



*Empowering Youth
Through Creative Expression*

Winter 2026 Newsletter



We're kicking off the year by extending our heartfelt thanks to our incredible 2025 donors, sponsors, and funders.

Your support makes our work possible. You are investing in the potential and leadership of our youth, and that impact reaches far beyond our walls.

We are deeply grateful for your partnership and belief in our mission. We look forward to highlighting and celebrating each of you more in the months ahead.

2025 Supporters

Fire Agate

Meaning: Courage
(\$2,500 and up)

Christopher Aker
Rotary Club of San Leandro***

Peridot

Meaning: Compassion
(\$1,000 to \$2,499)

Canology
Jill Raimondi
Lynn Drogo*
McGoldrick Milling Company **
Sheena Noori
Stacy Dent

Rose Quartz

Meaning: Love & Healing
(\$500 to \$999)

Alex Fernandez
Lisa Gallegos*
Monte Meyers
Pallen's Martial Arts**
Sons of Liberty Alehouse**
Susan Grinols
Vetted Real Estate**

Charoite

Meaning: Transformation
(\$250 to \$499)

Anonymous
Danny Murry's Irish Pub **
Florence Leto
Jacqui Diaz
Jason & Michelle Hammon
K Reed Roofing **
Kate Miller *
Kathleen Bilianni

Kathryn D'Olivo *

Kim Underwood *

Melissa Michelle Grooming **

Mindy Rizzo

Naissa Foster *

Penny Bilianni

Robyn Liebler

San Leandro Art Association

Shaun Lund

Tricia Reichert

Virginia Harrington

Amazonite

Meaning: Intuition & Hope
(\$100 to \$249)

Ailanis Wiebe

Alexander Halterman

Ben Frager *

Dan Wilson

Darlene Levy

Deborah Cox

Erika Ortiz

Gwen Buraster



Gwen Burastero
 Hoi-Fei Mok
 Holly Hayes *
 Ingrid Robinson
 James & Judith Nothem
 Jenny Ledesma
 Jill Stowe
 Juliane Monroe
 Kathryn Gholson
 Karen Ballock
 Leo Sheridan
 Maria Arcelona
 Maria Gallegos
 Mary Ohliger
 Matthew La Roque
 Michelle Hammon *
 Michelle Miller *
 Mitch Huitema
 Nancy and Thomas Mosley
 Patty Breslin
 Patricia Rodriguez
 Rob and Emily Rich
 Roberta & Billy Brooks
 Sophie Metzger
 Sue & Stef Grinols & Mueller
 Susan Bothwell
 Suzanne Pershing
 Valerie Bogdanos
 Wendy Robinette

Erin Head
 Erin Lagier
 Gourmet Cellars **
 Gregory Wei
 Gwen Burastero
 Jade Burchett
 Janine Hunt
 Jerry Joseph
 Lesley Feikert
 Lucian Drogo
 Margaret Hedgpeth
 Maureen Reid
 Michele Rowe
 Michele Stone
 Missy Brooks
 Neha Sampat
 Nicole Hunter-Maes
 Paul & Aleth Dimaano
 Paula English
 Shelby Bergeron
 Stacey Iavedra
 Susan O'Neil

In-Kind Donations
 Cherry Street DogHouse
 Claudia Papucci
 Estudillo Produce
 Eve King
 Gina Gallegos
 Janice Jorgeson
 Judy Filippoff
 Lauryn Alwan
 Lucy's Creations
 Mary Ohliger
 Paradiso
 Robyn Leibler
 Sue Grinols
 Sue Peterson
 Zocalo**

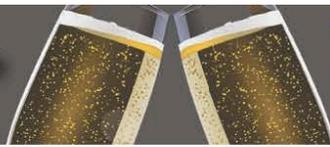
Carnelian
 Meaning: Warm &
 Joyous
 (up to \$99)

Ben Decker
 Ben Levy
 Courtney Blair
 Elis Miller
 Erin Head
 Erin Lagier



Sustaining Members **SponsorsFunders**

Happy New Year



FROM THE STAFF OF THE TIMES

WEEKEND WEATHER
RAIN Overcast with rain, showers at times sunny weekend
 HIGHS: 54-55
 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 110
 LOWS: 42-50

FRIDAY Overcast with rain, showers at times sunny weekend	SATURDAY Sunny	SUNDAY Sunny
---	--------------------------	------------------------

San Leandro Times

AN INDEPENDENT HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER SERVING SAN LEANDRO, ASHLAND, SAN LORENZO AND SHEFFIELD VILLAGE

VOL. 36 • NO. 1

THURSDAY, JANUARY 1, 2026

SAN LEANDRO • CALIFORNIA



PHOTO BY SHIRLEY ORILLE

Lynn Drogo, founder and executive director of TAGS (right) with volunteer Holly Hayes, greet guests arriving at the Holiday Night Market.

