

Staying Healthy

FALL 2021

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Pleasanton man recognized by 49ers for community service

Dave Moirao awarded for his work with nonprofit Culinary Angels

By **CIERRA BAILEY**

Pleasanton's own Dave Moirao was honored by the San Francisco 49ers as this year's recipient of the organization's Community Quarterback Award, which recognizes volunteers who show leadership, dedication and a commitment to bettering the Bay Area.

Moirao was nominated and selected for his work with Culinary Angels, an almost entirely volunteer-based Livermore nonprofit that prepares and delivers free, healthy meals throughout the Tri-Valley to people undergoing cancer treatment and others facing serious health challenges.

"David has been an integral part of our organization from its early days," Culinary Angels Executive Director Lisa McNaney said in a statement announcing Moirao's award.

"He consistently invests about 40 hours per week of his own time in a myriad of ways — from helping to put systems and a structure in place, to strategizing how we can serve more people, to working in the kitchen. We would not be where we are today without him," she added.

Moirao, 73, was chosen to receive the Community Quarterback Award out of more than 35 candidates nominated by nonprofits across Northern California. As the winner, he will

receive \$5,000 for Culinary Angels

"To me, the award is a personal satisfaction, but I think the bigger reward is really getting people to understand what we have to offer as an organization," Moirao told the Weekly. "We serve a little under 300 meals a month right now, and we know that there are more individuals out there that could use our help and it's a matter of making sure they're aware that we deliver good, quality healthy meals."

Moirao said he started volunteering with Culinary Angels about four years ago after looking into different local volunteer opportunities. He had been retired for a while before that and wanted to fill some of his time giving back to his community.

After struggling to find something of interest, he said one day he found a flyer for Culinary Angels on his desk that he thought may have been left there by his wife.

"It might have been a friendly hint to get out of the house, I don't know, but it was just perfect for me," Moirao said. "I enjoy cooking, I enjoy having people satisfied with a good meal and so I filled out my application and completed my certification and started working."

Moirao started in the kitchen prepping ingredients before moving on to cooking and even assisting with baking. Over time, he's had a hand in just about every aspect of the organization, including drawing from his IT background to identify new software for scheduling volunteers and running the meal delivery program.

His connection with Culinary Angels and its mission has also become deeply personal.

Moirao's daughter, Kenna Moirao, died from cancer last year. She was a third-grade teacher at Frederiksen Elementary School in Dublin. "She made a significant impact on all the children, the staff and fellow instructors," Moirao said of his late daughter.

The experience of losing his daughter strengthened Moirao's commitment to Culinary Angels' efforts to help those facing a serious medical diagnosis, which was demonstrated by his leadership in pivoting to delivering organic produce and recipes to recipients during a period when meal operations were suspended due to the pandemic, according to the nonprofit.

To learn more about Culinary Angels, visit culinaryangels.org. ■



COURTESY OF CULINARY ANGELS

Culinary Angels volunteer Dave Moirao (right) prepares meals for delivery with assistance from Executive Director Lisa McNaney.



COURTESY OF CULINARY ANGELS

A peek at the type of healthy meals that the nonprofit prepares.

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Keeping students in classrooms

Tri-Valley school districts, parents struggle to interpret and manage COVID protocols

BY GINA CHANNELL WILCOX

With a month in school, the four Tri-Valley school districts are diligently working to keep students on campus by limiting transmission of COVID-19, but it hasn't been easy for the districts, students or parents.

The districts have had to interpret county health codes, hire staff to do contact tracing and put in place protocols that vary based on vaccination status, symptoms and whether masks were worn. Trying to decipher and comply with the protocol instructions has left some parents frustrated and students at home.

A dashboard that records the number of students and staff by school or department who were presumed to be infectious while on a school campus are on Pleasanton, Livermore, Dublin and San Ramon Valley school districts' websites.

As of Sept. 17, only one district — Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District — had possible cases of the virus spreading among students on campus and were reported as such out of an abundance of caution.

"We have had a small number (three) of at-school transmission. We can't say that as an absolute certainty, of course, as the students could have been exposed in other places," said Chris Van Schaack, deputy superintendent at LVJUSD, who is leading the district's COVID reporting. "However, when we have an individual case in a classroom, and then another student in the same classroom subsequently tests positive, we operate under the assumption that it was an in-school transmission."

Terry Koehne, interim communications director at San Ramon Valley Unified School District, reported the district hasn't had any cases of on-campus transmission to their knowledge but concurred that tracking the origin of cases can be challenging.

