



# Discover WestCovina

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF WEST COVINA

February/March  
2012

A publication  
provided for residents by  
the City of West Covina



WWW.WESTCOVINA.ORG

## West Covina Police Heroes

### Save Life of 19-Month-Old Baby

**O**n December 23 at about 8:10 p.m., the West Covina Police Department received a 911 call regarding a 19-month-old baby choking.

The West Covina police and fire departments were dispatched to the 2700 block of Dawnridge Place in West Covina. While emergency personnel were en route, Senior Dispatcher Joan Phillipson provided CPR instructions over the phone to the family.

Officer Justin Schienle was first to arrive and found the victim struggling to breathe with his eyes rolled back. He conducted a finger sweep

inside the victim's mouth and a series of back blows in an attempt to free any obstruction.

Officer Matthew Nelson arrived next and took over, again performing a finger sweep and back blows. After the third back blow, the victim began breathing normally again. Paramedics arrived and began treatment on the victim, transporting him to Queen of the Valley Hospital.

Family members said the victim had been eating Doritos when he began to choke. The victim turned blue and then slumped over, which led to the 911 call.



**L-r: Officer Matt Nelson, dispatcher Joan Phillipson and Officer Justin Schienle.**

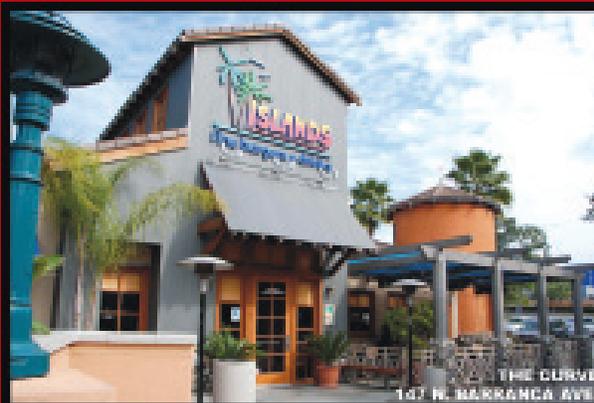
A follow-up call to the family revealed that the victim was released from the hospital that same night and is expected to make a full recovery. The family credits the quick actions of the officers in saving their son's life.

The 911 tape of the incident and interviews with the officers and the victim's family are available upon request. For more information, contact Cpl. Rudy Lopez at (626) 939-8685 or (626) 523-4031.

Want to know more about  
City of West Covina  
happenings?

Join us on Twitter:  
"CityofWCovina"

On the City's Web Site:  
[www.cityofwestcovina.org](http://www.cityofwestcovina.org)



The West Covina Community Development Commission has brought many new businesses, including Islands and other restaurants at The Curve, to the city. Redevelopment agencies are currently in danger because of actions by the state. To learn more, turn to pages 4 and 5.



*Thanks to the West Covina Sunrise Rotary and Payless Shoes, 157 excited students from Villacorta Elementary took a bus to Westfield West Covina during the holidays to pick out brand-new shoes and socks.*

*West Covina resident Karen C. writes, "... I miss the little blurbs in the newsletter that remind residents about being neighborly... good neighbor habits ..."*

## Are You a Good West Covina Neighbor?

Please remember to move vehicles off streets on sweeping days. It is a continual problem for street sweepers to have to go around vehicles parked on the street. This problem not only causes excess trash to build up along the curb, it upsets the neighbors.

An even bigger problem is that much of this trash will be washed down to the nearest storm drain and will eventually end up in the river basin that washes out to the ocean.

The small inconvenience of moving vehicles off the street two days a month goes a long way toward improving the appearance of your neighborhood. For information regarding the City's street sweeping schedule, call the City of West Covina Maintenance Department at (626) 939-8458 or visit the City's Web site at [www.westcovina.org](http://www.westcovina.org).

Another thing to remember is that improper maintenance of yards detracts from the appearance of neighborhoods. Keeping your property in good condition helps to maintain the value and integrity of your home as well as the other

properties in your neighborhood.

