

# *The Herculean*

City of Hercules Information Brochure  
Spring 2010



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# ***InSight***

## **OPTOMETRY**



### ***About the doctors***

Dr. Darren Ng is a native of El Sobrante and earned his Bachelor of Art in Molecular Cell Biology at UC Berkeley. He continued his education at UC Berkeley where he earned his Doctor of Optometry degree.

Dr. Tam-An Nguyen grew up in Sacramento and earned her Bachelor of Science in Human Development at UC Davis. She later earned her Doctor of Optometry degree from UC Berkeley.



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**CITY HALL HOURS:  
MONDAY - FRIDAY  
8:00 AM - 5:00 PM**

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**CITY DIRECTORY**

City Manager	799-8206
City Hall-General Information	799-8200
City Hall Fax	799-2521
Community/Swim Center	799-8291
Parks & Recreation Department	799-8291
Hercules Municipal Utility	799-8285
Hercules Senior Center	799-8219
Finance Dept/Business License	245-6509
Business/Community Development	245-6529
Public Works & Engineering	799-8241
Inspection Request Line	799-8240
City Clerk	799-8215
Police Department	799-8260
Rodeo-Hercules Fire District	799-4561

**City Council** 799-8206  
*Meets the second and fourth Tuesday of each month.*

Kris Valstad, Mayor	Joe Eddy McDonald
Ed Balico, Vice Mayor	Joanne Ward
Donald Kuehne	

**Planning Commission** 245-6529  
*Meets the first and third Monday of each month.*

Sherry McCoy, Chair	Richard Mitchell
Myrna L. deVera, Vice Chair	Raoul Maltez
Jose Bibal	

**Community and Library Services Commission** 799-8291  
*Meets the second Monday of each month*

Adoria Williams-Weinstein, Chair	John Mills
Cletia Hart, Vice Chair	Sid Shapiro
Sherry Madfes	Jojo Soriano

For additional information, please visit the City website at [www.ci.hercules.ca.us](http://www.ci.hercules.ca.us)

**Featured on cover:**  
Flower from Hercules Sustainable Community Garden,  
photo courtesy of Wing Lee.

# Hercules Explorers Compete in Arizona

by Hercules Explorer Sergeant Ben Cantwell



“Why are we doing all of this,” asks one of the newer members of Hercules Police Explorer Post #2111. I turn to him, blink the rain out of my eyes and respond, “It’s for Chandler Bro, you’re gonna love it!” He poses a reasonable question: why would a group of teenagers ever want to wake up early, get yelled at and pushed to the point of mental and physical break down. It’s simple, to show everyone what a lean, mean, tactical machine we are.

Every year, the Hercules Police Explorers send the best of the best to Chandler, Arizona to compete in their

annual Explorer Tactical Competition. This year’s event brought 40 Law Enforcement Explorer teams from all across America. Some groups traveling from as far as Illinois and Minnesota to compete.

The Hercules Explorers trained for the last four months under the watchful discipline and helpful eyes of Hercules Police Detective Alex Abetkov, Commander Bill Goswick and many other Police personnel. Through hours of drills, motivational runs, and lots of push-ups, the Explorers prepared to embark on a grueling two day test of dedication, teamwork and ultimately...excellence.

After a 13 hour drive, the 13 Explorers began competing in 11 SWAT events designed to test response time and skill. Events like the Sniper Challenge, SWAT Fitness Challenge and the Pistol Shoot involve two Explorers in a specific skill set. While other events, such as Rapid Response, Vehicle Assault, Hostage Rescue and Tubular Assault (a dynamic entry into tubular shaped spaces, e.g. a bus, plane or in this case, a two car train) involve the entire group requiring flawless execution and a high degree of teamwork. The Hercules Explorers preformed well and brought home a second place trophy for Tubular Assault and a third place in the Individual Pistol Shoot, completed by Explorer Captain Jerry Thompson.

The ride home was filled with joking around, fast food, sleeping and plans on how to perform even better next year. The Hercules Explorers want to extend many thanks to the Hercules City Council, Hercules Police Department and the entire Hercules community. Without the continued support from local residents and businesses, we would not be able to attend. We jump at the chance to showcase our skills and strengthen our devotion to the field of law enforcement. ♦

## Grand Opening



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# Veteran Police Officers Retire

Two senior members of the Hercules Police Department chose the New Year to retire from active service to the city. Sergeant Mark Stevenson completed his career on January 11, 2010 and Officer Dave Imada retired on February 20, 2010.

Sergeant Stevenson began his 31-year association with Hercules in 1978 as a Police Cadet. He became a Reserve Police Officer in January of 1979, and on July 1, 1979 was hired as a Police Officer. He was promoted to Sergeant on July 1, 1986. Sergeant Stevenson served as Acting Division Commander and Acting Police Chief on several occasions. He was also in charge of the Hercules PD Field Training Program, allowing him to play an important role in the training and development of new officers for the organization.

Officer Imada began his career in Hercules on Feb-

ruary 16, 1985 when he was hired as a Police Officer after working as a Security Officer at Hilltop Mall in Richmond and a Communications Dispatcher for the Contra Costa Sheriff's Department. During his 25 years of service, Officer Imada served as a Field Training Officer, Evidence Technician, and Detective. He also created numerous electronic forms for the department and served as an Information Technology liaison to the various computer system companies that have worked with Hercules PD.



Officer Dave Imada (left) and Sergeant Mark Stevenson are retiring after a combined 56 years of service with the Hercules Police Department

Sergeant Stevenson and Officer Imada leave with 56 years of combined commitment to providing public safety to the citizens of Hercules. The Hercules Police Department

salutes their dedication and wishes them a healthy, happy, and successful retirement. ♦

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# Hercules Detective Promoted to Sergeant

Hercules Police Detective Ezra Tafesse was promoted to the rank of Sergeant on January 12, 2010. Sergeant Tafesse grew up in Hercules and attended Pinole Valley High School. He graduated from the University of Arizona in 2000, earning a Bachelor of Science Degree in Sociology. He was hired by the Hercules Police Department in February 2001. In 2004, he was named Hercules' Police Officer of the Year. He also received awards from the California Highway Patrol and California State Automobile Association for Outstanding Achievement in the area of Vehicle Theft Enforcement.



Sergeant Tafesse began his career with the Hercules Police Department in February 2001

Sergeant Tafesse served as a Staff Sergeant in the United States Army Reserve and was called to active duty in May 2004. During his tour he served at Fort Bliss, Texas, Fort Huachuka, Arizona, Guantanamo

Bay, Cuba and spent four months in Iraq. He was named the Outstanding Non-Commissioned Officer of the Quarter for the Joint Task Force in Cuba during his tour. Sergeant Tafesse was awarded the Joint Services Commendation Medal, Joint Services Achievement Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal and two National Defense Medals for his military service.

Sergeant Tafesse served as one of the department's criminal investigators prior to his promotion. He is now a watch commander on one of the department's patrol teams. In addition, he serves on the department's Special Response Team. Congratulations Sergeant Tafesse. ♦

## Journey of a First Time Homebuyer

The road to purchasing a home, can be a long one. It takes determination, patience, and a little bit of faith to finally achieve the American dream. For Donna Yvonne, her journey began in 2000, when she came to City Hall looking for the Affordable Housing program. At the time, the program was small, and there were not many openings, but Donna was committed to finding a home in Hercules.

In 2004, a real opportunity for Donna and her family: a new residential development had five inclusionary homes available in her income category. "When something opened up, there was a mob of people," Donna recalls. A lottery was held and Donna's name was pulled sixth. Now in order for her dream to be a reality, one of the first five families would have to drop out. Even though she had been patient for three years, it still wasn't her time. "I kept getting excited and then let down."

The Affordable Housing Program continued to grow and in 2005, Donna took advantage of the program's credit counseling. "My credit score was kind of low, so it helped me quite a bit," says Donna. In just over a year, her credit score increased by an average of 137 points and



Donna Yvonne holding the key to her first home

Donna also noticed the banks were more willing to work with her. "I could see a difference with the banks once I was in the program."

Finally, in 2009, Donna's determination and patience paid off. One of the original first time homebuyers from 2004 decided to move and Donna was the first to apply. "There were a lot of prayers," Donna remembers, "and I felt like one day something would come through." And finally it did. Donna became a homeowner.

Donna admits there were setbacks and disappointments on the way, but believes the timing was exactly right. "I remember Nelson Oliva personally called me to give me the news, and I was jumping up and down with joy."

"The staff was awesome through the process, they were encouraging, honest, and I have a lot of respect for them, especially Nelson," she adds. "I feel if it wasn't for the program and my faith in God, I wouldn't have gotten into a home." Now her advice to others: "Never give up on your dreams." ♦

# COMMUNITY UPDATE 2010

Saturday  
April 10, 2010

9:30am - 11:30am

Hercules  
Community Center  
2001 Refugio Valley Rd



Learn about the progress that's happened over the past year and what's in store for the dynamic City of Hercules. Share your questions, ideas, and concerns with City officials, staff, public agencies, non-profits and developers working on the projects, programs, and issues you care about.

Childcare will be provided, so bring your family—and your neighbors, to this exciting and informative event!

