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438 Coleman Ave  
San Jose, CA 95110

The Guadalupe River Park Conservancy provides community leadership for the development and active use of the Guadalupe River Park & Gardens through education, advocacy and stewardship.

This newsletter is generously supported by



## Meet Us at the River Park

### VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

**Historic Orchard Workdays:** 1st Saturday of the month, 9:00-11:30am  
**Trail Clean Ups:** 1st and 3rd Wednesday, 9:00-11:00am  
**Heritage Rose Garden Workdays:** Every Saturday, 8:30-11:30am  
**Trail Ambassadors:** volunteer on your own time!

### PROGRAMS & EDUCATION

**Camp Guadalupe:** begins June 15, 2021 (in-person)  
**Mother's Day Rose Adoption:** adopt a rose with a gift package by Friday May 7th  
**Internship Opportunities:** Visit [www.grpg.org/education/interhips](http://www.grpg.org/education/interhips) to learn more

### RIVER PARK UPDATES

**Rotary PlayGarden:** open Friday - Sunday, 10:00am-6:30pm  
**New Murals:** new additions to the Guadalupe River Art Walk by Kristina Micotti and Alfonso Salazar along the Trail under Santa Clara and San Fernando Streets



### Become a Member!

Support programs and initiatives that uplift community through the River Park by joining our membership program!

Visit [grpg.org](http://grpg.org) to learn more and join.

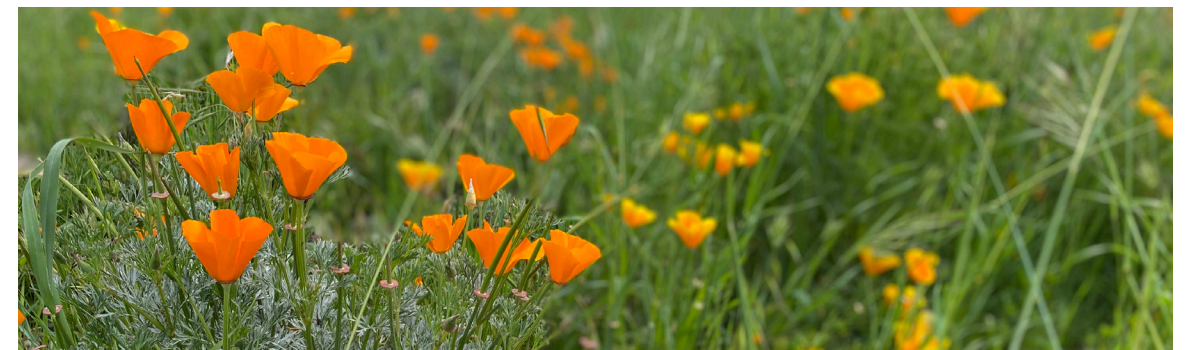


*Roses in the Heritage Rose Garden*

## The River Park in Bloom

Spring has sprung in the River Park! From eye-catching roses and tiny wildflowers, to flowing streams and singing birds, there's no mistaking the sights and sounds of the season of rebirth. In this issue, you'll learn a little more about our Heritage Rose Garden, read about a spectacular teacher, and hear from our Board Vice President.

We hope to GRPC you on the trail soon!  
- the Conservancy Staff



# Letter from the Board Vice President



Dear Friends and Supporters of the Guadalupe River Park Conservancy –

SPRING IS HERE! As we all enjoy this beautiful weather, the Conservancy wants to thank everyone for their continued support during a very challenging past 12 months. The hills are full of fresh green grass and the wildflowers are blooming giving all of us a beacon of hope and excitement that the world is slowly reopening like those same flowers. The past year has solidified how important parks, open spaces, and access to playgrounds are an instrumental part of our well-being and mental health. For many people, these community spaces have become so critical to us with limited options for entertainment and recreation. Parks have served as a much needed break from the grind of remote working, either that be from your garage, corner of your bedroom, kitchen table, and even the back of your hall closet. I hope you will continue to support the transformation of the Guadalupe River Park into the premier urban riverfront of the Bay Area.

