

NewsBriefs

\$1 million given to parish school

Ron Cali presented a \$1 million check to the St. Joseph of Cupertino School from the estate of his parents, Edward and Harriet Cali, at the school's 50th anniversary celebration Mass on Feb. 11. The elder Calis were founding members of the parish.

Edward Cali, who died in February 2006, spent 40 years running R. Cali & Bros. Mill, a major feed and grain trucking business located where Cali Mill Plaza now stands at Stevens Creek and De Anza boulevards. Rosario and Joseph Cali, Edward's grandfather and great-uncle, founded the business after moving to Cupertino in 1919. They served farmers when the area was still primarily agricultural land.

The donation put the school well over its goal of raising its endowment fund to \$1.5 million by its 50th anniversary.

Principal Mary Lyons thanked Cali and presented him with a shooting star, which represents the school's aspirations for its students.

Another candidate for city council

Albert Chu has filed a declaration of candidacy form stating his intention to run for the Cupertino City Council, according to Kim Smith, the city clerk. The form will permit Chu to start raising money for a campaign.

"I believe the current city council is in need of a change of personnel," said Chu, a Hong Kong native, in an interview with the COURIER. "I always feel that Cupertino is and can be a great model and example as the best and safest city across the country."

Chu said he had a rough time growing up as one of two Chinese immigrants at Stockton High School. His parents worked in restaurants to put their children through college. He now works as a reliability and safety system engineer at Lockheed Martin.

Chu has lived in Cupertino with his family and three children for about 25 years, and serves on the school site council at Monta Vista High School, which his youngest son attends. He has been involved with soccer leagues as a coach and referee for 15 years and is currently a certified youth soccer referee for NorCal Premier Soccer.

Bilingual educators host conference

Cupertino Language Immersion Program directors and other local bilingual educators hosted the 2007 National Association for Bilingual Education conference at the San Jose Convention Center.

The conference, held Feb. 7 to 10, is the largest gathering of teachers, administrators and policymakers in the United States dedicated to serving English-language learners. Cupertino Language Immersion Program director Mary Jew was very active in the conference.

"We're such an active school culturally that we have a guided learning center and it is used heavily," said Meyerholz Elementary School principal Marjorie Zellner.



NEWS



Photograph by Jacqueline Ramseyer

Arrival: Lise Swain, 8, gets dropped off by Kids Kab driver and owner Liz Marino-Morris. Lise has been a passenger with Kids Kab for three years.

Company picks up, delivers children

Kids Kab helps ease parents' schedules

By CODY KRAATZ

Their boss is breathing down their neck. They have a schedule packed with meetings and business trips. Their child just finished school, and it's only 2:30 p.m.

As Silicon Valley working parents consider how to juggle work and family life, they often ask themselves, "What is my time worth?"

Some parents say they are grateful to have found their answer in Kids Kab, a service that shuttles their loved ones wherever in town they need to go—safely and on time.

"In my case it's a little bit unique. I'm a divorced parent, so sometimes my daughter has to be dropped off at my place and sometimes at her mom's place," said Nari Ramarapu, president and CEO of Wintec Software Corp. in Santa Clara.

Kids Kab has dropped his 9-year-old daughter at his workplace, where a sign-in sheet in the lobby confirms that she arrived safely, Ramarapu said. She has been a Kids Kab client since she was 6.

"It was perfect in that sense. They've been very reliable. I think they're always on time," said Ramarapu, who finds the price definitely a good value for the peace of mind of knowing his daughter is safe and where she needs to be.

"In my case it's worth it because if I had to take off work and go, that time I'm away from work is worth more than \$14," he said.

"A lot of our parents are doctors, lawyers, CEOs and CFOs, and some of them are just regular working parents," said Kids Kab owner Liz Marino-Morris.

Parents such as Ellen Bicht, who starts work at 6 a.m. at Stanford, find Kids Kab very helpful in the mornings, when Marino-Morris said drivers sometimes take kids to breakfast and then school.

"If I have to work till 5:30 and she has soccer practice at 4, there's no way to get her there," said Bicht, whose daughter goes to Hyde Middle School. Knowing her daughter is safe is another big plus for Bicht, who lives in San Jose and is a parent in the Cupertino Union School District.

"When she was younger they would walk her to the door. They would make sure another adult was there," said Bicht. "Basically, I don't have to worry about it."