*Kids Activities*

*Project information*

*Meet fellow residents*

*Chat with City Officials*

For more information, visit our website at  
[www.ci.hercules.ca.us](http://www.ci.hercules.ca.us) or call 510-245-6533



- *Waterfront*
- *Sycamore Downtown*
- *Dog Park*
- *New Town Center*
- *Traffic & Road Improvements*
- *Schools*
- *Recreation*
- *Transportation*
- *Duck Pond Park*

*And much, much more!*

Complete the information below and bring to the Community Update to be entered to win a \$50 Visa gift card.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

# Farmers Market Moving to Market Hall

If you've noticed the empty lot at the corner of Sycamore and San Pablo, you are not alone. After the opening of the new Park and Ride on Willow, the developers of the New Town Center, The Red Barn Co., took ownership of the lot and have been working with the City to create an innovative (but interim) use for the site.

This interim project, called Market Hall, will converge retail, recreation and of course, food. Market Hall is a collection of a few simple buildings. At the center will be a large open hall housing several food vendors. Around the main hall will be multiple small retail shops, a lawn and other recreation spaces such as a tot lot, bocce ball courts and a fire pit. Events, including the Hercules Certified Farmers Market, will also be held at Market Hall bringing the community together at this new unique space.

"Market Hall will be another reason for the Bay Area to put Hercules on their map," says Economic Development Director Steve Lawton. "Red Barn has found a tremendously creative use for the site to benefit Hercules residents, employees, and visitors from outside our usual market area."

Behind the scenes, the 6.62-acre site is being readied for construction of the "Market Town" phase of the New Town Center. However, due to the complexity of the property exchange, the old BART lot would have remained vacant for about two years before construction could begin. So the Redevelopment Agency challenged Red Barn to activate this important crossroads site with an interim, experimental use. Red Barn found a way to offer innovative dining and shopping options while allowing retailers to understand the Hercules shopping community. "Not only does Market Hall start the development of New Town Center early, it also creates a great community venue for people to enjoy," says Tom Weigel, President of The Red Barn Co.

More details on Market Hall's grand opening will be posted around town and on the City's website at [www.ci.hercules.ca.us](http://www.ci.hercules.ca.us). You can also visit Market Hall's website: [www.herculesmarkethall.com](http://www.herculesmarkethall.com) for more information on this new and exciting venue.

And don't forget to check out the Farmer's Market this spring at its new location. There will be fresh produce, baked goods, eggs, kettle corn, barbecued oysters and much, much more! ♦



The "Commons" is a retail courtyard extending from inside the Hall to a swath of community tables for outdoor dining or simply hanging out.



"Silver Springs" is a 50's themed area with vintage airstream trailers and retail kiosks. This area celebrates the historical Highway 40 and the roadside stands that welcomed drivers to the Bay Area.



The playground area will be located centrally between the retail spaces. Enjoy a cup of coffee while the kids play.

# New Urbanism in Hercules

The City of Hercules continues to advance the design of a world-class Intermodal Transit Center at the heart of the waterfront. The project is strategically located and has been carefully planned to bring the local community and regional commuters a truly 'multi-modal' transit center. When complete, the project will raise the bar for transit connectivity in the bay area by combining train-bus-ferry service, seamlessly integrated into a community with trails, parks and plazas.

As the project has progressed through a public process that included design workshops and environmental review, some questions have come forward relating to New Urbanism and how the principles of New Urbanism fit into the plans for the Intermodal Transit Center.

## *Can Suburban become New Urban?*

Suburban communities were developed and built over the last sixty years in response to the ascent of the automobile made possible by the construction of the national highway system. The majority of US citizens now live in those suburban communities. In fact, one could argue that the City of Hercules was once a sprawling, suburban, "bedroom community" where workers that commuted north, south, and east lived. In its broadest sense, New Urbanism "represents a culmination in the attempts of policy-makers and professionals in a variety of fields to galvanize ways of thinking around making communities better places to live." [Andrew Stevens, 2004] New Urbanism, as a movement, emerged in response to "suburbanism" because architects, planners, developers, and others opted to develop communities that were "walkable" and designed to a "human-scale". [New Urban News] In the last decade, the City of Hercules has been in the forefront of planning in a different way and encouraging

## *Transit Oriented Development at Hercules Bayfront:*

- Use of a form-based code, zoning changes, and architectural styles incorporated into the Waterfront Initiative adopted by the City Council in summer 2008.
- Designing the public infrastructure – including wide sidewalks, use of street furniture and landscaping, on-street parking, and the possibility of car-free streets for special events such as the Farmers Market.
- Interconnecting the streets, from larger boulevards and roads to access the transit facilities, to smaller streets leading to residential neighborhoods to improve connectivity and encourage walking.
- Mixing living and working areas within the neighborhood and within buildings emphasizing the diversity of uses within the Hercules Bayfront.
- Having a diverse range of housing types, sizes, and prices in close proximity.
- Emphasizing architecture and architectural styles that help create a "sense of place."
- Combining public and private uses and encouraging walking, bicycling, and use of public transit.
- Obtaining LEED Certification for the Intermodal Transit Center and Hercules Bayfront development.

the principles of new urbanism in development including "walkability, connectivity, mixed-use and diversity, mixed housing, quality architecture and urban design, traditional neighborhood structure, increased density, green transportation, sustainability, and quality of life." [Principles of Urbanism from [www.newurbanism.org](http://www.newurbanism.org)]

The Hercules Bayfront and Intermodal Transit Center projects are great examples of how the principles of new urbanism can be incorporated into a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) in a historically suburban area.

## *Are the LEED rating systems an important part of New Urbanism?*

The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) began in 1993 and soon after formation, the members understood the need for a system to define and measure

□ *Continued on page 8*



*"...LEED for Neighborhood Development takes the next step for sustainability and climate protection by establishing standards that integrate the principles of smart growth, urbanism, and green building into a national program for mixed-use and neighborhood design".*  
*-Katherine Gregor, Austin Chronicle, Greening the Neighborhood*

## □ *New Urbanism continued from page 7*

“green buildings”. A diverse committee including architects, realtors, a building owner, lawyer, environmentalist and industry representatives, worked together to develop the initial product. The first Leadership for Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) was launched as LEED Version 1.0 in 1998 and has subsequently grown into a multitude of products more carefully tailored to rate projects across a range of uses and sizes.

In 2008, the USGBC established the Green Building Certification Institute (GBCI) for project registration and certification. The GBCI administers credentialing of professionals and certification programs related to green building practices.

Greener neighborhoods are a core part of new urbanism and greatly benefit our daily lives by providing mixed-use transit oriented development and encouraging walking, bicycling and multiple public transportation options for both daily errands and commuting. The addition of LEED design guidelines to new urbanist principles also ensures that the buildings are environmentally responsible and the site design includes green infrastructure. This allows the project to maximize reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by decreasing energy demand and water consumption. Bringing new urbanism together with LEED and transit weaves environmental responsibility and mobility into a project, creating a livable community with local and regional benefits. Some specific examples of these benefits include: parking and transit priority streets that are strategically laid-out to meet demand, protect the local community and promote less reliance on automobiles; parking that integrates spaces for low-emitting and fuel efficient vehicles and bicycle storage; and a network of safe pathways and trails to promote more walking and bicycling



*Hercules Intermodal Transit Center and Plaza*

- LEED Silver or Gold Certification
- Transit integrated with a mixed-use development
- On-site power generation from wind and solar

within the community. Since the proposed Hercules Intermodal Transit Center and Bayfront development provide all these benefits, these projects will enhance the health and environment of the neighborhood and Bay Area at large.

### *How is Transit related to New Urbanism?*

According to [www.newurbanism.org](http://www.newurbanism.org), “regional planning techniques are being used to control and shape growth into compact, high-density, mixed-use neighborhoods, villages, towns, and cities. Planning new train systems (instead of more roads) delivers the best results when designed in harmony with regional land planning – known as Transit Oriented Development. At the same time, the revitalization of urban areas directs and encourages infill development back into city centers.”

The principles of New Urbanism also take into account safety, security, comfort, the use of gathering places that define the community and its identity, historic preservation, and green/open spaces such as parks, plazas, view corridors, etc. All these principles are being carefully considered by the design team working on the Intermodal Transit Center project, the centerpiece of the Hercules Bayfront development. A public-private partnership is exemplified by regular collaboration and the combined design effort of City staff and the developer, Anderson Pacific, LLC. This collective design team includes engineers from civil, structural, and geotechnical disciplines; planners; architects; landscape architects; artists and art advisors; historic preservationists; environmental specialists; and more.

