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# MEMORIES AND *Yummy Food*

**A**s a kid who grew up in Sacramento, I was fortunate to attend the California State Fair on a regular basis. So many memories were made with my family and friends. The rides, concerts and different foods became necessary staples for each time we visited. I mean, who doesn't love a corn dog (I love corndogs!) and some fresh lemonade while listening to your favorite band on the main stage? Due to the nature of my career, I have experienced how much work goes into putting on a festival or fair. While the nuts and bolts of logistics are extremely important in having a successful event, there is something extra special that is needed every time to create a lasting impression on people. It is the heart, soul and culture of the community that keep people coming back year after year.

Let's be honest; San Joaquin County has some of the best festivals in the nation. They are great for encouraging us to share our heritage, learn about a new culture, embrace trying new things and celebrate



each other. With that in mind, a few years ago, I had the opportunity to work with the people behind planning Festa Italiana! Being that I am Italian, I was super excited to become involved. What a wonderful opportunity to put on an event that speaks to my roots. Yes, this and other festivals are more than just the food but hang with me. There is something about gathering around the table with family and friends while enjoying some delicious food and maybe a glass of wine too!

So, if you are looking for a festival to try out, look into the

St. Basil Greek Food Festival that is featured in this *HERLIFE* Magazine edition. It is a great event next month that embodies all things Greek such as dancing, language, food, values and traditions. Grab your friends and family and head over to the Greek Food Festival at St. Basil's Greek Orthodox Church in Stockton on the first weekend in September to create more memories with the ones you love.

And, as I start planning the 2026 Festa Italiana!, I just have to figure out how to add Italian flair to a corndog! There must be a way!

*Enjoy every moment,*

*Anna*





*The first  
dollar they  
carried*

• 1915



• 20

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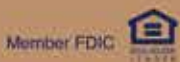
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• 1935



# 15

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### *Loukoumades, Dolmades, Baklava, Oh My!*

Teaser: Even if you're not of Greek heritage, you will be saying Καλημέρα, Καλησπέρα and Καληνύχτα after attending St. Basil's annual Greek Food Festival next month. It's an undertaking of love by the women, men and clergy of Saint Basil Orthodox Church. Note: Kalimera means good morning, Kalispera wishes one good evening, and Kalinixta bids good night.



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Lincoln Center

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## MAGAZINE

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# FOOD & WINE Festivals

Our own San Joaquin County is often called the “food basket of the world,” thanks to fertile soil and a Mediterranean-like climate for favorable growing conditions. It’s no wonder, then, that we are blessed with so many festivals that celebrate the culture and commodities our county is most known for serving up. Mark your calendar and enjoy a taste of what’s to come for the remainder of 2025 and into next year!

## AUGUST 2

**Obon Adori and Festival**  
Stockton Buddhist Temple  
Info: [stocktonbuddhisttemple.org](http://stocktonbuddhisttemple.org)

## SEPTEMBER 12-15

**Lodi Grape Festival and Harvest Fair**  
Lodi Grape Festival Grounds  
Info: [grapefestival.com](http://grapefestival.com)

## APRIL TBA

**Lodi Beer Fest & State BBQ Championship**  
Lodi Grape Festival Grounds  
Info: [grapefestival.com](http://grapefestival.com)

## AUGUST 2

**Stockton Soul Food Festival**  
Weber Point Events Center  
Info: [visitstockton.org](http://visitstockton.org)

## OCTOBER 5-6

**Manteca Pumpkin Fair**  
100 Block N. Main St., Manteca  
Info: [mantecapumpkinfair.org](http://mantecapumpkinfair.org)

## MAY TBA

**Linden Cherry Festival**  
Linden Elementary School Grounds  
Info: [visitstockton.org](http://visitstockton.org)

## AUGUST 9

**Annual Taste of the Delta**  
Delta Diamond Farms, Isleton  
Info: [tasteofthedelta.com](http://tasteofthedelta.com)

## OCTOBER 11

**The Great Central Valley Foodie Festival**  
San Joaquin County Fairgrounds  
Info: [facebook.com/events/597927656072045](https://facebook.com/events/597927656072045)

## JUNE TBA

**Jewish Food Fair**  
Temple Israel, Stockton  
Info: [templeisraelstockton.com](http://templeisraelstockton.com)

## AUGUST 9-10

**Stockton Barrio Fiesta**  
Filipino Center Plaza, 6 W. Main St., Stockton  
Info: [downtownstockton.org](http://downtownstockton.org)

## FEBRUARY 14-15, 2026

**Lodi Wine and Chocolate Weekend**  
Location TBA  
Info: [lodiwineandchocolate.com](http://lodiwineandchocolate.com)

## JUNE 7

**Festa Italiana!**  
Lodi Grape Festival Grounds  
Info: [festa-italiana.com](http://festa-italiana.com)

## AUGUST 15

**Summerfest**  
Lincoln Center  
Info: [lincolncentershops.com](http://lincolncentershops.com)

## FEBRUARY 19-22

**Ripon Almond Blossom Festival**  
Mistlin Park  
Info: [riponchamber.org](http://riponchamber.org)

## JUNE TBA

**Taste of Jazz**  
Weber Point Events Center  
Info: [visitstockton.org](http://visitstockton.org)

## SEPTEMBER 5-7

**Greek Food Festival**  
St. Basil Greek Orthodox Church  
Info: [stocktongreekfoodfest.com](http://stocktongreekfoodfest.com)

## MARCH 28

**Lodi Wine Festival**  
Lodi Grape Festival & Event Center, Lodi  
Info: [grapefestival.com](http://grapefestival.com)

## JUNE TBA

**San Joaquin Ag Fest**  
San Joaquin County Fairgrounds  
Info: [sanjoaquinagfest.org](http://sanjoaquinagfest.org)

## SEPTEMBER 6-7

**Seafood & Soul Festival**  
San Joaquin County Fairgrounds  
Info: [blacktobusiness209@gmail.com](mailto:blacktobusiness209@gmail.com)

## APRIL 24-26

**San Joaquin Asparagus Festival**  
San Joaquin County Fairgrounds, Stockton  
Info: [sanjoaquinasparagusfestival.net](http://sanjoaquinasparagusfestival.net)







GAYLE: “In the early days, ladies of the church from Stockton, Lodi, Manteca and Tracy had been making the pastries at home and bringing them to the festival,” Gayle recalled. “They gave me their authentic Greek recipes on scraps of paper and I put them into a binder. Then, using those recipes, we began gathering in the church kitchen to make the foods on site.”

# LOUKOUMADES, DOLMADES, BAKLAVA, OH MY!

BY MARY RAFFETO | PHOTOS BY CONRAD BORBA

Everyone loves a great festival, and St. Basil's annual Greek Food Festival is truly one of the greatest. This family-friendly event has drawn crowds for 65 years and will take place again September 5 through 7, 2025, on the St. Basil's church grounds at 920 W. March Lane in Stockton.

In keeping with tradition, numerous food stations will sell authentic Greek main dishes and desserts, all homemade from original recipes. The festival is enjoyable for all ages and provides plenty of seating, indoors and out, to gather with friends and take it all in, from people-watching to Greek dancing. A variety of shopping booths, entertainment and live music will round out the event as well as church tours for anyone who wishes to see the beautiful facility and learn about Greek Orthodox Christianity.

## THE BEGINNING

Long ago, in 1961, much of March Lane was still empty and undeveloped. That year, Saint Basil Orthodox Church purchased its current lot with plans to build a small hall and kitchen before relocating from their Stanislaus Street location in downtown Stockton. In its early years, the Greek food festival took place in several other locations, including the Civic Auditorium, Delta Community College and the Scottish Rite Temple. In 1986, the church was finally able to hold the festival on its own grounds. To this day many people come back year after year, even some who now live out of state, to help with this special event.

Generations of attendees and volunteers have fond memories of participating in the festival for decades, some all their lives. Gayle Maduros is one of those people, having overseen the festival's pastry production for close to 25 years. Fifty-five years ago, when she and her husband, Bill, moved from Chicago to California, they didn't know anyone locally. "The church became our family," she explained.

"In the early days, ladies of the church from Stockton, Lodi, Manteca and Tracy had been making the pastries at home and bringing them to the festival," Gayle recalled. "They gave me their authentic Greek recipes on scraps of paper and I put them into a binder. Then, using those recipes, we began gathering in the church kitchen to make the foods on site. The preparations took two to three weeks and were really something of a social event," she laughed. "They even put a TV in the room where we worked so that the older ladies could keep up with their soap operas."

## TRANSITIONS

The cooking was steeped in tradition, and change was difficult for some. When Gayle wanted to start using a machine to speed up the production of loukoumades, the small spheres of fried donut batter served in honey syrup, some of the older members became grim-faced and insisted the popular treats would never be the same. Luckily, Gayle's instincts were spot-on and the tiny, machine-cut treats were indeed the same as those painstakingly made by hand. "Exactly the same," Gayle said, laughing as she reminisced about

their suspicions.

As luck would have it, the old-school skeptics were ultimately won over by Gayle's mother-in-law, Alexandra Maduros. Alexandra had owned a Greek restaurant in Manhattan, Kansas, and was an outstanding cook. She fit right in and quickly earned their trust. Of Norwegian and Swedish descent, Gayle distinctly lacked a Greek pedigree but was accepted as something of an honorary Greek by virtue of having married into a Greek family and her ongoing involvement with the Orthodox Church.

