



Valley Voice

*The official newsletter of the
San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments*

June 2023

***From Homelessness to Hope:
Mary Peña's Journey of Resilience***



(Photo/Michael Owen Baker)

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, all establishments came to a halt, and Mary Peña, who had limited financial resources, found herself without a roof over her head. With no other option available, she resorted to living on the streets for over a year and a half, primarily outside drugstores, depending on the goodwill of strangers. However, Mary's life took a transformative turn when she found refuge in the newly established Esperanza Villa, a community of 25 Tiny Homes

in Baldwin Park. The video beneath showcases Mary Peña's inspiring story, highlighting the resilience of the human spirit and the impact of the San Gabriel Valley Regional Housing Trust (SGVRHT).



Thanks to our partnership with the City of Baldwin Park, Mary's fortunes changed when Esperanza Villa opened its doors. This initiative was made possible through a partnership between the City of Baldwin Park and the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments, with the later addition of support from Los Angeles County. Esperanza Villa provided a glimmer of hope, offering not just shelter but a comprehensive approach to addressing homelessness through supportive services.



Mary Peña's success in securing her own apartment in West Covina, a significant milestone in her journey out of homelessness, can be attributed to the supportive services provided at Esperanza Villa through City Net and Union Station Homeless Services. Here, Mary received valuable guidance and support from her City Net case manager and Union Station Homeless Services housing navigator, which helped her overcome the challenges she faced and achieve her goal of finding a permanent home.

Mary Peña's journey of transitioning from homelessness to securing a permanent home in her West Covina apartment showcases the significance of community collaboration and the invaluable nature of compassionate support services. It's heartening to see the positive impact of programs like Esperanza Villa and the tireless work of organizations like City Net and Union Station Homeless Services. Mary's incredible transformation is a testament to the power of these initiatives and serves as a reminder that we must continue to support innovative solutions, foster compassion, and work together to create a world where homelessness is no longer a reality.

Legislative Briefing Day Showcases Progress and Collaborations in the San Gabriel Valley



The San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG) held a Legislative Briefing last month, which brought together representatives from various legislative offices and advocacy partner agencies in the San Gabriel Valley. The event was aimed at discussing the SGVCOG's ongoing efforts to address housing, homelessness, and transportation issues. The venue for the briefing was the SGVCOG's Monrovia office, and it provided an excellent platform for sharing updates, success stories, and priority legislative goals for the SGVCOG and the region.

SGVCOG staff delivered informative presentations outlining the latest housing, homelessness, and transportation developments. The in-depth discussions enabled attendees to gain valuable insights into these critical areas and fostered a sense of collaboration and shared responsibility in addressing the region's challenges.



The event's significance was further enhanced by the presence of representatives from L.A. CADA and God's Pantry, two prominent service providers for SGVCOG's housing, homelessness, and workforce-related programs. These organizations shared success stories, highlighting the positive outcomes resulting from the region's concerted efforts. In addition, the engagement and dedication of these service providers underscored the transformative impact that can be achieved through effective partnerships and ongoing financial support from our legislative offices.

Ricky Choi, Director of Government and Community Relations, took the opportunity to present the SGVCOG's legislative priorities. The Legislative Briefing underscored the importance of partnerships and collaborations with local, state, and federal offices representing the San Gabriel Valley. Such partnerships play a pivotal role in driving meaningful change and amplifying the

impact of regional initiatives.

Looking ahead, SGVCOG remains committed to furthering its mission and engaging in ongoing collaborations with these stakeholders. The event served as a catalyst for strengthening bonds, generating fresh ideas, and developing strategies to tackle pressing issues.

Celebrating Energy Efficiency Champions: San Gabriel Valley Agencies Recognized for Sustainability Achievements



The San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG) proudly recognizes the remarkable efforts of several San Gabriel Valley (SGV) agencies in their pursuit of energy efficiency and sustainability. Through the San Gabriel Valley Energy Champion Awards, these municipalities have demonstrated their commitment to increasing energy efficiency at their facilities and engaging in long-term strategic planning for a greener future.

