

# Sophie's • Gazette

OCTOBER • 2025

A PERSON CENTERED NEWSLETTER PRODUCED BY ST. MADELEINE SOPHIE'S CENTER  
Edited in the Theresa & Edward O'Toole Foundation Adaptive Computer Learning Center  
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## HAPPY HALLOWEEN

October 31, 2025





# October

## **National Disabilities Employment Awareness Month: Value & Talent**

### *Props to Bruce Davis at Nat Cat*

"Cats are loving and affectionate creatures!" Bruce Davis is passionate about cats and gets a regular feline fix at his job at National Cat Protection Society where he is a valued employee. He has worked for 12 years at the no kill shelter, also known as Nat Cat. "It is a privilege to work with Bruce, he is kind and compassionate with our animals" Mike Rueb, Nat Cat Director remarked. "He is a caring person who laughs easily and helps to create a positive work culture."

Bruce is a SMSC student, but he doesn't come to SMSC's campus his day starts at Nat Cat. "Bruce hits the ground running to complete the day's work and is flexible moving from job to job with ease", Rueb remarked. "He is a hard worker who needs little direction."

According to Bruce, "People think we pet cats all day, that is not the case." There are many tasks necessary to keep the environment clean and safe for the cats, so his responsibilities include feeding and getting fresh water for the cats and other care, like changing the litter boxes. He also has cleaning chores around the facility such as mopping, sweeping, and washing dishes. "I have always had a good work ethic, so I make sure stuff gets done."

Mike noted "When the job is done and Bruce is off the clock, he enjoys time with cats and is often the first to notice the important little things like noticing when a cat is sick and needs extra care." Some of the cats have been at the shelter since Bruce started worked there. "They know my voice and come to me." Advising, "if you are having a bad day pet a cat, it is so soothing."

Props to cat fancier, Bruce Davis whose love of cats turned into a career, one that gives him a sense of purpose, connection, and a path to a fulfilling life!



**Up to 86% of people with Intellectual and developmental  
disabilities are unemployed in San Diego County.**  
[data.sandiegocounty.gov / natcat.org](http://data.sandiegocounty.gov/natcat.org)





with  
Emily Cunningham



Emily Cunningham bagging potatoes.



Craig and Emily Cunningham with American Textile Maintenance volunteers .

Emily Cunningham, a student at St. Madeleine Sophie's Center recently volunteered at Feeding San Diego along with her father Craig. The company he works for, American Textile Maintenance volunteers at Feeding San Diego twice a year. This was the second time Emily joined the volunteer group.

The group made boxes of food and divided items for packaging. They separated and packaged potatoes, filling bags that would be picked up at a distribution center later. In the 2 hours that they volunteered the group helped to bag up to 16,000 lbs. of potatoes. "The staff at Feeding San Diego said that the potatoes we bagged would help 4000 kids in San Diego County! It is VERY rewarding work, and Emily was a GREAT help." her father reported.

**For more information go to: [www.feedingsandiego.com](http://www.feedingsandiego.com)**



Tritons Swim Team Ends the 2025 Season



## Serving on the Self-Advocacy Board By: Cali Williams

It feels like an honor to be part of the Self-Advocacy Board at St. Madeleine Sophie's Center. As an AC Program Representative, being able to help others make a difference in their lives, means a lot to me. Knowing our rights and becoming a role model, I can speak up for myself and others. This is the best part of being a Self-Advocate. Helping others has a special place in my heart, and the best part is showing others how to do the same. It is a wonderful joy to see everyone happy here at program. To make someone smile and to make someone feel better about themselves makes my job easy. The main key is to remember to have an open mind. I look forward to next year's election. If you are interested in running for Self-Advocacy, you will need to wait until they announce the election. Until then talk to your case manager about how to prepare for the election. I listed some tips below!