Not only are all the festival foods homemade to this day, Gayle said "very few" frozen ingredients are used in the process. The one exception is a special filo dough that they order from New Jersey by the case. "We found that this filo is of the highest quality and has the best taste. It's an important ingredient when you consider all the foods filo is used for, the sweet baklava desserts and the savory spanakopita, to name just two of the most popular dishes," she explained.

## OH, THE FOOD!

According to Gayle, no food on the festival menu requires more advanced planning than the dolmades, all 5,000 of them. Classic dolmades are grape leaves stuffed with a seasoned blend of rice and meat and topped with avgolemono, a creamy lemon sauce. There are no canned or preserved grape leaves to be found here, Gayle assured. The dolmades-making work party at church is a finely tuned assembly line producing the savory specialty, each containing tender perfection in every bite.

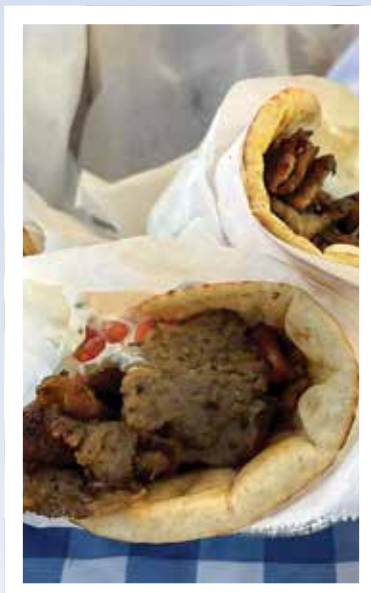
"Now even our priests join us to make the foods," Gayle said. "Father Gabriel Cupsa and Father Pete Sotiras join us for lunch and it's a nice social time with everyone sitting at long tables, working together." Deeply fond of the parish, its Greek Food Festival and all who work so hard to produce it, Gayle affirmed, "It's a tradition we hope to always carry on."

There are special teams in charge of cooking the many foods including roast chicken, calamari, hummus, meatballs, gyros and spanakopita. Over the years, they have refined which

recipes work best for every dish. Gayle set her personal record for production the year she made twenty-two casseroles of galactoboureko, a traditional Greek custard stirred slowly and patiently over low heat on the stove. "It requires gallons and gallons of milk and dozens of eggs," she mused. It's hard work, but Gayle and all the festival cooks are proud that every item is still made from authentic old recipes, by hand, using the freshest and best ingredients.

## THE IMPACT


The money generated by the yearly festival goes to support a variety of community programs, both local and afar, via the Ministries Charities of the Greek Orthodox Church. Funds are donated to Hospice of San Joaquin, Stockton Women's Center, St. Mary's Dining Hall and the Food Bank. Donations are also made to The Metropolis in San Francisco for education, seminars and other worthwhile endeavors approved by the Greek Orthodox Church.











**PETER:** “After all these years the institutional knowledge held by this group of experienced people who put on this event and then hand that knowledge down—it’s just a force of its own at this point. It’s a wonderful phenomenon at the parishioner level that allows this to continue.”

Peter Koulouris, past president of St. Basil Parish and director of the Greek Food Festival, shared, “Our family roots go way back. In 1900, my paternal grandfather’s family was the very first Greek family to settle in Stockton.” Peter’s lifelong love of the festival began when he was just seven years old. “One of my favorite childhood memories is of enjoying the koulourakia, the traditional butter cookies known for their distinctive twisted shape. “My mother, Mary Koulouris, was in charge of the loukoumades booth. Hers were the best around, and she was very happy when the loukoumades machine was donated. It makes me smile to remember it,” he reminisced warmly.

“‘Bigger, Better, Grecker!’ That’s our festival motto,” Peter said with infectious enthusiasm. While it’s hard to imagine the Greek Food Festival getting any bigger, better or more Greek than it already is, Peter is achieving exactly that. As the festival director, he is deeply committed to upholding the traditions, especially ensuring food quality, while always implementing new ways to improve the festival experience.

## THE ENVIRONMENT

This year Peter will ensure visitors stay cool and comfortable via overhead shade cloth and an outdoor misting system identical to those used at the Acropolis in Greece. New foods will be featured, and he has booked a Bay Area group, KYMATA, to perform live music. He predicts that the new taverna area with even more seating will be the most popular spot on the grounds. The taverna will serve imported Greek beer, IPAs, beers on tap, select wines from local vintners and a variety of refreshing nonalcoholic beverages. A snow cone booth and carnival area for kids are sure to be just as well received.

Asked about his own must-have favorite foods, Peter replied instantly, “Lamb chops. The lamb chops are phenomenal! And the calamari is just outstanding. The gyros, pastries and the baklava, definitely.” He is just as enthused about this year’s new souvlaki and said, “They are truly authentic, just like the ones served in the villages of Greece.”

In regard to the process of putting on such a big event, Peter elaborated, “One thing that might surprise people is the amount of work involved to put on a three-day event of this caliber, and how massive the event is. It’s a heck of an operation. But our team leaders are awesome,” he emphasized. “After all these years the institutional knowledge held by this group of experienced people who put on this event and then hand that knowledge down—it’s just a force of its own at this point. It’s a wonderful phenomenon at the parishioner level that allows this to continue.”

Like Gayle, Peter enjoys a strong connection and sense of family within their parish. “I love the festival,” he said. “I’ve loved it my entire life, and I’m always looking for ways to make the experience even better for those who attend. In fact, the community itself, by attending, is every bit as important as all the volunteers who make the festival happen and I am so grateful because we love the church, we love our parish, and we love being able to benefit so many people.” ♦

*Tickets are \$5 at the door and children 11 and under are admitted free with an adult. For tickets and more information, please visit [stockton-greekfoodfest.com](http://stockton-greekfoodfest.com) or call 209-478-7564.*



**66<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL**

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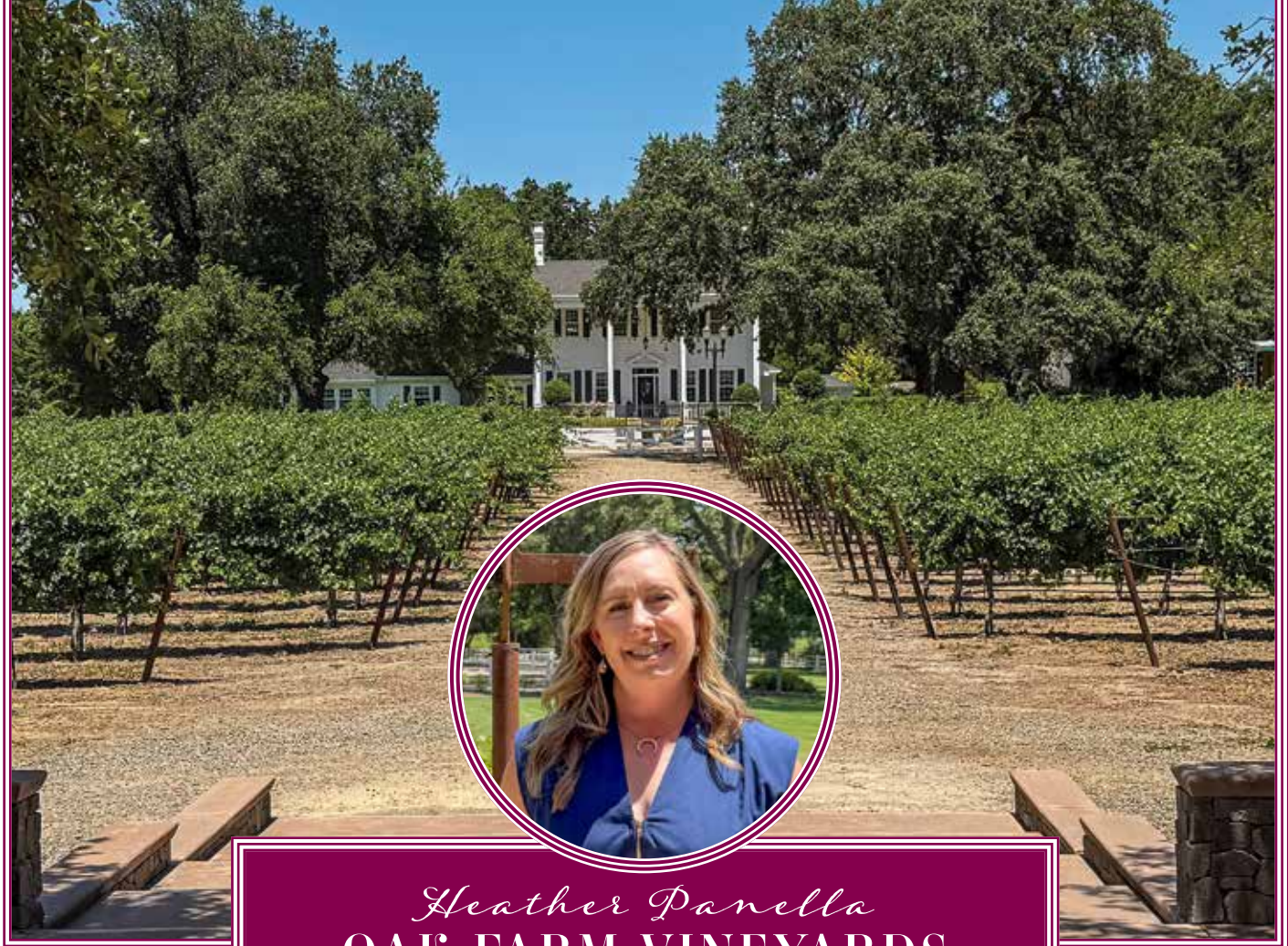
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STORY & PHOTOS BY RACHEL FENTON

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*Viticulture is a staple of life in our part of the world, and the vintners are dedicated to sharing their love of the earth, its fruit and winemaking. This month, HERLIFE Magazine visits three local wineries and their histories.*





*Heather Panella*  
**OAK FARM VINEYARDS**

**H**idden away in northern Lodi, Oak Farm Vineyards is a luxurious oasis for wine lovers to relax and stroll. It's quiet yet vibrant with life; the air is full of the sound of rustling leaves and running water mingled with the soft conversations of friends sharing a bottle of wine. The artistic vision and tireless labor of Heather Panella and her husband, Daniel, has evolved since the winery's early beginnings in 2004. Together, they transformed the former cattle ranch and grain farm into the iconic property it is today, a welcoming place for hosting events, dining and, of course, wine tasting.

