocity with the land as they care for nature, give offerings before gathering, and treat everything in the natural world as sacred. The Tongva maintained balance with the environment surrounding them by dedicating themselves to the rules of Mother Nature and ensuring that they did not take more than needed. After the workshop, one third grader remarked, "I learned that the Tongva people gave back to nature." Teacher Arianna Haft added, "It's essential to honor the people who came before us and for students to become aware of different cultures." The Gabrieleno/Tongva workshop provided students direct exposure to tribal communities and diverse cultures, sparking their interest and curiosity rather than presenting them as just textbook history. Today, the tribe's cultural traditions are kept alive through visibility and educational initiatives like this to showcase who they are as people. These workshops allow the Gabrieleno/Tongva to share their message of "E'kwa'shem," meaning "We are still here," with the younger generation.

MAYOR'S CORNER

A Modern Alhambra Thrives

by Mayor Jeff Maloney



Mayor Jeff Maloney
City of Alhambra

What an honor it is to be writing the Around Alhambra Mayor's column again! When I was first elected to the Alhambra City Council over 9 years ago, I was inexperienced but very excited to get to work making our community the best it could be. Over my time in office, I have come to realize that well-intentioned ideas and campaign slogans can only get you so far. In order to implement real change and tackle big issues, it takes long-term commitment, dedication, and plain hard work.

I'm proud to say that many of the initiatives that my colleagues and I have worked hard on over the years are coming to fruition. We are implementing traffic calming and pedestrian/bike safety improvements so that our residents feel safe on our streets. The City's first historic preservation plan is gearing up to ensure our rich heritage is preserved. Our comprehensive sustainability plan will soon be complete so that we can leave a strong, healthy environment to our children. The new Alhambra community center has broken ground and will become a state-of-the-art facility for numerous activities for residents of all ages.

Meanwhile, Alhambra's first responders have ensured that public safety remains primary and that our residents are kept safe. We have managed to meet the state's new housing laws while preserving our unique character. Our hard working professional staff at City Hall is stable and continues to serve us well. And despite uncertain economic times, we have balanced our budget and saved for the future. There's no doubt that we face difficul-

ties and challenges, just like any community in unpredictable times. But after almost a decade in office, I know that the people of Alhambra are resilient, creative, compassionate, and courageous. Together I look forward to taking on our challenges head on and creating our best future with our neighbors. It may be a cliché, but I know that the things we hold in common far outweigh our differences.

I am proud to be your Mayor once again. Together I know we can do great things!

In closing, I would like to dedicate this column to the memory of Alhambra Police Officer Alex Sanders, who lost his life in the line of duty, protecting the people of this City. His legacy, and the legacy of all of those who put their lives in danger to keep us safe, will not be forgotten. Rest in peace, Officer Sanders.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, I sincerely welcome your feedback. Please do not hesitate to send me an email at jmaloney4alhambra@gmail.com.

News & Notes

- > **Alhambra Chamber Presents Gifts from Sister City Kirishima to Council**
On October 27, 2025, the Alhambra Chamber presented gifts from the Mayor of our sister city – Kirishima, Japan – to the Alhambra City Council. The Chamber sent a delegation in Spring 2025 to continue to develop relationships to bring business and investment to the City.
- > **California Institute of Advanced Management Names Dr. Jack Paduntin as President to Lead Next Era of Growth and Innovation**
The California Institute of Advanced Management (CIAM) proudly announced the appointment of Dr. Jack Paduntin as its new President. A forward-thinking higher education leader known for driving innovation, inclusion, and measurable impact, Dr. Paduntin steps into the role with a bold vision to expand CIAM's reach and elevate its position as a leader in values-driven management education.
- > **Alhambra Post Office Honors Seventeen Letter Carriers with National Safety Council's Million Mile Award**
The Alhambra Post Office, located at 10 W Bay State St., Alhambra CA 91802, hosted a ceremony on Friday, October 24, honoring 17 Letter Carriers who earned the prestigious National Safety Council Million Mile Award.
- > **Fremont Elementary Hosts Community Mural Painting Event Celebrating Culture, Connection, and Creativity**
On Saturday morning, October 18, Fremont Elementary School hosted a community mural painting event led by professional artists from **Studio Tutto**, where students, families, and local residents worked side-by-side to create a vibrant, multicultural mural celebrating Fremont's rich diversity.
- > **Iconic Sweet Treats are Coming to Alhambra!**
Just off Fremont in the Kohl's Shopping Center, the iconic **Handel's Ice Cream** will be opening to delight locals and visitors with their generous portions and sought-after flavors. The ice cream chain has expanded to various locations across the San Gabriel Valley, with the closest in Pasadena's Hastings Ranch neighborhood. Alhambra is an ice cream town, starting with the historic Fosselman's on Main Street and more than a dozen other ice cream and novelty shops in the City. Look for long lines that are worth the wait coming soon!

For full stories, visit aroundalhambra.org

Alhambra Passes Smoke-free Multi-Unit Housing Ordinance

by William Henderson



At the October 27 Alhambra City Council Meeting, a motion was made and passed to adopt an ordinance restricting smoking in multi-unit housing, affecting buildings with 3+ conjoined units. Advocated for by the Alhambra Community Health Alliance, a community coalition led by staff from the Institute for Public Strategies (IPS), this ordinance has been the culmination of years of work from the Alhambra community. Starting in September of 2022, Raudell Aluiso, Lahiru Kodituwakku, and Antonio Salang fro IPS

kicked off their project with a needs assessment, surveying the community to identify the most pressing issues and who would support the project. "A lot of our work is community-focused. We're subject matter experts - we're not explicitly telling residents what to do. We're just giving them tools to educate them and provide them with the information. Then it's up to them if they want to continue advocating for themselves," shared Aluiso. While IPS focuses on

continued on page 5



The World's First Multi-Plex Movie Theater Was In Alhambra

by Glenn Barnett

William James Edwards was a pioneer in the movie theater business. In 1930, as the Depression spread, the bold 23-year-old Edwards scraped up enough money to buy a movie theater, the Mission Theater (later known as the Monterey) in Monterey Park for \$1,000. Edwards was a hands-on owner. He and his wife took a can-do attitude toward running a business that depended on the scarce loose change of Depression-era people. They sold the tickets, screened the movies, and cleaned up afterwards, all while making time to befriend their customers.

At times, money was tight, and they couldn't pay themselves, but Edwards's hands-on management formula worked. Before the year was out, he bought the independent Alhambra Theater, built in 1924 and located on the southeast corner of Main and Atlantic, which seated 990 people.

The adjacent building had been a grocery store, which Edwards also bought in 1939. He knocked out a wall to create an entrance from his theater and built a second movie screen with seating for 490 people, which became known as 'The Annex'. The space had shared bathrooms, a ticket booth, and a concession stand. The Annex opened on November 5, 1941, becoming the world's first multi-screen movie house. As it gained fame, it eventually became known as Alhambra Twin Cinemas. Edwards' innovation was just in time for the golden age of movies, which began with 'talkies' and later introduced color cinematography, which replaced black-and-white films. Soon, the theaters drew huge, wartime crowds to enjoy their favorite stars on the big screen.

At the Alhambra Twin Cinemas, with one ticket costing 30 cents, customers could watch one of the double-bill movies in one theater and, for no extra charge, move to

the other to see the second feature. Edwards would go on to own different theaters in Alhambra: the El Rey on Main Street and the Garfield Theater at Valley and Garfield. He dominated the San Gabriel Valley.

Edwards was hugely influential in the geographical territory he perceived as his own. In the late 80s, the Mann Theater Group proposed building a theater in Alhambra. The neighbors gathered at a City Council meeting to protest the proposed development, expressing a "not in our backyard" sentiment. It did little good to stop the plan. Mr. Edwards, however, had strong ties with the Alhambra city council and let them know he was not pleased to have a rival company on his turf. The Council took the hint and voted against the Mann development.

Although the Alhambra Theater survived the threat of competition, it did not outlast the Whittier Narrows earthquake of 1987, which collapsed its roof and walls, reducing the significant Alhambra landmark to rubble.

Edwards died at 90 in 1997, and his son took over the business. By 2001, the Edwards Theater Circuit, which was still family-owned and operated, had the 11th-largest theater chain in the country, with 90 locations and 850 screens. Much of its success was due to the theaters it bought or built in the San Gabriel Valley and the rapidly growing Orange County. The founder's hard work and innovation remained a hallmark of the company's success.

More recently, Regal purchased Edwards Theaters, and today, when we visit the modern Regal Edwards Alhambra Renaissance Theater, it still evokes the essence of William Edwards and his significant contributions to movie history.

Alhambra Remembers APD Officer Alec Sanders

by William Henderson



Early in the morning on Thursday, November 20, at around 3:00 am, Officer Alec Sanders, age 28, was one of two individuals who passed away after a high-speed police pursuit ended in a fatal crash.

"He was a devoted fiancé and dedicated family man," shared Alhambra Police Chief Garrett Kennedy at an interview this morning. "He'll be remembered for his dedication, his kindness, and the positive impact he had on everyone." Officer Sanders is survived by his fiancée, two sisters, and his brother. He was "known for his unwavering

reliability," said Kennedy. "He was the type of officer who responded to every call, whether he was dispatched to it or not."

The whole Alhambra community mourned alongside the Alhambra Police Department, his friends, and his family. Alhambra police officers put their lives on the line every day to protect and serve their community, and Alhambra feels the loss of one of its own deeply. Alhambra residents and police from surrounding areas gathered together for an end-of-watch procession honoring his life and legacy.

Celebrate Winners of the Best of Downtown Alhambra

Downtown Alhambra proudly recognizes businesses that truly stand out in our community with the announcement of the Best of Downtown Alhambra 2025 first-place winners. Selected through online community voting, these awards celebrate the local businesses that residents and visitors continue to support, recommend, and love.

This year's top honors reflect the diversity, creativity, and heart of Downtown Alhambra. From dining and nightlife to wellness, shopping, and professional services, these businesses represent the very best of what our downtown has to offer.

The Best Date Spot award goes to Imizzu, while Vita Cane earned first place for both Best Dessert Spot and Best Drink Spot. In entertainment, The Granada was recognized as the Best Entertainment venue, continuing its role as a cornerstone of culture and gatherings in Downtown.

Health and wellness took center stage with CrossFit DTA winning Best Healthy

Lifestyle Business, while local retail was celebrated with Imizzu also taking top honors for Best Place to Shop.

In professional services, Elis Tours & Travel earned first place, and Delhi Belly, named Best Restaurant, led Downtown's culinary scene. Self-care services were highlighted with Beauty and Co. winning Best Self-Care Service.

Community connection was front and center with Happy Humble Hub earning Best Third Place, and the highly coveted Favorite Business award going to Relash. The Best of Downtown Alhambra awards are presented by the Downtown Alhambra Business Association, celebrating the local businesses that help make Downtown Alhambra a vibrant place to shop, dine, and connect.

To connect with Downtown Alhambra events and highlights, follow on Instagram and TikTok @downtownalhambra and visit www.downtownalhambra.com.



