Arts Day Celebration at City Hall

Each October, the City of El Cerrito celebrates National Arts and Humanities Month, and joins with communities across the United States to recognize the importance of art and culture in our daily lives.

The City’s Arts and Culture Commission is hosting this year’s Arts Day Festival at El Cerrito City Hall on October 17. This indoor/outdoor festival will celebrate the arts with activities for kids and adults. Kids can enjoy puppet shows, sidewalk chalk drawing and crafts activities. Adults will enjoy film screenings, poetry readings, crafts activities and an artist’s talk in the City Hall Gallery.

Adding to the fun will be exhibits from El Cerrito’s Playland-Not-At-Beach, the El Cerrito Historical Society, and the Shadi Holiday Display Committee. The Del Mars will play surf music and two trios will perform classical chamber music. In addition there will be a photography workshop.

The Arts Day Festival is free, with light refreshments available for purchase. See page two for details.

To encourage residents to participate, patronize, and support the arts and humanities in El Cerrito, a list of art events, performances, and exhibits appearing around town in October is available at www.el-cerrito.org/artsday.

El Cerrito Restaurant Week

The City of El Cerrito Community Development Department and the Economic Development Committee, in partnership with the El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce, are hosting the first ever, El Cerrito Restaurant Week, October 1–4. Participating restaurants will offer deals, promotions, and specials, so it’s a great time to dine out with friends, discover new restaurants, and support local businesses!

Grab a few friends and explore the variety of cuisine in El Cerrito at participating restaurants, including:
- Best Burritos
- El Cerrito Natural Grocery Annex
- El Mono
- Elevation 66 Brewing Company
- Franco’s Mini Deli
- Noodles Fresh
- Papi’s Pizza Roma
- Raphael’s Shutter Cafe
- The Red Onion
- Rubio’s Fresh Mexican Grill
- SCENE Winebar Café
- Taki Sushi
- Treviño’s Restaurant
- Well Grounded Tea & Coffee Bar

For more information, go to www.el-cerrito.org/restaurantweek or call 215-4339.
UPCOMING EVENTS!

Saturday, September 26
FREE FOLK FESTIVAL
Listen, learn, and play live music. Enjoy featured performances and workshops from both world-renowned musicians and local favorites. The festival also includes open microphones and jam sessions for musicians of all abilities, so bring your instrument! New this year, a dance program includes workshops from noon to 6 p.m., and dance parties from 6:30-9:30 p.m.! The City’s Arts & Culture Commission is proud to co-sponsor this annual event with the San Francisco Folk Music Club. Bring your instruments, your dancing shoes, or just yourself! Go online to www.elcerritofolkfest.org for details.

When: Noon to 9:30 PM
Where: El Cerrito High School
540 Ashbury Avenue

Thursday, October 1 to Sunday, October 4
RESTAURANT WEEK
See details on page 1 and make plans now to dine out in support of local business! Find a list of participating restaurants online at www.el-cerrito.org/restaurantweek, or by using the Chinook Book app on your smart phone. You can download Chinook Book from the Apple Store or Google Play.

October 1 to October 30
OCTOBER IS ARTS MONTH
Celebrate the arts in El Cerrito. Go online to www.el-cerrito.org/artsday for a list of local events, performances, and exhibits, or call 215-4318 for details.

Friday, October 2 to Sunday, October 4
ANNUAL ART SHOW AND SALE
The El Cerrito Art Association’s annual Show and Sale returns to the El Cerrito Community Center. This year’s special theme category is Rhythm. Opening reception on Friday night; unframed art sale on Saturday and Sunday. For more details, visit www.elcerritoart.org.

When: Friday, 7 to 9 p.m.
Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Sunday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Where: El Cerrito Community Center
7007 Moeser Lane

Saturday, October 3
BOOK SALE
Friends of the El Cerrito Library presents its fall Book Sale. On this date, this year, fill a paper grocery bag with as many great used books, DVDs, and CDs as you can—and pay only $3! (Bags provided). The sale funds book purchases and library programs for both children and adults. Check the Friend’s website at friendselcerritolibrary.wordpress.com for additional sale dates in September.

When: 10am to 4pm
Where: El Cerrito Library
6510 Stockton Ave.

Saturday, October 10
CITYWIDE GARAGE SALE
Keep waste out of landfill, shop for great deals, and get to know the El Cerrito community. Garage Sale listings will be available October 2 in self-serve boxes at the Recycling Center and Community Center or online at www.el-cerrito.org/garagesale.

