GRiD Alternatives brings solar energy to City Heights

By Helen Gao
City Heights Life

At first glance, Hugo Sandoval’s home on Pepper Drive in the Azalea Park neighborhood of City Heights doesn’t look much different from the others on the block. It’s modest but well-kept, blending in with the rest of the neighborhood. But closer examination reveals that Sandoval’s home is special – it has solar panels on the rooftop, which are still relatively rare in City Heights.

The married father of three who works as a food server was able to bring solar energy to his family, thanks to GRiD Alternatives, whose mission is to provide renewable energy, energy efficiency services, equipment and job training to communities in need. The nonprofit organization helps low-income families, such as the Sandovals, apply for rebates through the state-funded Single-Family Affordable Solar Homes (SASH) program. GRiD Alternatives serves as the SASH program manager on behalf of the California Public Utilities Commission.

For the Sandoval family, there were no out-of-pocket expenses to get solar panels installed because

New school year, new services at Hoover High

By Helen Gao
City Heights Life

As students get ready to kick off a new school year, the City Heights Educational Collaborative is geared up to launch new support services and educational initiatives aimed at helping Hoover High students graduate and go on to college.

The Collaborative – a partnership between Price Charities, San Diego State University and the San Diego Unified School District – hopes to solidify the academic gains Hoover has made in recent years.

Principal Chuck Podhorsky said that every year the school adds to its system of academic and social support to ensure students have all the resources needed to succeed. “There is a promise that I make to parents that we essentially hold students’ hands from the...
Más servicios de salud mental

Estamos desarrollando un completo programa de salud mental en Hoover para afrontar el envejecimiento de la población y otras condiciones psiquiátricas entre los estudiantes y familias que no tienen suficiente cobertura de segu- ros, no tienen seguro o son indocumentados.

En la escuela, el Centro de Salud del campus ofrece servicios de salud mental solo a quienes tienen Medi-Cal. Con la expansión del programa, todos los estudiantes y sus familias tendrán acceso a asesoramiento, manejo de crisis y terapia sin importar si tienen seguro o su estatus migratorio.

“Estamos solucionando una necesidad”, dijo Dorothy Zirkle, directora de servicios de salud de Price Charities. “La salud y bienestar mental de muchos de nuestros estudiantes está bajo un riesgo increíble. Es un tema que muchas veces se pasa por alto”.

Price Charities está trabajando junto con los Centros Comunitarios de Salud La Maestra para aumentar la can- tidad del personal en el Centro de Salud. Por primera vez, el centro contará con un trabajador social certificado que puede ofrecer tratamientos clínicos de psico- terapia.

Esta nueva etapa, trabajando bajo la supervisión de Roberto Velásquez, Director de Bienestar Familiar de La Maestra, quien tiene un Doctorado en psicología.

El equipo de salud mental tam- bién incluirá a un personal certificado en Trabajo Social y de Parejas. El personal estará recibiendo el apoyo de aprendices y pasantes que participan en los programas de postgrado en Trabajo Social y Terapia Familiar y de Parejas de San Diego State University.

“Colaborando con La Maestra y San Diego State, la cantidad de familias y estudiantes de Hoover High School que vamos a poder ayudar será fenomenal”, aumentó.

Peggy Jones tiene dos nietos que asisten a Hoover High y con frecuencia trabaja como voluntaria en la escuela. Dijo que ve muchos jóvenes de alto riesgo que se beneficiarían si existen más servicios de salud mental.

“Muchos jóvenes solo vienen a la escuela porque tienen que hacerlo o porque están tratando de alejarse de sus padres en casa. Necesitan alguien con quien puedan hablar”.

Programa de educación superior temprana para comenzar

Hoover High estará iniciando un programa de educación superior temprana en conjunto con San Diego City College. El programa estará dirigido a los estudiantes de alto riesgo que necesitan ayuda extra para ingresar a la universi- dad. El plan es que los profesores de City College vengan a Hoover para co-enseñar con los instructores de la escuela. Durante el verano, se creará un programa especial para que los estudi- antes de Hoover puedan tomar clases en City College. En el futuro, el programa de educación superior temprana les per- mitirá a los estudiantes acumular crédito- tos universitarios.

“Queremos que los estudiantes se sientan cómodos con la idea de asistir a la universidad”, dijo Tim Allen, Di- rector Ejecutivo de City Heights Educa- tional Collaborative y de College Avenue Compact, iniciativas que se concentran en Hoover High y en las escue- las a las que asisten los estudiantes que ingresan a Hoover: Monroe Clark Middle y Rosa Parks Elementary.

“Añadí que, ‘Queremos que los estu- diantes tengan opciones. Creemos que asistir a un Community College es una buena opción’.

La iniciativa representa una exten- sión de College Avenue Compact, que ofrece a los estudiantes de Hoover ad- misión garantizada a San Diego State University si cumplen con los requisi- tos académicos necesarios.

Alumnos de GEAR UP ingresaran a Hoover

Durante el nuevo año escolar, los estudiantes del programa GEAR UP de College Avenue Compact tendrán una presencia más significativa en Hoover. Alumnos egresados de las escuelas de Educación Media Monroe Clark, Wilson y Monroe que partici- paron en el programa serán este año alumnos de noveno grado en Hoover. Vienen acompañados de una gran cantidad de servicios de apoyo, tales como tutorías, exploración de carreras, enriquecimiento académico y actividades motivacio- nales para estudiantes y padres de familia.