Little Dimples Brings Indoor Play to Alhambra

by Cynthia Harbott

Finding a safe and child friendly play space is difficult for parents in a large metropolitan area. Parks are often not within walking distance, and poor weather conditions can put a damper on outdoor activities. To counter this issue, on December 14, 2025, Sarah Del Rosario opened Little Dimples in Alhambra, giving parents a fun environment for the whole family to enjoy, come

rain or shine. As a clean, bright indoor playground, Little Dimples Alhambra features ballpit, dress-up areas, trampolines, merry-go-round, and other areas for little ones to play, explore, and have fun. Little Dimples offers just as much enjoyment for parents as they do for children. Featuring an in-house cafe and a full menu of small bites, coffee, boba tea beverages, and desserts, parents can lounge at the cafe while their kids have fun in the hands-on play areas. For Rosario, opening Little Dimples was a testament to remaining faithful to her dreams. Leaving behind a career in a corporate office, Rosario's passion for her business helped it stand the test of time. After a 14 month shutdown following Covid mandates,

Rosario emerged from the intermittence, reopening her Montebello location and successfully expanding to the city of Alhambra. Little Dimples' grand opening and ribbon cutting was met with enthusiasm from the crowd, as Alhambra Chamber President Maria Gao and Alhambra Councilmember Kathrine Lee congratulated Rosario and her family on their contribution to the city's local milieu. For Lee, the addition of a family friendly space addresses a crucial local desire at the heart of Alhambra's neighborhoods. "Someone talked to me about wanting to make sure that Alhambra becomes a family oriented community," Lee explained, "and this is one example of how we can bring that into fruition."

Alhambra's Historical Neighborhoods

by Gary Frueholz, Engel & Voelkers Real Estate

Alhambra's real estate has a rich and extensive history. The first housing developments in what would become Alhambra were established in the mid-1870's. These initial communities were built north of Mission Road and west of Atlantic Blvd. and had names such as Shorb, Dolgeville, and Marguerita. Alhambra was formally incorporated into a city in 1903. As these areas developed, they reflected the era of their construction through the architecture which was employed. The earliest neighborhoods employed Craftsman, Spanish Mediterranean, and Victorian architecture, while districts built after 1930 began to employ Ranch, Colonial Revival, and Modern architecture. In the last two decades Alhambra has established, with the assistance of a professional urban planning company, twenty-six historical residential neighborhoods. These historical neighborhoods reflect and help preserve the unique architectural styles of various areas of our city, foster community identity, and support architectural guidelines for new construction and additions to houses. Colorful signs on parkways identify these historic districts which create a link to our city's rich history and cultural heritage. Some of Alhambra's historical neighborhoods are the Midwick Tract, La Marguerita-Souders Tract, and Airport Tract.

The Midwick Tract is located in southern Alhambra between Hellman Avenue, Atlantic Boulevard, Garvey Avenue, and

Granada Park. Homes in this neighborhood generally range from 1,200 to 1,800 square feet and lots vary between 5,000 and 9,000 square feet. The most common style of architecture in the Midwick Tract is the Ranch style. Ranch style homes typically were constructed after World War II and had a low single-story profile with a gentle slope to the roof. Homes usually had a porch, yet it would not be as large as the porches of its architectural predecessor, the Craftsman. Hardwood floors were typical, tile kitchen counters, and thin red bricks around the fireplace.

The Midwick Tract has an interesting history, as prior to World War II it was a golf course and polo field. Only in the post war economic growth years was it turned into a residential neighborhood. When in the Midwick Tract, you will notice that streets are not constructed in a grid arrangement (i.e. streets are straight and intersect other streets at right angles), as in the middle of the Midwick Tract is the Midwick Hill. Streets now bend around the hill in gentle curves, with some streets meandering up the side of the hill to cul-de-sac ends. During the last year, the average price of a single family detached home sold for approximately \$1,100,000 and was about 1,800 square feet.

One of Alhambra's oldest historical tracts is the La Marguerita-Souders Tract. This tract dates back to the turn of the century when Alhambra was incorporated as a city



in 1903. Some of the homes in La Marguerita-Souders are actually older than the city itself. The La Marguerita-Souders Tract is easy to find. It is nearly a perfect rectangle and bounded by Olive Street on the east and Bushnell Avenue on the west. Bushnell was established as the western demarcation line of Alhambra with South Pasadena. The north edge runs along Pine Street and the rectangle is completed with the southern portion of the tract going along Alhambra Road.

If you want to see Craftsman style homes, this tract has an abundance of this style of architecture. During the earlier period of this tract some Victorian style homes also were constructed. As time progressed, Spanish-Mediterranean style homes started to also show up. The Craftsman style of homes, also known as the Arts and Crafts

Movement, started to evolve in England during the mid-1800's. Its philosophy was to utilize natural materials into a simple and pure design. During this past year these single family detached homes sold for approximately \$1,000,000 and averaged a little over 1600 square feet. The other historic residential neighborhoods such as the Airport Tract, Bean Tract, and Ramona Tracts tell their own stories and help connect our city's heritage and community stability. It's thanks to these historic neighborhoods that our city's identity and the economic value of Alhambra's real estate are magnified.

Gary Frueholz is a realtor with Engel & Voelkers Real Estate, a past member of the Alhambra Planning Commission, a Certified Senior Real Estate Specialist, Certified International Property Specialist, and can be reached at 626-318-9436.



Authors Luncheon Features One of Its Own Members

Local Author to Share Writing Journey at AAUW Luncheon The AAUW Alhambra-San Gabriel Branch will host its annual Authors Luncheon on Saturday, January 25, from noon to 2 pm at United Methodist Church, 9 N. Almansor St., Alhambra.

Featured author and branch member Jackie Fisher will introduce her middle-grade novel, *Courage Found*, and share insights into her creative process, from where story ideas originate to the tools she uses to stay focused on her craft.

Fisher launched her writing career after retiring from Montebello Unified School District in 2003. She self-published *Adventures on Tuesdays*, a beginning chapter book, before completing *Courage Found*. To promote her novel, Fisher has visited classrooms for book talks and traveled to upstate New York for education conferences and book fairs. She's currently

working on *Courage in Love*, her latest novel, and has submitted chapters for a Masters Review competition.

The Alhambra-San Gabriel Branch has a distinguished history of featuring authors whose work promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion. Past speakers include Father Gregory Boyle, founder of Homeboy Industries, who discussed *Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion*; Kyoko Nancy Oda, who presented her translation of her grandfather's *Tule Lake Stockade Diary* from his WWII incarceration; and Dr. Gary Scott, who highlighted the sacred art of Isabel and Edith Piczek in his self-published book *The Universe Speaks*.

The event is open to the public. For reservations and information about branch programs, visit www.alhsangab-ca.aauw.net

continuation from page 3

substance prevention in general terms, the focus in Alhambra was moving towards eliminating the severe health hazards secondhand smoke poses.

Halfway through 2023, IPS transitioned its focus to running the Alhambra Community Health Alliance, engaging Alhambra residents and keeping them informed. Residents, students, and landlords came together to meet and discuss the issues at hand, working to create positive change within their community. IPS provided data to community members, helping them substantiate their desire for a healthier Alhambra with the proven science to make the changes they wanted to see.

"Alhambra has been such a warm and receptive community," said Kodituwakku. "Every community event we've gone to, people have come up and said 'Thank you for the work you've done and thank you for being here,'

and often share their experiences with us. People have been very open and willing to share their stories, which has made our jobs a lot easier."

Salang agreed: "People here are very passionate, and that's rare for a lot of cities. The warmth and the welcoming spirit that Alhambra gave us really shines... [residents] already know what to do, how to speak to their councilmembers, and who their district councilmembers are." All three staff members from IPS said that because Alhambra is a tight-knit community, talking to the Alhambra councilmembers was very organic, as residents already had relationships to leverage, prompting decision-makers to value the significance of the issues brought to them.

In 2024, IPS shifted its focus again to policy campaigns. Antonio mentioned that their group was especially grateful for the support from the Alhambra High School Dream

Center students. After going through the fires earlier in the year, the ICE raids, and much more, he anticipated they would not want to take on even more work. Still, they were eager and willing to attend meetings, support the cause, and share stories about how they had been impacted and how much this ordinance meant to them. While this campaign has successfully concluded, going forward, there are other issues to address and more work to do. IPS staff members expressed that they're still passionate about helping people and are always seeking new grants, contracts, RFPs, and nonprofits in the area seeking advocacy support.

To discover more about the history of this project, visit @cha_alhambra on Instagram. To read about other projects IPS is overseeing, visit www.publicstrategies.org.

Ramona Convent Robotics Team Makes Their Television Debut



Mission Unstoppable is an Emmy-nominated CBS television series hosted by Miranda Cosgrove that showcases cutting-edge science and STEM innovations by highlighting inspiring women in STEM fields, including engineering, zoology, and space exploration. Last year, they visited the Ramona Convent's 19-acre campus, taking photos, collecting footage, and interviewing members of the Ramona Rampage Robotics team. The recent episode features Ramona's very own all-girls Robotics Team, Ramona Rampage, in a real competition.

The host interviewed 2025 Team Captain Sara Caldera '25 and Lead Digital Designer Chloe Castellanes '25 about building a competition robot from scratch and how these students will use STEM skills in the future. The show is produced in partnership with Lyda Hill Philanthropies and the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in

Media to encourage and support girls' interest and participation in STEM careers. Ramona Convent offers a strong STEM program as a Catholic girls' high school in Alhambra, CA, with a rigorous curriculum, hands-on learning in a Makerspace, an award-winning all-girls robotics team, and facilities including science labs to foster interest in STEM for college and careers.

Ramona Convent, celebrating a legacy of 136 years of distinction, is a welcoming Catholic college-prep high school for young women committed to excellence in education. Graduates are empowered, resilient, socially conscious leaders well prepared to meet the challenges of life as contributing members of the global community. For more information, contact Ramona Convent Secondary School, located at 1701 W. Ramona Rd., Alhambra, CA 91803. Telephone (626) 282-4151 or visit www.ramonaconvent.org.



Past and Present Alhambra Rose Princesses Meet at Alhambra Historical Society's Story House


by William Henderson

On Friday, December 19th, current Rose Princess Keiko Rakin visited the Alhambra Historical Society's Story House to meet Barbara Beckley, a former Rose Princess and Alhambra High School alumna. Despite the 59-year gap between their election to the court, Rakin and Beckley bonded quickly by sharing their incredible experiences of representing their hometown.

"It's amazing, I didn't know that there was anyone previously from Alhambra because it just wasn't in the geographic location for so long... I was so happy to come out and meet someone from Alhambra," shared Rakin. "We go to a lot of different events in different areas, and princesses on the court will see people who are from their school, and they could talk and have somebody to look up to and converse, but I never had that because there wasn't somebody from Alhambra in such a long time. It was really nice to see someone who represents the community so well."


It was just last year that the Rose Court eligibility opened, allowing students from Alhambra High School to apply. While Beckley was an Alhambra resident and attended Alhambra High School, she was allowed to apply to the court only after she began attending Pasadena City College. The geographic eligibility is not the only change since 1967, as Beckley shared. "When I was on the court, around 750 women applied, and because the internet wasn't around, you got your letter in the mail. Even now, I get goosebumps now and then remembering how I felt waiting for my parents to get the letter."




