



IN A Nutshell



No. 177

Newsletter of the City of Walnut Creek

SPRING 2017

MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVANCE

The City will honor those who died in service to our country with a Memorial Day observance on Monday, May 29, at 10 a.m. in Civic Park. The ceremony will include patriotic music by the Walnut Creek Concert Band. More information will be available closer to the event at www.walnut-creek.org.



INTERIM CITY MANAGER NAMED

The City Council appointed Fran Robustelli to serve as Interim City Manager following the departure of Ken Nordhoff. Robustelli joined the City in 2014 as Human Resources Director and was promoted to Assistant City Manager in 2015. The City Council is working with an executive search firm to recruit a new city manager.



JOIN OUR VOLUNTEER DISASTER TEAM

Community Emergency Response Team members play a vital role in the City's ability to respond during emergencies. New members are needed! A 7-week CERT training begins April 5. Learn more: walnut-creek.org/cert.



LOOK INSIDE FOR SUMMER CAMP GUIDE

Summer camp registration opens March 1! Check out the Summer Camp Guide for an array of options.



Walnut Creek Senior Park Maintenance Worker Mark Cabih, center and contractors Larry and Fernando Luna pose with one of the new solar-powered Bigbelly trash and recycle bins.

Bigbelly bins take a bite out of trash

Walnut Creek is the first city in Contra Costa County to install state-of-the-art Bigbelly trash bins. Thirty-five of the advanced dual trash bins were installed in downtown Walnut Creek, completely replacing existing bins.

Bigbelly bins use solar power to compact trash and recyclables. As a result, the bins can hold five times

the amount of trash as a similar-sized traditional bin.

Wireless technology automatically notifies staff when the bins are approaching capacity and need to be emptied. This feature eliminates overflowing litter, which can pollute waterways and entice scavenging animals.

The bins are ADA compliant with both hand- and foot-operated levers.

City Council sets priorities for 2017

The City Council has identified four priorities to focus on in the upcoming year. They are housing; homelessness; updating the economic development strategic plan; and budget management and infrastructure financing.

The priorities were set at a special City Council retreat held Jan. 24. All Council retreats are open to the public.

Already, the Council has set March 7 as the date for a workshop on housing, with affordability and rent stabilization

among the potential topics.

In addition, the Council directed staff to schedule a study session on homelessness in the near future.

Additional details on how the Council will approach each of the priorities were to be discussed at the Feb. 21 City Council meeting, after this edition of the Nutshell went to the printer.

More information about the Council workplan will be posted at walnut-creek.org/government/city-council.

Spring highlights

Check cable listings or walnutcreektv.org for full schedule

Public Meetings

City Council and all Commission meetings are televised live and available on demand at walnut-creek.org/meetings.

State of the City

What's in store for Walnut Creek in the year ahead? Watch the 2017 State of the City report featuring Walnut Creek's mayor and become an informed citizen.

Diablo Ballet

Catch Diablo Ballet's spring performance from the comfort of your living room! Airing after April 1.

High School sports

Las Lomas and Northgate girls and boys basketball teams compete in the "Battle of the Creek." Plus, soccer!

Channel info

Comcast Channel 28 (incorporated WC only), Rossmoor 26, Astound Channel 29, and AT&T U-Verse Channel 99. Or, watch the channel online at walnutcreektv.org.

Find us on Youtube

Go to youtube.com/cityofwalnutcreek for original programs.

First Wednesday street fests are back!

Now that spring is on its way, it's time to celebrate with the First Wednesday street festivals. Head to Cypress Street the first Wednesday of each month, April through October, and enjoy live music, dancing, beverages, food trucks, Kids Fun Zone, fashion shows, interactive games and more, from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. In addition to free admission, parking is free in City garages on Wednesdays starting at 5 p.m.



Renovations at Boundary Oak Clubhouse provide an improved guest experience.

Boundary Oak hosts Fourth Friday Dinners

Fourth Friday dinners at Boundary Oak are the perfect way to check out the renovated Clubhouse. Upcoming events include a St. Patrick's Day themed dinner on March 24 and Fiesta Night on April 28. Cost is \$25.

Fresh paint, remodeled restrooms, new carpet, flooring, and lighting have been added to enhance the guest experience, while a remodel of the kitchen paved the way for more efficient food service.

The golf course has also received upgrades including new sand bunkers, new tee boxes, and additional landscaping. Further improvements are in the works for the downstairs Golfer's Grille.