GEAR UP, es un programa pa- trocinado por fondos federales y sus siglas significan “Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Un- dergraduate Programs”. El objetivo del programa es atraer a los estudi- antes, aumentar la participación de sus padres y apoyar al personal de la escuela para cultivar una cultura univer- sitaria. Trabaja en conjunto con el programa College Avenue Compact de City Heights Educaci- onal Collaborative para preparar a los estudiantes para que asistan a centros de educación superior.

La sede de GEAR UP en Hoover será el Salón 206 y contará con siete u ocho tutores de matemáticas y cien- cias y cuatro consejeros universitari- os, todos serán alumnos de licenciu- tura en San Diego State.

Estudiantes de Hoover, ¡bienveni- dos al nuevo año escolar!\n
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time they get to Hoover the all the way to graduation day,” he said. Here we highlight what will be new in Hoover in the 2011-12 school year.

Expanded mental health services

A comprehensive mental health program will be developed at Hoover starting this fall to tackle depression and other psy- chic conditions among students and families who are un- derserved, uninsured and undocumented.

Currently, the campus Health Center is able to provide mental health services only to those with Medi-Cal. With the expanded program, all students and their families will have access to counseling, case management and therapy, whether they have insurance or not and regardless of their immigration status.

“We are responding to a need,” said Dorothy Zirkle, direc- tor of health services at Price Charities. “Their mental health and wellness is just incredibly at risk. It’s a forgotten issue.”

Price Charities will also include another person with a master’s degree in social work or a license in marriage and family therapy. The staff will be assisted by ad- ditional trainees and interns from San Diego State University’s graduate programs in social work and marriage and family therapy.

“In partnership with La Maestra and San Diego State, the number of families and students we will be able to serve at Hoover High School will be phenomenal,” Zirkle said.

Peggy Jones, who has two grandchildren at Hoover High and who frequently volunteers there, said she sees many at-risk youths who can benefit from additional mental health services.

“There’s an awful lot of kids who are just in school because they have to be in school, or they are trying to get away from their parents at home. They need somebody to talk to,” she said.

Early college program to get underway

Hoover will also be launching an early college program in partnership with San Diego City College, targeting Chris- tian students who need extra help to make it to college. The plan is for City College professors to come to Hoover to co-teach with the instructors there. In the summer, a special program will be created for Hoover students to take classes at City College. Down the road, the early college program will enable students to earn college credits.

We want students to be comfortable with the idea of col- lege,” said Tim Allen, Director of the City Heights Educational Collaborative and the College Avenue Compact, which focuses on Hoover and its feeder schools, Monroe Clark Middle and Rosa Parks Elementary.

“We want students to have options. We think community college is a great option.”

The early college initiative represents an extension of the College Avenue Compact, which offers Hoover students guar- anteed admission to San Diego State University if they meet certain academic criteria. The first group of Hoover students to go on to San Diego State under the Compact started classes at the university on Aug. 29.

GEAR UP cohorts coming to Hoover

In the new school year, GEAR UP to College Avenue Compact will have a much bigger presence at Hoover. Recent graduates of Monroe Clark, sensitized to the schools enrollment in the college readiness program will become freshmen at Hoover. Along with them will come a host of support services, such as tutoring, mentoring, career exploration, academic en- richment, and motivational activities for students and parents.

GEAR UP, which is federally funded, stands for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs. The program seeks to engage students, involve parents, and support school staff to cultivate a college-going culture. It works hand in hand with the City Heights Educational Co- lorative’s College Avenue Compact to prepare students for higher education.

GEAR UP will be housed in Room 206 at Hoover and will have seven to eight math and science tutors and four college advisors, all of whom are current undergraduate students at San Diego State.

Hoover students, welcome to a new school year!
By Jessica Lopez

Big Brothers Big Sisters of San Diego County

Remember when recession was the best part of your school day? Well you can bank on being a kid again and volunteer for one hour, once a week, right here in City Heights.

Through the Bigs in Schools mentoring program, Big Brothers Big Sisters of San Diego County (BBBS of SDC) is able to reach out to more children in your community who need the support of a one-to-one caring mentor.

With minimal time needed, it is an easy way for a busy professional or student to volunteer with a child. During a set time each week, all activities take place at the school. Activities range from playing board games, shooting hoops, reading a book together, or simply talking. This program also provides the opportunity to see other matches interacting as well as having a BBBS of SDC staff member present at every session.

Studies on the Bigs in Schools program have shown that there are proven positive impacts on students. Children who have had a Big have increased their self-esteem, achieved higher grades in social studies, language arts and math, and even improved relationships with their peers and adults.

So what are you waiting for? Start something… and become a Big today! Visit www.sdbigs.org or call (619) 536-4900 for more information.

— Jessica Lopez is a program manager for the Mid City Division of Big Brothers Big Sisters of San Diego County.

Hugo Sandoval’s home on Pepper Drive is one of the first in the Azalea Park neighborhood to get solar panels through the state-funded Single-Family Affordable Solar Homes (SASH) program. City Heights area. It has scheduled another six in Azalea Park on Sept. 24.

Grid Alternatives has completed 32 installations in the City Heights area. It has scheduled another six in Azalea Park on Sept. 24 for its Sept. 24 Solarthon, a block party and annual fundraiser, where six solar installations will take place in the Azalea Park neighborhood. To learn more, visit www.gridalternatives.org/solarthon.

