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# KENSINGTON OUTLOOK

Available Online at [www.KensingtonOutlook.com](http://www.KensingtonOutlook.com)

MARCH 2025

A PUBLICATION OF THE KENSINGTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

VOLUME 83 NUMBER 2



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The sixth iteration of the Colusa Circle 5K run brought rain, but that didn't discourage runners of all ages. Pray for sun but come and run (or walk) no matter what. Photo by Cory Humak.

## Run for Our Watersheds at Colusa Circle 5K

By Rae Quigley

Make a splash in our community by participating in this year's Colusa Circle 5K, the seventh annual community fun run organized by Zip Code East Bay. Set for Saturday, March 15, this year's event supports the Watershed Project, a Richmond-based environmental organization dedicated to protecting and preserving our local watersheds. Starting at 8am at Colusa Circle, runners and walkers of all ages and abilities will follow the scenic sidewalk course through charming Kensington and El Cerrito neighborhoods, all while supporting a vital environmental cause.

Money raised from this year's race will support the Watershed Project's three-year initiative in the Wildcat Creek Watershed, which flows through Berkeley, Albany, Kensington, El Cerrito, San Pablo, and Richmond before reaching the North Richmond shoreline. We all live in a watershed, and we all live downstream from somewhere! Caring for the watershed starts on our front steps and in our backyards. The project's work includes restoration activities, community science initiatives, educational programs, and local advocacy efforts—all aimed at maintaining the health of our creeks and their surrounding environments.

See Watershed, page 5

## Take the KPPCSD Survey Today

By Sarah Gough, KPPCSD board director

I think we can all agree that the world today feels, well, unsettled. Many of us are confounded, overwhelmed, even hopeless, in light of the current national and geopolitical landscape. Yet herein lies the beauty of local government. Locally, you can guarantee your voice will be heard, but only if you speak up.

The truth is, if you want to make an impact, you simply have to engage with community leaders. And we, at the Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District (KPPCSD), have made it really easy for you to do just that by offering a short community survey.

**It's never been more important to connect with your local government—and you still have time!**

The KPPCSD survey shouldn't take more than 10 minutes to complete, and it's a simple way to give us a sense of how we're doing and what matters to you. You can also use the survey to take a meaningful step toward greater involvement in your local government by sharing your email address. If you opt-in to district email notifications, you will always be in the loop about district news, events, and opportunities.

And so, the KPPCSD encourages you

See Survey, page 4

Meet new fire board director Rodney Paul, page 4.  
And get those hazardous plants tamed, page 2.



### Kensington Market Update

<b>JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2024</b> 4 Closed Sales Median List Price: \$1,345,000 Median Sales Price: \$1,613,000 Median Sq. Ft.: 2,186 Median Cost Per Sq. Ft.: \$709 List Price: \$709 Sales Price: \$806 Average Days on Market: 39*	<b>JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2025</b> 4 Closed Sales Median List Price: \$1,197,000 Median Sales Price: \$1,263,000 Median Sq. Ft.: 1,611 Median Cost Per Sq. Ft.: \$751 List Price: \$877 Sales Price: \$877 Average Days on Market: 11
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#### What is the listing price?

The listing price should not be confused with the actual value of a home; it's a powerful marketing tool. Getting this price right is crucial to capturing the attention of both buyers and brokers. The aim is to create competition, generating multiple offers for your property. Remember, homes are not priced based on the latest sale; they're strategically set to attract those offers. The true value of a home lies in what an eager and capable buyer is willing to pay. It's a common misconception that banks determine this value—they do not. Cash buyers or those with no loan or appraisal contingencies are often ready to cover any appraisal shortfalls because they recognize that values are rising, and comparable sales may be limited. Think of the listing price as an invitation to an exclusive event. Imagine how many more guests would flock to your party if it starts at an appealing time, in a stunning venue, and in a prime location. This approach sets the stage for a truly successful event.

\*The two sales in the current analysis that increased the days on the market were unique. The average days on the market for pending sales without unique circumstances in Kensington is 12 days.

Are you thinking about selling your house, wondering about the current market conditions, or interested in discovering your home's value? Don't hesitate to reach out! I offer a complimentary and confidential consultation to help you make informed decisions.



Representing Kensington sellers for 30+ years. Specializing in Trusts and Residential Real Estate. If you are interested in knowing the value of your home or what is required to sell a home in this market, call me. The appointment is confidential and complimentary.  
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## January Police Log

- Jan 1: Officers handled a loud party on Kenilworth Drive; the situation was resolved.
- Jan 3: Hit-and-run collision on Kingston Road.
- Jan 7: Verbal argument on Stratford Road.
- Jan 8: Hit-and-run on Arlington Avenue; suspect vehicle identified via community cameras and located.
- Jan 11: Vehicle tampering on Lake Drive.
- Jan 12: Traffic stop on San Pablo Avenue for non-moving violation; driver arrested for violating court order.
- Jan 13: Suspicious vehicle on Edwin Drive; expired registration, vehicle impounded.
- Jan 13: Petty theft from a vehicle on Edgcroft Road.
- Jan 14: Traffic stop for non-moving violation; unlicensed driver arrested; motorcycle impounded.
- Jan 16: Petty theft on Stanford Avenue.
- Jan 17: Hit-and-run on Arlington Avenue.
- Jan 19: Commercial burglary on Arlington Avenue; suspect identified and arrested.
- Jan 22: Petty theft on Ocean View Avenue.
- Jan 24: Petty theft of vehicle parts on Ardmore Road.
- Jan 26: Fugitive with active warrant arrested on Berkeley Park Blvd.
- Jan 24: Suspicious circumstance at police station.
- Jan 28: Traffic stop on San Pablo Avenue; driver cited for suspended license.
- Jan 29: Grand theft report on Coventry Road; investigation ongoing.

