



# NEWS RELEASE

Contra Costa County  
**JOHN GIOIA** (joy-a)  
District One  
Board of Supervisors

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **PARENTS OF NORTH RICHMOND BURN VICTIM THANK SON'S SUPPORTERS**

### How to contribute

If you're interested in making a donation to the family, you may bring a check to any Mechanics Bank branch office or send a check to:

The Argueta Rodriguez Fund  
Mechanics Bank  
3170 Hilltop Mall Road  
Richmond, CA 94806

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact  
Supervisor John Gioia's office at 510-374-3231

**SAN JOSE, Calif.**, Surrounded by nurses, doctors, and supporters of their son, Donaldo Argueta Rodriguez and Guillermina Zaragoza, parents of Julian Zaragoza, will be giving their first public thanks to the hundreds of people who have opened their hearts and donated to help the family. Last December 21, 5 year old Julian was badly burned to more than 70 percent of his body in a Christmas tree fire that left his family homeless, and killed his twin brother Francisco.

For the last two months, Julian has spent painful days and nights with the skilled doctors, nurses, and physical therapists at the Santa Clara Valley Medical Center's Burn Unit who are treating his injuries. Through the constant bandage changes and cries for support, his mother and father have been at their son's side.

"We couldn't have done this alone," said Donaldo. "Our family will forever be grateful to the hospital staff for helping us and to the public for all your generosity."

30 year Contra Costa County resident Stephanie Surls, who has been volunteering for the Richmond Fire Department's annual toy drive for the past eight years, was at the fire station on December 21 bagging toys when the call about the family's house fire came in. She's been so moved by the family that she's making it her mission to continue fundraising for them by placing donation jars in Walnut Creek businesses where she lives. "It's such a tragedy," said Surls. "I want to do everything I can to help them."

Offers of help are extending beyond the family's temporary stay in San Jose. Walnut Creek real estate agent Linda Hellman says she'll work other realtors when the family returns to Richmond so they have a furnished home. "The family has enough to think about," said Hellman. "They shouldn't have to worry about where they're going to live when they come back."

(more)

## **2-2-2-2-2 Julian Zaragoza News Conference**

Supervisor John Gioia, whose district includes North Richmond where the fire happened, wants to make sure the donations the family is receiving is kept in a trust account for Julian's long-term care.

"Julian is going through therapy with so much dignity, I'm humbled and inspired by his courage," said Supervisor Gioia. "Looking at him, I really feel there's hope for his future."

"Julian has been such an inspiration to everyone who's been caring for him." Said Dr. Yvonne Karanas, who has been leading the team caring for Julian's injuries. "He has such a huge heart and incredible strength and those qualities will help him as he faces years of procedures and surgeries.

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