This year, celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Garage Sale. El Cerrito resident (and avid recycler) Marianne Hegeman first suggested a citywide sale as a way to help homeowners clear away enough clutter to inspect their foundations for damage after the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake!

When: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Where: Citywide

Saturday, October 10
FIRE STATION OPEN HOUSE
Bring your family to an open house to learn fire safety tips as part of Fire Prevention Week. Place a working smoke alarm in every bedroom of your house! For more details, call 215-4450.

When: 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Where: Fire Station 72
1520 Arlington Blvd

Saturday, October 17
ARTS DAY
Celebrate National Arts and Humanities Month on Arts Day at City Hall. Enjoy live music, poetry, a puppet show, and a film screening. Meet local artists and take part in hands-on art activities, including a creative re-use crafting activity and hands-on photography workshop. Free! Refreshments available. For more details, visit www.el-cerrito.org/artsday or call 215-4318.

When: 1 to 5 p.m.
Where: City Hall
10890 San Pablo Avenue
(indoors and outside)

Saturday, November 7
CERT BOOT CAMP
Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) teaches residents to provide effective and efficient help for themselves, their families and neighbors, without placing themselves in unnecessary danger.

The CERT “Boot Camp” is a one-day introduction to the CERT program. The full CERT training consists of eight modules of training (20 hours) and will be offered again in 2016. To register for the Boot Camp, or for details, call 215-4450 or visit www.el-cerrito.org/fire/cert.

When: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Where: Arlington Community Church
52 Arlington Avenue, Kensington
Wednesday, November 11  
**VETERANS DAY**

All City offices will be closed for the Veterans Day holiday. Curbside collection of garbage, recycling, and green waste will continue on the usual schedule.

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Friday, November 13  
**COMMUNITY MIXER**

The City’s Economic Development Committee and the Chamber of Commerce invite residents, business owners, and members of the El Cerrito community to attend this no-host mixer and get to know each other. Details at 215-4339 or online at www.el-cerrito.org/mixers.

**When:** 5 to 7 p.m.  
**Where:** SCENE Winebar Café  
10070 San Pablo Avenue

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Wednesday, November 4  
**SENIOR CENTER RESOURCE FAIR**

Don’t let someone scam you or a senior you love. At the 2015 Resource Fair, you can get everything you need to help you become informed and organized. Vendors will include healthcare organizations, business professionals, residential communities, senior adult living facilities, home care, and County programs. The event is free and all ages are welcome, so bring a friend or neighbor.

To reserve your spot, call the Open House Senior Center at 559-7677 by Friday October 23. The first 100 people to RSVP will receive a free lunch.

**When:** 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
**Where:** El Cerrito Senior Center  
7007 Moeser Lane

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Thursday and Friday  
November 26 & 27  
**THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**

All City offices will be closed for the Thanksgiving holiday. Curbside collection of garbage, recycling, and green waste will continue on the usual schedule.

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**Saturday, December 12**  
**SHADI HOLIDAY DISPLAY**

Enjoy an El Cerrito tradition! The El Cerrito Community Foundation invites you to visit the Shadi Holiday Display. Volunteers will be on hand nightly to provide information at the lighted display site on Moeser Lane at Sea View. For more information, visit www.shadiholidaydisplay.com or call 235-1315.

**When:** 5 to 10 p.m., nightly  
**Where:** Moeser Lane above Sea View Drive

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Saturday, December 12  
**HOLIDAY BREAKFAST**

Join the Recreation Department staff at their Annual Holiday Pancake Breakfast. Families can enjoy a pancake breakfast, a visit from Santa, and a children’s musical performance. Proceeds go to the David Hunter Memorial Scholarship Fund. Tickets may be purchased at the Community Center or online at www.el-cerrito.org/recreation, starting November 2.

**When:** 9 to 11 a.m.  
**Where:** El Cerrito Community Center  
7007 Moeser Lane

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Saturday, December 26  
**WINTER BREAK**

Check the City’s website in December for information about holiday business hours for City administrative offices. There will be no curbside collection of garbage, green waste, or recycling on December 25 or January 1. All collections during the break will be one day later than usual, for example Thursday collections on Friday. The usual schedule resumes on Monday, January 4. For curbside collection details, call 215-4350 or visit www.ecenvironment.org.

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Saturday, January 16  
**ZUMBATHON**

Start the year off with a high energy party! Zumba combines Latin and International music with a fun and effective workout system. All experience levels welcome at the Zumbathon. Includes a Raffle and Silent Auction to benefit the Recreation Department’s David Hunter Memorial Youth Scholarship Fund.

