

# Healthy Alternatives to Violent Environments (HAVEN): Annual Walk For Survivors: In Their Shoes

By **Tom Portwood**

HAVEN is a catalyst for individual empowerment and societal change: advocating for those impacted by domestic violence, sexual assault, or human trafficking and working to end gender-based violence.

HAVEN, one of the most well-respected and venerable nonprofits in Stanislaus County, will again be welcoming the community to its traditional fundraiser – **Walk for Survivors: In Their Shoes** on Saturday, April 11<sup>th</sup> at 9 am, with [registration](#) starting at 9:30 am in front of Greens on 10<sup>th</sup> Street. Everyone in the area who wants “to celebrate the survivors in their lives,” as Executive Director May Rico said, is warmly



encouraged to join in the fun that day, which, of course, also supports the important work that HAVEN does every day.

With roots dating back to 1977, HAVEN has a long history and a strong philosophical commitment to adapting to the needs of our community. It has also always provided a wide array of services that are available to everyone experiencing domestic violence, sexual abuse, or human trafficking, including programs for both adults and children. As always, funding adequate to the great needs in the community for HAVEN’s services is an ongoing challenge for the agency. In a recent interview, May Rico shared her thoughts about this challenge and other issues related to HAVEN’s mission and work, which are so essential for our community and our society.

**Tom Portwood:** During the pandemic,

there was a lot of additional funding for agencies like HAVEN, but that has since disappeared. Please describe some of the challenges that have resulted from that loss of funding, and how the agency has responded.

**May Rico:** In the face of shrinking resources – which always means shrinking staff - we are just trying to meet demand and provide services as best we can. But, faced with all those cutbacks, we have had some growth. In our school-based program, we are very pleased to be serving an increasing number of schools and children through those collaborations. We also saw an increased number of our human trafficking services provided to victims of labor trafficking, which is really important. We’ve been trying to increase visibility that our human trafficking services are not solely sex trafficking but also labor trafficking (such as the exploitation of immigrants, or wage theft).

And this year, with some new partners, we were able to add back some legal advocates so we’re starting to do more around restraining orders than we had for a while.

We also have some additional funds for our housing program, which has been able to grow back a bit, so we’re able now to provide more services than we were over the last couple of years.

With the current federal administration there has been a lot of uncertainty. For example, there is a three-year grant program that concluded in September, and we still



don’t know whether our renewal application for that program will be funded. Something

else that has changed are the conditions that have been put on funding. Before some of the very, very strict rules were put around non-discrimination and making sure you were providing services in an inclusive fashion, and trying to reach the most vulnerable in the community that might not be seeing you as a community resource because of an

impression they’ve experienced. That was very much supported by federal funders in the past and now it’s the opposite. So, this creates a lot of uncertainty about what the focus for federal funding will be.

**Tom Portwood:** Why do you think our society is so hesitant to listen to the survivors of domestic violence or sexual abuse?

**May Rico:** Sexual abuse is endemic in our culture. It is a part of who we are as a society and people don’t always like to acknowledge that because you’d like to think this is something that doesn’t happen except by individual perpetrators. But we have a society that repeatedly creates situations where people are sexually abused, and, at the same time, folks are saying that that shouldn’t be a part of who we are. It is horrible when these happen. There’s a reluctance to believe that someone we like could do this horrible thing so instead of believing the victim, we automatically say ‘she’s got to be lying.’ So long as we refuse to acknowledge that sexual abuse is endemic in our culture, so long as we refuse to acknowledge that for very long periods

people who are in power and are liked and are respected have also been able to abuse others and get away with it, so long as we aren’t able to acknowledge that that has happened and continues to happen than we are never going to have a safe environment for victims to come forward and tell their stories. We promise people justice as a culture, as a society. We promise people that if something happens to you that shouldn’t have happened and you come forward, we

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## IN MEMORIAM



**JESSE LOUIS JACKSON**

October 8, 1941 –  
 February 17, 2026

Civil Rights Leader

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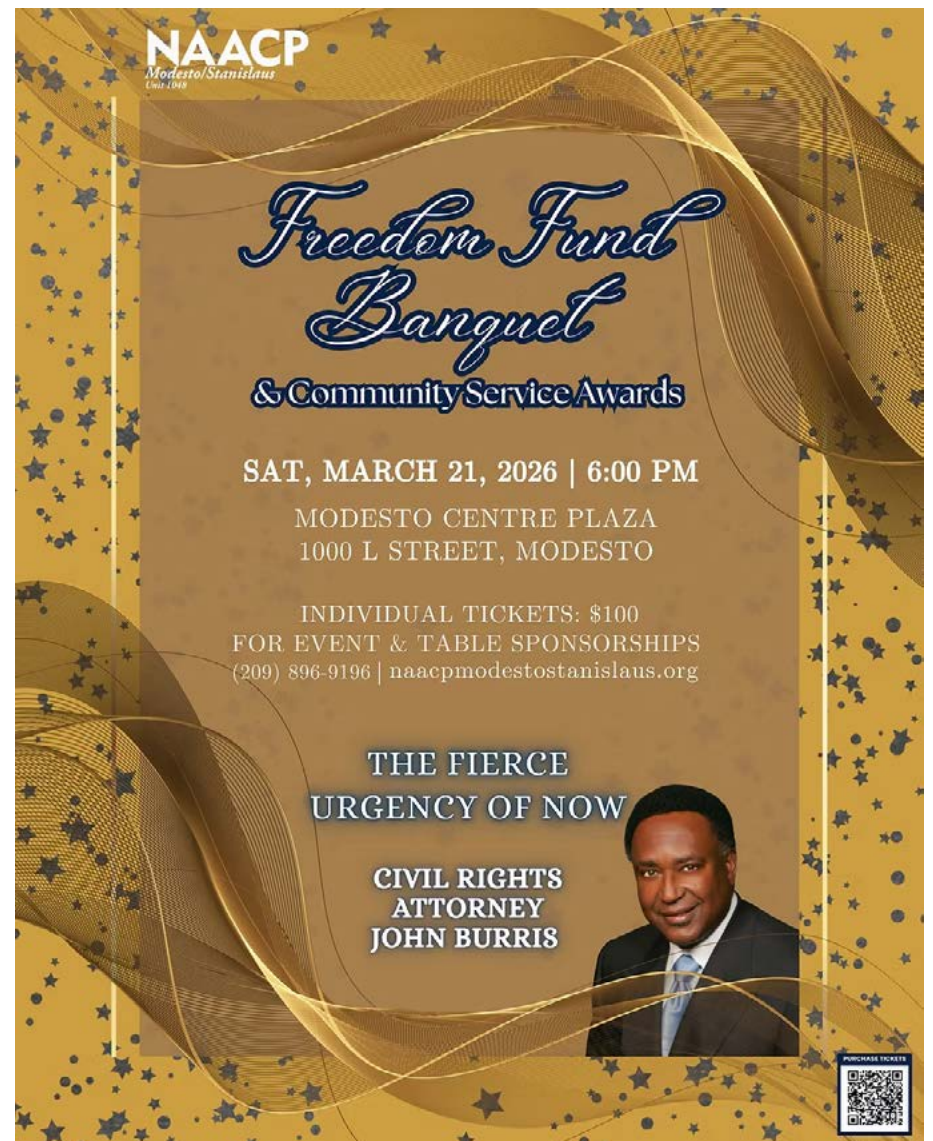
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MARCH 29, 2026 | 5:00 PM  
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## Kruse Lucas Showcases New Artist

Kruse Lucas Art Gallery welcomes **Chella**, a well-known regional artist. Known for her Plein Air, painting on location, and scenes of our agricultural Central Valley, she is a retired art educator who continues to conduct critique sessions in her rural studio. Her work will be on exhibit in March, April, and May. Meet the artist, Chella, each Thursday at 2:00 pm as she discusses her work and answers questions. Contact her at [cgonsalv@ix.netcom.com](mailto:cgonsalv@ix.netcom.com). The gallery is located at 525 Tully Road, Modesto, and is open Monday - Thursday 7 am – 6 pm, except holidays.