□ *Continued on page 9*

### *USGBC Leadership for Environmental Design (LEED) Rating Systems:*

- Green Building Design & Construction (LEED BD&C)
- Green Interior Design & Construction (LEED ID&C)
- Green Buildings Operations & Maintenance (LEED BO&M)
- Green Neighborhood Development (LEED ND)
- LEED for Homes
- LEED for Retail (in development)

## □ *New Urbanism continued from page 8*

Integrating a regional Intermodal Transit Center into the heart of a mixed-used development requires careful analysis of both the new urbanist principles and the established design codes and guidelines used by engineers and transit providers. The principles of new urbanism have been built-in to Hercules' form based code to guide the development. Likewise, these guidelines must be evaluated along with the California Building Code (2007 CBC) and other design codes and guides including: American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), American Concrete Institute (ACI), American Institute of Steel Construction (AISC). As the project design team advances the design of the Intermodal Transit Center construction documents, they must also take into account



*Hercules Bayfront Development Site Plan*

these important codes and guides to insure the safety and operability of the transit facilities, roads, bridges and parking. The increased use of that public infrastructure due to Bay Area congestion and the public's keen interest in using alternative modes of transportation, including bus, train, and ferry, amplify the importance of careful design that balances the new urbanist principles with accepted engineering guides and codes. The Intermodal Transit Center and Hercules Bayfront projects can be integrated to create an infrastructure that "works" and a development with a "sense of place". ♦



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### Healthy Gardens for All -- Hands on Workshop Series

Join us for a fun and easy way to learn gardening techniques and tips.



Each session will begin with a presentation, followed by a demonstration, and ending with time for discussion. We will then spend time practicing what we've learned with hands-on-activities in our demonstration garden. Meet other gardeners from your community, and have the opportunity to share gardening wisdom.

- ❖ Beginning and experienced gardeners are all welcome.
- ❖ Workshop series facilitated by The Watershed Project and RecycleMore staff.
- ❖ Program is offered FREE of charge to West Contra Costa residents, sponsored by RecycleMore.

Series offered on the **First Saturday\*** of the month starting March, 2010 through June 2010  
@ West County Resource Recovery & Household Hazardous Waste Facility,  
101 Pittsburg Avenue, Richmond, CA



Visit [www.recyclemore.com](http://www.recyclemore.com) or call 510.215.3126 for more information.

*\*Clean out your back room, storage shed or garage by bringing your unwanted household hazardous waste (i.e. old paint, fertilizers, pesticides, oil, stains, dyes, TVs, computers, batteries, fluorescent bulbs, etc.) when you come to the workshop.*

# Why Attend the Citizen's Police Academy

The Hercules Police Department is sponsoring a Citizen's Police Academy beginning on March 31, 2010. The Academy will be held in Hercules on Wednesday evenings from 7:00 to 9:00 PM, with some Saturday courses and field trips. Graduation is scheduled for early June.

Interested Hercules residents have contacted the Police Department to ask why we are holding an academy for the public, and there are a variety of answers to that inquiry. First and foremost, the Citizen's Police Academy allows members of the community to learn about the day-to-day operations of a law enforcement agency. They will meet and be instructed by officers currently involved in the maintenance of public safety in Hercules. Second, in addition to learning law enforcement procedures, students will be able to explore their interest in the police profession with officers in a relaxed, positive environment. Any questions about policies, procedures, and techniques of law enforcement can be answered.

And possibly, the most important reason to attend the Citizen's Academy will be to meet other great members of the community with whom you will be able to interact, take interesting field trips, and potentially become Police

Department volunteers or Neighborhood Watch leaders. Your classmates will also be residents of Hercules, and you will form a common bond that will be in place long after your graduation.

Seats are limited so complete the attached application today! If you are not sure about participating, feel free to call Neighborhood Watch Coordinator Gaema Obenchain at 510-799-8263 or by email at [gobenchain@ci.hercules.ca.us](mailto:gobenchain@ci.hercules.ca.us). ♦

## Serious Injury • Auto Accident

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Richmond



**FREE CONSULTATION 510-262-2120**



## 2010 Citizen's Academy Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's License # \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security # \_\_\_\_\_

Current Employer \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title \_\_\_\_\_

I, hereby authorize the City of Hercules Police Department to review my background to determine eligibility to attend the Citizen's Academy. I understand submission of this application does not guarantee admission.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*An Old-Fashioned*

# 4th of July

*In Hercules*

*Sunday, July 4, 2010*

- ◆ **Parade** 10:30 AM Redwood Road to Sycamore Avenue to Refugio Valley Park
- ◆ **In the Park** immediately following parade: games, booths, food & beverages
- ◆ **Fireworks** at dusk (approximately 9:30PM) over the Hercules Waterfront

*Theme:*

**We The People**

*With Gratitude to Last Year's Contributors:*

Hercules Bayfront LLC

Kel-Aire Heating & Air-Conditioning

Mora Family Dentistry

Pillow Pre School

Pro Media Ultra Sound

Richmond Sanitary Service

Synergistic Telecommunications

*Participant Information:*

Participant applications will be available  
**AFTER March 31, 2010.**

At that time please visit the City of Hercules website:  
[www.ci.hercules.ca.us](http://www.ci.hercules.ca.us).

*Event Information:*

Please call  
510-799-7536  
or  
510-799-8230

*Event Co-Sponsored By:* The Hercules 4th of July Committee and City of Hercules

# Our Quiet Leaders

What does it take to work with teens? Most of us would agree it takes patience, leadership, fairness, and passion, but after taking a peek inside the inner workings of the Hercules Teen Center, one might realize it takes much more. The ability to know when to ask the tough questions and when just to listen. When to be a friend and when to be a teacher, when to be serious and when to play, and when to lead from the front or lead by example.

Fortunately, for the youth in Hercules, there are several City staff members that fit that mold. They can talk with students about serious issues one minute, and dance with them to the newest hip-hop music the next. The staff of the Hercules Teen Center is officially tasked with providing supervision and activities for the students, but according to the teens, they take on so much more. "They are more like family," says Mileena Swin, a 9th Grader on the Teen Youth Council (T.Y.C.) Executive Board. "They are easy to talk to on a personal level." Another 9th Grader, Keenan Wiling adds that they "are really good role models" and "very cool."

At the recent combined holiday party of T.Y.C. and T.H.E. S.P.O.T., staff quickly went from cleaning up spills, to directing students, to getting them out on the dance floor. They not only know the teen's names, they know their families, their hobbies, and their struggles. "They are cool to come to with problems," says 8th grader Tiffany Farmer. She continues saying "they're fun and have a sense of humor."

Teen Center staff admit the challenges. "It's not a job for everybody," says Mackenzie Johnson, who has worked



The Teen Center Staff (from left) Pedro Jimenez, Patrick Navitad, Abby Brock, Janine Shaheed, Erica Bridges and Mackenzie Johnson at the Teen Center for three years. "You get something different everyday." Abby Brock and Erica Bridges, two other teen center staff members agree. "It takes a lot of patience," says Erica.



A group of teen girls surround one of the staff while dancing to the latest hits

Although the staff quickly adds that the challenges are worth it. When Abby started at the Teen Center, she was going to school to be a nurse, but after just a short time, she decided she wanted to be a teacher. "Seeing their faces when they learn...its rewarding." For Mackenzie, this is more than just a step in her career, this is it. "This is really what I want to do."

When talking to the staff, their passion and vision is clear: creating a fun, safe environment. "We are all a team," says Janine Shaheed, Teen/Youth Supervisor. "And teamwork is the key to our success. We started with a small room at the Community Center and now we have a wonderful Teen Center for teens to come and enjoy."

The daily rewards are often small and unseen, making a young person's day a little brighter, helping a student with a difficult assignment and encouraging a teen to be themselves, but the long term rewards can be tremendous. And so we thank the staff for their daily service and dedication to seeing the next generation become the best generation.

For more information on the Hercules Teen Center and how to get your teen involved, check out our website at [www.ci.hercules.ca.us](http://www.ci.hercules.ca.us) or call 510-799-8289. ♦



Students enjoying the potluck food at their latest after school party

# Little Munchkins Academy

## *Honored as Business of the Year*

“Sing, play, learn and grow!” In 1991, Sarah Kazmi obtained her license to run a child care out of her home in Hercules and created this as her business logo. A single mother of three herself (her girls are now in high school and her eldest attends UC Berkeley), Ms. Kazmi has materialized her passion for nurturing and teaching young children into a quality preschool and haven for learning.

In 2008, she was awarded national accreditation by the National Association of Family Child Care. In becoming accredited, the Little Munchkins Academy exceeded national standards in the following key areas of quality: relationships, environment, activities, developmental learning goals, safety and health, and professional business practices. The longest licensed facility in Hercules, Little Munchkins guarantees children engage in activities designed to promote their individual development. Meanwhile, parents enjoy open communication through an open-door policy, daily discussion with staff, and a careful system of notes sent home regarding children’s needs and accomplishments.

Visiting the immaculate facility is a delight: the children happily interact in a spacious, colorful play room, in which all toys and learning materials are arranged neatly by category. A variety of multicultural, non-

stereotyping materials and activities are offered to celebrate socio-cultural diversity and to foster each child’s self-concept and self-esteem. “We use our training and experience to carefully plan activities that enable children at different ages and developmental levels to participate with equal success,” says Ms. Kazmi.

The children excel by being in a non-crowded, comfortable environment with a low adult/child ratio. Ms. Kazmi says, “Studies have shown that children mimic each other to learn new words, self-help skills and appropriate social behavior.” Academic learning isn’t the only focus, also taught are basic manners, good citizenship, and respect for self and others.

