

Meet Us at the River Park

EVENTS & PROGRAMS

- **Trail Cleanup with San Jose Downtown Streets Team**
Wednesday, August 16, 8:45-11am
- **Art is the Wave Open Mic & Market**
At the Rotary PlayGarden on Friday, August 25, 7-9 PM
- **Senior Strolls**
Aug 31, Sept 28, Oct 26, 10-11am
- **Pumpkins in the Park**
Saturday, October 14, 10am-4pm
- **Historic Orchard Workdays**
1st Saturdays, 2nd & 4th Wednesdays, 9-11:30am
- **Heritage Rose Garden Workdays**
Every Saturday, 8:30-11:30am
- **Trail Clean Ups**
1st and 3rd Wednesdays, 9-11am
- **Nature Trail Tours**
2nd Saturdays, 10:30-11:30am
- **CHIRP**
Every Monday 1-3pm starting on 9/11/23



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



SUMMER 2023
NEWSLETTER

THE GUADALUPE GAZETTE



SUMMER 2023

THE GUADALUPE GAZETTE

The Spirit of Summer

Components of joy, inclusivity, and respite are at the heart of the our programs and offerings throughout the River Park. Summertime allows for longer days with freer schedules and spirits, which are rewarded with outdoor movies and music, animal sightings, and now an expanded Rotary PlayGarden to explore. Featured in this issue are stories of connection: family, belonging, ecology, and those made through shared new experiences at the River Park.

- The Conservancy Team

Stewardship Metrics	Q1 2023	Q2 2023
Number of volunteers	430	696
Acres maintained	39	66
Volunteer hours	1,590	2,390
Trash bags filled	37	374
Pounds of trash removed	1,110	11,220
Park features restored	3	6

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Meet our New GRPC Board and Staff

The Guadalupe River Park Conservancy is thrilled to welcome our new Board of Directors and Staff to our leadership and impact team. We look forward to sharing their talents and passion to help connect our communities to nature and each other.



Joseph Aguilera
Santa Clara County
Parks and Recreation Department

I joined the board to be part of a team equally invested in creating connections to public spaces which offer an abundance of natural, cultural, historic, and scenic resources.



Sara Ghalandari
Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP

The River Park serves as an important artery to the heart of San Jose, linking many of our treasured neighborhoods through a network of parks and open spaces.



Christina Ramos
Pacific Gas & Electric Company

Our parks and open spaces are integral to healthy and thriving communities, and I am excited to join the board and the GRPC's mission to maintain this natural gem in our community for generations.



Caroline Wallis
Sequoia Capital

San Jose is one of the most populous cities in the US, and the Guadalupe River Park is at the heart of it. I'm excited to play a role in preserving such an important space.

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Katrina Semene
Education Program Administrator
Jay Thompson
Horticulturist

River Park Round Up



Make Music San José Day
The sounds of music filled the River Park on June 21 for Make Music Day! Five different bands and musicians played throughout the day in Arena Green, Discovery Meadow, and the Heritage Rose Garden to bring entertainment and delight to onlookers, as well as celebrate the first day of summer.

Launched in 1982 in France as the Fête de la Musique, Make Music celebrates on the same day in more than 1,000 cities in 120 countries. Make Music San José is a free community-curated celebration of music held on the summer solstice.



New Trellises in the Orchard
Trellises were recently added to the Historic Orchard to help guide along the new blackberry, raspberry, and mulberry bushes. We're excited to see them take off and grow along with all the other newly planted trees this year.



Summer at Camp Guadalupe
Camp Guadalupe is underway at the River Park! Campers have had a lot of fun learning science hands-on with crafts, games, and exploration in the River Park. Even though summer is starting to wind down, we will still hear the laughter and play of children in the park with the CHIRP program beginning in September and field trip offerings for schools.



Snakes on the Trail
If you've taken a walk in the park lately you might have noticed a slithering creature along the path. The uptick in snake sightings this time of year is due to brumation, which is hibernation but for cold-blooded animals. Be sure to keep an eye out for snakes and other cool creatures next time you're on the River Trail!