For more information, visit www.gridalternatives.org.

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Alternatives está buscando voluntarios y patrocinadores para el evento “Solarthon” del 24 de septiembre. Es una fiesta comunitaria anual que busca recaudar fondos y durante la cual se instalarán seis sistemas de energía solar en el vecindario de Azalea Park. Para más información, visite www.gridalternatives.org/solarthon.

Para la familia Sandoval, no hubo gastos asociados con la instalación de los paneles solares porque calificaron para recibir un sistema gratuito bajo el programa SASH. Sandoval dijo estar sorprendido de lo fácil que fue el proceso de aplicación. Sandoval dijo: “Fue increíble. Me emocioné mucho. No podía creer lo rápido que íbamos a recibir los paneles”.

Se entiende de Grid Alternatives por un vecino que había asistido a una reunión comunitaria en donde le informaron de los incentivos para los propietarios de bajos recursos. Después de menos de dos semanas de haber enviado la aplicación, recibió una llamada notificándole que había sido aprobado.

GRID Alternatives envió inspectores a su casa para verificar que el techo y el sistema eléctrico eran compatibles con los paneles solares y que no hubiera árboles o arbustos que bloquearan los paneles. Firmaron un contrato. El 14 de junio llegó la caudalera de trabajo para realizar la instalación.

Los Sandoval recibieron un sistema fotovoltaico de 15 paneles con capacidad para generar 2.95 kW. De acuerdo a GRID Alternatives, estos sistemas pueden ahorrarles a los clientes un promedio del 70% al 90% en sus facturas eléctricas.

“Si ahorrás dinero en electricidad, lo más seguro es que podrás utilizarlo para pagar por otros artículos necesarios, como por ejemplo alimentos frescos y saludables para tu familia. Este ahorro puede significar mucho para las familias que están atravesando dificultades en el clima económico en el que vivimos”, dijo Marty Becerra, Oficial de Desarrollo de GRID Alternatives.

Patrocinado por las compañías de servicios públicos, incluyendo San Diego Gas & Electric, el programa SASH está dirigido a los residentes de las comunidades más pobres de California. El estado ha asignado $108 millones para subsidiar el programa SASH.

Además de hacer que la energía solar esté al alcance de los residentes de bajos recursos, un aspecto importante de GRID Alternatives es que entrena a los residentes para que puedan trabajar en la industria de energía solar. La organización sin fines de lucro está asociada con organizaciones locales, tales como Urban Corps de San Diego County y sus subcontratistas para ofrecer el entrenamiento. La instalación de paneles solares le ha brindado a la participación de los paneles solares y, muchas veces, de patrocinadores que ayudan a cubrir los gastos de los propietarios.

“La capacitación laboral es un componente importante de lo que hacemos. Muchas de las personas que han pasado por nuestros programas de entrenamiento han conseguido trabajos dentro de la industria de energía solar”, dijo Becerra.

Hasta ahora, GRID Alternatives ha instalado 52 sistemas solares en el área de City Heights. La existencia del programa ha pasado rápidamente de boca en boca en City Heights. Bob Walters, quien vive al frente de los Sandovals, estará recibiendo su sistema a través de GRID Alternatives a principios de septiembre.

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their income qualified them for a free system under the SASH program. Sandoval said he was surprised by how easy the application process was.

“That was incredible. I was very, very excited. I couldn’t believe we could have those panels that quick.”

He had heard about GRID Alternatives from a neighbor and attended a community meeting where he learned all about the incentives for low-income homeowners. Within about two weeks of submitting an application, he got a call notifying him he was approved.

GRID Alternatives sent inspectors to his house to check the rooftop and the electrical system to make sure they could support the solar panels and that no trees or shrubs would block the panels. A contract was then signed. On June 14, the work crews came for the installation.

The Sandovals received a 15-panel photovoltaic system with the capacity to generate 2.95 kW. According to GRID Alternatives, its systems can save clients an average of 70 to 90 percent in electric bills.

“If you are now saving money on electricity, you are probably using it. Many of the people in our training programs have gone on to land jobs in the solar industry,” Becerra said. So far Grid Alternatives has completed 32 installations in the City Heights area. It has scheduled another six in Azalea Park on Sept. 24.

Word of mouth about the program has spread quickly through City Heights. Bob Walters, who lives across the street from the Sandovals, will be getting his system through GRID Alternatives in early September.
From teen mother to role model

By Jaqueline Cervantes
Teen Options

I am a 23-year-old City Heights mother with two adorable children, ages 6 and 3, and a student at the University of Phoenix pursuing a bachelor of science degree in human services. Having gotten pregnant at 16 and then again at 19, I could have easily become a negative statistic. Fortunately, with support from dedicated teachers and mentors at Hoover High School and assistance from organizations such as San Diego Youth Services, my life has been turned around. I now work at San Diego Youth Services’ Teen Options program, which provides support services to pregnant teenagers and young parents.

I want teen moms out there to know that help is available, and that completing programs like Teen Options can really make a difference. They can take advantage of a variety of resources, such as parenting and independent living skills classes, to learn how to make the right choices and give the best to their children. I once felt oppressed too, so I know the feeling that some teen moms have against people who are trying to help them. I am where I am now because I accepted the referrals and resources through school.

