SAFETY
Take defense
The recent brush fire in Manzanita Canyon highlights the importance of creating defensible space.

EDUCATION
A star student
Hoover High senior Julian Lopez is a top-notch student and athlete. His goal is to get into Harvard University.

Attention residents!
City Heights Life wants to hear from you! Please submit your articles, photos, letters, events or story ideas to editor@cityheightslife.com.

CLINICAS, P2

City Heights Life

CLINICS, P2

Clinics see dramatic growth

demanda aumenta para las clinicas

By Helen Gao

City Heights Life

In the past two years, the Rudy Children’s Urgent Care Center in City Heights has seen a 19 percent growth in patients. That makes it the busiest Rudy’s urgent care facility in the county.

Other nonprofit health providers in City Heights are also reporting explosive growth in demand. La Maestra Community Health Centers, which last year opened a 36,000-square-foot headquarters in City Heights, estimates its patient load is increasing by as much as 30 percent a year.

San Diego Family Care, which operates the Mid-City Community Clinic at two separate locations for children and adults, and Fam- 
ily Health Centers of San Diego, which runs the City Heights Family Health Center and Kid Care Express mobile clinics, have experienced the same trend as well.

Family Health Centers is now in the midst of building a 48,000-square-foot facility at 5454 El Cajon Blvd., less than a quarter of a mile away from its existing 5,000-square-foot clinic. The new building is expected to be completed in early 2012.

“The new site will be a much larger comprehensive clinic. We will add dental services, HIV care and case management, and increasing the capacity of our existing services, such

By Helen Gao
City Heights Life

La Muestra Community Health Centers opened a new, 36,000-square-foot facility in the heart of City Heights last year. The new building houses its main medical clinic, pediatrics unit, women’s clinic, pharmacy, and other services. Photo courtesy of La Maestra

El Centro Comunitario de Salud La Maestra inauguró una instalación de 36,000 pies cuadrados en el corazón de City Heights el año pasado. El nuevo edificio es el hogar de la clínica médica principal, una unidad pediátrica, una clínica de mujeres, farmacia y otros servicios. Foto cortesía de La Maestra

Por Helen Gao
City Heights Life

En los últimos dos años, la cantidad de pa-
ientes que atiende el Centro de Cuidados de Urgencia de Rudy Children’s ubicado en City Heights aumentó en un 19%. Esto hace que el centro de cuidados de urgencia de Rudy sea el centro más concurrido del condado.

Otros proveedores de servicios de salud sin fines de lucro de City Heights también reportan un crecimiento explosivo en la demanda por sus servicios. El Centro Comunitario de Salud La Maestra, que inauguró el año pasado una sede de 36,000 pies cuadrados en City Heights, calcula que la cantidad de pacientes está creciendo a una tasa anual del 30%.

San Diego Family Care, que administra la Clínica Comunitaria de Mid-City en dos locali-
dades separadas (una para niños y una para

FEMA Ready Kids

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has created a special website — www.ready.gov/kids — filled with cartoon characters, activities and games to make emergency preparedness fun for kids. Pack it up, one of the interactive games featured on the site, helps children and their families remember what to put in an emergency supply kit. There is also a scavenger hunt game, which is designed to get the whole family involved in collecting supplies for the kit. Visitors to the site can print out instructions on how to play the game with their family.

Another section of the website educates children about weather events and unexpected situations, everything from earthquakes to tsunamis to terrorism.

FREE

City Heights Life

Ad

October 2011

Social Services
Lovingly cooked meals
Mama’s Kitchen provides freshly-prepared meals for AIDS and cancer patients throughout San Diego County.

[ P10]

Business
Supermarket success
The story behind the Latino supermarket with an Irish name run by an Iraqi-born Catholic.

[ P10]

At Your Service
Be prepared for emergencies

By Helen Gao

City Heights Life

It’s human nature to be complacent when it comes to emergency preparedness because emergencies by definition don’t happen very often. While we know we are supposed to make contingency plans to survive a disaster, many of us don’t.

For your own peace of mind, take the time to get ready now. Plenty of resources exist locally, regionally, and nationally to help residents with emergency preparedness. To ensure your family is ready and protected when the next blackout, earthquake or wildfire strikes, take advantage of the following resources.

Ready San Diego

Ready San Diego (www.ReadySanDiego.org) was created by the San Diego County Office of Emergency Services in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to educate and empower Americans to prepare for and respond to both natural disasters and terrorist attacks.

ReadySanDiego.org contains resources on how to prepare your family, pets, children and business for emergencies. The site links to an interactive hazards map created by the California Emergency Management Agency that allows users to enter an address and see whether a location is in the danger zones for earthquake, fire, flood and tsunami.

This website also offers a Family Disaster Plan and Personal Survival Guide in multiple languages, including Spanish, Tagalog and Vietnamese. In addition, it features real-time Twitter feeds from local public safety agencies about fires and other emergencies.

FEMA Ready Kids

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has created a special website — www.ready.gov/kids — filled with cartoon characters, activities and games to make emergency preparedness fun for kids. Pack it up, one of the interactive games featured on the site, helps children and their families remember what to put in an emergency supply kit. There is also a scavenger hunt game, which is designed to get the whole family involved in collecting supplies for the kit. Visitors to the site can print out instructions on how to play the game with their family.

Another section of the website educates children about weather events and unexpected situations, everything from earthquakes to tsunamis to terrorism.

[ EMERGENCY, P9]

Security has created a special web-

site to keep people informed about fires and other emergencies. The site links to an interactive hazards map created by the California Emergency Management Agency that allows users to enter an address and see whether a location is in the danger zones for earthquake, fire, flood and tsunami.

In addition, it features real-time Twitter feeds from local public safety agencies about fires and other emergencies.

[ P4]

[ P10]
In the future, he expects more patients will be coming in only when they are in dire need. Right now, he said, many patients who have lost their job and health insurance. “As a safety net, we are seeing a huge increase in demand,” Zaheer said.

