

**INSIDE
THIS
ISSUE:**

John's Message 1

Helping Families Thrive Through Community Schools 2

HealthCare Reform and Contra Costa County 2

West County Health Center Opens 3

Newest HeartSafe Community in West County 3

Domestic Violence Services get \$900,000 Boost 4

Rebuilding a New El Cerrito Library 4

Air District Funds Richmond's Free Local Bus Service 4

2012 Coastal Cleanup Breaks Records 5

Toy, Coat, and Hoodie Drive for Richmond Youth Kicks Off 5

Back Page: Staff Contacts Meeting Schedules Commission Openings 6

West County Newsletter

OCTOBER 2012

A message from Supervisor John Gioia



It's a busy time and I'm working on many different things.

This newsletter includes some of them.

This is also an important election season, and I want to take this opportunity to remind everyone to exercise their rights and vote on Tuesday, November 6th.

I know that it's easy to feel that one vote doesn't matter. However, the Florida vote in the 2000 Presidential election should be a reminder that each vote can make a difference. There have also been very close races at the local and state levels.

Voting is an opportunity to engage in the freedoms of democracy and influence history because each individual vote joins others in building the edge that makes decisions.

My father, a civics and history teacher at Kennedy High School in Richmond, taught me and his students the values and responsibility of voting and civic engagement. We need to appreciate our freedoms, remembering that there are still countries where residents don't have voting rights.

This year's ballot, in addition to the Presidential election, includes important local measures, 11 state propositions, and many city council, school board and special district candidate races.

With such a full election, it's not easy to understand each issue well so I encourage everyone to read and discuss the many ballot and candidate races broadly.

The County's Elections website is a good place for background information on local elections. It also tells you where to find your polling place.

(You can also get this information from the elections office at 925-335-7800 or my office at 510-374-3231).

The site posts results as soon as they're available on election night.

Information about state propositions can be found on the Secretary of State's website.

One of my favorite places to go to keep up on the Presidential, U.S. Senate and Congressional races, is RealClearPolitics.com.

So, exercise your rights, and don't forget to vote!

- John

“Community Schools... is a strategy to utilize school sites to offer a variety of resources for families such as health care, recreation, adult education, and after-school and summer programs.”

Helping Families Thrive Through Community Schools

Supervisor Gioia is leading statewide efforts to encourage cities, counties, and school districts to work together to create "community schools" as a way to more effectively address the needs of children and families.

Community Schools - a movement that's gaining strength nationwide - is a strategy to utilize school sites to offer a variety of resources for families such as health care, recreation, adult education, and after-school and summer programs.

As a Vice President of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), Supervisor Gioia is Chair of the California Cities Counties Schools (CCS) Partnership, which includes city councilmembers, county supervisors, and school board members from across the state.

In its efforts to support the Community Schools model, the CCS Partnership is launching an online tool kit for interested agencies, with best practice tips on how to establish and operate a community school.

Locally, Supervisor Gioia has also worked to support community schools by, among other things, making sure that there are health services offered at all West County high schools. Supervisor Gioia and the county's Health Department are working with Richmond and San Pablo to expand community schools at the elementary and middle school level.

For more information contact Luz Gomez at 510-374-3231 or luz.gomez@bos.cccounty.us

Healthcare Reform and Contra Costa Health Services: What's New?

Contra Costa County is preparing for changes expected under President Obama's Healthcare Reform, the Affordable Care Act (ACA). In California, more than 3 million uninsured individuals are expected to gain access to health insurance under the law.

The County's Health Services Department, which offers its own health plan (the Contra Costa Health Plan (CCHP) is expecting new members when the law is fully implemented in 2014. Many of these new members will be covered under Medi-Cal, the state's health insurance program for the low income and disabled.

CCHP now covers thousands of individuals under its Low Income Health Plan (LIHP) who will be eligible for Medi-Cal under the ACA.

Currently, the County pays 50% of their healthcare costs. Starting January 2014, these Medi-Cal costs will be fully federally funded.

The County is well positioned to be a model with several integration projects well underway including implementing an electronic medical records system, integrating physical and behavioral healthcare, and establishing one-stop primary "health homes," such as the new West County Health Center in San Pablo.

For more information on healthcare coverage you qualify for now, contact Contra Costa Health Services' Financial Counselors at 1-800-771-4270 or www.cchealth.org/insurance/adults.php.

New West County Health Center Now Open

The new West County Health Center opened to patients in early October.

The state-of-the-art medical center, located on San Pablo Avenue near Doctors Medical Center in San Pablo, offers a modern, regional medical hub, based on the "medical home" model where most patient needs are met under one roof.