Young Entrepreneurs Learn on the Job

By Shirley Orille
San Leandro Times

It's been said that "when you support small business, you're supporting a dream," and that saying was evident in the turnout of support for young entrepreneurs at a recent Holiday Night Market in San Leandro.

Teen Advocacy Going Strong (TAGS) held the

market at Zocalo Coffeehouse on Bancroft Avenue on November 29, which happened to be Small Business Saturday.

Founder & Executive Director of TAGS, Lynn Drogo, described the nonprofit's mission as Empowering Youth Through Creative Expression.

see TAGS, page 8



PHOTO BY SHIRLEY ORILLE

TAGS held a holiday market to sell their goods.

Korematsu Exhibit Coming To Main Library

Mail Library to present exhibit and programs about Fred Korematsu

The San Leandro Main Library announced the opening of "Am I an American or Am I Not?" a traveling exhibit from the Fred T. Korematsu Institute on display starting January 6.

The exhibit was inspired by Fred Korematsu's resistance against the violation of his constitutional rights, and it examines the mass incarceration of over 125,000 Japanese Americans during World War II and invites visitors to reflect on historical injustice and its relevance today.

The exhibit was developed

in partnership with the Korematsu Institute. It emphasizes stories of resilience and civic engagement, encouraging everyone to stand up for equal rights.

In addition to hosting the exhibit, the Main Library will be holding related programs, including:

• Saturday, January 10, at 2 p.m. – opening reception featuring Dr. Karen Korematsu, civil rights advocate and daughter of Fred Korematsu

• Tuesday, January 27, 6 to 7 p.m. – Origami Paper Cranes

see KOREMATSU, page 5

EB Parks Issues Wild Mushroom Warning

Due to this year's early rainy season, wild mushrooms are popping up in great numbers throughout East Bay Regional Parks.

Mushrooms are an ecologically important part of the parklands and can look beautiful—but some of them contain dangerous toxins. The death cap (*Amanita phalloides*) and western destroying

angel (*Amanita ocreata*) are two of the world's most toxic mushrooms, and both can be found in Regional Parks during the rainy season.

The death cap and western destroying angel mushrooms contain amatoxins, molecules that are deadly to many animals. Symptoms may not appear until up to 12 hours after

see WARNING, page 8

INSIDE YOUR TIMES

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION New program strengthens math program. Page 2	Calendar..... 3
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY Help the city keep storm drains clear. Page 3	Classified Ads..... 8
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORATORY Students invited to MLK oratory contest. Page 5	Crossword..... 9
38,500 EVERY THURSDAY THE LARGEST FREE DELIVERED NEWSPAPER IN THE EAST BAY	Food..... 4
	Homes..... 6
	Home Services..... 8
	Letters..... 10
	Obituaries..... 11

TAGS: Young people curate their own sustainable fashions to sell

continued from front page

“We serve teens and young adults ages 13-24 through our programs: Job Program, Volunteer Program, Creative Workshops, Community Events and Entrepreneur Program,” Drogo said.

TAGS’ Entrepreneur Program includes the makers (youth who make handmade items, including jewelry, crocheted items, art, keychains, etc.) and sellers (youth who curate their own sustainable fashions to sell).

There were several mak-

ers and sellers at the holiday market, along with two racks of TAGS sustainable fashions from their thrift store at 1711 East 14th Street in San Leandro.

Drogo also said that teens and young adults often join their team as volunteers. And depending on their interest, they have opportunities to lead TAGS’ creative workshops as instructors, or join one of their other programs, such as the Entrepreneur Program.

For example, 20-year-old Maker, Bryan Mendez, who

was in the TAGS Holiday Night Market, first came to TAGS as a 16-year-old in one of the free monthly Creative Workshops.

Seeing his talent, he was invited to lead a workshop and shortly after, Bryan joined the Job Program.

“We developed our Makers Program in 2022, and Bryan was our first maker,” Drogo said. “Bryan continues to be part of our Entrepreneur Program. Today he is selling his handmade jewelry, keychains and art.”