With federal health care reform, he also believes more patients will be looking for primary care homes and end up at community clinics. “We need a larger facility to be able to add physicians and support staff to meet their needs,” said Zaheer. Meanwhile, San Diego Family Care is studying ways to expand services by adding evening hours at its existing Mid-City Community Clinic facilities and exploring new locations, according to Aaron Zaheer, medical director of pediatrics for the organization.

Due to the prolonged economic recession, nonprofit health providers in general are coping with an influx of new patients who have lost their job and health insurance. “As a safety net, we are seeing a huge increase in demand,” Zaheer said.

With federal health care reform, he also believes more patients will be looking for primary care homes and end up at community clinics. Right now, he said, many patients who may qualify for subsidized care in the future are coming in only when they are in dire need. In the future, he expects more patients will take advantage of preventive care.

**Commitment to providing culturally-competent services**

If there is one thing that the nonprofit health providers have in common, it’s their commitment to ensure their services address the culturally diverse needs of their clients. All the providers make special efforts to hire employees who speak foreign languages, such as Spanish, Somali and Vietnamese, in addition to English. Some of the providers make use of telephone interpretation services when a patient speaks a rare language that nobody on their staff understands.

Zara Marselian, La Maestra’s chief executive officer, said when her organization can’t find staff who speak the native languages of patients, it recruits those speakers from the community and train them to be medical assistants. La Maestra has a model for developing medically-trained cultural liaisons who serve as ambassadors in the community on health care matters. It has brought feedback from clients to improve its services to reach particular ethnic groups.

“"We know the only way to gain cultural competence is to hire from the community we serve," Marselian said.

**Proving quality, affordable care**

All the nonprofit providers help patients without health care insurance apply for government health programs. For those who don’t qualify for subsidized care, they typically discount fees based on income and family size. As a general rule, the community clinics don’t turn anyone away.

“Our mission is to provide affordable high-quality care to everyone who needs it. We take that mission very seriously,” Shay said.

Because not all of their patients can pay, nonprofit providers rely heavily on public and private grants and fundraising to cover budget gaps.

**Cooperar en lugar de Competir**

A pesar de que los proveedores de servicios de salud sin fines de lucro de City Heights están ubicados en un área relativamente pequeña, cooperan los unos con los otros en lugar de tratar de competir. Sus servicios y horarios tienden a complementarse.

Por ejemplo, la Clínica Comunitaria de Mid-City – Pediatría y Centro de Adultos de Urgencia de Rady Children’s comparten el mismo espacio en 4305 University Ave. La Clínica Comunitaria de Mid-City opera durante el día y Rady’s provee cuidados de urgencia hasta altas horas de la noche. A través de Rady’s, los pacientes de la Clínica Comunitaria de Mid-City tienen acceso a servicios de radiología. Las clínicas dentales de La Maestra están ubicadas en el mismo edificio que el Centro de Cuidados de Urgencia de Rady’s y la Clínica Comunitaria de Mid-City – Pediatría. Como resultado, la Clínica Comunitaria de Mid-City ha sido designada por el gobierno federal como un centro de que provee servicios integrales de salud a las poblaciones marginadas.

Katherine Konzen, Directora de Cuidados de Urgencia de Rady’s, dijo que la cooperación entre Rady’s y la Clínica Comunitaria de Mid-City ha sido muy exitosa. “Las instalaciones se usan a lo largo de todo el día. Los pacientes tienen acceso a una variedad de servicios desde las 8 a.m. hasta las 10 p.m.”

Comprometidos con Proveer Servicios Culturalmente Competentes

Algo que estos proveedores de servi-
East African Healthcare Reform Roundtable seeks to share knowledge

By Adam Ward
Mid-City CAN

Explaining health care reform, which entails deciphering complicated timelines, legalese and technical medical terms, can be daunting even for native English speakers. Members of the East African Healthcare Reform Roundtable are attempting to do all that and overcome language and cultural barriers for immigrants whose traditions focus on oral, rather than written, means of communications.

Group members include representatives from Horn of Africa Community in North America, Somali Youth United, Huda Community Center, Somali Family Service of San Diego, Nile Sisters Development Initiative, Southern Sudanese Community Center of San Diego, South Sudan Christian Youth and Community Organization and the Center for Bridging Communities.

Funded by the California Endowment as part of its Building Healthy Communities initiative, the roundtable is intended to help the East African community understand federal health care reform. The group has been meeting once a month since January and is still in the strategic planning stage. Facilitators are helping leaders collaborate and increase their knowledge.

“This is a very complex issue even for health care workers,” said Yasmin Hamud, executive director of the Center for Bridging Communities. She is on the governing board of the Mid-City Community Advocacy Network, also known as Mid-City CAN, which coordinates the partnerships for the roundtable.

“The idea is to bring together this group of thought leaders in the community to learn as much as they can, so they can turn around and share this information,” said Lenore Lowe, executive director of Nonprofit Management Solutions, which is facilitating and advising the group.

The roundtable is creating a shared vision and action plan for community outreach and advocacy. “The areas of focus includes sharing knowledge about health care reform and medical rights and increasing the ability for leaders in the East African communities to work collaboratively,” Lowe said.

Hamud gave an example of what these efforts might look like in City Heights. “The average Somali person that I represent in my community [might not be able] to read these articles about the reform,” she said. “We as community leaders can sort of break it down for them in a language they can understand and in a format that will be useful.”

Hamud said leaders of the East African community in City Heights will be able to talk about parts of the legislation that are most likely to have the biggest impact. “(Community members) might not even understand that, for years and years and years, their adult children who lived with them couldn’t get insurance, well, now they can,” she said. Hamud anticipates doing one-on-one outreach to people as well as larger trainings.

Meanwhile, the roundtable is looking at some unique strategies to disseminate information. “When you’re talking about translation, that doesn’t necessarily mean written translation, but oral translation that can be recorded and provided, because there is an oral tradition in the Somali and Sudanese community,” Lowe said.

— Adam Ward is the Mid-City CAN staff writer and a former San Diego Union-Tribune editor. Adam has lived in San Diego for nearly a decade and is the father of a young son. Contact him at award@midcitycan.org or (619) 283-9624 ext. 210.