By participating in the Proud Parenting program through San Diego Youth Services, I learned how to raise a healthy family. More importantly, the program gave me the opportunity to interact with other teen moms. Being able to share feelings and experiences with peers made me feel better about myself and my son’s future. Proud Parenting was also fun. The program offered outings and events, such as Mother’s Day breakfast and Christmas celebrations.

I went through Proud Parenting twice. The second time around, I took advantage of another Teen Options program called Aftercare. It led me to dig deeper within myself and examine why I was in the position I was in. I was breaking down due to stress, anxiety and other feelings. This program fostered independent living skills and referred me to services to further my education and my son’s education. Even to this date, I have the binder I created when I was participating in the program. I look through it whenever I feel sad or confused about what path to take.

Thanks to the program, I finished high school in February 2006 and graduated from the program in March 2006. Completing the program was a new beginning for my family. It meant that I was ready to take on the challenges of life. I got a job through the program site as a youth leader and began to build job skills.

Through Teen Options I gained the confidence that I am capable of anything if I put my mind to it. I began taking classes at San Diego City College and applied for childcare through the college’s Child Development Center. When I turned 19, I got pregnant with my second child and gave birth to a beautiful girl. Even so, I continued with my college education while holding down a job or two and yet still managed to earn enough credits to transfer to the University of Phoenix. Upon starting the field experience in my B.A. program, I immediately thought of working for Teen Options as a way to give back.

My hard work and struggles are getting rewarded little by little, and I know that much more is to come. My son has now completed kindergarten, and my daughter is starting her first year of preschool. My success is just beginning.

— Jaqueline Cervantes is a City Heights resident and staff member at Teen Options located on Fairmount Avenue. Administered by San Diego Youth Services, Teen Options provides support services to pregnant and parenting teens and young adults, ages 12 through 25.

2-1-1 connects community to social services for free

By Helen Gao
City Heights Life

With hundreds of organizations in San Diego County offering health and human services, everything from food assistance to mental health therapy, it can be daunting to figure out which agency to contact for help. Don’t waste your time looking through the Yellow Pages or other websites. Instead, dial 2-1-1, a free, one-stop information hub that connects people to community, health, and disaster services 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The phone service is confidential, and assistance is available in multiple languages. Many of the information and referral specialists who answer the phone speak Spanish, and they have access to a service that can translate more than 150 languages.

When people call 2-1-1, they are asked a few questions so the referral specialists can assess their needs and guide them to the closest resources in their community. The specialists have at their fingertips a list of more than 5,000 programs of resources is also available for search at www.211sandiego.org. The 2-1-1 service is similar to 911, except it’s for non-emergency situations.

Launched locally in 2005 and funded by both public and private money, the regional nonprofit program is intended to make it easy for residents to navigate the maze of social services. During disasters, such as wildfires, 2-1-1 works with the county’s Office of Emergency Services to provide information about areas that may be affected.

The program also acts as a central communications point for other community agencies and non-governmental organizations and reports on community needs that are not being met. 2-1-1 is not unique to San Diego. It’s a nationally-recognized number reserved by the Federal Communications Commission for non-emergency referral services. In California alone, 25 counties have established these information lines, according to a 2-1-1 directory published by the state.

If you are looking for access to food, health care and other social services, and you are not sure where to start, dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211sandiego.org.

Si necesita acceso a alimentos, cuidados de salud y otros servicios sociales y no sabe a dónde llamar, marque el 2-1-1 o visite www.211sandiego.org.

— Helen Gao is City Heights Life Editor.
A TRIBUTE TO JEREMY HENWOOD

Officer spent most of his life serving others

By Sgt. Scott Wahl
San Diego Police Department

Much has been said over the past several weeks about the character of Officer Jeremy Henwood. I’m here to say that all of it is true. He was a man of honor, pride and discipline. To Jeremy, it was an honor “To Protect and Serve” - an honor he worked hard to maintain. This wasn’t just a job to him. This was his way of life.

Jeremy spent most of his life serving others. He served his country in the Marine Corps for 15 years and this city as a San Diego police officer for the past four years. His entire career as a police officer was spent serving this community of City Heights. This is where he loved to be. He enjoyed the action and excitement that comes with being a police officer, and he enjoyed the opportunity to help others.

What was most amazing about Officer Henwood was that he was imperious to the outside negative influences that often come with this job. He had a happy-go-lucky attitude that never faltered. This was what I admired the most about him. His focus was always on the good things he was doing for the community and how lucky he was to be able to do it. His kind heart, spirit of service and humanity were in evidence until the last moments of his life. His purchase of a bag of cookies for a local youth was paired with a conversation about the child’s future plans.

Jeremy provided some guidance about what it would take to achieve his dreams, such as good choices and hard work. He wasn’t focused on the negatives. To Jeremy, protecting and serving was an honor, not just a job. He set an example for all of us to follow - one that will stay fresh in my mind each day I go out to protect and serve.

— Sgt. Scott Wahl was Jeremy’s supervisor at the Mid City Division of the San Diego Police Department

City Heights Hope bridges generational, access gaps for Somalis

By Adam Ward
Mid-City CAN

City Heights Hope community organizer and project coordinator Sahra Abdi has witnessed the leadership growth in her group’s members first hand. She tells the story of one group member who used to accept schools’ lack of halal foods, which are sanctioned by Islamic law and ritually fit for use. “She said, ‘Ah Sahra, this is America, you either follow what’s provided or you go to another country,’” Abdi said. A short time later, that same woman was talking about going to a higher-level administrator and advocating for halal food when the same issue came up in a hospital setting.

