

The newsletter of Hayward Rotary Club

Serving Hayward since 1922


# HIGH



# GEAR

HAYWARDROTARY.ORG

VOL. 96, NO. 26 | MAY 1, 2018

A close-up portrait of Pamela Russo, a woman with blonde, wavy hair, smiling and looking upwards. She is wearing a red garment. The background is a solid red color.

**STANDOUT**  
**Pamela Russo**  
Outstanding Hayward Rotarian

# STANDOUT

**Pamela Russo**

**T**HE RICHARD W. BOWMAN OUTSTANDING HAYWARD ROTARIAN award is given annually to the Hayward Rotary Club member who best exemplifies the Rotary motto of "Service Above Self", and whose contributions in the



five Avenues of Service distinguish them among their peers. It is the highest honor Hayward Rotary Club bestows on its Members.

**Pam Russo** is the Outstanding Hayward Rotarian for 2018. A Past President of Hayward Rotary Club and leader of numerous impactful projects for the betterment of the community, Pam is a standout Rotarian in every way, and is richly deserving of the highest honor the Club has to offer.

**Pam** was nominated for the award by multiple Club members, and was unanimously chosen by the OHR

## **HAYWARD ROTARY CLUB FOUNDATION**

**Centennial Challenge for \$2 million by 2022**

**Hayward Rotary Club Foundation** is a charitable nonprofit organization established in 1990. The mission of the Foundation is to provide a stable and sustainable source of financial support for **charitable projects in the Hayward community.**

The Foundation has provided millions to major local charitable projects over the past 28 years, including the **Silva Pediatric Clinic**, the **Children's Playground** at Giuliani Plaza, and the **Children's Storytelling Room** at the new Hayward library. Going forward, the Foundation has set a new goal, the **Centennial Challenge** to reach \$2 million by the year 2022, the 100th anniversary of Hayward Rotary Club's founding. The Centennial Challenge will provide essential funding for charitable projects in Hayward for generations to come.

Learn more at [www.haywardrotary.org](http://www.haywardrotary.org)



Committee as the winner. The committee is comprised of the past five Outstanding Hayward Rotarian honorees. The 2018 OHR Committee members are **Paul "The Godfather" Martin, Larry Ratto, Brian Schott, Bob Sakai, and Ed Mullins.**

**Pam** was feted and honored in a special OHR awards dinner on April 9, 2018 in the Masonic Lodge. Congratulations, **Pam Russo!**



*Foundation President Paul "The Godfather" Martin, Club President A.T. Stephens, Past President Bob Sakai, Outstanding Hayward Rotarian Pam Russo, Past President Larry Ratto, Past President Ed Mullins, and Past President Brian Schott*

## OUTSTANDING SERVICE

**P**amela Russo exemplifies Rotary's creed of "Service Above Self." As a registered nurse and later House Supervisor at St. Rose Hospital, **Pam** stood out as an extraordinary caregiver and leader dedicated to helping others. She then went on to serve as Executive Director of the hospital's charitable Foundation, where she helped raise millions

to support the hospital's work on a grander scale. And as Hayward Rotary Club member and later President, **Pam** created or supported numerous service projects including the Silva Pediatric Clinic, the Back-to-School "Child Spree" event to give Hayward kids the gear they need for school, and the Sorensdale holiday gift-giving project for special-needs adults, among many, many others. She also traveled to Uganda to bring needed medical supplies to a pediatric clinic in that country. In her current professional role as Executive Director of the Hayward Area Recreation and Park District Foundation, **Pam** is the driving force behind the fund development for Mia's Dream, a universally accessible playground planned for Tennyson Park.