NAACP  
Modesto/Stanislaus  
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Banquet*  
& Community Service Awards

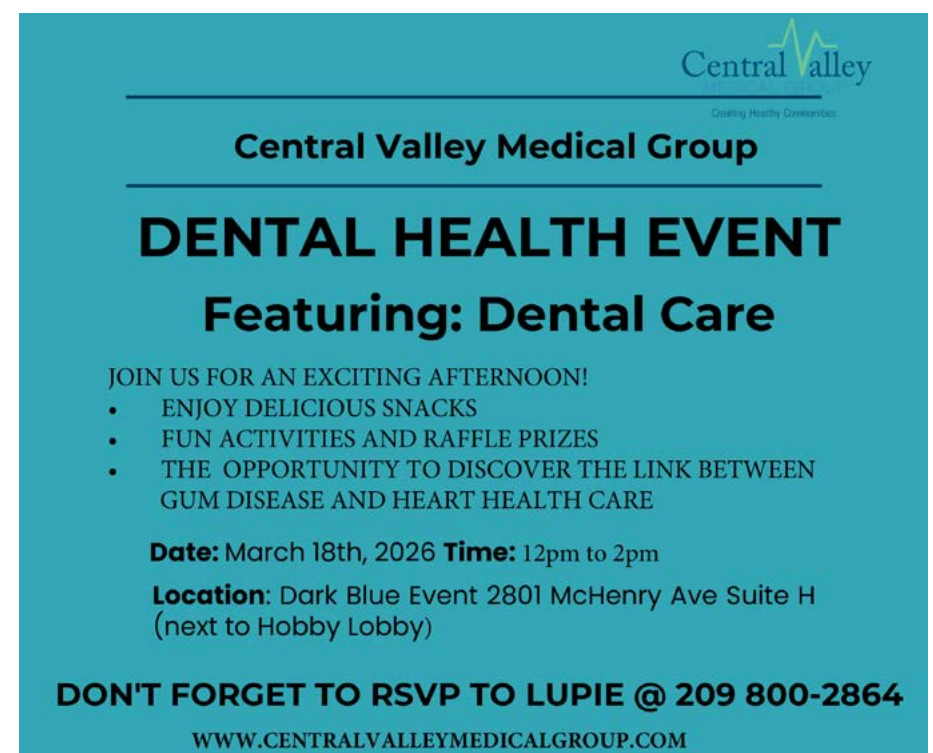
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MODESTO CENTRE PLAZA  
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INDIVIDUAL TICKETS: \$100  
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Creating Healthy Communities

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**Date:** March 18th, 2026 **Time:** 12pm to 2pm  
**Location:** Dark Blue Event 2801 McHenry Ave Suite H  
(next to Hobby Lobby)

**DON'T FORGET TO RSVP TO LUPIE @ 209 800-2864**  
[WWW.CENTRALVALLEYMEDICALGROUP.COM](http://WWW.CENTRALVALLEYMEDICALGROUP.COM)

## Celebrating the Winners of the 38th Annual Create Change: Peace Essay, Poetry & Art Contest

We are thrilled to announce the revitalization of this storied contest, sponsored by the Modesto Peace/Life Center. Originally launched in 1986, the contest took a hiatus due to the pandemic but is now back for the 2025-26 season—bigger and better than ever! This revival is thanks to many generous sponsors, including Bookish, StArt—bringing art into classrooms throughout Stanislaus County, Modesto Artist's Movement, Stanislaus Humanists, Dittos Printing, Mitchell Dill Music, Queen Bean Coffee, Creativity & Community, live music - Us4LoveMusic, singer-songwriter Weston Perry, William Harris Photography, with more partnerships in development!

THANK YOU to our individual sponsors! John & Lynn Lucas, Elaine Gorman, Paul Favour, Jerry Jackman & Sandy Wilson, Daniel & Anita Bruce, Jane Manley & Ricardo Cordova, Bill & Cathie Peck, Carl W. Collins, Bill Cox, Rachel Gately, Dan

& Mary Alice Onorato, David Rockwell & Nancy Smith, Mary Menz, John Bryon and others.

Create Change is open to all Stanislaus County students in grades 5 through 12. Bookish is excited to host a reception celebrating this year's winners in essay, poetry, and fine art. The theme for this year's contest centered around social media and non-violence. We look forward to honoring these young talents, along with their families, teachers, schools, sponsors, and judges.

We are also honored to have Modesto's Poet Laureate, Angela Drew, share her insights with us. Ms. Drew's poetic storytelling breathes life into words, fostering deeper understanding of ourselves and each other.

**Join us on March 5th, 2026**  
**Time: 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM**  
**Location: Bookish in Roseburg Square**  
**811 W. Roseburg Avenue**  
**Modesto, CA**

We are eager to share this special evening with you! Your presence and support are important to our young artists and contribute greatly to enriching our creative community and the larger Stanislaus County area.

### Evening Highlights Include:

- **Special Guest Speaker:** Angela Drew, City of Modesto Poet Laureate
- **Showcase:** Winners will display their art and read their works
- **Community Connections:** Engage with aspiring artists and writers, teachers, families, and patrons—we have so much in common!

Light refreshments will be available. For more information, contact Chris Davidson at 415-572-4572.

We can't wait to see you there!

## Become a Create Change Contest Partner!

This isn't just an event; it's a dynamic, year-long celebration of creativity that ignites creativity in primary and secondary students throughout Stanislaus County.

The groundwork begins in March, as college freshmen and sophomores delve into crafting thought-provoking topics for our young contestants to explore!

Throughout spring and summer, we connect students and teachers with an array of engaging activities! Writing and art workshops, pop-up writing nights, and poetry slams are waiting for our nascent creatives. All these activities are designed to hone artistic and linguistic talents in our kids while bringing together aspiring creatives, fostering a vibrant community.

In the fall, we launch the contest to students in 5th – 12th grades in both public and private schools, as well as kids' clubs throughout the county. By the end of January, judges are organized to assess the entries in the categories of essay, poetry, art, and music. Once judging is complete a reception is organized for the winners. Peppered throughout are fundraising activities.

Behind the scenes, our dedicated team is tirelessly forging connections across the county through various activities that range from linking students with valuable community service opportunities to building essential peace partnerships.

YOU are invited to join our mission! We are in search of passionate individuals ready to lend their skills—whether it's technical support, social media savvy, research expertise, fundraising prowess, or just good old-fashioned enthusiasm! We welcome all whether you're a seasoned pro or just starting out, your contribution—be it as a savvy cold caller or a vibrant social butterfly—is essential in bringing our vision to life from the foundation of the Peace Center's 50-year tradition and core values of non-violent conflict resolution democracy and peace.

Together, let's super charge the Create Change Essay & Art contest and make it a beacon of positive creativity that resonates throughout our community!

Contact Chris Davidson, 415.572.4572 or [cdavidsonconsulting@yahoo.com](mailto:cdavidsonconsulting@yahoo.com) for more details. Remember, no amount of time is too little and no skill is too small!



## Award Ceremony

Celebrate the Winners of the 38th Annual Create Change: Peace Essay, Poetry & Art Contest

Join us on March 5th, 2026  
6:30 PM - 8:30 PM  
at Bookish in Roseburg Square  
Modesto, CA

Share this special evening with us! Your presence and support are important to our young artists and enrich our creative community and the larger Stanislaus County area.

Evening Highlights Include:

- *Special Guest Speaker: Angela Drew, City of Modesto Poet Laureate*
- *Showcase: Winners will display their art and read their works*
- *Community Connections: Engage with aspiring artists and writers, teachers, families, and patrons—we have so much in common!*

Light refreshments

# Grito de Mujer Grito de Mujer Decries Violence Against Women, March 17-21, 2026

By Linda Scheller

Grito de Mujer /Women Scream/Cri de Femme is a global movement that honors women's lives, strengthens self-esteem, and raises awareness about all forms of violence affecting women and girls. Since 2011, the annual Grito de Mujer International Festival has been celebrated with poetry, art, music, and information presented in workshops, public forums and events, classrooms, and community partnerships in order to give women voice, honor their resilience, and speak out against violence. Grito de Mujer is part of the UN Women's Generation Equality initiatives and the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM-OAS) with the goal of promoting knowledge, hope, and justice through art and words against violence toward women and girls. <https://www.gritodemujer.com/>

Local poet Vielka Solano joined Grito de Mujer as an ambassador in 2012. Initially, she facilitated poetry readings and events in Manhattan, Philadelphia, Sacramento, Fresno, UC Davis, and San Francisco but now concentrates on the Modesto area, providing a greater number and variety of projects to reach different communities here. "Women's voices are amplified when we work together," says Solano. "For one month every year the whole world—Africa, Australia, South America, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, Mexico, Canada—get together with music, art, and poetry to scream against violence toward women. Together we feel more powerful and more positive in our battle against domestic violence."

"Without Borders," the theme of Grito de Mujer 2026,

focuses attention on the high degree of violence experienced by migrant and immigrant women and girls. According to the World Health Organization and UN Women, nearly one in three women globally, or an estimated 840 million women, experience physical or sexual violence at least once during their lifetime. Migrant and immigrant women and girls are particularly vulnerable to gender-based violence. They are far more likely to be victims of assault, exploitation, trafficking, and sexual violence due to the perilous conditions they face, economic insecurity, language barriers, and lack of legal recourse.

From March 17-21, Grito de Mujer volunteers from Modesto, Newman, Fresno, Los Angeles, and Mexico will lead workshops, deliver presentations, and coordinate with Stanislaus County nonprofits and organizations committed to the welfare of women and girls, especially in immigrant and migrant communities. Most of the Modesto area events will be presented in both Spanish and English in order to reach more participants, and Grito volunteers will provide bilingual assistance in workshops and classroom writing activities. Vielka Solano, visiting artists, and the other poets will present information and facilitate discussions to deepen participants' understanding of the scope and effects of gender-based violence. Some events will enable survivors of sexual assault and violence to express themselves through art, words, and activities that promote healing.