Stacey Iravedra, a 22-year-old Seller at the TAGS Holiday Night Market started as a staff member and then became the Store Manager.

In 2023, she helped TAGS develop the Sellers Market and was their first seller. Stacey continues to be part of their Entrepreneur Program today, selling her curated fashions.

With a welcoming café venue for the Holiday Night Market, creative young entrepreneurs, local holiday shopping, and community spirit.

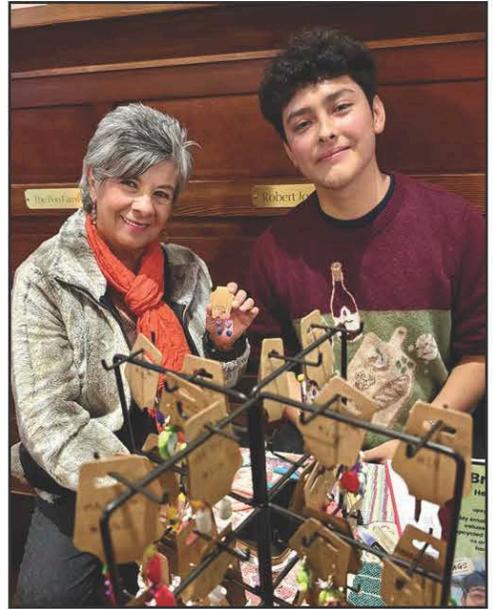


PHOTO BY SHIRLEY ORILLE

Bryan Mendez (right) assists customer Marisela Castro.

Hearing Loss Association to Meet on Jan. 10

The Hearing Loss Association East Bay will meet on Saturday, Jan. 10, at Kaiser Permanente, Fabiola Building, 3801 Howe St, Basement Conference Room G-26, in Oakland. Refreshments at 9:30 a.m., presentation at 10

The meeting is both in-person and on Zoom. For Zoom, register at: www.HearingLossEB.org. RSVP by: Thursday, Jan 8, at 5 p.m.

The speaker will be Brooke Barry, a researcher in the Sound and Music Perception

will break down the current understanding of music perception in cochlear implant users, how it differs from speech perception, and why those differences matter for both research and rehabilitation. Brooke Barry received a B.S.

a B.A in music performance from UCLA. Her research on music perception in cochlear implants, combines her passion for music and music theory with her knowledge of anatomy and the ear.

Holiday Night Market at Zocalo Coffeehouse

Our 1st Holiday Night Market was a vibrant celebration of youth entrepreneurship, sustainable gifting, and community connection. The energy of the evening reached far beyond our space, with coverage from NBC Local News, CBS KPIX TV, and the San Leandro Times — shining a spotlight on the incredible work of our young makers.

This event would not have been possible without the generous support of **Javier Flores and Vetted Real Estate.**

Your sponsorship helped uplift youth voices, creativity, and leadership in a very visible way.





Latest Happenings

11/14- Adult Wreathmaking Workshop (Sip & Create Fundraiser)

Our cozy Adult Wreathmaking “Sip & Create” workshop blended creativity and community while serving as a mini-fundraiser for our free youth programs. Interested in attending or leading a future adult workshop?

Email us at info@teenadvocacy.org.

11/21 – BGC Total Teen Takeover

We were excited to partner with the Boys & Girls Club of San Leandro for Total Teen Takeover – an evening centered on youth leadership, creativity, and connection. Opportunities like this allow us to expand TAGS’ creative reuse mission and strengthen community partnerships that support young people.

1/24 – Dare to Flare: Jeans Upcycling Youth Workshop

We welcomed new instructor Jordan, whose first workshop brought fresh creative energy to our space. Expanding our teaching team allows us to offer youth new artistic perspectives and experiences.

1/25 - Adult Tarot Card Workshop

Our Adult Tarot Card Workshop invited participants into reflection and expression. These adult offerings both build community and help sustain our youth programs.

1/28 - Best of San Leandro Nomination

We were honored to be nominated for Best of San Leandro yet again!— a meaningful recognition of the impact our youth and community create together.

2/1 - Private Birthday Party Workshop

We hosted a creative private birthday workshop – a fun and meaningful way to celebrate! Private workshops (ages 9–24) are available.

Interested in booking one? Email info@teenadvocacy.org.





Upcoming Events & Happenings

Now – Shop TAGS at Zocalo Coffeehouse

You can now shop TAGS at Zocalo Coffeehouse!