Oak Farm Vineyards began as a boutique winery, producing only around five thousand cases per year, but Heather and Daniel quickly realized both their growth and their developing vision for the winery would require an expansion. "One of my fondest memories of this building was standing on the pad of dirt with my husband in the middle of February," Heather laughed. "It was quite chilly as we were counting the loads of dirt coming in to build the pad for the tasting room." They have been deeply invested in Oak Farm Vineyards' growth from the ground up.

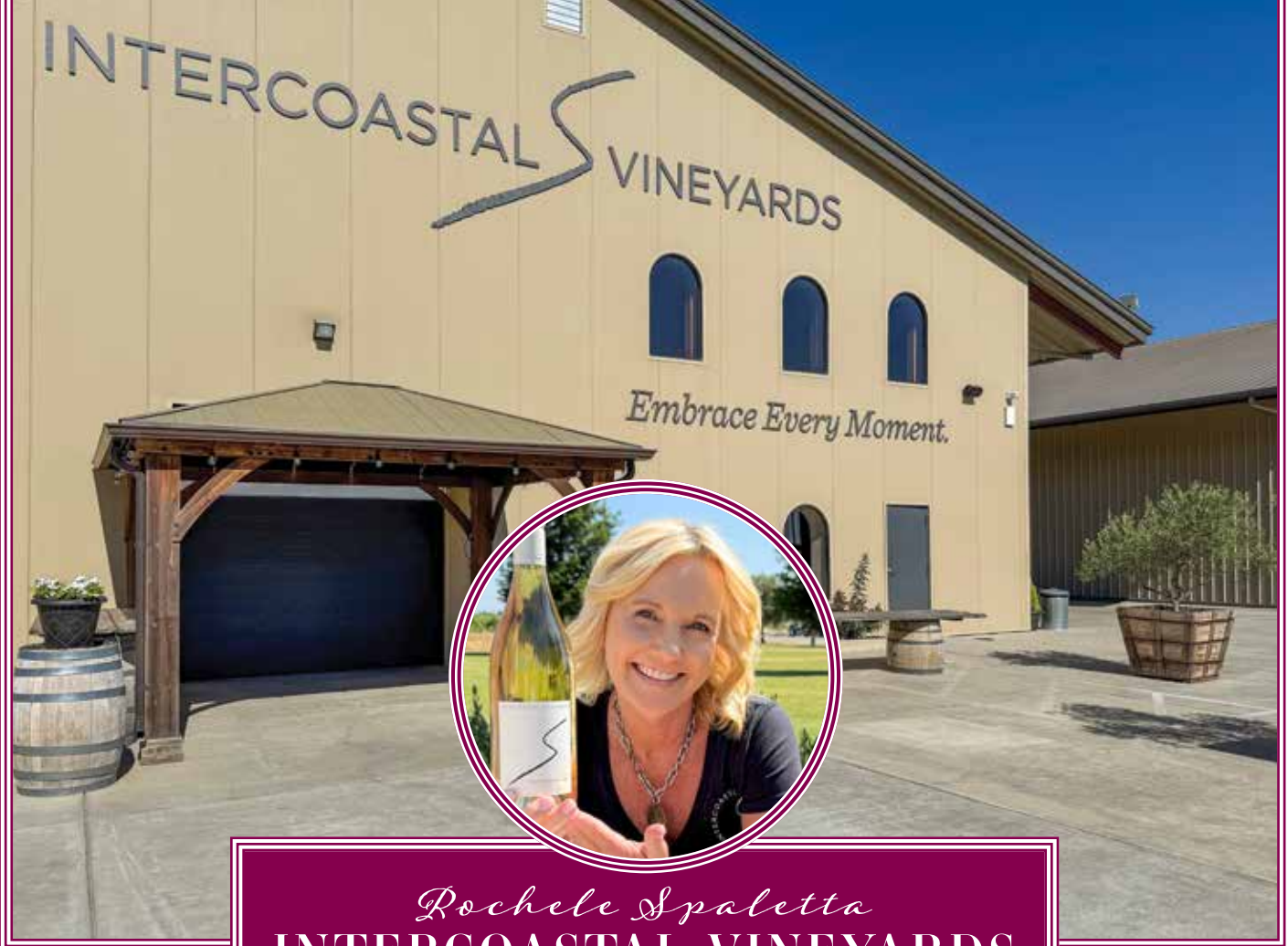
As well as a new tasting room, they built the warehouse to facilitate the case goods and barrels and allow them to store everything onsite; they most recently added a commercial kitchen and culinary experience to their offerings. "The food is the bow on the package," Heather said. "It really gathers and combines what we've wanted to do with the winery." The commercial kitchen has bloomed under the

artistic hand of Chef Lacey Franklin, who joined the team in 2023. Embracing the agriculture of the Central Valley, their farm-to-fork menu focuses on local and seasonal offerings with both simple plates and more complex meals. Each dish is expertly crafted to complement Oak Farm's wine portfolio.

Winemaking is not the only art at Oak Farm Vineyards. Heather's eye for beauty and detail is evident in the property's manicured landscaping and shaded alcoves. Each corner of the property is curated to be a treat for the senses, from the spacious courtyard and the bocce ball court to the barrel room for events and the intimate east patio for wine club members. But while they also host private events and weddings, Heather emphasized their passion for giving back to the community. "Having a company is also about what you can do for the community and give back." They have donated toward and hosted fundraisers for organizations such as Lodi House, the Woodbridge and Stockton Fire Departments, The One-Eighty and the Mary Graham Foundation.

Together, the property, location, and vision are all part of what makes Oak Farm Vineyards unique in its own right, helping them stand out for what they offer to the community and what they give back. Whether a guest is visiting for a tasting, a meal or support a good cause, Oak Farm Vineyard stands as a masterfully crafted homage to Heather's and Daniel's vision and passion, inviting all those who come to stay and linger awhile. ♦





*Rochele Spaletta*  
**INTERCOASTAL VINEYARDS**

**I**ntercoastal Vineyards sports a casual yet sophisticated ambiance that puts both the experienced sommelier and novice wine taster at ease. The winery's breezy front lawn, spacious patio and tank room invite you to gather around the table and leave your worries at the door. Rochele Spaletta, the co-proprietor with her husband, Mitch, is a constant presence at Intercoastal, and her tireless passion is one of the reasons for its warm and inviting air. "I want people to feel like they're coming home...everyone! Visitors, members, family and pets! Making everyone feel valued and important is our philosophy here," she said.

Intercoastal Vineyard's motto, Embrace Every Moment, is emblazoned across their main building and intertwined into the very beginnings of the winery. Intercoastal began in 2017 as an online-only storefront, and the Spalettas launched their brick-and-mortar winery in the tumult of 2020. Not to be deterred by the difficulties of that year, they continued to develop their brand and focus on their art of winemaking. They also concentrated on designing their signature modern and witty products such as their Canpanion series, premium canned California wine on-the-go, inspired both by the limitations of travel and their love of our favorite companions, pets. Most recently, they launched their In Love series with puns such as You Make Me Blush and "You Had Me At Merlot" adorning the back label.

Rochele is no stranger to embracing the moment despite difficulties or the unknown. She left a successful 22-year career in technol-

ogy sales to embark on the adventure that became Intercoastal. Her work in sales ignited her love for people, but as much as she enjoyed her career, she knew it wasn't truly her passion: "I didn't want my one job to define me," Rochele said. Her husband, Mitch, had always had a love for farming as a second-generation farmer, and she knew she was still looking for the thing that she could call her life passion. Together, they created Intercoastal, the perfect intersection of the things they love.

Intercoastal Vineyards is never stagnant. It continues to grow and innovate while accepting each moment as the gift that it is, like Rochele's outlook on life. She sees every experience, both the good and the challenging, as a chance for building something new. From her first job wrapping gifts at a small boutique in high school to her career after college, each moment has given her a gift she still uses to this day. "There are many hats we wear," she said. "You take every piece and part of what you learn along the journey of life and find that you're applying it to every day."

There are many exciting things in development for the winery, but at the end of the day, the team's greatest desire for Intercoastal is to invite you into their family by sharing their love of winemaking. One of the wine club members told Rochele, "I'm not just greeted here, I'm welcomed here," and Rochele cited it as the highest compliment she could have received. "Those are the moments that make me feel like I'm doing what I'm supposed to do," she said. ♦





## *Liz Bokisch* **BOKISCH VINEYARDS**

Nestled among the Clements hills, Bokisch Vineyards is one of California's finest gems. Their tasting room and patio look out over a rolling sea of grape vines, broken only by clusters of majestic California oak trees and the white spires of owl boxes. The patio furniture and gazebos are perfectly placed to catch the spectacular sunset views. Once you step foot onto the property, the frenetic pace of the daily grind is replaced with the slow and seasonal Mediterranean way of life: a love of food, wine and community that's as beautiful as it is contagious.