### **Mia's Dream**

*Hayward Rotary Club and Foundation are proud sponsors of the Mia's Dream universally accessible playground project. The new playground, which is planned to break ground in 2018, is inspired by 10-year old Mia Vasquez, who has cerebral palsy and dystonia, a movement disorder that causes her muscles to contract uncontrollably. Her wish is to have a playground near her home in Hayward where she and other children with disabilities can play. Her parents, Emelyn Lacayo and Daniel Vasquez (pictured above with Mia at Tennyson Park), applied to the Make a Wish Foundation Greater Bay Area in 2015 and asked for help in building an all-accessible playground in Hayward. After their request was granted, Vasquez and Lacayo approached Hayward Area Recreation and Park District administrators and directors in early 2016 and asked if space could be set aside in a Hayward park for the playground. Park district directors unanimously agreed to dedicate an acre of space at South Hayward's Tennyson Park for the playground, which will be called, "Mia's Dream Come True: Where the Heart of the Bay Comes to Play."*

The \$2.5 million park will have play structures designed to evoke key Hayward landmarks that Mia enjoys, including Sulphur Creek Nature Center, Hayward Executive Airport, Hayward Loop, Hayward shoreline, Hayward-San Mateo Bridge and the water tower at Cannery Park.

There also will be a music therapy area, interactive language board for children who can't see and a quiet zone for autistic children. "Mobility and motion is really important to children with special needs, so each of the various structures will incorporate all of our seven senses to best allow children to play, recreate and have fun," **Pam** said in an interview with *The Daily Review* newspaper about the project.



## Conceptual sketch of Mia's Dream playground

Mia's Dream is a one-acre, all-access playground for inclusive play opportunities for child developmental needs. It will replace an existing playground in Tennyson Park in Hayward and serve the local community as well as the greater Alameda County area. The new playground will provide a variety of play features and experiences for children of all abilities in a fun atmosphere. It includes elements of inclusion play for cognitive, physical, social, sensory and communication. Among the features are a Music Therapy Zone, Kindness Arches, Sensory Wall, Water Tower Look-out, swings and spinners, slides and rollers, and an Animal and Nature exhibit. The park will also provide accessible pathways, picnic areas, seating and shade structures. For more information or to learn how you can help, call (510) 888-0111 or visit the

HARD Foundation website: [www.haywardrec.org/191/HARD-Foundation](http://www.haywardrec.org/191/HARD-Foundation)



"It will be very much designed with all disabilities in mind and how each child may respond to different forms of therapy." **Pam** said.

Though the playground will be specifically tailored for seniors and adults or children with disabilities, it also will help teach other children and adults how to empathize with those with special needs. When completed, Mia's Dream Park will be Hayward's first universally accessible playground and one of only a handful of such playgrounds in the Bay Area.

To learn more about Mia's Dream and how you can help make the dream come true, call (510) 888-0111 or visit the HARD Foundation website at [www.haywardrec.org/191/HARD-Foundation](http://www.haywardrec.org/191/HARD-Foundation).



## Mia's Dream Playground - Project Location

*Tennyson Park is a public parkland situated on approximately 9.6 acres in the heart of the Tennyson Corridor between Huntwood and Ruus Roads. The park is adjacent to the Matt Jimenez Community Center and the Eden Youth Center. (One of Hayward Rotary Club Foundation's major past projects, the Silva Pediatric and Dental Clinic, is located in the Eden Youth Center.) Across Huntwood Road from the park is the Firehouse Clinic. Tennyson Park currently features a softball field, basketball court, outdoor restrooms, open fields, a skate park, and a "tot lot" playground. The park is slated for a major renovation, the centerpiece of which is the development of Mia's Dream universally accessible playground in place of the existing tot lot.*