Further, Little Munchkins recognizes that language development is the key to success in all other subjects. The children are provided with a “print-rich environment” and thus develop a love of books early. The enviable vocabulary of the littlest munchkins is the result of consistent verbal communication between the staff and the children. Parent testimonials attest to the eagerness their children show for learning, as well as the skills they acquire in how to be inquisitive students.

Throughout the day, Ms. Kazmi and her staff actively discuss the children’s progress and ways to

strengthen their teaching methods. Ms. Kazmi minimizes staff turnover by maintaining staff who have a genuine interest in young children. “I am fortunate to work with such a unique group of children,” says Ms. Saeteurn, who has been with the Academy for over three years. “Circle time is especially rewarding – even the very youngest is able to participate!” Ms. Piperdi adds, “Being a teacher at Little Munchkins has definitely taught me that giving children a head start is vital in these early years.” Having obtained their B.A.’s, both teachers are continuing to further their education in early childhood education.

Ms. Kazmi shares her expertise by being a Peer Mentor for the Child Care Council and an accreditation observer for the NAFCC. For facilities of all stages seeking to set up environments, develop professional business practices and procedures, and/or create contracts, Ms. Kazmi also offers individual consulting services.

Besides being a demonstration site, Little Munchkins is also now participating in Preschool Makes a Difference, a new First 5, Contra Costa program which offers scholarships to children to attend high-quality preschools. The little munchkins are very honored to accept this award and invite their fellow Herculeans to be the future of America with them. ♦



# Composting, Gardening, Ecosystems & More

Interesting science lessons have long been an important, and often fun, part of school and this past year the Hercules Municipal Utility (HMU) partnered with our local schools to add to that fun. Through the form of a grant, each Hercules school received \$1,500 to use towards educational materials or supplies related to science or the environment. While the four schools used the funds for different purposes, there is a common theme, teaching students to become good stewards.

## *Ohlone Elementary Learning How To Compost*

Last Spring, Ohlone fourth and fifth graders learned about composting and are now putting it in to practice on a daily basis. The lunch room has been equipped with composting bins, buckets for liquids and regular garbage cans. As students finish with lunch, they distribute their garbage into the bins, which is weighed daily to track their trash savings. In addition to helping the environment, school officials have seen a cost savings. "We now have to order less lunch trays, since students can write their name on them and reuse them," says Mr. Joe Eyles, the 4th and 5th grade teacher who



Ohlone students disperse trash and composting items after lunch

was instrumental in starting the program. This spring, they plan to expand on the program by teaching composting to the lower grades, making lunch time, a learning time for all.

## *Hanna Ranch Fourth Graders Create Ecosystems*

Hanna Ranch created a Green Program guide to align with the schools science and social studies programs. Mr. Cooper Reaves, who has his degree in sustainable development, created the guide with the input of Hanna Ranch teachers and administrators. Now that the guide is created, teachers have a comprehensive



Fourth Grade students in Mr. McCreadie's class share their ecosystem projects with their classmates

resource to help them integrate green education into the classroom. The guide lists education resources on a variety of green topics including energy, ecosystems, wind, recycling and more. Mr. McCreadie's fourth grade class used the guide in December to learn about ecosystems and to create science fair worthy ecosystem projects. Students could choose between creating a mock ecosystem or writing a research paper about plants or seeds. The ecosystem projects are just one example of how the Green Program Guide will be used to enhance students' education. This year, the school plans to do more



Lupine Elementary student displays composting lid full of worms and rich dirt in class projects using the guide and the funds provided by the Hercules Municipal Utility.

## *Lupine Elementary Adds to School Garden*

The Lou Anne Dibble Memorial Garden has been growing ever since the ground breaking in April 2007. Since then, fourth and fifth grade students in Mrs. Valerie Oliva's class have tended to the garden twice a week: pulling weeds, watering plants, and checking on their own composting bins. Other classrooms can take part in the garden by caring for one of the many plots. While the garden continues to flourish because of the students work, there is still a need for volunteers to work on the garden during non-school hours. School officials know a storage shed and outdoor classroom are key for bringing in more students and volunteers. A storage shed will enable volunteers to access garden tools when the school buildings are locked, while the outdoor classroom will facilitate more learning. The funds provided by HMU will go towards the cost of the shed and outdoor classroom, in addition to funds from the PTA, taking this garden to the next level.

□ *Continued on page 20*

# 2010 HERCULES CITYWIDE GARAGE SALES

A Benefit for the Hercules Sister City Association's Youth Ambassador Program

Saturday, April 24, 2010

8 a.m. - 3 p.m.



All Hercules residents are invited to participate in this exciting event! Sponsored by the City of Hercules and the Hercules Sister City Association (HSCA) to support the Youth Ambassador Program, this event encourages the re-use and recycling of unwanted items instead of throwing them away. There may even be treasure to be found! Clean out your closets, enjoy the opportunity to get acquainted with neighbors, build community trust, and promote good will locally and globally.

Rain or shine, the event will be held. The registration fee to list your home on a current map of the City of Hercules is only \$20. Shortly after the registration deadline, as a confirmation of the receipt of your registration, you will be mailed a sign to display at your home showing that you are an official participant in the event. Also, you will receive a list of helpful hints for the event. HSCA will provide event advertising in publications (both printed and on-line) that cover a large geographical area around Hercules. The event is 8:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 24, 2010. However, you may choose to start or end earlier on Saturday or also conduct sales on Sunday. All of the money you make from the sale of your items is yours to keep. Maps listing participating homes will be available for sale to prospective buyers for 25 cents each starting at 8 a.m. on the day of the event outside on the parking lot side of the Hercules Public Library at 109 Civic Drive (off Sycamore Avenue).

Should questions arise about this event, call 510-724-7063. Additional registration forms may be downloaded from the HSCA website at <http://tsushima.home.comcast.net>, where you can also read more about the Hercules Sister City Association.

---

## REGISTRATION FORM

Registration Deadline: **April 10, 2010**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (     ) \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

Address of Garage Sale (if different): \_\_\_\_\_

Send this completed registration form to:  
Hercules Sister City Association  
P.O. Box 5092, Hercules, CA 94547-5092  
Include your payment of \$20 (check should be payable to HSCA)



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M-F 4:00 PM – 6:30 PM

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April 4th                      May 9th                      June 20th

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(2 lenders involved) and coordinating with the buyers. He kept us informed throughout the entire process and went beyond our expectations of what a real estate agent would do. His experience on this arena was key to a successful negotiation and we would highly recommend Jojo Soriano to our friends and associates. Thanks for all the hard work! M.F.

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**3<sup>rd</sup> 10<sup>th</sup> 17<sup>th</sup> 24<sup>th</sup>**  
4:00 p.m. - Dusk  
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[www.muzickproductions.com](http://www.muzickproductions.com)

## □ *HMU Grants continued from page 14*

### *Hercules Middle/High Builds A Shade Structure*

Hercules Middle/High School has also been working on a garden and composting. The HMHS garden is tended to by the Special Education and Culinary Arts students on a daily basis. Mr. Jerry Clopp oversees the students and has helped cultivate vegetables and spices that can be incorporated into the lunches made by the culinary arts students for the teachers. To promote better growth of these plants and vegetables, some shade was needed to protect the plants. Thus, the school used the grant monies to build a



Hercules Middle/High School purchased a shade structure to protect their growing garden.

large wooden shade structure over a portion of the garden and add a composting bin. Much of the work was done as Eagle Scout projects including the fencing, concrete growing area and installation of the shade structure. Besides more vegetation, students can now enjoy the shade while working in the garden on those hot summer days.

Great job to all of our schools for incorporating 'green' lessons into every day learning and great job to our students

for reminding us that even small changes can make a big difference for our planet. ♦

## Imposition of Fee for False Alarms

The Hercules Police Department has been required to respond to an increasing and excessive number of false alarms in the City. The problem of false alarms includes the diversion of police personnel from other necessary activities, the potential delay in police response to valid calls for service, the hazards to the general public and officers when responding to false alarms. This is an expense that should properly be borne by the persons responsible for the false alarms. \*Please note: NO charges will be made in the case of a true emergency.

The fee schedules for false alarms in a calendar year (January through December) are currently as follows:

- NO FEE for the first, second or third alarm occurring in a calendar year
- \$150 for the fourth alarm occurring in a calendar year
- \$200 fee for the fifth and each subsequent alarm occurring in a calendar year

With valid certification, no charge will be made for a false alarm if the system was under repair and the Police Communications Center (724-1111) was notified in advance, or if the alarm was caused by failure of electrical or telephone service.

For questions or concerns, please refer to the City of Hercules Ordinance #421 (Chapter 12. False Alarms and

Imposition of Fee for Police Services) or call the Hercules Police Department at 799-8260. ♦

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[bayareahomes@hotmail.com](mailto:bayareahomes@hotmail.com)

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# Property Tax Distribution

Ever wonder how your property tax dollars were distributed? If so, the chart below may provide some insight, showing the many organizations that receive a portion of those funds. For Hercules residents, you may be surprised to learn that such a small amount, only 5.4 cents for every dollar actually goes to the City of Hercules. The rest goes towards schools, the fire district, the county, and a number of other organizations that provide services to Herculeans. It is important to note that this breakdown does not include special taxes and assessments, which are listed separately on your property tax bill.

