



[Home](#) > [Headlines](#) > [Gavilan College announces Community Spirit Awards](#)

## GAVILAN COLLEGE ANNOUNCES 2018 COMMUNITY SPIRIT AWARDS

*by on Sep 24, 2018*

At their September meeting, the Gavilan College Board of Trustees announced the winners of the Community Spirit Awards for 2018. The awards are presented annually, in each of the communities served by Gavilan College, to honor the people and institutions that contribute to improving the quality of life in each community. Each of the three sets of awards includes an individual, a business, and an organization.

The awards will be presented at three breakfasts this fall:

- Morgan Hill Chamber of Commerce Breakfast, October 4, 2018, 7:30 a.m. at Mama Mia's Restaurant in Morgan Hill
- Hollister Downtown Association Breakfast, October 24, 2018, 7:30 a.m. at Paine's Restaurant
- Gilroy Chamber of Commerce breakfast, November 14, 2018, 6:45 a.m. at the Hilton Garden Inn

This year's awards will be presented to:

Morgan Hill / San Martin:

- Individual - Marty Cheek
- Organization - South Valley Islamic Community
- Business - Morgan Hill Art School

Gilroy:

- Individual - Carlos Pineda
- Organization - Gilroy Elks Lodge
- Business - Old City Hall Restaurant

San Benito County:

- Individual - artists Rolan Resendiz and Joel Esqueda
- Organization - LULAC
- Business - Teknova

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## About the Community Spirit Award winners (in alphabetical order, with information provided by the nominators):

### **Marty Cheek**

Marty is a lifelong resident of the South Valley, grew up in Hollister and has lived in Morgan Hill for the past few decades. He has devoted his life to service in the South County Community. After working for the Morgan Hill Times, he and Robert Airoidi founded the Morgan Hill and Gilroy Life newspapers, and since then have thrived in our community with a focus to media that brings a very positive outlook to life in our region and the many great benefits of being a resident. He is personally involved -- there are very few community events that he does not attend.

Often times this translates to outstanding support for our education system and Gavilan College, of which he is an alumnus. In addition to his support of Gavilan, he has also been an outspoken advocate of our K-12 districts and even ran for MHUSD school board in 2012.

Marty is also very involved with South Valley Symphony, where he currently serves as Vice President and a vocal champion of music and the arts.

### **Gilroy Elks Lodge #1567**

The Mission of the Elks includes the words "Elks Care and Elks Share: This has been exhibited locally by (among other efforts):

- The Elks maintain an active honor roll called the "Wall of Vets" with pictures of Gilroyans who served in the military, displayed every October and November.
- The lodge also collects items for care packages to be sent to the troops.
- Since the beginning of the Gilroy Garlic Festival, the Elks Lodge has been involved.
- For the last 25 years, several hundred pairs of eyeglasses have been purchased for underprivileged youth, dictionaries have been distributed to third graders in schools, and funds are donated for Sober Grad Night at Gilroy High Schools.
- This year the Lodge hosted 80 Boy Scouts and their families for the annual Eagle Scout presentation. In 2015 the Elks Lodge was a major donor the funding of a 90-foot mural now located on the South side of the Gilroy Library.
- For the past 8 years, the Gilroy Elks Lodge has supported Gilroy's Kids Triathlon
- The Gilroy Elks Lodge has established a scholarship at Gavilan College to encourage students to study Speech Therapy
- 375 members
- 89 years of service in South County

### **LULAC**

The San Benito County League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) Council 2890 advances the economic condition, educational attainment, political influence, health, housing and civil rights of the Latino population in the City of Hollister, City of San Juan Bautista and the surrounding area.

LULAC is a volunteer-based organization that builds strong communities through numerous community-based programs. In San Benito County, LULAC is the local council of a National organization that is the largest and oldest Latino membership organization in the Country. Under the San Benito adult LULAC Council umbrella, there are two youth councils: Collegiate and Youth (High School students) Councils.

In San Benito County and the surrounding areas, LULAC is a valued partner, working alongside many non-profits, government agencies, educational institutions, and community members. LULAC has created programs to empower the community and provide them opportunities, and the organization has expanded greatly since its

creation. The following delineates a summary of San Benito County LULACs accomplishments and service to the local community in Gavilan College's service area.