**ACTION:** Join the cry against violence toward women and girls! Grito de Mujer features two free bilingual poetry readings open to the public. On Tuesday, March 17<sup>th</sup> at

6:30 p.m., there will be a poetry reading at Bookish, 811 W. Roseburg Avenue in Modesto. MJC will host a poetry reading on Thursday, March 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. in Forum 101 on the East Campus. At both readings, there will be an open mic, time permitting, so please feel free to bring a poem about violence against women and girls, resilience, immigration, connection, migration, or finding a path.



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will put it right as best we can. But most sexual abuse survivors who go through the system will tell you that's not the case.

**Tom Portwood:** How can people change the dynamic related to sexual abuse in this society? What would you ask them to do?

**May Rico:** What I would ask people to do is this - if they find themselves part of this conversation and if they hear people around them telling them 'oh, they've got to be lying' or 'that person could never do that sort of thing' is to instead of just dismissing it, investigate it. We need to hold our leaders accountable to a deep and fair investigation. Hold people accountable when we find they've done wrong.

**Tom Portwood:** You have been with HAVEN for many years. Please describe a shift in the field you've noticed over that time.

**May Rico:** There have been many shifts and improvements in our field over the years that HAVEN has mirrored or tried to mirror. I think the biggest one is acknowledging that survivors of all genders need to be served. Two things can be true at the same time: (1) The overwhelming majority of victims of sexual abuse and domestic abuse are women, and violence against women is part of a cultural and societal

fabric built around who has power, but at the same time, it's also true that: (2) all genders experience violence. If you are transgender nonbinary, you might experience violence at an even higher rate than folks who are cisgender. Regardless, survivors come in all genders, and we should provide services to all victims regardless of their gender, whether they're male victims or nonbinary or are in same-sex relationships.

**Tom Portwood:** What would you like to say to any survivors who may read this article?

**May Rico:** HAVEN IS HERE FOR YOU. We don't ask about immigration status. We serve all genders. Services are not dependent on gender or gender expression or immigration status. With the exception of some mandated reporting exceptions, we do not share personal information with law enforcement, government agencies, or anyone else. We always want people to feel comfortable and confident in the conversations they have with us and to have control over their own information.

Visit <https://www.havenstan.org/>. Call the HAVEN office at (209) 524-4331 (Monday-Friday, 8:30 am - 4:30 pm). Or call HAVEN's 24-hour crisis line at: (209) 577-5980. Toll-free 1-888-45HAVEN.

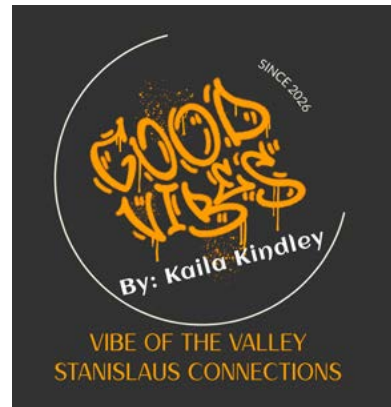


# Music, Art, Murals, and Theatre: That's the Modesto Charm

By Kaila D'Sa

I have called Modesto home for the past decade, and in that time, I have watched something remarkable unfold. What was once a quiet Central Valley city has evolved into a vibrant hub of music, murals, theatre, and civic creativity. The growth has not been accidental. It has been intentional, community-driven, and deeply rooted in local pride.

Take downtown, for example. The once-at-risk **Queen Bean Coffee House** has transformed into one of the city's most beloved gathering spaces. Instead of fading into memory, it reinvented itself and became a symbol of



resilience. Around the corner, **the State Theatre** continues to anchor downtown culture. Whether you are attending a film screening, a live show, or stepping out during intermission to feel the evening air, the energy is undeniable.

Even the **Children's Museum** has embraced renewal, unveiling a refreshed and colorful façade that signals growth and imagination. Meanwhile, continued improvements near the lawn of the **Gallo Center for the Arts** reflect an investment in gathering spaces where families, students, and artists intersect.

Let's talk about coffee culture. While longtime favorite Presentations Coffee has closed its doors, downtown has not skipped a beat. From Five Points to Ninth Street, excellent coffee remains within walking distance. And yes, a new café is stepping into the space left behind — a reminder that in Modesto, endings often become beginnings. (A review will certainly follow.)

In the world of college towns, few engines of cultural momentum are as powerful as their campuses. **Modesto Junior College** continues to raise the bar with its spring theatre season and upcoming Directors Showcase. Professor



Lynette Borelli-Glidewell will direct *Cabaret*, while Professor Lindsay Bryan hosts emerging student directors in a showcase that highlights the next generation of creative leadership. Productions like these do more than entertain — they train storytellers, cultivate discipline, and strengthen the artistic backbone of our community.

Modesto has long been known for the **Graffiti Summer** tradition and its classic car heritage. Yet for years, our walls remained comparatively blank. Enter Mural Alley — a bold and necessary step toward embracing large-scale public art. Murals do more than decorate. They communicate. They tell residents and visitors alike who we are. They declare that creativity lives here. Civic art and sculpture give texture to identity. They transform ordinary streets into storytelling corridors. In a city of just over 200,000 people, culture matters. Every note, every brushstroke, every spotlight counts.

Modesto has its own rhythm. We are not the relentless hustle of the Bay Area. We are something steadier — a place to regroup, plan, and launch. Entrepreneurs build here. Families settle here. Artists refine their craft here. We are relaxed but not idle. Calm but not stagnant. In many ways, Modesto is the Valley's reset button — where vision becomes strategy and strategy becomes execution.

Public transportation is joining the movement as well. **Stanislaus Regional Transit Authority** is forming an Art




in Transit Committee to introduce creativity and color to bus stops along S routes. This initiative blends infrastructure with imagination, proving that even daily commutes can become artistic experiences. The collaboration between transit leaders, businesses, and artists signals a forward-thinking approach to civic pride.

**Community radio** also plays a vital role in the resurgence of what many now call the "New Modesto." **The Modesto Peace/Life Center**, along with **KCBP Community Radio 95.5 FM** (also streaming at [www.kcbpradio.org](http://www.kcbpradio.org)), provides a platform where musicians, podcasters, and activists find their voices. It is grassroots expression at its finest — creative freedom balanced with community awareness. Programs like *Melodic Thoughts* and *In the Mix Lounge* amplify local talent while keeping listeners informed and connected.

What makes Modesto charming is not just one venue, mural, or broadcast. It is the ecosystem — the collaboration between coffee shops, campuses, theatres, public agencies, and independent creators. Growth here is not flashy; it is foundational. It is built on people who believe that art belongs in everyday life.

Ten years in, I can say this with confidence: Modesto is not simply growing. It is defining itself. Music fills the rooms. Murals color the walls. Theatres light up the night. And together, they compose the unmistakable charm of Modesto — steady, creative, and quietly powerful.

To read more articles on Music, Art, and Theatre from Kaila D'Sa, subscribe to his Substack at [kailadsakindley.substack.com](http://kailadsakindley.substack.com). Email: [kailakindley@gmail.com](mailto:kailakindley@gmail.com)



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# The Outstanding Women of 2026 Award Recipients Honored by the Stanislaus County Commission for Women



**Amy Collier Carroll** grew up in Modesto and has dedicated her career to the community through nonprofit marketing and development, public sector communications/legislative affairs and most recently healthcare public relations and advocacy. She works to build a better quality of life for the women of our community, volunteering her

free time to empower and inspire women through mentorship and professional development opportunities. She believes in the arts, education and services for vulnerable communities. Amy serves on the board of directors for the Modesto Symphony, the Stanislaus Family Justice Center, and the Stanislaus Education Foundation. She is a Rotarian and a member of the League of Women Voters.



**Angelina Ceja** works as Vice President and Chief Education Officer at AgSafe, where she develops training for farmworkers across the US that enables them to work safely in agricultural settings and return home healthy to their families each day. She believes that access to information is essential to safety, dignity and opportunity. She is also a consultant at Mujeres Poderosas,

where she supports organizations in delivering relevant multilingual education, such as translating topics to Spanish that will help parents understand social media platforms that their children access. Ms. Ceja lives in Patterson and volunteers at her church, helping parishioners navigate community resources. She serves on the board of Golden Valley Health Centers Foundation, is the Vice President of the League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County and serves on the boards of Protected Harvest and Ag Innovations Network.



**Jocelyn Cooper's** community work is a testament to her commitment. She serves on the board of the Modesto Peace/Life Center and volunteers for its local radio station, where she organizes volunteers and assists the general manager. She is currently President of the Board of Directors

for West Modesto Community Collaborative. She is also the president of Parents Leading Change, working with Modesto City Schools to inform parents about school and local resources, increasing parent engagement to improve

graduation rates and reduce suspensions and expulsions. At Project We Care 4 U in Ceres Unified School District, Ms. Cooper provides curriculum and teaches classes in financial literacy, college and career readiness, and community service to expose students to new experiences and inspire them to achieve their goals. She is Executive Administrator for Central Valley Black Chamber of Commerce. Other volunteer work in past years with NAACP, and Stanislaus Sustainable Communities Coalition, plus many more.