Winemaking has been a lifelong love of owners Liz and Markus Bokisch, and their passion is evident in both their care of their vineyards and the masterful wines they create. They purchased the property that would eventually become their family-run winery in 1995, and they celebrate their 25th anniversary of winemaking this year. They lived near Markus' family in Spain during their first few years of marriage and it was there that they took advantage of the Spanish food and lifestyle, a slow-paced, intentional way of living specifically focused on food and wine as an art form. "Creating interesting recipes that are beautifully presented, taking fresh ingredients and combining flavors together and marrying them with the wines – food and wine is a magical experience," Liz says. It's an experience she loves to share with those around her.

Their focus on Spanish grape varietals such as Albariño and

Tempranillo is one of the things that sets Bokisch Vineyards apart from its competitors, as they were one of the first to pioneer growing these particular grapes in this region. Their passion for Spanish wines is obvious by the quality of their product. Liz spoke proudly of their intentionality in every step of the winemaking process, from hand-harvesting and selecting the grapes to their native yeast fermentation projects and aging techniques. Being able to share their love of Spanish wine with people through a product they have nurtured from beginning to end is one of the aspects of this job Liz loves the most. She says, "It's such an honor to have your wine shared at the table for family celebrations or weddings, or all occasions; it's an honor to be a part of their lives with a product we've worked so hard to achieve."

Much like the Spanish lifestyle itself, Bokisch Vineyards is closely connected to the turning of the seasons. Both their winemaking process and their winery events embrace the ebb and flow of the earth's bounty. From fully organic and regenerative farming practices to their summer Night in Ibiza and autumnal Harvest Moon events, they marry the Mediterranean lifestyle with the California environment, creating events that are culturally tied to what they do and what they love. From the bud break of spring to the quiet rest of winter, Bokisch Vineyards invites you to join them in their deep connection to the land and delight with them in the joys of food, wine and community. ♦



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# QUE SYRAH, SYRAH!

BY MELISSA HAINES LAVIN

*Cabernet sauvignon may claim rights to the dinner table as the king of wine, but syrah shares the stage with beautiful qualities that earn its place on wine lists at bistros, restaurants and wine bars.*



Although both wines have some characteristics in common, such as earthy black pepper and hints of mint or eucalyptus, the warmer-climate syrah has rich notes of licorice, mocha and clove spices that make it a delightful addition to favorite traditional and vegetarian dinner recipes. Additionally, tannic and acidic qualities of syrah provide a sturdy structure for aging your favorite bottles; these wines can develop vegetative or leathery notes and may be enjoyed as a single varietal or blended.

Even though the color of syrah is deeper than that of cabernet, the softer textures of syrah can be found in wines of the Walla Walla and Columbia River regions of Washington State, as they provide perfect growing conditions for the Syrah grape to flourish without harsh heat spikes. Thriving in stony graphite soil, similar characteristics are

found in syrah wines of the Rhone Valley of France, where they are delightfully blended with two other red wines, grenache and mourvedre, to create a beautiful GSM that's absolutely stunning with pâté and baked fig-brie galette with crostini. The GSM blend originated in the Southern Rhone region of France and contains fair shares of these three grapes designed to show the favored qualities of spice,

dark fruit and tannic structure.

## OLD WORLD VS. NEW WORLD

Old World-style syrah is revered for its smoky, rich flavors that remain perfect for slow-cooked and stewed meats and vegetables. The description refers to the hand-crafted styles produced throughout Europe and the Mediterranean regions, considered by



most as the birthplace of wine.

When a wine is called New World, it often refers to the modern method of making wine, from vineyard management to barrel and tank aging, which continue to evolve as technology supports efficiencies throughout the wine-making process. New World wines can have a brighter fruit or berry component and still maintain the delicate nature of an Old World style. Age of wine is not necessarily the difference between the two and one is not better than the other, as each style can combine the art form of the winemaker with the complementary nuances of the grape.

## SHIRAZ BY ANY OTHER NAME

Shiraz wine has been around at least since the ninth century. It originated in the Persian region of Shiraz, a fine wine-producing area now known as Iran. Shiraz was unique and specific to the region, recognized throughout the world. What is old was made new again when wine producers of the 17th century who wanted to stake their claim among the world's wine consumers had financial means and access to goods produced world-wide, including spices and wines.

The new shiraz grape is identical to the original syrah grape brought to Australia by way of eastern France by James Busby, considered to be the father of Australian wine. Rebranding syrah into shiraz created a new marketing strategy to steal a bit of European spotlight for the emerging wine markets of South Africa and Australia. Working with local and national wine retailers, American wine consumers noticed the "new" shiraz and a wine varietal was reborn and appreciated anew. Shiraz is flourishing Down Under in Barossa, Hunter Valley and Margaret River. Shiraz

is also produced in California, Washington State, France, Chile and New Zealand. Consumers will be delighted to find the familiar pepper spices and blackberry-currant flavors in their glass of shiraz.

## NOT PETITE SIRAH OR DURIF

Some folks ask if syrah is the same as petite sirah. No, it's not a small syrah. The name arises because the petite sirah grapes are so very tiny and tightly wedged in their grape clusters, requiring a great deal of labor to select the best fruit for wines that can be acidic and dry. Oddly, although petite sirah originated in France, discovered by Francois Durif as a syrah hybrid, production is on the decline as vineyard managers have reduced their plantings of petite sirah. We continue to refer to petite sirah as the Durif grape to honor the historical significance of determining the DNA of many old-world varietals. Durif continues to thrive in California and throughout the world's wine regions.

Syrah has many lovely qualities that pair well with the fall menu of root vegetables, roasted tenderloin and saucy Asian dishes. Consider syrah when you order grilled halibut or swordfish. When dessert is chocolate mousse or brandied berry tarts, you may find a serving of syrah wine provides the perfect finish to a beautiful meal. If you are a cigar fan, some smoke shops provide wine-soaked cigars that are terrific as gifts or great to pack for upcoming recreational trips. ♦

**SOURCES:** [decanter.com](http://decanter.com), [en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org), [winefolly.com](http://winefolly.com) and [winespectator.com](http://winespectator.com).



**PLAY**  
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Grove &  
Shumway  
Oak Grove*

San Joaquin County  
**PARKS** [sjparks.com](http://sjparks.com)  
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The advertisement features a large, bold word "PLAY" in dark green. Below it, the text "at Micke Grove & Shumway Oak Grove" is written in a smaller, italicized font. In the bottom left corner, there is a logo for "San Joaquin County PARKS" with a green leaf icon. To the right of the logo is the website "sjparks.com" and the phone number "(209) 953-8800". Social media icons for Instagram and Facebook are also present. The background of the advertisement is a photograph of a disc golf basket in the foreground and a person in a blue shirt and khaki shorts in the background, standing on a grassy field with trees in the distance.





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BY CARRIE SASS

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# CHURCH STREET COFFEE WHERE LOVE BREWS

Church Street Coffee has teamed up with The Well in downtown Stockton to roast and bag the most flavorful coffee beans.

As one of the micro-businesses created by Gospel Center Rescue Mission, Church Street Coffee's roasting team consists of three women who have been through the New Life Program at The Mission. The faith-based New Life Program empowers participants to become positive members of society. Working closely with The Well, they have learned the intricate details of the very competitive coffee business. The Well's Roastery offers a collaborative space designed for coffee enthusiasts and entrepreneurs to learn about coffee roasting and grow their business. The demand for Church Street Coffee is teaching them business and public relations skills as well as building the team's confidence. Aligning with The Well Stockton has brought the dream to life, with a mission to engage, empower and equip entrepreneurs and creatives.

All coffee roasting and production for Church Street Coffee is fulfilled from start to finish at The Well. "Running Church Street Coffee has given me such purpose. I love learning, I enjoy meeting people in the community, and it keeps me busy," shared Laurie Holloway, Church Street Coffee team member. "I learned to roast the coffee beans, bag them and prepare for shipping. My team goes out into the community to sell coffee at events and churches."

The team has created a supply chain to various churches throughout the area, several retail stores including True Value Hardware Stores on Country Club Boulevard and Fremont Street, as well as online sales. They are actively participating in festivals and community events, selling the Church Street Coffee beans and often providing fresh coffee for sale. Recently, they had a booth at Festa Italiana! at the Lodi Grape Festival Grounds, where they sold coffee drinks and were able to spread the word about their business.

Each bag of savory coffee beans is roasted with love, with proceeds supporting the work The Mission is doing for the addicted and homeless in our community. Their Church Street blend is sold in 12-ounce bags of whole beans or single-pot pouches of ground coffee. "We are a small startup but we are starting to grow," Laurie said. "This work makes me feel important, especially since the proceeds go back to the Gospel Rescue Mission programs."

Running Church Street Coffee has given Laurie and her team purpose and the opportunity to serve others while learning the ins and outs of a business. ♦

To learn more about Church Street Coffee, visit [churchstreetcoffee.com](http://churchstreetcoffee.com).



# ORGANIZING A HEALTHY KITCHEN

BY LISA BUTLER

*The saying goes, “While life may be created in the bedroom, it is certainly lived in the kitchen.”*

**F**ueling our bodies and minds, the kitchen is essential to our overall wellness, and our pantry and refrigerator are key in encouraging us to eat healthy. Having these two areas organized and stocked with nourishing food can make menu and meal preparation a snap.