"It is difficult to prove since we don't know if students at school who also hang out together in the community are spreading the virus when not at school, or at school," Koehne said.

Dublin Unified School District has had no known such cases, and Pleasanton Unified School District uses the Alameda County Public Health Department to monitor on-campus transmissions.

"ACPHD has not confirmed that any cases were spread student to student," said Kelly French, PUSD's pandemic services coordinator. "More than likely the cases that have been reported at school are a result of community transmission."

In addition to keeping a dashboard and FAQs for everyone, parents are notified if their student has come in close contact with someone who has tested positive.

In the past, whole classes generally had to quarantine when a student tested positive for COVID-19. This year, kids who come into close contact with a positive case can typically continue to attend school, regardless of vaccination status, as long as they don't have any symptoms, meet testing requirements and everyone was wearing masks at the time of exposure.

The guidelines for positive cases aren't the only thing that has changed this school year. There are no longer rules for socially distancing students in classrooms, so class sizes no longer have to be reduced.

Masks are still mandatory indoors, but not all districts have the same policy.

LVJUSD, DUSD, and SRVUSD are "meeting but not exceeding health mandates." However at PUSD schools, according to spokesperson Patrick Gannon, masks are required outdoors and indoors, and it has been this way since the start of the school year.

Identifying cases

In addition to keeping dashboards updated and translating county health department policies and guidelines, school districts have had to take over some of the duties once handled by the health departments, which necessitates more personnel and space.

"Public health guidance is a moving target and has been for a long time," said SRVUSD's Koehne. "School districts are trying to pivot and adapt as new guidance and mandates come our way."

To add to the complexity of all this, the responsibility of contact tracing has recently shifted from county health departments to schools and school districts.

Each district has identified an individual or individuals responsible for contact tracing. PUSD, for example, has a COVID-19 liaison at every school who works with the district team and a pandemic services coordinator (French). At SRVUSD, a COVID task force at the district level is led by the assistant superintendent of business operations and facilities.

Students at all districts are surveyed regularly and schools have required a negative test result to return to school.

"We have a kid with a cold, and so failed the survey," Pleasanton parent Steve Paddon wrote



FILE PHOTO/COURTESY OF PUSD

Amador Valley High principal Josh Butterfield (left) greets students arriving to school on the first day of in-person learning this term.

on a social media site. "The process to then clear them for school is a) feeling better, b) no fever, and c) a doctor's clearance or a PCR or Molecular test."

"Everybody is backed up on testing," he continued, "so scheduling is two days out, plus however long the tests take to get results. So both of my daughters will likely miss a week of school for what is very likely a common cold. Rinse and repeat this over a normal winter and they are going to miss an awful lot of school ... yes, we do need a better process."

"One of the most challenging parts of our job is to balance the desire to keep all our students in school every day with the equal desire to keep them healthy and COVID-free," LVJUSD's Van Schaack said. "When in doubt, we have to lean to the side of safety and we occasionally end up quarantining students who (it may turn out) did not have a direct contact, simply because we are unsure and want to be cautious."

Implementation hiccups

In some cases, there have been kinks in rolling out the new exposure protocols.

For example, although all Tri-Valley districts base their protocols for "close contact" on the same state policies, how it is explained — and interpreted — seems to vary widely.

The state protocols for when someone tests positive are complex and dependent on a variety of factors, including a student's vaccination status, mask use and symptoms. That has led to confusion and frustration among some parents, as they try to abide by the detailed requirements.

School districts have at times hit snags — or have been criticized for decisions — as they try to implement the health rules, which have changed substantially since last school year.

On Aug. 24, a group of students at SRVUSD's Charlotte Wood Middle School were identified as a close contact to someone who tested positive for COVID.

"Per county health requirements, in order to implement state requirements, for students to be on campus after they have been identified as a close contact, they are required to meet certain criteria which is determined according to their vaccination status and whether the contact was masked or unmasked," Christine

Huajardo, SRVUSD assistant superintendent of educational services, wrote in an email to the CWMS community.

Some students were released from school on Aug. 24 because, according to district officials, they didn't have appropriate documentation on file — namely a vaccination card. A few parents said children were divided into groups of vaccinated and unvaccinated, while others reported that some children were released without parental notification. The district denies both claims.

"It is true that not all parents spoke directly to a staff member," the email said about confirming vaccination status, "but in all cases, a school employee confirmed that the parent was contacted before the student was allowed to leave campus."

What happens when there is close contact with a student or staff member who tests positive is also not consistent and very confusing.

