

# Good jobs for good people

## Groundwerx program helps homeless

The holidays this year will be special for **Christina Ruiz**, **Kathryn Wilburn** and **Craig Douglas**.

A year ago, each was homeless, living out of tents and cars. This year, each will celebrate in style with close friends and family:

- ◆ In their own homes.
- ◆ Working for Groundwerx.

They got their jobs as cleaning ambassadors by first joining Downtown Streets Team (DST), a volunteer work program that recruits homeless individuals through peer-to-peer outreach. In exchange for their volunteerism, participants earn basic food and need vouchers, housing assistance and counseling services.

Downtown Streets Team, Groundwerx and the city's Housing Department formed a partnership on July 1 to provide work experience for DST clients. Since then, 19 DST volunteers have worked alongside Groundwerx staff, receiving hands-on training and skills that helped Ruiz, Wilburn, Douglas and five others transition into regular employment.

"The Streets team 'graduates' are excellent new employees," reported **Eric Hon**, Groundwerx operations manager.

"When I got into the pilot program on July 1 and saw how serious Groundwerx was to help me, I got serious, too," said Douglas, 56, a native of upstate New York who has lived day-to-day and on government assistance almost his entire adult life.

"I don't mind working hard and cleaning up," he said, adding that he is proud to wear the Groundwerx orange shirt. "I'm motivated by the people who tell me thanks. I enjoy lending a helping hand, giving people a big smile, telling them 'Good morning,' and offering them directions."

"I'm just trying to make each day better than the last," he added.

A 15-year homeless stint ended when he got into a safe-haven shelter program in September 2013. He joined Downtown Streets Team in January 2014.

On Aug. 19, 2014, Douglas was placed in permanent housing.

"I've never had my own place and responsibilities, bills," he said with a



*Kathryn Wilburn's chores include looking after planters.*



**Craig Douglas**

confident and proud smile. For the holidays, Douglas will spend time with a brother who lives nearby and his family. Beyond that, he's catching up on a lot of TV through Netflix and saving for a car – one that's affordable and gets good mileage. Douglas hasn't owned a car since 1983.

Wilburn is quieter about the major changes that have occurred in her life. Born in Dallas and raised in Massachusetts, she moved to California in 1998, studied early childhood education for three years and worked as a pre-school teacher several years before her situation changed.

She learned about Downtown Streets Team a few years ago while living in a tent.

She volunteered to clean the creeks and neighborhoods before getting her chance with Groundwerx. She still volunteers her services with Streets Team. And, she's back in her former residence.

"Things are going well again," she said. "I really like it here."

The holidays will have a deeper meaning this season, she said. She looks forward to sharing gifts with loved ones at her home.

Ruiz and her two teenage daughters moved to San Jose a decade ago.

In 2012, the computer company for which she worked as a receptionist laid her off. When her unemployment insurance ran out, she became homeless, living out of her car and cleaning up at her sister's home.

In June 2013, while at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, an outreach worker from DST approached Ruiz about the program. She immediately got involved, participating in the creek cleaning programs and working in the kitchen at InnVision.

By July, Downtown Streets Team found her a room in a house she shares with others. She also joined the Groundwerx program. Within two weeks, a paid cleaning ambassador position opened at Groundwerx and she was hired.

Ruiz also continues to give back through DST, working in the computer lab.

"I am extremely thankful for the opportunities provided by Downtown Streets Team and Groundwerx," she said.

She's saving to get into her own apartment, and then possibly a car, she said. This holiday, she plans to spoil her grandchildren, one newborn and the other 3 years old.

Of the 19 team members who have volunteered for Groundwerx, eight have found employment, reported **Brandon Davis**, project manager for Downtown Streets Team in San Jose. "We have had some incredible progress with so many of our folks on the Groundwerx team," Davis said.



**Christina Ruiz**

## Pop-up stores solidify downtown's holiday retail base

Nine temporary "Pop-Up" stores have joined established small business retailers, several museum stores and a few national chains for this holiday season in downtown San Jose.

"It's exciting to see so many new retailers and unique shopping options," said **Nate Echeverria**, SJDA business development manager. "This is an important step towards creating a more dynamic shopping experience downtown, which will be led largely by these small independent retailers."