Saturday, October 14: 10am-4pm
Discovery Meadow, 180 Woz Way, San Jose
Pumpkins in the Park is downtown San Jose's longest-running pumpkin patch, bringing together children and families across Silicon Valley to enjoy a fun-filled celebration aimed to bring more awareness to one of our region's unique natural resources, the Guadalupe River Park.

We look forward to hosting this treasured event with you again this Fall!



Interested in event sponsorship or an event booth? Visit grpg.org or scan the QR code for more information:



Rotary PlayGarden Expansion is Now Open!

The Rotary PlayGarden has finished its expansion and is now fully open to the public! Since opening day on June 24 parents and children alike have had a blast enjoying the PlayGarden's new amenities including the zipline, additional swings, climbing structures and more. There are also plenty of places to sit and lounge under the new large shade structure. Seeing this treasured playground come to life with the sounds of laughter and joy these last few weeks has been truly amazing and we are excited to host other events in this cherished amenity.

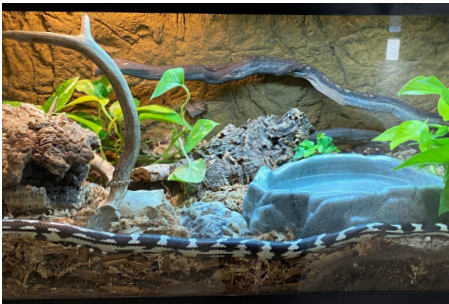
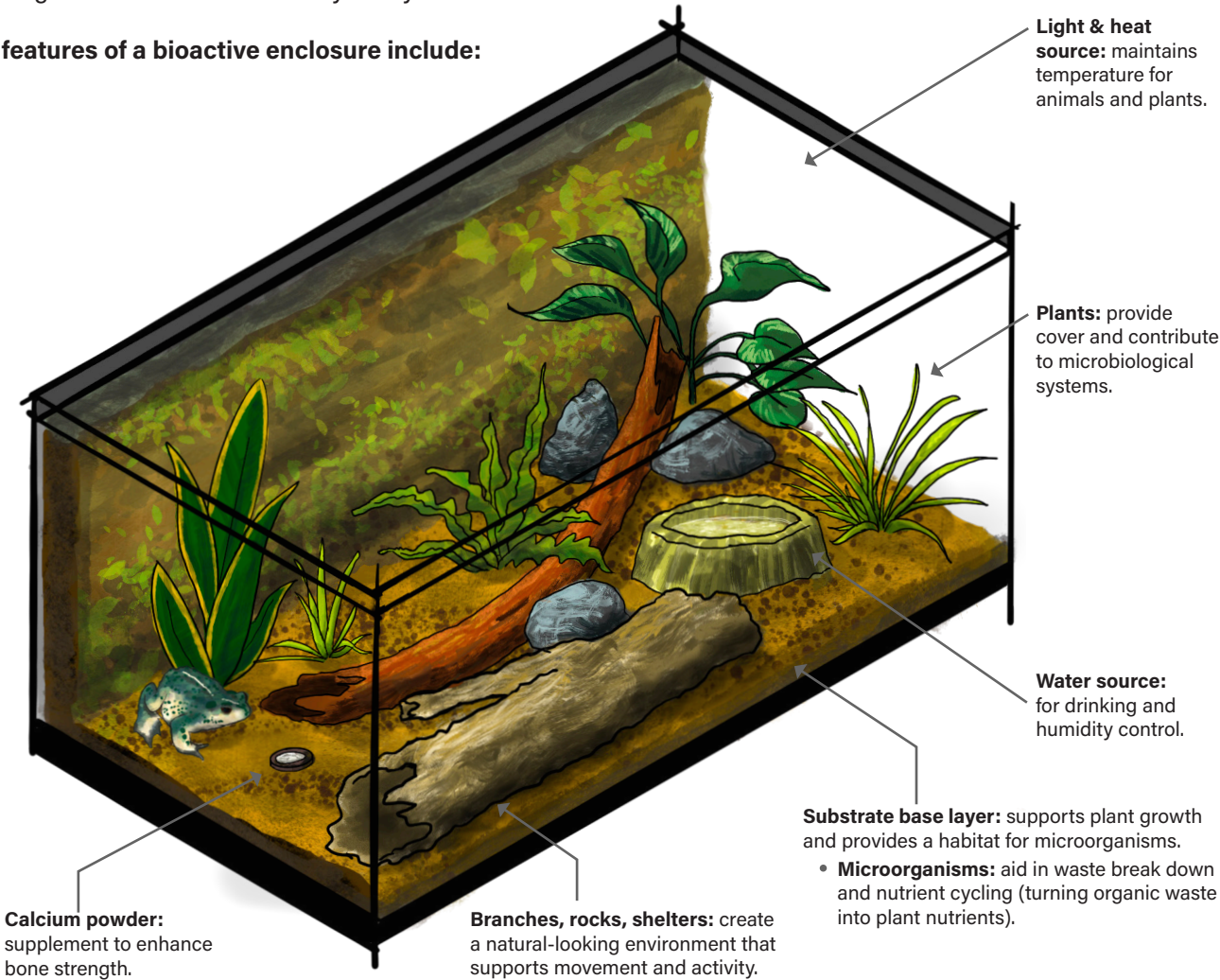
The expansion was funded by a County of Santa Clara All-Inclusive Playground Grant, along with support by the Rotary Club of San Jose, San Jose Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services, and Office of Councilmember Dev Davis.



