

Elkus Ranch opens garden for disabled youths

THE RICHARD J. ELKUS RANCH, an environmental education and conference center in Half Moon Bay, recently held a ribbon cutting for its new Enabling Garden, which is designed for children with limited mobility or other physical, emotional or learning disabilities.

Director Marilyn Johns and a beautiful morning greeted about 65 advisory board members, donors, staff, University of California master gardeners and volunteers who were invited to tour the ranch and enjoy a brunch.

The lovely garden, built by ranch foreman Augie Aguilar and groundskeeper Bruno Acosta has raised beds of varying heights, some with cutouts for wheelchairs, so youths can have up-close access to the garden without bending or kneeling. The beds contain cuttings, flowers, herbs, root crops and vegetables. Tools and materials are located close by, as are a greenhouse and lath house for ease of moving plants to the beds.

The garden also includes



CAROLYN LIVENGOOD
Livin' Good

pathways that are covered with decomposed granite for firm footing and sturdy outdoor furniture that swivels for easy access.

"We wanted to make sure that everyone who comes to Elkus Ranch, regardless of ability or disability, can connect with the dirt," said Leslie Jensen, Elkus program coordinator and a certified horticultural therapist, who lent advice for the garden's construction. "An area has been provided for training, workshops and demonstrations of principles and techniques for horticultural therapy for special education teachers."

The project was funded by the Atkinson Foundation, Silicon Valley Community Foundation, Strong Foun-

dation for Environmental Values and the 2008 Youth Garden Grantee-National Gardening Association.

The late Richard J. Elkus donated the 600-acre Elkus Ranch in 1975 to the University of California Cooperative Extension. The facility offers camps, a conference center, classroom trips, a variety of gardens, farm animals, a water education display and much more.

To learn more or to donate, call 650-712-3151, e-mail elkusranch@ucdavis.edu or visit <http://cesanmateo.ucdavis.edu>.

Italian-American club raises \$25,000 for Mission Hospice

The Peninsula Italian American Social Club in San Mateo raised more than \$25,000 at a dinner dance to benefit Mission Hospice for all the good work it does. The evening was highlighted by a silent auction, raffle and music by the Bob Gutierrez Band.

Mission Hospice Chief Executive Dwight Wilson, board members, volunteers and many club members were among the 306 guests in attendance, according to

Emil Giannoni, club president. "It was such a success that we are looking forward to repeating the event in March 2010," Giannoni said.

"Another fundraising effort we recently undertook was in response to the earthquake in central Italy," he added. "The consul general of Italy, Fabrizio Marcelli, addressed the membership at our April club meeting to express his appreciation of the \$7,548 we generated for that cause."

Foster City Rotary participates in community improvement

Patricia Nutting, a member of the Rotary Club of Foster City, part of District 5150, has advised me that the Foster City branch also participated in the recent Rotarians at Work Day, a worldwide effort that I wrote about in my June 6 column.

The members undertook three projects: Highway 92 cleanup; painting the bathroom at Gull Park inside and out; and tending the roses at the Foster City Recreation Center.

Papan scholarships help 20 Peninsula students
The John Papan Me-

memorial Scholarship Fund awarded scholarships to 20 students in the San Mateo and Jefferson Union high school districts who have overcome great adversity and numerous personal challenges.

"These scholarships are about triumph," said Gina Papan, co-director of the fund with her sister Diane. "They reward students for their personal tenacity, for never giving up or giving in and help open the door of opportunity for every student who wants to succeed."

Gina's parents, the late Assemblyman Lou Papan and his wife, Irene, founded the annual scholarship fund in 1981 in memory of their son John Papan.

"The fund awards two very unique types of scholarships," explained Gina. "The first helps special education students, as John's illness left him learning disabled. The second helps late bloomers, students who received virtually all Ds and Fs during their first two years of high school but turned their grades around during their last two years."

The scholarships are

intended to recognize the effort and potential of these overlooked youths, as there are almost no scholarships available for such students.

To make a tax-deductible donation, send a check payable to the John Papan Memorial Fund to 440 Green Hills Drive, Millbrae, CA 94030.

Cypress Lawn Heritage Foundation honored for contributions

Cypress Lawn Heritage Foundation in Colma was recently honored by the North Peninsula Food Pantry & Dining Center of Daly City at its annual "Thanks for Taking Our Hand" Luncheon, held at the Colma Community Center.

"We are so appreciative of Cypress Lawn for their continued support and contributions to the success of our programs," said Executive Director Denise Kelly, who presented a plaque to Cypress President Kenneth Varner.

"Our Food Pantry & Dining Center, started in 1989, provides nutrition and sustenance to those in need

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