

## Sacramento Medical Reserve Corps Help Vaccinate

Laura Hess, a recently retired Primary Care Nurse Practitioner, has had a busy year. When the pandemic hit hard in March, Laura wanted to find a way to contribute. Inspired by the mission of the Sacramento Medical Reserve Corps (SMRC) she started to volunteer by staffing the Sacramento County Public Health COVID-19 Medical Hotline.

SMRC recruits, trains, deploys and retains volunteer health professionals, and supports volunteers who contribute their skills and expertise during an emergency.

Since last June, Laura has worked weekly supporting the COVID-19 hotline answering questions from the Sacramento County community. Laura educates callers about the medical aspects of COVID-19 and helps callers access community resources and walk them through their fears and anxieties. When the vaccination clinics opened, Laura started helping with administering vaccinations and monitoring patients.

Since the pandemic began, hundreds of MRC units have deployed volunteers to help with the COVID-19 response and logged hundreds of thousands of volunteer hours.



(Photo Credit: Sargent Gilberto Castro)

### SMRC volunteer Laura Hess prepares vaccine

"SMRC volunteers have been such an important part of the Sacramento County Public Health COVID-19 response, they have dedicated thousands of hours to answering phones, working at our testing sites, contact tracing, vaccination clinics and more," said Megan Sheffield, Sacramento County Public Health Volunteer Coordinator for the COVID-19 response. "With the help of SMRC volunteers,

Sacramento County Public Health has been able to serve our community during these unprecedented times,"

The SMRC currently has more than 600 volunteer medical professionals and non-medical members who have served an estimated 14,000 hours for the COVID-19 response effort to date.

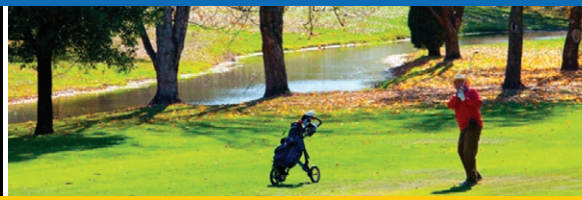
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Ann Edwards, Interim County Executive  
www.saccounty.net  
700 H Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Produced by:  
**Sacramento County**  
**Public Information Office**  
Editor: Kim Nava (navak@saccounty.net)



## Regional Parks Family Fun Challenges & Activities

With the weather beginning to warm up and spring on the horizon, now is a great time to get out and explore your local Regional Parks. To help inspire residents to enjoy more time in the outdoors, make healthier choices and try out new hobbies, [Regional Parks](#) has put together monthly challenges and activities for residents of all ages.

Regional Parks began sharing these monthly challenges and activities in September 2020. New challenges and activities are added at the beginning of each month, and all are appropriate and fun for children, families and adults!



“Each challenge is different. Some involve physical activity and getting outdoors and some are focused on wellness, with activities like practicing deep breathing and taking time to read,” said Liz Bellas, Director of Regional Parks. “We wanted to give people fun and easy ways to stay occupied and engaged while we’re still living under a public health order, and we realize some people might not be able to enjoy our parks right now, so it was important to us that we design activities that can be completed at home, too.”

To view the current and past monthly challenges and activities, visit the [Regional Parks Family Fun Activities](#) page at [regionalparks.saccounty.net](http://regionalparks.saccounty.net). If there’s an activity or challenge you’d like to see, let Regional Parks know on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

## County Partners with School to Reuse Lawnmowers

A partnership between the Sacramento County [Department of Waste Management and Recycling](#) Department and Will Rogers Middle School is giving new life to discarded lawnmowers while helping students get hands-on training in engine repair.

Since 2019, the [North Area Recovery Station \(NARS\)](#) has allowed Will Rogers Middle School instructor, Ken MacPherson, to take discarded gasoline lawnmowers to use in the school’s class on bicycle and small gas engine repair. The class gives mechanically-minded students a jumpstart on auto shop classes offered in high school.

Small gas engines are a little pricey, and students have a tendency to lose parts. One day while visiting NARS, MacPherson noticed customers dropping off old gas-powered mowers. Inspiration struck.

MacPherson approached NARS workers, who supported his idea of using discarded mowers. As part of the agreement, the school is required to document the donation, release the county from liability, and prohibit students from selling the engines.

Pre-COVID, students in a classroom could perform basic diagnostic tests, drain oil and gas from the engines, and give them a good pressure wash. Given the restrictions of the pandemic, MacPherson prepares the mowers for students to work on at home and schedules a pickup date for parents and students to come



to the school. They choose the engine they will work on for the semester.

“There’s a lot you can learn from a small gasoline engine. It’s like a 3-D puzzle, with oil,” said MacPherson. “And if they can make it work, they can use the engine to build anything they want.”

For Waste Management and Recycling, it’s another example of how employees go the extra mile to support the community and reduce and reuse items that would have otherwise ended up in the landfill. And in this case, it also provides an opportunity to partner with a school and educate students.



## More Than Just a Home



Since he was 14, Chris Culcasi's drug and alcohol addictions have led him in and out of prison and homelessness. While incarcerated at the Rio Cosumnes Correctional Center, he found his path to a better life: Horses.

"I could identify with them. It was probably the first time I ever had a feeling for something that wasn't drug-induced," said Culcasi, who worked in a program that offers inmates the opportunity to train wild horses for adoption. "I realized they were just looking for a leader and I started to feel like I could be a leader and I could do this."