The main reason Hercules receives such a small portion is because of Proposition 13, which was approved by California voters in 1978. Under Proposition 13, the annual real estate tax on a parcel of property is limited to 1% of its assessed value. This “assessed value,” may be increased by no more than 2% per year, unless there is a change in ownership or a significant increase or decrease in the property value, such as a home addition or a real estate slump (as we are presently in).

In addition, Proposition 13 froze the property tax rate that each city in California was charging at the time of passage. Thus, every city received a portion of the 1% tax based on their individual rate. In 1978, Hercules had a low property tax rate due to the surplus of revenue from the local refinery. Therefore, Hercules property tax revenue

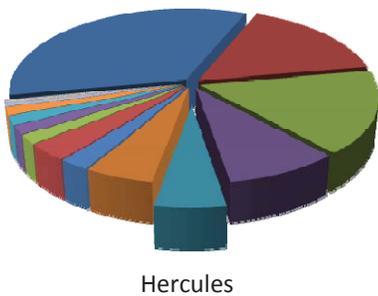
is quite low compared to other cities in West County such as El Cerrito, which collects approximately 22 cents on the dollar and Pinole, which collects approximately 19 cents on the dollar.

Many cities have taken measures to offset losses due to Proposition 13, such as increasing sales tax and establishing redevelopment areas. While Hercules does not receive much revenue from sales tax, redevelopment has become an important source of revenue for the city.

When a redevelopment project area is formed, the assessed value on the tax roll at the time of formation becomes the tax “base.” Through the efforts of a Redevelopment Agency to improve the economic, environmental, and structural conditions of an area, the property values presumably increase. As these values increase, a portion of the value in excess of the “base year” become tax increment revenues, which are used solely by a Redevelopment Agency to fund its activities. Thereby making redevelopment a powerful tool for cities to significantly improve their communities, while working within the constraints of property tax and redevelopment law.

Since the 5.4 cents per dollar is unlikely to change, Hercules continues to invest in the City’s economic future by improving underutilized and blighted properties which will eventually bring more sales tax dollars to our city. ♦

## HOW YOUR TAX DOLLARS ARE SPENT



- West County Unified\*\*
- K-12 Schools ERAF
- County General
- Rodeo/Hercules Fire
- Town of Hercules
- County Comm. College
- Comm/ College ERAF
- East Bay Reg. Park
- West County Hospital
- County Library
- County Super. Schools
- East Bay MUD
- BART
- County Flood Control
- County Mosquito Abate.
- Bay Area Air Mgt.
- County Water Agency

### Description

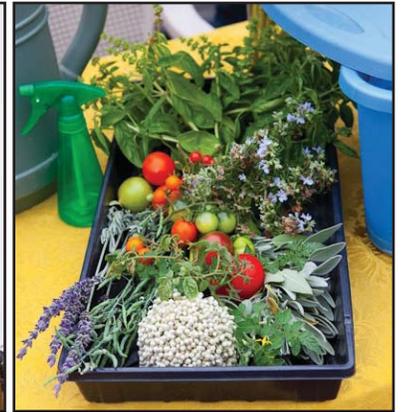
### Tax-\$1.00\*

West County Unified**	0.3402
K-12 Schools ERAF	0.1609
County General	0.1595
Rodeo/Hercules Fire	0.0908
<b>Town of Hercules</b>	<b>0.0542</b>
County Comm. College	0.0539
Comm/ College ERAF	0.0240
East Bay Reg. Park	0.0349
West County Hospital	0.0178
County Library	0.0174
County Super. Schools	0.0168
East Bay MUD	0.0159
BART	0.0074
County Flood Control	0.0020
County Mosquito Abate.	0.0018
Bay Area Air Mgt.	0.0021
County Water Agency	0.0004

\*Figures are based on the largest percentage of property owners and vary slightly based on location

\*\*Homes in John Swett Unified School District pay this portion to JSUSD, approximately \$0.35 per \$1

# Hercules Sustainable Community Garden



Happy New Year from your Community Gardeners! We want to thank everyone who was instrumental in making 2009 a successful year for the Community Garden. The involvement of the City of Hercules, the Teen Council, the Citizens and our Volunteers was amazing. This year we are hoping to offer many more opportunities for everyone to enjoy the Garden. We also continue to have volunteer opportunities on Saturdays to work on the first phase of the Garden, visit the winter gardens of some of our members, and meet with them individually.

We are currently in the process of setting up classes and workshops which are open to the public. One project is our film series held at the Library. Please join us at on March 13 and April 10 when Mark Eley will be presenting films, "The Power of Community: How Cuba Survived Peak Oil" and "How to Save the World: One Man, One Cow, One Planet" at the Hercules Library. These presentations and some of the other workshops we will be hosting are listed below. We encourage you to check out our website at: <http://sites.google.com/site/herculesgardening/> for the complete listing. If you have any questions or wish to schedule an appointment to visit the Garden located in Ohlone Park, please contact the Hercules Sustainable Community Garden Foundation at: [hcgsp@yahoo.com](mailto:hcgsp@yahoo.com).

## HSCGP Calendar 2010

- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Saturday, March 6    | Volunteer Work Day at the Garden: 9:00 a.m. – Noon   |
| Saturday, March 13   | Movie: "The Power of Community: How Cuba Survived Peak Oil" 2:00 p.m.  |
| Saturday, March 20   | Volunteer Work Day at the Garden: 9:00 a.m. – Noon   |
| Sunday, March 21     | Heirloom Tomato Class at the Garden: 2:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.*  |
| Saturday, April 10   | Movie: "How to Save the World: One Man, One Cow, One Planet" 2:00 p.m.   |
| Saturday, April 17   | Volunteer Work Day at the Garden: 9:00 a.m. – Noon   |
| Saturday, April 24   | Bio Intensive Workshop at the Garden with Janet Miller*^   |
| Saturday, May 8      | PLANT SALE AT THE GARDEN and COMPOSTING CLASS at the Garden.*^   |
| Saturday, May 22     | Volunteer Work Day at the Garden: 9:00 a.m. – Noon   |
| Saturday, June 5 & 6 | Hercules Cultural Festival -Volunteer at the information booth   |
| Saturday, June 26    | Workshop: "Lawn Out-Nature In! Replace that thirsty lawn with a more sustainable solution" by Troy McGregor.*^ |

\* Admission fee will be charged to cover cost of materials.

^Please see website for time and location.

*Please be sure to check our website for updates and new offerings of classes.*

*<http://sites.google.com/site/herculesgardening/> OR email us: [hcgsp@yahoo.com](mailto:hcgsp@yahoo.com)*

*Photos provided courtesy of Wing Lee, taken at the 2009 Harvest Festival*

# Community Coat Drive Collects Over 500 Warm Items for Bay Area Rescue Mission

On February 9, 2010, the Hercules City Council honored the participants of the 2009 One Warm Coat Drive. Several businesses and organizations contributed to the success of the program and on Tuesday, Council thanked each participant with a proclamation.

Over 500 coats, hats, scarves, gloves and other warm apparel items were collected and donated to the Bay Area Rescue Mission last month. In addition to the warm apparel, new socks and underwear were also collected. Many of the items that were donated have already been distributed to local families.

The Bay Area Rescue Mission has been caring for the poor and impoverished in West Contra Costa County for over 40 years. This is the second community coat drive Hercules has hosted to benefit the Rescue Mission.

Thank you to the following businesses and individuals for your dedication to the 2009 One Warm Coat Drive: Big Lots, Broadway Rhythm Dance Company, Dynamic City Skate Shop, Hercules Chamber of

Commerce, Hercules Fitness Center, Hercules Wellness Center, Lucky Supermarkets, Sycamore Hills By the Bay, and the Hercules Interact Club: Justine Betschart, Stacy Chan, Stephanie Chan, Davidson Chia, Randolph Decastro, Natasha Ernst, Ryan Fong, Kyle Lampley, Stephanie Ny, Gian Tabagon, Rachel Torres, and Jobel Vecino. And most importantly, thank you to the Hercules community, for your generosity and kindness. ♦



Hercules Interact Students (from left) Rachel Torres, Stacy Chan, Randolph Decastro, Stephanie Ny and Justine Betschart, at the February 9, 2010 City Council Meeting after receiving their Proclamations

## T.Y.C.'s 9th Annual Pre-Mother's Day Fashion/Talent Show

**Date:** Sunday, April 25, 2010

**Time:** 3:00pm-6:00pm

**Location:** Hercules Community Center Gym  
2001 Refugio Valley Road-Hercules, CA  
94547

**Admission:** \$5.00



Gift Boutique featuring: AVON, Kiss Of Polynesia, & fun prizes donated from Partylite Candles!