The improvements are part of a three-year \$3.5 million plan funded by user fees.

For reservations and more information, visit playboundaryoak.com or call 925-934-4775.

Here's what's happening

Walnut Creek Concert Band

The Walnut Creek Concert Band, under the direction of Harvey Benstein, will present "Symphonic Dances," on Tuesday, March 7 at 7:30 p.m. in the Leshner Center for the Arts. There will be a special appearance by Joseph Lulloff, professor of saxophone from Michigan State University (shown above). Tickets are free for students, \$14 for seniors, and \$17 for adults. Call 925-943-7469, or go to lesherartscenter.org.



Spring Family Art Day

Enjoy art-making, springtime crafts, vendors, refreshments, music, demos and more during the Spring Family Art Day, Saturday, May 6 from 10 a.m. to noon. Activities take place at both the Shadelands Art Center and the Civic Park studios. All ages and skill levels welcome at this free morning of fun. Go to communityarts.org.



Chat with City Council members

For a low-key way to connect with City Council members, drop by the Council's Farmers Market booth on Locust Street, most Sundays between 10 a.m. and noon. Parking is free for the first hour at the adjacent Growers Square garage.

Restaurant Week is April 23 - 30

More than two dozen restaurants will serve up specially priced lunch and dinner menus in the 5th annual Restaurant Week. A complete list of participating restaurants is available at walnutcreekdowntown.com.

Center REP, the City's theater company presents:

Sisters Matsumoto

March 31 – April 29

Three sisters discover secrets, lost opportunities, and new beginnings in this charming story of a bittersweet homecoming.

Stockton, California. 1946.

The war is over and American optimism is returning. Also returning are the three Matsumoto sisters - Rose, Grace and Chiz - to their family home, a farm outside of Stockton, to begin their lives again after internment in Arkansas. Successful, prosperous and part of the community before the war, taking up life where they left off proves more complicated than they thought.

Balancing comedy, romance and suspense, this tender and truly heartwarming play tells an important story of what it means to be American.

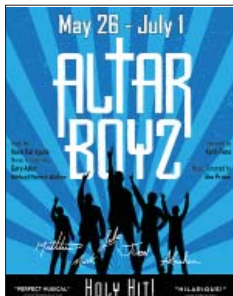


Altar Boyz

May 26 – July 1

Full of sharp parody, sinfully spectacular dancing, and irreverent humor, this spoof about a heavenly guy-group is adored by audiences and critics alike.

With an extraordinary mix of side-splitting songs convincing enough to be played on MTV, uncontrollable laughs and lighthearted fun, this award-winning and totally original new musical is 90 minutes of pure delight that's suitable for all ages and will have the whole family laughing and singing along.



Tickets to both shows are available at lesherartscenter.org or 925-943-7469.



Learn the secret to "Living Life Well" at a special conference for seniors featuring free health screenings and educational presentations.

Senior health symposium on May 31

In conjunction with the National Senior Health and Fitness Day, Walnut Creek Recreation and the Walnut Creek Seniors Club present "Living Life Well." The free event takes place from 9 a.m. to noon Wednesday, May 31 at the Civic Park Community Center.

Healthcare professionals from John Muir Health will present sessions on aging and caregiving.

In addition, a health fair will offer screenings for strength and balance, hearing, memory, blood pressure and more.

While there is no charge for the event, pre-registration is required for both the conference and the health screenings.

For a schedule of events and to register, visit walnutcreekrec.org or call 925-943-5852.

Bedford Gallery highlights



Material Girls: Lynn Aldrich & Sabina Ott

March 23 – June 4

Opening Reception: 6-8 p.m. March 23

"Material Girls" presents the work of Lynn Aldrich (Los Angeles) and Sabina Ott (Chicago), two nationally known artists whose work has had little exposure in the Bay Area. "Material Girls" will focus on the artists' process and capacity to transform familiar materials or objects into artworks that are large-scale, enigmatic and astounding — with a touch of humor.

Public Art Walking Tours

11 a.m. - noon, 3rd Saturday of the month, April – November

Join the Bedford Gallery docents on a walking tour of Walnut Creek's wonderful Public Art collection. Admission is \$5 and includes a free pass to the Bedford Gallery. Tours meet in front of the Leshar Center at 11 a.m.