### Tips for running for Self-Advocacy

- Define a goal that is member-driven
- Have a strong message and slogan
- Make an action plan with timelines
- Mobilize using social media, public speaking, and letter writing
- Let people know who you are & what you stand for



## San Diego People First Self-Advocacy Monthly Meeting

**Hosted** on the 3rd Friday of every month at 2pm in person or on Zoom.

Build the confidence to advocate for yourself, grow as a leader, and bring positive change to the community around you. With the right tools, you can inspire others along the way.

### Join Us Via Zoom:

Click [HERE](#)  
Meeting ID: 937 0215 8975  
Passcode: 123763



Or scan the QR code



Check us out!

### Join Us In-Person:

State Council on Developmental Disabilities  
8880 Rio San Diego Drive, Room 325  
San Diego, CA 92108

### Questions?

Please contact:  
**Viri Salgado**  
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### 3 Cheers for the Transportation Department!

By: Coleen Baucom



**Josh Pizana, Coleen Baucom,  
and Fay Chargualaf.**

*Hello my fellow readers, I want everyone to know about a special person here at St. Madelein's; her name is Fay Chargualaf. She is our Transportation Coordinator and has worked at SMSC for 25 years.*

*Have you ever noticed we have a lot of buses here at program? Fay told me we have 14 B Buses, 12 C Buses, 3 Trucks, 10 Dodge Vans, and 5 Transit Vans for a total of 44 vehicles. We currently have 24 drivers. Fay starts her day early by opening the gates when it's time for our buses to leave to pick up students. At the end of the day she waits for all the drivers to return and then locks up. Everyone in the Transportation Department works very hard every day to make sure we are safe on our buses.*

*I think the drivers are great. They get to campus early so they can put gas in the buses and clean the seats. They pick us up in the morning and take us home after program. Our buses pick up students in Mission Bay, San Diego, parts of Chula Vista, and as far away as Poway.*

*I really enjoyed interviewing Fay. It's not every day that she is in our newsletter so thumbs up to Fay and all her drivers! Congratulations to Fatu Laga who was recently made Transportation Manager and Victor Ontideros the new Assisant Transportation Manger! Together everyone in the Transportation Department does a very good job of transporting us all week long.*



It costs \$25,000 a month  
to put gas in all our vehicles!



**Sara Gonzalez with Bill Rynkofs  
Armando Rosas with Larry Finnegan  
Connor Hauer and Kevin Locke  
Laura Woody and Jennifer Carter**





# September Birthdays

Amber Bobbitt  
Christopher Bradshaw  
Jonathan Chavez  
Cameron Cromwell  
Faith Davies  
Bruce Davis  
Chandra Deal  
Caitlin DeCoro  
Mayra Gonzalez  
Mitch Gricman  
Rachel Guerrero  
Isaac Hernandez  
Janae Horn  
Nicholas Horning  
Larissa Ibanez  
Janis Jackson  
Kathy Kilander  
Heather Ksiazek  
Samuel Kulek  
Dawn Linnen  
Moyses Lizarraga  
Shannon Manning  
Heather Matthews  
Scott McLoughlin  
Heather Moreno  
Lynn Murray

Libby Pieti  
Catherine Pestreich  
Nick Pittman  
Sabrina Pomeroy  
Janel Shortes  
Rosalia Sottile  
Margaret Sperry  
Muna Toma  
Adrienne Wright

# October Birthdays

Samantha Calderon  
Anne Colburn  
Shauna Davis  
Peter Feghali  
Nancy Gonzalez  
Taylor Hitchcock  
Grace Kennedy  
Virginia Kennedy  
Luke Laliberte  
An Nguyen  
Reg Oberg  
Lauren Papworth  
Hannah Parrett  
Nick Perretta  
Matthew Phillips  
Aldo Quezada  
Daniel Reaves  
Tonja Rogers  
Stephen Schmidt  
Laura Sloan  
Matthew Soares  
Renee Sprague  
Sheldon Wallace  
Claudia Whitefield  
Kristen Woldt  
Meredith Yamada  
Tyler Zito







Join us for Spookeasy: Blackout Party, an outdoor Halloween celebration in SMSC's secret garden featuring eerie blacklight décor, a live DJ, costume contest, scavenger hunt, gourmet food, unlimited drinks, and an exclusive cigar bar. Dress to glow and support St. Madeleine Sophie's Center with a night of spooky fun and good vibes!