Whether you have a spacious walk-in or a few selected cabinets that serve the purpose, the pantry can lift a weeknight meal or an impromptu lunch to new heights.

## DISCARD AND DISINFECT

The “skinny” on a plentiful pantry is to first get rid of the junk. Survey what is currently in the cupboards and purge any potential pitfalls. It’s fine to have one or two kid-friendly munchies on hand, but keep the pantry lean with fresh choices. Use this time to clean and organize as well. Get rid of any foods that have expired or won’t be eaten.

## STOCK PARTY

Now’s the time to fill our pantry with exciting options! Develop-



ing a healthy pantry doesn’t require a two-hour trip to the grocery store and a colossal food bill. By starting slowly in our pantry progression, we can educate ourselves about the food we’re buying. A well-stocked pantry typically has a few staples.

## CAN IT!

One of the healthiest and easiest canned foods to keep in the pantry is the tomato. Chopped, sauced, diced or whole, tomatoes can help prevent certain cancers and provide bone-strengthening vitamin K. Other canned produce that offers more bang for your buck include green beans, corn, olives, peaches, pears, pineapple and mandarin oranges.

## GO NUTS!

Noshing on nuts such as almonds, walnuts, pecans, pistachios and others can provide protein, fiber and good fats. Organic nut butters are great too; the only ingredients should be nuts and perhaps a little salt. If peanut butter is a potential pitfall, then don’t buy it or keep it out of eyesight. Better yet, try powdered peanut butter. Made from roasted peanuts, most of the fat is removed in the pressing process. Mix with water for a tasty treat or add to smoothies and baked items.



## BEAN TOWN

Keep your favorite beans on hand, either dry or canned. Black, kidney, garbanzo, cannellini and white beans pack a good amount of protein and are filling. Similarly, packs of tuna, salmon and sardines come in handy for a quick salad or sandwich.

## WHOLE GRAINS AND PASTA

Go whole or go home when it comes to bread and pasta. Check that the label says “whole” grain or wheat. Other pantry standards are brown rice, couscous, oatmeal, barley, quinoa and bulgur. Cereal is okay; aim to buy whole-grain and low-sugar varieties.

## FLAVOR FAVES!

Spike your taste buds with condiments! Stocking shelves with your favorite dried herbs and spices lets you change the taste and look of a dish. Keep extra virgin olive oil on hand, plus balsamic vinegar and reduced sodium chicken broth for soups and sauces.

## REFRIGERATOR

Like the pantry, a clean refrigerator is more appealing to the eye and helps keep bacteria at bay. Empty the fridge and freezer contents and do a deep cleaning. Discard any food that has passed its expiration date and throw away any fruits and vegetables that have seen better days.

## THE EYES HAVE IT

When adding the food back in, think healthy food front and cen-

ter! Fruits and vegetables can sometimes be stored in a basket on the counter, but for those that need to be housed in the fridge, make sure they are accessible and eye level. Clean and chop veggies and place in a clear bag or container so they are easy to find.

## BIN IT TO WIN IT!

Stock up on clear bins to separate categories of food. They separate and organize and help you know when to add certain items to the grocery list.

## CUTTING THE PRICE TAG

One of the most important reasons to keep a stocked fridge and pantry is to avoid buying expensive restaurant and take-out meals loaded with fat and calories. Other tips to help save money and time include buying in bulk when possible and shopping at discount stores for staples and/or unique food items; just check the expiration dates. Often, store brands are tastier than their national counterparts.

Prepare meals using less ingredients. Make “Meatless Monday” magnificent with just roasted veggies and brown rice.

Know what you like and don’t like. If you aren’t going to eat it, don’t buy it.

A well-stocked pantry and fridge are appealing and can inspire us to eat healthier. By using ours to our advantage, we keep our wellness and wallet in mind. With a clean sweep and the right staples, we can open the doors to making quick and tasty meals. ♦

**SOURCES:** [rallyhealth.com](http://rallyhealth.com) and [eatingwell.com](http://eatingwell.com).



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## CULINARY ARTS AND CAREER PATHWAYS: HOW THE ONE.PROGRAM PREPARES STUDENTS FOR REAL-WORLD SUCCESS

BY SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

**A**t a recent conference hosted by the San Joaquin County Office of Education (SJCOE), lunchtime was not just a break; it was a lesson in action and service. As more than 100 students and educators wrapped up their morning sessions, a group of student chefs rolled in with trays of tri-tip, barbeque chicken, vegetables and homemade cookies. Their service kept the event running smoothly and the guests focused for an afternoon of learning.

These students were not just volunteering. They are part of one. Culinary, a hands-on culinary arts program within the SJCOE's one. Program. More than just preparing food, the experience gave students a chance to practice key workplace skills such as planning, time management, teamwork, and professionalism that will serve them well

beyond the kitchen.

"It's a real-world business simulation," said Chef Michael Speer, the program's instructor and a working culinary professional. "Students get to experience all facets of the food and hospitality industry in a supportive learning environment."

For students like Malissa, the experience goes even further. She is among a select group participating in ARCH, or Apprenticeships Reaching Career Horizons, a groundbreaking SJCOE initiative that offers state-registered apprenticeships to high school students. Through ARCH, they have taken their passion for culinary arts to the next level, balancing high school studies with college-level career technical education, or CTE, courses at San Joaquin Delta College. And





## KIDS SHINING BRIGHTLY



they are getting paid while doing it.

“I know how to handle rushes, how to serve, and how to manage responsibilities most 16-year-olds haven’t even encountered,” said Malissa. She is considering a future in psychiatry but sees her culinary training and the college credits she’s earning as a foundation. The skills she is learning—communication, service, and problem-solving—will aid her in any industry.

ARCH is the first program in California to offer state-registered apprenticeships to high school students. Since its inception, ARCH has enrolled 45 apprentices from six school districts across the county. Students have explored career paths in hospitality and marketing, IT support, education and agriculture.

By combining classroom learning with hands-on experience

and college-level coursework, ARCH is helping students bridge the gap between high school and career, preparing them not only to earn a diploma but to step confidently into the workforce or post-secondary education.

The students working in the one.Culinary program are prime examples of how this model impacts students. “This program has given me extra responsibilities outside of school. And I feel this has benefited me on how to just show up and stay on task,” said Malissa. “I am very confident in my cooking skills. I am very confident with recipes. And I feel confident that I could pursue culinary after school and never have an issue.” ♦

*Learn more about ARCH and the one.Program at [sjcoe.org](http://sjcoe.org).*



# FESTA ITALIANA! SUCCEEDS AGAIN!

Festa Italiana! drew more than 4,000 people to the Lodi Grape Festival Grounds on Sunday, June 8. The vibrant celebration of Italian culture featured world-renowned tenor Pasquale Esposito. The Nicolini Brothers were a big hit on the accordions and the Funambulus Italian Stilt Walkers were hugely entertaining. Vendors served up Italian fare and there was wine tasting too! A youngster, Zaine Mardini, and his crew won the always popular Boss of the Sauce contest. ♦

PHOTOGRAPHY BY TIM ULMER





# Three Layers of Lighting: *Essential for Your Home*

BY KATHLEEN JENNISON | PHOTOS BY TIM ULMER





## Ambient, task & accent lighting *illuminate your Life.*

**A** well-lit space does something for the soul. Crisp overhead lighting, pinpointed task lighting and soft accent lighting help you live, work and relax with ease. Plus, the balance of natural and artificial light in a space is a significant part of every design we create.

If you're curious about why your space absolutely needs three layers of lighting to be considered well-designed, today is your day. Keep reading.

### AMBIENT

Ambient lighting is that always needed but rarely admired lighting. Recessed lights and track lights are utilitarian. When they aren't in use, you don't notice them. When you do need them and they are absent, you are likely to feel just as we do, immediately frustrated with flashbacks to the Stone Age. (Should we light a candle? Why is it so dark in here?) Less utilitarian ambient lighting sources include chandeliers and similar ceiling fixtures.

### TASK

Task lighting is also utilitarian and can, too, make a statement

versus simply fading into the background. Pendants, vanity lights, desk lamps and floor lamps fall into this category. Task lighting is meant to illuminate specific micro-spaces such as a desk or dining table rather than an entire room.

### ACCENT

Always the star of the show, accent lighting highlights certain features of a space. On the exterior of a home, it creates a soft glow around the soffits, giving your home that airy, fairytale vibe or lining a walkway or driveway with elegance. On the interior of your home, it provides subtle statements through under-cabinet, interior-cabinet or toe-kick lighting, artwork spotlights, interior soffits, alcove illumination, wall sconces and more.

### PRO TIP

Because humans were meant to be within nature and not removed from it, lighting trends continue to gravitate toward natural materials, textures and shapes with an emphasis on maximizing sunlight through the use of sheer window treatments and mirrors. ♦



Before becoming an interior designer, Kathleen Jennison worked as certified public accountant for a national firm. A near-fatal car accident changed her career path and life forever. She suffered serious brain injuries, and her doctors suggested she take art classes to help with her rehabilitation. With her newfound love for design, she studied at the Art Institute in Sacramento, obtaining her bachelor's degree in interior design. She is a member of the American Society of Interior Designers and has served as the director of marketing for the National Association of Remodelers for the Greater Sacramento area. In 2009, she started KTJ Design Company.