Grants enable La Maestra to expand medical and dental health services to more schools

By Lindy Webb
La Maestra Community Health Centers

Thanks to a $406,733 grant awarded under the federal Affordable Care Act, La Maestra Community Health Centers will expand medical and dental services to schools in City Heights and elsewhere in San Diego County.

The funding will allow La Maestra to purchase a new mobile clinic to provide medical, dental and other health and well-being services in about 9,000 more elementary and middle school students. The 40-foot mobile clinic will feature two dental chairs and one exam room.

The van will provide substantial savings for families because they will no longer need to miss work and school to drive to a clinic. La Maestra will save money as well because it won’t have to shoulder the costs associated with building a permanent clinic on a campus.

“This new mobile clinic will allow us to effectively increase access to preventive care and treatment for so many students and families who aren’t able to see the doctor otherwise, and the children won’t have to miss school,” said Zara Marselian, La Maestra’s chief executive officer.

La Maestra, which has been serving City Heights for more than two decades, established its first school-based health center when it took over the clinic at Hoover High School in 2009. Ever since then, it’s been working to expand services to more schools. Last year, through funding from its community partners, The California Endowment and Price Charities, the nonprofit health provider opened a second school-based clinic on a campus.

“The idea is to bring together this group of thought leaders in the community to learn as much as they can, so they can turn around and share this information,” said Lenore Lowe, executive director of Nonprofit Management Solutions, which is facilitating and advising the group.

The roundtable is creating a shared vision and action plan for community outreach and advocacy. “The areas of focus includes sharing knowledge about health care reform and medical rights and increasing the ability for leaders in the East African communities to work collaboratively,” Lowe said.

Hamud gave an example of what these efforts might look like in City Heights. “The average Somali person that I represent in my community [might not be able] to read these articles about the reform,” she said. “We as community leaders can sort of break it down for them in a language they can understand and in a format that will be useful.”

Hamud said leaders of the East African community in City Heights will be able to talk about parts of the legislation that are most likely to have the biggest impact. “(Community members) might not even understand that, for years and years and years, their adult children who lived with them couldn’t get insurance, well, now they can,” she said. Hamud anticipates doing one-on-one outreach to people as well as larger trainings.

Meanwhile, the roundtable is looking at some unique strategies to disseminate information. “When you’re talking about translation, that doesn’t necessarily mean written translation, but oral translation that can be recorded and provided, because there is an oral tradition in the Somali and Sudanese community,” Lowe said.

— Adam Ward is the Mid-City CAN staff writer and a former San Diego Union-Tribune editor. Adam has lived in San Diego for nearly a decade and is the father of a young son. Contact him at award@midcitycan.org or (619) 283-9624 ext. 210.
As he enters his last year of high school, Hoover senior Julian Lopez maintains a sharp focus on both sports and academics. He prepared himself for the upcoming year with one goal in mind: attending college.

Julian has always been a strong student. During his years at Monroe Clark Middle School, academics was his priority, and he became one of the top students in his class. Not only did he excel in his classes, he was also interested in athletics. He brought the same commitment and drive to Hoover, where he ended his freshman year with a 3.8 GPA and started his first year playing football. He trained during the summer with the team and did extra training on his own. He faced a major setback when the doctor said that he was not fit enough to play football. He took that as a challenge and pushed himself harder. Julian also participated in track and field and became a top hurdler.

During his sophomore year, Julian was recruited to the varsity football team and raised his GPA to 4.5, earning him a spot in the top 10 in his class. “It is a privilege to be in the top 10,” Julian said. “Just because you have a top GPA doesn’t mean you’re smart but a hard worker.”

In his junior year, he was injured during football season. While others pushed him to get back on his feet, he felt like stopping because of the pressure from his peers and teachers. “It made me feel like everything that I was doing was just because other people wanted me to do it,” Julian said.

His motivation was not the same, but he did all he could to get back on his feet. He quit track and field and then managed to come back by apologizing and discussing his future with his coach. His junior year was not what he expected. It was a challenge managing time to study, do school work and play sports. He put his all into every football game and track meet.

He has been involved in football and track and field all through the past three years and plans on doing the same this year.

Not only have his peers noticed how good he has become but colleges have as well. Lopez has been receiving letters of recruitment from the Air Force and multiple colleges. Recruiters from the University of San Diego, University of California, Davis, UC Riverside, UCLA, and Harvard University have all approached him in person.

Although he has some time to think about where he will go, he already has his mind set on one particular university: Harvard. This is his dream school. He will continue to work hard to reach his college goal.

This year he has more on his plate, as he juggles academics, sports, and a job to help his family. He also feels like the man of the house because his father is not there.

Although Julian has a portfolio full of medals, awards, and letters of recognition and recruitment, he remains humble and is doing everything to make his mother proud. His senior year is challenging, and he won’t forget where he stood before and where he is now. Both his family and peers support him in every way.

By Ashley Quintero
Hoover High School

For Julian Lopez, hard work equals success
Bubble Up! gala raises funds to support City Heights programs

By Elizabeth Horpedahl
Ocean Discovery Institute

With City Heights students at the helm, Ocean Discovery Institute celebrated its accomplishments and plans for growth at its annual Bubble Up! gala on Sept. 17. The black-tie affair at La Costa Resort and Spa raised critical funding to support programs in City Heights.

Guests participated in student-led activities, competing to win prizes while raising funds to empower City Heights youth. Hoover High School alumni, including Rudy Vargas and Anai Novoa, led the activities to engage guests in the Institute’s mission and programs. Activities included remotely-operated vehicle races, “plankton” races, and an “Are you Smarter than an Ocean Leader?” game show.

More than 250 leaders from San Diego’s business, philanthropic, and scientific communities attended. Student ambassadors sat at each table with supporters, simultaneously gaining networking skills and connecting with potential internship opportunities. Erick Ruiz was one of these student ambassadors, sitting with supporters from Bumble Bee Foods. Through this event, Erick was able to share his dream of combining his interest in fisheries science with his passion for the culinary arts, and discuss ways that he can pursue that dream.