Lynn Aldrich, "Starting Over: Neo Atlantis" brushes, sponges, scrubbers, scouring pads, gloves, plumbing parts, wood



Sabina Ott, "here and there pink melon joy" polystyrene, mirror, artificial and natural plants, astroturf, foam, clocks, light fixtures

Community connections

Community nonprofits play a vital role in the fabric of Walnut Creek. Here are some current volunteer opportunities.

Creek clean-up set for Saturday, May 13

Join the Friends of the Creeks' annual downtown creek clean-up on Saturday, May 13 from 9 a.m. to noon. Wear old clothes, sneakers, and prepare to get wet! Signed waivers are required for all participants. Please register in advance at friendsofthecreeks.org.

Make a difference by becoming an English tutor

Volunteer to help adults learn to read, write and speak English well enough to function in our society. You can help people to get a better job, apply for citizenship, read to their children ... the possibilities are endless!

The next two-day workshop will be Saturday, March 4 from 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and Saturday, March 11 from 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 4000 Clayton Road, Concord. Adult volunteers typically give one or two hours per week. There is a \$20 registration fee to help with costs.

To register, call the hotline and leave a message at 925-685-3881 or email DVLC4ESL@gmail.com. Registration is also available online under "Volunteer to Tutor" at dvlc4esl.org.

Host families needed

The International Education Center at Diablo Valley College is looking for local families to host international students on a temporary basis while they improve their English skills. All types of families are welcome - single adults, couples, or families with or without children. Short and long-term placements are available. Students already speak a good level of English.

Host families will receive a monthly stipend of \$875 per student, and must provide a private bedroom and two meals per day for the student(s). Please contact Fia Parker, at 925-876-0080 or email fparker@dvc.edu.



Electric fences create movable feast for cattle

The City is using electric fences this season to keep cows in designated, mobile pastures in North Lime Ridge, Shell Ridge and Sugarloaf open spaces, a practice known as "rotational grazing." The fences keep cows off the trails and away from people and dogs, while still giving them space to graze. Although touching the fencing will result in a mild shocking sensation, the fences are not harmful to humans or pets.

Downtown history tours resume in March

Every second Saturday from March through October, the Walnut Creek Historical Society offers an easy 90-minute guided walking tour of the downtown area. This stroll on city sidewalks brings to life the early days of Walnut Creek and reveals parts of our history hiding in plain sight.

The next tours will be on March 11, April 8, and May 13.

These tours are free and depart at 9:30 a.m. from the fountain at Liberty Bell Plaza (corner of Broadway and Mt. Diablo Boulevard). A booklet with historic photos of the sites visited may be purchased at the tour for \$5. Registration in advance is not required.

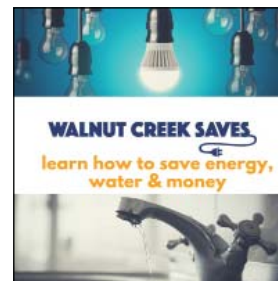
For more details, call 925-935-7871 or visit the Historical Society's website at whistory.com and select Tours.

Energy-saving program comes to Walnut Creek Free in-home consultations, plus internships for teens

Walnut Creek introduces "Walnut Creek Saves," a free community program designed to save residents energy and water and to lower monthly bills.

Through "Walnut Creek Saves," all residents, whether they are homeowners or renters, may sign up for a free home consultation to learn how to save energy, water and money.

The consultation is not a sales call. In addition to getting specific suggestions on how to have a more energy efficient home, participants will receive free efficiency products to jump-start the savings (like LED bulbs and low-flow devices).



In addition, "Walnut Creek Saves" offers free access to the online "The Energy Center," in which participants can calculate how much they can save by making a variety of energy efficiency changes.

"Walnut Creek Saves" also offers paid internships

to local high school students. Details about how to apply are available on the WalnutCreekSaves.org website under "Students."

"Walnut Creek Saves" is offered as a part of the City's efforts to address climate change and reach its sustainability goals.

To sign up for an in-home consultation, or for additional information, call 1-800-314-5997 or visit WalnutCreekSaves.org.

WALNUT CREEK **ARTS**
REC
Volunteer opportunities

Volunteers play a vital role in the success of the City's Arts and Rec programs. Here are some current volunteer opportunities.

Leshar Center for the Arts

*20-35 openings each session
 Next orientation: 7 p.m. March 13
 Recruitment twice per year, centered around orientation dates
 Apply at lesherartscenter.org*

The Leshar Center for the Arts values its wonderful volunteer usher staff. If you are interested in joining this incredible team of ushers please attend the next Prospective Usher Orientation Session on March 13 at 7 p.m. To apply, visit lesherartscenter.org.