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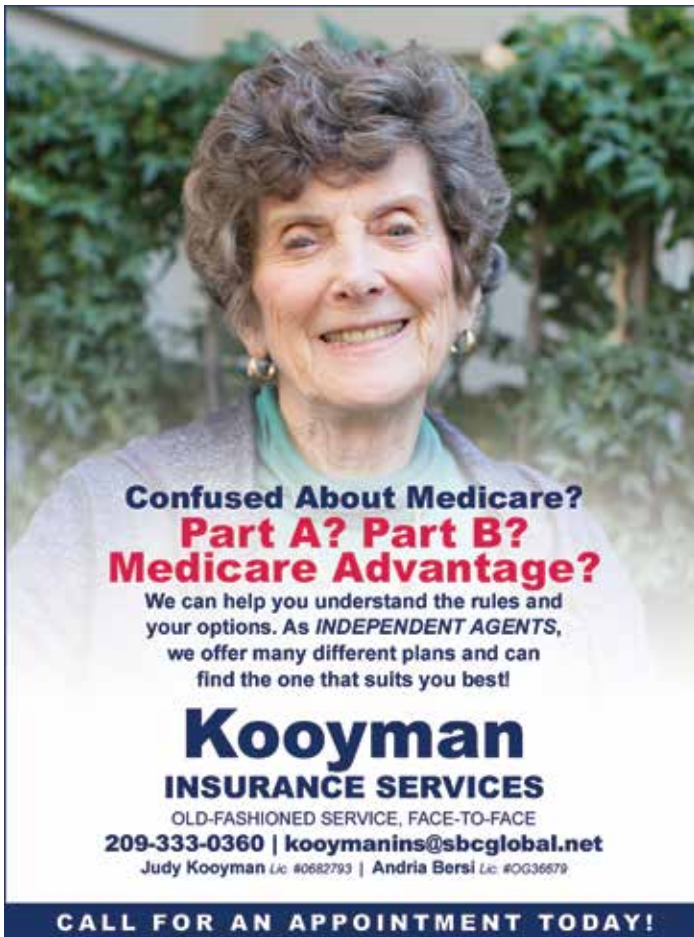
# GREATER STOCKTON CHAMBER AWARDS

The Greater Stockton Chamber's Business Awards and Installation Dinner took place June 26 at the Hilton Stockton to honor local businesses and thank Jamie Bossuat, Kroloff Law Firm, for her outstanding performance as chamber president from 2024-2025. Elizabeth H. Kim, Leonardini, Despotes, Giannecchini & Nims LLP was welcomed as the chamber's 2025-2026 president and new officers were installed. The 2025 Business Awards Honorees included Valley Strong Credit Union as Business of the Year and Alex's Detailing as Small Business of the Year. Co-Non-Profit Organizations of the Year awards went to Art Expressions of San Joaquin and Emergency Food Bank of Stockton/San Joaquin. Awards were also presented to other individuals and organizations. ♦

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HELEN RIPKEN







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# MEZZO RISTORANTE

## *Sips & Sounds on the Patio*

BY MARY RAFFETTO | PHOTOS COURTESY OF MEZZO RISTORANTE

Most San Joaquin County chefs are quite aware of how lucky they are to have unique access to some of the finest produce in the country. That access helps them build menus and create specialties that would be difficult to replicate elsewhere. Daniel Cortez, executive chef of Stockton's Mezzo Ristorante, has a great appreciation for the top-quality foods grown locally. That year-round access, he says, is key to turning out innovative quality dishes.

"I started cooking at age 17 and as soon as I graduated high school, went straight to culinary school," he said. In his case, culinary school was none other than the Sacramento campus of the renowned Le Cordon Bleu. Daniel then went to Hawaii, where he continued to learn about the culinary arts before spending years cooking at a variety of highly regarded Bay Area restaurants. "I worked in Napa, Sonoma, San Francisco and I enjoyed it a lot!" he enthused. "I worked in a lot of French kitchens where I learned so many techniques that I could apply to all different cuisines as my career continued."

Now at Mezzo Ristorante, Daniel finds a great deal of creative opportunity to apply his skills and imagination. "I am inspired by all kinds of classic dishes such as spaghetti and meatballs, for example, and I will put my own twist on the classics in order to have different

ways to present them." The restaurant makes pasta dough daily using Caputo and semolina flour and extrudes it into a variety of shapes. He says the unique pasta shapes often lead him to select specific sauces for each. Casarecce, for example, is the perfect pasta to highlight seasonal sweet corn. He elaborated, "Whatever we do at Mezzo is led by good technique and the best ingredients available."

In addition to their stunning foods, a brand-new summer highlight at Mezzo Ristorante is their Wednesday night live music event called Sips and Sounds on the Patio. "It's really very special out there," Daniel said, "under the shade, with the breeze, the music, enjoying the company of others and all the rotating special bites we offer in addition to a new handcrafted special cocktail every week. And for something this nice, I really do strongly recommend making a reservation so you don't miss out."

A few examples of the weekly small plates offered during the patio music events include New York steak skewers in a balsamic sauce with arugula salad. Mezzo's outstanding carpaccio will also be featured along with their specialty Caprese salad, both items for which they are well known. Other skewered dishes will include seafood or chicken with a variety of flavorful sauces. "We like to change it up from week to week," Daniel explained.





*Sips and Sounds on the  
Patio will take place from  
6:00-8:30pm on the  
following Wednesdays:*

**AUGUST 13TH  
AUGUST 27TH  
SEPTEMBER 11TH**

Daniel reports that one of Mezzo's top-selling dishes is the burrata served with honey, pine nuts and prosciutto. "It's just this incredible combination of flavors and textures, salty, sweet, creamy, crunchy. It's outstanding." Daniel shares Mezzo's passion for bringing people together over beautifully prepared dishes, experiencing an inviting ambiance infused with warm hospitality.

A perfect meal deserves the perfect finale and Mezzo's desserts are truly not to be missed. The summer Peach and Cream Crostata features vibrant fruits from Lodi's Golden Bear Ranches. The chocolate cake is also very popular, as is the tiramisu, which Daniel says is his personal favorite. "It's just so delicious!" he exclaimed. ♦

Visit Mezzo Ristorante, 3499 Brookside Rd. Suite A, in Stockton. Call 209-473-7300 or check [mezzostockton.com](http://mezzostockton.com) to learn more.



# CREAMY SHRIMP AND DILL WEDGE SALAD

RECIPE & PHOTOS BY LAUREN LANE | LAUREN-LANE.COM



## INGREDIENTS

1 cup mayonnaise  
 ¾ cup Greek yogurt  
 ½ teaspoon sriracha hot sauce  
 1 ½ teaspoons granulated sugar  
 1 garlic clove, grated  
 ½ teaspoon kosher salt  
 ⅛ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
 1 cup fresh dill, finely chopped  
 ¾ cup diced seedless cucumber  
 ⅓ cup finely diced red onion  
 1 pound cooked shrimp, tails off, roughly chopped  
 1 head iceberg lettuce, cut into 4 wedges

## DIRECTIONS

In a large bowl, whisk together the mayonnaise, yogurt, sriracha, sugar, garlic, salt, pepper and dill until combined and smooth. Taste and adjust seasoning if necessary. Add in the cucumber, onion and shrimp. Stir gently to coat. Tear the first few top layers off each lettuce wedge to create a pocket. Place on individual plates. Fill each wedge with the shrimp mixture, letting it spill over the sides if desired. Garnish with a little extra fresh dill. Serve cold or room temperature. ♦

## NOTE

This salad is best served the same day, otherwise the “creamy” turns to “runny.”





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# ANNIVERSARY FOR JEWISH FOOD FAIR

The Jewish Food Fair celebrated 50 years on Sunday, June 1. The annual event also marked the 175th anniversary of Temple Israel of Stockton, one of the oldest Jewish congregations in the state of California. Brunch included lox and cream cheese on a bagel with a pickle and coleslaw or corned beef on rye with the same. The bakery had all kinds of traditional food to take home and there was live music and dancing. The once-in-a-generation celebration welcomed the community to Temple Israel. ♦

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HELEN RIPKEN







# WEBER POINT

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# STOCKTONIAN OF THE YEAR

The Greater Stockton Chamber of Commerce hosted the Stocktonian of the Year dinner to honor Tino Adame, a Marine Corps veteran, on June 20 at the Stockton Golf & Country Club. Adame is the 71st Stocktonian of the Year recipient, an honor reserved for individuals who go above and beyond with their acts of goodness, community involvement and continual devotion to the betterment of Stockton. Adame, a Purple Heart recipient who served in the Vietnam War, has demonstrated exceptional commitment and dedication to improving the lives of others in the Stockton community through a variety of impactful initiatives aimed at supporting veterans and their families. His advocacy and tireless efforts have been instrumental in ensuring that the needs of veterans are recognized and addressed within the community. One of Tino's most significant achievements is his role in advocating for the establishment of a new Veterans Administration facility in San Joaquin County. ♦