When CWMS parents and guardians were notified about the close contact of their student, the email said vaccinated students don't have to quarantine unless they show symptoms when both parties were wearing a mask. Unvaccinated students, though, must quarantine even when masks were worn, but can request a "modified quarantine" in which the exposed student can continue attending school if they are asymptomatic, continue masking and undergo twice weekly testing.

Extracurricular and community activities at school can continue after Day 7 if a test collected after Day 5 is negative and the student remains asymptomatic. (Day zero is the last date of exposure.)

Pleasanton, Dublin and Livermore have guidelines for modified quarantine similar to San Ramon Valley's, except the return to extracurricular and community activities' timelines differ slightly. In Livermore, the student can return on Day 8 if a test collected after Day 6 is negative. Pleasanton students may return on Day 8 if a test collected after Day 5 is negative. Dublin will not allow the exposed student to attend extracurriculars for the entire 10 days.

Siblings of exposed students do not have to quarantine, but siblings of students who test



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Work-life harmony as a 'three-legged stool'

Pleasanton author debuts book on finding fulfillment in career

By JEANITA LYMAN

Much about Reena Gupta's childhood, background and overall character give the image of selflessness.

The Pleasanton resident's work has centered on helping others, and her personal life has been deeply affected by a strongly communal household and close family ties. However, Gupta does not advocate self-abdication.



Reena Gupta

"Do things to your limit of your well-being because if you do something and you're not healthy, then you're not going to do it to the best of your ability," Gupta's teenage daughter Rikita said, citing the advice from her mother that has resonated most with her.

The philosophy of well-being detailed in Reena Gupta's new book with Rebecca Cullen, "Career Interrupted: Navigating Career Crossroads and Defining Success on Your Own Terms", evokes the image of a three-legged stool, with each leg ("Family and Friends", "Career" and "Wellness") providing equally important support for the seat of "Work-Life Harmony" atop them.

Family and friends

A major motivation for Gupta came from the words of one of her own early-career mentors. He told a young Gupta, grappling with her role as a minority in an industry notoriously dominated by white men, to "use your difference for your strength".

"That became my armor," Gupta said.

The comment, and the impact it had on her, made Gupta aware of how well-timed advice can have a lasting influence. She found herself drawn to mentoring others with this in mind, while also maintaining on well-being. In the case of helping others, this means doing it for its own sake, according to Gupta.

"When you're helping others, just help; don't expect anything in return," Gupta said.

Key to this, for Gupta, is appreciating and benefiting from the support of others, but not being dependent on anyone else's actions for fulfillment.

Wellness

The biggest misconception about wellness, according to Gupta, is that it's something that naturally comes as the result of career success.

"They feel that well-being is a result of 'if I'm successful at work, if I'm happy I'll be healthy,'" Gupta said.

This is a dangerous myth, according to Gupta.

Health and true happiness, in her view, are interconnected with fulfillment, not just success, at work. And rather than coming naturally as the result of a narrow vision of workplace success, they are dependent on the different "legs" of her stool model.

While career is one leg, it can't hold up the stool if the other legs (family and friends, and wellness) are broken or unstable.

Career

Although Gupta was able to use her "difference as her strength" while navigating the technology industry early on, she acknowledges that this is no small feat.

"Currently the situation for DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) is everybody wants to be

part of it, but they don't know how," Gupta said. "Every company, they want to boast that they're doing the best, but there's so much bias."

The prevalence of bias in society in general makes it difficult to quickly or easily overcome, Gupta noted, despite seeing recent attention to it as a step in the right direction.

"I think the challenge (for companies) is that now people are speaking up," Gupta said.

She cited social media and other changing societal tides as the reason for this. It's no longer the norm, she noted, to just sit back and accept bias or mistreatment in the workplace as inevitable. For this reason, companies are feeling additional pressure to accommodate their employees in ways that don't necessitate sacrifices to their health and personal lives.

"What is needed is commitment," Gupta said. "What is needed is to put their money where their mouth is."

What this means for companies, according to Gupta, is that they need to "look beyond the resume" to get a sense of who a candidate is, and what their strengths are, in a way that is far more holistic than simply checking boxes to see if they can perform certain duties.

"No matter how good a person is, if you go back and tell somebody 'you're bad' or 'do this better, you're bad at this', they will continue to underperform," Gupta said.

Work-life harmony

As the "seat" of Gupta's stool, finding a balance between work and other aspects of life serves as the foundation for overall health and happiness. This has been central to her fulfillment in the work she's done, and lack of remorse over opportunities she's had to pass up.