Bedford Gallery

*30 openings each for Docent and Guild programs
 Next Volunteer Info Day: 10 a.m. April 18
 Ongoing recruitment. Guild members can join at any time; Docents have mandatory Fall training.
 Apply at bedfordgallery.org*

Reward yourself by becoming a Bedford Gallery volunteer! Through our many volunteer opportunities, you can take part in the behind-the-scenes activities of the gallery as you learn about contemporary art and artists of the Bay Area.

As a volunteer, you can lead tours of the gallery, greet visitors at the front desk, or assist with receptions and special events. For more information, visit bedfordgallery.org and save the date for Volunteer Info Day on April 18 at 10 a.m.

Civic Arts Ed. Foundation seeks new board members

The Friends of Civic Arts Education Foundation is looking for people who are passionate about the arts and arts education to join them in their work of raising funds for scholarships, equipment and programs for Walnut Creek's Center for Community Arts (formerly Civic Arts Education). If you are interested in becoming a Board Member, or would like more information, contact Glynnis Cowdery at gecowdery@gmail.com.



Bedford Gallery Docent Holly Eliot assists students from Cornerstone Family School with an art project during their gallery tour.

Walnut Creek Recreation

*2 openings for each opportunity below
 Ongoing recruitment
 Call 925-943-5852 and request Volunteer Application*

Position Title: Walnut Creek Seniors Club Volunteer Driver

Work Location: Civic Park Community Center

Volunteer Impact: Once a week, drivers will assist with the Walnut Creek Seniors Club Mini Bus service. This service helps seniors throughout Walnut Creek get to appointments, social events, and more. Drivers must have a clean driving record and provide a driver's report from DMV. Shifts are available from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. and from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. on weekdays.

Position Title: Walnut Creek Seniors Club Volunteer Dispatcher

Work Location: Civic Park Community Center

Volunteer Impact: Once a week, volunteer dispatchers help to arrange transportation through the Walnut Creek Seniors Club Mini Bus service. This service helps seniors throughout Walnut Creek get to appointments, social events, and more. Dispatchers must have excellent phone skills and patience. Shifts are 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. weekdays.

Position Title: Walnut Creek Seniors Club Volunteer Receptionist

Work Location: Civic Park Community Center

Volunteer Impact: This position will enable the Walnut Creek Seniors Club to continue to offer senior and social services to the community by answering phone calls and in-person questions about Walnut Creek Seniors Club Drop-in Programs and upcoming activities. The volunteer will also assist in processing senior club annual memberships, selling upcoming event tickets, scheduling social service appointments, and providing a welcoming environment for visitors to the Civic Park Community Center.

Position Title: Pancake Breakfast Volunteer

Work Location: Civic Park Community Center

Volunteer Impact: Help the Walnut Creek Seniors Club to continue to offer the monthly Pancake Breakfast by assisting with set-up/clean-up, food preparation, and/or serving. The monthly Pancake Breakfasts provide a fun weekend social event for seniors and the Walnut Creek community while enhancing fund-raising efforts of the Walnut Creek Seniors Club.

Second units easier to build under new law

New state regulations make it easier for homeowners to add an Accessory Dwelling Unit (also known as second units, in-law units, and granny flats) to their home.

The new rules allow garage conversions and have reduced parking and setback requirements. Additionally, utility fees for water and sewer connections have been greatly reduced.

A building permit is required to build a new Accessory Dwelling Unit, or to legalize an existing unit that was built without permits. Accessory Dwelling Units do not require a public hearing.

For more information, visit walnut-creek.org/adu. Questions? Call the Planner-on-Duty at 925-256-3500 or visit the Permit Center at City Hall (open Monday through Thursday, between 8 a.m. and noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.).

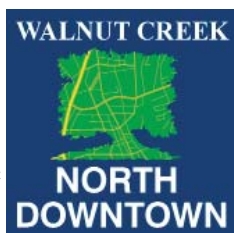
The City is exploring additional changes to the City's Zoning Ordinance to facilitate the construction of Accessory Dwelling Units in order to create more housing in our community. Those interested in participating in this public process should contact Trishia Caguiat, Assistant Planner at 925-943-5899 ext. 2209 or caguiat@walnut-creek.org for more information.

Community workshop on North Downtown plan

A community workshop on the North Downtown Specific Plan will take place the evening of Monday, April 17 at the Civic Park Community Center. (The exact times will be posted at walnut-creek.org/northdowntown.)