# EL CAJON'S HAUNT FEST

Free Community Event



KAISER PERMANENTE



SYCUAN



CITY VENTURES  
Building It Forward






Everyone is welcome!

# Oktoberfest

in El Cajon  
Sept. 26 - 28 & Oct. 3-5, 2025



ARTIST: Francisco Rojas, 2025, St. Madeline Sophie's Center

German American Societies of San Diego  
1017 S. Mollison Avenue, El Cajon  
[www.OktoberfestElCajon.com](http://www.OktoberfestElCajon.com)  
[facebook.com/OktoberfestElCajon](https://facebook.com/OktoberfestElCajon)

# Sea Life

Passageways 2025

Celebrating  
self-determination  
September 12 - October 31, 2025

Art exploring life in the  
ocean and the experiences  
of living by the coast,  
while celebrating donated,  
up-cycled & reimagined  
materials.

- Mosaic fish & coastal seascapes
- Sea creature paintings on recycled  
cabinet doors & cruiser  
skateboards
- Beaded jellyfish & crab sculptures
- Paper maché sea stars
- Painted wooden buoy wind chimes
- Watercolor fish illustrations
- Seashell & fish polymer clay  
earrings, Sewn fish purses  
and more...



Sophia's Gallery  
25th Anniversary

Seahorse © Ethan Coss 2025  
Crab © Sara Elias 2025

**ATTENTION**

## ATTENDANCE MATTERS!



WHEN STUDENTS MISS A DAY:

WE LOSE \$75 OF FUNDING PER DAY PER STUDENT

**WHAT YOU CAN DO:**

IF THEY CAN'T ATTEND, GET ON VIRTUALLY!


DONATE \$75 TO COVER THE LOSS

Sophie's Gallery Artists  
Featuring  
Paintings of The

# Eiffel Tower

NOW at



Rob's BrewPoint • 153 E. Main St • El Cajon CA





## Alley Cat Art Walk

*Celebrating the Arts in Downtown El Cajon*

*Sea Life*





# October • Octubre/ 2025

## LUNCH MENU



**Stacy McCorquodale adding bread crumbs .**



**Kelsey Wammack helping with salads.**



**Cali Williams adding broccoli to lunches.**

Oct 1<sup>st</sup> Hawaiian BBQ chicken over rice

Oct 2<sup>nd</sup> Phantom pulled pork sandwich and chips

Oct 3<sup>rd</sup> Pizza and side salad

Oct 6<sup>th</sup> Shrimp boil and cornbread \*

Oct 7<sup>th</sup> Cheese lasagna, side salad, and garlic bread

Oct 8<sup>th</sup> Franken burger and french fries

Oct 9<sup>th</sup> Mary me chicken over garlic mashed potatoes

Oct 10<sup>th</sup> Pizza and side salad

Oct 13<sup>th</sup> Pork adobo over rice

Oct 14<sup>th</sup> Greek chicken pita wrap and chips

Oct 15<sup>th</sup> Spookhetti & meatballs and side salad

Oct 16<sup>th</sup> Cajun shrimp over rice

Oct 17<sup>th</sup> Pizza and side salad

Oct 20<sup>th</sup> Tomato spinach and shrimp pasta

Oct 21<sup>st</sup> Buffalo chicken fries

Oct 22<sup>nd</sup> Beef enchilada casserole, black beans, and rice

Oct 23<sup>rd</sup> Hallowscream chicken parm sandwich and side salad

Oct 24<sup>th</sup> Pizza and side salad

Oct 27<sup>th</sup> Spinach & cheese tortellini, garlic bread, and side salad

Oct 28<sup>th</sup> Chicken tenders, garlic bread, fries, and coleslaw

Oct 29<sup>th</sup> Eggplant parmesan over pasta and side salad

Oct 30<sup>th</sup> Witches brew stew and cornbread

Oct 31<sup>st</sup> Pizza and side Salad

\* New Menu Item