- 30 Years Granting Scholarships- over \$164,000
- Young Readers Program-4 Hollister School District schools-\$96,000-13 years
- Latino Student Leadership Conferences-18 years-\$72,000
- Adelante Mentorship Program- 8 years - \$100,000
- Latino Early Academic Pathways Program in partnership with Gavilan College.
- Funding by a Ford Driving Dreams grant for \$20,000
- Student Annual Retreats- 19 years- \$57,500
- Diversity Dialogue Student Meetings-5 years
- Annual Hispanic Women in Action Reception (Scholarship Fundraiser)- 24 years
- Annual Veteran's Breakfasts- 23 years
- Needy Children Toy Drive - 19 years
- Youth Sports sponsorships-Hollister Recreation
- Graffiti Cleanup-Hollister Police Dept- 10 years
- Hollister Downtown Association Street Festival-16 years
- Community Service and assistance to local agencies
- 29 Years of LULAC Youth Leadership- 1,247 LULAC Youth Members participation an 18 Years of LULAC Young Adult Participation- 324 collegiate students
- San Benito LULAC introduced and secured City District Elections
- Council members including young adults and youth have served in District, State and National leadership roles
- National Youth Council 2012 - Las Vegas Nevada

These services and programs are designed to build strong communities through the value of education and dedication to civic duty. These efforts have resulted in LULAC members that started as Youth Council members in high school, returning after college to serve the community in the adult Council. In its history, San Benito LULAC has positively influenced over 1,240 youth members (95 percent college bound average) to continue their post-secondary education. Many LULAC youth students continue their path to higher education by attending Gavilan College.

### **Morgan Hill Arts School**

The Morgan Hill Art School's vision is to, "Build community through art." This first and currently only non-profit art school opened its doors just two short years ago. In this short period of time it has provided numerous family and youth activities at no cost to the community. All offered in their school , the weekend Farmer's Market, and many of the annual key events in our city.

The Morgan Hill Art School has also made relationships with surrounding schools, offering unique artistic mediums to help improve the creative character within our students.

"I feel passionate about the school's mission is that because it is a non-profit, their ultimate success will only be measured by continuing to offer awareness through art, further evolving the meaning of community within our residents. I believe the Community Spirit Award can only help raise the value of the mission of the Morgan Hill Art School. Since it has not been recognized as a community contributor as of yet, this opportunity can help expand its visual potential to supporters both in and outside of Morgan Hill"

### **Old City Hall Restaurant**

She (owner Fran) goes above and beyond to accommodate everyone who needs support. She would give the shirt off her back if it was needed. She's herself to the bone and never complains, instead - gives more. She is

the prime example of what a business owner in our community should be and she deserves so much recognition and love.

### **Carlos Pineda**

Carlos has consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to providing vocational and culinary skills to disadvantaged youth in his community. Our students in the Culinary Academy and apprentices in the Kneaded bakery face a multitude of stressors and risk factors including poverty, teen pregnancy, abuse and neglect, exposure to drugs and alcohol, crime, and gang violence. Through his work, Carlos has created a therapeutic and supportive learning environment in which our youth can acquire culinary skills, general job-readiness skills, and prepare for success in the workforce. Carlos and his team provide a structured educational experience that promotes a sense of personal safety, independence, self-worth and self-confidence that better helps youth prepare for stable, independent living and the demands and responsibilities of adulthood and the work world.

Carlos has a unique ability to connect with students, build trust and rapport, address areas of need, and build on strengths. Under his guidance, over 900 students have graduated from the Culinary Academy, and 90% of these students have gone on to enroll in higher education or secure employment. He works tirelessly on behalf of his students, taking late night calls when they are in crisis, or need to talk.

Carlos is passionate about his community, and this is evident not only in his work at RCS, but also with his various philanthropic efforts. Carlos volunteers his time and is active with many other community organizations including the Gilroy Sunrise Rotary, Chamber of Commerce, South County Young Professionals Network, and the Gilroy Exchange Club. For two consecutive years, Carlos and his former students have placed first in the Gilroy Garlic Festival Cook-Off. Each of these years, Carlos has selflessly donated the three thousand dollar prize money back to a non profit agency in his community; last year to the Gilroy Foundation, and this year to the Culinary Academy.

"I truly cannot think of anyone more committed to his community, and more deserving of the Gavilan College Community Sprit Award, than Carlos."

### **Rolan Resendiz and Joel Esqueda**

Rolan Resendiz and Joel Esqueda are the owners of ARTI-Culture, a community based organization located in Hollister. Rolan and Joel, both Gavilan College Alumni's, initiated their artistic vision for the city of Hollister in 2014 when completing their senior projects in order to pursue their college degrees in higher education, by collaborating with the city to paint the utility boxes sprinkled around the downtown area. Their vision was executed with the sole purpose of bringing more life to Hollister expressed through art, of which demonstrates, to them, the true representation of the community.

Collaborating with the city of Hollister was just the start of a successful business, soon after, ARTI-Culture opened their doors to the community by offering numerous classes of which allowed residents of all ages and demographics to explore various outlets of art, such as, paint nights located on onsite and in local restaurants around town, dichroic jewelry making classes, to creating one's own succulent fairy garden. Moreover, ARTI-Culture is now a location in the community for children to receive lunch and access to art materials during the summer, free of charge. The art component functions on an honor till where parents are given the option to pay a fee for art supplies without the fear of their children being turned away due to socioeconomic status. With this program put in place, ARTI-Culture has successfully serviced 30 children per day during their summer program in 2018.