The Alhambra Historical Society organized the meeting through the efforts of Vice President Chris Olson and President Michael McCollum. Olson shared, "The older I get, the more I recognize that there are parts of history that are not fully told. This was an opportunity to talk about all of the princesses from Alhambra."




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Watch the full video

Join high school robotics team, Ramona Rampage, as they talk about what it's like to build competition robots from scratch! Hear from students about their challenges and victories, and how this experience prepared them for STEM in the future.

Pokémon Craze Returns: Alhambra Trading Card Fans Wait Hours for Mega Evolutions Box

On Tuesday, September 23, a long line formed in downtown Alhambra on S. Garfield Ave., wrapping all the way around Project CCG into the alley and behind the store as avid Pokémon fans lined up for a release of the new Pokémon Mega Evolutions box. Adam, a local trading card fan, shared that "it's become the hot ticket trading card game. It's one of the easiest to go after and has the most hype." Read more at aroundalhambra.org

The Alhambra Kicks Off the Holiday Season with Santa Night

by Kyrian Corona



The Alhambra was transformed into an outdoor Winter Wonderland for Santa Night on December 4. Tenants and their families were treated to a stroll through whimsical holiday displays lighting up the Oval Mall, highlighted by a majestic illuminated Christmas tree. Some of the evening's fun included free photos with Santa, outdoor animated films, train

rides, a visit with Santa's reindeer, and ornament decorating. Attendees were serenaded by holiday carolers while enjoying hot chocolate, apple cider, popcorn, and cookies. Kids had a chance to write letters to Santa and drop them off in a special Post Box. In all, 119 letters were collected and mailed straight to the North Pole free of charge!



Alhambra City Hall Features Local Artists in Lobby Art Gallery

by Kelsey Rivadeneyra

The Alhambra City Hall will showcase the talent of six local artists in its lobby art gallery during the first half of 2026, featuring unique exhibitions from community members. Each exhibition will highlight different artistic styles, from painting and sculpture to photography and mixed media, offering visitors a chance to explore the creativity and diversity of Alhambra's art scene.

and hear the stories behind each project. These receptions provide a unique opportunity to connect with local artists and gain a deeper appreciation for their work. In addition to the receptions, exhibitions will be up throughout the full month for community members to visit and see the art during city hall operating hours.

Every exhibition will include an artist reception, where guests can meet the creators, learn about their inspirations,

Stop by 111 S 1st St, Alhambra to experience these one-of-a-kind exhibitions and celebrate the vibrant talent of the city's artists firsthand.



Love Alhambra?
Celebrate your passion for your city this Valentine's Day by supporting local restaurants.

Check out aroundalhambra.org for local reservations and specials!



“Chinese New Year” photo by Juliana Phang is licensed under CC by 2.0

Refresh Your Home for Lunar New Year: Where to Shop & Find Inspiration in Alhambra

by William Henderson

While many people associate Lunar New Year only with food and festivities, the cultural holiday represents much more than food and fun. For many, Lunar New Year is a time to renew their home, let go of what no longer serves them from the last year, and invite in brightness, positive intentions, and transformation.

Decor plays a meaningful part in these preparations, and there's no better way to redecorate than by shopping locally! While there are countless spots in Alhambra that will showcase the signature red and gold accents and offer opportunities for a home reset, four Alhambra locations stand out as great options for finding new decorations.

Alhambra Furniture Gallery

In the heart of Downtown Alhambra at 323 E Main St, Alhambra, Alhambra Furniture Gallery has been part of the community for nearly 40 years. The gallery focuses on Chinese-style rosewood furniture, with its exhibition space making it easy to shop and imagine new possibilities for the home. Knowledgeable staff are happy to help with suggestions and new ideas.

Rehab Vintage Interiors

At 3086 W Valley Blvd, Rehab Vintage Interiors offers timeless pieces that welcome in the new year by honoring the past. The shop sells vintage “statement” furniture, featuring one-of-a-kind finds in its rotating selection. Shoppers consistently find unique custom pieces.

Gallery Nucleus

Located at 210 E Main St, Alhambra, Gallery Nucleus offers a creative approach to redecorating. The gallery sells prints, books, and collectibles that add flair to redecorating. More than decor, the store also features new events every few weeks, making the visit not just for shopping but an enjoyable full-gallery experience.

Mercados Flowers

To complete your decorations, head over to Mercados Flowers on the corner of Atlantic Blvd and Alhambra Rd (600 N Atlantic Blvd, Alhambra). The carefully curated bouquets are a simple yet powerful way to symbolize renewal, luck, and fresh beginnings that welcome in the new year.

After refreshing your space, celebrate with the community! Stop by the Lunar New Year Festival to continue your festivities, connect with the community, and welcome the new year with your Alhambra neighbors and visitors, surrounded by tradition, entertainment, and delicious food.



Exhibiting Month	Artist Reception	Exhibition Title	Artist
January 2026	January 21, 2026 5:00 P.M. – 7:00 P.M.	Looking Inward, Reaching Outward	Vi Truong
February 2026	February 18, 2026 5:00 P.M. – 7:00 P.M.	The Art of Keith Batcheller	Keith Batcheller
March 2026	March 18, 2026 5:00 P.M. – 7:00 P.M.	All Things Great and Small	WeArt5
April 2026	April 15, 2026 5:00 P.M. – 7:00 P.M.	Journey of the Artist	Angel Barris
May 2026	May 20, 2026 5:00 P.M. – 7:00 P.M.	The Skin of a Snake	Lisa Hirata
June 2026	June 17, 2026 5:00 P.M. – 7:00P.M.	Fire Keepers	Franshesca Oliveras



2026

ALHAMBRA LUNAR NEW YEAR FESTIVAL

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2026
MAIN STREET, ALHAMBRA**

Alhambra’s Lunar New Year Festival is the region’s premier holiday celebration, drawing more than 20,000 attendees from across Southern California. Families, residents, and visitors come together to enjoy a full day of cultural performances, lion dancers, live demonstrations, kids activities, and delicious food.

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WELLNESS PAVILION

Position your brand where community, culture, and celebration meet. Join us as a vendor or sponsor and make your business part of this highly visible, widely celebrated tradition. For more inquiries, please email

ALNY@alhambrachamber.org.

Alhambra Valley Bowl Reopens Alhambra's Only Bowling Alley

by William Henderson



On Sunday, November 30, the San Gabriel bowling community rejoiced together at the grand opening and ribbon cutting of Alhambra Valley Bowl, the only bowling center in all of Alhambra. At 10 am, a large crowd of excited bowlers gathered outside the fully renovated bowling alley. The line wrapped all the way around the building, as residents joined the new owners in celebrating the long-awaited return. Alhambra Mayor Katherine Lee and Assemblymember Mike Fong joined in the festivities, presenting certificates and offering their congratulations.

After two years of waiting as the space was gutted and closed, followed by a complete interior renovation, new owners Andre Eubanks, Roberta Vann, and Lynn

Matsubara were thrilled to see all the support from bowlers coming out to their grand opening. "It's been a lot of work over the last four and a half months... we're very thankful to be here," shared Eubanks, reflecting on all the work that the team had gone through to bring back the bowling alley. Matsubara, who's been deeply connected to the bowling community, added, "I've been bowling all my life, and this is a dream; to actually own a bowling center. To do it with two friends, two junior bowlers that I used to bowl with when we were kids, is so exciting."

Celebrating the return of bowling to Alhambra, the owners offered 88-cent games for the day, which thrilled the local



community. The center stayed bustling with people, excitement, and festivities all day. Vann summed up the overwhelming gratitude she and the rest of the team shared, saying, "I just wanted to thank everyone from the bowling community, and our family and friends for being here. Today, just seeing all of you out here means a lot to us all. Thank you so much for supporting us all today."

Alhambra Valley Bowl is open to the community on weekdays until 10 pm and until midnight on Fridays and Saturdays with galactic glow bowling. It is located at 1400 E Valley Blvd, Alhambra, CA 91801. For more information, visit their website at <https://avbowl.com/>



Local AUSD High School Sports News

by Mike Koski, President, Alhambra Sports Hall of Fame Committee

Boys Football Recap

The Moors were the only AUSD team to make it into the CIF-SS Playoffs, beating Bassett 25-0 in the first round of Division 14 before losing to Anaheim 13-6 in a quarterfinal game to finish 6-6 on the season. Halen Tsang and Nero Navarro were named First Team All-League, while Bryan Leonard, Leeland Mendoza, Jefferson Clay, and Marco Vasquez were named to the Second Team.

San Gabriel finished the season at 7-3 but did not qualify for the Division 12 Playoffs because there were too many automatic qualifiers in that division. Adam Mascorro, Louie Navarro, and Noah Osorio made First Team All-League, while Kenji Leos, Jahkai Lowe, Eian Nery, Abraham Rodriguez, and Richard Garcia made Second Team.

Mark Keppel had a tough season at 0-10. Matthew Contreras was named First Team All-League, while Ryan Gomez, Jesse Escobar, and Derrick Liang were named to the Second Team.

Girls Flag Football Recap

All three AUSD teams participated in this new high school girls' sport. The Moors

finished the season with a 7-12 record in their second year of existence. Quarterback Iris Luong threw for 3,049 yards to leading receivers Gisella Segura with 62 receptions for 1,354 yards and Annilka Rodriguez with 64 receptions for 862 yards. Mark Keppel was 3-19-1 while San Gabriel finished at 5-19.

Boys Basketball

All three teams are looking to repeat last year's success, as they all made the CIF-SS Playoffs. Mark Keppel is looking to win the Almont League for the third year in a row, and will be led by last year's League Co-MVP Maddux Hang, along with Alex Benitez, Jake Amimoto-Ha, and Henry Liu. Alhambra had one of its best seasons last year, but will need to find a way to replace three-year starter Landon Winslow, who is now playing at Glendale College. San Gabriel also had an outstanding year and looks to build on that success this season.

Girls Basketball

Last year's Mark Keppel Girls Team won a CIF-SS Division 3AA Championship and will aim for that success again this year. As always, they are heavy favorites to win the Almont League. Alhambra and San Gabriel both look to improve on last year's season.

Alhambra Planet Fitness Celebrates Grand Reopening

by William Henderson

On Friday, October 3, Planet Fitness in Alhambra celebrated its grand reopening with a ribbon-cutting, showcasing a fresh new look and upgraded equipment throughout the gym. The event drew a large crowd of members, fitness enthusiasts, and Alhambra neighbors, all eager to see the changes and reconnect with their local fitness community. Staff gave tours, celebrated the ribbon-cutting, and invited attendees to try out their massage chairs and review the improved

Black Card benefits. As part of the event, Planet Fitness offered a special discount to new members at its revitalized location. With its brighter interior and modern machines, Alhambra Planet Fitness continues to help residents reach their fitness goals.

Those wanting to visit the newly improved location can see it in person at 610 E Valley Blvd in Alhambra, or visit online at www.planetfitness.com/gyms/alhambra-ca/.



Jan-Mar 2026



ALHAMBRA
Restaurant
of the Week

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Discover new favorite restaurants each week by visiting alhambraeats.com for fresh features and food news!

The Alhambra Restaurant of the Week (ROTW) highlights the unique flavors of our community. Every week, we showcase a diverse culinary offering that represents the best of local dining in the City of Alhambra!