Bioactive Homes for our Animal Ambassadors

Animal Ambassadors at the our Visitor & Education Center have upgraded into new bioactive homes. A bioactive enclosure creates self-sustaining ecosystem that replicates a natural habitat within a contained space. It combines live plants, animals, microorganisms, and other elements to create a balanced and harmonious environment. The goal of a bioactive terrarium is to mimic the interactions and processes found in nature, where plants, animals, and microorganisms work together to maintain a healthy ecosystem.

Key features of a bioactive enclosure include:



Our animal ambassadors play an integral role in our environmnetal education programs while also bringing joy to the guests at our Visitor and Education Center. The upgraded enclosures improve the health and enrichment of our teaching partners while also reducing maintenance needs through natural waste management. The bioactive homes themselves serve as a new educational opportunity.

Please visit www.grpg.org/education/ to learn more about our environmental education and enrichment programs, Animal Care Internship opportunities, and the ecological significance of the Guadalupe River Park.

People of the River Park: Jay Thompson, Horticultrurist

Jay Thompson is the first ever Horticulturist for the Guadalupe River Park Conservancy. As a horticulturist they manage the care and maintenance of the park including pruning, mulching, irrigation needs, and other outdoor work that makes the River Park look beautiful and keep on running. Read below to learn how they became inspired to pursue a career in horticulture and be sure to say Hi or ask questions if you see them (most likely in purple and overalls) out in the Park!

What drew you to horticulture/ the study of plants?

I loved being in the garden with my grandmother but I always thought I had a black thumb because I killed everything I touched. Then somebody bought me a potted African Violet, which is my favorite color, so I wanted to make sure I kept it alive. I did something I had never done before which was look up 'How to take care of an African Violet.' That's when I learned that each plant has specific needs and dos and don'ts and environments they should be in.

What do you enjoy about working in the River Park?

I love everything! I even love that there's challenges. That's kind of the point, I think, is to be challenged and rise to the occasion and help make things better. There's so much room for improvement here, it just really gets me excited and motivated to do good things for the park. In the future we're hoping to start some horticulture-related programming and workshops on composting, vermicomposting and more, so keep an eye out!



Do you have a favorite area of the park?

Anywhere that needs my help. I just really love a good before and after and making things nice then maintaining them, which I anticipate dealing with for a little bit then it'll just be maintenance after a while.

“When I realized it’s not an inherently born skill, a green thumb is a learned skill through education and experience, that set me off on a path to learn more.”

What do you wish more people knew about horticulture?

You don't just water on a schedule or need half a cup of water every 3 days. You have to learn individual plants and climates and what zone you're in for planting. I wish more basic agriculture and horticulture was taught in school like home economics.