**Harleen Wahid Dail** works as an attorney in family law, immigration, and Social Security disability, frequently helping women navigate the complex circumstances of child custody, domestic instability, and access to benefits. As the executive board chair for United Way of Stanislaus County, she demonstrates inclusive leadership by advancing equity and working to amplify

women's voices in organizational decision-making. She also co-chairs United Way's annual Power of the Purse event, raising funds for community programs and celebrating women as community leaders. A Turlock native Mrs. Wahid-Dail is Vice-President of the community organization called Letters to Santa, supporting children and families in need. She is active in the Turlock Sikh Temple and has been a liaison for Valley Children's Hospital. She is also on the Board of Directors for the Stanislaus County Bar Association. Harleen is dedicated to improving the lives of women and families throughout our community.



**Jessica Trompeter Godden**, a lifelong Modesto resident, is the Executive Director of Stanislaus Partners in Education, where schools and community partners collaborate so students can learn about careers in their communities, envision their future, and set goals for pursuing academic and career opportunities. Mrs. Godden

fosters collaboration at work and in her volunteer activities, including Board roles with the State Theatre of Modesto, Modesto Children's Museum, and Mocse Credit Union, as well as service on the Juvenile Justice Commission. Additionally, she supports local philanthropy through community giving at the Modesto Subaru store. Her leadership positions require strong governance, advocacy, and community trust. She champions inclusive spaces that support families and expand access to cultural and early learning experiences, focusing on removing barriers for families and uplifting women as caregivers, educators, and community leaders.



**Nancy Martinez** is the CEO of Debrief, a community engagement organization dedicated to improving quality of life in the Central Valley. She founded Debrief to give voice to underrepresented

residents by sharing information, gathering insights and providing analysis on important local issues affecting vulnerable populations. Ms. Martinez has worked with Stanislaus 2030, North Valley THRIVE, and StanRTA, among other major regional initiatives. She organizes community focus groups to discuss needs and facilitates community conversations to foster understanding, healing and inclusion. She is an active volunteer Girl Scout troop leader, serves on the board of Empower 8 and most recently West Modesto Community Collaborative, a leader in the Stanislaus Latino Giving Circle, and serves as the part time Community Prosperity Lead at BEAM Circular.



**Patty Ramirez** is a founding member of The Modesto Children's Museum, serving on its board and helping to shape the museum from the start. Patty supported the early years of the Children's Museum by organizing initial community outreach events. She co- led the charge in organizing the museum's first Launch the Adventure event

that propelled the museum's capital campaign. Her six years of leadership helped establish it as a space where children and caregivers feel seen, respected, and welcomed by shaping its educational vision with a focus on bilingual access, representation, and family engagement. She continues to serve on its Advisors Circle and various committees focusing on community and fundraising events as well as educational programming. Ms. Ramirez works as an art educator for Riverbank schools, where previously she taught Spanish immersion.

**Marie Russell** is the Director of Communications, Family Engagement, and Outreach for Turlock Unified School District. In addition to overseeing all District communications for TUSD, she oversees the Family



Resource Center, providing resources, programs and services based on the needs and interests of TUSD’s diverse families, such as supporting school readiness, meeting basic needs, hosting parent workshops, supporting at-risk youth, and helping refugees and newcomers. The FRC

also partners with community organizations such as Second Harvest, Legacy Health Endowment, Stanislaus County BHRS, Kiwanis of Greater Turlock, Amazon MCE1, and more to support families. Ms. Russell also leads the Turlock chapter of the CA Ivy League Project helping under-represented Central Valley students visit and apply to the most prestigious universities in the country. She is always looking to improve programs and outreach, never leaving anyone out, so that each student can grow and learn.

**Dr. Andrea Silva** is a family physician, addiction medicine specialist, educator and nonprofit leader in our county. She demonstrated leadership and advocacy on behalf of women through her clinical, educational and nonprofit work. She provides care to women facing substance use disorders, homelessness, and systemic barriers to healthcare. Dr.



Silva also supports women through pregnancy and early parenting to reduce neonatal complications and strengthen

maternal-infant bonding. She is a co-founder of Valley Streetz, a nonprofit that delivers essential healthcare directly to women experiencing homelessness. Dr. Silva also co-founded the Rainbow Clinic, a resident-run clinic specializing in LGBTQ+ and gender-affirming care, creating a safer and more inclusive healthcare environment for women and gender-diverse individuals. She also trains future doctors to provide compassionate care to women and children affected by addiction, poverty, and trauma.

## Outstanding Young Women of 2026



**Zoe Byron** is a poet, a musician, a tennis team member, a leader, and one of the most academically gifted seniors at Oakdale High School. Zoe served as the 2nd Youth Poet Laureate of Stanislaus County in 2024 and 2025. During her tenure, she organized a set of poetry readings in county library branches, demonstrating

her ability to lead others, especially young women, in writing and sharing their own poetry. Zoe has volunteered in numerous capacities in the poetry community including judging the Aileen Jaffa Youth Poetry Contest and helping to write poetry for the community during a Poetry on the Spot event. Zoe is also the founder of the Oakdale PREVIEW, an art journal and digital media portal for poetry, reviews, editorials, videos, and other art forms; she has participated for several years in the Poetry Out Loud annual recitation contest for high school students; published her own work in local journals; and otherwise shares her commitment to creativity – not only her own, but that of her peers. In other words, Zoe is an exemplary literary citizen.



**Sabrina Clendenin**, a graduate of Gregori High School, a former MJC student, and a current student at UC Davis, excels in academics, speech and debate, music, and community service. In the speech and debate program at MJC, Sabrina competed across an unusually wide range of events including informative speaking, persuasive speech, and oral interpretation,

demonstrating rigorous research, analysis, and the ability to communicate complex ideas in accessible ways. Her topics often focus on issues specific to women and girls, including the need to prioritize women in scientific research, bisexual erasure, women’s embodied experiences through *The Vagina Monologues*, and the impact of social media and eating disorders on young women. Sabrina has earned top awards with these performances, but her academic interests don’t stop there and include psychology,

mechanical engineering, mathematics, and communication studies, many of them traditionally male-dominated fields. Sabrina was an active Girl Scout until recently and earned all four of the organization’s top honors all of which require substantial community service. Her commitment to academics, leadership, service, and sustained concern for well-being of women and girls are admirable.



**Lily Li**, a senior at Gregori High School, has both a heart and the soul of a mathematician. While navigating top math classes, Lily has brought her love of math to her classmates by successfully campaigning to establish a Math Olympiad team which is now thriving. Lily not only helps organize competitions, but tutors and mentors her classmates through it. She has even extended her

teaching efforts by volunteering to coach students in SAT math, Calculus AB and BC as well as English through [Schoolhouse.world](https://www.schoolhouse.world). Furthermore, Lily has, on her own, created a study guide for Calculus students preparing for their AP exams. The fact that Lily chooses to teach other students math speaks volumes, not only about her mastery of the subject, but also about her generosity, leadership, love for learning, and deep understanding of the importance of math in our world. Lily recently won 1st place for the Alternative team in the 2026 Stanislaus County Academic Decathlon, is a National Merit Scholar, and will be attending MIT in the fall with a full scholarship.



**Magdalena Siordia-Tapia** has many passions, but chief among them are music and the environment. Magdalena has worked to expand access to music in all communities as the president of the United Sound chapter at Johansen High School for the past three years. This organization pairs school

musicians with students with special needs, enabling all students to access music and performance. She organizes weekly meetings to address inequities in music access, organizes recitals that allow students to have all abilities to perform, and presents the work that she does at state-wide conferences. Magdalena has also worked with Tuolumne River Trust as a student representative helping to write constitutions for park use and helping to design signage for Tuolumne Regional Park. She also volunteers for monthly clean-up projects, assists with the LaLoma Native Garden, and helps with the Modesto Library’s planter project. Magdalena is also the president of JoHo 4 Change, a club that beautifies the campus with sustainability and native planting as core pillars. As you can see, Magdalena is a powerful force for change in the community.

STANISLAUS COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN  
presents  
**OUTSTANDING WOMEN OF STANISLAUS COUNTY 2026**

Amy Collier Carroll Nancy Martinez  
Angelina Ceja Patty Ramirez  
Jocelyn Cooper Marie Russell  
Jessica Godden Andrea Silva  
Harleen Wahid-Dail

**Outstanding Young Women**

Zoe Byron Sabrina Clendenin  
Lily Li Magdalena Siordia-Tapia

**SAVE THE DATE**  
BRUNCH CELEBRATION  
SATURDAY MARCH 14, 2026 | 10:00 a.m.  
GREENS ON 10TH, MODESTO  
STANISLAUS COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

# 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Aileen Jaffa Young Poets Contest

Co-sponsored by Modesto-Stanislus Poetry Center (MoSt) and the National League of American Penwomen (NLAPW), Modesto Chapter.