Jan 5 to Jan 11		<p>Boat House is known for its flavorful Cantonese-style seafood, featuring fresh fish, lobster, and classic stir-fried dishes. The expansive menu and banquet-style dining make it a popular choice for family gatherings and special occasions.</p> <p>Visit them at 25 W Valley Blvd, Alhambra</p>	
Jan 12 to Jan 18		<p>Hengry brings bold regional Chinese flavors to Alhambra, specializing in dishes rooted in Guizhou cuisine alongside other classic Chinese favorites. Diners enjoy spicy sour soups, poached chili chicken, and rich stir-fries in an inviting, contemporary setting that celebrates bold aromatics and shared plates.</p> <p>Visit them at 2718 W Valley Blvd, Alhambra</p>	
Jan 19 to Jan 25		<p>Ipoh Kopitiam brings authentic Malaysian comfort food to Alhambra, highlighting traditional dishes like hainan chicken, nasi lemak, and house-made sauces. Its casual café-style atmosphere makes it an inviting place to enjoy bold, nostalgic flavors.</p> <p>Visit them at 1411 S Garfield Ave #104, Alhambra</p>	
Jan 26 to Feb 1		<p>Zhenwei Kitchen specializes in Northwestern Chinese cuisine, offering hearty dishes such as hand-pulled noodles, savory pancakes, and rich stews. The bold seasoning and homestyle preparations have earned it a loyal following among locals.</p> <p>Visit them at 1227 W Valley Blvd #105, Alhambra</p>	
Feb 2 to Feb 8		<p>The Hat delivers classic fast-food favorites with a local touch, serving pastrami sandwiches and chili cheese fries all day. Known for quick service and generous portions, it's a dependable stop for comfort food cravings.</p> <p>Visit them at 1 Valley Blvd, Alhambra</p>	
Feb 9 to Feb 15		<p>Sushi Yu offers an elevated Japanese dining experience with fresh sushi, sashimi, and carefully crafted rolls. The clean, modern setting and attention to quality make it a standout spot for both casual meals and special occasions.</p> <p>Visit them at 115 W Main St, Alhambra</p>	
Feb 16 to Feb 22		<p>Shanghai Yao Fat is a longtime favorite for Shanghainese comfort dishes, featuring hot & sour soup, chow mein, and fried pork chops. Traditional flavors and satisfying portions keep diners coming back for familiar, homestyle meals.</p> <p>Visit them at 1721 W Valley Blvd, Alhambra</p>	
Feb 23 to Mar 1		<p>Zui Xiang Yuan showcases bold Northern Chinese flavors with a menu centered on hand-pulled noodles, dumplings, and pan-fried buns. The hearty dishes and casual setting make it a popular destination for comforting, flavorful meals.</p> <p>Visit them at 1269 E Valley Blvd, Alhambra</p>	
Mar 2 to Mar 8		<p>Tacos Ensenada brings authentic Mexican street-style tacos and burritos to Valley Blvd, featuring seafood tacos, nachos, and hearty burritos. With fresh ingredients and delicious seafood flavors, it's a casual, flavorful stop for Mexican favorites.</p> <p>Visit them at 1142 W Valley Blvd, Alhambra</p>	

Restaurant lineup is subject to change. For the most up-to-date info, visit alhambraeats.com.





Bao Master Brings Handmade Xiao Long Bao to Alhambra

by William Henderson

Alhambra welcomes a new xiao long bao and noodles restaurant: Bao Master. Featuring crab meat and kurobuta pork xiao long bao among other unique, handmade delicacies, Bao Master is located in the new mixed-use space near Alhambra Place and the Sprouts parking lot. On December 12, Bao Master opened their doors for the first time, celebrating with a soft opening and inviting the Alhambra community to explore their delightful new space and sample delicious cuisine.

Owner Tony Zhang shared that his focus in opening Bao Master is to bring the umami-rich, home-style flavors of Chinese cuisine to diners. His goal was to create a restaurant that delivers top-quality food while offering a warm, welcoming atmosphere for guests. "I've done high-end restaurants before, but with Bao Master, I'm really looking to capture the authentic and comforting flavors of home," Zhang said. "I love the community here in Alhambra, and my dream is for this restaurant to be a place that brings family and friends together while they're out and about exploring the downtown area." Zhang's intention is obvious once you step inside. A large bao mascot greets customers at the front, while playful small-

er bao mascots line the walls of the restaurant. When he created this unique dining experience, Zhang shared that his greatest challenge was refining and narrowing down the menu. Influenced by the flavors and dining trends popularized by restaurants in the San Gabriel Valley and beyond, including Din Tai Fung, Zhang decided to highlight well-loved favorites, some with a twist. Food artisans handcraft each item on the menu, aiming to deliver the perfect dish.

Since its opening, locals have flocked to Bao Master, making it a popular spot for local shoppers in the area. Along with visitors from the local community and beyond, you can see people enjoying themselves at lunch and dinner, often savoring warm soup dumplings and lively conversation.

Stop by Bao Master to try their limited-time soft opening specials, or visit on January 22 to officially welcome Zhang and his team to the Alhambra community at their grand opening - with free samples! Bao Master is located at 108 S Monterey St #102, Alhambra, CA 91801. To contact them, call (626) 614-3119.



Eat, Play, and Celebrate at the Alhambra Lunar New Year Festival on February 28

by William Henderson



The annual Alhambra Lunar New Year Festival may be the most important cultural event that Alhambra residents eagerly anticipate. Joining local families and neighbors, thousands of visitors flock to Downtown Alhambra to welcome the Lunar New Year with food, cultural attractions, and family-friendly activities.

The celebration on Main Street is always packed with impressive performances, interactive activities with fun for all ages, a wide variety of booths from the nearby community, and, as the highlight of any Alhambra celebration, mouthwatering food from vendors to feed the whole crowd from sunrise to sunset.

This year's festival on February 28, 2026, promises to build on that excitement with new vendors, activities, and seasonal fun for everyone to come and enjoy. Open to the public and entirely free to attend, the Alhambra Chamber of Commerce is excited to partner with the city and local sponsors to host one of the largest events this city has seen. As the date approaches, featured below is a sneak peek into what to expect from a few of the food vendors this year:



Sunday Cafe

A local favorite for fresh breakfast and brunch, start off your day at the festival with savory sandwiches or sweet pastries, complemented by good coffee.

Dragon Fire BBQ

Smoky, bold flavors for grilled meat and barbecue food a hearty meal, keeping you going throughout all the activities and fun available.



Spiral King Concession

Fun to look at and eat - spiral-cut potatoes on a stick. These snacks are crispy, salty, and a bit addicting, good for kids and adults alike.

Coconut & Co

After walking around outside, you'll want to cool off with something sweet. They've got you covered with coconut drinks and fruity treats.

Enjoy treats, delicacies, delicious meals, and more at these spots and others, while you celebrate Lunar New Year in Alhambra! To view more details or apply to be a vendor, visit alhambralunarnewyear.com.

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The Alhambra Educational Foundation (AEF) extends our heartfelt gratitude to all our donors, supporters, and the community for your unwavering support in 2025. Your generous contributions have played a pivotal role in enhancing the educational programs of the Alhambra Unified School District (AUSD), benefiting all our schools and students.



Left to Right: Christian Galindo, Eddie Maldonado, Dawn Rock, Steve Perry, Diane Velasco Hyland, John Nuñez, Garrett Gomez, Tristan Preciado



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- Tammy Lopez
- Los Angeles Dodgers
- Los Angeles Dodgers Foundation
- Los Angeles/San Gabriel Hilton
- Dorian Love
- Lawrence Lucero
- Calvin Ly
- Lindsey Ma
- MA Construction Services, Inc.
- Samantha Maciel
- Marguerita School
- Mark Keppel High School
- Mark Keppel High School Alliance

Continued on the next page.



Mark Keppel High School Instrumental Music Boosters
 Mark Keppel High School PTSA
 Rocio Martinez
 Martha Baldwin PTA
 Cruz McPherson
 Barbara Messina
 Wendy Molina-Solis
 Joseph Moon
 Monterey Highlands School
 Monterey Park Fire Dept.
 Oo and Myint Family
 Natural History Museum
 Martha Navarro
 Neff Construction, Inc.
 New Century BMW
 Paul Ng
 Khanh Nguyen
 Thi Nguyen
 Thuy Nguyen
 Hoang (Kevin) Nong
 Northrup School
 John Nuñez
 Gregory Olbrich
 Juanita Orta
 Nicholas Oyagha
 Pacific Park
 Lisa Padilla-Jones
 Marisa Palacios
 Denise Palomares-Salazar
 Park School
 Pasadena Athletic Association
 Cycling Club
 Mark & Susan Paulson
 Steve & Débora Perry
 Page Phillips
 Ashton Potter
 Emily Quach
 Elizabeth Ramirez
 Ramona School
 The Ratkovich Company/
 The Alhambra
 Veronica Renova
 Repetto School
 Republic Services
 Debra Rice & Family
 Nathaniel and Dawn Rock
 Roshanian and Associates, Inc.
 Matthew Russell
 Sandra Saavedra
 San Gabriel High School
 San Gabriel High School PTSA
 San Gabriel Woodshop Dept.
 Nelson Sanabria

Nadia Santana
 James Schofield
 Sea World San Diego
 Lisa Serrano
 Sesame Place San Diego
 SGV Municipal Water District
 Shakey's Pizza
 Christina Siow-Young
 Martin Siwy
 Sky Zone, Alhambra
 Sarah Smith
 Karen Schlosser
 SPARK Academy Corp.
 Vera Sundukova
 Christopher Takeshita
 Paul & Regina Talbot
 Amy Tambara
 Yanzhi Tan
 Alice Tang
 Kenneth Tang
 Irene Tark
 tBP/Architecture
 David Thai & Linda Lam
 I Tran
 Lorraine Tom
 Topgolf Montebello
 Jesse Toribio
 TKR, LLC
 Transtech Engineers, Inc.
 Brian Truong
 Martin Ulloa
 Joanna Vargas
 Vector USA
 Mike Vollebregt
 David Vuong
 Qianqian Wang
 Qiong Wang
 Marcia Wilson
 Sharon Woo
 Elaine Wong
 Cathleen Wu
 Liu and Wu Family
 Barbara Yamadera
 Russ Yamanaka
 Guan & Yang Family
 Wen Yang
 Bill and Lisa Yee
 Ynez School
 Eileen Young
 Dr. Gay Yuen
 Zixing Liu & Joyce Zhang
 Sandy Zhen-Yeh

(Partial List)



**Together, we are building a lasting legacy
 in education, one that unlocks new
 opportunities and empowers our students
 to reach their full potential.
 We couldn't have done it without you!**

**Thank you for believing in our
 mission and investing in our future.**

Happy New Year

Together We Make A Difference.