There's no debating that 2020 was a rollercoaster, and the ride is not quite over yet. It helps me to stop and reflect on all the positive trends in our neighborhoods. The massive surge in demand for bicycles started a year ago and has not let up with the mild winter this year. That means thousands of new riders are out on the bike trails enjoying nature and improving their health. It will be inspiring to see all these new riders enjoy the outdoors this spring and summer, with so many people picking up new hobbies and interests during the pandemic.

The all-day clean-up at Arena Green on March 13th was organized and supported by multiple organizations and active citizens of San Jose. I would have also never expected how rewarding it was to participate with the clean-up with my older brother. Picking up trash is surprisingly relaxing, therapeutic and an even better workout. It was simply amazing to personally witness what a few hundred volunteers could accomplish in a matter of hours. March 13th was not only a time to serve the community but also a time to reflect on how fortunate our lives are in retrospect, and to be thankful.

2021 marks the 25-year anniversary of the Guadalupe River Park and Gardens. We are all excited to celebrate and reconnect with coworkers, friends, and family we have missed this past year. I am very proud of the Conservancy Staff and Board of Directors for all the work they have done in a challenging virtual environment.

Best,  
Chuck McCarroll  
Board Vice President

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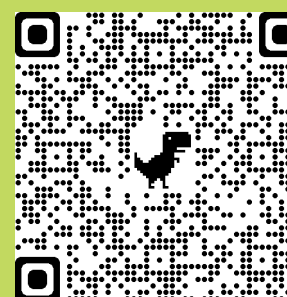
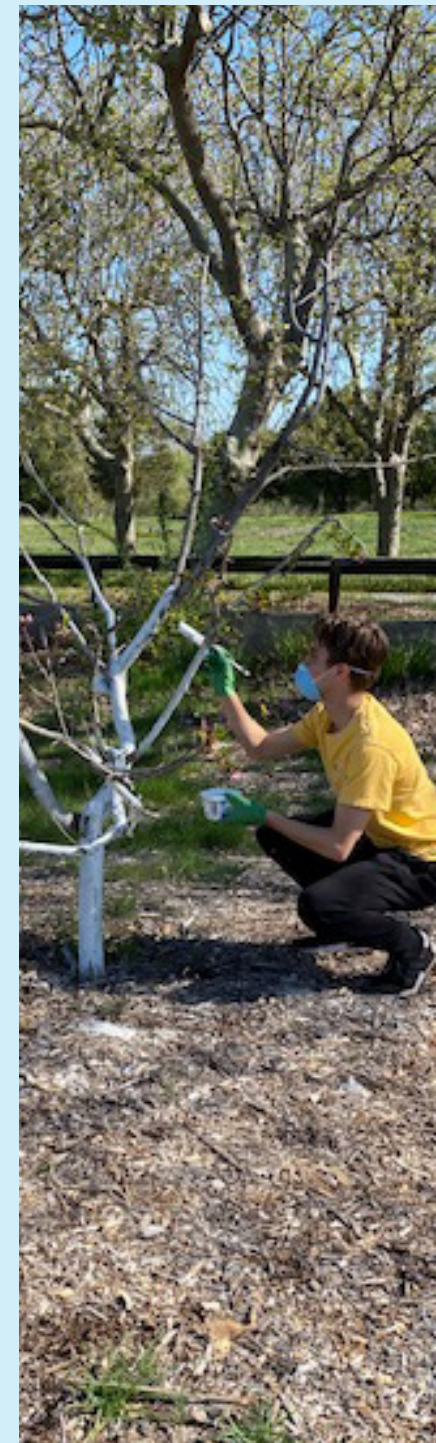
## A Fruit-ful Endeavor at the Historic Orchard

Participating in a community workday at the Guadalupe River Park and Gardens is a great way to spend some time outside, catch a bit of sunshine, learn a new skill, and give a little love to the planet during Earth Month! The GRPC has reinstated both the Historic Orchard Workdays and Trail Cleanup opportunities in a COVID conscious, safety first fashion.

