



Valley Voice Free

Serving Madison, Esparto, Capay, Brooks, Guinda and Rumsey

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 2
Esparto, CA 95627

February 2026

Postal customer
Esparto CA 95627

Elijah Steiner Selected to Join California's Statewide Student Advisory Board for Community Schools

Elijah Steiner, a junior at Esparto High School, has been selected to serve on California's Statewide Student Advisory Board (SSA) for Community Schools, an honor that reflects both his leadership strengths and the state's commitment to elevating student voice in education.

Elijah was chosen for his thoughtfulness, steady presence, and ability to connect action with purpose. During his interview, he emphasized teamwork, clear communication, and accountability as essential to creating meaningful change. He also demonstrated strong self-reflection, expressing confidence in his strengths while being honest about areas he wants to improve, showing initiative and a commitment to growth.



Grounded in collaboration and empathy, Elijah believes lasting progress begins with stronger relationships within schools and across communities. He spoke about building trust between students, staff, and families to create a culture of understanding and shared responsibility. Known for being organized, curious, and reliable, Elijah brings a leadership style others can depend on, one that prioritizes listening, follow-through, and collective problem-solving.

Elijah joins a diverse fourth cohort of students selected through a carefully curated process designed to ensure representation, inclusivity, and high standards. The SSA Board was built with a rigorous, replicable structure to support engagement, critical analysis, growth, and community-based learning, preparing students to contribute meaningfully to statewide conversations.

California's SSA for Community Schools, launched by the State Transformational Assistance Center (S-TAC), exists to strengthen youth agency, equity, and authentic partnerships, positioning students as collaborators who can influence policy and improve education for diverse learners. Alongside other student-led efforts, such as the Student Advisory Board on Education (SABE), these initiatives empower students to propose solutions directly to education leaders.

As Elijah steps into this role, his forward-thinking ideas and collaborative approach will bring depth and focus to the SSA Board's work, helping to advance equitable, student-driven change across California's Community Schools initiative.

Submitted by Sherrie Vann

VALLEY VOICE AD RATES

CLASSIFIED ADS

25 WORDS FOR \$10

DISPLAY ADS

Business-card size: \$25/month

1/4 page: \$50/month

1/2 page: \$100/month

Full page: \$200/month

For more info, and yearly discounts email ValleyVoice@riseinc.org

The Valley Voice

P.O. Box 133

Esparto, CA 95627

For article inquires, email Yessennia Galvan, Editor,
at ValleyVoice@riseinc.org.

For billing inquiries or ad rates, call (530) 787-4110 ext 237.

All articles and **payments** are **due on or before the 15th of each month**.

*We reserve the right to edit articles at our discretion,
due to space limitations and other criteria.*

**The Valley Voice is published monthly in partnership with Yocha Dehe
Wintun Nation, RISE Inc., & Esparto Unified School District.**

Valley Voice Subscription Form

Let all your friends and relatives know that for just \$25 per year we will mail them each month's edition! This is the perfect way to keep up with all the Capay Valley news and events.

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____

Please Select : One Year: \$25.00 (12 editions)

Two Years: \$50.00 (24 editions)

Please make checks payable to RISE Inc., Mail to RISE Inc. at
P.O. Box 133 Esparto, CA 95627 or bring it into our office (17340 Yolo Ave.)



Capay Valley Almond Queen Pageant

The time has come to celebrate a handful of incredibly talented young women in the Esparto and Capay Valley community. This year, 6 brave young ladies will compete for the title of 2026 Capay Valley Almond Queen. The pageant will be held on Saturday, February 14th at the Western Yolo Grange Hall in Guinda at 6:00pm. Tickets for the dinner can be purchased online via the Esparto Chamber of Commerce Website. The purchasing link will also be available on the Almond Queen Association and Esparto Watch facebook pages.