“With each new year, it is a thrill to see all the growth and dimension in the students. To cross paths with so many wonderful, compassionate and generous people brings a whole new meaning to community,” said City Heights resident Dennis Wood who attended the gala.

Perhaps the most exciting part of Bubble Up! was that Carolina Barraza, Cal State University Chico and Hoover High alum, was recently hired as Ocean Discovery Institute’s events and communications coordinator, implementing the event for the first time this year.

“I was thrilled to be a part of this event to share our organization’s vision and long-term commitment to improving our region,” Carolina said.

The funds raised at Bubble Up! will support activities and programs that pave the way for more than 5,000 youth from City Heights to gain knowledge and understanding of the sciences and nature, preparing these young people to become our future scientific and environmental leaders.

The gala fundraiser was made possible by the title sponsor Gen-Probe. Other supporters include Boeing; Procopio, Cory, Hargreaves and Savitch; Cox Communications; Hughes Marino; Wells Fargo; Bank of America; Life Technologies; Qualcomm; SDG&E; ProFlowers; and Fresh & Easy.

— Elizabeth Horpedahl is the director of development and communications for the Ocean Discovery Institute.

To learn more about the Ocean Discovery Institute, visit www.OceanDiscoveryInstitute.org or call (858) 488-3849.

EDUCATION BRIEFS

Discussion on school closures and realignments underway

In anticipation of further state budget cuts, the San Diego Unified School District is studying the possibility of closing some schools in ten of its 16 high school clusters, including the Hoover and Crawford clusters in City Heights. A cluster consists of elementary and middle schools that feed into a high school.

District staff has held a series of community meetings throughout September to inform parents about the potential changes, which could include grade-level reconfigurations and program consolidations, in addition to campus closures. As part of the adoption of this school year’s budget, the district has committed to saving $5 million through school realignments in the 2012-2013 school year.

Additional community meetings are scheduled in October. To learn more, visit www.sandi.net/realignment.

Campaign aims to recruit 4,500 volunteers for local schools

United Way of San Diego County, the San Diego County Office of Education, and the San Diego Union-Tribune have joined together for a campaign to recruit 4,500 volunteers to tutor, mentor, and support local students at a time when schools are grappling with severe budget cuts.

The campaign was announced on Sept. 15, and it’s part of a national effort by United Way to get one million people throughout the country to volunteer in schools. United Way and the Union-Tribune will track the local volunteer efforts to determine their impact.

To speak with a volunteer coordinator, call (858) 636-4111.

New dialogue has begun to improve services for East Africans

A recent conference sponsored by City Heights Hope, Voices of Women and the United Women of East Africa Support Team sparked a new dialogue between San Diego’s East African community, local agencies and educators on how to best serve East African families.

Agin Shaheed, a program manager in the Race, Human Relations and Advocacy Department of the San Diego Unified School District, was part of a panel discussion on how to provide better advocacy for children and adults in a culturally diverse community. In addition, Shaheed gave a motivational speech to participating students on how to become responsible citizens and shared information about the contributions of East Africans to American culture.

Participants are working to improve the overall health and well-being of East African families living in San Diego. For more information, contact Shaheed at (858) 490-8678.

Hoover moves from Beiser’s school board subdistrict to Barrera’s

Under a redistricting plan approved by the San Diego School Board on Sept. 13, Hoover High School has moved from subdistrict B represented by Kevin Beiser to subdistrict D represented by Richard Barrera.

Electoral maps are redrawn every ten years after new census data is released. The goal of redistricting is to balance populations between political districts to ensure equal representation.

The total population in the school district is a little more than one million people, and the voting-age population is 80 percent of the general population. About 200,000 people reside in each of the five school board subdistricts.

In subdistrict D, 45.22 percent of the population is Hispanic, 37.76 percent non-Hispanic white, and 7.9 percent black, with the remainder made up of a mix of races.
Refugee youth from Crawford High School are participating in an arts-based workshop on Food Justice that is being run by The AjA Project as part of the media collaborative, Speak City Heights. Youth explored the New Roots community garden in City Heights. Their photos and stories revealed that not only do gardens help ensure access to healthy food, but also improve mental health by providing refugees with a sense of community and connection, helping to alleviate acculturation stress and depression. The students also noted that mostly refugees use the gardens. They think most people in City Heights believe the gardens are only available for refugees.
For the above assignment, youth photographed their City Heights neighborhood and created a photo map illustrating the options for healthy and non-healthy foods. They unanimously agreed that there are many places in City Heights to get healthy, cheap food. They considered themselves to be healthy, but felt that City Heights, as a whole, is unhealthy. Their visual narratives raised the question: Do refugees have more access to healthy, cheap food than other City Heights residents?

Crawford students photographed their cultural food practices, illuminating the link between culture, access and education around healthy eating. Many youth from Southeast Asia described a plant-based diet that they have been able to easily continue in the United States through local community gardens and farmers markets. Many refugees arrive in the United States with the tools and education for healthy eating.
Prepare, plan, stay informed
Three strategies on how to prepare for emergencies

By Yvette Urea Moe
San Diego County Office of Emergency Services

If City Heights residents were polled and asked how well they were prepared to cope with the recent power outage, many would likely answer “not very well.” A December survey of 503 San Diego County residents, sponsored by the local American Red Cross, found that a 41 percent are completely unprepared for an emergency.

The massive blackout in early September that affected more than three million residents in San Diego and elsewhere serves as a wake-up call to get ready. In a major disaster, emergency officials won’t be able to reach everyone immediately. It could be days before first responders are able to assist. In the event of a fast-moving wildfire or explosion, residents might be given 15 minutes or less to evacuate their homes.

By following the three strategies outlined below, you will be in a better position to respond to any emergency:

• Prepare. Gather items for a home, work and car emergency kit. At minimum, you will need a three-day supply of water, non-perishable food, a first aid kit, a whistle, a radio, flashlight and batteries. The items should be stored in a ready-to-grab waterproof bag or container, such as a plastic tub.