Key to ensuring the ongoing well-being of our animal ambassadors are our Animal Ambassador Supporters, who contribute to the annual costs of their care. Support is committed at our annual Window on the River Park annual celebration, where guests have an opportunity to connect with some of our Animal Ambassadors.

2022	Animal Ambassador	Supported by	2023	Animal Ambassador	Supported by
	Lord Byron, California Kingsnake	Alan Hackler		Lord Byron, California Kingsnake	Alan Hackler
	Jackson, Mississippi Map Turtle	Tracy Bitelli		Jackson, Mississippi Map Turtle	Antonina Ettare
	Coriander, Pacific Gopher Snake	Louisa Stawsbury		Blue Crayfish	Meg Taylor
	Madison, Mississippi Map Turtle	Rebecca Vermeulen		Coriander, Pacific Gopher Snake	Meg Taylor
	Rocky, Western Toad	Brandi Moody			
	Diego, Northern Alligator Lizard	Carolone Wallis			

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!



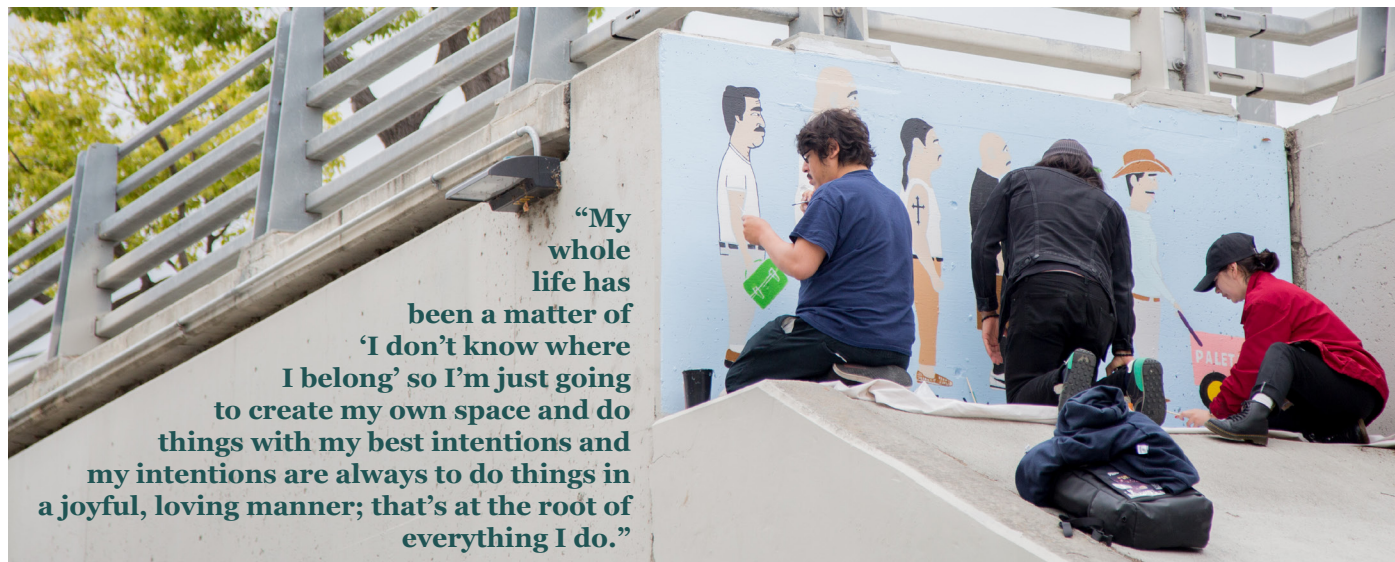
Ruben Escalante: The Art of Identity



In early May San Jose Walls and the Guadalupe River Park Conservancy joined forces for another Artist in Residency (AIR) showcase to produce more murals along the Guadalupe River Art Walk, an outdoor gallery displaying various art styles. This year's AIR was Ruben Escalante, Visual Artist and Director of the Teen Tech Center at MACLA. Escalante's inspiration for their Residency was honoring Chicano fathers who ensure machismo culture, or toxic masculinity, ends with them. Dealing with a torn achilles just days prior to painting, Escalante was able to call on their community to help them finish the eight new murals in the course of just a few days.