Tickets are \$30/ adult and \$15/ children under 12 and Seniors 85 and older. The dinner will include marinated chicken, buttery mashed potatoes, macaroni and cheese, roasted vegetables, tossed salad, and rolls. Dessert will be a choice of chocolate or vanilla cake.

Thank you to our Sponsors: Road Trip Bar & Grill, BZ Bee at the "Platinum" level (\$2000+), Head Spa by Harlee, Cork & Co, Substation Solutions at the "Bronze" level (\$250+), Nitysh Mercado, El Toro Meat Market, DSA Bees, Kaleidoscope Salon by Liz, Cork & Co, and Mariani Nut Company (\$150). Not all Sponsors were available at the time of publication. If you are interested in sponsoring the pageant, please contact event coordinators, Harlee Grant & Cynna McAllister by February 6th at almondqueenassociation@gmail.com.

This year's pool of qualified candidates includes athletes, scholars, leaders, and community-oriented seniors. Join the entire Capay Valley in honoring these remarkable young women and celebrating this important community tradition.





Casara Pineda is the daughter of Nitysh Mercado and the sister of Victoria Mercado. She has been actively involved in her school and community throughout high school, participating in Associated Student Body all four years and serving as class president for two terms. Casara was also a member of Link Crew, where she helped mentor younger students, and joined Spanish Club this year, earning the position of treasurer. She participated in Puente, a college success program that allowed her to tour colleges and learn about Hispanic culture, and served as a class representative for two years. Casara has played softball since the age of six and has volunteered through the organization, as well as at church events and a local retirement home. Her achievements include recognition through Puente and being on the honor roll since eighth grade. After graduation, Casara plans to attend college and pursue a degree in science with the goal of entering radiology or orthodontics. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, watercolor painting, playing volleyball and softball, upcycling, baking, camping, journaling, and trying new creative outlets. Casara is participating in this pageant to become more involved in her community and to celebrate the traditions of the Almond Festival.

Thank you to Casara's Sponsor: Nitysh Mercado



Chloe Camargo is the daughter of Kaylee Wiskur and Clayton Wiskur. She is actively involved at Esparto High School and is participating in the Almond Festival Queen Pageant as a way to step outside of her comfort zone and become more involved in her community. Chloe values personal growth and has embraced opportunities that challenge her to try new experiences beyond what she has previously done during her high school years. In her spare time, Chloe enjoys reading, writing, diamond painting, and participating in hands-on learning experiences. She has a strong interest in creative and thoughtful activities that allow her to express herself and continue learning in new ways. As a senior, Chloe decided to participate in this pageant to push herself, create new memories, and take part in a tradition she has long admired. She is excited for the opportunity to grow, gain confidence, and celebrate the Almond Festival alongside her community.

Thank you to Chloe's Sponsor: El Toro Meat Market



Diana Lucero is the daughter of Antonio Lucero Chavez and Ana Laura Chavez, and the sister of Samantha and Alexa. She has been highly involved in her school and community, serving as President of the Spanish Club and President of the MAD's Club, which focuses on music, art, and drama. Diana is a member of the volleyball team, the National Honor Society, and actively volunteers through her church organization. She is also involved in beekeeping with DSA Bees, reflecting her strong connection to agriculture and community service. Her achievements include Honor Roll recognition, Spartan of the Month, Perfect Attendance, and multiple honors for leadership and citizenship. Diana has received the Congressional Certificate of Recognition for Outstanding Student Achievement and Leadership, the Concilio of Yolo County's 2025 High School Scholarship Award, the California State Legislature Certificate of Recognition through the Concilio of Yolo County, and the American Legion Citation of Good Citizenship. After graduation, Diana plans to attend a CSU or UC and pursue a major in either law or a STEM-related field. She hopes to build a career where she can make a meaningful difference through advocacy, innovation, and service. In her free time, Diana enjoys art, digital editing, baking, spending time with family and friends, and exploring new creative outlets. She is participating in this pageant to give back to her community and proudly represent the unity, kindness, and pride that make it so special.