Lawns should be mowed regularly and kept in good condition. Dead, decayed or diseased trees should be removed, and trees, hedges and shrubs should be trimmed as needed.

Remove or discard unwanted items on residential properties. Do not store trash, vegetation, building materials or other unwanted materials in the front or side yard for more than 24 hours. The City does allow the storage of some material for up to 10 days if it is screened from public view.

If we all do our part to properly maintain our lawns and other vegetation, and dispose unsightly trash and other unwanted materials, we can continue to preserve the beauty of the West Covina community and enhance the value of our properties.

If you have any questions or concerns about these issues or other unsightly or potentially hazardous conditions, call the City's Community Enhancement section at (626) 939-8426.

## Farmer's Market HAS RELOCATED TO GLENDORA AVENUE

near The Lakes and  
Edwards Theatre  
Every Saturday, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

FOR MORE INFORMATION,  
CALL (626) 488-0054.

## West Covina Web Site a Big Hit with Nearly 2 Million Visitors!

Two years ago, the City of West Covina completed a total makeover to the City's Web site by redesigning it and making it much more user-friendly. As a result of those changes, nearly 2 million people have visited the site (1,874,086 to be exact).

The number of page views has totaled approximately 16 million (16,169,101 precisely). The most popular page is the home page, which changes constantly, and the second favorite is the city calendar.

We hope you will continue to visit the Web site to learn about the latest happenings, programs and services available to you. Visit us online at [www.westcovina.org](http://www.westcovina.org).



**WWW.WESTCOVINA.ORG**

# West Covina Fire Department Hires 12 Firefighters Using Grant Funding

The West Covina Fire Department submitted a request for grant funding under the SAFER program administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The SAFER grant program was originally intended to fund new positions for fire departments to become compliant with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standard 1710 that prescribes minimum staffing levels for fire departments. The program was modified in 2009 to address issues faced by cities during the economic crisis and their ability to fund positions that have been vacated and not filled.

These grant funds not only pay 100 percent of all firefighter salaries, but they also include benefit costs for a two-year period. And, no funding match is required of the City during these first two years. The grant agreement requires the City to fund the positions for the third year; however, there is a provision for a waiver from the government for demonstrated financial hardship that would

preclude the City from the requirement. The West Covina Fire Department has



not hired replacement personnel since March 2008 and has had numerous vacancies since that time. The department is currently operating with 61 shift personnel and five vacancies that are filled utilizing overtime personnel. Without grant funding, it is unlikely that the City would be able to hire any firefighters for the next five years.

*These grant funding measures have allowed the City to restore fire department response capabilities to the residents and visitors of the city.*

Thanks to this grant funding, the fire department has been able to hire four firefighter/paramedics and eight firefighters and has reinstated Engine 4 to full service after it had been eliminated during cost-saving measures last year. In addition, the City and the firefighters union have agreed to an alternate staffing model that pairs a fire engine and the department's ladder truck to respond in tandem from Fire Station 2.

## Sign Up for First Annual C3 'King of the Court' 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament

The Castucci Foundation and Cameron Community Center is proud to present the first annual C3 King of the Court 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament on Saturday, March 17. The tournament is open to males and females of all ages.

The cost to participate in the tournament is \$40 per team or \$10 for individuals. The registration deadline is March 9.

For more information, call Cameron Community Center at (626) 919-6966.





# Detrimental Defeat in Statewide Struggle to Protect Redevelopment

California's 400 redevelopment agencies mourned as their worst nightmares were realized with the California Supreme Court's ruling that came down on December 29. The court upheld California law AB 1X 26, stating that the state has the constitutional right to eliminate redevelopment agencies and struck down the companion measure, AB 1X 27, which would have allowed redevelopment agencies to pay a ransom in order to exist.