Modesto-Stanislus  
Poetry Center

The Modesto Chapter of the National League of American Penwomen and Modesto-Stanislus Poetry Center are pleased to facilitate this annual contest honoring poet Aileen Jaffa, the founding president of the Poets of the San Joaquin and

member of the NLAPW, Modesto Branch, and to encourage young writers enrolled in Stanislaus County schools to share their best work.

## Eligibility and Deadline

Any student enrolled in a Stanislaus County school, grades K through 12, is eligible to submit up to 3 entries, at **\$1 per entry**. Each entry, except for typing, must be the original creative work of the student, although parents or teachers may provide encouragement. Postmark deadline for submissions is **April 3, 2026**. Mail submissions to **MoSt Poetry, P.O. Box 578940, Modesto, CA 95357**. Find the **entry form** at <https://www.mostpoetry.org/contests/jaffa/>. Information: [info@mostpoetry.org](mailto:info@mostpoetry.org)

## Categories

Poems will be placed in categories according to the student's year in school.

1. Grades K – 3
2. Grades 4 – 6
3. Grades 7 – 9
4. Grades 10 – 12

## Judging and Entry Specifications

Poems will be judged by adult poets who are knowledgeable about young people's work. Any poem that shows evidence of plagiarism will be disqualified. **No simultaneous submissions. The poems you enter must not**

**be submitted to other contests at the same time. Poems must not have been published nor been winners in other poetry contests.** Poems may be in any style, but no longer than 24 lines. Two copies of each poem must be submitted: one copy should contain the title and poem, but no identification of the author; the other copy should contain the student's name and a copy of the entry form below, and the \$1 entry fee.

## Awards and Recognition

First, second, and third place winners in each category will receive cash awards from the **MoSt Poetry Center**. Prizes are First Place \$25, Second Place \$15, Third Place \$10. In addition, the **Modesto Branch of the NLAPW** will award a *\$60 Aileen Jaffa Outstanding Poem* award in each of two combined categories, Categories 1 and 2, and Categories 3 and 4. The current president of the NLAPW Modesto chapter will present the awards, and the winning poems will be read at an **Awards Ceremony on May 16 at the Carnegie Arts Center, 250 N. Broadway, Turlock**. For more information, contact [info@mostpoetry.org](mailto:info@mostpoetry.org).

## Free Tax Preparation



Stan State VITA Program offers free Tax services to those who need assistance in preparing their own tax returns!

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Residents of Stanislaus County</li> <li>✓ People with disabilities</li> <li>✓ People with limited proficiency in English</li> <li>✓ People who generally make \$60,000 or less per year</li> </ul>	<p><b>February to April</b></p> <p>Schedule an appointment in English or Spanish</p> <p>1+209-667-3699</p> <p><b>Located at MSR</b> 130, 130b, and 130c (Follow the signs to the room)</p> <p><b>Free parking at Lot</b> One University Circle</p>
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Don't wait until the last minute! Schedule your appointment today!



Dates	
1:00 Pm - 5:00 pm	10:00 am - 4:00 pm
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>
February 12	February 7
February 26	February 21
March 12	March 7
March 26	March 21
	April 4

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Wear your Red, White & Blue!

Program includes:  
**STRIKE UP THE DANCE** • BALLET SUITE

HESITATE  
CHOREOGRAPHY BY MARY KOTTALIS

SOLITARY WORKERS

TICKETS **MARCH 6 & 7** Preview  
GALLO CENTER FOR THE ARTS  
Student/Senior discount available in selected seating.  
**7:00PM**

2025  
26  
SEASON

## What If The Three Wise Men Had Been Immigrants?

They were too far away to become known. There was some speculation through. One said, "It's a caravan, perhaps from a circus. Another said, "A caravan, yes, but it must be gypsies." "If it is," said a third, "you better watch your children, they'll take them for sure." It was a moment that required drawing back just a bit. One that shouted, caution. "Are you sure, about the Gypsy thing?" one wonders out loud but to themselves more than to anyone else. It was a question that seemed to leave a big hole in the universe. Not sure who they are, seemed to be consensus, along with the resolve not to let them get any closer.

— Ed Bearden

## Rev. Sonya Sukalski: Finding Beauty In The Quiet Places

Rev. Sonya Sukalski has always been curious about how people think about what is most important in life – following this interest in studying Cognitive Linguistics, Germanic Languages, and Adult Wellness Education before moving to the San Francisco East Bay to attend Starr King School for the Ministry.

It was difficult to leave the beauty and peace of the mountains and desert of Northern New Mexico, but Sonya fell in love with the High Sierra in 2012 when she hiked most of the John

Muir Trail and has hiked several sections of the Pacific Crest Trail since then – over 400 miles in one go in 2014.

During seminary, Sonya had a short winter job in 2005 with the Unitarian Universalist Justice (formerly Legislative) Ministry (UUJMCA) calling California congregations to send valentines to the governor in support of marriage equality. Sonya later helped develop the Young Leaders Project and Spiritual Activist Leadership Training programs with UUJMCA. She has served a variety of sabbatical and family leave ministries with the San Jose, Berkeley, Fremont, Hayward, Chico, Livermore, and San Francisco congregations, and was the minister for the UU Fellowship of Tuolumne County from 2014-2020.

Sonya enjoys nature, gardening, biking, backpacking, yoga, playing the piano, and recently, writing letters to her nephews who are now 6 years old. During the pandemic, a chance conversation underscored how formative the brain chemistry and wiring of the limbic system are throughout our lives, leading to intensive efforts to rewire her brain for joy, ease, and better humor.

Sonya retired in 2022 primarily to join the UU Retired Ministers and Partners' Writing Group, which meets in 6–8-week sessions several times a year. Sonya lives in Castro Valley, CA, with her husband of 37 years and adult daughter.

*A Gathering of Voices* is honored that Rev. Sukalski is sharing several of her fine poems in this issue of *Stanislaus Connections*.



## Change

The slow imperceptible  
emergence of  
buds on branches.

The bobbing  
of that branch  
in the wind.

The tiny specks  
of pollen  
slowly landing  
on new surfaces.

The lazy buzzing  
of bees  
working from one blossom  
to the next.

The sun's shadows  
growing long and longer  
as the daylight fades.

My heart  
rising and falling  
as breath waxes and wanes.

Consciousness slipping  
into the cushions  
as sleep  
overtakes my thoughts.

## Body Prayer for Jacqueline on her 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday

May you always be as grounded as you are when you garden.

May your feet carry you everywhere you want to go,  
and fill you with a sense of balance and rootedness.

May your legs always have the strength to dance through life  
as enthusiastically as you desire.

May your digestion keep pace with the deliciousness and beauty  
you desire to fully inhabit.

May your hands always find love, care, and tenderness  
when you reach out,  
especially if you need something.

May your strong heart find connection, joy, and inspiration  
and beat for decades to come.

May your shoulders feel any burdens you carry eased with each passing day.

May your neck feel strong, supple, and able take in new sights.

May your arms find loved ones to hug every day.

May your beaming smile never tire,  
and be returned exponentially.

May you delight in the scent of flowers every day.

May your eyes let in all the love here tonight,

and beam it to those who need it.

May your ears use all your gifts to tune in even more keenly.

May your spirit feel free,  
full of ease,

full of healing

and blessing all your days.

And when your days end,

may we become the dance you have so beautifully shared all your life!

## Truth?

Too hot to sleep,  
but what a sunrise –  
pink mountain tops  
as Bishop creek rushes incessantly on.

Natural air conditioning  
by virtue of a wet bandana or  
shirt dipped in the stream.

A fact –  
a heatwave over our campsite above Bishop.

But a few miles north,  
storming sky on and off  
all day,  
all week.

My truth –  
altitude suppresses my appetite.

I nibble and sip.  
I enjoy the luscious lupine,  
pink penstemon,  
goldenrod,  
cornflower,  
pussy paws,  
the tiny frog in the trail,

granite weathered to a peachy tone.

The changing light on the cliffs surrounding us.

Your truth –  
no appetite means no fuel in the tank –  
you can't hike all day  
without eating.

Our truth –  
our friends want to give us an out.

The hail storm  
and flooding in the trail  
added an element of danger  
to the empty tank.

My truth –  
hail on this landscape  
magnifies  
the scent of everything I see –  
so powerfully luscious and delicious.

We bail out this week.  
We're not the only ones.

It's the right decision.  
Back to phone calls  
to my mom with her senior moments.  
Where home is not the same language

as living closer to nature.

But it's more comfortable,  
easier,  
more muted,  
faded; compared to being pelted by hail.

Shallower  
than the deep gratitude I feel  
for a bite of watermelon  
or the unexpected, unearned kindness of a stranger.

Back to fundamentalism on full display  
as I try to catch up on the news.  
Rather than slowly unfolding day  
beyond the spinning news and constant marketing.

How to capture that feeling  
of soulful strolling among the wildflowers,  
the joy of laying on a slab of granite  
and watching the cotton candy colors  
playing buoyantly in the shifting clouds.