For information, or to register, go online to www.el-cerrito.org/recreation. Entrance fee is $15 per adult, $5 per child. Kids under 4 free (must be potty trained).

If your business would like to become a sponsor for the 3rd Annual Zumbathon, please contact Vivian Brandt at 559-7007.

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Monday, January 18  
**MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. ANNUAL CELEBRATION**

Join in the annual parade and attend a spirited rally celebrating the life of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at the ECHS Performing Arts Center.

The City of El Cerrito, St. Peter Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, the El Cerrito Branch of the NAACP, and the West Contra Costa Unified School District proudly cosponsor this event. For more information later in the year, go to www.el-cerrito.org/MLK or call Karen Pinkos at 215-4318 or Patricia Durham at 234-2518.

**When:** 9 a.m., gather at City Hall  
9:30 a.m., parade starts  
10:30 a.m., rally starts  
**Where:** Meet at City Hall to join the parade. Rally at El Cerrito High School.
Preventing the Rainy Season

Despite the current drought, the rainy season is just a few short months away. The City needs your cooperation and assistance to make sure that our storm drainage system functions properly and to minimize the risk of flooding. The system provides for storm water runoff from City streets to travel along gutters and through underground pipes until it reaches the waterways that drain to San Francisco Bay.

To report a problem with the storm drainage system, call the Maintenance Division at 215-4369 during business hours, or 233-1214 after hours. Please keep in mind that when there are citywide flooding events, requests will be prioritized, but the Maintenance Crew will do their best to respond promptly. Call the Maintenance Division about the following problems:

- Storm drain grates blocked by leaves or trash
- Blockage where a creek flows into an underground pipe
- Flooding of your property by water from the street

Sandbags: Sandbags can prevent flooding of your driveway, garage, or home. Before or after a storm hits, residents can get up to ten sandbags from the Recycling and Environmental Resource Center. Pick up the empty bags from the Recycling Center Office, 7501 Schmidt Lane, Monday through Sunday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. You will need to fill the bags yourself, but shovels will be provided. Sand is available on a first-come-first-served basis. Proof of residency is required.

Do You Have a Creek on Your Property?
The City needs your cooperation and assistance to minimize the risk of flooding during periods of heavy rain. If you have a creek (or other open watercourse) on your property, it is your responsibility to maintain the portion that lies within your property boundary. If it contains debris or overgrown vegetation, it poses a flooding risk for you, your neighbors, and anyone living downstream from you.

The Public Works Department recommends the following guidelines for maintaining a creek on your property:

1. Remove all debris and foreign objects, including bottles and cans, construction debris, fallen tree limbs, and any other litter. We recommend storing outdoor furniture and other backyard items at least 10 feet away from the top of the bank to avoid anything washing into the creek during a heavy storm. Sheds, or other small structures closer than 10 feet from the top of bank should be anchored to the ground.

2. Cut vegetation along the creek banks up to the top of the bank (flood line). This includes shrubs, tules, pampas grass, cattails, and bamboo, but not low ground cover. Do not clear-cut the creek slopes. If you cut a plant, cut it at the ground level, but leave the roots in the ground. Remove hanging vines that could block the natural flow of water. Trim berry vines to the top of the bank.

3. Prune back any tree limbs hanging within two feet of the top of the bank. Prune from the creek banks up to the top of the bank (flood line). If there are trees growing within the stream channel that could cause an obstruction to the flow of water, contact the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for direction. A single, living tree with a diameter of 2 inches or greater need not be removed, provided it is not leaning toward the creek. If you do cut a tree, cut it at the ground level, but leave the roots in the ground.

4. Any work to alter a creek requires a Permit. Widening, filling, or dredging requires permits from the City, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the State Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the US Army Corps of Engineers.

For more information, call the Operations and Environmental Services Division at 215-4369 or visit www.el-cerrito.org/sandbags.

Spread Cheer by Donating Toys

For over two decades, the Richmond/El Cerrito Firefighters’ Annual Toy Program has delivered a little extra holiday cheer for disadvantaged children in West Contra Costa County. You can support the Toy Program by donating a new, unwrapped toy, making a financial contribution, or hosting a donation barrel at your business or event.

The Toy Program is part of a joint effort by the Firefighters, the Richmond Police Department’s Food Basket Program, and the Coronado YMCA in Richmond. Last year, more than 800 families benefited from these programs.