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HELEN RIPKEN





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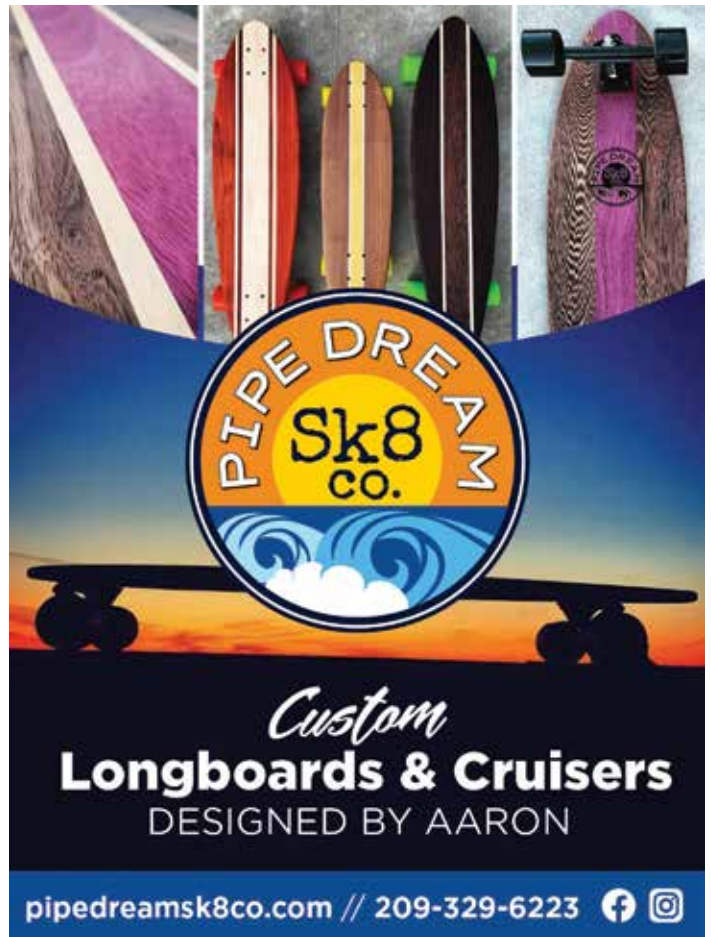
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BY PHILLIP MERLO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**W**e are excited about the creation and development of the Pioneer Village at the San Joaquin County Historical Museum. The expansion of the campus, which is already a treasure for San Joaquin County and beyond, will be the catalyst to broaden the ability to bring new experiences to our visitors.

The Pioneer Village will dramatically improve the historic atmosphere, efficiency and safety of our living history programs, such as Valley Days, Pioneer School and Farm to Fork. The beautiful museum will soon have the facilities required to expand our programming to weekend demonstrations, summer history programs and art camps.

The Pioneer Village will pull together the beloved Valley Days and Pioneer School stations, such as the Blacksmith Shop, the Harness Shop and the Laundry Station. This will create a core “village” space, which will improve the historic atmosphere of the programs and help transport students back in time.

New, creatively designed buildings for the Blacksmith Shop, Cookshack, Harness Shop, Print Shop and Valley Days Farm will allow for larger student groups, better educational demonstrations and increased incorporation of historic artifacts. This will improve the historical authenticity of our programming, while increasing the number of students museum staff can work with on field trips to the museum.

The new Pioneer Village will be able to host all visitors, as the new stations will be ADA and California Education Code compliant. They will be designed with hidden modern amenities and with rustic 19th-century charm of the Central Valley.

There is much excitement about the new assembly and classroom space, utilizing the renovated and remodeled Hammer Building, desperately in need of the assembly and classroom spaces. This space will be presented in the form of the new Big Valley Saloon and the Historic Bank Classroom space. The saloon will come with modern amenities, a kitchen and bathrooms, and will be capable of seating 100 students or visitors. Meticulously designed and crafted to look like an 1860s saloon or tavern, the space will allow for programming during inclement weather, and will be air-conditioned, opening up the opportunity for summer programming. The classroom space will also provide the museum with required space for modern summer programming.

The Pioneer Village is thoughtfully designed to increase synergy with the Sunshine Trail, the Charles Weber Cottage and the Calaveras School House, and it will improve the historical interpretation of our Living History programs. It will also bring the stations closer together, which will reduce station-to-station transfer time, allowing the museum to work with more schools.

Stay tuned as the Pioneer Village is developed to bring education to our students in the most authentic way, taking students back in time. ♦



# THE PIONEER VILLAGE: A NEW PIECE OF HISTORY





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# RUNABOUTS ON THE RIVER

Ahoy there, matey! It was a gorgeous day when the Antique and Classic Boat Society's Norcal/Lake Tahoe Chapter welcomed visitors to Runabouts on the River on June 28 at the Stockton Sailing Club on Buckley Cove. Visitors were able to enjoy free boat rides, listen to live music and enjoy food and drinks. Classic and antique boats such as Chris-Craft boats were on display as well as classic cars, hot rods and muscle cars. There was a firefighting boat demo and a water rescue demo as well. The event ended with a parade of boats leaving down the channel. ♦

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HELEN RIPKEN







# Kiki

## A Flirty Feline

BY HERLIFE STAFF

**Q: What's your full name?**

**A:** Kiki Sass

**Q: What kind of personality do you have?**

**A:** I am blingy, confident, high-maintenance, prissy and yappy. I'm very energetic, whether it's at noon or midnight. I'll speed around in my donut tunnel and all around the house just to annoy my family members.

**Q: What's your favorite pastime?:**

**A:** Oh my gosh, I love my backyard. I love all of the new different scents. I love to stalk birds. I'm a little lion from the wild on a bird hunt. My backyard is like a Disneyland for me!

**Q: What is your guilty pleasure?**

**A:** I always climb the tree in my backyard and will refuse to come down. My mom does get me down by heating up tuna and putting it at the bottom. Oh, it smells so good that I just have to come down to eat it. That's a life tip right there.

**Q: Your naughtiest deed?**

**A:** So, don't get mad, but I kind of knocked a baby hummingbird out of its nest and my parents had to foster it for a few days. What?! In my defense, that is my tree!

**Q: Current obsession?**

**A:** I am obsessed with my best friend Abby. She's my parent's black

Lab and she's so fun to wrestle with. She tries to avoid me a lot, but it's okay because I pretend to snuggle her and then I bite her toes—HA! Who wouldn't want to be with the cute and adorable cat that I am?!

**Q: What's your fave treat?**

**A:** From plain tuna to salmon puree by Blue Buffalo, I love it all.

**Q: What do you do for self-care?**

**A:** I love to just sleep alone in peace and quiet. No people touching me. Just sleep. I will do most of this in my tunnel or under my parents' bed.

**Q: What else should we know about you?**

**A:** If you meet me, you can pet me for a split second, but don't hold me. Never. Not in a million years. I'm not one of those cats that's on commercials or anything like that. But if we start to be better friends, you can pet me for a few more seconds but just don't hold me.

**Q: Where are you from?**

**A:** Nobody really knows where I was born, but I was found in somebody's yard with my siblings and was taken to a shelter with them. A few weeks later I was in Petco and a girl found me and picked me up. She's kind of the best, but don't tell her I said that.

**Q: Who is your human?**

**A:** Leah Sass. ♦

# EVERY DOG SHOULD HAVE A HOME

BY MARILYN ISAMINGER

*For that matter, every cat, donkey, horse, pot-bellied pig and domesticated mammal should too. Only 10 percent of dogs born will find a permanent home. Roughly 70 million cats are homeless in the United States. Only 25 percent to 30 percent of dogs in shelters are purebreds. The rest are mostly mutts.*



**I**t was the photo on Facebook that caught me, shared by a friend who's involved in animal rescue. A mother dog nursing five puppies looked at the camera with a forlorn expression. "Please help!" her eyes pleaded. So do something, I thought.

One well-known animal rescue nonprofit in my city is desperate for foster homes to provide a loving environment, water, food, a clean, dry shelter, exercise and safety. That's a no-brainer. As I learned, foster homes are required to complete an application and have their veterinarian references verified. Next, we signed a four-page agreement to abide by the organization's rules, which include taking the foster dog or cat

to weekly adoption events and promoting on the rescue's social media. That's not so hard, right?

Anyone who has raised a puppy, kitten or even an older pet understands what's involved, particularly with a puppy. Potty training, socialization, vaccinations, behavioral training are the minimum requirements. Rescue dogs frequently have abandonment issues, anxiety and physical health issues that a foster home must be informed about; some problems aren't uncovered until the dog is in

the home. A good rescue organization will have resources and referrals to help fosters learn to work with and improve the animal's behavior.

Our first foster puppy was one of a rescued litter of five, found in



deplorable conditions and infected with canine parvovirus, or parvo. She was the only one to survive with extended veterinary care. Princess was a tiny, spunky, bright-eyed pitbull/terrier mix, as are many of the dumped animals. She was adopted within a week by a family who wanted just her style.

Our second foster, Blaze, was of many origins, likely cattle dog, German shorthaired pointer and pitbull terrier, from his markings and head shape, with feet the size of saucers. He was ten pounds the day I met him, and when he went to his new family two months later, he weighed in at 36 pounds.

Four days after Blaze was adopted, we were asked to foster Mango, a four-month-old, 11-pound Australian shepherd/collie mix. Her temporary foster told us, "I live at the end of a rural road where puppies are frequently dumped. I now have 11 puppies in a small enclosure; I'm just up to my ears in puppies." Mango is a shy baby; her littermates, named for identification and veterinary tracking, Apple, Pineapple, Prune and Banana, are twice her size and picked on her by chewing off half of her right ear. It just makes her more endearing. In fact, she may be a foster fail.

If this is the course for you, here are some considerations for preparing your home and family.

Create a safe space; make sure your home is dog-friendly and safe with a designated area for your new pet to retreat to. Gradually introduce her to other pets slowly and in a controlled manner. It may take a few days for them to be comfortable.

Stock up on essentials such as food, bowls, a bed, leash, collar and toys. I believe a crate is essential for the dog's emotional

security; the bonus is that it helps with potty training. Your rescue organization may provide many of these, but many foster "parents" tend to purchase or provide food, cute outfits, nutritional supplements, special shampoos and conditioners if the pup's skin condition needs improvement.