How to embody  
the slow rapture  
of watching the light change  
on a lake  
surrounded by sharp spires  
whose relief is revealed with each passing minute?

# Great Programs on KCBP 95.5 FM Community Radio

Full-power station Broadcasting North to Lodi, East to the Sierras, South to Merced

Streaming on [www.kcbpradio.org](http://www.kcbpradio.org)

A Project of the non-profit Modesto Peace/Life Center

An affiliate of the Pacifica Network

## CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING

*Confetti Park* - Music, stories New Orleans style, Saturdays at 8:00 am; & Sunday's 12:30 pm.

*The Children's Hour* - Sundays 3:00 pm. And Mondays at 4:00 p.m.

## SCIENCE

*Radio Ecoshock* - the latest scientific information on Climate Change - Saturdays, 9:00 am.

*Explorations* - Science explained with Dr. Michio Kaku - 9:00 am Sundays.

*Big Picture Science* - 1:00 pm Sundays.

*Planetary Radio* - 2:00 pm Sundays.

## PROGRAMS

*Encouragementology* - the practice of instilling hope, provides positive alternatives to some of life's challenges. Sundays 8:00 am.

*Food Sleuth* - Dietitian Melinda Hemmelgarn helps listeners "think beyond their plates," connecting the dots between food, health, and agriculture to uncover the truth about food. Wednesdays at 8 a.m., Saturdays at 6 a.m.

*Moccasin Tracks* - in Solidarity with Traditional Original Peoples, prioritizes the voices of the original peoples and the issues confronting them today, including the decolonization of our minds, workplaces, and institutions. Includes contemporary and traditional music from Native artists, news, views, and interviews. Tuesdays at 8:00 am.

*The Ralph Nader Hour*: Citizen advocate Ralph Nader and guests discuss topics important for consumers and our nation on Saturdays at 4 p.m.

*Ukraine 2.4.2* - weekly cutting-edge and exclusive interviews with key people in Ukraine - Thursdays, 10:00 am.

*Beethoven to Bernstein* - Classical music ranging from Beethoven to Bernstein. Big hits from well-renowned composers - Chopin, Tchaikovsky, Strauss, Ravel, Copland - and many more, mostly in the form of orchestral, chamber, and piano music - Saturdays, 10:00 pm.

*The Not Old - Better Show* - fascinating, high-energy program of big-name guests, inspiring role models, interesting topics, with entertaining host and former Modestan, Paul Vogelzang - Fridays, 2:00 pm, Saturdays, 12:00 pm.

*Sounds Irish* Music from County Wicklow - Saturdays, 7:00 pm.

*Various Musical Programs During the Noon Hour*: Different genres of great music.

*Dead Air* - Hear the Grateful Dead with Cory Daniels. Fridays, 6 pm; Saturdays, 3 pm.

*Attitude with Arne Arnesen* - 3:00 pm. Monday through Friday. Political and social issues.

*Alternative Radio* - 4:00 pm - Tuesdays. Interviews by David Barsamian focusing on national and international issues.

*Democracy Now!* - 7:00 am, Monday thru Friday. News and reporting by veteran journalists Amy Goodman.

*Flashpoint Magazine* - 10:00 pm, Monday through Thursday. Politics, social issues, from KQED's veteran journalist, Dennis Bernstein.

*Julian Taylor's Jukebox* - 4:00 pm, Thursdays and Fridays. Eclectic, indigenous, and contemporary music.

*Sprouts* - Mondays at 7:00 pm and Sundays at 7:00 am. Produced in collaboration with community radio stations and independent producers, featuring radio productions of national interest. Coordinated and distributed by Pacifica Radio.

## LOCALLY PRODUCED PROGRAMS

*I'll Take You There* - Musical journeys to various geographic localities, highlighting their memorable music. Hosted by DJ El Comandante. Saturday, 5:00 pm; Sundays, 9:00 pm; Wednesdays, 4:00 pm.

*Youth in The Loop*. Modesto High student Rudra Patel interviews prominent local people about their lives and professions. Wednesdays at Noon and at 6:00 pm.

*The Well-Being of the Community, Your Family, and You* 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm Tuesdays.

Live, Bilingual in Spanish & English. Hosted by Jose Higuera-Lopez and Nico Torres.

*Rockin' with MJC* - One-hour music shows by Modesto Junior College students. Saturdays, 12:00 a.m., and 2:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m. Tuesdays.

*Triumphant Tuesdays* - Noon, Tuesdays. Inspirational thoughts & music with Catrice.

*Sports Talk Modesto* - Join Jay Freeda and Jimmie Menezes. Snappy banter to catch up on everything happening in the sports world. - Thursdays, 5 pm.

*Vibn with the West Modesto Collaborative* - Hosted by Likhi Rivas and Oscar Vasquez. Engage, Educate, and Advocate on behalf of the West Modesto Community Collaborative. Showcases Voices of the West Modesto Community - Wednesdays, 7 pm.

*AREA 5150 UFO RADIO* - Old radio shows, music & sounds out of this world, Friday nights, 10:00 pm.

*Cyber Stallion: Bucks Stallion's Radio Transmission Emporium* - Cyber Acoustic Music - Saturdays, 11:00 pm, Wednesdays, 5:00 p.m.

*I-On-Modesto*: John Griffin interviews local people who share inspiring stories. Mondays & Fridays, 10 am, and Wednesdays at 9 pm.

*Arts of the San Joaquin Valley* with Linda Scheller and Laura Stokes - Mondays, 8:00 pm; Tuesdays, 9:00 am & Wednesdays, 8:00 pm. Listen here: <https://anchor.fm/kcbp> and on Spotify

*Women of the Valley* with Linda Scheller and Laura Stokes - 8:00 pm Tuesdays & Thursdays & Wednesdays, 9:00 am. Listen here: <https://anchor.fm/kcbpwotv> and on Spotify.

*Modesto Sound* - California Audio Roots Project (CARP) - Tuesdays 5:30 pm, Wednesdays 11:30 am, & Sundays 11:00 am & 4:30 pm. Interviews on the theme of social justice.

*Sunday Cruisin'* with your host, DeeJay Rig! Oldies hits from 1959 to 1999 - Sundays, 5:00 p.m.

*Faithful Fridays* - inspirational Black Gospel music and thoughts with Catrice - Fridays, 7:00 p.m.

*Why Not Nice?* - Showcases unique music from unique cultures and thinkers worldwide, focusing on world/academic/jazz and roots music - Thursdays, 7:00 p.m.

*Bars Radio - Hip-Hop Show* - Music, interviews from local & regional artists - Fridays, 8:00 pm. A new, second show plays on Saturday nights at 8:00 pm, with a third at 8:00 pm on Sundays.

*Modesto Area Music Awards (MAMA)* with Middagh Goodwin - Mondays 5:00 pm; Fridays 9:00 pm & Saturdays 6:00 pm.

*Freak Radio* with Christian E. Boyatt, 6 pm Thursdays. Replays Saturdays, 9 pm & Tuesdays 11 pm.

*This is SKA* with Middagh Goodwin - Tuesdays, 9 pm; Fridays, 11 pm; Sundays, 5 am to 7 am.

*Penny Bloods* - Fun, Victorian melodrama radio plays, often performed by local actors, written by Arnold Anthony Schmidt, CSU, Stanislaus. As scheduled.

PSAs in English and Spanish produced by the West Modesto Community Collaborative.

LISTEN TO OUR MUSIC PLAYLISTS AT SPINITRON <https://spinitron.com/KCBP/>

Find a complete programming schedule on our website, [www.kcbpradio.org](http://www.kcbpradio.org)

PLEASE SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY RADIO STATION: Donate here: <https://kcbpradio.org/donate/> Please consider a recurring monthly donation.

Stanislaus County Behavioral Health & Recovery Services and KCBP 95.5 FM "The Voice of The Valley"



Presents A Live Bi-lingual Program:

"THE WELL-BEING OF THE COMMUNITY, YOUR FAMILY AND YOU"

TUESDAYS 5:00 to 7:00 PM



# UCLA Report Urges Stronger Oversight of Pesticide Mixtures and Legislative Action to Protect Public Health

*Lindsay, CA.* A new report from researchers at the UCLA School of Law and the UCLA Institute for Society and Genetics calls for urgent reforms to California's pesticide regulatory system, including stronger oversight of chemical mixtures and new legislative action to address cumulative health and environmental risks.

The report, [\*Building Capacity for Robust Pesticide Regulation: Part I – Cumulative Impacts\*](#), was co-authored by Professor Timothy Malloy of UCLA School of Law and Dr. Patrick Allard of the UCLA Institute for Society and Genetics. It is the fourth in a series of UCLA reports highlighting deficiencies in pesticide governance, including the failure to adequately regulate the cumulative impacts of pesticides.

