

Community Updates...

CenCal Health Receives Community Partners in Excellence Award

CENCAL HEALTH WAS PRESENTED WITH THE 2016 COMMUNITY PARTNERS IN EXCELLENCE AWARD in March during PHorum: Perspectives in Healthcare, a healthcare symposium hosted annually by Visiting Nurse & Hospice Care (VNHC). That same evening, CenCal Health received Certificates of Recognition from both the California Assembly and Senate.

Held at the Fess Parker Doubletree Resort, PHorum brings together national, regional, and local healthcare leaders to discuss relevant issues affecting the Santa Barbara community. The Community Partners in Excellence Award is presented each year at PHorum to recipients who work closely with VNHC to provide high-quality patient care.



Photo by Rhanna Mercier Photography

CenCal Health CEO **Robert Freeman** accepts the Community Partners in Excellence Award from Visiting Nurse & Hospice Care President and CEO **Lynda Tanner**

“I’m so grateful to have CenCal Health as a partner in serving the Central Coast,” shared Lynda Tanner, President & CEO of Visiting Nurse & Hospice Care. “They go above and beyond in helping individuals.”

Tanner cited collaborative work on expanding telehealth programs and finding creative solutions to reach people most in need as other reasons why CenCal Health was this year’s recipient.

“It’s nice to get the recognition that what we are doing is having some resonance,” CenCal Health CEO Bob Freeman told the audience.

Freeman, along with seven other colleagues from CenCal Health representing diverse departments,

accepted the award on the organization’s behalf.

On the heels of the VNHC award, the Assembly Certificate was presented by member Das Williams of the California State Legislature. The Senate Certificate was presented by Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson of the Nineteenth Senate District.

CenCal Health provides health coverage for more than 172,000 members in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties. Operating in the community for more than 32 years, CenCal Health partners with many local providers, hospitals, community, and nonprofit agencies to better serve their membership and coordinate care. www.cencalhealth.org

New S.T.E.A.M. Program at Central Library

THE SANTA BARBARA PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM recently introduced a new S.T.E.A.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) program called STEAMcraft at the Central Library. Located in the Island Room in the new Children’s Library, STEAMcraft provides an opportunity for children to engage in hands-on learning of various math and science topics as they explore, create, and play. STEAMcraft will be offered every Friday, now through May 13th, from 4pm to 5pm at the Central Library (40 E. Anapamu).

In each of the six drop-in sessions, STEAMcraft participants will receive guidance and instruction from local educator Julianne Walsh as they tackle different projects, including a LEGO engineering challenge, scratch coding, and building personal robots. Designed for children 8 years old and up, all supplies needed for each project will be provided. No pre-registration is required, although each session will be limited to the first 20 participants. www.sblibrary.org

Cox Communications’ Low Income Programs Nationally Recognized

COX COMMUNICATIONS was recently recognized by President Barack Obama for new investments in its Connect2Compete program which offers discounted internet services for low-income k-12 families. The program is part of the larger ConnectALL initiative to help Americans across the country, at every income level, get online and have the tools to take advantage of the internet.

“Today’s digital classrooms are tomorrow’s connected businesses. The investments we are making in closing the digital divide help ensure our students are prepared for their careers and life-long success after school,” shared Cox Communications President Pat Esser. “Together with partners like Univision, we are committed to closing the homework gap for all students, no matter where they live.”

The company will host more than 200 events across the country in 2016, signing up at least 100,000 low-income Americans for the program. Later this year, the company will launch a media campaign in partnership with Univision, promoting discounted internet service and digital literacy tools available to Hispanic families through Univision’s stations and across Cox’s media properties. The campaign will reach Cox’s six million customers nationwide through live programming, public service announcements, and community events.

Cox is a founding partner of the Connect2Compete program, and has connected nearly 160,000 people to the Internet in the last four years.

In addition to providing access to Internet service in the home, Cox has been a National Technology Partner of the Boys & Girls Clubs of America for more than a decade, funding more than 75 Cox Technology Centers across its 18-state footprint. Its commercial services division, Cox Business, provides Internet services to more than 7,400 schools serving 4 million students. www.cox.com

Santa Barbara Vintners Raise Over \$1 Million for Direct Relief

THE SANTA BARBARA VINTNERS FOUNDATION surpassed its record-setting \$1 million dollar goal to support the work of medical aid organization Direct Relief at their ninth biennial Santa Barbara Wine Auction held last month at the Bacara Resort & Spa.