AHS Senior Keiko Rakin is Rose Court Royalty

by Alhambra Unified School District



On January 1st, Keiko Rakin (third from the left) will ride down Colorado Boulevard as a member of the Royal Court of the 137th Tournament of Roses Parade. The theme for 2026 is "The Magic Teamwork," and Laker legend Magic Johnson will serve as the Grand Marshall. (Photo Credit: Ricardo Padillo, AUSD Communications Intern)

Alhambra Unified School District (AUSD) Student Board Member and Alhambra High School (AHS) senior Keiko Rakin will be riding down Colorado Boulevard on New Year's morning as one of seven members of the 2026 Tournament of Roses Royal Court. She has earned one of the nation's most visible and prestigious student honors, and her selection is especially meaningful, as this is only the second year of the expansion of the geographic eligibility for the Rose Parade Court.

A large group of family members, friends, and district supporters joined Keiko at both the Court announcement ceremony and the coronation of the queen, both held at the Tournament House in Pasadena. The Royal Court, chosen from hundreds of applicants, represents the Tournament of Roses at more than 80 community and media events leading up to the Rose Parade and Rose Bowl Game on January 1, 2026. For Keiko, being named to the Rose Court carries special significance. During her sophomore year, she wrote a heartfelt letter to the Tournament of Roses president, encouraging the expansion of the geographic area eligibility. That change became a reality the following year, making her selection feel both personal and historic.

"I am truly honored and grateful to be part of the 2026 Royal Court," Keiko said. "It's amazing to see how much has come full circle since writing that letter two years

ago. I'm so proud to represent AHS, AUSD, and my entire community. This experience has already been incredible, and I loved meeting and spending time with all the other amazing girls on the Court, as well as the supportive and hardworking people associated with the Tournament and Queen and Court Committee."

Keiko also expressed pride that in the two years of eligibility, two AHS students have reached the finalist stage, highlighting the exceptional talent within the community. "It's exciting to see AHS represented again," she said. "And I know there will continue to be an amazing legacy of students who will take the opportunity to try out for the Court."

Since being named to the Royal Court, Keiko has embraced her role as an ambassador for the Tournament of Roses, attending events and enjoying the unique opportunity to be a representative for young people in her community. During this time, she has continued to juggle her other responsibilities as a student and as AUSD's student board member, with student board member alternate Angelina Yip (Mark Keppel High School junior) occasionally filling in for Keiko when a scheduling conflict occurred.

Keiko's whirlwind Rose Court schedule is slowing down and will soon come to an end. But her membership in the unique and prestigious Rose Court sisterhood is something she will carry with her forever.



With their Top Four results, these AUSD students will now represent their respective schools at the regional level of SkillsUSA. From left to right: Patrick Oradan (AHS), Mike Luo (SGHS), Scarlett Tran (SGHS), and Ava Zeller (AHS).

Hands-On Learning Comes to Life at Alhambra Unified's Annual Woodworking Contest

by Alhambra Unified School District

Alhambra Unified School District held its 13th Annual Woodworking Contest, bringing together students from Alhambra, Mark Keppel, and San Gabriel High Schools for a fast-paced, skills-focused competition. The annual event serves as a showcase for the district's woodworking programs and the hands-on learning opportunities they provide.

This year's contest followed the traditional "live build" format, in which students were given two hours to complete a surprise wood project. Contestants first studied a technical drawing, created a detailed cut-list with exact part measurements, and then constructed the project using a variety of tools and equipment, including band saws, miter saws, disc and spindle sanders, drill presses, routers, files, power drills, and other hand tools.

More than a demonstration of craftsmanship, the contest challenges students to apply problem-solving, precision, and planning skills under time pressure. According to this year's panel of judges, this year's submissions were especially competitive, with the final decision coming down to fine details and measurement accuracy.

The panel of judges consisted of wood-

working educators and industry-related professionals. Alec Alejo, Anthony Fortner, and Steve Carbajal carefully evaluated each project for craftsmanship, accuracy, and overall execution.

Dr. Leann Huang, AUSD's Coordinator of College & Career Preparation, expressed appreciation for the district's Wood Technology teachers and the opportunities they provide. "Paul Lam, John Mason, and Carlos Sanchez continually create meaningful experiences that go far beyond the classroom," she said. "Their commitment to hands-on learning gives students real-world technical skills, builds confidence, and opens doors to future career pathways. I'm so proud of the dedication they bring to our Career Tech programs each day."

In addition to vying for district recognition, the contest also determined which students would earn a spot to compete at the upcoming SkillsUSA-California Regional Conference.

The annual contest continues to highlight the strength of AUSD's woodworking programs and the value of hands-on, career-focused education across the district.



All of the AUSD Woodwork Contest competitors successfully completed the "live build" project and made their judges' decision a very difficult one

The 2025 contest results were:

- 1st Place:** Patrick Oradan (Alhambra High School)
- 2nd Place:** Mike Luo (San Gabriel High School)
- 3rd Place:** Scarlett Tran (San Gabriel High School)
- Honorable Mention:** Ava Zeller (Alhambra High School)



Around Alhambra accepts submissions!

To submit an article, press release, or tip for consideration, email AA@alhambrachamber.org

Baldwin Teacher is One of L.A. County's "Sweet 16" Teachers of the Year

by Alhambra Unified School District

Baldwin School's Christina Kwon Loose has been named one of Los Angeles County's 2025 "Sweet 16" Teachers of the Year, a distinction that places her among the most exceptional educators in the region. The announcement was made at the Los Angeles County Office of Education's 44th Annual Teacher of the Year Awards Banquet in Universal City. Loose, who teaches seventh-grade English Language Arts and Social Studies at Baldwin School, was previously recognized as Alhambra Unified School District's 2025 Teacher of the Year.

L.A. County Superintendent of Schools Dr. Debra Duardo praised this year's honorees for their dedication and impact in the classroom. "Each Teacher of the Year represents the very best of our profession, leaders who go above and beyond to ensure every student feels seen, supported, and empowered," she said. "Their unwavering commitment to student success is nothing short of inspiring."

The 16 County honorees were chosen from a competitive pool of teachers representing school districts throughout Los Angeles County. The intensive process included writing a series of essays, describing detailed lesson plans/activities, and filming an introductory video. Semi-finalists also participated in interviews with panels of education experts and past Teachers of the Year.

Known for her dynamic and inclusive teaching style, Loose strives to create a classroom where every student feels valued, respected, and empowered to learn. A second-generation Korean-American and daughter of immigrants, she often draws from her own experiences to foster empathy and equity in her classroom.

"Teaching is about so much more than academics," Loose said. "It's about creating a safe space where students know they are valued, where their voices matter, and where they can discover their own strengths. To be recognized alongside so many inspiring colleagues is truly humbling."

At Baldwin, Loose is also known for her leadership beyond the classroom. She serves as advisor for the school's Nutrition Advisory Council, guiding students in projects that promote healthy living, gardening, and community engagement. As a certified trainer for Project GLAD (Guided Language Acquisition Design), she has also played a key role in supporting multilingual learners across the district.

"Christina embodies everything we hope for in a teacher...compassion, innovation, and a deep belief in every child's potential," said Baldwin Principal Chris Takeshita. "Her classroom is a place where students feel safe, seen, and excited to learn. This recognition could not be more well-deserved."

Alhambra Unified Superintendent Dr. Denise Jaramillo echoed that pride, noting that Loose's award continues the district's strong tradition of teaching excellence. "We are incredibly proud of Christina and of all the remarkable educators who make Alhambra Unified such a special place," Dr. Jaramillo said. "Her recognition follows County Teacher of the Year honors for MKHS teacher Page Phillips last year, and County and State Teacher of the Year honors for SGHS Virginia Vasquez four years ago. This pattern of accolades speaks to the exceptional quality and heart of the teachers in our district."



Christina Kwon Loose was surrounded by family, friends, and colleagues at the 2025 LA County Teacher of the Year Luncheon, where she was celebrated as a Los Angeles County Teacher of the Year.

PLUS Forum Inspires AUSD Students to Strengthen Community on Their Campuses

by Hayley Wong, AUSD Communications Intern

Dedicated students from across AUSD recently joined the Peer Leaders Uniting Students (PLUS) Forum at Almansor Court for the first training session of the year. PLUS is a leadership group at each site that focuses on transforming school environments through student dedication and involvement. Student leaders in grades 6-12 worked with John Vandenburg, founder of the PLUS program, to learn how to lead their own forums, identify critical issues on their campus, such as bullying, racism, and exclusion, and create meaningful solutions. Through games and conversations, PLUS leaders learned how to confidently build an inclusive and welcoming environment for all students at their schools.

Student-led forums are among the key ways for leaders to engage with their peers and talk openly about issues on campus. From these discussions, students are able to problem solve and create realistic solutions to help alleviate schoolwide concerns. Dr. Wendy Solis, Director of Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS), explained, "[Students] come up with solutions, which they then present to adults. The adult group that they present to in AUSD is our PBIS team. And then that is how we start enacting change." Her explanation highlights how much student involvement contributes to meaningful progress around campuses, as well as AUSD's commitment to listening to and supporting student-led change. PLUS ensures that every student has a voice by encouraging representation from all schools across the district.

During the training, Vandenburg emphasized the importance of students doing research, speaking to other students, and taking initiative. With the expansion of PLUS to include middle school students, even more conversations are

happening about important topics such as drug use, mental health, and racism. Although some discussions can feel uncomfortable, the program stresses that talking about these issues, especially for younger students for whom these issues might be new, is essential in order for real change to take place. PLUS continues to highlight how powerful student leadership can be in creating better, safer school environments. To break the ice, the PLUS leaders started the day with a group game that encouraged students to interact with new people. In the "bus game," students were asked to form a bus with a certain number of people, which changed each round. This simple activity helped students connect with peers they did not know and build comfort in the space. Activities like this reflect the central message of PLUS, which is to encourage inclusion and build community among all students on campus.

To close the day, students held mini-forums focused on the topic of exclusion in their schools. Leaders were divided into randomly selected groups to create a mix of backgrounds and perspectives. Together, they brainstormed solutions that would benefit a wide range of students.

PLUS stresses the importance of student voices and the lasting impact they can have on creating positive change in school communities. From this training, AUSD student leaders were encouraged to step outside their comfort zones and lead with confidence. By the end of the day, students learned how to analyze issues on their campuses, hold meaningful conversations, and develop solutions. As Vandenburg explained, "Knowing that there's a team of students on campus that is really looking to bring kids in and not push them away, it's a cool thing to see that across the state now, and Alhambra is really doing a great job at it."



AUSD middle and high school PLUS leaders took part in this year's PLUS Student Forum, working with facilitator John Vandenburg to learn strategies for strengthening school climate and amplifying student voice. (Photo Credit: Karlie Yonemoto, AUSD Communications Intern)

Come see Alhambra students perform at ALNY on the main stage!



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2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR

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Online Enrollment

Enrollment for Alhambra Unified classes, including those in the Spanish and Mandarin Dual Language Immersion Programs, is now open. Give your child the gift of being biliterate, bicultural, and prepared for a global future. Scan the QR code in the accompanying graphic to enroll.