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## Hercules Chamber of Commerce Proudly Presents

### 17th Annual Awards Dinner

*Business of the Year*  
**Little Munchkins Academy**

*Citizen of the Year*  
**Carobyn Willing**

*Educator of the Year*  
**Janet Headington**

*Special Recognition*  
**Myrna de Vera**

*Youths of the Year*  
**Carla Bernal  
Tracy Chan**

**March 27, 2010**

**6pm**

**Hercules Senior Center**

**111 Civic Drive**

**\$35.00**

**For Tickets**

**Call (510) 741-7945**

**Or Email**

**Sylvia@HerculesChamber.com**



# Hercules Students Protect Their Watershed with Kids by the Bay

On a sunny day in October, fourth grade students at Hanna Ranch Elementary School took a trip around their school grounds carrying plastic tongs, note-taking sheets, and garbage bags. Before their excursion, these students were learning about how pollution can enter Refugio Creek and the San Francisco Bay through storm drains, and they were determined to do something about it. "Refugio Creek ends in the Bay, and garbage that goes into the creek could hurt animals living there," said a concerned student. The class scoured the campus and filled multiple garbage bags with plastic wrappers, drink containers, pieces of paper, and other types of garbage. They also identified four storm drains on their school campus. This project was part of an environmental education program, called Watershed Action

Program, led by KIDS for the BAY.

Since 2005, KIDS for the BAY, an environmental education non-profit organization serving elementary schools throughout the East Bay, has taught their Watershed Action Program at all three elementary schools in Hercules. Through engaging hands-on activities in the classroom and outdoors, students learn about their local creek watershed and how their neighborhoods are directly connected to the creek through the storm drain system. Participants also learn about the larger San Francisco Bay-Delta watershed and how we can collectively and individually keep our precious waterways clean and healthy. The Watershed Action Program provides students the opportunity to become stewards of and activists for their environment. Students plan

and implement a variety of projects to improve the health and beauty of local habitats, including trash clean-ups, creek restoration, and presentations to family members and school peers to educate others about watershed pollution prevention.

Sometimes, class projects have a much larger impact than the students could have imagined. In the 2007-2008 school year, students participating in the Watershed Action



Students at Ohlone Elementary tested water quality to assess the health of Ohlone and Refugio Creek.

Program at Ohlone Elementary grew concerned about the health of their local creeks. These motivated students wrote persuasive letters to city officials to remind them about the importance of the creek habitats and share their interest in helping to improve the health of their local watershed. The students' efforts were later referenced by the City of Hercules in a grant proposal package to Common Sense California, where they received \$25,000 to develop the Refugio Creek Watershed Visioning Plan. The plan includes creating creek-side trails, improving creek access, implementing restoration projects and increasing education and outreach.

Other projects that students have completed include a local tree field guide, water quality testing to assess the health of Ohlone and Refugio Creeks, and a pollution clean-up coupled with informational posters that educated

☐ *Continued on page 25*

[www.ci.hercules.ca.us](http://www.ci.hercules.ca.us) ☞ Page 24

A person is captured in mid-air, performing a skateboard trick against a light-colored brick wall. The person is wearing a light-colored t-shirt and dark pants. The skateboard is visible at the bottom of the frame.

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## ❑ *KIDS by the BAY continued from page 24*

the community about urban runoff pollution.

Ohlone Elementary School Principal Liz Lonsdale appreciated the opportunity for her students to learn about their local watershed. "I am excited about having KIDS for the BAY at Ohlone Elementary School. The Watershed Action Program makes it possible for students to become more aware of their surroundings and take ownership of their local environment. The creek is such an underutilized resource. It is in our backyard and I am glad that we are finally taking advantage of it," she said. Students are equally excited about becoming active stewards of their environment. During a recent lesson in which students built a model of the San Francisco Bay to observe how pollution can spread through the watershed, a student at Hanna Ranch Elementary remarked, "We should stop polluting the bay and start cleaning up all of the garbage. We need to make the waters fresh and clean again." Thanks to the combined efforts of the City of Hercules, the Contra Costa Clean Water Program, and KIDS for the BAY, Hercules



Students collected aquatic invertebrates on a field trip to a nearby creek. The organisms found can be indicators of the creek's health

students are turning this vision into a reality.

To learn more about KIDS for the BAY and their award-winning programs, please visit them on the web at [www.kidsforthebay.org](http://www.kidsforthebay.org). ♦

## Hercules Library Provides Programs For All

*By Hercules High School Senior Carla Bernal*

For the residents of Hercules, the Hercules Public Library serves as a haven of knowledge. Although the library is relatively new, it has quickly established itself as a vital resource for children, students, and adults through a variety of programs, events, and activities.

One of the library's most popular programs is Computer Help, which is designed to help anyone with computer related questions. It offers a helping hand and tutorials on Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft PowerPoint or Internet related issues. The Library's computer docents are available on Mondays from 1-3 p.m. and 4-9 p.m., Tuesdays from 3-6 p.m. and 6-9 p.m. and Wednesdays from 10-12:30 p.m. and 1-6 p.m.

Another popular program is the Homework Help hosted by the Hercules Middle High School's KIWINs, a local service club organized by sophomore Beilul Naizghi, that offers help with any academic based topic or subject on Mondays and Wednesday at 4-6 p.m. "I think Homework Help is a good and simple program to help students," said Naizghi. "It's a community service project that started last year, around March when our club was officially chartered," another KIWIN's volunteer, junior Myron Lam said.

In addition, the Storytime Program caters to our youngest readers. On Tuesdays at 7 p.m., there is Family

Storytime catering to children ages 3-8 yrs old, and on Thursdays at 10:15 a.m. there is Mother Goose Storytime for toddlers ages 0-3 yrs old.

The Hercules Library not only hosts programs, but events as well, such as Monday Movie Madness which continues this spring on Mondays at 3 p.m., job seekers workshops and special presentations by authors or performers, such as Yee's Martial Arts who performed for Chinese New Year on February 23.

Additionally, the Hercules Sustainable Community Garden Foundation, in cooperation with the Hercules Library, is presenting The Future of Food, a four part film series about the food we eat, the science and technologies replacing traditional agriculture systems and what people can do about this. The Power of Community: How Cuba Survived Peak Oil, a film covering Cuba's peak oil crisis and its food scarcity, will be hosted on March 13 at 2 p.m. and How to Save the World: One Man, One Cow, One Planet, a film featuring India's economy and its farmers' lives, mounting debt, and uncertain futures will be hosted on April 10 at 2 p.m.

The Hercules Library will also be hosting a Summer Reading Program that encourages kids of all ages to read over the summer, followed by a Reading Festival. Look for more details in the coming months on these programs. ♦

# Make Drowning Prevention Your #1 Priority

Drowning is the leading cause of death, disability, and injury for children under 5 years of age in California, and the second leading killer of youngsters nationwide.

The number of young, severely brain-damaged near-drowning victims has increased rapidly in recent years. Residential care of these victims averages \$220,000 annually per child, and is the leading cause of admission to state hospitals. At the time of print, there were over 600 individuals maintained in state facilities.

A drowning happens in seconds and it could happen to you! Supervision is critically important, but it's virtually impossible to supervise small children every minute of every day. That is why parents and caregivers must provide multiple layers of protection; pool fencing, self-closing, and self-locking gates, automatic sliding door closers, pool alarms, automatic safety covers, as well as constant supervision.

## Pool Facts

- A residential pool is 14 times more likely to cause a death than an automobile.
- 50% of deaths by drowning, for children ages 1-4 occur in residential pools, spas, or hot tubs.
- 65% of children were at their own home at the time of the incident.

- 46% of children were last seen safe inside the house just before the drowning.

- 72% had direct access to the pool once they were outside the house.

## Safety Guidelines

In addition to the pool safety features installed as part of the permit to construct your pool, the following guidelines will help insure child safety:

- Never leave a child alone near water to answer the phone, the doorbell, to go to the bathroom, attend to another child or attend to household chores, even for a few seconds.

- Keep a constant eye on young children playing in or near any body of water, wading pool, public pool, bathtub or lake.

- Remember that swimming lessons do not insure safety. A child who falls into the water unexpectedly may panic and forget his swimming skills.

- At large gatherings, designate an adult to watch children at play, and while in the pool.

- Fence your pool on all four sides. Move lawn chairs, tables and other potential climbing aids away from the fence to keep children out.

- Any gate or door leading to the pool area should be self-closing and self-latching, opening outward away from the pool, with the latch placed on the pool side out of reach.

- Install panic alarms on all house doors and windows leading to the pool area, automatic sliding door closers and an automatic safety cover over the pool. Completely remove the cover before children are allowed in the pool.

- Drain off water that accumulates on top of the pool cover. A child can drown in as little as two inches of water.

- Keep reaching and throwing aids, such as poles and life preservers, on both sides of the pool.

- Always have non-swimmers wear approved personal flotation devices when they are near the water.

- It is crucial that you and all of your child's caregivers can swim and know how to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) in an emergency. Immediate CPR could prevent death or massive brain damage. Contact the American Red Cross for CPR training.

For more information please call the City of Hercules building division at 510-799-8244. ♦



**HANDS OF GOLD MASSAGE**  
Specializing in Swedish & Pregnancy Massage  
Located In Face & Body Day Spa

**JANUARY SPECIAL**  
**\$35<sup>00</sup> / 1 Hour**

Hours: 9:00-7:00 Monday - Friday  
(by appointment only)  
681 Parker Ave., Rodeo/Hercules 94572  
**510-283-8547 Call Cheryl**

*Gift Certificates are available.*

# Hercules Serious Crimes Reduced in 2009

The City of Hercules enjoyed a second year of reduced serious crime in 2009, as the “Part 1” crime totals were reduced by an impressive 13% for the year. This follows the success of 2008, when the Part 1 crime level showed a modest reduction over the previous year.