Since reestablishing these work days at the beginning of March, the Conservancy has offered a wide variety of activities aimed at refreshing the Historic Orchard and preparing it for replacement and revitalization in the coming year. Our dedicated volunteers have helped remove substantial quantities of trash from the park, sheet mulch the orchard floor, sun block trees, repair squirrel barrier fencing, and weed out troublesome plants. Throughout the upcoming months, work in the Historic Orchard will focus on preparatory projects in anticipation of the Orchard's replanting.

Volunteers will aid in installing drip irrigation, digging planting holes, preparing soil, and eventually getting trees into the ground. These workdays will serve as a great opportunity to honor our City's past as an agricultural hub while embracing our present through community connection and service. Restoring and maintaining infrastructure as large as our 3.3 acre orchard and over 9 miles of trails is a significant undertaking, so we are extremely thankful to have community members like you that are willing and eager to help!

If you are interested in joining us for either an Orchard Workday or a Trail Cleanup, please visit the Guadalupe River Park Eventbrite to volunteer! Furthermore, if you want to provide any input on volunteerism or Historic Orchard restoration, please fill out our survey through the QR code below.



## Take the Orchard Survey!

1. Open the camera app on your phone
2. Hold the camera up to the code
3. Wait for a banner with a link to appear
4. Click the banner to go to the link
5. Take the survey!

## Teacher Spotlight: Cindy Brown

The GRPC Education Team would like to spotlight Cindy Brown, a 6th grade teacher at O.B. Whaley Elementary, a Title One school, who was fundamental in helping us pilot our Virtual Field Trip program at the start of this spring. Here is what she has to say about her experience with the Virtual Field Trip:



Cindy Brown's class "meeting" our turtle animal ambassadors

**“The lessons are aligned with NGSS and are organized, interesting, engaging, and easy to follow. Many of the materials are bilingual; this ensured all students- and their families- could participate fully”**

“For obvious reasons, this year has been the most challenging of my 30 years teaching. I have always incorporated numerous field trips, including at the Guadalupe River Park, and hands-on experiences for my students to enrich their learning. The pandemic shut it all down, leaving my students feeling frustrated. I was excited, to say the least, that GRPC was offering virtual field trips and providing scholarships for Title 1 schools to attend. Without a scholarship, my class would not have been able to participate.

We started off with the provided asynchronous lessons, which are designed specifically for distance learning with videos and hands-on lessons. The lessons are aligned with NGSS and are organized, interesting, engaging, and easy to follow. Many of the materials are bilingual; this ensured all students- and their families- could participate fully. The lessons took around 10 days to complete with my class and prepared them for the synchronous lesson while easing the pressures on my time.

The synchronous lesson was an Animal Encounter. Because of the lessons beforehand, my students could recall facts, explain, add details, or ask questions- all important interpersonal communication skills. The live lesson was engaging and informative, leaving my students wanting to learn more! They excitedly commented how much they appreciated the opportunity to learn more.

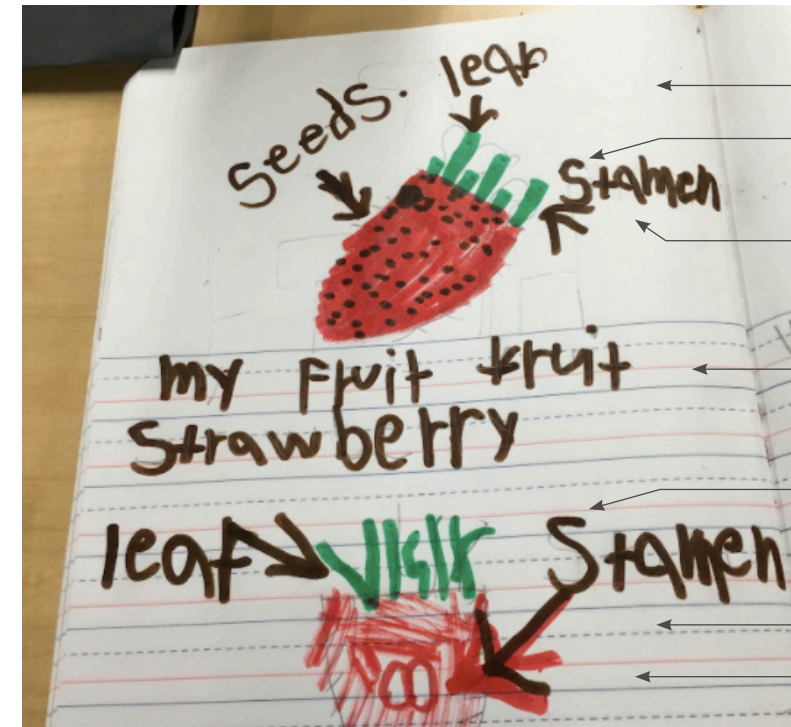
Thank you, GRPC, for providing my Title 1 students with a scholarship for this Virtual Field Trip. It provided my students with deeper science learning in such a fun and creative way. Your support to our community and to our schools impacted us in such a positive way!”