It’s stories like these that have made Abdi believe that City Heights Hope members have been transformed. “People’s perspective of their rights have changed,” Abdi said.

Abdi is a City Heights resident, member of Mid-City Community Advocacy Network (Mid-City CAN) and past member of the Mid-City CAN Coordinating Council. Founded to provide support to Somali families, City Heights Hope is composed of about 200 City Heights residents. The California Endowment has funded the group since 2009, and the Mid-City CAN coordinates the funding.

This summer City Heights Hope ran a four-week program to help connect Somali children to their cultural heritage and community, according to Bill Oswald, an advisor for the group. “It covered culture, history, religion and poetry and strengthened the sense of who they are,” Oswald said.

Somali college students organized the program. The students were inspired to act because they felt that one reason why Somali children weren’t doing as well as they could in school and why too many were in the criminal justice system is that they don’t have this grounding.

“The college students did it all,” Oswald said. “They recruited the teachers and got a small grant.”

About 70 elementary-, middle- and a few high-school students participated in the program, Abdi said. It was based in City Heights’ Southern Sudanese Community Center. Abdi’s own 7-year-old son benefited from the program. “He was questioning who he is,” she said. “Now I ask what he is, and he says ‘I’m Somali American.’”

Another program helping to bridge generational gaps is cooking classes that mothers teach their daughters to prepare traditional Somali foods and the U.S. dishes that are halal.

In our community, parents didn’t experience growing up in America,” Abdi said. “They think it is easy.”

The mothers teach their daughters to prepare traditional Somali foods and the daughters teach their mothers to prepare U.S. dishes that are halal.

City Heights Hope’s next project is an ambitious “participatory action” research survey aimed at health access, Oswald said. Group members will talk about their experiences getting health care and then use surveys to determine whether those same experiences are widespread in their community.

After the surveys are completed, group members will make recommendations to improve access. The group is working to complete its health-access campaign plan by the end of the year.

— 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.

Editor’s Note: San Diego Police Officer Jeremy Henwood, 36, died Aug. 7 after being shot in the head in an unprovoked attack at a City Heights intersection. A decorated Marine, he did two tours of duty in Iraq and one in Afghanistan. A trust has been established on behalf of Officer Jeremy Henwood through the San Diego Police Officers Association. Donations can be sent to 8388 Vick St., San Diego, CA 92111. Write Jeremy Henwood on the memo line.
To learn more about the Ocean Discovery Institute, visit www.oceandiscoveryinstitute.org.

Founded in 1999, Ocean Discovery Institute engages 5,000 young people each year in City Heights with tuition-free science-oriented programs. The nonprofit organization focuses exclusively on City Heights in order to maximize the impact of its services.

The Institute uses science exploration to engage youth in education, scientific research, and environmental stewardship. It believes that young people learn through discovery. As students use science to discover the world around them, they discover themselves and their future as scientific and environmental leaders.

Participation in Ocean Discovery Institute’s programs is available at three levels:

- **At the broadest level**, young people, their families and community members are engaged through hands-on science and conservation projects.

- **Within local elementary and middle schools**, the organization provides classroom and field-based ocean science education.

- **At the middle, high school, and college levels**, intensive programming and support services are offered to youth in the community.

Students participating in the classroom-based programs attain, on average, a 47 percent performance increase on science tests. In addition, eight out of 10 of after-school program graduates attend four-year universities, compared with fewer than three out of 10 of their peers. These programs are creating a path to success for students as they progress toward college and careers in science and conservation fields.

Ocean Discovery Institute serves Hamilton Elementary, Central Elementary, Franklin Elementary, Adams Elementary, Cherokee Point Elementary, Rosa Parks Elementary, Florence Joyner Elementary, Normal Heights Elementary, Rowan Elementary, Euclid Elementary, Wilson Middle, Monroe Clark Middle, and Hoover High with tuition-free programs. By 2014, the Institute will expand to reach all City Heights schools and serve more than 20,000 individuals annually, transforming the entire community through science.

As the organization grows, it’s also expanding its leadership team. It’s currently recruiting a full-time fellow to teach in the classroom and provide program support. For more information on the position, contact Melissa Nichols at (858) 488-3849.

— Elizabeth Horpedahl is the director of development and communications for the Ocean Discovery Institute.
Budding scientists from Hoover High School spent five weeks of their summer vacation researching and documenting plants and wildlife in Baja California, discovering much more than sea grass and whales in the process.

Each year the Ocean Discovery Institute (ODI) takes a select group of students from its Ocean Leaders program to a field station in the village of Bahía de Los Ángeles - population 590 - on the Sea of Cortez to perform scientific research and discover their own hidden potential. The goal of the San Diego nonprofit organization is to engage and inspire youth from diverse, urban backgrounds to become scientific and environmental leaders.

The annual science expeditions would not be possible without the help of volunteers like City Heights residents Dennis Wood and Jody Carey, who have been taking the 400-mile journey for much of the past decade.

Dennis and Jody got involved with ODI through canyon cleanups and Project Face-lift. They live in the Castle neighborhood of City Heights and co-own Carey Construction and Design. Dennis said they saw a need (imparting construction knowledge) and filled it.