Student Leaders Highlight the Power of Art at Therapicasso's 2025 Gala

by Nicole Del Villar, AUSD Communications Intern



The youth-led nonprofit Therapicasso recently hosted its second annual art exhibit and fundraising gala, bringing together more than 150 guests, including students, educators, and elected officials such as Congresswoman Judy Chu. Held at the Courtyard by Marriott Los Angeles in Monterey Park, the gala's theme, "A Night of New Beginnings," highlighted healing, creativity, and youth leadership. The event showcased the expansion of the nonprofit's student-led chapters and its ongoing mission to transform mental health advocacy into creative action. Therapicasso was founded by Gabby Wong and Joshua Ferriere, Class of 2025 alumni of Mark

Keppel High School, in the aftermath of the Monterey Park shooting. Their goal was to provide creative mental health workshops and leadership opportunities that empower students to use their creativity as a "tool for transformation."

The gala opened with a display of student artwork, followed by an interactive activity inviting attendees to write a "Memory Postcard" to their future selves. The postcards encouraged guests to reflect on growth, meaningful moments, and who they hope to become. For \$5, Therapicasso offered to mail the letters back to participants in a year. The night

Early Enrollment Opens for AUSD, including Dual Language Immersion Programs

by Alhambra Unified School District

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All Souls World Language Catholic School Presents Shrek The Musical Jr. in January 2026

Get ready to go "ogre the moon" as All Souls World Language Catholic School proudly presents its 2026 student musical production of Shrek The Musical JR! Performances will take place at Cathedral High School Theatre (1253 Bishops Rd Los Angeles, CA 90012).

To learn more or buy tickets, visit www.allsouls.org/musicals.

then continued with the main program, featuring speeches from Congressmember Judy Chu, AUSD Superintendent Dr. Denise Jaramillo, and student testimonials from Therapicasso leaders. Dr. Jaramillo stated that the nonprofit is "making a positive difference" in the lives of AUSD elementary school students and shared that she is proud to have seen this organization grow and to feel like an unofficial "founding member" and early supporter. Congressmember Chu added that Therapicasso's work demonstrates "what vision can do to transform a community."

Audrey Tamanaha, Therapicasso's current chapter president at Mark Keppel High School, reflected on the organization's meaning across the community and in her own life. "Therapicasso is a platform for me to advocate for what I'm passionate about and to create the change I want to see in this world," Tamanaha said. She also sees the nonprofit as a way to "develop my leadership skills and also uplift others in their journeys of becoming leaders."

At San Gabriel High School, chapter president Ariana Dena said, "Stepping into the role of president" has turned her "personal growth into something purposeful." She explained that Therapicasso has

given her a space where "I no longer have to hide from the struggles of being treated differently," and that "seeing my cabinet and volunteers using strategies I've taught them" is what she wishes she had as her younger self, reminding her of why the work matters.

Members of AUSD's Student Advisory Council (SAC) also noted Therapicasso's impact. Student Board Member Keiko Rakin said the nonprofit provides opportunities for "access to arts education and mental health services, teaching students self-care, identity, and expression through art."

SAC member Drexel Ngo added that the organization shows "how strong our community is and just how strong we are as people."

The night ended with prize drawings featuring donations from numerous organizations and community members. From theater tickets to Popmart blind boxes, attendees purchased tickets for an opportunity to win various prizes. The event commemorated the work of more than 20 chapter members, 30 ambassadors, and 40 volunteers, all working to improve mental health resource availability across LA County.

Asian American Association to Host 36th Annual Lunar New Year Banquet in Celebration of the Year of the Horse

by Alhambra Unified School District

The Asian American Association (AAA) will mark the upcoming Year of the Horse with its 36th Annual Lunar New Year Banquet, taking place on Friday, February 27, 2026, at NBC Seafood Restaurant in Monterey Park. The annual celebration brings together families, community partners, and supporters of Alhambra Unified School District (AUSD) for an evening of cultural performances, traditional cuisine, and fundraising for student scholarships.

Guests will enjoy a 10-course banquet dinner featuring a variety of classic dishes, along with entertainment that includes traditional lion dancer, a performance video of the district's Mandarin Dual Immersion Program students, recognition of scholarship recipients, and other program highlights. A no-host bar will open at 6 p.m., with dinner and the program beginning at 6:30 p.m. This year's banquet will be co-hosted by AAA president Dr. Leann Huang and AUSD Student Board Member and 2026 Rose Court princess Keiko Rakin.

The event also offers several incentives for those who register early. There is still time to RSVP and submit payment before the

Early Bird deadline of January 6, 2026. These guests will receive discounted pricing and priority seating for full tables. By registering in December, Mr. Eric Lee won the "Super Early Bird" prize of a pair of orchestra-level seats to The Notebook, The Musical. RSVPs purchased and paid for by the "Early Bird" deadline of January 6, 2026 will be entered to win a pair of orchestra-level tickets to Opening Night performance of a different show: the Broadway and West End hit, Six, the Musical at the Hollywood Pantages Theater on February 18th.

Proceeds from the banquet will directly support the Asian American Association's scholarships, which provide awards to AUSD promoting eighth-graders and graduating high school seniors. These scholarships recognize student achievement and help support their continued educational goals.

Reservations may be made online at www.tinyurl.com/AAA26RSVP, with options to pay by PayPal, check, or cash. Event sponsorship opportunities are also available. More information about the Asian American Association can be found at www.aaafalhambra.org.



Mark Keppel High School students participated in a hands-on Disabilities Awareness Fair, exploring activities that built understanding, empathy, and appreciation for all abilities. (Photo Credit: Clara Chan, AUSD Communications Intern)

Students Gain New Perspectives at Disability Awareness Fair

by Emily Liu, AUSD Communications Intern

Mark Keppel High School students had the opportunity to step into the shoes of their peers with disabilities through the school's second Disability Awareness Fair. The two-day event invited students to participate in hands-on activities designed to build empathy and understanding.

The event was organized by teacher Stephanie Hardy, founder of the MKHS' Aztec Amigos Community (AAC) club. A longtime advocate for students with disabilities, Hardy's goal was to create an environment where students could become more open-minded and understanding toward their peers. She shared, "I have seen disability awareness fairs happen at other schools and thought it would be the perfect environment to do it here. First, it started off as a Powertime, and after that, I created the AAC, and the club has just taken off."

During the fair, students attended sessions designed to help them better understand common disabilities that some of their classmates experience. Students rotated through six interactive stations, each designed to simulate a different disability. Volunteers from the Aztec Amigos Community led each station, offering a general overview of the disability before guiding students through the activity.

At the Orthopedic Impairment Station, students sat in wheelchairs and attempted to pick up cones from the floor using a reaching tool while being pushed by their peers. The wheelchairs used in this simulation were the same ones some of their classmates use in their daily lives.

At the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) Station, students learned basic sign language. They introduced themselves in sign language and attempted short conversations to experience alternative ways of

communication. The Fine Motor Station challenged students to button and unbutton a shirt while wearing thick gloves. This station proved to be especially challenging, highlighting the struggles people with limited motor control may face when completing everyday tasks.

At the ADHD and Autism Station, students read a short script while others tried to distract them using feathers. This helped the participants understand how difficult it can be to stay focused in a distracting environment.

The final two stations were the Communication Station and the Orientation, Mobility, and Visual Impairment Station. Students simulated disabilities using stuffed mouths and blindfolds. These activities helped participants appreciate the sensory and mobility challenges that some of their peers encounter.

Freshman Emily Wong reflected, "We need to accept all differences and be understanding and considerate." Caelyn Yang, also a freshman, added, "Some people are granted privileges, like being able to see, while others are not."

The Disability Awareness Fair made a strong impact on Mark Keppel students by promoting inclusivity and empathy across campus. As student Anthony Mojica stated, "I can understand how it can be challenging for people who have trouble doing normal day-to-day activities. I hope people can put themselves in others' shoes and understand their difficulties."

Participants found it inspiring to see Mark Keppel High School taking steps to promote awareness, inclusion, and understanding, while creating a more welcoming environment for all students.

Asian American Association 36th Annual Lunar New Year Banquet Friday, 2/27/2026



NBC Seafood Restaurant
404 S. Atlantic Blvd.
Monterey Park, CA 91754

No-Host Bar 6PM ** Program/Dinner 6:30PM

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|---|
| Banquet Menu (subject to change) | | Program |
| • Special Combination Plate | • Lobster w/Ginger & Scallion | Lion Dance Performance, Northrup Student LNY Performance |
| • Fish & Tofu Soup | • Fish Filet w/Vegetable | Video, Multi-Course Dinner & Opportunity Drawings. |
| • Honey Walnut Shrimp | • Braised Tofu | |
| • Reishi Mushroom w/ Vegetable | • Yan Chow Fried Rice | |
| • Chinese Style Crispy Chicken | • Dessert | Proceeds will fund scholarships for AUSD elementary and high school students. |

Early Bird Discount: \$60/Guest or \$550/Table for 10 Guests if reservation & payment is received by 1/6/2026

Regular Pricing: \$65/Guest or \$600/Table for 10 Guests if reservation & payment is received by 2/10/2026

After 2/10/2026 OR at the door: \$80/Guest (subject to availability)

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Sponsored by the Asian American Association - A Public Charity Organization 501(c)(3) www.aaafalhambra.org

AAA's annual Lunar New Year Banquet is usually a sold-out event, so make sure to submit your reservations early so you don't miss out on all the festivities and we celebrate the Year of the Horse

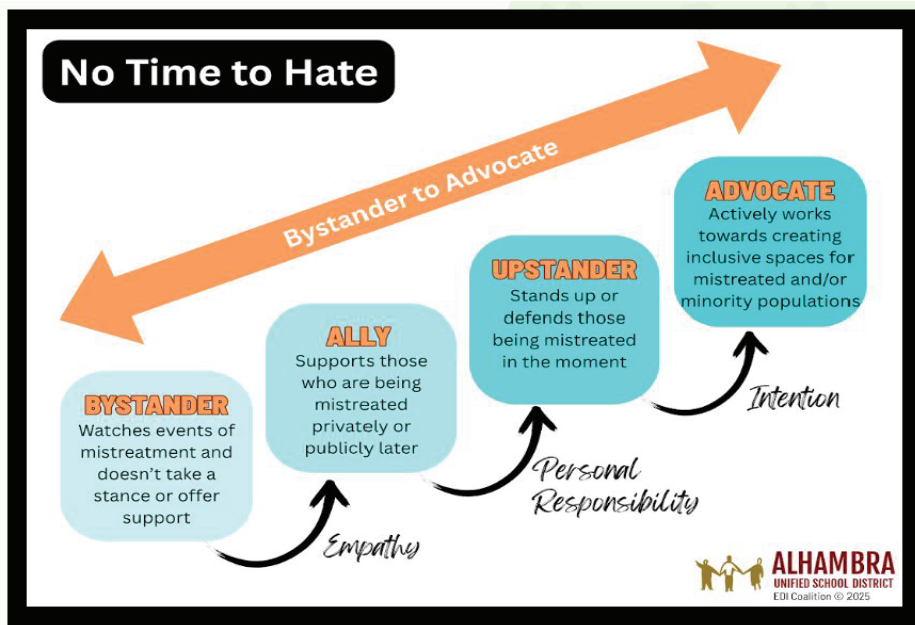
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AUSD Expands Anti-Bias Project to Build Empathy and Inclusion



One goal of the Anti-Bias Project Expansion is to help students move from being a “bystander” to becoming an “advocate” and to work to create safe spaces for those who are mistreated. To see the rest of the slidedeck from the recent Board Meeting presentation, please visit: <https://tinyurl.com/AntiBiasExpansion>.

by Alhambra Unified School District

Alhambra Unified School District (AUSD) continues to deepen its commitment to creating safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environments with the expansion of its Anti-Bias Project, an initiative designed to help students develop empathy, celebrate diversity, and stand up against bias on campus.