### Become an Animal Care Volunteer

Help the GRPC care for its lovely cadre of Animal Ambassadors! We are looking for dedicated Animal Care & Enrichment volunteers who are available for 1.5-2 hours, M-F, between 9 AM & 5 PM. Volunteers should care about animals and be detail-oriented; we'll train you on the rest! To learn more, please visit: [www.grpg.org/education/internships](http://www.grpg.org/education/internships)

## Anatomy of a Student Drawing

Even during a Virtual Field Trip, there are many learning opportunities when students are immersed in a new environment, guided by skilled and compassionate instructors, and encouraged to lead discussions. In addition to meeting Next Generation Science Standards- our curriculum, instructional materials, and student-led learning fosters social skills, environmental awareness, academic achievement, and a passion for discovery. The act of observing, drawing, labeling, and summarizing achieves many scholastic milestones like the ones shown below.



### What do these drawings show us?

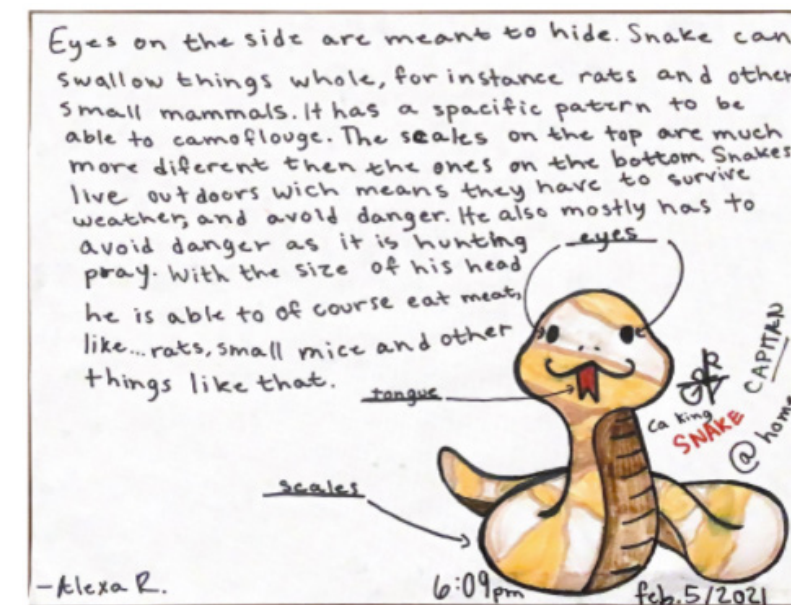
- Critical Thinking:** Application of field trip content
- Creative Thinking:** Student is able to apply concepts to household objects
- Application:** Student uses instructional videos (science drawings and fruit dissection) to do activities