This year, Dennis and Jody led a construction project that transformed not just a place, but the people involved. The project left the village’s museum with new benches and a crab display and the Ocean Leaders with a new self-confidence.

Dennis said he enjoyed teaching one young lady in particular, who had never touched a power tool in her life, how to drill into a concrete wall and attach a display. He said up to that point she had mostly kept to herself, but soon after began asserting herself. “I get to witness the kids overcome their self-esteem issues and blossom during the program,” Dennis said.

Empowerment is emphasized throughout the program. Ocean Leaders are expected to ask questions and do their own research. They take what they’ve learned and teach it to the local villagers.

They had many great experiences. One day while floating in the Sea of Cortez, the Ocean Leaders, in the company of Dennis and Jody, witnessed a feeding frenzy of diving blue-footed boobies, whales, and dolphins. They also swam within feet of whale sharks.

Throughout the five-week adventure, the Ocean Leaders were preparing for college. ODI evaluations show the program is having a positive effect: 100 percent of its graduates pursue further education and 80 percent enroll in a four-year university, almost triple the rate of their classmates.

Next month the students will share their experiences with family and City Heights residents at a community event.

Dennis said he has great hope for the future of City Heights as he sees Ocean Leaders graduate from high school, attend college, and return to share their discoveries with the next generation of Ocean Leaders.

— Staff report
Un día con un oficial de policía de Mid City

Por Anna Ponting

Price Charities

En el mes de agosto tuve la oportunidad de acompañar a un oficial de la División de Mid City durante un turno y ser testigo de lo que hace un oficial de policía en su día a día de trabajo. ¿Por qué lo hice? Porque trabajo como pasante en Price Charities y quise ver a City Heights desde un punto de vista diferente. Fue una gran experiencia de la que aprendí mucho. Conversé con varios oficiales y me di cuenta de lo difícil que es su trabajo y de lo mucho que hacen por la comunidad. Al llegar a la estación, me presentaron al oficial con el que iba a pasar el resto del día. Me sentí en el asiento del pasajero del coche de policía y me explicó cómo funcionaba la computadora y cómo nos informarían a dónde teníamos que ir. Me sentí segura y preparada para ayudar a la comunidad.

Lo primero que hicimos fue responder a una llamada en la que una persona se quejaba del ruido y otra que tenía que ver con un posible robo. Después hablamos con una mamá que estaba reportando a un niño desaparecido. Pasamos la mayor parte del resto del día con un hombre que fue arrestado por perseguir coches en una transecta. Llevamos al hospital en una ambulancia, y lo seguimos. En el cuarto de detención, se presentaron al oficial con el que iría a ayudar a la comunidad. Al llegar a la estación, me di cuenta de que los oficiales estaban concentrados en su trabajo. Trabajando y haciendo de la seguridad de City Heights su prioridad. Vi a miembros de la comunidad llegar a la estación para realizar donativos para la familia del Oficial Henwood y conocí a algunos oficiales de la División Sur que se trasladaron durante esa semana para ayudar en City Heights. Todos fueron amigables y respondieron todas mis preguntas.

Cualquier día que vivo o trabajo en el área de la División de Mid City puede participar en el programa “Ride Along”, así que una vez interesado, ¡jóvene! Solo tienes que visitar la estación de policía y solicitar un “Ride-Along Request Form”. Al llenarlo puedes escoger en cuál de las 100 horas quiere participar. Yo escogí el turno de las 2 p.m. hasta la medianoche para poder ver cómo cambia el vecindario desde la tarde hasta altas horas de la noche. Tienes que presentar una identificación, como su licencia de conducir, para que puedan verificar tus antecedentes penales. Un par de días después recibirás una llamada para confirmar tu participación.

Quiero agradecer a la División de Mid City por permitirme participar en el programa. Les deseo lo mejor a todos los oficiales y especialmente, a la familia del Oficial Henwood. City Heights tiene muchas suertes de contar con oficiales tan dedicados que se esfuerzan cada día en mantener la seguridad del vecindario.

— Anna Ponting estudió Planificación Urbana en la Universidad de Stanford y está participando en una pasantía de verano en Price Charities. Anna se graduó de la Escuela Secundaria Patrick Henry.

My ride-along was only a couple of days after the shooting. Everyone at the police station was still shaken up, I was a little nervous about the ride-along for my own safety, but as soon as I got to the station I saw the officers were focused on their job. Everyone pulled together to keep City Heights’ safety the first priority. I saw community members making donations at the police station for Officer Jeremy Henwood’s family, and I met officers from the Southern Division who had come up for the week to help in City Heights. Everyone was very friendly to me and answered all of my questions.

Anyone who lives or works in the Mid City Division service area can do a ride-along, so if you’re interested, sign up! All you have to do is go to the police station and ask for a Ride-Along Request Form. When you sign up, you can choose which 10-hour shift you would like. I chose the 2 p.m. to midnight shift, so I got to see the neighborhood in the afternoon and into the night. You’ll need some identification like a driver’s license, so they can do a background check. You can expect a call a couple of days later to schedule your ride-along.

I want to thank the Mid City Division for letting me participate. I wish the best to all of the officers and especially, Officer Henwood’s family. City Heights is truly lucky to have such dedicated officers who are out there every day keeping the neighborhood safe.

— Anna Ponting is an undergraduate student at Stanford University studying urban planning and a summer intern at Price Charities. Anna is a graduate of Patrick Henry High School.