To help the Toy Program:
- Drop off a toy at any fire station in West County
- Make a monetary donation via the Toy Program website, or at any Richmond or El Cerrito Fire Station
- Request a donation barrel from El Cerrito Firefighter Rob Murphy at 215-4450

For more information about the Toy Program, please contact the Richmond/El Cerrito Firefighters Toy Program at 774-5133, email info@toyprogram.org or visit www.toyprogram.org.
Huber Park Improvements

The City has been working with neighbors to plan improvements to Huber Park, in the hills, south of Moeser Lane. These improvements will be funded by East Bay Regional Park District Measure WW Funds, with the goal of making improvements while maintaining the character and ecology of the park. The $174,000 grant was first allocated in 2010 and the scope of the project was approved by the Park District in 2014.

Improvements will include new park benches, tables, and grills; a toddler play structure; a new sandbox; the resurfacing of the basketball court, with new backboards, rims, nets, and striping; refurbishing the existing concrete slide; some accessibility upgrades; and minor drainage improvements and repairs. City staff held community meetings last fall and spring and also received feedback from the Parks & Recreation Committee on current needs.

Huber Park was first developed by the 1930s Federal Works Progress Administration. Improvements since then include clubhouse construction in 1966 and restroom accessibility renovations in 2003. Changes to be pursued as funding is identified include improving accessibility; repairing and modifying creeks and storm drains; trail improvements, such as stairs, foot bridges, and pedestrian access; repaving; and new lighting.

Construction on the planned improvements is expected to start this winter. Contact Project Manager, Melissa Tigbao, at mtigbao@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us or call 215-4368 for more information.

Burglary Prevention Tips

Don’t be an “easy target” for burglars. Below are just a few simple tips you can use to help avoid a break-in at your home or business.

- Install deadbolts on all exterior doors.
- Consider installing an alarm system.
- Don’t display valuables where passersby can see them.
- Trim any vegetation that obscures your house or can be used as a hiding place.
- The El Cerrito Police Department takes your suspicions seriously. Call 9-1-1 if you have reason to suspect illegal activity in your neighborhood.

While you’re away, make your home look occupied.

- Use automatic timers to turn lights on and off.
- Remember to lock all doors and windows.

IF YOU USE SOCIAL MEDIA, PROTECT YOURSELF ONLINE.

- Set your account privacy so that only people you actually know can see your content.
- Don’t announce an out-of-town trip.
- Don’t post photos that show your address or expensive items in your home.
- Stay informed by following the Police Department on Twitter or Nixle to keep up with crime trends in your area.

Please visit www.el-cerrito.org/police or contact the Police Department Administrative Office during business hours at 215-4400 to learn about our Home Security Check Program, or register for vacation checks.

Castro Park Athletic Field Renovation

The athletic field at Castro Park was renovated over the summer as part of a joint project between the City and the West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD). In addition to new turf, renovations include drainage and irrigation system improvements that will make park maintenance easier and reduce water usage in the future.

The field is used year-round by a variety of groups, including residents, athletic leagues, and the City’s Recreation Department. Starting as early as Spring of 2016, it will also be used by students at the new Korematsu Middle School.

Castro Park is located on WCCUSD property, and maintained by the City through a shared use agreement. Due to the age of the field, poor drainage, increasing usage, and impacts from the construction of Korematsu Middle School, the City and WCCUSD determined renovation of the athletic field was necessary.

WCCUSD provided $250,000 in funding for the field renovation.

The park is located at 1420 Norvell St. The playground, club house and tennis courts were not impacted by the field renovation.

Work on the playing field starts with breaking the clay soil and adding a coarse second layer to facilitate deeper root growth. This enables the new turf to better withstand damage from heavy use.
Thank You, July 4th Sponsors!

Thousands of people celebrated Independence Day at the 2015 City of El Cerrito worldOne July 4th Festival at beautiful Cerrito Vista Park. This is the 17th year that the City has partnered with worldOne Radio (KECG Public Radio 88.9FM, a program of the West Contra Costa Unified School District) for the festival’s mainstage entertainment. Thanks to all the attendees, vendors, performers, and volunteers who were part of the fun at this annual event.

The July Fourth Festival was made possible by the generous support of many sponsors, including Honda of El Cerrito, Marin Clean Energy (MCE), East Bay Sanitary, Sierra Nevada, The Natural Grocery Company, Maria-Tina Vision, WCCUSD, The Whole 9, Olvero Plumbing, Pastime ACE Hardware, Plaza Auto, Prospect Sierra School, C.V.S., O’Reilly Auto Parts, J&P Properties, and other local businesses and individuals.