For Gupta, this has long included working remotely, in order to spend time with her family. However, she noted that the surge in remote work brought on by the pandemic hasn't resulted in the same healthy work-life balance for everyone.

"More people are working from home and there is absolutely no discipline," Gupta said. "Employers are expecting more, employees are now trying to do more than the hours required, they are losing focus, so there is no demarcation of what work is."

One way of contending with this in the present era is how to use technology as a tool and a "friend", rather than being a "slave" to it, according to Gupta.

"My biggest advice to anyone, no matter what that situation, is to bring awareness," Gupta said. "When we are not aware, we don't respond, we react."

For Gupta, that means seeing her book launch as an opportunity to not just get her word out to the public, but as a way of gaining insight and strengthening relationships.

Gupta will be holding an author's event for her new book at Towne Center Books on Main Street in Pleasanton at 5:30 p.m. this Saturday (Sept. 25).

She said she seeks to continue using her book as a way to connect with others at her book launch event. She welcomes community members to share their own stories of reinventing and "relaunching" their careers. ■



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Traffic trends in Tri-Valley give officials cause for concern

Higher potential for collisions as kids travel to school and more offices reopen

By **JULIA BAUM**

A rash of traffic collisions in the Tri-Valley this year between pedestrians and motorists, including a handful of fatalities, has local law enforcement and other officials reminding residents to take extra care on roadways as schools and offices reopen more fully after 18 months.

Two pedestrians have been killed in Pleasanton since February, and a man crossing Dublin Boulevard on foot was fatally struck in June.

Dublin school board Trustee Catherine Kuo died after being hit by an SUV while volunteering at Fallon Middle School in March. And NFL assistant coach Greg Knapp died at a hospital days after he was struck by a vehicle while cycling in the bike lanes on Dougherty Road in San Ramon, a story that has garnered national headlines.

Several fatal vehicle crashes over the past month have also transpired in the Tri-Valley, including one before Labor Day weekend where a Livermore teen died and five of his peers were injured.

September, which is Pedestrian Safety Month, has been particularly deadly with the deaths of two pedestrians walking on local freeways in the dark in separate incidents near Livermore and San Ramon. A teenage cyclist was also struck and critically injured by a car at the intersection of Santa Rita Road and Rosewood Drive in Pleasanton on Sept. 1, but ultimately survived his injuries.

While there is no direct connection or pattern among any of the events, the intersections around local schools are getting some extra attention lately from safety officials.

Sgt. Justin Lash with the Livermore Police

Department said kids coming back to class has contributed to an uptick in close calls between drivers and bicyclists.

"A lot of them are juveniles that you get kids riding to school, especially that weren't pre-COVID," Lash said in an interview. "Most of them are kids riding from the sidewalk into the roadway; many times they're traveling the wrong direction."

One common scenario that Lash described is the bicyclist will be approaching or in the crosswalk from the wrong direction, but when the driver looks left a second time, "they don't look right (again)."

"That's the majority of them, and that comes down to the pedestrian or bicyclist making sure the other party sees them," Lash said. "They're all right-of-way violations, is what we'd call them."

Other common violations on the road include speeding, making illegal turns, failing to yield to pedestrians in crosswalks, and failing to stop for signs and signals.

Local law enforcement are generally more lenient with young ones, and will talk to students first instead if they see an actual traffic violation occur. LPD had a bicycle enforcement day several weeks ago, but Lash said "we ended up citing drivers more than anything."

The return to learning in-person has caused an increase in traffic on the roads, and also demand for crossing guards around Pleasanton schools. Right now the city of Pleasanton, which currently funds 22 crossing guards, is conducting a crosswalk study "so we can provide some analytics behind the crossing guards," traffic engineer Mike

Tassano told the Weekly.

"Around schools, we haven't had students there for 18-plus months," Tassano said. "We had a very limited going this last spring but this is the first year when we're back 100%."

"We're doing this crossing guard study to establish a mechanism to say 'maybe we don't need a crossing guard here but maybe we need one here, move them'," Tassano added. Several schools including Fairlands and Donlon elementaries, as well as Hart Middle, have asked for crossing guards.

Staff have been out every morning and afternoon for several weeks to monitor the crossing guards, including "how they're crossing, visibility and sight-line distance," according to Tassano, and should finish collecting volume data by the end of the month or potentially as late as early November. Regardless of when the study is completed, Tassano said no changes will be made to any crossing guard assignments until the start of the 2022-23 school year.