North Downtown extends from Civic Drive to Parkside Drive, and from Highway 680 to the Iron Horse Trail. Looking forward 20 years or more, the Specific Plan is being prepared to provide guidance on preferred land uses and transportation links, various improvements, and design guidelines.

To join the North Downtown Specific Plan mail list, and for additional information, go to walnut-creek.org/northdowntown.



A field of their own

The City Council unanimously approved a plan by Carondolet High School to build an athletic complex on the former Valley Vista Club Sport site across from Boundary Oak Golf Course. The privately-funded athletic complex will be used for tennis, softball, soccer, lacrosse and aquatics. Groups with recreation programs will be able to lease the facilities through the school.

Electric vehicle charging stations come to library

Visitors to Walnut Creek's library can now charge their electric car in the library garage. The City installed five chargers to meet the growing demand for electrical vehicle parking spaces. The chargers are offered free of cost and they are available from 6 a.m. to midnight.

The new EV chargers are one of the many measures the city has been pursuing in order to lower its greenhouse gas emissions and advance its Climate Action Plan. With the new additions, the City of Walnut Creek has 35 EV charging stations located throughout downtown.



Take advantage of the EV Connect app to check availability of EV stations before heading downtown, or to get alerts when your vehicle is done charging. before driving to the space. The app is available from the Apple or Google Play store.

Free tax preparation offered in Walnut Creek

Free tax preparation for the 2017 tax season is available from AARP's Tax-Aide and United Way's Earn It, Keep It, Save It (EKS) programs. All tax preparers are trained and certified by the IRS.

While both programs serve taxpayers of any age, Tax-Aide does not have an income limit in whom they can serve, but EKS can only serve individuals whose incomes do not exceed \$50,000.

For information or to make an appointment with the Tax-Aide sites serving the Walnut Creek area, please call: 925-943-5851 for the Walnut Creek Senior

Club site; 925-405-6278 for the Walnut Creek Grace Presbyterian Church site; 925-979-5013 for the St. Paul's Episcopal Church site. For general information and other site locations, call 925-726-3199.

For information on EKS sites call 2-1-1 or visit www.earnitkeepitsaveit.org.

To complete a tax return, Tax-Aide will need the following: Social Security Card or ITIN letter for all individuals to be listed on the return; copies of all W-2s; 1098s and 1099s; other income and deductions; and, 2015 Tax Return.

Mail thefts are on the rise across the country. Here are some tips to protect your mail:

- Use the letter slots inside your Post Office for your mail, or hand it to a letter carrier.
- Pick up your mail promptly after delivery. Don't leave it in your mailbox overnight.
- If you don't receive a check or other valuable mail you're expecting, contact the issuing agency immediately.
- If you change your address, immediately notify your Post Office and anyone with whom you do business via the mail.
- Don't send cash in the mail.
- Tell your Post Office when you'll be out of town, so they can hold your mail until you return.
- Report all suspected mail theft to a Postal Inspector or the Police.
- Conduct regular checks of your credit score and be vigilant for any suspicious activity on your accounts.
- Consider starting a neighborhood watch program. By exchanging work and vacation schedules with trusted neighbors, you can watch each other's mailboxes (as well as homes).
- Consult with your local Postmaster for the most up-to-date regulations on mailboxes, including locked centralized or curbside mailboxes.
- If you see a mail thief at work, or if you believe your mail was stolen, call 911 immediately. If this is an in-progress crime, please gather as much information about the possible suspect(s) and/or vehicles as you can safely do. This includes vehicle description and license plate.

We want to encourage citizens to call us anytime they see suspicious activity in their neighborhoods, to join Nextdoor, and to follow our social media accounts!

www.facebook.com/walnutcreekpd
www.instagram.com/walnutcreekpd/
twitter.com/walnutcreekpd



Public Works to the rescue!

Winter storms hit with a vengeance earlier this year, and Public Works crews responded swiftly to remove downed trees, clear storm drains and fix potholes. Here, Nate Hovland of Public Works works late into the rainy night to ease flooding in the Northgate area.

FEMA to issue new flood maps March 21

Are you in or are you out? FEMA flood map boundaries have changed.

On March 21, FEMA will release flood maps containing new boundaries for flood zones. These maps were updated using state-of-the-art technology as well as the most current flood information and reflect more accurate boundaries for flood zones. Search for your home or business on the maps by visiting www.msc.FEMA.gov.