Services include primary and secondary care, outpatient surgeries, prenatal care, pediatrics, dental care, radiology, and laboratory services.

Supervisor Gioia led the effort to replace the cramped, aging Richmond Health Center.

He's also leading efforts to increase partnerships between the new county health center and Doctors Hospital and

the LifeLong Brookside Clinic.

The Health Center project received a significant boost in 2009, with a \$12 million Federal grant. San Pablo officials worked cooperatively with the County to locate the new Health Center in their city in record time.

For more, check the Center's at www.cchealth.org/services/wchc or contact Terrance Cheung at 510-374-3231 or terrance.cheung@bos.cccounty.us.

"The state-of-the-art medical center... offers a modern, regional medical hub, based on the "medical home" model where most patient needs are met under one roof."



Kensington Now "HeartSafe"

Other West County Communities on Their Way

Supervisor Gioia attended a recent meeting of the Kensington Fire District to help designate Kensington as a HeartSafe Community under a program established in 2009 by Contra Costa County Emergency Medical Services and the American Heart Association.

To earn the designation, communities must take steps toward placing Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in public locations, educating residents on using them, and increasing awareness of cardiovascular emergencies, including heart attack, stroke, and sudden cardiac arrest.

AEDs and CPR improve cardiac emergency survival rates. Supervisor Gioia, whose father died of cardiac arrest, has led efforts to expand the program throughout the County.

In addition to Kensington, the City of El Cerrito is also a HeartSafe Community. Other communities in West County making progress towards the designation include Richmond and El Sobrante.

The Kensington effort is in partnership with the El Cerrito Fire Department, which contracts with the community to provide fire services.

AEDs are now located in the Kensington Library and the Arlington Church, and will soon be at the Kensington Community Center and the Chevron Gas Station on Arlington Blvd.

For more on Contra Costa's HeartSafe program check its at www.cchealth.org/ems/heartsafe.php, or contact Pamela Dodson, with the County's Emergency Medical Services, at 925-646-4690 or email.

Domestic Violence Programs Receive Big Boost from Federal Government

Contra Costa programs to help victims of domestic violence recently received a major funding boost with news that the County's Zero Tolerance for Domestic Violence Initiative received a \$900,000 federal grant.

The grant will help fund the new West Contra Costa Family Justice Center in Richmond, which Supervisor Gioia is helping to secure a permanent home for in the Civic Center area.

That site, expected to open by next year, would be a partnership between Contra Costa County and the City of Richmond.

The Center, one of several in the nation, provides comprehensive one-stop services for victims and their children, including legal advocacy, offender monitoring, and assistance obtaining restraining orders.

The grant will help several County domestic violence prevention efforts, is from a special program run by the U.S. Justice Department's Office on Violence Against Women.

For now, the West County Family Justice Center is providing services at the Richmond Police Substation at the Hilltop Mall located at 2200 Hilltop Mall Road, Richmond and is open weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. (510-965-4949).

The County's Zero Tolerance for Domestic Violence, an initiative of the Board of Supervisors, is a collaboration of numerous organizations and agencies including Bay Area Legal Aid, Community Violence Solutions, STAND! For Families Free of Violence; the Richmond, Concord, and Antioch police departments, and We Care Services for Children.

For more, contact Terrance Cheung at

Community Campaign for a Rebuilt El Cerrito Library

A group of library fans is working to rebuild the county's aging and cramped El Cerrito Library, which was built in 1949 and last renovated in 1960.

For more information, including on how you can help, check the campaign's website at www.newelcerritolibrary.org or email them at newelcerritolibrary@gmail.com.

The grassroots effort, steadily growing momentum, is a hub of fundraising and support for revamping the popular facility on 6510 Stockton Avenue.

Air District Funds Richmond's Free Local Bus Service

As part of its commitment to lower greenhouse gas emissions and encourage sustainable energy practices, the City of Richmond is entering its second year of providing free local bus service.

The Richmond Circular Shuttle is funded by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (Air District) which Supervisor Gioia chairs.

The Air District supports a variety of programs aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The main Richmond shuttle, which operates on weekdays from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., travels a five mile radius connecting riders to businesses, health services, recreation, transit stations and residential neighborhoods.

A second free shuttle connects the Marina Bay neighborhood with the Richmond Civic Center and BART station.

For more information on the shuttle including a map of its route and stops see the City's at www.ci.richmond.ca.us/index.aspx?NID=2508.

Richmond Coastal Cleanup 2012 Breaks Volunteer Records

More than 800 volunteers, the majority of whom were young people, showed up at this year's Richmond shoreline Coastal Cleanup, sponsored by Supervisor Gioia, in partnership with the City of Richmond and the non-profit Watershed Project.