## Kensington and Beyond Update

March 2025



**NEW LISTING | 18 Kerr Avenue**  
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**SOLD | 1646 Aqua Vista Road**  
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**SOLD | 954 Keeler Avenue**  
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**SOLD PRICE: \$2,058,000**  
 To view online visit: 954keeler.com

The small enhancements you make today can yield impressive returns when it comes time to sell.

#### Modern Light Fixtures

Updating old light fixtures with stylish, contemporary designs can transform the atmosphere of any room. Choose fixtures that complement your home's architecture to enhance overall appeal.

#### Elegant Off-White Walls

Opting for neutral tones, especially off-white, not only brightens spaces but also attracts a wider range of buyers, making your home feel more inviting.

#### Sleek New Hardware

Revamping cabinets and doors with trendy hardware adds a touch of sophistication that buyers love—it's the little details that make a big difference.

If you are interested in knowing the value of your home or wish to know what is required to sell a home in this market, call me. The appointment is confidential and complimentary. Consider me your real estate resource.

I have served Kensington and the surrounding areas for over 40 years, specializing in Residential Real Estate and Trust sales. Real Estate has always been my chosen profession.

**Ruth Frassetto, CRS | 510.697.8606 | ruth.frassetto@compass.com | DRE 00779030**



COMPASS

## Apply Now to Remove Hazardous Vegetation

By Johnny Valenzuela, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator

The Kensington Fire Protection District (KFPD) has launched its Hazardous Vegetation Removal Reimbursement grant program, and the community's response has been overwhelmingly positive. With applications already coming in from residents across Kensington, the program is bringing neighbors together with a renewed commitment to wildfire preparedness and home-hardening.

The grant provides up to \$2,000 in reimbursement per parcel for the removal of hazardous vegetation such as juniper, bamboo, and other fire-prone plants. Many residents have already started obtaining quotes from landscapers to take advantage of the funding, and interest in the program has surged following the devastating 2025 Los Angeles wildfires

See [Vegetation](#), page 3

*The Kensington Community Council is dedicated to the improvement, development, and education of the community, and to the promotion of social welfare in Kensington. It enriches the community by providing educational and recreational programs for all ages and by publishing the Outlook, a monthly newsletter that covers local events and issues. KCC also provides a forum for all Kensington community groups to meet and coordinate their respective efforts toward the common good of the community.*

# KENSINGTON OUTLOOK

EDITOR  
LINNEA DUE  
ADVERTISING MANAGER  
ALMA KEY  
PUBLISHER

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**Editorial**.....  
 editor@KensingtonOutlook.com  
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**A P R I L - 2 0 2 5**

## DEADLINES

**Advertising Deadline ❖ MAR. 8**  
**Editorial Deadline ❖ MAR. 10**

*Opinions expressed in Letters to the Editor are those of the writers and do not reflect the opinion of the Outlook, its editor, or the Kensington Community Council. Letters must be signed and include the resident's phone number and address (which will not be printed). Letters 350 words or under will appear in the print edition (space permitting). Any letter over 350 words will be printed in the online edition only. Publication of letters and articles is subject to space and the editor's discretion. Obituaries of Kensington residents are printed without charge. All material must be received by the 10th of the month preceding issue date; submit by email to [editor@kensingtonoutlook.com](mailto:editor@kensingtonoutlook.com). No press releases or PDFs; Word documents or text in the body of an email are acceptable.*

*Use one space, not two, after all periods.*

## Letters to the Editor

### CERT Training Can Help Save Lives

To the Editor:

In my application for the open seat on the Kensington Fire Protection District board, I mentioned my involvement in our area's K6 CERT group. I regularly participate in its meetings and radio drills and have taken the lead in creating a roster of residents on my street, maintaining an email list and using MapYourNeighborhood to record information on each property.

As we address the risks we face from wildfire, earthquake and other threats, strengthening our ties with each other can be very helpful. Having effective communication tools and knowing our neighbors and their needs could prove invaluable in an emergency situation. The loss of life and destruction we've seen in Los Angeles underscores the need to prepare as best we can.

To re-energize Kensington's CERT groups, I want to convene a Zoom meeting of residents who are looking to get more involved as well as those who are currently engaged in disaster preparedness efforts. There is a lot that can be accomplished, and much of it does not require a great deal of time. By sharing best practices and taking advantage of online tools, we can strengthen ties in our community and ready ourselves for whatever lies ahead.

Please email me at [rodneypaul510@gmail.com](mailto:rodneypaul510@gmail.com) for information on this Zoom meeting. While not yet scheduled, I'm aiming to do this in March or early April. If multiple dates are needed, we can certainly do that.