Despite facing the challenge of a torn Achilles just days before the painting project, Escalante effectively rallied their community's support to complete eight new murals within a remarkably short span of time.

Escalante's upbringing and identities heavily influence not only their approach to art, but how they take up space in the art world. Growing up, Escalante developed a strained relationship with their father, which came into focus after their dad's cancer diagnosis. "When it was clear he'd be passing away, rather than focusing on the negative I wanted to focus on positivity regardless of our relationship. I wouldn't be who I am today if I didn't go through my experiences with him. To understand



that I'm not going to be a victim of our relationship anymore, I just want to celebrate dads in general because seeing dads who are spending time with their kids, having these tough conversations and moving the stigmas away, moving generations forward from all the toxicity that we inherit is important."

Escalante identifies as someone on the outskirts. "Socially I've always been really quiet and introverted. That's not a general trait a lot of Latinx men see or portray. Even in my immediate family I experienced being the black sheep quite a bit." In response to this they founded Emo Kids of Color (EKOC), an artist collective that aims to bridge social gaps by exposing underserved communities to art and subculture. "I put up illustrations in Paseo de San Antonio and for people to stop and ask questions...that was the sole purpose of it. Trying to get people together and talking, letting them know it's okay to be sensitive, emotional, soft. Being soft isn't a weakness, it can be an asset"



Escalante's murals can be found along the Guadalupe River Trail between West San Carlos Street and Woz Way by Discovery Meadow.



Play for a Purpose: Window on the River Park

We asked our new Advancement Manager, Carly Beard, what she thought about her first ever Window on the River Park. Carly oversaw much of the coordination, set up, and preparation with a fresh set of eyes.

When I made the decision to move to San José, I hoped to carve out a path to best connect me with my new community. Luckily it led me to the Guadalupe River Park Conservancy, whose mission to provide community leadership for the development and active use of the park immediately piqued my interest. Even more so as I read about the educational programs they facilitate, the spirit of volunteerism they foster, and the inclusiveness of the Rotary PlayGarden. When I learned that a few short weeks after being hired that I would be coordinating the annual fundraiser, Window on the River Park, I was eager and nervous for the challenge.

During my first tour of the PlayGarden, where the event was to be held, I was shown the new expansion in its final phases. Ash Namdar, our Operations and Project Manager for the expansion, explained how it was built with the intention to be a more sensory friendly space. As a late diagnosed AuDHDer, learning that the expansion was built with sensory differences like mine in mind provided me with a sense of belonging from the start. This place was a treasure, and I couldn't wait to showcase its value.



Planning the event was nothing short of a marathon. The logistics of a new location, choosing refreshments to compliment the childlike space, and finding ways to get adults to play on features intended for children posed a fun challenge. Before I knew it I was standing in the middle of a packed PlayGarden with a crowd of supportive community members. As music from San Jose Jazz filled the air, Sharkie scooted around stopping to pose. A beautiful display of fruit cups from Copa Cabana was framed in the distance, and as folks were enjoying the spread from Scratch Cookery, the space filled with



Thank you to our event sponsors and supporters

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the buzzing of hopeful conversations. Looking around, I realized a hesitancy to play on the new features. So I grabbed the hand of a friend and took them to the zipline. After our first few rounds curiosity grew, before you knew it we had a line of people waiting to show off their moves. The joy on their faces as they cheered and zipped through the air during golden hour was magical.

Soon our Board President Andrew Sandler, Mayor Matt Mahan, Councilmember Dev Davis, Supervisor Cindy Chavez, Supervisor Susan Ellenberg, and our Executive Director Jason Su all spoke on the value that inclusive spaces like the Rotary PlayGarden add to our communities. After a quick scan of the crowd I could see that their messages resonated, and the realization set in that I was finally on the path to the community I had been looking for. To quote Mayor Matt Mahan from the Rotary PlayGarden ribbon cutting ceremony, "The extra effort to make it all inclusive so that people of all ages and all abilities can enjoy and benefit from our public spaces and our public parks is really special and important, and shows that we've come a long way in making a more inclusive community."