Foothill Transit leads the pack which has set an exemplary benchmark by becoming the first agency to achieve the CHAMPION tier in the 2022-2023 San Gabriel Valley Awards. Foothill Transit's relentless dedication to fostering sustainable transportation solutions and reducing environmental impact has propelled them to the forefront of energy conservation. Their proactive involvement in energy efficiency projects, coupled with active participation in the Energy Work Group meetings, has solidified their position as trailblazers in the field.

The City of Pomona is another shining star, achieving the esteemed Gold recognition in the 2022-2023 San Gabriel Valley Energy Champion Awards. Their notable work in energy efficiency and education initiatives has showcased their unwavering commitment to creating a more sustainable future for their community.

Likewise, the **City of South Pasadena** has secured the distinguished Gold recognition for its outstanding contributions to energy efficiency. Their collaborative efforts through the eSGV Program, particularly in partnership with SGVCOG, have created water conservation kits for participating South Pasadena residents. This remarkable endeavor exemplifies their dedication to energy conservation and their community's well-being.

Last but certainly not least, the **City of Duarte** deserves accolades for achieving the esteemed Gold recognition in the 2022-2023 San Gabriel Valley Energy Champion Awards. Notably, they have been an exceptional partner in the eSGV Program by also creating water conservation kits for participating residents. Their commitment to energy efficiency resonates strongly, making them a commendable role model for other municipalities.

The San Gabriel Valley Energy Champion Awards catalyzes cities, school districts, and special districts across the SGV to continue their endeavors in energy efficiency. These remarkable achievements demonstrate the collective

commitment of these municipalities toward building a more sustainable and resilient region.

The SGVCOG extends its heartfelt congratulations to Foothill Transit, the City of Pomona, the City of South Pasadena, and the City of Duarte for their remarkable achievements in energy efficiency. Their dedication and leadership in driving positive change will inspire others to follow suit and propel the SGV toward a brighter, greener future.

For more information on the San Gabriel Valley Energy Champion Awards and other sustainability initiatives, please visit [SGVCOG's website](#).

SGVCOG Staff Gain Insights into Composting Best Practices at Rose Bowl Stadium Demonstration



On May 9th, the SGVCOG staff had the opportunity to witness the excellence of composting at the Rose Bowl Stadium during a demonstration event hosted by 301 Organics. The event was an exceptional showcase of the benefits and best practices of on-site composting.

Previously, 301 Organics had the opportunity to present to the Solid Waste Working Group of SGVCOG. The SGVCOG team has indicated their eagerness to gain further insights into composting practices in the area and intends to extend invitations to 301 Organics to continue spreading awareness about the advantages of composting to cities within the SGV region.

Buckle up and join us on this exhilarating composting journey as we unravel the mysteries, embrace sustainable practices, and pave the way toward a greener future for the San Gabriel Valley! Stay tuned for more exciting updates on our ongoing quest for environmental excellence.

***Join us for the San Gabriel Valley
Legislative Networking Reception!***

The San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership, the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments, and the San Gabriel Valley Public Affairs Network cordially invite you to the annual San Gabriel Valley Legislative Networking Reception. This highly anticipated event provides an exceptional opportunity to connect and engage with esteemed LA County Supervisors, Congressional representatives, state lawmakers, and a host of local elected officials.

Event Details:

Date: Friday, June 16, 2023

Time: 4:00 PM

Location: Citrus Valley Association of Realtors, [504 E Rte 66, Glendora, CA 91740](#)

Join us as we bring together influential speakers and key decision-makers who shape the future of our region. Confirmed speakers for the evening include:

- Senator Bob Archuleta
- Senator Josh Newman
- Senator Susan Rubio
- Assemblymember Mike Fong
- Assemblymember Chris Holden
- Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez
- L.A. County Supervisor Kathryn Barger
- L.A. County Assessor Jeff Prang

But that's not all! Stay tuned as we confirm additional distinguished guests.