**Rodney Paul, Kensington Fire Protection Board director**

### Blake Garden FAQs

Dear Editor:

I wanted to answer some questions of visitors to Blake Garden—and inform those who don't know about this wonderful sanctuary in Kensington. I hope to be of service to you regarding issues you may have with the University of California Department of Architecture and Environmental Design's Landscape Laboratory "outdoor classroom" located in your neighborhood.

First, coyotes. Yes, we often see coyotes in the garden, they live in many urban areas due to urban sprawl encroaching on their habitat. It is our official policy at the Garden to let them be. Unless a coyote feels threatened or is otherwise "not exhibiting normal behavior," they will run away from you. Coyotes are still active in the mornings as folks arrive to visit the garden. Please be mindful in mornings especially. We have posted signs asking people to keep pets on leash and stay on garden paths. I would encourage folks who visit natural areas to become informed about coyote behavior as a well-informed person is less likely to be fearful of wild creatures.

Second, we often close for major storms. We are not a public park or a public botanical garden, and we are owned by the University of California for the purpose of educating students attending the university and interested members of the public about plants, animals, and our local ecosystems. We also curate our living museum of plants, some rare and many exceptional due to their continued care for over 100 years. Closing is for your safety because of large old trees with dead limbs and steep slopes that get very slippery in heavy rain events.

Occasionally we close for administrative days. As there are only three persons employed at the garden, we close some days to fulfill our obligations as UC employees to attend meetings and training. The garden's new hours are Tues.-Fri., 9am-4pm, closed weekends and Mondays.

I will inform folks of closures using social media (Instagram @ucberkeleyblakegarden), our garden voicemail (510-590-0544) and signs at entrances. For other questions, contact me at [klincoln@berkeley.edu](mailto:klincoln@berkeley.edu). Thanks to all and see you in the garden!

**Kathryn Lincoln, Blake Garden Manager**

### Proportional Balance of Voices

Dear Editor:

For all of my 28 years living in Kensington, I have appreciated the Kensington *Outlook* and read it from cover to cover. It serves a crucial role in informing Kensington residents about all local matters of interest to the community.

But I couldn't help noticing that recently there has been a lot of space in the *Outlook* devoted to one person's point of view. Every single issue from July 2024 to January 2025 has included a lengthy letter to the editor from this person. In the February issue, a flattering two-page article interviewing this same person dominated as well.

Please assure that a proportional balance of voices and opinions are presented to your readers.

**Cassandra Duggan**

Editor's note: The *Outlook* publishes every letter we receive on all topics Kensington, either in print or online, except those that are unsigned or libelous. Please contribute letters to the editor before the 10th of the month. Letters for April are due March 10.

### The "Magnificent 7" Needs You

Dear Editor:

Sadly, I am writing about diminishing public transit at a time when we thought we would, for the sake of our air and climate, rely less and less on automobiles. Now that the phase of surveys, hearings, and comments is over, increased ridership on the AC Transit #7 bus may be the only thing that will get attention. I encourage you to ride "our Kensington bus" over the next several months before AC Transit's Realignment plan goes into effect, originally scheduled for March, now for August 2025.

In my 27 years in Kensington, I have always thought of the #7 bus as one of several Kensington amenities as it traverses the Arlington on its route from BART Del Norte through Berkeley and now to Emeryville. While working I took it to/from Berkeley BART and now retired, often take it to Berkeley or the top of Solano. I find it quite reliable (with an app to check its timing), comfortable, friendly (nearly everyone thanks the bus driver), and it feels very safe. Best of all for me, it alleviates the need to find parking and to navigate downtown Berkeley with all its pedestrians, eScooters, eBikes, double-parkers, etc. It connects to BART and AMTRAK.

The Final Draft Realignment plan (see [www.actransit.org/realign/draft-final#Routes](http://www.actransit.org/realign/draft-final#Routes)) calls for keeping the same extensive hours (6 am to 10 pm) for the #7 bus but reducing its frequency from twice an hour to once per hour. I fear that the reduced service will erode ridership, thus making it a target for elimination should the budgetary constraints get even more severe.

**Beverlee French**



On February 8, Gary Williams and David Yun were among the happy firefighters celebrating the reopening of the fire house on Arlington Avenue. Sparkling sunshine mirrored the expressions on kids and adults as they toured the remodeled facility. There was live music, historic exhibits and treats for all. Photo: Byron Kawaichi

## Second Town Hall on Consolidation

By Daniel Levine, president, Kensington Fire Protection District

The Kensington Fire Protection District and the Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District will hold a joint Town Hall on March 1 at 10am in the Kensington Community Center on the proposal to combine the two districts into one unified district. There will be a presentation on the issues from both boards' committees and the opportunity for the community to give comments and ask questions.

## Aspiring Journalists! Write for the Outlook

High school students: Think you have the chops to cover Kensington? Do you like to discover what makes people tick? Come write for the *Outlook*. You gain valuable experience, meet interesting neighbors, and learn what makes a good lead to a feature article. You can find out what a "nut graph" is—hint, it doesn't involve cashews. [editor@kensingtonoutlook.com](mailto:editor@kensingtonoutlook.com)

## Reorganization Public Hearing Notice

By David Spath, president, KPPCSD

On March 13 at 6pm at the Community Center, the Board of Directors of the Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District (KPPCSD) will hold a public hearing to consider adoption of a resolution of application (resolution) seeking approval from the Contra Costa Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) to provide fire protection and emergency medical services as part of a reorganization of the KPPCSD and the Kensington Fire Protection District (KFPD).