In order to balance the state budget, the governor signed several budget-related bills on June 29, 2011, including ABX1 26, which eliminates redevelopment agencies, and ABX1 27, which establishes a voluntary alternative redevelopment program whereby an agency can continue to exist upon the enactment of an ordinance by the City to comply with the provisions of ABX1 27.

These two bills were passed as part of the 2011-12 state budget and work together to eliminate redevelopment agencies (ABX1 26) unless they agree to pay the state \$1.7 billion in this fiscal year

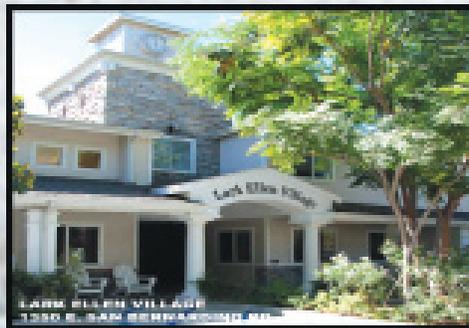
and \$400 million in subsequent budget years (ABX1 27).

As these two laws threaten the existence of the redevelopment agencies in California, taking local

dollars from cities to pay for state budget shortfalls, the California Redevelopment Association (CRA) and the League of California Cities ("League") filed a lawsuit in July 2011. The CRA/League's lawsuit challenged the constitutionality of the legislation, including merits of violating Proposition 22, the initiative to protect local funds, including redevelopment funds, from the raid by the state that was approved by more than 60 percent of California voters in the November 2010 election.

The ruling has far-reaching consequences, as cities will not only lose their economic engines, which generate jobs, remove blight and promote the overall fiscal health of the city, but also will adversely impact city general funds and critical city services. Already facing economic hardships, cities will have the added burden of finding funding for essential city services such as police, fire, senior and youth recreational programs, and street and infrastructure improvements.

What does this mean for West Covina? In West Covina, the



# to Help Make It A Great Place To Live, Work & Play?

elimination of redevelopment will have severe adverse impacts to the City, its residents and businesses.

The West Covina CDC has been successful in implementing responsible redevelopment to improve the quality of life for West Covina residents. The revenues generated from redevelopment activities translate into sales and property taxes to help pay for essential City services such as police, fire, parks and city streets. All this is now being eliminated.

Over the years, the CDC has established a proven track record of successful and beneficial projects for the city. Among the many projects is the redevelopment of West Covina's BKK Landfill. The CDC transformed the state's third largest landfill into a vital and integral part of the community featuring the Big League Dreams Sports Park and The Heights at West Covina shopping center. This project has been recognized nationally and internationally as a successful redevelopment project, winning 13 awards.

Additionally, West Covina was named as Los Angeles County's Most Business-Friendly City this past November by the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation. West Covina won the award for being proactive with CDC's economic development efforts to promote job creation and business growth and to encourage development/investment in the community. Some of West Covina's other showcase projects are shown in the accompanying photos.

As a direct result of CDC's redevelopment and economic efforts, just in the past 11 years, the CDC/City has created more than 5,000 new permanent employment opportunities, 6,500 construction

jobs, more than \$6.4 million in annual new sales tax revenues to the City of West Covina, approximately \$6 million in annual gross property tax increment and more than \$600 million in private investments in our community.

In addition, the CDC has been a leader in providing quality affordable-housing opportunities

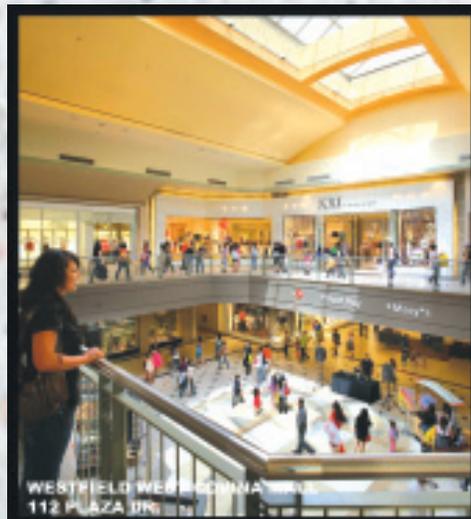
for residents. The CDC has financially assisted more than 3,000 affordable housing units, which include 1,010 new housing units restricted to affordable-housing families, provided down payment assistance to 142 first-time homebuyers and more than 2,141 home improvement loans to West Covina residents to improve the housing stock in West Covina.