El honor de proteger y servir

By Sgt. Scott Wahl

San Diego Police Department

Mucho se ha hablado en las últimas semanas acerca del carácter del Oficial Jeremy Henwood. Quiero decirles que todo lo que se ha dicho es verdad. Era un hombre de honor, orgullo y disciplina. Para Jeremy, era un honor “Proteger y Servir” – y se esforzaba por merecerlo. No era solo su trabajo. Así como vivía su vida. Jeremy pasó la mayor parte de su vida sirviendo a los demás. Sirvió a su país como miembro de la Infantería de la Marina durante 15 años y a la Ciudad de San Diego como Oficial de Policía durante los últimos cuatro años. Sirvió durante toda su carrera como Oficial de Policía en la comunidad de City Heights. Aquí era donde le gustaba estar. Disfrutaba de la ac- ción y agitación característica de ser policía y disfrutaba de poder ayudar a los demás.

Lo más impresionante acerca del Oficial Henwood era que era inmune a las influencias externas negativas que usualmente se asocian con este tipo de trabajo. Siempre tenía una actitud despreocupada. Esto era lo que más admiraba de él. Siempre concentrándose en las cosas buenas que hacía por la comunidad y su gran suerte de poder hacerlo. Su bondadoso corazón, espíritu de servicio y calidad humana se dieron a todos hasta los últimos momentos de su vida. Le compró una bolsa de galletas a un joven de la área mientras conversaba con él acerca de sus planes futuros. Jeremy le dijo lo que tenía que hacer para alcanzar sus sueños, tomar buenas decisiones y trabajar mucho.

No se enfocaba en lo negativo. Para Jeremy, proteger y servir era un honor y no solo su trabajo. Nos dio un ejemplo que todos debemos imitar. Uno que permanecerá en mi mente cada día que dedico a proteger y servir.

— El Sargento Scott Wahl pertenece a la División de Mid City del Departamento de Policía de San Diego y fue el Supervis or del Oficial Jeremy Henwood.
The Leadership Academy empowers City Heights residents

By Virginia Angeles
Proyecto de Casas Saludables

Proyecto de Casas Saludables (PCS) is an organization here in City Councilman Todd Gloria’s district that has the mission to strengthen the community by providing education, counseling, and representation to residents in the areas of housing and community affairs. The name of the organization means Healthy Homes Project.

One of the key programs offered by PCS is the Leadership Academy, which provides a series of workshops on topics such as immigrant rights, employee rights, tenant and healthy housing rights, and educational rights and access to education. Participants learn how the government system works and how to advocate for their rights.

By making residents aware of their rights, PCS is empowering them to protect themselves against abuses, such as a lack of repairs to housing they rent, exploitation at their jobs, injustices by the police, and many other circumstances.

The program opens up avenues of civic engagement for residents who are an essential part of the community where we live and who deserve to exercise their voice, as well as understand that decisions must come from genuine collaboration within the community. Through the Academy, residents come to understand it’s important to be involved in making changes to benefit those who live here.

At PCS we will continue to work ardently to continue with the Leadership Academy so that residents can achieve meaningful participation in issues that improve the community. Because of the tools of knowledge given throughout the workshops at the Academy and the enthusiasm and commitment of the presenters, we know that we are slowly building healthy communities led by residents.

PCS would like to thank our sponsor, The California Endowment which has committed to supporting City Heights for the next ten years through its Building Healthy Communities initiative.

— Virginia Angeles is a City Heights resident and director of Proyecto de Casas Saludables.

To learn more about Proyecto de Casas Saludables, call (619) 280-4311 or visit www.procasas.org.
Cruising the Boulevard brings back good old memories

By Beryl Forman aka Ms. Boulevard
El Cajon Boulevard Business Improvement Association

El Cajon Boulevard, also known as Historic Highway 80, was once the center of car culture in San Diego. Drive-in restaurants and movie theatres, animated neon signs, and drag racing were prevalent along the strip.

On Aug. 17, the glamour of car culture came roaring back to the Boulevard. More than 50 classic car owners came out for a Cruise the Boulevard Mixer, sponsored by the El Cajon Boulevard Business Improvement Association. At 6 p.m., the event kicked off at the J.A. Cooley Automotive Museum, which is known for having one of the best collections of 100-year-old cars in the country.

The cars gathered for a cruise down El Cajon Boulevard, just like the good old days. One of the attendees who grew up in San Diego suggested cruising to Euclid Avenue, just like he and his friends used to do when they were young. Euclid is where Oscar’s Drive-In once stood. It is now the home of the newly-restored Til-Two Club, and it made for the perfect final stop.

Mick Rossler, who has a passion for restoring and bringing new life to historic sites, is responsible for the return of the Til-Two. He is also the owner of the Tower Bar, another historic venue in City Heights. The Til-Two was an upscale bar that got its start in the 1940s, and at the time, was a nice accompaniment to the State Theatre next door. Sixty years later, the original neon Til-Two sign shines once again on El Cajon Boulevard.

Drivers pulled up at the Til-Two for some oldies music as they reminisced about the fun times growing up in San Diego and cruising down the Boulevard.