## MINUTES-IN-BRIEF

### Highlights from recent meetings

- **March 26, 2018.** President **A.T. Stephens** presided. It was reported that Hayward Rotary Youth Speech Contest winner Ginger Semko took first place at the Regional Competition. **Paul "The Godfather" Martin** announced the slate of Foundation Board candidates for election in April 23: **Dennis Butler, Robert Sakai, Ken Meirovitz, Tony Varni, Dave Elkins** and **Mona Diamantine**. New member **Greg Hegstrom** joined the Club. **Ken Meirovitz** was recognized for his 40-year Club anniversary. Keynote speaker was Fran David, on the topic of California's Public Pension System.
- **April 2.** President **A.T. Stephens** presided. President-elect **Sid Hamadeh** called for volunteers to work the food and drink concessions at the Rodeo fundraiser. Keynote speaker was Jim Camponigro, CEO of Goodwill Industries of the Greater East Bay.
- **April 9.** Special evening meeting to honor **Pam Russo**, the Richard W. Bowman Outstanding Hayward Rotarian for 2018. Former OHR honorees **Paul "The Godfather" Martin, Ed Mullins, Bob Sakai, Larry Ratto,** and **Brian Schott** presided.
- **April 16.** President **A.T. Stephens** presided. **Douglas den Hartog** called for volunteers to assist with the Rodeo fundraiser, and **Valerie Caveglia** called for sponsorships of the food and drink concession stands. President-elect **Sid Hamadeh** announced the slate of candidates for the upcoming Club board elections. Candidates for Directors are: **Freddye Davis, Lucy Lopez, Valerie Caveglia, Jason Carmichael, Matt Spielberg** and **Robert Pimentel**; for President-elect, **Michael Cobb**; for treasurer, **Laurel Quirk**; and Secretary-for-life, **Mona Diamantine**. the Club election will be held April 30. Returning member **Laura Simpson** officially re-joined the Club. Keynote speaker was **Sean Reinhart** on the topic of Hayward's 21st Century Library.
- **April 23.** President **A.T. Stephens** presided. The election of Foundation board members was held and the slate was approved as presented on March 26. **Vrushali Nanjundappa** gave her vocational talk. Keynote speaker was Eleanor Vogelsang from Close Up Foundation, a non-profit civic education organization that inspires and empowers young people to engage in the political process.

#### ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

HIGH GEAR is the official newsletter of Hayward Rotary Club. It is one of the longest-running serial publications in Hayward. The first issue was released when the club was founded in 1922. The pages of HIGH GEAR offer extraordinary snapshots of Hayward history, updates on present-day community activities and projects, and the occasional hijinks of Hayward's movers and shakers. Editor: Sean Reinhart. Contributors: Barbara Halliday, Laurel Quirk, Valerie Caveglia, and Ed Avelar.

#### ABOUT HAYWARD ROTARY CLUB

We are Hayward's premier service club since 1922 -- a non-partisan, non-political group of people united in giving back to our community. Hayward Rotary Club members come from many diverse walks of life. We are leaders in business, education, government, nonprofit, and community service. Do you have what it takes to become a Rotarian? Learn more about who we are and how to become a Rotarian by visiting our weekly meetings and website, [www.haywardrotary.org](http://www.haywardrotary.org).

*Coming to Hayward Rotary Club:*

# **District Attorney Nancy O'Malley**

## **Monday, April 30, 2018**

Hayward Rotary Club proudly welcomes a very special keynote speaker: Nancy O'Malley, Alameda County District Attorney.



*A nationally recognized expert in issues involving violence against vulnerable populations, District Attorney Nancy O'Malley founded the Human Exploitation and Trafficking Unit (H.E.A.T.) to prosecute and eliminate sex trafficking in Alameda County.*



### **HAYWARD ROTARY CLUB KEYNOTE LUNCHEON** **with District Attorney Nancy O'Malley** **Monday, 4/30/18 at 12:00 p.m.**

1074 B Street, Hayward (next door to Buffalo Bill's)

Guests are welcome.

**District Attorney Nancy O'Malley** is the chief law enforcement officer in Alameda County. She is the first woman to serve as Alameda County's elected District Attorney, and is a leader known throughout California and the country for her innovation and vision. District Attorney O'Malley's keynote address will discuss The Justice Restoration Project to eliminate recidivism and to keep young offenders out of prison. Members and newcomers to Rotary alike won't want to miss this informative discussion of restorative justice practices at our next luncheon.

**12:00 p.m. Monday, April 30, 2018**