Try to follow the 3-3-3 rule, which gives the foster dog time to adjust to their new surroundings. The first three days should be for adjusting, the next three weeks for training and bonding, and the last three months for continued socialization and training. Use positive reinforcement training methods to teach your dog new skills and behaviors. Be understanding; it may take time for them to settle in and trust you.

Brush up on the structure of the rescue organization and its requirements for adopters. My group has staff that cover administration, coordinating rescues, fosters and veterinary care, a finance and accounting director, a photographer and marketing director. These roles may be interchangeable and persons holding them are cross-trained for emergencies and personnel changes. The board of directors, volunteers who provide guidance and fundraising support, meets state and federal guidelines for nonprofits. The organization is required to file annual Federal 990 forms. If you have doubts, check [charitynavigator.com](http://charitynavigator.com) or another nonprofit watchdog.

The house is a wreck; laundry's not finished; there are new holes dug in the yard. But for each rescue placed, two lives are saved, this one and the one for whom a space is made. ♦

**SOURCES:** [dogtime.com](http://dogtime.com) and [twobytworecue.com](http://twobytworecue.com).

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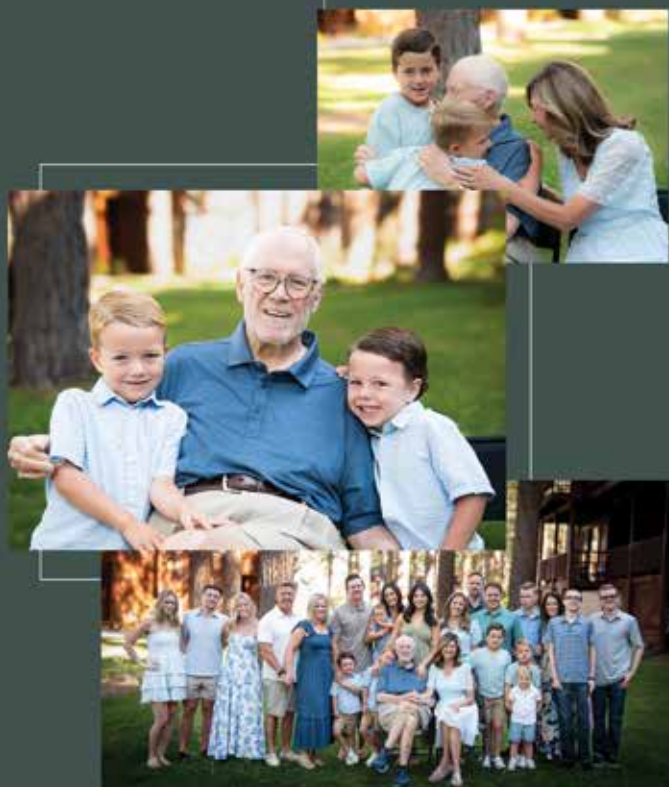
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# CELEBRATE COMMUNITY EVENTS

## AUGUST 1

### *Evening in the Barrel Room*

Van Ruiten Family Winery  
Info: [dmcforwomen.org](http://dmcforwomen.org)

## AUGUST 2

### *Obon Odori & Festival*

Buddhist Church of Stockton  
Info: [buddhistchurchofstockton.org](http://buddhistchurchofstockton.org)

## AUGUST 5

### *National Night Out*

Stockton Ball Park  
Info: [downtownstockton.org](http://downtownstockton.org)

## AUGUST 6, 13, 20

### *Concerts in the Park*

Victory Park  
Info: [visitstockton.org](http://visitstockton.org)

## AUGUST 9

### *Taste of the Delta*

7600 Windmill Cove Road, Stockton  
Info: [tasteofthedelta.com](http://tasteofthedelta.com)

## AUGUST 9

### *Family Fun Festival*

Central United Methodist Church, Stockton  
Info: [familypromisesjc.org](http://familypromisesjc.org)

## AUGUST 15

### *Summerfest & Duck Derby*

Info: [lincolncentershops.com](http://lincolncentershops.com)

## AUGUST 16

### *Moonlight Sip & Stroll*

Brookside Classics on Heron Lakes Dr., Stockton  
Info: [hospicesj.org](http://hospicesj.org)

## AUGUST 22

### *Tigers Prowlin' the Mile*

Miracle Mile  
Info: [visitstockton.org](http://visitstockton.org)

## AUGUST 23

### *YFC Hope Shines a Light*

125 S. Hutchins St.  
Info: [sjvyfc.com](http://sjvyfc.com)

## AUGUST 25

### *Mary Graham Kids Classic*

Stockton Golf and Country Club  
Info: [marygrahamfoundation.org](http://marygrahamfoundation.org)

## AUGUST 30-31

### *Stockton Community Pow Wow*

UPC Lawn, University of the Pacific  
Info: (209) 487-3042

## SAVE THE DATE

### SEPTEMBER 19

#### *Feast at the Fox*

The Bob Hope Theatre  
Info: [visitstockton.org](http://visitstockton.org)

### SEPTEMBER 20

#### *Family Day at the Park*

Weber Point Event Center  
Info: [familydayatthepark.com](http://familydayatthepark.com)

### SEPTEMBER 21

#### *Friends Outside 70th Anniversary Celebration*

BellaVista Rooftop  
Info: [friendsoutside.org](http://friendsoutside.org)

### SEPTEMBER 23

#### *Cancer Kids Take Over a Restaurant*

Dave Wong's  
Info: [cancerkidssjc.org](http://cancerkidssjc.org)

### SEPTEMBER 27

#### *Ironstone Concours d'Elegance*

Ironstone Vineyards, Murphys  
Info: [ironstoneconcours.com](http://ironstoneconcours.com)

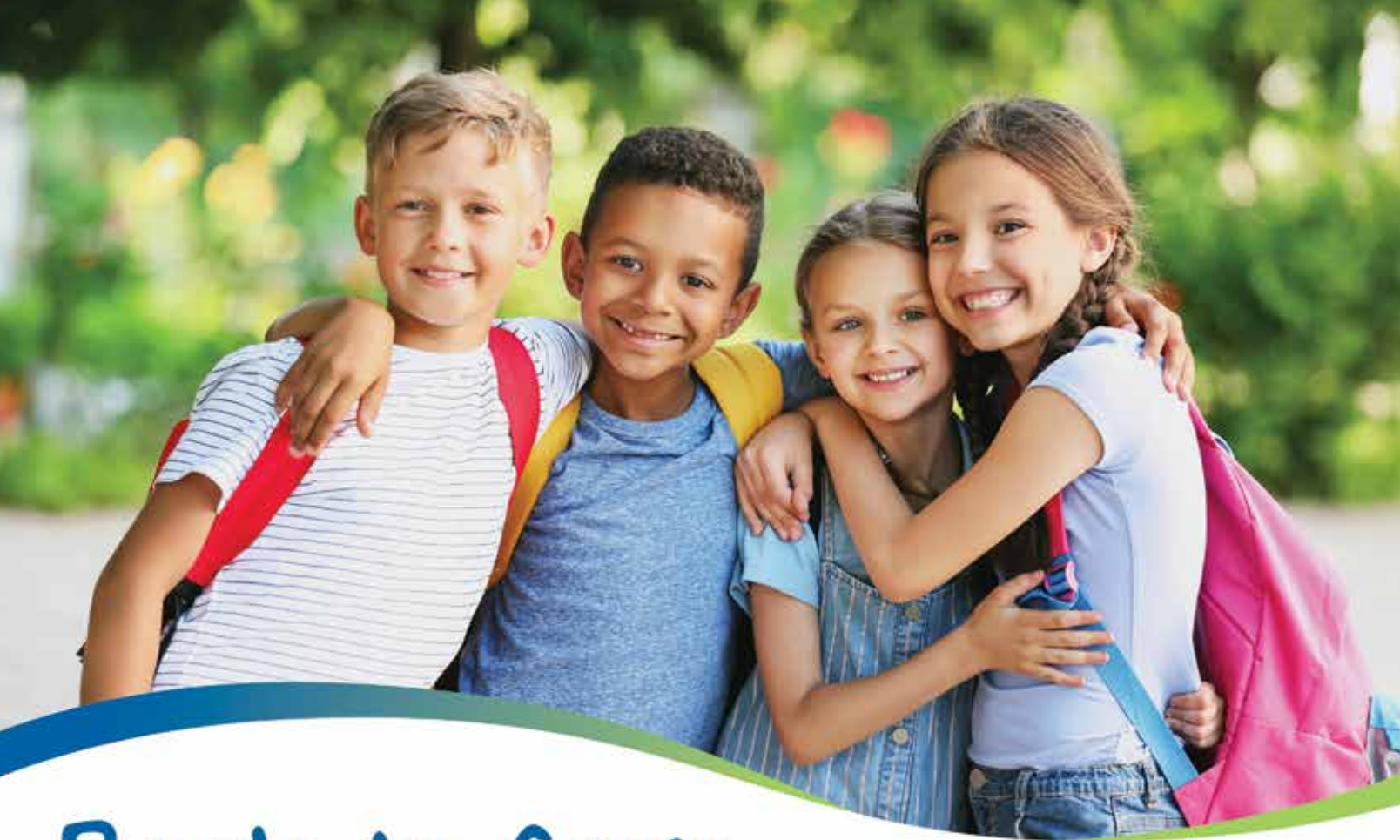


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Ease back into school when summer ends with these helpful tips:

-  Help your child practice good hygiene.
-  Start each day with a healthy meal.
-  Set a bedtime that allows your child to get enough sleep.