Recently the boards of directors of the KPPCSD and KFPD agreed to combine the two districts through a reorganization process. As a Community Services District, the KPPCSD is authorized under the Government Code to provide multiple services including fire protection and emergency medical services as well as police protection, recreation and park and solid waste collection services while, as a fire district, the KFPD is only authorized to provide fire protection and emergency medical services. The reorganization will result in the dissolution of the KFPD and annexation of the KFPD by the KPPCSD, which after reorganization will be known as the Kensington Community Services District (KCSO). Once the reorganization is approved by LAFCO, the fire protection and emergency medical services responsibilities of the KFPD will be carried out by the KCSO.

At the public hearing, any affected local agency, affected county, or any interested person wishing to appear at the hearing shall be given an opportunity to provide oral or written testimony on the resolution. The draft resolution will be posted on the KPPCSD website at [www.kppcsd.org](http://www.kppcsd.org) at least 72 hours prior to the public hearing, at which time hard copies may also be obtained at the KPPCSD office at 10940 San Pablo Ave, El Cerrito.

### Vegetation

...from Page 2

in Pacific Palisades and Pasadena.

Beyond individual home-hardening efforts, Kensington is also seeing an increase in neighborhood-level wildfire resilience. Since 2023, four Firewise communities have been officially recognized. In 2025 alone, ten more Firewise groups are in development, demonstrating strong local momentum in fire preparedness. Firewise is a national program that empowers communities to take collective action in reducing wildfire risks, working in close coordination with local fire agencies.

To further support homeowners, the Kensington Library hosted a special wildfire preparedness event on February 18. The event connected residents with critical resources for securing funding and assistance for fire safety projects. Speakers from the KFPD, California Fire Safe Council, Diablo Fire Safe Council, and Contra Costa County Fire Protection District provided insights on available grants for defensible space projects. Additionally, representatives from Wildcat Firewise shared firsthand experiences on how these programs have made a tangible impact.

This surge of interest in vegetation removal, home-hardening, and Firewise neighborhood development is a promising sign that Kensington residents are taking wildfire risks seriously. The Hazardous Vegetation Removal Reimbursement grant program is a crucial step in reducing fuel loads around homes, ultimately making the community more resilient against wildfires.

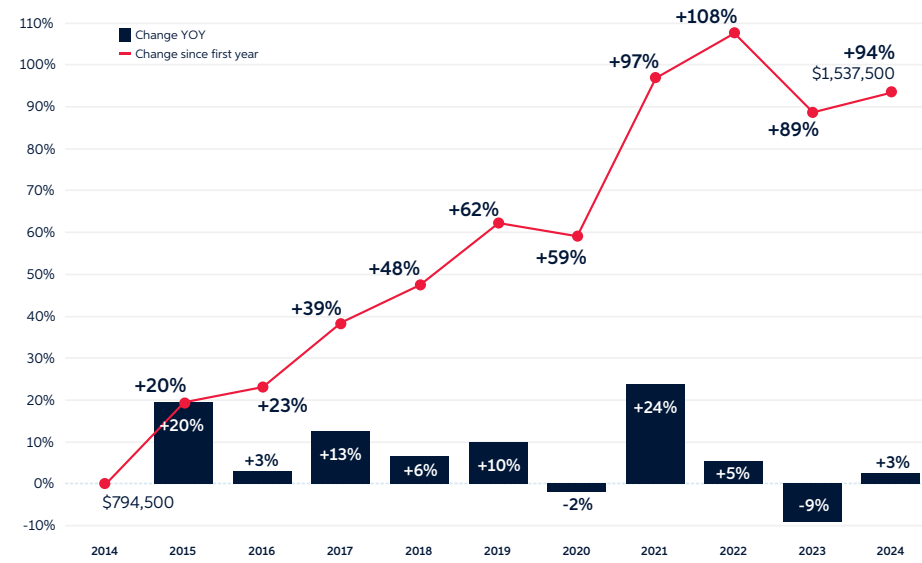
Residents interested in applying for the reimbursement grant can visit [www.kensingtonfire.org/grant](http://www.kensingtonfire.org/grant) for more details. To learn more about forming a Firewise community in Kensington, email [prepare@kensingtonfire.org](mailto:prepare@kensingtonfire.org).



# RED OAK REALTY'S KENSINGTON MARKET UPDATE

Kensington home values have grown at a steady pace over the past decade, nearly doubling in value if purchased as far back as 2014. Demand remains high as buyers are still willing to pay over the list price by an average of 17%, with homes still selling in less than 3 weeks.\*

## KENSINGTON HOME VALUES: 10-YEAR OVERVIEW



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\*Source: MLS, single family homes; 2024

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# New KFPD director Rodney Paul: "It was time to step up."

By Linnea Due

Although 26-year Kensington resident Rodney Paul has been active in many of the "K" groups—KCC, KPOA, KIC—he had never run for or applied to public office. Now he's the newest Kensington Fire Protection District board member, appointed to fill out director Julie Stein's last two years after she resigned at the end of December. "I hadn't been planning on doing this," Paul said in a February interview. "What changed things for me was what I saw happening in L.A. There's no reason it can't happen here. I just felt like it was time to step up and get involved."



