

**EPACENTER LAUNCHES
COMMUNITY ART INITIATIVE
AT EAST PALO ALTO'S
40TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT, JULY 1
Local "Heroes" To Be Documented
For Future Street Art Project**

EAST PALO ALTO (26 June 2023) --- EPACENTER, the East Palo Alto creative youth center, will honor the everyday heroes of its hometown with an arts initiative program launching at the City's 40th Anniversary celebratory parade and festival, July 1, 2023. While the event is marking the fourth decade since the incorporation of the City of East Palo Alto, artist/photographer Cristina Velázquez will be capturing images of the residents, neighbors, parents, workers, volunteers, and others who make up the vibrant landscape of this resilient 2.5 square mile town whose official motto is "Building the Just City." In this public art project sponsored by Dragonfly Community Arts, the portraits will eventually form the basis for street pole banners to be installed along Bay Road, offering a commemoration of the residents' personal triumphs and an homage to its hometown heroes.

This arts program is part of EPACENTER's planned series of art and healing activations in which local residents create visual art together that represents the city's founders and cultural heritage, celebrates family heroes, depicts communal life across ethnicities, rectifies issues around the lack of representation of Latino, African American, and Pacific Islander communities in public monuments, and weaves residents' personal stories into the fabric of the city. The program's goal is to highlight residents as well as a person, place, thing, or activity that has inspired them, or makes them proud to call the city home. Artist Cristina Velázquez, who grew up in East Palo Alto, holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from SJSU, as well as Masters of Arts and Masters of Fine Arts dual degrees from the San Francisco Art Institute.

The **City of East Palo Alto** will be celebrating the 40th anniversary of its incorporation on Saturday, July 1, with a full day of activities, food, and music. All are invited to line up curbside and cheer as contingents from local civic, sports, and education groups march through town ([map](#)

[here](#)) concluding at a day-long family-friendly public festival on the street in front of EPACENTER. Activities include two stages presenting multi-cultural concerts and performances, an outdoor video game arcade, and food stands offering a wide variety of cuisines. For youth there will be free face painting and children's games, arts and crafts, and other activities on EPACENTER's spacious grounds.

EPACENTER is a creative youth development center created to harness the power of art, design, technology, and culture to accelerate positive outcomes for vulnerable youth in East Palo Alto. Its state-of-the-art facility was driven by a community-based outreach effort, filling a much-needed gap in East Palo Alto to give local youth access to free quality arts instruction, job training, and workforce development programs. Funded by the John & Marcia Goldman Foundation, the 25,000 square foot facility provides local youth with a space they asked for specifically: a safe learning environment where they can access a multitude of exciting opportunities to develop their creativity and learn job skills. EPACENTER will celebrate the city's 40th anniversary all year long with events through May 2024 focused on East Palo Alto's fascinating past, cultural heritage, and impact on the San Francisco Peninsula. For updates and more information, visit epacenter.org.

-30-

PRESS: Contact Steph Keay, Carla Befera & Co., steph@cb-pr.com

PHOTOS: Media may download video and high-res photos at:
<https://www.cbpr.co/press/epacenter>