After his release, Culcasi set out to start a new career as a farrier. To be accepted into a trade school, however, he had to prove he was able to stay sober.

"For the first time in my life, I was willing to do a program," he said.

Culcasi benefited from a 2017 initiative passed in Sacramento County aimed at reducing homelessness. The Flexible Supportive Rehousing Program (FSRP) provides help with securing housing as well as intensive case management that supports clients in maintaining that housing through medical, mental and behavioral health care, employment assistance,

expungement services and other supports. According to Neil Kurtz, Program Planner for the Sacramento County Department of Human Assistance (DHA), these initiatives were the first by the County to specifically target frequent users of services.

"Our participants are building these relationships with their case managers who are going to look out for them and connect them with services," said Kurtz. "You're going to see less recidivism and lower costs over time because housing with services allows people to rebuild their lives and address issues."

According to Kurtz, the difference between past programs and these initiatives is more intentional collaboration with county departments and nonprofits. In addition to connecting people with county departments and the nonprofit service provider, DHA works with the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency, Sacramento Steps Forward, the Public Defender's office, child and adult protective services, probation departments and more.

"It involves additional support services that can address the long-term trauma and chronicity of somebody who has been on the street or in an encampment for a while,"

Kurtz said. "Those additional support services are equally important as the housing that's being offered."

Today, Culcasi owns his own business, is stably housed, paid off his child support lien and is making victim restitution payments. He credits his caseworkers with helping him get his life back on track.

"I had a team help me learn how to pay bills, they helped me rebuild my credit, build up renter's history and they gave me all the moral support I needed to get through it," he says. "I never fell through the cracks once. It takes a lot for somebody like me to get this far. I was in a hole that most people never get out of."

For more information, visit Sacramento County's Homelessness Response Website at [www.saccounty.net/Homelessness](http://www.saccounty.net/Homelessness). For homeless resources, call 2-1-1.

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### Vaccinate, *Continued from cover*

Some members have said that volunteering for the SMRC has helped them get through this challenging year. To volunteer for the SMRC, visit the SMRC Foundation website at [www.sacmrcfoundation.org](http://www.sacmrcfoundation.org) to fill out an application online.



### Visit the County's COVID-19 website

for the latest news and updates, testing locations, vaccine info, guidance and resources for businesses and more: [covid19.saccounty.net](http://covid19.saccounty.net).

## What's New at Sacramento International Airport

As destinations begin to open up, **Sacramento International Airport** (SMF) is announcing several new nonstop flights to make vacation getaways easier than ever. Additionally, passengers traveling to Hawaii have a convenient on-airport option for testing that meets the state's entry requirements.

### New and Returning Flights

- » Frontier: Nonstop flights to Phoenix (PHX) and Ontario (ONT)  
[www.flyfrontier.com](http://www.flyfrontier.com)
- » JetBlue: Nonstop flights to Cancún (CUN)  
[www.jetblue.com](http://www.jetblue.com)
- » Volaris: Nonstop flights to Mexico City  
[www.volaris.com](http://www.volaris.com)
- » Spirit: Daily nonstop flights to Orange County (SNA)  
[www.spirit.com](http://www.spirit.com)
- » Alaska Airlines: Nonstop flights to San Diego (SAN)  
[www.alaskaair.com](http://www.alaskaair.com)

### Know Before You Go

Sacramento International Airport and the Transportation Security Administration



(TSA) continue to put the health and safety of passengers first with new procedure and rules to reduce the spread of coronavirus. Here are few things to keep in mind before arriving at SMF that will make traveling easier:

- » **Parking:** The East Economy at \$10/day is open with shuttles running to both Terminals. Additionally, both the Garage, \$18/day, and the Daily Lot, \$10/day are open, and the Hourly Lot pricing is still \$29/day.
- » **Self-Scanning:** passengers will scan their own boarding passes and not hand them over to TSA employees.

- » **Liquids:** liquids still must be in 3.4 ounce or smaller containers with the exception of hand sanitizer, which can be in a 12-ounce container. It must be removed from baggage before it goes through the X-ray and will be screened separately.
- » **Food:** if passengers bring meals on their flights, they should be placed in a clear plastic bag, in a separate tray from their luggage, for scanning.
- » **Personal Items:** TSA recommends that all personal items (keys, phones, wallets, etc.) should be placed in carry-on bags instead of directly in the bins, to avoid contamination.

SMF reminds everyone to travel safely and take extra precautions when at the airport. Anyone in a public space is required to wear a face covering. The airport has installed social distancing signage inside the airport, where passengers wait for pick-up, taxis, rental car shuttles and ride-hailing apps. For more information, visit the SMF website at [sacramento.aero/smf](http://sacramento.aero/smf).

### We're Hiring!

As the region's second largest employer, Sacramento County has more than 12,000 employees working across 40 departments in fields such as technology, health care, finance, waste management, social services, law enforcement, parks and voter registration. If you're looking for a career with purpose, visit [www.SacCountyJobs.net](http://www.SacCountyJobs.net) to view a list of all the positions currently accepting applications and subscribe to emails to be alerted when a specific job is available.



### Sac County 311 Connect is Your Link to County Services

Where do you report an abandoned vehicle or broken street light? Or get information about County services? Get the information you need by submitting a request on the web at [www.311.SacCounty.net](http://www.311.SacCounty.net), through our mobile app or by calling 311. (916-875- 4311 if calling from out of the area.) Friendly and knowledgeable customer service representatives are available 24/7, 365 days a year to answer questions, route calls, and resolve issues.

