

GMIA viewpoints

WINTER 2025

Volume 56 Issue 1

Start the Year on a High (Altitude) Note

Join Us for the 18th Annual GMIA Walk to the Top!

After the holidays, there's something revitalizing about stepping outside, breathing crisp morning air, and reconnecting with your community. Whether you're easing into your resolutions, walking off the whipped cream, or simply looking for a reason to get outside, the 18th Annual Walk to the Top of Mt. Helix offers the opportunity to reset, recharge, and rediscover your neighborhood in the New Year. We invite you to join over 450 of your neighbors to celebrate this traditional event!

WHEN: Saturday, January 3rd at 10 a.m.

WHERE: San Miguel Fire & Rescue Station 21,
10105 Vivera Drive

DISTANCE: A relaxed ¾-mile walk to the summit

CONNECT WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

At the summit, meet organizations working to strengthen our neighborhoods and protect local resources. You can ask questions, discover local initiatives, and find new ways to get involved. Participating groups include:

- ◆ Casa de Oro Alliance
- ◆ La Mesa History Center
- ◆ Senior Gleaners

WHY YOU'LL LOVE THIS EVENT

- ◆ Family-friendly: All ages are welcome – it's a great way to get everyone moving together. The energetic sounds of the Grossmont High School Foothiller Pep Band will lead the way up the hill.
- ◆ Paws-itively welcome: Leashed pups are encouraged to join in the fun because fresh air is for everyone!
- ◆ Community-connected: Longtime local or new to the area, this is a chance to explore Mt. Helix and meet the people who make this community special.

ENJOY:

- ◆ Stunning views from the top of Mt. Helix
- ◆ Free Gladly coffee and refreshments
- ◆ Live music from the Grossmont High School Marching Band
- ◆ The Pup-arazzi booth, the ulti-mutt place to snap some tail-wagging shots

- ◆ SDG&E Vegetation Management
- ◆ The Water Conservation Garden
- ◆ Fill out a survey at the GMIA booth for a chance to win a \$20 Gladly Coffee gift certificate.
- ◆ And more!

FIRE STATION OPEN HOUSE

Before we hit the pavement, get a behind-the-scenes look at San Miguel Fire & Rescue Station 21! Our local heroes are hosting an open house where you can explore the fire apparatus and discover the life-saving services they provide.

A TOAST TO TRADITION

Special thanks to the Mt. Helix Park Foundation for their continued support in making this event a highlight of our New Year. 🏔️





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This newsletter reflects the efforts of your entire Board of Directors.

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MISSION

GMIA, formed in 1938, is a nonprofit 501 (c) (4) public benefit membership organization. Our mission is to preserve the character and enhance the quality of the area and foster pride in the community. We are served by an all-volunteer board and do not employ any paid staff.

Embracing Healthy Aging Through Lifelong Learning

Do you want to learn Italian? Take an exercise or art class? Have questions about your tech devices? If so, there is probably a class for you at Oasis.

San Diego Oasis is a nonprofit learning and wellness center at La Mesa's Grossmont Center, with additional locations including Rancho Bernardo and other U.S. cities. Oasis helps older adults stay active, engaged, and connected through affordable classes that support healthy aging.

Classes range from language, art, and exercise to technology, financial wellness, and history. There are also fun options like "The Songs of John Denver," "Acting Workshop," and "Mahjong."

Membership is free, and classes are available in person and online. A new catalog is released every two months.

Learn more and start your healthy aging journey at <https://san-diego.oasisnet.org/>.



Thank You Donors!

Special thanks to these members who donated \$25 or greater in excess of their dues.

Jill Blaemers
Ken Bullock
Dieter Fischer
Bob and Amy Hargrove

Daniel Lamb and Henry Jordan
Todd Lehman
Sandra Matranga
Cindy Rambis and Gary King

Successful Sunny Succulent Swap



It was a warm, sunny, fall day when the succulents were spread over a gorgeous setting. Did you miss it? We hope not, because people were there giving away expensive or-nate succulents! There were some common succulents too, in case that was what you needed. One couple said they had designed their entire front yard using freebies gathered at the Succulent Swaps over the years.

The annual Succulent Swap was held September 27 in the amazing yard of Wendy and Ron Caragher. Thanks to them

for once again hosting our swap as they celebrated their 35th anniversary!

Thanks also to Paul Kacsir of PK Pottery, Gladly Coffee for providing the refreshments, and Jon and Carolyn Freeman, who offered the soothing tones of music vibration.

One couple said they had designed their entire front yard using freebies gathered at the Succulent Swaps over the years.



At the moment that we persuade a child, any child, to cross ... that magic threshold into a library, we change their lives forever, for the better.

– President Barack Obama

Friends of the Casa de Oro Library

by Susan Nichols

On time and on budget, our new San Diego County Casa de Oro library is slated for completion in May, 2026. The 12,000-square-foot building will be located across the street from The Hub pickleball courts on Campo Road. The state-of-the-art facility will feature a 2,000-square-foot community room, 49 parking spaces, a “poet’s patio” outdoor space, study rooms, dedicated children’s and teen areas, and a host of other features.

Exciting initiatives for our new library are in the works with unique volunteer opportunities! The Friends of the Casa de Oro Library has formed a Casa de Oro–Mt. Helix Garden Club partnering with GMIA, the Mt. Helix Park Foundation, The Water Conservation Garden, the Casa de Oro Alliance and the Spring

Valley Community Alliance. The Garden Club is open to all with no membership fees. We will host quarterly meetings at our new library to feature speakers, exhibitors and hands-on learning experiences focused on a broad range of gardening topics. Each nonprofit partner will have a working Garden Club committee; we invite you to reach out and join a committee to be a part of the planning process.

Our new branch will have a separate Friends Bookstore to sell donated books. Proceeds from used book sales help fund many library programs. We are in the process of gathering names for volunteers who might like to work a shift in our new bookstore. There is no commitment at this time; we are gauging interest from the community.

Complementing our new library, the Friends will liaison with local artists to exhibit their work and facilitate sales, with a portion donated to the Friends to fund library programs. We envision quarterly shows and hosted receptions, with invitations to the community.

If you are interested in being involved in any of these initiatives, please contact us at casalibraryfriends@gmail.com. For more information about the Friends of the Casa de Oro Library, go to www.casadeorolibrary.org. We invite you to join and make a difference! 🌱



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Please look at your mailing label on this newsletter to ensure your membership is current. If the date is June 2026 or later, your dues are paid, but you are welcome to renew in advance.

An annual household membership is \$25. You can renew online at www.gmia.net or mail your payment to GMIA, P.O. Box 2751, La Mesa, CA 91943.

Know When a Disaster Happens

San Diego County has an emergency notification system that can make phone calls to people or businesses when an emergency or disaster is happening or about to happen. The system will alert you on what actions you should take, like leave your home or stay inside.

Register to have the system send alerts to your cell phone by going to

alertsandiego.org

then to

Register for Emergency Alerts

Regular landline phones are already in the system.

CALENDAR