As stated before, the loss of redevelopment agencies will have a tremendous impact on cities statewide, and unfortunately West Covina is no exception. Already facing a projected deficit of approximately \$3.8 million, West Covina will have the added burden of finding funding from the General Fund for programs/services that redevelopment funds currently pay for. The loss of CDC could mean an additional annual deficit to West Covina's General Fund of \$4.8 million.

Currently, CRA, the League of California Cities and several agencies are working aggressively on a legislative program to (hopefully) "fix" the worst-case scenario and revive redevelopment agencies (turn to Page 8 to learn how you can help).

Although the ruling is a devastating loss, it's not the end of the struggle. There is still hope for redevelopment agencies, but they will need a show of support from their communities. Please continue to show your support for maintaining City services by writing and calling your elected officials.

For more information, visit [www.westcovina.org/supportcdc](http://www.westcovina.org/supportcdc).



*At the time of printing, this information was the most recent. However, updates are taking place almost daily. Check your local newspapers and the City's Web site at [www.westcovina.org](http://www.westcovina.org) for more information.*

## • West Covina Resident Spotlight •

### Entrepreneur Reinvests in His Hometown

#### West Covina Native Returns Home with Ultimate Frozen Yogurt Experience

**Y**anitz Rubin, who grew up in West Covina, is bringing his entrepreneurial talent back to his hometown. A graduate of Sierra Vista Middle School and South Hills High School, Rubin's first taste of entrepreneurship began at age 19, when he started a video production company with his best friend while being a student at UCLA.

Rubin graduated from UCLA with a bachelor's degree in psychology and a minor in business administration. Upon graduation, he decided to sell his share in the video production company to his business partner and explore a career in film and TV.

After a few years working for Turner Broadcasting, MTV and "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno," Rubin knew that there was still something instilled in him from a very young age that he couldn't deny. He had an entrepreneurial appetite and a hunger for business success that had yet to be fulfilled. He decided to pursue a master's degree in organizational behavior, which led him to his next successful business venture.

While in graduate school, he wrote a business plan for an online automotive parts and accessories company called GoMiata. His business plan seemed very solid, so he decided to use a portion of his student loan in order to start it. With \$7,000 and a lot of hard work, he was able to establish a successful business with more than 30,000 clients all over the world.

Since then, Rubin sold his online business and has returned to his roots to start a new entrepreneurial chapter in his life. He recently opened a Menchie's store in West Covina. He fell in love with the Menchie's concept after visiting the original store in Valley Village. Now he brings the ultimate frozen dessert experience to his hometown.

Located at 245 Barranca Ave. in West Covina in the Westfield Eastland Center, Menchie's is a frozen yogurt

concept unlike any other in the segment. While kids always love the mixing and matching of different flavors and toppings, the creative self-serve process seems to bring out the kid in everyone, regardless of age.

With Rubin's new Menchie's store, he looks forward to helping guests create memories in a family-friendly environment that is both warm and welcoming. Menchie's offers guests an unlimited mix of yogurt and toppings at a

unique self-serve store with more than 100 rotating yogurt flavors from cake batter and mango tango sorbet to milk chocolate and dulce de leche, and more than 70 rotating toppings, including fresh fruits, granolas, nuts, and an assortment of candies and hot fudges, using the highest-quality frozen yogurt.

The interactive store experience, relaxing indoor and outdoor seating areas, and enjoyable music create

the ideal place for families to gather every day.