If you represent a local business and would like to find out more about sponsoring future Recreation Department special events, email cjones@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us or call 559-7000.

Serve on a City Board, Committee, or Commission

El Cerrito has 13 advisory boards, commissions, or committees that advise the City Council on a number of topics. Their recommendations provide feedback to the City Council and can result in innovative programs and improved city services.

Most advisory groups meet once a month during evening hours. Meetings are always open to the public.

The following bodies advise the City Council in their areas of responsibility:

- Arts & Culture Commission
- Citizens Street Oversight Committee
- Civil Service Commission
- Committee on Aging
- Crime Prevention Committee
- Design Review Board
- Economic Development Committee
- Environmental Quality Committee
- Financial Advisory Board
- Human Relations Commission
- Parks & Recreation Commission
- Planning Commission
- Tree Committee

Currently, over 80 residents make a contribution to the El Cerrito community by serving on advisory bodies. Become a part of your local government. Several advisory bodies have openings now, with more expected as terms expire in early 2016.

If you are interested in serving, please submit an application to the City Clerk, City Hall, 10890 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito, CA 94530. Applications are available online at www.el-cerrito.org/commissions, where you can also find more information about El Cerrito’s boards, commissions and committees, and about the selection process. For more information, call the City Clerk 215-4305.
City Adopts Housing Element

The Housing Element is one of seven mandatory elements to a local jurisdiction’s General Plan. According to Senate Bill 375, state law requires jurisdictions in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area, including El Cerrito, to update their Housing Element based on an eight-year planning period, beginning in 2015. The housing element must plan for the City’s fair share of the region’s need for housing at all income levels and it must also meet specific State statutory requirements. But ultimately, the Housing Element reflects the vision and priorities of the El Cerrito community.

The City Council adopted the 2015–2023 Housing Element in April, 2015, and the California Department of Housing and Community Development found the Housing Element to be in full compliance with State law and approved it in May, 2015.

The goals of the City’s Housing Element are to:

1. Conserve and improve El Cerrito’s existing housing
2. Facilitate and encourage the development of housing to meet regional needs as established by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG)
3. Expand housing opportunities for the elderly, disabled persons, very low- to moderate-income households, and others with special housing needs
4. Promote housing opportunities for all, regardless of race, age, marital status, ancestry, national origin or color

The document includes a needs assessment and inventory, an analysis of sites available for development of new housing, and analyses of both governmental and nongovernmental resources and constraints.

The State Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) requires all California cities to provide their fair share of housing for all income levels as well as for special needs populations. El Cerrito is projected to grow to a population of 24,700 by 2020, slightly less than a 5% growth rate per decade, and is required to plan for 398 new housing units by 2022.

To view the document online, visit [www.el-cerrito.org/housingelement](http://www.el-cerrito.org/housingelement). The document is also available for review at the library and City Hall. For more information, contact Margaret Kavanaugh-Lynch, Development Services Manager at 215-4332.

Local Government Leadership Academy

In January 2015, 20 local government agencies in Contra Costa County participated in the first Contra Costa Government Leadership Academy. The Academy is a unique professional development opportunity for employees who are emerging as agency leaders.

The participants met once a month for seven months to learn about leadership and public service. They formed teams that presented on topics of concern to city managers throughout the County, including efficient systems for responding to Public Records Act Requests and new potential funding sources for state and federal clean water mandates.

El Cerrito participants were David Ciappara, Captain/Paramedic in the El Cerrito Fire Department and Maria Sanders, the City’s new Operations + Environmental Services Division Manager from the Public Works Department. Ciappara has been with the City since 2006; Sanders joined in 2009.

Both employees said they valued the program because it gave them an opportunity to explore different perspectives when attempting to meet the challenges facing local government leaders.
Volunteer at the Senior Center

Would you like to try something new, gain job experience, or just give back to the community? The Recreation Department’s Senior Services Division needs volunteers to help with a number of programs and services offered to adults 50 years and older at the Open House Senior Center.

Older adults continue to thrive when given the extra care and dedication that volunteers can provide. There is an immediate need for volunteers to help with:

- Monday to Friday lunch program
- Gardening
- Reception
- Teaching classes
- Assisting people with Alzheimer’s disease (or other types of memory loss) and providing respite for their caregivers

The Senior Center is located at 6500 Stockton Avenue (behind the library). For more information, call 559-7677.

Kitchen volunteer and staff at the Senior Center.