Don't miss out on this invaluable opportunity to expand your network, exchange ideas, and strengthen partnerships that drive progress in the San Gabriel Valley. Mark your calendars and reserve your spot today!

Please register [here](#) to secure your attendance. For any inquiries or further information, please reach out to info@sgvpartnership.org.

Unveiling the Future: SGVCOG Tour Showcases Fullerton Road Grade Separation Project and Sets the Stage for National Infrastructure Week



The SGVCOG commenced National Infrastructure Week on Monday, May 15th, with an informative tour of the Fullerton Road Grade Separation Project in the City of Industry and unincorporated community of Rowland Heights. Esteemed members of our Capital Projects & Construction Committee and Transportation Committee were given the opportunity to witness the ongoing progress firsthand. Led by project managers, they received a comprehensive on-site briefing and conducted a thorough inspection.

The meeting was an excellent platform to emphasize the paramount importance of safety, efficiency, and environmental benefits that will be attained through the successful completion of this grade separation project. It served as a reminder of the positive impact that well-planned infrastructure projects can have on our communities.



We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all who participated in this enlightening tour. It is through the dedication and hard work of our exceptional capital projects team that projects like this come to fruition. Their unwavering commitment ensures the realization of vital infrastructure developments that enhance the quality of life for residents and propel progress in our region.

***Shoeing Away Hardship: U.S Chinese Women
Organization Steps Up for the Homeless***



South Pasadena Councilmember Michael Cacciotti and the U.S. Chinese Women's Organization made a heartfelt visit to our office recently, leaving behind a generous donation for our Solemates Shoe Drive. With immense kindness, they donated 468 pairs of socks and 60 pairs of shoes, all intended to bring comfort and protection to our unhoused neighbors.

These donations will be distributed among several esteemed service providers in the San Gabriel Valley, including God's Pantry, Los Angeles Centers for Alcohol and Drug Abuse (L.A. CADA), Montebello Community Assistance Program (MCAP), and Shepherd's Pantry. Through these partnerships, we aim to positively impact the lives of those in need within our community.



Recognizing that shoes and socks are crucial in providing comfort and safeguarding unhoused individuals, we invite everyone to join us in this worthy cause. If you're interested in contributing, there are various ways to get involved. You can donate new shoes, socks, or gift cards by sending them to our *Monrovia Office at [1333 S. Mayflower Ave, Suite 360, Monrovia, CA 91016](https://www.sgvkog.org/village143)*. Additionally, we welcome contributions through [PayPal](#) and our [Amazon wish list](#). We also encourage you to spread the word and share this information with your networks, allowing more people to participate in this meaningful endeavor.

For further details and to learn more about our initiatives, please visit [sgvcog.org/village143](https://www.sgvkog.org/village143). Should you have any inquiries or require assistance, don't hesitate to contact Meredith Sharkey at msharkey@sgvcog.org.

With collective efforts, we can make a significant difference in the lives of those experiencing homelessness, ensuring they receive the care and support they deserve.

[Building Homes, Rebuilding Lives: SGVCOG Staff Volunteer to Furnish Homes for Seniors in Need](#)



In a heartwarming display of community engagement, the dedicated staff members of SGVCOG came together on Thursday, May 25th, for a volunteer day filled with purpose. Their collective efforts were directed toward assembling furniture for a new and exciting project. As part of the innovative shared housing pilot initiative in collaboration with the Housing Linkage Working Group, SGVCOG has taken the initiative to rent a home.

The upcoming month of June holds great significance as a group of employed seniors, who have unfortunately experienced homelessness, will have the opportunity to move into a fully furnished, immaculate, and secure home. This pivotal transition marks a crucial step in their journey towards permanent housing, facilitating stronger connections and providing them with the stability they deserve.

We extend a heartfelt expression of gratitude to Support Solutions, the project's esteemed service provider, for their unwavering support and remarkable vision in bringing this much-needed sanctuary to the senior residents of the San Gabriel Valley. By fostering collaboration and embracing innovative solutions, SGVCOG continues to make strides in creating positive change and uplifting the lives of those in need.