The Pop-Up Project is mostly clustered in and around the former Repertory Theatre on Paseo de San Antonio. Two of the businesses – The DH Co. and First Article – are set up inside transformed shipping containers. The Pop-Up stores mostly offer casual and more formal apparel, accessories and art – though one provides bicycle repair services.

"Our small-business creative entrepreneurs breathing life into under-utilized downtown storefronts is exactly what downtown San Jose needs," said **Marie Millares**, who brought the SJ MADE Playspace and



*Sam Garcia works Underground at 95 S. Market St.*

The Usuals into the theater lobby. "What better timing than during the bustle of longtime downtown traditions like Christmas in the Park and Downtown Ice."

Since the official opening Nov. 7, the Pop-Up participants have marketed themselves through social media and started a series of promotions. They joined

Circle-A Skateboards, MUJI, Discover San Jose, Brixton Hue salon and style studio, iMiNUSD bike shop, Showroom San Jose, Ay Dios Mio! KALEID Gallery, Seeing Things Gallery, Gift 2 Gab, San Jose Rock Shop, Diaz Men's Wear, Hammer & Lewis and Mosher's Ltd. for Small Business Saturday on Nov. 30.

More promotions are planned, such as weekend trunk shows, a Holiday Bazaar Dec. 6 with up to eight additional pop-up stores at the theater, the Dec. 12 Content Magazine pick-up party, and Holiday SJMADE annual vendor show Dec. 13-14 at San Pedro Square Market.

The Pop-Up Project is a collaboration between the San Jose Downtown Association, PBID, Knight Foundation and several city departments led by the Office of Economic Development, Office of Cultural Affairs and Department of Public Works.

A map of the stores is provided at [sjdowntown.com/popup](http://sjdowntown.com/popup). Stores are open into the evening. The Pop-Up Project is set to end Jan. 15.

downtown

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Year in Review

**Meeting Dec. 12:** San Jose Downtown Association Executive Director **Scott Knies** will summarize downtown 2014 activity at SJDA's last public meeting of the year, Dec. 12 at Camera Cinemas, 201 S. Second St., starting with continental breakfast at 8 a.m. The "Year-in-Review" meeting also includes presentation of Golden Nail Awards for outstanding design and architecture; and comments by board members ending their terms. Please RSVP to **Ellen Lee**, [elee@sjdowntown.com](mailto:elee@sjdowntown.com).

## Downtown for the Holidays (sjdowntown.com/holidays)

Through Dec. 27 – VTA Historic Trolley rides on weekends; vta.org  
Through Jan. 1 – Christmas in the Park, christmasinthepark.com  
Through Jan. 4 – Winter Wonderland, winterwonderlandsj.com  
Dec. 5 – South First Fridays Art Walk, southfirstfridays.com  
Dec. 5-Jan. 17 – HARK! Annual Holiday Show and Sale at KALEID; kaleidgallery.com  
Dec. 6-7 – “Turkish Romance,” California Theatre, 345 S. First St.; symphonysiliconvalley.org  
Dec. 13 – “Carols in the California,” California Theatre, 345 S. First St.; symphonysiliconvalley.org  
Dec. 8 – You-Sing-It “Messiah” sanjosesymphonicchoir.org  
Dec. 12-23 – Season of Hope Cathedral Performance Series; stjosephcathedral.org  
Dec. 13-14 – Big Band Christmas; tabardtheatre.org  
Dec. 14 – TiVo Santa Run Silicon Valley, santarunsv.com  
Dec. 31 – Noon Year’s Eve; cdm.org  
Dec. 31 – New Year’s Eve with Cake; citynationalcivic.com

### Performing Arts:

Through Dec. 7 – San Jose Stage Company: “A Weekend with Pablo Picasso,” 490 S. First St.; thestage.org  
Through Dec. 20 – The Tabard Theatre Co.: “The Best Christmas Pageant Ever,” Theatre on San Pedro Square, 20 N. San Pedro St.; TabardTheatre.org  
Through Dec. 21 – City Lights Theatre Co.: “Truce: A Christmas Wish from the Great War,” 529 S. Second St.; cltc.org  
Dec. 4-28 – Northside Theatre Co.: “A Christmas Carol,” 848 William St.; northsidetheatre.com  
Dec. 5-14 – CMT San Jose: Disney’s “Mary Poppins,” Montgomery Theater, 271 S. Market St.; cmts.org/tickets  
Dec. 13-28 – Ballet San Jose: “The Nutcracker,” Center for the Performing Arts; balletsj.org

## Downtown News

**Downtown high-rises spared fee:** Downtown residential high-rises were exempted for five years from a \$17-per-square-foot housing impact fee to be imposed citywide on new rental projects starting July 1, 2016. By 7-3 vote on Nov. 18, the San Jose City Council approved the fee that will be used to build subsidized, affordable housing in San Jose.