Pre-packaged emergency kits are available at some big box stores and the American Red Cross, but residents also can put together their own. Personalize the kits for your family by considering the dietary needs of infants, pets and other family members. If anyone in your family requires medication, put an extra week’s supply in the kits. Keep copies of important documents, such as insurance policies, identification cards, and bank records, in case you have to evacuate quickly. You can scan and store them online or on a thumb drive. Do the same with family photographs.

• Plan. A disaster could happen while parents are at work and children at school. During the blackout, we learned that phone lines can quickly get overloaded, so it’s important to have a family disaster plan that includes several meeting places and an out-of-state emergency contact that family members can call or text-message. Text messaging is often an easier way to communicate during a disaster.

Create a family disaster plan with important phone numbers and information you may need in an emergency. Plan templates are available in English, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese on www.ReadySanDiego.org. If you already have a plan, review it, make sure it’s up to date and practice it.

• Stay informed. The County of San Diego offers free emergency alerts by cell phone. To register, go to www.ReadySanDiego.org and click on AlertSanDiego. During an emergency, the county also will activate a special website, www.SCOCOE.org/emergency.com, and send out information via two Twitter accounts @readySanDiego and @SanDiegoCounty.

If power is out, use your battery-powered radio to get updates from KOGO 600 AM or XTRA Sports 1360 AM. You can also dial 211 for emergency updates and service referrals.

During the blackout, many of us found that we lacked batteries, a surge protector, a flashlight, gas in our car, or cash on hand. If you haven’t already, take the time now to get what you were missing, so you’ll be ready the next time to survive an emergency.

— Yvette Urea Moe is a communications specialist at the San Diego County Office of Emergency Services, which coordinates the region’s overall response to disasters.

Recent City Heights brush fire is reminder to create defensible space

By Lee Swanson
San Diego Fire-Rescue Department

The Aug. 29 brush fire in Manzanita Canyon threatened homes in City Heights and called attention to the need to create defensible space and a fire-safe landscape at properties facing the canyon.

A fire-safe landscape isn’t necessarily the same thing as a well-manicured yard. It means using fire-resistant plants that are strategically planted to resist the spread of fire.

The good news is you don’t need a lot of money to make your landscape fire-safe. And you will find that a fire-safe landscape can increase your property value and conserve water while beautifying your home.

Defensible space is the base around your home that will give firefighters time to arrive and space to fight the fire. To create such a space requires clearing all dry grass and dead leaves and selectively thinning, trimming and pruning the native vegetation to a maximum of 100 feet from your home. None of this means you should have a ring of bare dirt or disturb any of the root systems around your home.

Defensible space is the landscape between your house and the dense stands of native or naturalized vegetation that could be a source of fuel for a fire. It is your responsibility as a homeowner to maintain this area to reduce fire risk.

The first approximately 35 feet from the house is the level area that should have permanent irrigation and low-growing plants (with the exception of trees). The next 65 feet cannot have permanent irrigation and must be thinned and pruned on an annual basis.

Here are some tips on how best to create defensible space:

• Remove dead wood and vegetation and cut half the plants that are more than two feet tall down to six inches. Don’t go below six inches or you will lose erosion control. The plants you cut to six inches should be in groups, so there are two-foot plants in an area, surrounded by lower plants in a mosaic pattern. The goal is to thin the plants, not eliminate them.

The remaining plants, four feet or more in height, should then be cut and shaped into umbrellas. Prune half of the lower branches to create umbrella-shaped canopies. This also allows you to see and deal with what is growing underneath. Finally, remove all the cuttings and dead wood from your property or use a machine to chip or mulch your cuttings and spread them out to a depth of four to five inches.

— Lee Swanson is a public information officer for the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department website at www.sandiego.gov/fireandems/inspections/brush.shtml.

San Diego Fire-Rescue Department requires 100 ft. (measured horizontally out from the structure)

Tres Estrategias Fáciles para estar Preparado durante una Emergencia

By Lee Swanson
San Diego Fire-Rescue Department

La semana pasada, en Manzanita, un incendio de maizales amenazó en City Heights y llamó la atención sobre la necesidad de crear un espacio defensivo y un paisaje de seguridad del fuego en propiedades que enfrentan el valle de la cantera.

Un paisaje de seguridad del fuego no es necesariamente lo mismo que un jardín cuidado. Se refiere a las plantas que son resistente al fuego y que están estratégicamente plantadas para resistir la propagación del fuego.

El buen news es que no necesitas mucho dinero para hacer que tu jardín sea seguro del fuego. También puedes encontrar que un paisaje seguro del fuego puede aumentar el valor de tu propiedad y conservar agua mientras mejoras tu hogar.

El espacio defensivo es el área alrededor de tu casa que dará a los bomberos tiempo para llegar y espacio para combatir el fuego. Para crear este espacio necesitas eliminar todo el pasto seco y las hojas secas y seleccionarmente despejar, podar y podar la vegetación nativa a una máxima de 100 pies de tu casa. Ninguno de este significa que debes tener una esquina de tierra desnuda o interrumpir los sistemas de raíz de alrededor de tu casa.

El espacio defensivo es el paisaje entre tu casa y la densidad de las plantas nativas o naturalizadas que podrían ser una fuente de combustible para el fuego. Es tu responsabilidad como propietario de casa mantener esta área para reducir el riesgo de fuego.

El primer aproximadamente 35 pies de la casa es el nivel del terreno que debería tener irrigación permanente y plantas de crecimiento bajo (con la excepción de los árboles). Los siguientes 65 pies no pueden tener irrigación permanente y deben ser podados y podados en un año.

Aquí hay algunos consejos para cómo hacerlo de la mejor manera:

• Extrae el madera muerta y la vegetación y corta la mitad de las plantas que son más de dos pies de altura de seis pulgadas. No vayas por debajo de seis pulgadas o perderás el control de la erosión. Los vegetales que cortas a seis pulgadas deberían estar en grupos, así que hay dos vegetales de pie en un área, rodeados por plantas más bajas en un patrón mosaico. El objetivo es vencer los vegetales, no eliminarlos.