California law requires state and county regulators—the Department of Pesticide Regulation and County Agricultural Commissioners (CACs)—to consider cumulative impacts during pesticide registration at the state level and in permitting decisions at the county level. Yet an earlier UCLA report [\*Governance on the Ground\*](#) documented how CACs receive no guidance from DPR and do not consider cumulative exposure during the permitting process. DPR, with limited exceptions, also does not evaluate the cumulative health impacts of pesticides during the registration process.

The consequences of this regulatory gap are significant. Pesticides are used in California in huge amounts: in 2023 alone, 176 million pounds of pesticides were applied to 98 million acres. The result is that Californians, especially in agricultural areas, are frequently exposed to multiple pesticides at once – with serious health impacts.

“Families aren't exposed to just one pesticide at a time—they're exposed to mixtures. Yet our regulatory system still evaluates chemicals one by one, as if people live in a lab instead of the real world,” said Mayra Sánchez, Associate Director of the statewide non-profit coalition Californians

for Pesticide Reform.

Although cumulative exposure to multiple pesticides is a statewide concern, studies from the Monterey Bay region show just how damaging these combined exposures can be. A decades-long collaboration between University of California researchers and community residents has produced some of the strongest evidence yet of the health impacts of cumulative pesticide exposure. UC Berkeley researchers have consistently shown that exposure to multiple pesticides during pregnancy resulted in [reduced IQ test scores](#) and [more attention and behavior problems](#) in children and teens. One [study of Salinas teens](#) found that they were exposed to an average of eight different pesticides in just a week's time.

A group of pesticides called organophosphates is particularly concerning. They are all toxic to the nervous system and are used on some important California crops, including almonds, citrus, and lettuce. [Over seven percent of pregnant California moms live near organophosphate pesticide use, and in agricultural counties the percentage is much higher, up to 50 percent.](#) Yet California still regulates pesticides one chemical at a time, even as communities face the reality of combined, ongoing exposure.

The UCLA report released today recommends a hybrid assessment approach for evaluating pesticide mixtures, combining whole-product testing with component-based analysis. It also proposes the development and implementation of new modeling tools to help county agricultural commissioners assess risks in real time when issuing permits for restricted pesticide use. Implementation of these recommendations will make California a healthier state for all Californians.

For more information or to request a hard copy of the

report, please contact:

Evan George, Director of Communications, Emmett Institute on Climate Change & the Environment at UCLA School of Law, [george@law.ucla.edu](mailto:george@law.ucla.edu), 323-877-8404.

Timothy Malloy, Frank G. Wells Endowed Chair in Environmental Law, UCLA School of Law, [malloy@law.ucla.edu](mailto:malloy@law.ucla.edu), 310-794-5278.

Full report [\*Building Capacity for Robust Pesticide Regulation: Part I – Cumulative Impacts\*](#) available here: <https://law.ucla.edu/news/building-capacity-robust-pesticide-regulation-part-i-cumulative-impacts>

*Californians for Pesticide Reform* is a diverse, statewide coalition of 200+ member groups working to strengthen pesticide policies in California to protect public health and the environment. Member groups include public and children's health advocates, clean air and water groups, health practitioners, environmental justice groups, labor, education, farmers and sustainable agriculture advocates from across the state.



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<b>Be informed!</b> Read the Valley Citizen at <a href="http://thevalleycitizen.com">http://thevalleycitizen.com</a>
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# calendar

Help keep our readers informed. We urge people participating in an event to write about it and send their story to Connections.

## MARCH 2026

**MAPS** - Modesto Area Partners in Science: Free MJC science programs on Fridays in MJC West Campus, Sierra Hall, Rm 132, 7:30 pm. **March 20: Vaccines for Parasites: Can We Do It?** Dr. Kirk Jensen, UC Merced. Dr. Jensen's laboratory studies the immunology and pathogenesis of the obligate intracellular parasite *Toxoplasma gondii*, the causative agent of human toxoplasmosis. Parasitic diseases are a major health problem in developing countries, and progress in treatments has been slow. Is it possible to develop effective vaccinations against parasites instead of focusing on treatment after infection?

**Modesto Science Colloquium:** Wednesdays from 3:15 pm - 4:15 pm, West Campus, Science Community Center, Rm. 115. Event and Parking Free. **March 11: Career Opportunities for Speech-Language Pathologists: A High-Demand Allied Health Profession.** Sara Martin, M.S., CCC-SLP, Speech-Language Pathologist, explores the wide range of career opportunities in speech-language pathology, including work in hospitals, rehabilitation centers, outpatient clinics, private practice, schools, and home therapy. Areas of practice include stroke recovery, traumatic brain injury, pediatric language delays, articulation and voice disorders, hearing impairment, and more. **March 25: Engineering Equity in Postpartum Hemorrhage Care: Practical Solutions for Low-Resource Settings.** Mohammad Edrees Alizai, Supplementary Instruction Leader (SI), Mathematics, Engineering, and Science Achievement (MESA), Modesto Junior College, examines why postpartum hemorrhage (PPH) interventions succeed in high-resource settings but often fail in low-resource contexts. Guided by the WHO 2023-2030 Roadmap, the talk highlights engineering solutions designed for equity, including offline functionality, cold-chain independence, reusability, and rapid deployment. This work has been submitted to peer-reviewed journals and includes undergraduate student co-authorship.

**The Prospect Theatre: 25/26 season** has continuing offerings. Visit <https://prospecttheaterproject.org/2024-2025-season/>

**4 WED: PEACE LIFE CENTER BOARD MEETING,** 829 13th St., Modesto, 6:00 pm, 529-5750. Meetings on Zoom and in person.

**5 THURS: Celebrating the Winners of the 38th Annual Create Change: Peace Essay, Poetry & Art Contest.** 6:30 at Bookish in Roseburg Square, 811 W. Roseburg Ave., Modesto.

**10 TUES: VIGIL: DEFEND OUR DEMOCRACY** at McHenry Ave. and J. St. (Five Points), 5:00-6:00 pm. Info: Call the Center at 209-529-5750 or email [jcostello@igc.org](mailto:jcostello@igc.org).

**14 SAT: Brunch Celebration for the Outstanding Women of Stanislaus County,** 10 am, Greens on 10th

**15 SUN: The State Theatre and Modesto Film Society present An American in Paris,** 2 pm. Join the State Theatre. Have fun, get perks, and support Modesto's historic non-profit theatre. <https://thestate.org/films/an-american-in-paris-032026/>

**17 TUES: Grito de Mujer presents Free Bilingual Poetry Reading** open to the public, 6:30 pm. at Bookish, 811 W. Roseburg Ave., Modesto.

**19 THURS: Grito de Mujer presents a Free Bilingual Poetry Reading** open to the public, 6:30 pm, at MJC, Forum 101 East Campus, 435 College Ave., Modesto.

**24 TUES VIGIL: DEFEND OUR DEMOCRACY** at McHenry Ave. and J. St. (Five Points), 5:00-6:00 pm. Info: Call the Center at 209-529-5750 or email [jcostello@igc.org](mailto:jcostello@igc.org).

**28 SAT: NO KINGS MARCH!**

**29 SUN: Homegrown Farewell Concert. State Theatre.** Doors open at 4:00 pm, concert at 5:00 pm. <https://thestate.org/events/home-grown-farewell-concert-032026/>

### LOOKING AHEAD

**April 11: Walk In Their Shoes for The Haven. A Walk to Support Survivors of Sexual Assault.** Register at <https://secure.qgiv.com/event/its2026/>

**June 12-14: MPLC's Annual Peace Camp**

### REGULAR MEETINGS SUNDAYS

**Unity of Modesto** meets in person every Sunday at 10:00 a.m. at 2467 Veneman, Modesto. Information: 209-578-5433.

**Modesto Vineyard Christian Fellowship,** 10:00 am at the MODSPOT, 1220 J St. Call or text 209-232-1932, email [modestovineyard@gmail.com](mailto:modestovineyard@gmail.com); All Welcome.

**IMCV Weekly Insight Meditation and Dharma Talk,** 8:45 am - 10:15 am, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto (rear bldg. at the end of the UUFSC east parking lot). Offered freely; donations welcome. All are welcome. For more information, please email [charlie@imcv.org](mailto:charlie@imcv.org). Our mailing address is IMCV, P.O. Box 579564, Modesto, CA 95357.

**Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Stanislaus County** meets in person and on Zoom every Sunday at 10:30 am at 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto. Info: 209-788-3720; [www.stanuu.org](http://www.stanuu.org)

**Food Addicts Anonymous in Recovery.** Sundays 6:30 pm, 2467 Veneman Ave. Modesto. Info: Emily M., 209 480-8247.

### MONDAYS

**CENTRAL VALLEY DEMOCRATIC CLUB,** 3rd Monday of the month, except November and December, 7:00 to 8:30 PM. McHenry Bowl, 3700 McHenry Ave., Modesto. Info: Contact [centralvalleydemocraticclub.com](mailto:centralvalleydemocraticclub.com)

**The Compassionate Friends,** Modesto/Riverbank Area Chapter is meeting by Zoom on the second Mondays at 7:00pm. Bereaved parents, grandparents, and adult siblings are invited to participate in this support group for families whose children have died at any age, from any cause. Call 209-622-6786 or email for details: [tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com](mailto:tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com); <https://www.modestoriverbanktcf.org/>

**Suicide Loss Support Group:** Friends for Survival meets every third Monday at 7 pm. Details: Norm Andrews 209-345-0601, [nandrews6863@charter.net](mailto:nandrews6863@charter.net).