Opponents to the measure said the fee will slow new development and lead to even higher rents in the skyrocketing housing market.

The downtown high-rise exemption sends a strong message to developers that the City wants them to invest and build downtown, said Vice Mayor **Madison Nguyen**, who proposed the exemption along with Councilmember **Sam Liccardo**. Once it became likely the fee was going to pass, the San Jose Downtown Association advocated for a downtown exemption.

A Housing Department study before the vote showed some local cities charge an impact fee of \$28 per square foot to support affordable housing. San Jose Housing Director **Leslye Corsiglia** estimates that since the Redevelopment Agency folded in 2012, the city has fallen 30,000 units behind in its building of affordable housing. In its heyday, the San Jose Redevelopment Agency provided about \$40 million a year for subsidized units.

**Hammer time:** A 10-member advisory committee started meeting Nov. 18 to discuss the future of the former San Jose Repertory Theatre, now called the **Susan and Phil Hammer Theatre Center**.

The committee is expected to take about seven months before making a recommendation regarding the future of the theater.

In early 2015, the City intends to issue a Request for Interest to explore options for future use, said **Kim Walesh**, the deputy city manager and director of economic development. A permanent operator will activate the theater as much as possible; offer programs that meet market/audience demand; have experience in facility operations and management; and be financially stable, Walesh added.

Advisory Committee meetings will be the second Tuesday of each month, 5-7 p.m., in City Hall Council Wing 119. Check sanjoseculture.org.

**Live, work and/or play:** An 8-story, 194-unit residential building on the San Pedro Square parking lot next to Old Spaghetti Factory has been proposed by Mill Creek Residential and designed by Steinberg Architects. The mixed-use building would feature a new paseo that wraps around Peggy Sue’s, Theatre on San Pedro Square, and opens up into a courtyard facing the back patios of the Britannia Arms and new AFK Gamer Lounge. Plans call for razing the building with Satori Tea, San Pedro Bistro and Wine, Los Cubano’s and **Kenneth J. Machado** law offices.

“It’s an unusual in-fill site with different edges and character,” said **Rob Steinberg**, who emphasized the design is “very preliminary” and the development team is still digesting comments from the city’s Planning Department.



### Panda-monium

**San Jose artist Phuong-Mai Bui-Quang updates the panda mural on First Street next to Billy Berk’s. The PBID commissioned Mai’s stylized panda, which is inspired by comic book and Japanese anime. Check pmbq.com.**

The apartments, mostly studio and one-bedroom, would average 850 square feet. With retail possible on three sides, the building will be 165,000 square feet.

Mill Creek Vice President **Dave Fiore** hoped that the project could break ground in early 2016.

Another new project by Barry Swenson Builder proposes 13 three-story live-work townhouses on a half-acre at Fourth and Julian streets.

Barry Swenson Builder would fund the project designed by Studio Current. The flexible live-work concept is modeled after a similar program in San Diego, said **Joshua Burroughs**, BSB development manager. Construction could begin as early as summer 2015.

**Minimum wage up to \$10.30:** The minimum wage will increase to \$10.30 per hour starting Jan. 1, representing a 15-cent bump in pay. Approved by San Jose voters in November 2012, a \$10 minimum wage took effect in March 2013 and increased to \$10.15 on Jan. 1, 2014. The rate hike is based on a 1.6 percent increase in the Consumer Price Index. More information is available at sanjoseca.gov/minimumwage.

### SJDA News

**Public space activation in 2015:** Downtown’s public spaces are being programmed with music, arts and lectures, thanks to an activation program funded by the **John S. and James L. Knight** Foundation.

The Commons, produced by **Drew Clark** of Method 42 Productions, presented classical music and “higher art” performances Nov. 28 on Paseo de San Antonio. That performance featured cellist **Freya Seeburger**. On Fridays in 2015, NoonArts and Lectures plans lunchtime “pocket” concerts, artist interviews, lectures and demonstrations, readings and recitals, rotating among five locations, said **Tom Ingalz** of South Bay Guitar Society. Check NoonArtsAndLectures.org.