SGVCOG Staff Member Spotlight: Yanin Rivera ***Senior Administrative Assistant***



What do you like most about working with the SGVCOG?

I take great satisfaction in working for the COG because of the positive influence we have on the various communities we serve. Witnessing the successful completion of grade separation projects that effectively reduce traffic, prevent accidents, and decrease emissions is incredibly fulfilling. Being part of the SGVCOG team brings me immense pride. Additionally, our programs

addressing homelessness, coyote, and fire prevention have had a meaningful impact throughout the SGV.

What is a fun fact about you?

My family and I enjoy traveling, especially visiting national parks. We have visited Yosemite the most, but we have also been to Sequoia, Yellowstone, Grand Teton, and the Grand Canyon. Each park offers its own unique beauty, great hiking trails, a variety of animals from bears to squirrels, and stunning views and waterfalls to appreciate.

News-in-Brief



Soulemates Shoe Drive

We are excited to announce the Soulemates Shoe Drive, a collaboration between the SGVCOG and Shepherd's Pantry. The Soulemates Shoe Drive is a dynamic initiative that seeks to make a profound impact on the lives of our neighbors by providing them with new socks and shoes. By donating to this noble cause, you will directly support Shepherd's Pantry and its clients, offering them essential resources and a helping hand when they need it most. Join us in making a difference by contributing to the Soulemates Shoe Drive today! Visit sgvcog.org/village143 to donate and discover more about this incredible initiative. Your generous contributions will go a long way in supporting the exceptional work of Shepherd's Pantry. Help us spread the word and share the love! Let's come



CalKIDS Statewide Savings Account Program

This past August, Governor Newsom, State Treasurer Ma, and the [ScholarShare Investment Board](#) (SIB) launched [CalKIDS](#), a statewide children's savings account program that awards every newborn child with up to \$100 and eligible low-income public school students enrolled in first through 12th grade with up to \$1,500 for future higher education expenses. If you have interest in this program, please contact Julio Martinez Julio.Martinez@treasurer.ca.gov or Noah Lightman Noah.Lightman@treasurer.ca.gov



SGVCOG Can Help Increase Your Home's Energy Efficiency

Interested in increasing your home's energy efficiency? We can assist you! The SGVCOG has partnered with the County of Los Angeles, which administers the Southern California Regional Energy Network (SoCalREN) to bring together a wide variety of services with one common goal: achieving unprecedented levels of energy savings

Get started by signing up for a free eSGV review! Our staff will walk you through the whole-house approach to energy efficiency, giving you the tools necessary to become more efficient. Find out more information [here!](#)

together as a community to
create a more vibrant and
compassionate San Gabriel
Valley. Together, we can uplift
and empower lives—one shoe
at a time.

June Committee Meeting Schedule

Please be advised that the **Governing Board** will convene in person at the **SGVCOG's office in Monrovia**. Livestreams of the meetings can be found on the **SGVCOG website [here](#)**. The live streams of **San Gabriel Valley Regional Housing Trust Board of Directors** meetings are [here](#).

Executive Committee - June 5, 2023, at 10:00 AM

Water Committee - June 6, 2023, at 2:00 PM

Homelessness Committee - June 7, 2023, at 8:30 AM

EENR Committee - June 7, 2023, at 10:15 AM

Transportation Committee - June 7, 2023, at 4:00 PM

Governing Board - June 15, 2023, at 4:00 PM

Public Works Working Group - June 19, 2023, at 12:00 PM

Planning Directors Working Group - June 22, 2023, at 12:00 PM

Capital Projects and Construction Committee (Special) - June 26, 2023, at 11:00 AM

City Managers' Steering Committee - Cancelled

Regional Housing Trust Board - Cancelled

San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments
1333 S. Mayflower Avenue, Suite 360
Monrovia, CA 91016
(626) 457-1800 | sgv@sgvcog.org

Please note that this e-newsletter is best viewed with the latest web browser version of Internet Explorer, Safari, Firefox, and Google Chrome at a zoom level of 100%.