"A taxi driver would drive up, honk, and

if no one came out, they'd take off," said Marino-Morris. "My drivers are all background-checked, drug-tested, carry first aid and are CPR-certified, and I hire drivers that are good with kids."

With daughters aged 2 and 4, West San Jose resident Lekha Dasgupta said she doesn't know how working parents manage without Kids Kab. She lives near Quito Road, right on the border with Saratoga, and works at the Mountain View-based software firm Synopsys Inc.

Her older daughter will start kindergarten near home, while her younger will still go to preschool at Rainbow Montessori in Sunnyvale, near her mom's workplace.

Her daughters ride from school to their nanny with Kids Kab every day and talk enthusiastically about their drivers, Dasgupta said.

"I know all their drivers personally," said Dasgupta. "The kids love them."

When Marino-Morris bought the company in 2002, there were three vans and the company was operated out of founder Coreen Fujinami's home in Saratoga. Now, there are 10 vans, about 300 kid clients and an office on De Anza Boulevard.

Kab page 9

FEBRUARY 21, 2007 CUPERTINO COURIER 7

NEWS



Photograph by Jacqueline Ramseyer

People Mover: Liz Marino-Morris had a job in the high-tech industry before buying Kids Kab more than four years ago.

Kab

Continued from page 7

When Marino-Morris was interested in buying a small business, she had a choice between a bookstore and Kids Kab. She went with Kids Kab because she loves children, she said.

“When people ask me if I have kids, I say, ‘Yeah, 300 of them!’” said Marino-Morris, who used to volunteer with Big Brothers Big Sisters and was on the board of directors at a Boys and Girls Club.

Marino-Morris came from Albuquerque, N.M., in 1988, lived and worked in high tech in Sunnyvale for 10 years, and now commutes from her home in Milpitas. She and her husband also own Stanford Driving School in Palo Alto.

In March, the Fine Living Channel will feature Kids Kab in an episode of its new series *What’s Your Time Worth?* It was taped in August in Berkeley, starring the child of one of the show’s producers, Marino-Morris said.

Besides picking up kids for busy parents, another big chunk of Kids Kab’s business

is group transportation contracts with Kehilla Jewish High School in Palo Alto, the private Stratford Schools in the South Bay and Morning Star Chinese School in Santa Clara.

In the morning, parents bring their children to a designated meeting spot, where the van loads up the youngsters from that area who are going to one of the private schools. They don’t often pick up children at homes.

The vans are also busy in the early afternoon picking up children from many local schools and taking them to after-school programs or day care.

Ride costs vary. If a child rides three or fewer times per week, each ride costs \$18. For four rides per week, each costs \$16. For five or more rides per week, each costs \$14. For siblings riding together, at the same time and location, the fee is \$11 per ride, and the hourly group rate is \$70.

The drivers use a radio dispatch system to communicate with the main office.

For more information or to download an application, visit Kids Kab’s website at kids-kab.com, email kidskab@sbcglobal.net, or call 408.342.0100.

Planners

Continued from page 1

Piasecki said these are valid concerns that would be taken into consideration when the park is designed.

Rancho Rinconada resident Jennifer Griffin was pleased with the possibility of a new park in the park-deficient neighborhood, but was concerned about security and how the parks would be patrolled.

“I would say security is an issue,” said David Kaneda, the newest planning commissioner, who also felt security would improve when the city takes over the land.

The city is already working to obtain San Jose City Council consent to realign the boundaries, and then will have to get approval from the county’s Local Agency Formation Commission before annexation.

“To me this seems like a no-brainer that we would want to go forward,” said Kaneda.

Sheriff’s Report

The following incidents were culled from reports filed by deputies at the sheriff’s west-side substation.

Terrorist Threats—Feb. 8, 2:10 p.m., Cottonwood and Blackwood drives. One brother threatened to break the other’s jaw and to blow his head off with a shotgun, the victim said. The suspect denied the shotgun threat, and the victim and the boys’ mother did not want prosecution.

Auto Burglary—Feb. 7, 7 to 8:30 p.m., N. Wolfe Road. An unknown person broke windows of three separate rental vehicles at Cupertino Village and stole four laptop computers and other personal items, including an iPod Shuffle, a passport and keys. The total value of the stolen items is about \$8,000.

Auto Burglary—Feb. 6, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., N. Wolfe Road. Someone stole a laptop valued at \$3,400 from a rental car by breaking the windows. Six fingerprints were found.