And that’s just for starters. SJDA decided to extend its application process and invites artists and producers to apply for grants ranging from up to \$3,500 for exhibits, interactive projects and other original events to \$7,500 for Knight-instigated initiatives: “Dance Across the District” events; “Raise the Bar” lectures, discussions and learning opportunities; “The Big Lunch” community

# Yamaguchi warms up Ice

Former Olympic figure skating champion **Kristi Yamaguchi** was among the first skaters on the rink for the 11th season of Downtown Ice in the Circle of Palms.

“It’s great to be back on the ice,” Yamaguchi said at the opening Nov. 17. “I have skated at many outdoor rinks around the world, but coming back to San Jose with my family is one of my favorite places to skate. With the 32 palms and all the lights, it’s unlike any other rink. We’re so lucky to have this here.”

**Leimomi Hall** of title sponsor Hawaiian Airlines, Mayor **Chuck Reed**, Mayor-elect **Sam Liccardo** and SJDA past president **Art Bernstein** joined Yamaguchi celebrating the rink and Downtown San Jose for the Holidays.

“I think we all can remember the fun of coming to downtown San Jose for the museums, all the attractions and Christmas in the Park when we were children,” Yamaguchi said. “And now we bring our own children here to share the tradition during the holiday season.”

From Dec. 21-Jan. 3, the rink will be open from 11 a.m.-midnight, except for special holiday hours. Early in the month, skaters can take to the ice after work until

9 p.m. Monday-Thursday and until midnight on Friday and Saturday and from noon-9 p.m. on Sunday. Admission covers skate rental and one unlimited session.

The Halo light show on the palms takes place nightly at 6 p.m. and 9 p.m., with LEDs changing colors and patterns in choreography with music.

Details are at sjdowntown.com/downtownice. Call (408) 291-0525 for current conditions.

Downtown Ice is supported by Hawaiian Airlines, Yamaguchi’s Always Dream Foundation, PG&E, PayPal, Barry Swenson Builder, Wells Fargo, EQUUS Commercial real Estate Services, Level (3) Communications, Skanska, Huawei and the City of San Jose.

The rink is also funded by participants of the 5-kilometer TiVo Santa Run Silicon Valley, which will be Dec. 14. Register at santarunsv.com.



The Yamaguchis enjoy a holiday tradition.



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dining that causes neighbors to share trends and interact socially. Make a proposal at psa@sjdowntown.com.

### Business News

**More space for financial planning:** Sequoia Wealth Advisors is expanding its offices for the third time since relocating to downtown San Jose in 2007, said **Kristina Kuprina**, president.

The financial planning firm started its downtown run at 75 E. Santa Clara St. and moved to 99 Almaden Blvd. in July 2011. Twice since then, Sequoia literally knocked down walls of adjoining offices to expand their space. Now with 12 employees, the firm has two conference rooms, 15 offices and five admin spaces. Call 645-2500 or visit sequoiaw.com.

### From the Archives

**25 years ago** – December 1989 – SJDA promoted free holiday parking and 25-cents light rail and bus fares on evenings and weekends.

**20 years ago** – December 1994 – Downtown office buildings set up elaborate holiday displays. Of note: Ten Almaden decorated its trees with 20,000 lights and surrounded them with animated dancing bears; Horizon Center’s 14-foot “tree” made of white azaleas; and Fairmont Plaza’s models of Nutcracker toy soldiers.

**15 years ago** – Dec. 31, 1999 – Police started street closures at 10 p.m. on New Year’s Eve to ensure an

orderly flow of pedestrian traffic, as a preparation for the turn of the century.

**10 years ago** – Dec. 9, 2004 – Hospital Corporation of America closed San Jose Medical Center.

### Downtown Facts

**Giving to San Jose State University:**

Fiscal year 2013-14: \$31 million

2012-13 (Acceleration Campaign for SJSU): \$208 million

Average giving before 2012: \$10 million

Source: San Jose State University

### At the Convention Center

Dec. 3-4 – BIOMEDevice (4,500 estimated attendance) biomedevicesj.mddionline.com

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dimension

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