Chris Harrison, host of ABC’s hit reality show *The Bachelor*, emceed the sold out celebrity-filled evening. Guest chef Michael Mina, a James Beard Award winning chef, crafted a three-course dinner, complimented by reserve wine tastings from more than 40 Santa Barbara County vintners.



Photo by Bob Dickey

SBVF Board Member **Frank Ostini** of Hitching Post; Honoree **Richard Sanford** of Alma Rosa; and SBVF Board President **Jenny Williamson Doré** of Foxen Vineyard & Winery

In a brief award ceremony, the SBVF honored Sanford & Benedict Vineyard co-founders, Richard and Thekla Sanford and Michael Benedict with the Pioneer Award, as well as Bob and Louisa Lindquist as Vintners of the Year.

The live auction featured items such as the “Honoree’s Lot” comprised of a two-night stay, lunches, and dinners for four at Mayacamas Vineyards hosted by Bob Lindquist of Qupé; A Vineyard-to-Table Anniversary Celebration commemorating 40 years of Sanford & Benedict Vineyard and 30 years of Hitching Post II; Dinner for 50 by Chef Michael Mina and hosted at vintner Jim Clendenen’s Rancho La Cuna; and A Day of Simpatico wine blending, lunch, and dinner hosted by Foxen and Melville wineries and Wine Cask Restaurant.

“Because of their extraordinary efficiency, Direct Relief will be able take the money we raised on Saturday and leverage that into more than \$30 million in medical aid provided around the world and right here in Santa Barbara County,” shared Vintners Foundation President Jenny Williamson Doré of Foxen Vineyard and Winery. “We are honored to be a partner with this amazing organization that is headquartered in Santa Barbara County.”

Since 2000, the Santa Barbara Vintners have raised more than \$4 million dollars for Direct Relief, which translates into over \$100 million in medical aid. www.DirectRelief.org

Chumash Casino Resort Hotel, Willows Restaurant, and Hotel Corque Receive AAA Four Diamond Award

THE CHUMASH CASINO RESORT HOTEL, WILLOWS RESTAURANT, AND HOTEL CORQUE have earned the AAA Four Diamond Award. This is the eleventh consecutive year that the hotel at the Chumash Casino Resort received the award, the tenth year in a row for Willows restaurant, and the fourth consecutive year for Hotel Corque.

“The AAA Four Diamond Award is a respected benchmark in the industry, and we are proud to be among the best hotels and restaurants on the list,” shared Vincent Armenta, Tribal Chairman of the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians. “The fact that we are continuously recognized in this way is a great achievement by our dedicated staff.”

“To receive the AAA Four Diamond Award so consistently is a testament to the tribe’s commitment to these properties,” John Martino, the Tribe’s Executive Director of Economic Development/Hospitality related. “Chumash-owned properties are always well-maintained and uphold the highest standards of Chumash hospitality.”

Willows received a makeover in 2015, giving the fine-dining restaurant an emphasis on relaxed elegance with private dining rooms available for small or large parties. The Chumash Casino Resort Hotel has remained open throughout the Tribe’s recent casino-hotel expansion project. Upon completion in May, the hotel will feature 330 rooms, including 55 suites. The crown jewel will be the 12th-floor, 1,700-square-foot Chairman’s Suite.

Located on Highway 246 in Santa Ynez, the Chumash Casino Resort is owned and operated by the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians. The Tribe also owns Hotel Corque, Root 246, and the Hadsten House in Solvang, as well as two gas stations in Santa Ynez.

Students Learn to Compost with Explore Ecology

ROUGHLY 500 STUDENTS from Goleta Unified School District visited the fifth Grade Health Fair last month. The Fair, which takes place every year, is a way for community groups to interact with and inspire fifth graders to make healthy choices- whether for their own bodies or for their greater community.

This year, Explore Ecology took part manning a compost education table. Resident compost expert, Bennett Rock, set up a station where students were able to “Meet Todd” and choose what to feed him. Todd is the industrious red wiggler worm that lives in most compost bins in Explore Ecology’s School Gardens. These bins are generally students’ first interaction with how great composting can be for our world.

Students were encouraged to take a look through some of Bennett’s own compost, searching for Todd and his family. They were also prompted to decide what items Todd can and cannot eat- organic matter and food scraps versus trash. Many of the students are, at this point, experts in composting, having had lessons both in their School Garden and through Explore Ecology’s In Class Education presentations. www.exploreecology.org



Caroline Bargo teaches students about composting