Living in a flood zone requires flood insurance. If your home or business is now located in a flood zone, it means your risk of flooding is significant and you should talk to your insurance agent about adding flood insurance.

FEMA offers assistance for

homeowners who find themselves newly mapped. Information can be found at www.floodsmart.gov under their Newly Mapped program.

If you previously lived in a flood zone and are now located just outside of it, flood insurance is no longer mandated, but FEMA recommends you keep your flood insurance to mitigate your risk.

It's important to know if the status of your home or business has changed due to the new flood maps.

It's also important to remember that flooding can happen anywhere, even to homes not located in a flood zone. Be aware, and be prepared! Visit www.msc.FEMA.gov to see if the status of your home or business has changed.

Crime rates drop in 2016, statistics show

Crime dropped by 16 percent between 2015 and 2016, according to statistics provided by Police Chief Tim Chaplin. The numbers were compiled using the Unified Crime Reporting data that is provided to the FBI.

Chief Chaplin will be sharing more information about crime statistics and trends, when he presents the Annual WCPD report to the City Council in May.

Some highlights include:

Property crimes: Auto burglaries were down by 30 percent, and residential

burglary dropped by 25 percent. Vehicle thefts remained essentially the same, dropping from 238 to 234. In all, there were 420 fewer incidents of property crime in 2016 than in 2015.

Crimes against persons (violent crimes, including aggravated assault, simple assault and robberies) dropped by 9 percent. In total, there were 32 fewer incidents of violent crime in 2016 than in 2015.

A detailed table with crime statistics is at walnutcreekpd.com.

How can I get in the know about what's happening in the City of Walnut Creek?

Easy!

- 1 Sign up** for updates on the City of Walnut Creek website, walnut-creek.org.*
- 2 Enter your email** address and click the subscribe button. Create a password (optional).
- 3 Subscribe!** Simply select the topics that interest you.

Subscription Topics

- Arts & Recreation news
- Commission Application Interest
- Development
- Environment & Sustainability
- Jobs
- Meeting Agendas
- News
- Requests for Proposals
- Traffic & Roads

- 4** You will be sent a confirmation email.
- 5 News and info delivered directly to you:** When the topics you subscribe to have updates, you'll be sent an email.

Now you are in the know!

*If the sign up box does not appear on the City website homepage, go to walnut-creek.org/subscribe

GRAPHIC BY CHUCK TODD FOR THE CITY OF WALNUT CREEK

1666 North Main Street
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

PRESORTED
STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
WALNUT CREEK CA
PERMIT # 282

ECRWSS

POSTAL CUSTOMER

925-943-5800
www.walnut-creek.org

CITY COUNCIL

Mayor Rich Carlston
Mayor Pro Tem Justin Wedel
Loella Haskew
Cindy Silva
Kevin Wilk

For appointment, call 925-256-3504

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Fran Robustelli, Interim City Manager
Steve Mattas, City Attorney
Suzie Martinez, City Clerk
Ronald Cassano, City Treasurer

Administrative Services
Jeff Mohlenkamp, Director

Arts & Recreation Department
Kevin Safine, Director

Community & Economic Development
Sandra Meyer, Director

Human Resources
Kelly Guertin, Manager

Police Department
Tom Chaplin, Chief of Police

Public Works
Heather Ballenger, Director

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

The Nutshell Newsletter is published quarterly. For questions and comments, contact editor Gayle Vassar, 925-943-5895 or vassar@walnut-creek.org

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

facebook.com/cityofwalnutcreek
twitter.com/walnutcreekgov

Walnut Creek forms partnership with Kita City

Walnut Creek has a new partner on the other side of the globe. In December, the City Council passed a resolution formalizing the City's partnership with Kita City, Japan. The Kita City mayor will be visiting Walnut Creek in April.

Kita City has a long history within the Walnut Creek community. For 17 years, they have participated in a formal student exchange program with The Seven Hills School, and for the last two years they've participated in a summer exchange program with Las Lomas High School students.

This summer, the two cities are partnering on a program for teens. Ten Kita City students, along with local students ages 14-18, will participate in a week-long photography workshop through the City's Center for Community Arts. The program begins Aug. 14; look for registration details in the summer Guide to Arts & Rec.

Kita City is looking for host families for the 10 students. Those interesting in hosting a Kita City student should contact Mihoko Malian, mmalian@comcast.net.