Los vegetales restantes, cuatro pies o más en altura, deberían entonces ser cortados y modelados en umbrelas. Enreda la mitad de los vegetales inferiores para crear una especie de paraguas. Esto también te permite ver lo que está creciendo debajo. Finalmente, elimina todas las cosechas y el madera muerta de tu propiedad o usa una máquina para triturar o muletas tus cosechas y dispersarlas a una profundidad de cuatro a cinco pies.

— Lee Swanson es un oficial de información pública para el departamento de bomberos de San Diego.

To create a defensible space, clear all dry grass and dead leaves and selectively thin the native vegetation to a maximum of 100 feet from your home.
Nguy hiểm của hút thuốc gián tiếp và nhiều cần não ở

By Manuel Andrade and Mary Baum
Social Advocates for Youth

Vivienda multifamiliar y peligros del humo de segunda mano

Por Manuel Andrade and Mary Baum
Social Advocates for Youth

¿Sabía Usted que en E.U. el humo de segunda mano es el segundo peor contaminante de nuestro ambiente? La Agencia de Protección Ambiental de los Estados Unidos ha clasificado al humo de segunda mano como un carpoceno en el grupo “A”, categoría de carcinógenos más peligrosos. Estudios han identificado 50 sustancias químicas que causan cáncer en el humo de segunda mano.

Un estudio realizado por la Academia de Pediatría en el 2010, se encontró que niños que viven en apartamentos donde nadie fuma adentro tienen un incremento de 45% en niveles de cotoni- na (sistema para medir la exposición al tabaco). El informe señala que las viviendas multifamiliares pueden ser una fuente importante de exposición al humo de segunda mano para los niños a niveles asociados con la morbilidad. Las viviendas multifamiliares en el Condado de San Diego tienen más de 500 mil unidades, ¿cuál es el problema? Que el humo de segunda mano se mueve en las viviendas multifamiliares. El humo de segunda mano debe ser expulsado del edificio para evitar que se mueva a las viviendas adyacentes.

El condado de San Diego tiene más de 20,000 unidades que deben cumplir con un programa de humo de segunda mano. Sin embargo, los programas actuales no son efectivos. El proyecto de la Oficina de Servicios de Emergencia del Condado de San Diego, llamado “Stop the Smoke”, busca mejorar la salud de las familias en viviendas multifamiliares.

¿Cómo puede ayudar a su escuela a luchar contra el humo de segunda mano? Pregúntele a su maestro o administrador del edificio.

---

**Emergency, from P8**

**Connect-ED and San Diego Safety Plans**

The San Diego Unified School District uses a service called Connect-ED to send out voice messages and emails in mass to parents and guardians to notify them of emergencies and school events.

Check with your child’s school to make sure your current contact information is in the Connect-ED system. To learn more about Connect-ED, visit www.sandi.net/Page/2998.

By law, every California campus must have a school safety plan. Ask to review a copy of the plan. Standard procedures require school staff to stay until all children are safely reunited with parents or designated adults whose names are on their emergency cards. Make sure your child’s emergency card information is up to date.

**American Red Cross, San Diego/Imperial Counties Chapter**

The local American Red Cross offers two types of disas- ter assistance. One type involves providing material items, which include food, shelter, cleanup kits and financial help. The second type involves counseling, guidance and advo- cacy. The organization also trains volunteers for disaster response. To learn more, visit www.sandrc.org.

In addition, the local chapter has teamed up with cor- porate partners to create www.PrepareSanDiego.org, which contains emergency-specific checklists in English and Spanish.

**2-1-1 San Diego**

During a disaster or emergency, 2-1-1 San Diego pro- vides information about road closures, shelter locations and recovery assistance. Residents can either dial 211 or visit www.211sandiego.org for help 24/7. 2-1-1 San Diego of- fers referrals in multiple languages.

To receive updates, sign up for the agency’s email list online.

Remember it’s your responsibility to create a disaster plan and that having such a plan can make a dramatic dif- ference in how well you and your loved ones survive un- foreseen situations.

**EMERGENCIA, from P1**

**Vivienda multifamiliar y peligros del humo de segunda mano**

Por Manuel Andrade and Mary Baum
Social Advocates for Youth

¿Sabía Usted que en E.U. el humo de segunda mano es el segundo peor contaminante de nuestro ambiente? La Agencia de Protección Ambiental de los Estados Unidos ha clasificado al humo de segunda mano como un carpoceno en el grupo “A”, categoría de carcinógenos más peligrosos. Estudios han identificado 50 sustancias químicas que causan cáncer en el humo de segunda mano.

Un estudio realizado por la Academia de Pediatría en el 2010, se encontró que niños que viven en apartamentos donde nadie fuma adentro tienen un incremento de 45% en niveles de cotonina (sistema para medir la exposición al tabaco). El informe señala que las viviendas multifamiliares pueden ser una fuente importante de exposición al humo de segunda mano para los niños a niveles asociados con la morbili- dad. Las viviendas multifamiliares en el Condado de San Diego tienen más de 500 mil unidades, ¿cuál es el problema? Que el humo de segunda mano se mueve en las viviendas multifamiliares. El humo de segunda mano debe ser expulsado del edificio para evitar que se mueva a las viviendas adyacentes.

El condado de San Diego tiene más de 20,000 unidades que deben cumplir con un programa de humo de segunda mano. Sin embargo, los programas actuales no son efectivos. El proyecto de la Oficina de Servicios de Emergencia del Condado de San Diego, llamado “Stop the Smoke”, busca mejorar la salud de las familias en viviendas multifamiliares.

¿Cómo puede ayudar a su escuela a luchar contra el humo de segunda mano? Pregúntele a su maestro o administrador del edificio.

---

**EMERGENCIA, from P8**

**Connect-ED and San Diego Safety Plans**

The San Diego Unified School District uses a service called Connect-ED to send out voice messages and emails in mass to parents and guardians to notify them of emergencies and school events.