Rubin recently celebrated the grand opening of his Menchie's store and is committed to playing an active role in the community. He has already partnered with local schools in fund-raising activities and education incentive programs, and he looks forward to Menchie's becoming a special place for friends and families to create great memories in West Covina.

"Opening a business is never easy, but it was made a lot easier with the City of West Covina Community Development Commission helping me through the entitlement process and getting my business open in a timely manner," Rubin said. "This further validates why the City of West Covina was voted 'Most Business Friendly City in Los Angeles County.'"

*Menchie's Eastland is open Sunday through Thursday 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. For information, call (626) 332-2400 or visit [www.menchies.com](http://www.menchies.com) or [www.facebook.com/menchieseastland](http://www.facebook.com/menchieseastland).*



## **SOUTH HILLS HIGH SCHOOL** *Wins Gold Medal*

The South Hills High School Band and Colorguard was recently crowned the Southern California School Band & Orchestra Association Division 4A Champions, toppling the reigning champions, William S. Hart High School.

This was an amazing accomplishment considering Hart High School had dominated, winning the gold medal for the past nine years. West Covina's South Hills succeeded in outscoring Hart with a score of 91.05, winning their first gold medal in band and colorguard competition. In addition, the percussion



and colorguard units earned first place within their captions.

“We wish you could have been there to see the tears of joy streaming from these kids’ faces as they received their gold medals,” proud parent Ileana Allan said. “It was truly an unforgettable evening – truly electric!

We are all proud of our band and colorguard students, as well as the excellent staff that has trained these fine musicians to accept nothing but the best.”

Congratulations, South Hills – way to go! You have made West Covina proud!

## **West Covina Community Works Together**

For this past Christmas, the West Covina Blue Jays baseball team worked hard at collecting toys for local children. Then they donated the toys to the West Covina Fire Department as part of the “Spark of Love” toy drive.

Fire Engine 1, Rescue 1 and Assistant 1 went to Orangewood Park to accept the donated toys from the baseball team members. There were so many toys that they filled up the entire back of the ambulance!

This is another fine example that reflects how the West Covina community pulls together for a good cause. Way to go, Blue Jays – you helped make a lot of children happy in West Covina!



## **Senior Group Seeks New Members**

The Senior Citizens’ Association of West Covina, Inc. is looking for West Covina residents older than 50 years old who like to have fun and enjoy camaraderie with those in their age group.

The group meets every Wednesday between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. Events include holiday parties, birthday celebrations, special trips, bake sales, pizza parties and more.

Membership is only \$6 per year. For more information, call (626) 964-6925.



# Shadow Oak Community Center

2121 E. Shadow Oak Drive • (626) 965-0328

**WEDDINGS • PARTIES • FAMILY REUNIONS • RECEPTIONS • QUINCEAÑERAS**

Shadow Oak Community Center has dedicated office hours Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Drop in to meet the staff, check out the recreation programs and services, or register for recreation classes.

Shadow Oak Park Community Center is an excellent rental location for your next event, but that's not all! This community center offers a variety of classes and programs for youths, teens and adults.



For more information, call (626) 965-0328 or visit the center at 2121 E. Shadow Oak Drive.



## HELP SAVE WEST COVINA REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Call or write your local legislators. Contact information is on the City's Web site at [www.westcovina.org](http://www.westcovina.org) (direct link: <http://www.westcovina.org/cityhall/agencies.asp>) or you can call the City of West Covina Community Development Commission at (626) 939-8417.



**Have any new ideas for "Discover West Covina?"**  
**E-mail us: [Discoverwestcovina@westcovina.org](mailto:Discoverwestcovina@westcovina.org) or**  
**mail to: West Covina City Hall, City Manager's Office,**  
**Attn: PIO Sue Williams, 1444 W. Garvey Ave.,**  
**West Covina, CA 91793**

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### WEST COVINA CITY COUNCIL

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 Mayor Pro Tem: Sherri Lane  
 Councilmember: Steve Herfert  
 Councilmember: Shelley Sanderson  
 Councilmember: Fred Sykes

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