This This was the 22nd year Supervisor Gioia has sponsored the annual event, which cleans up the south Richmond shoreline and wetlands.

Volunteers headed out along the San Francisco Bay Trail picking up trash and debris, returning to Shimada Park at noon for a free healthy lunch.

This event is part of California Coastal Cleanup Day where more than 80,000 volunteers statewide clean up our beaches and shorelines.

Event sponsors included Chevron, Mechanics Bank, and the Lawrence Berkeley National Lab, which is planning a second campus on the Bay, alongside the clean-up area.

Check out this great news story and video about the cleanup on the Richmond Confidential website at www.richmondconfidential.org.



Toy, Coat and Hoodie Holiday Drive for Richmond Youth Kicks Off

For the 14th year, Supervisor Gioia is marking the holiday season by sponsoring a Toy and Coat Drive for the children at Verde Elementary School in North Richmond.

However, this year, the effort is partnering with the RYSE Youth Center (www.rysecenter.org) to expand the effort to include toys and hoodies for Richmond area youth up to 14 years old.

The goal is to collect new toys and jackets for all Verde students from kindergarten to 6th grade, and toys and hoodies for Richmond and North Richmond youth (up to age 14) to be distributed at the RYSE Youth Center.

Cash donations are also accepted which will be used to buy toys, coats, and hoodies.

Thanks in advance for your help. The kindness and generosity of our community has made this a successful event every year.

Items can be dropped off by December 7th at one of two locations:

Office of County Supervisor John Gioia
11780 San Pablo Ave., Suite D, El Cerrito, 94530
(One block north of the El Cerrito Del Norte BART station)

RYSE Youth Center
205 - 41st St. Richmond, CA 94804
(One block off MacDonald Ave. across from Mechanics Bank)

Donations (in check form) can also be dropped off or mailed to Supervisor Gioia's Office by **December 7th**, and should be made payable to: "RYSE Center," c/o 2012 Toy and Coat Drive.

For more information, contact Luz Gomez at 510-374-3231 or luz.gomez@bos.cccounty.us

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Other Elected Officials

House of Representatives:
 Congressman George Miller, III
 (District 7)
 (510) 262-6500 - Richmond Office
 Congressman John Garamendi
 (District 10)
 (925) 757-7187 - District Office

State Senate & Assembly:
 Senator Mark DeSalunier
 (District 7)
 (925) 602-6593 - District Office
 Senator Loni Hancock
 (District 9)
 (510) 286-1333 - District Office
 Assemblywoman Nancy Skinner
 (District 14)
 (510) 559-1406 - District Office
 Assemblywoman Susan Bonilla
 (District 11)
 (925) 372-7990 - District Office

Commission & Volunteer Opportunities

Interested in community issues? Want to get involved? The County has numerous citizen boards that advise the Supervisors on a range of issues. For a complete list of openings check the county's website at <http://contra.napanet.net/maddybook/>. Click on Board Advisory Body Information. Applications are available on-line, or through our office. There are current openings on:

County Fire Protection District
 Vicki Wisher—925-941-3318

El Sobrante Municipal Advisory Council
 Terrance Cheung - 510-374-3231

Kensington Municipal Advisory Council
 Kate Rauch - 510-374-3231

West County Alcohol Policy Working Group
 Luz Gomez - 510-374-3231

Regular Public Meetings

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
 Meets at 9:30 a. m. every Tuesday at the County Administration Building, 651 Pine St, in Martinez

El Cerrito City Council
 Meets at 7 p.m. on the first and third Mondays of every month at the El Cerrito City Hall, 10890 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito

El Sobrante Municipal Advisory Council
 Meets at 7 p.m. on the second Wednesday of every month at the El Sobrante Library, 4191 Appian Way, off San Pablo Dam Road

Kensington Municipal Advisory Council
 Meets at 7 p.m. the last Tuesday of every month at the Kensington Community Center, 59 Arlington

North Richmond Municipal Advisory Council
 Meets at 5 p.m. on the third Thursday of every month at 515 Silver Avenue in North Richmond

Pinole City Council
 Meets at 6 p.m. on the first and third Tuesday at Pinole City Hall, 2131 Pear Street, Pinole

Richmond City Council
 Meets at 7 p.m. on the first and third Tuesday at Richmond City Hall, 440 Civic Center Plaza, Richmond

San Pablo City Council
 Meets at 7 p.m. on the first and third Monday of every month at San Pablo City Hall, 13831 San Pablo Avenue, Maple Hall, Building Two, San Pablo