Check with your child’s school to make sure your current contact information is in the Connect-ED system. To learn more about Connect-ED, visit www.sandi.net/Page/2998.

By law, every California campus must have a school safety plan. Ask to review a copy of the plan. Standard procedures require school staff to stay until all children are safely reunited with parents or designated adults whose names are on their emergency cards. Make sure your child’s emergency card information is up to date.

**American Red Cross, San Diego/Imperial Counties Chapter**

The local American Red Cross offers two types of disaster assistance. One type involves providing material items, which include food, shelter, cleanup kits and financial help. The second type involves counseling, guidance and advocacy. The organization also trains volunteers for disaster response. To learn more, visit www.sandrc.org.

In addition, the local chapter has teamed up with corporate partners to create www.PrepareSanDiego.org, which contains emergency-specific checklists in English and Spanish.

**2-1-1 San Diego**

During a disaster or emergency, 2-1-1 San Diego provides information about road closures, shelter locations and recovery assistance. Residents can either dial 211 or visit www.211sandiego.org for help 24/7. 2-1-1 San Diego offers referrals in multiple languages.

To receive updates, sign up for the agency’s email list online.

Remember it’s your responsibility to create a disaster plan and that having such a plan can make a dramatic difference in how well you and your loved ones survive unforeseen situations.
Iraqi immigrant creates jobs, brings fresh produce to the neighborhood

How did an Iraqi-born Catholic come to own a Latino supermarket with an Irish name? It’s a long story but well worth hearing.

Mark Kassab, co-owner of Murphy’s Market, was born and raised in Iraq. He immigrated to San Diego in 1977 with his two brothers to join his mother and sister. The Kassabs had a long history in Iraq, tracing their ancestry to 500 B.C. and the Babylonian empire, which included present-day Iraq. The Kassabs are Chaldean Catholics and speak Aramaic, which Mark says is more similar to Hebrew than Arabic, Iraq’s predominant language.

After settling in the San Carlos neighborhood of San Diego as a 17-year-old, Mark attended Patrick Henry High School and worked at a grocery store. He says his family was poor, but together with his two oldest siblings, he committed to pooling money to buy a supermarket in the future. Saving money wasn’t easy, as Mark remembers making only $2 per hour, even though minimum wage was $2.75 (His siblings, making only $2 per hour even though minimum wage was $2.75). (His manager said his English wasn’t good enough to justify paying him the extra $0.75 per hour).

Not long after graduating from high school, Mark heard through a friend that Murphy’s Market on Fairmount Avenue was for sale. Supposedly, Murphy’s was founded by an Irish descendant in the 1960’s, hence the Irish name.

Along with his older sister and younger brother, Mark leveraged the money they had saved working at local grocery stores to borrow money from the bank to buy Murphy’s. At the youthful age of 20, three years removed from landing in the United States with $5 in his pocket, Mark was the proud co-owner of a business.

“We worked really hard – more than 100 hours a week – to be successful. We had no other choice,” Mark says. The early years were really lean for the three siblings, and they all continued to live at home. To raise extra money for operations, Mark took a second job at a Pacific Beach liquor store. He remembers working at Murphy’s from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the liquor store from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m., and returning to Murphy’s for a couple of hours to stock shelves for the next day.

Asked if it was all worth it, Mark replies, “You learned not to complain. You take care of your family... It was better than being unemployed.”

The Kassabs learned to be savvy businessmen and adapt to their changing environment. Murphy’s customer demographics changed drastically from the early 1980’s to the 1990’s as City Heights experienced a large influx of Latinos. They did a lot of listening to their customers’ wants and needs and changed merchandise to stay current.

In the early years, the Kassabs decided they would need to expand operations to meet growing demand. The original store was just 1,800 square feet with six parking spaces and one employee, in addition to the Kassabs. In 2009, the time was right to purchase an adjacent lot and build a new 9,000-square-foot building with 35 parking spaces. Murphy’s on Fairmount now employs 35 full-time workers.

“We like my neighborhood. I want to stay here,” Mark says. The Kassabs built the Chevron station near the I-15 on University Avenue from the ground up in 2001 and opened a second store, Supermercado Murphy’s, on University in 2005. Altogether, the Kassabs’ businesses employ more than 100 City Heights residents. While Mark does not require his employees to be City Heights residents, he believes employing locals is good for his business and good for the community.

As Mark reminisces about his 34 years in the United States you can see the gleam in his eyes as he says, “You come from a poor, humble lifestyle. You work hard, and this country gives you everything you want.”

Mark has been married for 25 years and has four kids. They have all attended Our Lady of Sacred Heart, a Catholic school in City Heights. Besides business, Mark’s other passion is running. He runs 45 miles a week and has completed multiple marathons. Peer ing into the future, Mark envisions the Kassabs opening an upscale supermarket in City Heights that provides organic foods.

— Staff Report

Mama’s Kitchen moves to City Heights

Mama’s Kitchen Executive Director Alberto Cortés and Executive Chef Anne Garger say the industrial-sized commercial kitchen in their new City Heights headquarters allows the organization to expand its food preparation capacity and improve the quality of its prepared meals.

By Helen Gao
City Heights Life

After undergoing a $1.4 million renovation, a once-decrepit building on Home Avenue is now the gleaming headquarters of Mama’s Kitchen, a nonprofit organization that provides food free of charge for people living with AIDS or cancer throughout San Diego County. For 17 years, Mama’s Kitchen prepared meals out of a leased church basement in the Bankers Hill area of San Diego and delivered them to clients’ homes. The space was cramped, about 5,400 square feet, half of the size of its new City Heights facility. The nonprofit also ran a food pantry out of another location in North Park.
The Vietnamese were the first major refugee group to settle in City Heights

By Jon Luna
City Heights Life History Columnist

City Heights’ evolution from a predominantly white suburban community to a vibrant melting pot started in the 1970s with the end of the Vietnam War.

