



# COUNTY OF MONTEREY CAO Weekly Report

## In This Edition:

- > Health Department conference focuses on food, safety
- > Collaboration builds community park
- > Labor of Love event brings families together

## SPECIALREPORT



*Delores Ruiz (left) of La Tapatia Taqueria in Prunedale, receives her Award of Excellence from Health Department Director Elsa Jimenez (center) and Ric Encarnacion, Environmental Health Bureau.*

## County Notes

- > Get rid of old, unwanted prescriptions at the Drug Take Back event October 22<sup>nd</sup>. [Here are Monterey County drop off locations.](#)

## Best of the Best: Health Department Honors Top Gold Seal Earners at Conference

The Health Department's Environmental Health Bureau selected three Gold Seal food facilities for even higher honors.

One of the highlights of the department's 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Food Safety Conference last month was the announcement of Award of Excellence honors, which were

given to three outstanding Gold Seal eateries by the Environmental Health Bureau.

The Environmental Health Bureau and the Food Safety Advisory Council established this annual conference in 2008.



*Nominees for the Award of Excellence gather at the Food Safety Conference last month.*

“All operating food facilities must meet regulatory food standards,” explains John Ramirez, Director of Environmental Health. “Those who excel are recognized with our Gold Seal. Twenty-Five Gold Seal food facilities were nominated for our Award of Excellence and three winners were selected. These three were honored because they have consistently demonstrated excellence in providing safe and secure food above and

beyond the criteria for a Gold Seal.”

Award of Excellence honors went to Gonzales Subway #12235, La Tapatia Taqueria and Pacific Grove Convalescent Hospital.

These local food establishments were also recognized:

- |                            |                              |                   |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Asilomar Conference Center | Frutti De Mar Grill          | Post Ranch Inn    |
| Bi-Rite Market             | In-n-Out Burgers #99         | Red Lobster       |
| Burger King #1803          | Islands Restaurant           | Santa Rosa Bakery |
| Carl's Jr. #748            | Jamba Juice # 1182           | Stammtisch        |
| Carmel Valley Manor        | Monterey High School         | Taco Bell #27303  |
| Creekside Bagel Bakery     | Olive Garden Restaurant #335 | The Rio Grill     |
| Denny's #8636              | Panda Express #943           | Westland House    |

This year’s conference highlighted the ‘flow’ of food in food establishments. Patrick Kennelly, Chief of the Food Safety Section of the California Department of Public Health, Food and Drug Branch, was the event’s keynote speaker. His presentation included the story of an illegal food storage investigation that eventually led to the responsible party paying over \$19 million in fines and penalties for illegal and unsafe food storage handling.

The annual conference marks the culmination of Monterey County’s Food Safety Education Month (September) and focuses on the importance of food safety education to create an informed workforce for the restaurant and foodservice industry, all while raising the public’s level of confidence in the industry’s commitment to food safety.

# County Collaboration Builds Recreation Area and More in Chualar

For the small community of Chualar, it was a case of one good idea leading to another. The end result was a collaboration between the County and local school district to build the communities first recreation area and safe sidewalks to walk to and from school.

Chualar is a community in south Monterey County just south of Salinas with a population of 1,200, but lacked any public recreational space.

That need came to light in 2012, when the Chualar Union School District approached the County with a proposal to develop the first recreational facility in the community, a tot lot (a small playground for young children) on vacant land adjacent to Chualar Elementary School. The original project would have used approximately \$116,000 in State Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding, but during discussions with the school district and community, it became clear there was a greater need for a larger community recreational area for all ages.



*A panoramic view of the renovated lot (above). The school's team name is part of the track (right).*



The Chualar Community Athletic Field project was born from those discussions, and county Economic Development staff moved quickly to secure funds to cover the work, but the project would still take several more years to complete.

“We assembled \$857,511 dollars to complete the renovation,” explains Darby Marshall, who works on community grants for the Economic Development Department. “This included \$277,176 from the 2014 round of funding through the California Housing Related Parks Grant Program and \$580,335 from the CDBG Urban County funds which would be paid over a four-year period.”

With funding in place, landscape architects were hired last year to prepare the plans and specifications for the project and Public Works crews did the much-needed work. This included

correcting drainage issues at the existing school field, removing the existing sod and replacing it with synthetic turf. Because state funds were used, the new recreation area must be available to the general public outside of school hours, which required being able to securing the area from the school buildings during non-school hours.

And the work didn't stop there. In addition to the original funding, the County also used \$244,533 in grant funds to construct Americans with Disability Act (ADA) compliant sidewalks on the streets closest to Chualar Elementary School.

"The intent of the sidewalk Improvements was to directly benefit students walking to and from school as well as the community at large," explains Public Works Project Manager Juan Mesa. "We improved the existing conditions by adding infrastructure in the form of sidewalks and ADA ramps. Overall, this was a huge improvement for the children and community."

This additional project built eight curb returns at all corners of the intersections near the field and sidewalks which are 4 to 6 feet wide. These improvements provide residents with full access to the school and field.



*A new cross walk (above) and ADA compliant sidewalks (below) were part of the improvement project.*



---

## Labor of Love Educates, Celebrates

**It is fondly referred to as the biggest baby shower in the county, but the annual Labor of Love event has a deeper purpose, 'delivering' important information to expectant mothers and their families.**

Unlike other "baby fairs" that are held with vendors selling products, the Labor of Love Collaborative hosts a pregnancy health fair and party each September in Sherwood Hall that is all about educating families about healthy behaviors before, during and beyond pregnancy.

This year, 215 pregnant moms attended, along with expectant dads, siblings, grandparents-to-be and a host of volunteers and staff making a total of 647 at the event.



*Families pack into Sherwood Hall for the Labor of Love event.*

Parents were able to visit 37 different tables to “play a game” or activity that taught them about healthy habits for pregnancy and beyond. Many of the tables were hosted by county agencies who also showcased their available services.

Lucky mothers-to-be were able to win important baby items. 40 car seats, 30 strollers and 35 other prizes were awarded during the event. All the parents left with a children’s board book, a

nursing pillow and lots of new information and new contacts of community partners that help families.

This was the 24<sup>th</sup> annual Labor of Love event. Many thanks to the financial sponsors of the event: Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula, Natividad Medical Center, Salinas Valley Memorial Healthcare System, the Child Abuse Prevention Council, First 5 and United Way.

The members of the collaborative that organize the event are:

- David Maradei (Child Abuse Prevention Council)
- Michelle Fox (Monterey County Health Department WIC Nutrition Program)
- Lupe Covarrubias (Monterey County Health Department, Champions for Change)
- Toni Gifford (Hartnell Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN) program)



*Expectant fathers honed their skills at the diaper derby and ‘Feed the Baby’ contest.*