### TUESDAYS

**Climate Action Justice Network-Stanislaus** meets the first Tuesday of the month, 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm. Link- <https://tinyurl.com/CJAN-FirstTuesday>

**Attention Veterans:** Join us for **Free Coffee & Donuts Meet & Greet** at the Stanislaus Veterans Center, 3500 Coffee Rd., Modesto, Suite 15, 7 am - 11 am

**NAACP Meeting.** King-Kennedy Center, 601 S. Martin Luther King Dr., Modesto, 3rd Tuesday @ 6:30 pm. 209-645-1909; For ZOOM link, visit <https://www.naacpmolestostanislaus.org/> email: [naacp.branch1048@gmail.com](mailto:naacp.branch1048@gmail.com)

**Exploring Whiteness & Showing Up for Racial Justice Meetings,** Fourth Tuesday, monthly 7:00 p.m., Central Grace Hmong Alliance Church, 918 Sierra Dr., Modesto. Info: <https://www.facebook.com/events/247655549018387/>

### WEDNESDAYS

**Retired Public Employees Association.** All seniors welcome! Meetings every third Wednesday. Denny's

## MODESTO PEACE LIFE CENTER ACTIVITIES

Modesto Peace/Life Center **VIGILs:** held 2ND AND 4TH TUESDAYS of the month at McHenry Ave. and J. St. (Five Points), 5:00 - 6:00 pm. Call the Center for info: 209-529-5750.

**MEDIA:** Listen to **KCBP 95.5 FM** Community Radio, the "Voice of the Valley" also streaming at <http://www.KCBPradio.org>

**PEACE LIFE CENTER BOARD MEETING,** FIRST Wednesdays, 829 13th St., Modesto, 6:00 pm, 529-5750. Meetings on Zoom and in person. Email Jim Costello for login information, [jcostello@igc.org](mailto:jcostello@igc.org)

**PEACE/LIFE CENTER MODESTO,** 829 13th St. Call 529-5750. We'll get back to you with current info on activities.

### SATURDAY

**Free Community Drum Circle:** Saturdays, 11:00 am to 12:00 pm. No experience or drums necessary to participate. Modesto Junior College. All levels welcome. Visit <https://drum-love.com/> for the East or West Campus location.

**Divine Feminine Gathering.** Join us for a time of ritual, song and conversation as women come together to celebrate one another and the Divine among us and within us. 3rd Saturday of the month, 3:30-5:00 p.m. Stockton, CA. Contact Rev. Erin King, 209-815-0763, [orkingenne@gmail.com](mailto:orkingenne@gmail.com)

### CALPRIDE STANISLAUS

#### Peer Support Groups

Hosted at CalPride Stanislaus  
1202 H Street #C, Modesto, CA 95354  
209-408-8848

<https://www.facebook.com/CalPrideStanislaus/>

**Transcendence:** Every Friday, 2:00 pm-3:00 pm. A peer support group for transgender individuals ages 18 and older, providing a safe and judgment-free space to connect and share experiences.

**Senior Gay Men's Group:** Every Thursday, 1:00 pm. Senior Gay Men's Group is a space to connect, share, and build community. For individuals aged 55+.

**Writing Group:** Every Friday, 3:30 pm-5:00 pm. This group provides an affirming and confidential queer space to craft poetry and short stories. For individuals aged 18+.

**Folk Group:** 2nd & 4th Tuesday of the month, 4:00 pm-5:00 pm. An inclusive LGBTQ+ peer support group for individuals ages 25 to 45, providing a welcoming space to connect, share experiences, and build community. Hosted at CalPride Stanislaus 1202 H Street #C, Modesto, CA, 95354.

**Dreams & Solutions,** 1st & 3rd Wednesdays of the month, 11:00 am-12:00 pm. A supportive space for those navigating challenges with drugs and alcohol to connect, share, and heal together. For individuals aged 18+.

**We Thrive:** Every Wednesday of the month, 3:30 pm-5:00 pm. A space to explore your journey through art, connect with others, and create in a welcoming and supportive environment. This group is for individuals aged 18+.

**Heart to Heart:** First Tuesday of the month, 4:00 pm-5:00 pm. A supportive, peer-led group dedicated to exploring and nurturing healthy, respectful relationships within the LGBTQ+ community. For individuals aged 18+.

**Strength in Solidarity:** Third Tuesday of the month, 4:00 pm-5:00 pm. A safe and supportive space for sexual assault survivors to connect, share experiences, and find healing. For individuals aged 18+.

**Closet Abierto:** First and Last Thursday of the month, 4:00 pm-5:00 pm. A welcoming and affirming space for LGBTQ+ Latinx individuals to share experiences, find support, and build connections. For individuals aged 18+.

**Queer Karaoke Night:** Last Friday of Every Month: 4:00 pm-5:00 pm. Sing along to your favorite tunes with your friends at CalPride! For individuals aged 18+.

Restaurant, 1525 McHenry Ave. 11:30 am to 1:00 pm. Call (209) 324-2060. Pay \$8.00 and order from the menu.

**The Almond Blossom Sangha** meets on Wednesdays, 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm, Zoom, and sometimes hybrid, for meditation and Dharma discussions. Call Anne at 209-404-4835 for more information.

**Merced LGBT Community Center** offers a variety of monthly meetings and written materials. Volunteers, on-site **Wed-Fri**, offer support. Ph: 209-626-5551. Email: [mercedboard@gaycentralvalley.org](mailto:mercedboard@gaycentralvalley.org) - 1744 G St. Suite H, Merced, CA. [www.mercedlgbtcenter.org](http://www.mercedlgbtcenter.org)

**Merced Full Spectrum** meets the second Wednesday of every month, 6 p.m. 1744 G St., Suite H, Merced <http://www.lgbtmerced.org/> Merced Full Spectrum is a division of Gay Central Valley, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. <http://www.gaycentralvalley.org/>

**TRANSGENDER SUPPORT GROUP,** 2nd & 4th Wed., 7:30 to 9 pm. Info: (209) 338-0855. Email [info@stanpride.org](mailto:info@stanpride.org) or [tgsupport@stanpride.org](mailto:tgsupport@stanpride.org)

### THURSDAYS

**Attention Veterans:** Join us for **Free Coffee & Donuts Meet & Greet** at the Stanislaus Veterans Center, 3500 Coffee Rd., Modesto, Suite 15, 7 am - 11 am

**IMCV Grupo de Meditación en Español,** cada semana 7:30 pm - 9:00 pm, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto (edificio trasero al final del estacionamiento este de UUFSC). Ofrecido libremente, las donaciones son bienvenidas. Info: Contacto Vanessa, 209-408-6172.

**LGBTQ+ Collaborative Meetings** are on the 2nd Thursday of the month, unless noted. Evening meeting, 1pm to 2 pm, Central Valley Pride Center, 400 12th St., Suite 2, Modesto, CA. Information: John Aguirre at cell/text - (559) 280-3864/ e-mail: [jpmadesto@gmail.com](mailto:jpmadesto@gmail.com)

**Green Team educational meetings** the 3rd Thursday of each month, 10 to 11 am, Kirk Lindsey Center, 1020 10th St. Plaza, Suite 102, Modesto. [www.StanislausGreenTeam.com](http://www.StanislausGreenTeam.com)

**3rd Thursday Art Walk,** downtown Modesto, third Thursdays, 5 to 8 pm. stroll to art displays and galleries. Info: <https://visitmodesto.com/arts-entertainment/#art-walk>

**VALLEY HEARTLAND ZEN GROUP:** every Thurs 6:30 to 8:30 pm, Modesto Church of the Brethren, 2310 Woodland Ave. Meditation. Newcomers welcome. Info: 535-6750 or <http://emptynestzendo.org>

### FRIDAYS

Friday 7:30-9:30 pm (Sept thru May) **International Folk Dancing** with Village Dancers, Carnegie Art Center, 250 N. Broadway, Turlock \$7. No experience or partner needed. 209-480-0387 for info.

**Ukulele On Funstrummer Fridays:** Every Friday morning from 9 am to 10:30 am Play Along Easy Songs from the Funstrummers Songbooks of over 500 songs. Funstrummers Performing Band Practice from 10 to noon and afternoon gig. Unitarian Church, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto, 209-505-3216 for details. Donations accepted. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mej3gD0ZD40&list=LLB8Y19zZg660qHCXGoC6ojQ&index=1>

**SIERRA CLUB:** Yokuts group. Regular meetings, third Friday, Office of Valley Improvement Projects, 1224 K St. Modesto., 6:45 pm. Info: 209-632-5473. Visit <http://www.sierraclub.org/mother-lode/yokuts> for info on hikes and events.