On April 30, 1975, about two years after the U.S. decided to pull out of the Cold War-era conflict, the communist-led North Vietnamese army captured Saigon, the capital of South Vietnam. With the fall of Saigon, thousands of Vietnamese refugees fled Southeast Asia to the United States in the hopes of starting new lives. They became the first major refugee group to settle in City Heights.

When the Vietnamese refugees first arrived, they were housed in more than 1,000 tents and Quonset huts at Camp Pendleton in north San Diego County. The newcomers needed to be immunized and documented, so they were sent to military bases throughout the country. Camp Pendleton temporarily hosted more than 50,000 refugees. Eventually, they were relocated to various areas in Southern California, including Long Beach and Orange County.

Many of the refugees chose to stay in San Diego because the weather here is similar to that in areas of Southeast Asia, if not better. City Heights, in particular, was attractive to the newcomers because it had an abundance of affordable housing, including a large number of apartment complexes. Today, the San Diego region is home to more than 33,000 Vietnamese, according to the Vietnamese Federation of San Diego.

Once the initial wave of refugees settled down and gained a degree of financial stability, they petitioned for their relatives from Southeast Asia to join them in the United States. Consequently, San Diego experienced a second wave of Southeast Asian immigration by the early 1980s. By then, City Heights was well on its way to becoming an ethnic enclave with not just a substantial number of Asian refugees, but also Hispanic immigrants.

Settling as a group in a particular community makes it easier for immigrants to maintain their values and culture in a foreign country while simultaneously helping one another out. That’s why high concentrations of a specific ethnic group typically exist in a very small area. These ethnic enclaves can be found all over the country. In San Francisco, there is Chinatown. In San Diego, there is City Heights, which is home to various ethnic clusters, including an emerging Little Saigon business district, a six-block stretch of El Cajon Boulevard between Euclid and Highland avenues.

With the arrival of refugees, organizations sprang up to help them settle and assimilate. Over time, City Heights evolved to become a social services hub for immigrants. Today, a plethora of organizations here provide health care, resettlement assistance, job training, education, and other services to those who are new to America. Immigrants have plenty of resources at their disposal because of our long history of accepting them for well over thirty years.

The acceptance of refugees from the Vietnam War during the 1970s was just the beginning of City Heights’ transformation into a melting pot. In future columns I will explain the journey of other ethnic and refugee groups leaving their homeland and settling in the welcoming and wonderful community of City Heights.

— Jon Luna is a first-generation Filipino-American who was raised in City Heights. A San Diego State University graduate, he still lives there and works regularly as a substitute teacher at Hoover High School and other City Heights public schools. He is also pursuing a master’s degree in history from the University of San Diego. Jon’s research comes from the archives of the San Diego History Center.

KITCHEN, from P10

pand to meet growing demand.

The organization is in the midst of a capital campaign to raise $5.3 million to sustain the operations of its new facility and expand its capacity within three years to serve at least 750 clients each day with its new facility and expand its capacity within three years to serve at least 750 clients each day with at least 750 volunteers. Altogether, they donate about 30,000 hours a year in service. “This is really the work of many people,” Cortés said.

On a recent Friday afternoon, the first floor of Mama’s was filled with rows of paper bags of food waiting for volunteers to pick up and deliver to clients. Delivery days are Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. On those days, clients receive a hot meal and enough provisions for breakfast, lunch and dinner to last them a few days until the next delivery.

On this particular Friday, the hot meals were beef tips over buttered noodles accompanied by peas, carrots and a biscuit. The meals are not one size fits all. Anne Garger, Mama’s executive chef, said the staff does its best to tailor meals to clients’ dietary restrictions. Some clients don’t eat meat or fish and others can’t tolerate dairy, so substitutes are provided.

“We try to think, if you are feeding your family, what would you feed them? That’s what we give them,” Garger said.

It’s not just the AIDS and cancer patients who get three meals a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Mama’s also provides the meals to the clients’ children. The breast cancer population, it has noticed, is often made up of young mothers with children. When these women are undergoing chemotherapy, they often don’t feel well enough to cook for their family.

“Home delivery meals aren’t based on income,” Cortés said. “It’s based on the philosophy that we are taking care of people who are sick, who are vulnerable to hunger, because of their inability to prepare their own meals due to their illnesses.”

Mama’s also operates a pantry, a service for those affected by AIDS who are physically able to come and pick up their own food. Clients can use the pantry once a month to get about 25 items at a time, free of charge.

The staff of 12 at Mama’s is supplemented by an army of volunteers. As many as 750 volunteers help out with various aspects of the operation. Altogether, they donate about 30,000 hours a year in service. “This is really the work of many people,” Cortés said.

Left: Mama’s Kitchen provides food, free of charge, for more than 1,500 people annually in San Diego County who live with AIDS or cancer. Hundreds of volunteers help prepare and package meals for home deliveries, as well as staff the food pantry.

About 50,400 Vietnamese refugees were housed in a tent city at Camp Pendleton after the fall of Saigon in 1975. Photo reprinted with permission from the San Diego Union-Tribune.
Day of the Dead

The Fifth Annual Day of the Dead Festival will take place 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Oct. 26 at the City Heights Urban Village Park off Fairmount Avenue and Landis Street. The traditional Mexican holiday, called Día de los Muertos in Spanish, can be traced back thousands of years. Celebrations typically feature altars decorated with the photographs and favorite foods and beverages of deceased loved ones.

The festival is open to the public, free of charge, and includes live entertainment, educational altars and booths, school tours, and Mexican food.

Día de los Muertos

El Quinto Festival Anual del Día de los Muertos se llevará a cabo el día 28 de octubre de 10 a.m. a 7 p.m. en el Parque City Heights Urban Village que está ubicado entre Fairmount Avenue and Landis Street.

La celebración tradicional mexicana del Día de los Muertos es una tradición que se remonta miles de años. La celebración usualmente incluye altars decorados con fotografías de las comidas y bebidas preferidas de seres queridos fallecidos.

El festival está abierto para el público en general de forma gratuita e incluye entretenimiento en vivo, altars y puestos de información educativos, paseos escolares y comida mexicana.