Photo by Firoozeh Nourzad

When asked what was the one most important thing Kensington residents could do to improve fire safety, Paul said there are two things he feels most strongly about. "We need to reduce fire risk on our properties by hardening our properties and getting rid of flammable plants, but also, our community is not well designed for evacuating quickly. If you meet someone coming up or down the hill, you have to do this little dance of moving over. If fire engines are going one way and cars another, it's not hard to imagine that going poorly." He thought for a moment. "For me the most important thing is protecting life. Getting people to safety. Some of these wildfires move very quickly. And people think of it coming from Tilden but Cerrito Canyon is also full of fuel."

Paul lives near Colusa Circle, close to the foot of Cerrito Canyon, so it's not strange that he's aware of the danger. But risk spreads across every Kensington neighborhood. "We are all used to living in this beautiful community with our houses close together and our narrow, winding roads. The reality is that we're living in the kind of place that is poorly suited for the situations we find ourselves in with climate change."

Paul and his wife Sarah already endured a major fire in 2021: "We have a property at Lake Tahoe. CalFire identified properties as red, high risk, to green, lower risk. Ours was yellow. We asked what we could do to get to green, and we did all the recommended work of limbing trees, picking up needles, hardening the house. When the Caldor fire came, it actually jumped over our neighborhood. That neighborhood is called Christmas Valley but now people call it Passover Valley."

Rodney and Sarah Paul had their house in Kensington evaluated in the same manner. "We're going to do all the recommendations," he said. "We already have the automatic gas shutoff. We're going to do more house-hardening and remove some vegetation that we spent a fair amount of money putting in. Ultimately, people have to roll up their sleeves and spend some money and some time. Houses are fuel. That's what people have to remember. The fire just goes from house to house."

Paul's background was in IT. But what he really liked about his job was public speaking. "That led me to become a tour guide," he said. Paul works as a guide for a variety of agencies: "the Berkeley Historical Society, SF City Guides, the Giants, art-related programs for Community Living Campaign, and some I do on my own." Many residents have taken part in one of Paul's Kensington paths tours. He's thought about a fire safety tour. "We need to start walking around, start looking at juniper removal, see how our community is preparing."

"I like to speak about things I'm passionate about," he said. "And the way we've done things in the past unfortunately has to change. People say, 'We've always parked our cars in front of our house on Red Flag Days, why do we have to change?' Well, because it could cost people their lives."

Paul is coming to terms with what serving as a fire board director will mean. "One thing I recognized is that I'm not going to sleep as well at night. It's going to be my job to be as best prepared as we can be. We have to set priorities to be effective. I want to cut to the chase and get stuff done. LA teaches us: we can't afford to wait."



At the Fire Station reopening, three youngsters enjoyed a prime seat on the fire engine's running board. Photo by Sacha Kawaichi

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## Survey ...from Front Page

to access the survey any time before March 11 by using the Survey Monkey link (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KPPCSDSurvey>), the KPPCSD website [www.kppcsd.org](https://www.kppcsd.org), or the QR code on fliers displayed at the Arlington and Colusa kiosks and throughout the community. You can even grab a hardcopy of the survey from the Kensington Library! So, please. View this small survey as your launchpad for greater involvement in your local government. Real impact starts here. With you.



## High School Seniors! Photo Date Set

By Jenny Parks, KCC recreation director

Keep the tradition alive! Calling all high school seniors who live(d) in Kensington, or who attended Hilltop Elementary School for all or part of their elementary school years—you are invited to join other alumni for the annual High School Senior Photo scheduled for Sunday, May 4 at 3:30pm. Location: KCC Office/Recreation Building. Come early to catch up with old friends! The photo will appear on the cover of the June *Outlook*.

# KENSINGTON K-9s

It Takes a Village: From Orphaned Newborns to Frisky Pups Ready for Adoption  
By Winston Churchill, Bulldog

Yikes! Who's that chewing on my leg? Hey! Who's that sniffing my rump? I'm on a play date -- and it's puppy pandemonium!

How did I end up surrounded by these adorable, curious, nibbling puppies?

After my furry friend Minnie passed away, her family felt that they still had love and energy to share and wanted to help another rescue dog. When Minnie's mom, Jennifer Ritter, saw a post from Jelly's Place Rescue asking for help bottle-feeding newborns, she volunteered.

Tragically, a litter of five puppies lost their mom in childbirth during the holiday season. Jennifer and her husband, Justin, and daughters, Stella and Beatrice, took on the daunting task of caring for a litter of newborn pups. There was one girl, Noelle, and four boys, Chestnut, Coal, Pippin, and Tinsel.

Thoroughly immersed in puppy-raising, while carrying on with school and work responsibilities, the family endured sleepless nights, exhausting days, and were rewarded with an abundance of puppy love. Without their Frenchie mom keeping them warm and well fed, the fragile newborns required dedicated care around the clock. Initially, the pups needed to be bottle-fed every three to four hours and kept cozy at 75-80 degrees with a heating pad and space heater. Gradually, they transitioned from formula to gruel to kibble. They grew strong enough to regulate their own body temperatures, and the thermostat was lowered. Now, the puppies eat kibble three times per day (5am, 11am, and 6pm), sleep through the night, and are working on potty-training. At the time of this writing, the pups are 10 weeks old and ready for their new homes.