**Language:** Understanding and application of grade- and activity- appropriate vocabulary

**Biology:** Identification of plant anatomy

**Application:** Synthesizing cross-unit content

**Modeling:** Translation of visual insights through drawing and symbols



**Biology:** Structure & Function

**Ecology:** Understanding of predator and prey interactions

**Processing Information:** Summarizing and paraphrasing concepts

**Observation:** Students make observations about patterns among animals.

**Communication:** Use of diverse media and formats to convey information, as outlined in state standards

**Biology:** Identification of animal anatomy

Do you want your students to do great work like this?  
Register for a virtual field trip at [www.grpg.org/education/field-trips](http://www.grpg.org/education/field-trips)

## How Parks Can Address Homelessness

The need for open spaces continues to be highlighted one year into the COVID-19 pandemic. San Jose's City Auditor reported 90% of respondents visited a park at least once a month in 2020, making parks the primary way we interact with our city government. Research has connected access to parks with positive health outcomes and community connection. The strain COVID-19 has had on our collective well-being is highlighted through a distressing rise in rates of suicide, domestic violence, and substance abuse.

COVID-19 has also exacerbated structural issues that continue to hinder our community to prosper equitably. One significant issue is the increase in people experiencing homelessness, and thus a surge in encampments around the Guadalupe River Park. The 2019 Santa Clara County Homeless Census counted over 700 unhoused residents in the River Park area- the second-highest concentration in our County. These figures are expected to rise in 2021, since many living in parks have no other housing alternatives.

We are forced to decide which issue to prioritize: human need or ecological preservation. They are not inherently opposing, but positioned so as an outcome of flawed governance. As this debate continues with policy makers and local advocates, the Guadalupe River Park Conservancy offers an additional perspective: one that leads with opportunity, dialogue, and alignment to uplift community priorities.



*Credit: Kara Brodgesell*

### 1: Shared opportunity inspires creative partnership

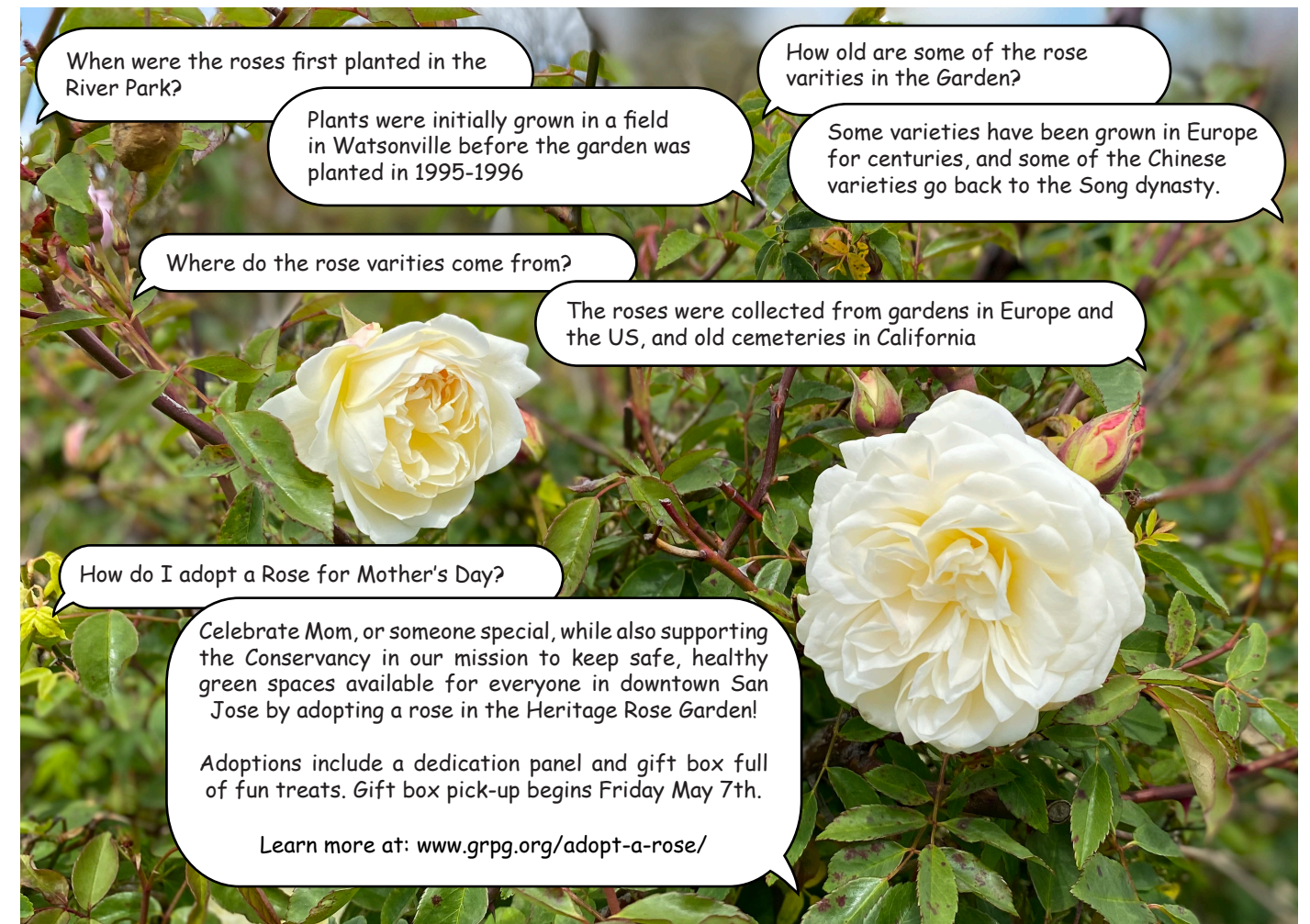
When speaking with our unhoused park residents, we hear their genuine desire to escape homelessness. They've shared their disappointment with us regarding how long new housing takes to build, and the fear they may get lost in the shuffle while waiting for accommodations. Many also take pride in the park since it is their home, and share the frustration of illegal dumping that impacts their camps.