— Beryl Forman is the marketing director of the El Cajon Boulevard Business Improvement Association.
THE SCHOOL’S FIVE-STORY-TALL TOWER AND WROTE YEAR, GRADUATING SENIORS WENT TO THE TOP OF “TOWER DAY CEREMONY.” IN JUNE OF EACH CLASS OF 1932, BEGAN A TRADITION CALLED THE PROJECTED WITH AUDIO, WHICH WAS TO HAVE “TALKING MOVIE EQUIPMENT,” A PROJECTOR ACCOMPANIED WITH AUDIO, WHICH WAS ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY THEN.

THE FIRST SCHOOL IN ALL OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA COUNTY TO HAVE A LIGHTED FOOTBALL FIELD AND FIELD, but the effort failed because the cost was too high. Before the wrecking ball struck, students, alumni and school officials were invited to climb the tower one final time.

OVER THE YEARS, HOOVER HIGH HAS PRODUCED NUMEROUS NOTABLE GRADUATES, INCLUDING THE LIKES OF BASEBALL HALL OF FAMER TED WILLIAMS. BUT MANY PEOPLE DON’T KNOW THAT ANOTHER HOOVER HIGH ALUMNUS IS THE REASON MONROE CLARKE MIDDLE SCHOOL WAS GIVEN ITS NAME. MONROE “BOOKIE” CLARK, NAMED SO DUE TO HIS LOVE FOR BOOKS, ATTENDED WILSON MIDDLE SCHOOL AND GRADUATED FROM HOOVER HIGH IN 1943. HE THEN WENT ON TO THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA (THE REASON CLARK MIDDLE SCHOOL’S MASKOT IS A TROJAN, AND THE COLORS ARE MAROON AND GOLD) AND RETURNED TO CITY HEIGHTS WHERE HE BECAME A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSMAN. FOR YEARS, HE TUTORED STUDENTS, DROVE THEM TO ATHLETIC EVENTS, AND ENCOURAGED FRIENDS AND OTHER ADULTS TO VOLUNTEER AS TUTORS.

IN 1998, WHEN OFFICIALS HAD TO SELECT A NAME FOR THE NEW MIDDLE SCHOOL IN CITY HEIGHTS, RESIDENTS AND HOOVER HIGH TEACHERS AND STUDENTS PETITIONED FOR IT TO BE NAMED AFTER CLARK. IN RESEARCHING THIS ARTICLE, I FOUND HUNDREDS OF LETTERS WRITTEN BY CLARK’S SUPPORTERS. ONE LETTER WRITER DESCRIBED HIM BEST: “BOOKIE BELIEVES THAT HOOVER’S MISSION IS TO SAVE EAST SAN DIEGO FROM ITS NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF GANGS, MURDERS, AND DRUGS. HOOVER AND EDUCATION OF ITS STUDENTS CAN SAVE OUR YOUTH AND OUR NEIGHBORHOOD. IT SEEMS WE AT HOOVER ARE FORTUNATE TO BE BOOKIE’S “FAMILY.”’ HE IS ALWAYS THERE, SUPPORTING US.”

HOOVER HIGH SCHOOL CELEBRATED ITS 80TH ANNIVERSARY IN OCTOBER 2010. THE RICH HISTORY OF THE CAMPUS AND THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF ITS ALUMNI TO SOCIETY CONTINUE TO TOUCH COUNTLESS LIVES TODAY.

— 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.
¿Qué está pasando?

September

Submit events to editor@cityheightslife.com.

Get your movie on!

By Paige Newman
City Heights Foundation

The last Friday of every month, Teralta Park at 40th Street and Orange Avenue turns into a giant outdoor movie theater.

The free movie night is made possible by the City Heights Business Association, City Heights Foundation, San Diego Asian Film Foundation, City Heights Community Development Corporation, Metro Villas Learning Center and the City Heights Recreation Council. During this fun, family-friendly event, a film is projected onto a large outdoor screen.

On Sept. 30, Ratatouille, an animated movie about a young rat’s culinary and personal adventures, is scheduled to be shown between 7 p.m. and 9 p.m.

Free movie night has at times attracted up to 300 residents, who eagerly come to the park with arms full of snacks, blankets and chairs in order to make themselves at home for a few hours. Attendees love the free popcorn served fresh from an old-fashioned machine. The event brings together residents of all cultural and ethnic backgrounds who live in City Heights.

“The movie nights are part of the City Heights Business Association’s and City Heights Foundation’s safety initiative where we’ve been focusing on making parks in City Heights safer for families and children,” said Enrique Gandarilla, who heads both organizations.

Keeping parks and neighborhoods safe is not just the job of the local police; it requires residents communicating with neighbors, being aware of their surroundings, and participating in community events, such as movie night, which bring people together.

Residents have fun and feel safe at the nighttime outdoor event, surrounded by a huge group of locals and protected by two Heritage Security guards.

Movie night is usually the last Friday of each month, unless it is rescheduled due to holidays or other circumstances, such as rain. Instead of showing a movie on Oct. 28, a Day of the Dead event will take place at Urban Village Park. December’s movie night is canceled because of the holidays.

— Paige Newman is the safety and security program organizer for the City Heights Foundation.

For movie night information, visit the Facebook pages of the City Heights Foundation or Connect San Diego (a program of the San Diego Asian Film Foundation).

CALENDAR EDITOR: JULIE LE

— Julie Le was born and raised in San Diego. She graduated at the top of her class from Hoover High School. Julie is attending the University of California, San Diego, majoring in urban studies and planning while working at Price Charities.

For a more complete list of events, visit www.cityheightslife.com.