Earlier this year, members of AUSD’s Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Summer Coalition presented an update to the Board of Education on the Anti-Bias Project’s progress and shared plans for its next phase of implementation. The presentation included an overview of the program’s conceptual framework, new grade-level lessons, and strategies that empower both students and educators to interrupt harmful behaviors and transform incidents of bias into meaningful teaching moments.

Superintendent Dr. Denise Jaramillo emphasized the district’s goal of ensuring every student feels safe and valued at school. “Our Anti-Bias Project is about more than just lessons. It’s about equipping our students and staff with the tools and understanding they need to respond with empathy and integrity when hurtful language or actions occur,” Dr. Jaramillo said. “We want every child to feel a sense of belonging and to know that their school community stands up for respect and inclusion.”

Launched in 2024 with middle school students, the Anti-Bias Project introduced a series of lessons addressing issues such as stereotypes, microaggressions, respect, and becoming an ally/advocate. Based on positive feedback and growing demand, the program is now expanding to include new units for students in grades 3-5, ensuring a developmental approach that builds students’ understanding and skills over time.

For younger students, lessons focus on developing kindness, empathy, and understanding others’ perspectives. By upper elementary, topics expand to explore identity, diversity, and community, helping students recognize how respecting individuality strengthens learning environments. Middle school units guide students in examining stereotypes and bias, practicing inclusion and integrity, and engaging in advocacy and equity-

focused discussions.

According to Dr. Lily Jarvis, AUSD’s Director of Educational Equity and Accountability, the project was designed to grow alongside students as they mature. “The curriculum is intentionally scaffolded,” Dr. Jarvis explained. “Each grade level builds upon the previous year’s learning. The lessons guide students from understanding empathy and respect in the early grades to becoming active advocates for inclusion and justice by middle school. It’s about preparing young people to navigate an increasingly diverse world with awareness and compassion.”

In addition to classroom instruction, AUSD has developed an educator toolkit that provides teachers with ready-to-use language, conversation prompts, and strategies to help address bias when it arises. The toolkit encourages educators to “interrupt harm” in the moment by calling attention to words or behaviors that may cause pain, and to use those instances as “teachable moments” for reflection and growth.

The district is also preparing parent workshops, which will be launched later this school year, to help families engage in thoughtful conversations about race, identity, and inclusion at home. “We know that meaningful change happens when schools and families work together,” Dr. Jarvis explained. “These workshops will give parents the opportunity to learn strategies for discussing these complex topics in supportive and age-appropriate ways.”

The Board presentation also highlighted the broader goal of the Anti-Bias Project: to ensure that every AUSD school fosters a climate where students feel empowered to speak up, show empathy, and take responsibility for maintaining a positive and inclusive culture. “We are proud of how far we’ve come, but we also recognize that this work must continually evolve,” Dr. Jaramillo said. “Our hope is that through this project, every student in AUSD will learn not only to appreciate diversity but also to lead with kindness and courage. Families are encouraged to review the presentation slides www.tinyurl.com to learn more about the project and its next steps.



Alhambra Unified Featured in 2026 Rose Parade

by Alhambra Unified School District

Alhambra Unified will be well represented in the 2026 Rose Parade on New Year’s Day, and the community is encouraged to tune in and cheer for three AUSD individuals who will appear on different floats throughout the procession.

AHS senior and Student Board Member Keiko Rakin will ride on the Rose Court float as part of this year’s Tournament of Roses Royal Court. Her selection reflects her dedication to student leadership and service. Baldwin School eighth grader Ngoc Han Le

will appear on the City of Alhambra float, which is inspired by her winning design. Her artwork helped shape the float’s look, giving the city a vibrant presence in the parade.

Superintendent Dr. Denise Jaramillo will also be featured on the Boys and Girls Clubs float in recognition of her induction into the “Kindness is Free” Hall of Fame. Families and community members can watch live on New Year’s Day to support these representatives of Alhambra Unified and celebrate

AHS Senior Earns Top Honors at “Teens of L.A.” Film Festival

by Alhambra Unified School District

Alhambra High School (AHS) senior Emmett Lee earned top recognition at the recent Teens of L.A. Film Festival hosted by the Los Angeles Public Library. His short film, “11:59pm,” won first place in the Live Action or Animated Short category and was later selected as Best Film of the entire festival.

The short captures the tension and fear of a forgotten deadline and a race against time. The idea for the project began when Emmett’s mother encouraged him to submit something to the competition. From there, Emmett developed the concept for the film and took on the roles of writer, director, and editor. He collaborated with AHS alumnus Zihan (Jacky) Xing, who served as cinematographer, and fellow senior Leonardo De Dios, who starred in the short.

Together, the team spent June 2025 bringing Emmett’s vision to life while balancing the challenges of producing a polished, suspense-driven film on a tight timeline.

Reflecting on the process, Emmett said, “Ironically, after creating a film about the pressure of an upcoming deadline, we failed to follow our own lesson and I only submitted the short two hours before it was due. We were actually late to the festival as well so we almost missed our own work being shown. However, it all worked out in the end, and the joy of our work being honored has pushed us to continue expressing our talent.” Emmett also acknowledged the contributions of his friends, noting Jacky’s

continued on page 19



| AHS Senior Earns Top Honors at “Teens of L.A.” Film Festival

continuation from page 18

keen eye for visuals as cinematographer and Leo's performance as the lead actor, which helped bring the story to life. Their hard work earned Emmett an \$800 scholarship to the Sydney Poitier 2026 Summer Film Camp, where he will continue developing his filmmaking skills.

AHS principal Diana Diaz-Ferguson praised Emmett's success. "Emmett's accomplishment shows the power of curiosity, dedication, and collaboration. We are proud of his achievement and can't wait to see how he continues to grow as a

storyteller and filmmaker." Emmett was also recently selected as an AUSD Communications Intern, where he will have more opportunities to showcase his videography work during the school year. The district looks forward to seeing more of his creative projects in the months ahead.

Readers can watch "11:59pm" at www.youtube.be/qHh3Q7ejRm1and and follow Emmett's future projects on his YouTube channel, Snowfall Pictures.

AHS Celebrates Successful Run of The Drowsy Chaperone

by Alhambra Unified School District

Alhambra High School Theater closed its fall musical on a high note as students delivered a lively and polished production of *The Drowsy Chaperone*. The show drew enthusiastic crowds who praised the strong performances, smart comedic timing, and talented ensemble work throughout the run.

The cast brought the 1920s-inspired musical to life with energy and charm, including upbeat tap numbers and playful storytelling that defines the beloved Broadway parody. Students in the Technical Theater program also earned praise for creating eye-catching sets, expressive

lighting, and detailed costumes that gave the production a professional and cohesive look. The production served as another strong showcase of the school's growing theater program and its commitment to providing students with meaningful and creative performing arts opportunities.

AHS Thespians are now looking ahead to the spring production of *The Outsiders*, a play based on the classic novel by S.E. Hinton. Students will soon begin early preparations and auditions, as they get excited for a powerful and memorable show this spring.



This collage of photos from Alhambra High School's production of "The Drowsy Chaperone" captures moments of fun and excitement that filled the auditorium during this year's fall musical. (Photo Credit: Karlie Yonemoto, AUSD Communications Intern)

AUSD Sixth Graders Explore Science in the Great Outdoors at Camp Pollock

by Alhambra Unified School District



Fremont sixth graders explored science while climbing, hiking, and conducting experiments in the great outdoors



Sixth graders at all 13 elementary schools in Alhambra Unified School District (AUSD) enjoyed an exciting three-day adventure at Camp Pollock this past fall, combining hands-on science learning with the beauty of nature. Students participated in activities such as rock climbing, hiking, and interactive science experiments, giving them a chance to explore the natural world while applying lessons learned in the classroom.

This annual science camp adventure is made possible in large part through the generosity of the Alhambra Educational Foundation (AEF), whose organizational connections and fundraising support allowed this districtwide tradition to launch three years ago, and to continue for the foreseeable future. Science camp is designed to spark students' curiosity, teamwork, and love of discovery. "It's incredible to see so many young learners engage with science outside the classroom," said Steve Perry, AEF president. "Experiences like this inspire

creativity and help students connect what they learn in school to the world around them."

AEF provides much of the monetary support for camp, but each year, AUSD relies on the additional generosity and fundraising efforts of students, staff, and community members across the district. By taking learning into the outdoors, students gain a deeper understanding of scientific concepts while developing teamwork, problem-solving skills, and an appreciation for nature.

This districtwide program highlights AUSD's and AEF's commitment to providing hands-on, experiential learning opportunities that help every student grow, discover, and thrive. Community members who would like to support this ongoing endeavor can make a donation to AEF through their website, www.aef4kids.com.

SGHS Dream Center Hosts Southeast Asian Celebration Honoring Larry Itliong Day

by Alhambra Unified School District

San Gabriel High School students came together recently to celebrate the rich cultures, traditions, and stories of Southeast Asia during a lunchtime event hosted by the SGHS Dream Center. The celebration highlighted 11 Southeast Asian countries, including Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Cambodia, Myanmar/Burma, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Brunei, while also honoring Larry Itliong Day, recognizing the Filipino-American labor leader's contributions to the farmworkers



SGHS students dressed in cultural clothing as they helped to showcase the traditions represented at the Southeast Asian Celebration. (Photo Credit: Kellyn Chea, AUSD Communications Intern)

movement. The school quad was transformed into a showcase of cultural pride, with booths representing each country featuring traditional foods, artifacts, and "untold stories" shared by students and staff. Students also took part in engaging activities, including lotus flower origami, flag coloring, Islamic art designs, and a "Guess Who?" trivia game spotlighting cultural and religious traditions from across the region.

Dr. Amy Erenay, SGHS English Language Development (ELD) Instructional Specialist and Dream Center Advisor, expressed her gratitude to everyone who helped make the event possible. "I saw students who have never participated in a lunch celebration," she shared. "I also saw students loving being represented." She thanked the Dream Center team, Ethnic Studies teachers, World Language

Club, VCC club, and AYC members for their collaboration and enthusiasm, noting how their collective efforts made the event both meaningful and memorable. Principal Jocelyn Castro praised the Dream Center for fostering inclusivity and cultural awareness on campus.

"This celebration gave our students the opportunity to share their heritage and learn from one another," she said. "I was inspired to see how proud our students were to represent their cultures and how eager others were to listen, learn, and celebrate with them."

The Southeast Asian Celebration continues the Dream Center's mission of creating a welcoming space for all students while promoting empathy, representation, and understanding within the SGHS community.

AUSD College Fair Draws Record-Breaking Crowd

by Alhambra Unified School District

The 18th Annual Alhambra Unified School District (AUSD) College Fair, held at San Gabriel High School, welcomed a record-breaking crowd of students and families eager to explore higher education opportunities. With over 900 attendees, this year's event marked the largest turnout in the fair's 18-year history and highlighted the community's strong commitment to preparing students for success after high school.