Sadly, the biggest pup in the litter, Tinsel, passed away at six days old. Fortunately, the remaining pups grew stronger and feistier every day. DNA testing revealed they are half French Bulldog and half Small Poodle (miniature or toy).

Pip is the smallest of the litter, sleepy and gentle but energetic at play time. Coal is the most boisterous, always initiating mischief with his siblings. Chestnut is playful with his siblings, but quiet and people-focused, always watching his caregivers with soulful eyes. Noelle is sassy with girl power and the leader of the pack.

Raising a litter of newborn pups is intimidating. And the pups' foster family will admit that it was more exhausting than they anticipated. But as they ready their furry charges for adoption, they know it will be emotionally fulfilling to see the pups going to loving families where they'll continue to thrive.

These rescue puppies were fortunate to be lovingly nurtured in a safe, quiet home instead of a stressful shelter environment. As Jennifer explained, the current state of animal shelters and rescue organizations is bleak. They are overwhelmed with more animals than they can care for. The lives of animals in need would be greatly improved if more people could step up and do something small to help. It benefits the animals tremendously and is rewarding for the humans, as well.

There are many ways to support animal rescues and shelters. Foster homes are in critical need, transporters can help pick up animals from shelters or veterinarians, and volunteers can spend time at shelters playing with kittens, walking dogs, and helping staff keep animals physically and emotionally healthy until they are adopted. Donations of all kinds, from money and time to food and toys to old blankets and towels, are gratefully accepted.

Or just get creative! Beatrice, the foster pups' middle school sister, joined her friends Norah, Laine, Charlotte, Amelie, Phoebe, Caroline, Noa, and Nara—all alums of Kensington Hilltop—in organizing a January 26 fundraiser to support Jelly's Place Rescue. Their sidewalk bake sale on the Arlington raised almost \$900!

If you would like to share your pet's story, please email [KensingtonK9s@yahoo.com](mailto:KensingtonK9s@yahoo.com).

## Watershed ...from Front Page

Mark your calendars, rally your friends and family, and let's run together for a cleaner, healthier community! Secure your spot early at [ColusaCircle5k.org](https://ColusaCircle5k.org) for a discounted rate and join us in supporting this worthy cause. If running isn't your forte, consider lending a hand by volunteering—simply reach out to [hello@zip-codeeastbay.com](mailto:hello@zip-codeeastbay.com) to get involved. Together, we can make a positive impact on our local watersheds.

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# New Game Night at Library

By Yumi Kleckner

Enjoy free programs offered by the Kensington Library at 61 Arlington Avenue. Call 510-524-3043 with questions. Thank you to the Friends of Kensington Library for making library programs possible.

**Tues, March 4, 6:30pm Friends of the Kensington Library** Friends of the Kensington Library, a 501c (3) nonprofit organization, has worked to improve and financially support library services in Kensington since 1959. Open to all Kensington residents.

**Tues, March 4, 6:30pm Castoff's Knitting Club** Meets on the 1st Tuesday of each month. Open to all levels of knitters. Bring your own yarn!

**Tuesdays, March 4, 18, 25, 6:30pm Family Storytime** Lots of picture books, songs, rhymes, and fun! Stuffed animals & pajamas welcome.

**Tues, March 11, 6:30pm Family Game Night** Come join us at the Kensington Library for a family game night. We will have a fun selection of kid-friendly games available along with staff who can explain the rules for anyone who is a bit rusty. Games will be geared for the elementary school crowd, but we will have a few games available for older patrons.

**Thurs, March 20, 2-5pm Cloth Produce Bag Sewing Circle** Join the Kensington Seamsters Union, local 94707 in transforming donated natural fiber fabric into bags, to be given out for free at the Kensington Farmers Market. We need you to help measure, cut, iron, sew and thread drawstrings, and create community.

**Tues, March 25, 6:15pm Kensington Library Book Club** The club meets online via Zoom, usually on the fourth Tuesday. The selection for March is *The Blind Man's Garden* by Nadeem Aslam.

**Tues, March 25, Read to a Dog** Join us and a licensed therapy dog for a 15-minute reading session every fourth Tuesday afternoon, 3-4pm. Same day, drop in sign up starts 15 minutes before the read session.

**Sat, March 29, 2pm, Yesteryears: A Golden State History Book Club** In partnership with the library, the El Cerrito Historical Society has launched Yesteryears, a book club about the Golden State's past. At our March meeting, we'll be discussing *Harem Scarem in El Cerrito: The Life of a Little Girl Growing Up in El Cerrito* by Neva Calvert Carpen-ter.

**March 2025, Little Free Garden & Seed library** The Kensington Library seed library is always being restocked with free seeds of seasonal varieties. We also host the "Little Free Garden" table where anyone can donate or take cuttings, houseplants, crop harvests, bulbs, and garden supplies!

**Art Exhibit** First half of March: Artwork by students of Amy Zheng: meiyunart.com  
Second half of March: Artwork by Duane Conliffe: www.defoto.co, satellite show of "Art of the African Diaspora," in partnership with the Richmond Art Center.