Stop by and check out our curated rack of stylish, sustainable finds – youth-powered fashion out in the community.

3/14– The Upcycle Lab: Patchwork Edition

Join us for another creative workshop with Jordan! We're excited to continue offering fresh artistic experiences that inspire skill-building and self-expression.



Immediate Sponsorship Opportunity

4/18 - Earth Day Market @ Zocalo Coffeehouse

📍 645 Bancroft Ave, San Leandro, CA

Celebrate sustainability, creativity, and community at our Earth Day Market. Shop youth vendors, support small businesses, and honor the power of reuse.

We are actively seeking event sponsors to help make this market possible!

If you or your business believes in sustainability and supporting young leaders, now is the time to partner with us.

Please reach out as soon as possible to info@teenadvocacy.org to learn about sponsorship opportunities.



Special Store Happenings

Second Saturdays

Mark your calendars!
On the following Saturdays,
enjoy 25% off in-store

- March 14th
- April 11th
- May 9th

It's the perfect excuse to shop with purpose and refresh your wardrobe with curated, reuse-forward finds

Free Drop Friday

Join us for Free Drop Fridays – a community favorite!

Stop by on:

- March 6th
- April 3rd
- May 1st

These special days are about access, equity, and sharing resources with love. Come see what's available and spread the word.

With Gratitude



We extend our sincere thanks to our recent donors and sustaining members whose generosity keeps TAGS thriving. Your continued support ensures that our programs remain free, accessible, and youth-centered.

A special thank you to **Inner Wheel Club of San Leandro** for your meaningful contribution and belief in our mission. Partnerships like yours help us nurture creativity, confidence, and leadership in the next generation.

We are deeply grateful for each of you. 🧡

THANK YOU TO OUR WINTER DONORS

We couldn't do it without our amazing supporters!

ALEXANDER HALTERMAN

BEN FRAGER*

DARLENE LEVY

HOLLY HAYES*

INNER WHEEL CLUB OF

SAN LEANDRO

JILL RAIMONDI

JOEY XANDER

KAILANI PONTI

KATE MILLER*

KATHLEEN KELLY

KATHRYN D'OLIVO*

KELLIE MCKEOWN

KIM UNDERWOOD*

LEILA TOWN

LISA GALLEGOS*

LYNN DROGO*

MICHELLE HAMMON*

MICHELLE MILLER*

NAISSA FOSTER*

ROSEMARY SIEFKES & DON LAKE

TORI DECKER

WENDY ZASTAWNEY

***Sustaining Member**

A special thanks to our Teen Advocate Community!

Our voices are being heard: we've reached out to let you—our community—know we need you, and you are responding. Your support keeps us going.

Please join our growing community of **Sustaining Members** by donating \$5 or more a month. This is one of the most helpful ways to support TAGS as it helps us to plan for upcoming projects for the youth. Thank you!



DONATION CORNER

We are currently in need of the following items:

- **Jeans and Graphic T-Shirts** - *please no skinny jeans at this time*
- **Handbags** - *especially designer bags*
- **Jewelry** - *especially earrings and rings*
- **Spring & Summer Clothing** - *including light jackets*
- **Mannequins** - *over the years our mannequins have lost fingers, limbs, and the will to stand*



Donations are accepted at the TAGS store
(1711 E 14th, San Leandro)
Wed through Sat 12-6pm

Please allow time for us to sort through your items, as we are not always able to accept everything.

More Ways to Contribute & Get Involved

Not sure where to start?

The best first step is to sign up for in-store volunteer hours and experience our mission firsthand. Spending time in the space is the most powerful way to understand our impact – and we're always looking for adult helpers to support youth, projects, and daily operations.

Join a Committee

A wonderful way to share your skills and make a deeper impact.

- Admin Committee – Help us stay organized with data entry, systems support, and assistance with our newsletter and website.
- Fundraising Committee – Support our annual fundraiser and help host, lead, or assist with Sip & Create adult workshops.
- Grants Committee – Research funding opportunities and assist with grant writing and applications.
- Programs Committee – Provide mentorship and support for our job training, volunteer, entrepreneur, and internship programs.

Become a Recurring Donor

Sustaining memberships are one of the most impactful ways to support TAGS. Monthly giving helps us plan ahead, grow responsibly, and keep our programs free and accessible.

Explore Sponsorship Opportunities

Partner with TAGS through event or program sponsorship and make a visible investment in youth leadership, creativity, and community well-being. We'd love to connect and find the right fit for you.