Representatives from more than 50 colleges, universities, and specialized programs participated in the fair, engaging with students and families to share information about admissions, financial aid, academic programs, and campus life. Attendees from Alhambra, Mark Keppel, and San Gabriel High Schools had the chance to meet directly with college representatives, ask questions, and begin mapping out their post-secondary pathways.

"This event continues to grow every year, which shows how much our students and families value college and career readiness," said Dr. Leann Huang, AUSD Coordinator of College & Career Preparation. "Our goal is to make the process

feel more accessible and less intimidating so that every student, no matter their background or future plans, feels supported and informed as they prepare for life after high school."

In addition to college and university booths, the event also featured AUSD's Early College program, highlighting pathways offered through partnership with East Los Angeles College. Career Technical Education (CTE) Advisors and staff were available to answer questions and provide resources for students at every stage of their planning process. Now in its 18th year, the District College Fair has become one of AUSD's most anticipated annual traditions. It brings students, families, educators, and college partners together in a shared mission to expand educational access and opportunity.

"The energy throughout the event was inspiring," Dr. Huang added. "Seeing so many students engaged in conversations about their futures reminds us why these events matter so much to our team. It's about helping them see the possibilities and giving them the tools to make their goals a reality."



AUSD's College & Career Preparation Team hosted the 18th Annual District College Fair at San Gabriel High School, drawing more than 900 students and family members. Representatives from over 50 colleges and universities met with attendees to share information about admissions, academic programs, and campus life. The event continues to grow each year, reflecting the community's strong commitment to supporting students in their post-secondary planning. (Photo Credit: Karlie Yonemoto, AUSD Communications Intern)

Seventy Years of Matador Pride Shine at SGHS Alumni Fest

by Alhambra Unified School District

San Gabriel High School marked a meaningful milestone as alumni, staff, and community members gathered for the school's 70th anniversary Alumni Fest this past fall.

The celebration brought together generations of Matadors for an evening of games, entertainment, and food before their Homecoming football game, where SGHS secured a hard-fought 27-20 victory.

It was a festive and poignant reunion as alumni returned to campus to reconnect with classmates, teachers, and the school that shaped their early years. Six current and former principals were also in attendance to commemorate the occasion: Alex Ayala, Marsha Gilbert, Barbara Randolph, Debbie Stone, Jim Schofield, and current principal Jocelyn Castro. Principal Castro shared her appreciation for the event's turnout and spirit. "Seeing so many

Matadors come home to celebrate our 70 years reminds us what a special community this is," she said. "The pride, traditions, and connections built at San Gabriel High School truly last a lifetime." Throughout the evening, guests enjoyed student performances, lively booths, and opportunities to revisit campus landmarks, all contributing to a night that honored the school's past while looking ahead to its future.

The celebration continued at the Homecoming game, where the Matadors' win energized both the alumni and current students in attendance. In the lead up to the event, SGHS continually used the motto, "Once a Matador; Always a Matador" and alumni took that phrase to heart as the 70th anniversary was a reminder of the deep roots and lasting legacy of being part of the SGHS family. If you missed out on this year's festivities, you won't have too long to wait...the 75th anniversary will be here before you know it.



Highlights from the 70th anniversary Alumni Fest at San Gabriel High School, capturing alumni reconnecting, students performing, and the community celebrating seven decades of Matador history. (Photo Credit: Reyna Guan, AUSD Communications Intern)

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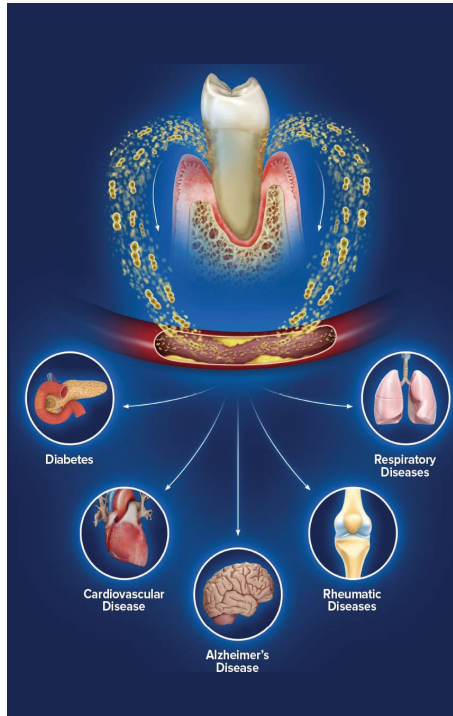


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The Mouth-Body Connection: What Your Teeth Say About Your Overall Health

by Dr. Krasnodara Gashparova, DDS (also known as Dr. Dara)



Today, doctors and dentists agree on one thing: your mouth's health is strongly linked to your overall health. In other words, the problems that start in your gums or teeth don't always stay there. They can signal - or even influence - health issues elsewhere in the body.

Below are four of the most important connections that affect us every day.

1. Gum Disease and Heart Disease: A Link You Shouldn't Ignore

Gum disease (also called periodontal disease) is far more common than most people realize. In its early stages, the only signs may be bleeding gums or bad breath. But when gum disease becomes more advanced, it can cause chronic inflammation and bone loss. Inflammation is what concerns heart doctors.

Research shows that:

- People with moderate to severe gum disease have a higher risk of heart disease.
- Gum inflammation may contribute to inflammation in blood vessels.
- Bacteria from infected gums can enter the bloodstream and travel to the heart.

While gum disease doesn't cause heart disease outright, it can definitely make it worse - and the two conditions often go hand in hand.

What you should know:

If your gums bleed when you brush or floss, don't ignore it. It's one of the earliest signs of a condition that doesn't just affect your mouth - it may affect your heart health, too.

2. Diabetes and Oral Issues: A Two-Way Relationship

Diabetes and dental health affect each other more than many people realize. High blood sugar levels can make the mouth more vulnerable to infection, which means:

- Gum disease develops more easily
- The mouth dries out, causing cavities and mouth sores
- Healing takes longer after dental work

But the relationship goes both ways. People with untreated gum disease often find it harder to keep their blood sugar stable. The inflammation from gum infections can make the body more resistant to insulin.

What does this mean for patients:

Good dental care doesn't just protect your teeth - it can help make diabetes easier to manage. For diabetics in particular, regular cleanings and gum checks are essential, not optional.

3. Bad Breath and Digestive Conditions: When the Problem Isn't in Your Mouth

Almost everyone deals with bad breath from time to time. But persistent bad breath may not be caused by poor brushing - it can be a sign of digestive issues. Some digestive conditions linked to bad breath include:

- Acid reflux (GERD)
- Helicobacter pylori infections
- Slow digestion or chronic indigestion
- Dry mouth

GERD, for example, allows stomach acid to travel upward, leaving a sour or metallic odor. Infections like H. pylori can also produce strong, persistent bad breath.

How to tell the difference:

If bad breath doesn't improve with brushing, flossing, mouthwash, or dental cleaning, it may be coming from the stomach or digestive tract rather than the teeth. In that case, a medical checkup is the next step.

4. Sleep Apnea:

Signs Your Dentist Can Spot First

Many people think of sleep apnea as a nighttime breathing disorder, but it often leaves clues in the mouth. Dentists may notice:

- A scalloped tongue (impressions along the edges from the tongue pressing against the teeth)
- Redness or dryness of the mouth from mouth breathing
- Worn-down teeth caused by nighttime grinding, a common sign of disrupted sleep
- Crowded throat anatomy, small airway, or large tongue

Because dentists often see these patterns before patients realize they have a sleep issue, many cases of sleep apnea are first detected in the dental chair.



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Why this matters:

Untreated sleep apnea can lead to high blood pressure, fatigue, heart strain, and increased risk of car accidents. Recognizing the oral signs can lead to life-changing early diagnosis.

What you can do to prevent gum disease:

- Brush and floss daily
- Visit a dentist twice a year for cleanings
- Pay attention to new symptoms like bleeding gums, chronic dry mouth, or unexplained bad breath.
- Talk to both your dentist and doctor when symptoms overlap

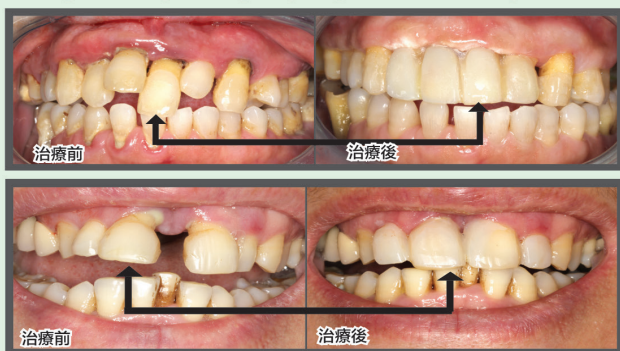
By understanding the mouth-body connection, we can take simple steps that protect not only our smiles, but our overall health.

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New Year, New Medicare Coverage Updates

The new year will bring a new round of Medicare coverage, cost and policy changes that will affect each beneficiary differently, depending on their medical needs, income and other factors. Here's some of the most significant changes that will shape your 2026 coverage.

Prescription Drug Changes

Part D out-of-pocket cap - The annual out-of-pocket cap for Part D drugs will be \$2,100.

Insulin - The monthly cap on insulin copays remains \$35 for Part D enrollees.

Negotiated prices - Medicare will begin to negotiate prices for 10 high-cost drugs, leading to lower prices for certain medications.

Part D deductible - The maximum Part D deductible will increase to \$615.

Vaccines - All ACIP recommended adult vaccines will be covered with no out-of-pocket cost.

Original Medicare (Parts A & B)

Part B deductible - The Part B deductible will be \$202.90/month.

Part A cost-sharing - The Part A inpatient hospital deductible will be \$1,736 for 2026, and daily coinsurance costs for days 61-90 and lifetime reserve days will increase.

Colorectal cancer screenings - Coverage for colorectal cancer screenings has been expanded.

Medicare Advantage (Part C)

Out-of-pocket maximum - The maximum out-of-pocket limit for in network Medicare Advantage plans will decrease to \$9,250 for approved services.

Special Supplemental Benefits for the Chronically Ill (SSBCI) - Plans will use this program to continue offering certain supplemental benefits, such as healthy food and utility credits.

If you need assistance in evaluating your current plan, please reach out to me for a free consultation as I'm here to help you navigate and find the most appropriate plan which fits your needs

Los Angeles Archives Bazaar Comes to Cal State LA as Region's Premier History Event Turns 20

Southern California's past took center stage Saturday, Oct. 18, at the 20th-annual Los Angeles Archives Bazaar, a free public celebration of the region's history. The event featured exhibits from 80 local and regional collections, along with practical workshops and exclusive presentations by archivists, filmmakers, and preservationists.

Read the full article at aroundalhambra.org.



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Cal State LA honors Rupa Purasinghe, Alhambra resident, with Outstanding Professor Award at 2025 University Convocation and Investiture

Read the full article at aroundalhambra.org

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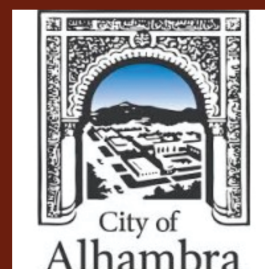
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