The California Department of Justice identifies Part 1 offenses as criminal homicide, forcible rape, robbery, assault, burglary, larceny (theft), and motor vehicle theft. The increase or decrease in these crimes on a yearly basis is one method of determining the success of a police department at combating criminal activity.

The Crime Statistics chart shows the totals for each type of crime for the past eight years. Hercules had a total of 547 Part 1 crimes in 2009. In 2008, there were 627 Part 1 crimes recorded and the previous low was in 2006, when there were 627 Part 1 offenses. There were 851 serious crimes reported

in 2004, 741 in 2005, and 633 in 2007.

The Hercules Police Department remains committed to providing the best service to the community to continue this downward trend. The ongoing partnership between the police and the public is the key to success. If you see something unusual or suspicious, do not hesitate to contact the police. Stopping a crime before it occurs, or identifying and apprehending the responsible suspects, are important facets of crime prevention in the City. Working together, we can continue to “crime proof” Hercules in 2010! ♦

CRIME STATISTICS 2004 - 2009						
PART ONE CRIME	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
MURDER	1	0	0	0	0	2
RAPE	0	2	1	5	4	2
ROBBERY	7	25	20	24	30	15
ASSAULT	127	113	96	109	136	106
BURGLARY	194	113	80	129	138	127
LARCENY	350	332	327	267	219	220
AUTO THEFT	172	156	103	95	100	75
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>851</b>	<b>741</b>	<b>627</b>	<b>633</b>	<b>627</b>	<b>547</b>

## Get Free Income Tax Help In West County

Last year, 47,000 Bay Area families filed tax returns through the Earn It! Keep It! Save It! Contra Costa’s free income tax assistance program. They avoided hundreds of dollars in tax preparation fees and “rapid refund” loans, and you can too!

Through the Earn It! Keep It! Save It! Contra Costa campaign, IRS-certified tax preparers can help you get the return you deserve. Some taxpayers may also qualify for certain benefits like the Earned Income Tax Credit, which could mean a refund of up to \$5,657.

Our tax preparers can file your taxes electronically, so you can get your refund in about a week. There are 9 free tax sites in West Contra Costa County not far from Hercules, shown below.

This free service is sponsored by the Family Economic Security Partnership (FESP) and run by the Community Housing Development Corporation. For more information, and to find out what documents to bring, dial 2-1-1 or visit [www.earnitkeepitsaveit.org](http://www.earnitkeepitsaveit.org).

**New Horizons Career Ctr**  
199 Parker Ave, Rodeo  
(510) 799-2916

**Lao Family Community Dev**  
1865 Rumrill Blvd, San Pablo  
(510) 533-8850

**Brighter Beginnings**  
2727 Macdonald Ave, Richmond  
(510) 903-7529

**Contra Costa College/GRIP**  
2600 Mission Bell Dr, San Pablo  
(510) 233-2141 x308

**West Contra Costa First 5**  
2702 Dover Ave, San Pablo  
(510) 232-5650

**CHDC**  
1555 Third St, Richmond  
(510) 412-9290 x26

**EBW One Stop Career Ctr**  
2300 El Portal Dr, San Pablo  
(510) 799-5465

**Barrett Terrace**  
700 Barrett Ave, Richmond  
(510) 237-1605

**Rubicon Programs**  
101 Broadway, Richmond  
(510) 412-1722

# Swiss Police Officer Interns with Hercules PD

With 5,830 miles to fly and a temperature change of close to thirty degrees, Swiss Police Officer Daniel Bühlmann boarded a flight bound for the San Francisco Bay Area. More specifically, Daniel was heading for the Dynamic City on the Bay known as Hercules.

Daniel arrived on October 1, 2009 to begin a three week internship hosted by our own Hercules Police Department. He was the third intern from Switzerland to take advantage of this great opportunity. Daniel took a leave of absence from his Police Department in the County of Bern to research the way police officers work in the United States. When he arrived he was partnered with Detective Alex Abetkov who immediately breathed a sigh of relief once he heard how well Daniel spoke English.

Over the following three weeks, "Danny Swiss" learned as much as he could about American police officers and really made a lot of friends. He went on ride-alongs with

both Hercules PD and the Richmond Police Department, worked closely with Detective Abetkov during some of his investigations, enjoyed a day at the gun range, trained with the Special Response Team, toured San Quentin State Prison, worked with the School Resource Officers at Hercules Middle High School and much more. Daniel also had the honor of attending a memorial service for fallen Richmond Police Officer Brad Moody who was killed in the line of duty on October 7, 2008.



Swiss Police Officer Daniel Bühlmann

When it came time for Daniel to leave it was very obvious that he would be missed. His outstanding character and all around good nature made him an instant family member within the Hercules Police Department. He has extended the invitation to any one of the Officers at HPD to come and intern in the County of Bern. Maybe if we are lucky this will turn into an exchange program. During the summer of course! ♦



**Free Event!**

**Earth Day Festival**  
**Saturday, April 17, 2010**  
**11:00 am – 3:00 pm**

West County Recycling Center  
101 Pittsburg Avenue, Richmond  
(off the Richmond Parkway)

**Music Food Games Arts & Crafts**

**More information: (510)-215-3021 or [www.RecycleMore.com](http://www.RecycleMore.com)**



# Attention Seniors (60+) and Disabled Persons

*Are you wondering how to get your old TV or computer recycled?*

*Do you no longer need that old paint or garden pesticides?*

If you are a Senior (60+) or are disabled and can not drive to our permanent facility, you can call 1-888-412-9277 for free door-to-door collection of your old electronics, paint and other unwanted household hazardous waste.

The West Contra Costa County Household Hazardous Waste Collection Program is available to residents in Hercules, Pinole, El Cerrito, San Pablo, Richmond, and El Sobrante. Residents must call 1-888-412-9277 to make an appointment. Common materials that are accepted in this program are electronics, paints, pool/photo chemicals, motor oil & filters, fluorescent bulbs & tubes, batteries (all types), mercury thermometers, and sharps (needles, syringes, lancets) and more.

Many of these wastes contain heavy metals, such as mercury and lead and can contaminate our water supply if disposed of improperly. Do not flush unwanted or old medicines down the toilet or sink because they may contain persistent chemicals that cannot be removed at the water treatment facilities. The Permanent Household Hazardous Waste Facility in Richmond also accepts pharmaceuticals.

The Permanent Household Hazardous Waste Facility is open to all West County residents on Thursdays, Fridays and the first Saturday of the month from 9-4pm (closed from 12-12:30pm). The facility is located in North Richmond at 101 Pittsburg Avenue, a block off the Richmond Parkway. Visit [www.RecycleMore.com](http://www.RecycleMore.com) for more answers to your environmental questions. ♦



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Let Us Handle All of Your Real Estate & Home Finance Needs & We Guarantee To Provide You with the Best Customer Service You'll Ever Experience... It's That Simple!

# Park Safely in Hercules-Curb Your Wheels



Turning your wheels into the curb, even when the street is only slightly sloped, can prevent your vehicle from becoming a run away

The City of Hercules is filled with attractive streets and elevations ranging from level roadways to steep grades with beautiful sweeping views of the Bay and surrounding areas. The Police Officers and Parking Enforcement personnel who patrol the city take community safety seriously, and one of the violations that they are on alert for is vehicles parked on a grade without the front wheels turned to the curb.

According to California Vehicle Code section 22509, “no person driving, or in control of, or in charge of, a motor vehicle shall permit it to stand on any highway unattended when upon any grade exceeding 3 percent within any business or residence district without blocking the wheels of the vehicle by turning them against the curb or by other means.” An example of a “3 percent grade” would be a roadway that increases or decreases grade approximately 3-feet over a 100-foot section of the road. This law was enacted to avoid run-away vehicles, which can rapidly increase speed even on a modest grade, potentially causing death, serious injury, or extensive property damage.

When parking on a hill, there are specific methods of reducing the chance your vehicle will become a hazard. When parking downhill, turn the wheels as far as they will go towards the curb before you turn the ignition off. In cars equipped with automatic transmissions, place your shifter into the park position. In cars equipped with manual transmissions, place your gear selector into the reverse gear. Then, engage your emergency brake.

When parking uphill, turn the wheels as far as they will go away from the curb. Let your vehicle roll back until your front wheel touches the curb. This distance should be no more than a few inches. If you are driving a vehicle with an automatic transmission, place your shifter into the park position. If you are driving a vehicle with a manual transmission, place your gear selector into 1st gear and engage your emergency brake.

If you park on a hill with no curb, you must position your car in such a way that it will roll away from the center of the street if the brakes fail or it is moved. The same is true for parking in steep driveways.

Whether your vehicle is facing downhill or uphill, in case of the emergency brake failing or an unexpected collision, your vehicle will roll and stop at the curb. This will minimize the damage to your vehicle and the danger to anyone else involved.