The city also does an annual collision review of one- and three-year history for pedestrians, bicycles and vehicles to determine patterns. Tassano also said staff reads "every collision report written by the police department to determine if there are improvements necessary."

A few traffic safety patterns have also been identified "but those are for specific locations, not system wide," Tassano said.

Most recently the city analyzed "if crossing from the curb to a 'pork chop island' has a higher crash rate and if there is a pattern of right turn on red collisions," but Tassano

said neither proved to have a pattern or be a problem.

In Livermore, some changes are being made on Portola Avenue while Lash said the Isabel-Stanley connector is also making bike path improvements and the city is considering painting the bike lanes.

Road conditions are not always consistent but officials said drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists can try to be and make traveling safer for everyone by following some common tips:

Drivers

- Wait for pedestrians to cross the street. Be courteous and patient.
- Stay off the phone.
- No speeding. Speed limits are not suggestions.
- Look for pedestrians when backing up, turning at intersections or entering/exiting shopping centers.

Bicyclists

- Always wear a helmet. Helmets are required by state law for anyone under 18.
- Bicyclists must travel in the same direction of traffic and have the same requirements as any slow-moving vehicle.

Pedestrians

- Only cross at marked crosswalks or intersections with a stop sign or signal.
- Look for cars backing up. Avoid going between parked cars.
- Make eye contact with drivers. Don't assume they see you.
- Wear bright clothing during the day and use a flashlight when walking at night. ■

COVID PROTOCOLS

Continued from Page 12

positive do.

"We want parents to know how important it is for them to keep an eye out for symptoms and to keep their students home when they see possible signs of COVID," Van Schaack said.

"Everyone in our school district has a part to play in keeping our students safe and in school. Stay home if you're not feeling well, wear a mask when required, and get vaccinated if you're eligible," French said.

Vaccinations and testing

Only students ages 12 and up are currently eligible to be vaccinated, leaving the vast

majority of local elementary-schoolers unvaccinated. While no district in the Tri-Valley requires students 12 and older to be vaccinated, teachers and staff must be fully vaccinated by Oct. 15 or be tested weekly, per the California Department of Public Health's Aug. 11, 2021 health order.

According to Sarah Lopez, DUSD's director of communications and community engagement, staff who have not submitted a "COVID Vaccination Verification Form" are already required to test on a weekly basis.

Each district offers tests at the district offices; most districts offer testing at school sites and it is available for asymptomatic students and staff.

"Since the new school year began, we've administered over 1,300 tests for students,"

French said of PUSD. "The testing program is expanding on a weekly basis and we look forward to offering our students and staff more testing opportunities in the near future."

"We offer testing for unvaccinated employees at the district office and we test students at school sites," LVJUSD's Van Schaack said. "As of right now, the only students we test are those who are unvaccinated, without symptoms, were a direct contact to a confirmed positive case, and whose parents have provided permission."

DUSD students and staff can test any time, regardless of symptoms or exposure.

"Since we started offering COVID testing on Aug. 30, 2021, (test administration company) Predicine has administered 2,359 tests at our sites," said DUSD's Lopez.

According to Koehne, San Ramon Valley, the only Tri-Valley district in Contra Costa County, has aligned its policies with the Contra Costa Health Services and all SRVUSD athletes and

coaches will now undergo twice weekly rapid COVID-19 testing.

"SRVUSD is providing access to twice weekly rapid testing for athletes after school at each of our high schools starting on Sept. 22," Koehne said. "We plan to expand the testing program to include all indoor extra-curricular activities so that these school activities can continue indoors. More information about indoor extra-curricular activities will be sent to families (the week of Sept. 20)."

"With the added responsibility of providing testing access and with contact tracing and case investigation now shifting from local health departments to schools and school districts, this has become a massive undertaking," Koehne said. "But we will keep moving forward as our primary goal is to keep kids in school to the best of our ability by limiting transmission of the virus." ■

Editor's note: Zoe Morgan, reporter at the Palo Alto Weekly, contributed to this story.

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	Student & Staff Population	Cumulatitve through 9/17	Positive tests 1st weeks Sept.*	Current % pop testing + 1st weeks Sept.*
DUSD	14009	52 (from 8/16)	25	0.17%
PUSD	17476	119 (from 7/1)	18	0.1%
LVJUSD	14600	85 (from 8/23)	18*	0.12%
SRVUSD	32466	197 (from 8/9)	47	0.14%

*Livermore data is from 9/13-17