Along with the summer program, ARTI-Culture has donated their time by teaming up with the Community Foundation of San Benito County who funded a project for juvenile youth to paint a mural at the San Benito County Historical Park, in partnership with the probation department and the R.E.A.C.H. program; moreover, collaborated with Chamberlain's Children Center by volunteering to paint two murals with the at-risk youth of San Benito County. As discussed, ARTI-Culture has made a significant positive impact on the community.

Regardless of the residents' socioeconomic background, this business caters to the community as a whole, while boosting local economy by partnering with local businesses and exposing youth of all walks of life to art by making it accessible and providing them a space of positive form for creativity.

As a result, ARTI-Culture has been awarded the 2018 Blue Ribbon for Child Abuse Prevention of San Benito County by the Child Abuse Prevention Council, they were also voted Best of San Benito County 2018 in two categories: best community organization and best place to take a class. Also, runner-ups in the 2018 Monterey Bay Start-Up Challenge

### **South Valley Islamic Community**

SVIC has consistently provided support and served the community at large since its establishment in 1999. During the past nearly two decades, SVIC members have volunteered thousands of hours to community service projects both independently organized as well as partnering with other organizations and community members. Although the number of individuals who are members of SVIC is only approximately 100 families, SVIC has a phenomenal record relating to the number of charitable causes they have supported consistently while serving the communities of San Martin, Gilroy, and Morgan Hill. Some of their voluntary service to the community include the following: volunteering at the Safe Car Park in Morgan feeding families every Friday and providing donation items needed; on-going collaboration, donations and volunteering at Cecelia's Closet; sponsoring meals and serving the homeless at the Gilroy Armory; San Martin Annual Trash-Bash clean up; sponsoring meals and serving at St Mary's Lords Table; gleaming leftover crops on local farms to donate to St. Joseph Pantry; sponsoring Christmas donations to Rebekah Children's Services and painting their storage sheds/parking lots; construction of homes for Habitat for Humanity; on-going donations to Gilroy Compassion Center; visitations to lonely seniors in senior housing to provide them with a friend and positive interaction.

In addition to these ongoing service projects, SVIC members have supported community members whenever the need arises. Recently, SVIC took a lead to support the victims of the San Martin fires in late July by gathering, sorting and distributing donation items and monies directly to numerous fire victims immediately after the fire and continuing to date. SVIC is still working with local families impacted by the fires to assure they have their basic needs and their children have school supplies and clothing as they begin the school year. All of these services listed above have been provided to the community at large purely as volunteer services by SVIC. It has always been a core mission of SVIC to provide service and support their community and neighbors in any area that is needed.

SVIC has also partnered with numerous organizations including the Rotary Club, San Martin Neighborhood Alliance, Interfaith Community of South County, with various community service projects. Another recent example of SVIC collaboration was during a fundraiser to support local refugees with SMNA. For this event SVIC volunteered to organize logistics and also donated some high-end new items valued in thousands of dollars which were sold during the silent auction for the benefit of refugees. The on-going collaboration with other organizations, the endless community service projects and volunteer hours provided by SVIC, truly define SVIC as an invaluable aspect that has made the South County a better place where both community and diversity are celebrated! With the exception of the Trash-Bash, of which SVIC was recognized along with other community members, SVIC has not been recognized for any of these activities servicing their community over the past two decades. It is time.

### **Teknova**

Teknova offers custom molecular biology media such as buffers and reagents, pre-poured agar plates, dry culture media, liquid culture media, and media supplements. Teknova has made a commitment to their current and future employees to help them develop their skill sets by providing education at no cost at the work site through a partnership with Gavilan College. Teknova believes in investing in their employees. All staff are invited to participate in classes, and all are accepted no matter their current education level. Teknova has also partnered with San Benito High school on an innovative internship program. Teknova has been involved in numerous community programs over the years. The list is very long, but just to name a few: Community Food Bank, United Way, Kinship Gabilan Chapter, Chamberlain's Children Center, Rotary Club, YMCA, Community

Foundation, the Chamber of Commerce, San Benito Business Council, etc. Board members are very involved in the community, giving our time and making donations to many organizations. They consider it to be an important part of their lives within this great community.

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**Archived Newsletters**

**Archived Headlines**

**Press Releases**

**Achievements**

**Archived Press Releases**

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**Documents**

**Events**

**Publications**

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## **Hours**

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[A-Z Index](#)

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[Employment](#)

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[Associate Degrees For Transfer](#)

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