Curbing your wheels not only provides personal safety, but it increases the safety for anyone in the community who may be impacted by your vehicle if it rolls from a parked position. It is also a wise financial move – Police and Parking Enforcement Officers are actively issuing citations for this violation, which carries a fine of \$35 plus court fees for conviction.

The Hercules Police Department and the citizens of Hercules, thank you for remembering to park safely and to properly curb your wheels when parking on an uphill or downhill grade. ♦

## **CITY OF HERCULES** **TEEN/YOUTH COUNCIL** **4TH ANNUAL** **SPRING EGG HUNT**



**DATE:** Saturday, March 27, 2010  
**LOCATION:** Hercules Senior Center  
111 Civic Drive  
Hercules, CA 94547

**TIME:** 9:30am—12:30pm  
**FEE:** \$5.00 Residents per child  
\$7.00 Non-Residents per child

For more information, please call (510) 799-8289

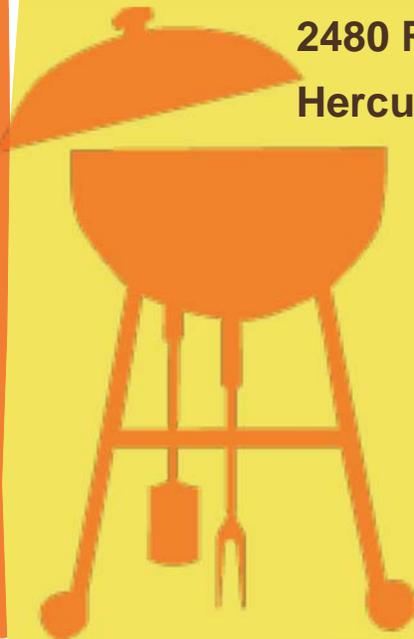
Hanna Ranch Elementary School



# Family Fun Carnival

Saturday - May 8, 2010

12pm - 4pm



2480 Refugio Valley Rd  
Hercules, CA 94547

*Come on down  
and enjoy the day!*

- Food
- Music
- Games
- Silent Auction
- Snowcones

Proceeds benefit  
Hanna Ranch PTA



Go Cougars!

# Reduce The Springtime Sting of Yellowjackets

*By Nola Woods, Community Affairs Representative  
Contra Costa Mosquito & Vector Control District*

Have you ever been stung by a yellowjacket? If you have, no doubt you remember it because unlike a bee that stings once, the yellowjacket can sting multiple times. Because yellowjackets can swarm and sting repeatedly, the Contra Costa Mosquito & Vector Control District offers a free service for yellowjackets in keeping with the District's mission to protect public health.

In Contra Costa County, there are four types of yellowjackets – two that nest above ground and two that nest below ground. The District's free service is for the ground-nesting yellowjackets in particular. "We only treat ground-nesting yellowjackets because we are not licensed to provide service in or to structural buildings and homes and that's where the above-ground yellowjackets tend to nest," says Contra Costa Mosquito & Vector Control Supervisor Sheila Currier.

Ground-nesting yellowjackets most commonly appear as the weather warms in spring, building their nests in abandoned rodent holes, railroad ties or in soil cavities underground. The queen begins the building process, laying eggs through the spring and summer to produce the colony. The colony members then chew wood from fences or structures into a paper-like pulp in order to expand the nest. There can be as many as 5,000 yellowjackets in a colony!

Yellowjackets do eat smaller pest insects, so they can provide natural insect reduction in many landscapes. Because they can also do incidental pollination through this process, yellowjackets can be viewed as beneficial to some extent. However, their principal source of food in the spring and early summer is meat to provide protein to the growing colony. That preference changes to fruit, soda and garbage in late summer as the colony's dietary needs turn to sugar. That's why these insects have gained a reputation for ruining countless picnics.

Once yellowjackets make their presence known, the next step for homeowners is to identify the insects' nest. One way is by spotting them as they enter or exit the nest in search of food. Yellowjackets will exit at dawn returning to the nest repeatedly during the day until their final return at dusk to stay in the nest overnight. More often than not though, folks tend to find nests by accident – usually disturbing them while doing yard work.

Now that the nest has been located, marking it by placing a garden tool, hose or any clearly visible object at the

location and drawing a simple map describing the location will assist the district with finding the nest when they arrive. After you've identified the nest, contact the District at [www.ContraCostaMosquito.com](http://www.ContraCostaMosquito.com) or dial 925-771-6184. A District employee typically responds to the call within one business day. A state-certified employee will then visit the location and treat the nest with a plant-based powder insecticide that should be left alone for one day to make sure any yellowjackets that have exited the nest have had time to return and be exposed to the treatment. Twenty four hours after the treatment, the homeowner will be instructed to cover the nest with dirt and tamp it down to ensure the nest is not used by another colony.

In cases where homeowners experience yellowjackets, but cannot find a nest, it is possible the insects are only foraging for food at the location and not setting up residence. These simple steps can reduce the risk of yellowjackets near your home:

- Keep garbage cans covered with tight-fitting lids to prohibit the insects' access.
- Pick up fallen fruit that will attract yellowjackets late in the summer.
- About 15 minutes prior to a picnic or outdoor barbeque, place a plate with samples of everything on the menu in the furthest corner of the yard to attract the yellowjackets away from the picnic. They will typically stay very loyal to the plate and leave the cook-out alone.

If yellowjackets have been a persistent problem, pheromone-baited traps purchased from hardware or home improvement stores can be installed following the last hard freeze of winter. The purpose is to capture the queen to minimize the establishment of new colonies in the area. The trap should be located in the furthest location from the house because it will attract yellowjackets. It should also be checked regularly to maintain effectiveness.

The bottom line is yellowjackets are looking for the same thing we are – food and shelter. And while they can be beneficial in some situations, if they have taken up residence on your property, they can pose a potential health hazard. Simple steps can reduce the risk of yellowjackets on your property. For homeowners that find a nest on their property, contact the Contra Costa Mosquito & Vector Control District for free inspection and service. ♦

# BIKE THE BRIDGES *for* SPECIAL OLYMPICS

<http://bikethebridges.kintera.org>

## 25 and 50 mile cycling event

hosted by El Cerrito PD, Hercules PD, Martinez PD, and Benicia PD

A family-friendly bicycle challenge ride to benefit Special Olympics. Starting and finishing at Waterfront Park, Martinez, the course will consist of two 25 mile loops that will take riders across scenic Carquinez Bridge and the new Benicia Bridge. A support “sag” vehicle will be mobile along the route to assist, support, and encourage cyclists. “Re-fueling” stations along the course will also be available.

- ✓ \$40/rider registration fee includes post-ride lunch. Register at <http://bikethebridges.kintera.org>
- ✓ Reach the \$150 fundraising goal and earn a commemorative challenge coin
- ✓ Reach the \$250 fundraising goal and earn a challenge coin *and* jersey

**8:30am check-in, 9:30am ride! You must wear a helmet!**



# Sunday, June 6, 2010

Sgt. Shawn Maples (510)215-4414 #26  
Cpl. Ian Baisas (510)799-8260

[smaples@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us](mailto:smaples@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us)  
[ibaisas@ci.hercules.ca.us](mailto:ibaisas@ci.hercules.ca.us)

# THE HERCULEAN

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### 2. UPCOMING ARTICLE SUBMITTAL DUE DATES:

- Summer** Friday, May 28, 2010 (July publication)
- Fall** Friday, September 24, 2010 (November publication)
- Spring** Friday, January 21, 2011 (March publication)

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\* Hercules Community Non-Profit organizations recognized by the Hercules Community/Library Services Commission will receive a FREE one page ad per calendar year. Increased rates effective July 1, 2009.

### 4. METHOD OF PAYMENTS:

- Check or money order (please make payable to the City of Hercules)
- Master Card or Visa (credit card payments must be made in person at City Hall ). As of 7/25/07, per City Council Resolution No. 07-116, processing of credit card payments will include an additional \$2.00 per \$100 or increment thereof.

### 5. MAIL PAYMENT AND AD TO:

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111 Civic Drive  
Hercules, CA 94547  
Attention: Herculean Advertising  
Phone: (510) 245-6533 Fax: (510) 799-2521

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DATE AD RECEIVED

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TITLE

# University of the Philippines Concert Chorus is coming to Hercules/Vallejo area!

A Day to Remember!



Known as the Singing Ambassadors of the Philippines, the University of the Philippines Concert Chorus (UPCC) is once again coming to town to serenade us with their music. Their lively

costumes and vast repertoire which includes various Broadway musicals, classical operas, Filipino songs and contemporary pop and rock songs is guaranteed to entertain all ages.

This event is being sponsored by the Philippine Cultural and Historical Association (PCHA) and the Fil-Ams of Hercules, jointly with other groups from Vallejo.



Date: Sunday, April 18, 2010 at 5:00 p.m.  
Place: Hogan High School, Vallejo CA



Tickets: \$20 per person

For more information and ticket purchase, please contact:

Phone: 510-685-1182

Email: [hercules\\_pcha@yahoo.com](mailto:hercules_pcha@yahoo.com)



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