In early 2021, we initiated a parks stewardship and workforce development program with the Santa Clara Valley Water District, Downtown Streets Team, and the San Jose Conservation Corps + Charter School. Five days a week, a partner team or a group of volunteers removes trash, maintains our trails, and conducts outreach to unhoused residents. The goal of this pilot program is to provide solutions that focus on shared civic desires, ecological stewardship, and economic opportunity. This program exists to support the park, encourage volunteerism, develop skills for youth, and provide work opportunities for unhoused residents.

### 2: Collective dialogue evokes a louder civic echo

In late 2020, the San Jose Mayor's Office, District 3 Council Office, and the Conservancy convened over 20 different stakeholders to plan, implement, and advocate for improvements to the safety, maintenance, and activation of the River Park. Through the working group process, this diverse group found alignment on the park's current conditions, collective vision for the space, and actionable plans for change. The opportunity for collective learning was also leveraged to better understand the social, legal, and economic frameworks in place.

## Did You Know? Heritage Rose Garden



## How Parks Help Address Homelessness (cont.)

While the Working Group plans to convene over the next two years, we have already seen progress. Mayor Liccardo's March 2021 Budget Message directed funds to the hiring of park rangers, workforce development programs, enhanced maintenance and trash removal support, homeless outreach resources, and transitional housing. We believe this was evident in part through a diverse coalition sharing and communicating a common vision for the Guadalupe River Park.

### 3: Cross-sector alignment shares competitive advantages for broader benefits

There are many pressing challenges that are also opportunities to meet shared goals. The Conservancy is working with the Mayor's Office and the City of San Jose on plans for an emergency homeless housing project, located near the Guadalupe River Park on Taylor Street. The proposal connects temporary housing options for unhoused residents with employment opportunities to maintain and steward the River Park. While currently in its initial planning phase, we are optimistic for both the future of our soon-to-be newly housed neighbors, and the chance to further nurture their connection to the River Park.

As a microcosm of the greatest opportunities and challenges our region faces, the Guadalupe River Park provides an opportunity to pursue innovative partnerships to mitigate homelessness and address the impacts of encampments within open space. These programs and initiatives are inspired by ongoing work, discussions, and passion of our community partners, and it is imperative that we explore strategies that begin with a common goal, and welcome diverse ways of achieving them.