## Kensington Community Council Annual Fund Drive Donors

KCC thanks you for your generous donation. It is never too late to donate, go to www.KensingtonCommunityCouncil.org/Support-KCC or send a check to KCC, 59 Arlington Ave., Kensington, CA 94707

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Time to enroll your child for a week or a summer at the KCC Summer Camp. See page 8 for details.

## New Baby? Just Moved to the 'Hood?

The *Outlook* publishes snippets of news about weddings, births, graduations, moves, and more in Neighborhood Notes (150 words maximum). Obituaries are published without charge (250 words max; include a jpg of the person at any age). Please prioritize Kensington connections. Send to editor@kensingtonoutlook.com

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# Kensington Community Education

Photo: Isi martinez/Unsplash

## Join Us for an Unforgettable Summer at KCC Camp!

Get ready for another summer of adventure, creativity, and fun at KCC Summer Camp! Nestled in the heart of Kensington Park, our camp offers an engaging and dynamic experience for children entering 1st through 6th grade in Fall 2025.

Each week, campers will enjoy a full day of activities from 9 AM to 4 PM, with exciting team games, arts & crafts, dance, sports, Olympic-themed challenges, cooking, tennis, and more. Campers are placed in small, age-based groups to foster friendships and teamwork. Our dedicated staff will guide daily activities, from hands-on crafts to cooking sessions in the community center's kitchen and outdoor BBQ.

With a welcoming and supportive environment, KCC Camp is the perfect place for kids to build new skills, make lasting memories, and have an amazing summer. Don't miss out—come join the fun!

## KCC Summer Camp Activities & Schedule

**KCC SUMMER CAMP 2025**  
\$425 Kensington Resident/\$470 Nonresident per week  
We have added some field trips this year. Check out weeks 2, 6 & 8

**Week 1 \*June 16- June 20** (no camp Thursday 6/19) \*cost \$350/\$385  
Theme: Rainbows and Magic Specialty: Fun w/ Food Creations  
Mid-Week Activity: Brian Scott Magic

**Week 2 June 23 – June 27**  
Theme: Creative Re-use & Recycle Specialty: Carpentry  
Field Trip: Adventure Playground

**Week 3 \*June 30– July 3** (no camp Friday 7/4) \*cost is \$350/\$385  
Theme: Stars & Stripes Specialty: Cooking around the World

**Week 4 July 7- July 11**  
Theme: Enchanted Forest Specialty: Creative Art w/ April Schlanger  
Mid-Week Activity: Fur, Tails & Scales

**Week 5 July 14 – July 18**  
Theme: Under the Sea Specialty: Sports & Games  
Mid-Week Activity: Visit to Blake Gardens

**Week 6 July 21 - July 25**  
Theme: Space Odyssey Specialty: Out of this World Cooking  
Field Trip: Lawrence Hall of Science

**Week 7 July 28 – August 1**  
Theme: Olympic Week Specialty: Team Olympics

**Week 8 August 4 - August 8**  
Theme: Animal Adventures Specialty: Cooking w/ April Schlanger  
Field Trip: Oakland Zoo

**Week 9 August 11 - August 15**  
Theme: Endless Summer Specialty: Field Games  
Mid-Week Activity: Sterling the Bubblesmith

**Online Camp Registration opens February 25th at 7:00pm**



## Summer Camp Counselor Opportunity

We have openings for summer camp counselors. If you are a senior in high school or older, enjoy working with children, and want to be part of a fun, energetic team, please download an application at KensingtonCommunityCouncil.org/Summer-Camp

## KASEP: Kensington After School Program

**KASEP**  
Spring KASEP Registration opens on Tuesday, March 4th at 7pm for TK & Kindergarten and 7:30 for grades 1-6. You can find our full list of classes on our website as well as a link to register for classes.

### Important dates

- Summer Camp Registration February 25th
- Spring KASEP Registration March 4th
- Spring KASEP session begins March 17th
- HS Senior Photo Date May 4th @3:30pm

## Spring Schedule for Adult and Family Classes

### Slim Chance Circus School - All-Ages Unicycle and Juggling Class

**When:** Thursday evenings, 6:00 PM - 7:15 PM

**Where:** Recreation Building Classroom A (Kensington Park near the flat upper lawn)

**Cost:** \$20 per person (drop-in). Family discounts available!

### Family Yoga in the Park with Lori Hess

Family Yoga will take place on rotating weekend days @ 10:00-10:45 (kids aged 2 to 5) on the grassy lawn outside the KCC Office/Recreation Building (past the tennis courts). If possible, please bring a waterproof blanket/tarp, two yoga mats (we will have extra mats available), warm layers, and a water bottle. Spring dates: Saturday 3/1, Sunday 3/23, Saturday 4/5, Sunday 4/13, Saturday 4/19 and Sunday 4/27. Suggested cost: \$25 per class; Please contact Lori Hess waytoglowkidsyoga@gmail.com with questions about the class.

### Dance into spring with a free Cardio Dance class Friday, March 21st 11:30-12:30

Karma Smart is a passionate dance instructor specializing in Afro-Dance Cardio, blending vibrant dance styles from the African Diaspora, including West African, Congolese, Afro-Beats, and samba. With decades of experience as a performer and teacher, she brings high-energy, rhythmic movement to her classes, creating an inclusive and uplifting fitness experience. She currently teaches at the Shawl-Anderson Dance Center, The Dance Floor, Cedar Rose Park and The Kensington Community Center.



The Kensington Outlook can now be found at: KensingtonOutlook.com Archive copies can also be found on our website dating back to 2003.

KCC/KASEP Office: 59 Arlington Ave., Recreation Building Kensington CA 94707  
E-mail: Info@KensingtonCommunityCouncil.org, or call 510-525-0292.  
Our website is: www.kensingtoncommunitycouncil.org.

### Cardio Dance with Karma Smart

Fridays 11:30am-12:30  
Community Center

Cost \$15 drop in or register online

### Tai Chi with Nobuo Nishi

Wednesdays & Fridays from 9:30-11:00am  
Drop-in fee is \$15

### Yoga with Anja Borgstrom

**Strength & Balance Yoga** -Tuesdays at 8:30am

**Gentle Yoga** - Thursdays at 11:30

Cost is \$20 drop in or register online Register at KensingtonCommunityCouncil.org/adult-and-family-classes

Follow us on Instagram @KensingtonCommunityCouncil





# KENSINGTON EATS OUT

Coffee, Cheese, and the American Dream  
By Ittai Shiu

Enjoying a great meal doesn't always mean dining out. Sharing something special with friends and family in the comfort of your own home can be just as delightful as any upscale restaurant experience. When hosting, a visit to a local specialty store can elevate the occasion—whether you're picking up a unique cheese for a charcuterie board, fresh spices for an adventurous new recipe, or a decadent dessert for a special treat.

For those familiar with the historic Kensington corner of Arlington and Amherst, Raxakoul Coffee & Cheese has been a beloved staple for over a decade. Originally home to the Rexall Pharmacy, this location has a rich history. Before it became Raxakoul Coffee & Cheese, it was known as the Country Cheese Company, where Laotian immigrant Khamyong Raxakoul began working as a stocker in 1986. Pursuing the American dream, her family saved enough to purchase the store in 1992, and Raxakoul Coffee & Cheese was born.



The Raxakoul family pose in front of their Arlington store. From left, Marie, Khamyong, and Phengkiao

Now run by the next generation, siblings Pete and Marie Raxakoul, the family has become experts in everything from coffee and cheese to tea and wine. With locations in both Berkeley and Kensington, they carefully curate a selection of gourmet delights, ensuring each store remains well-stocked with the high-quality products their customers love.

Their home-roasted coffee beans are available exclusively at their retail locations and online, and they ship to loyal customers nationwide. If you prefer your drinks on the



run, their full coffee bar offers expertly crafted espressos, Americanos, and the like.

Working with trusted vendors, some of whom they've partnered with for decades, Raxakoul purchases large cheese blocks—up to 50 pounds—and cuts them into smaller portions to keep their exceptional selection accessible and affordable.

Their shelves feature international selections like Parisian cheeses, Italian prosciuttos, and Spanish sausages, while their commitment to locally sourced products is evident. You'll find salami from Monte Pollino in Healdsburg, Judy's Breadsticks from Mill Valley, macarons from L'Artisan in San Francisco, and cookies from Berkeley-based Yvonne's Delights. With an impressive range of both international and local products, Raxakoul has earned a reputation as the

ultimate destination for gourmet snacks.

Although Khamyong Raxakoul is no longer involved in daily operations, she and her husband Phengkiao Raxakoul remain active in the Laotian community, sharing their



experience and insights as business leaders at events across the U.S. This spirit of engagement continues to define the Raxakoul family's mission.

At the height of the pandemic, the family delivered food to senior citizens during shelter-in-place. These days, they donate their time and energy to school events like readathons and fundraising for local sports teams. The Raxakouls express a profound respect, love, and appreciation for their community. Next time you're in the neighborhood, spend a few moments enjoying the art, photos, and countless examples in every corner of the store that showcases how the community reciprocates those feelings.

A final thought: always be careful navigating the intersection at Arlington and Amherst, especially on Friday afternoons. Hilltop students will tell you that Raxakoul's is a traditional end-of-week hangout because it has the best boba tea in town!

Raxakoul Coffee & Cheese, 299 Arlington Ave., Kensington, (510) 647-8330

## Experience the Ultimate Summer Adventure at KCC Summer Camp

By Jenny Parks, KCC recreation director

Join us for another exciting summer at KCC Summer Camp, where kids can explore the outdoors, engage in thrilling team games, and dive into arts & crafts, dance, sports, Olympic Week, cooking, tennis, and more! Located at Kensington Park, the Community Center, and the Recreation Building, KCC Camp offers an action-packed day from 9am-4pm, creating unforgettable memories for campers entering 1st through 6th grade in Fall 2025.

Campers are placed in small, age-based pods of 12-15, ensuring a supportive and fun environment where they can build friendships and discover new interests. Each day kicks off with a craft or guided activity, followed by outdoor cooking adventures, weekly tennis instruction, and a variety of sports and games led by our enthusiastic, well-trained counselors.

You can enroll by the week or for the entire summer, making it easy to fit camp into your summer plans. This year, we're excited to bring back field trips, adding even more adventure and exploration to the camp experience.

Get ready for a summer of fun, creativity, and adventure at KCC Summer Camp! Sign up at <https://kensingtoncommunitycouncil.org/summer-camp/>

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