Thank you to Diana's Sponsor: DSA Bees



Kamila Moreno is the daughter of Liz and Salvador Moreno and the sister of Juan Pablo Moreno. She has been deeply involved in her school and community throughout high school, participating in FFA for four years and raising an animal for the Yolo County Fair. Kamila has volunteered with the FFA Almond Festival Pancake Breakfast and has been an active member of Associated Student Body all four years. She has served as a class officer each year, beginning as treasurer her freshman year and serving as class president her sophomore, junior, and senior years, including holding the role of ASB president. Kamila has also helped with the community Christmas tree lighting, assisted with pumpkin bin distribution around town, and supported the football team as a water girl for the past two years. Her achievements include competing in FFA opening and closing ceremonies, earning the Outstanding Freshman Award, and receiving the AA Ace Award through volleyball. After graduation, Kamila plans to attend a four-year college to study animal science with the goal of becoming a livestock manager, while also pursuing coursework to become a licensed nail technician. In her spare time, she enjoys doing nails, raising livestock through FFA, and occasionally working with her mom doing makeup. Kamila is participating in this pageant to represent her community, demonstrate responsibility and leadership, and help support her future educational goals while celebrating the traditions of the Almond Festival.

Thank you to Kamila's Sponsor: Kaleidoscope Salon by Liz



Makenzie Karlstad is the daughter of Ashley and Marcus Karlstad and the sister of Marcus Karlstad Jr. She has been actively involved in her school and community, participating in National Honor Society, sports, the Journalism Club, and the FCCLA Club. In previous years, Makenzie also served as an officer for the JCOC and hopes to help revive the club this year. She has been involved in FFA and has participated in opening and closing ceremonies, demonstrating her dedication to leadership and teamwork. Her achievements include earning first place in the Yolo County Impromptu Public Speaking Contest during her sophomore year, as well as receiving awards for FFA opening and closing ceremonies, including Star President and a gold team award. Makenzie was also recognized as Defensive MVP in basketball and received the "Most Spirit" award in cheer during her junior year. After graduation, she plans to attend a community college and transfer to complete a bachelor's degree in psychology. Makenzie hopes to continue supporting her small town wherever she goes and remain closely connected to her community. In her free time, she enjoys dancing, cooking, reading, and spending time with family and friends. She is participating in this pageant to honor a valley tradition, challenge herself, and proudly represent the community she loves.

Thank you to Makenzie's Sponsor: Cork & Co



Riley Valle is the daughter of Jenny Dutton and the sister of Casie Valle. She has been actively involved in agriculture and leadership through FFA and 4-H, where she has held multiple officer positions and participated in a variety of agricultural projects. Riley has also been involved in volleyball, softball, and cheer, and has volunteered at community events including the Elk Lodge Dinner and the annual Spaghetti Feed. Her achievements include serving as a 4-H officer, holding leadership roles in FFA, being named FFA Sweetheart her sophomore year, and receiving recognition as the Most Coachable volleyball player and Most Dedicated softball player. After graduation, Riley plans to attend Butte Community College before transferring to Chico State to pursue a degree in agricultural education. Her goal is to return to Esparto as an agriculture teacher and give back to the community that has supported her. Riley is participating in this pageant to honor a valley tradition and proudly represent her community. In her free time, Riley enjoys dancing, cooking, reading, working with animals, camping, fishing, and spending time with family and friends. She is participating in this pageant to honor a long-standing valley tradition, celebrate her family's legacy within the Almond Queen Pageant, and proudly represent the community she has grown up loving.

Thank you to Riley's Sponsor: Mariani Nut Company

Seasonal Recipes

Using ingredients sourced from the Capay Valley
From the kitchen of Pamela Bateman

Buttery Leek Pinwheels



1 Flatbread - Traditional Lavash
2 Tablespoons Butter
1/3 cup finely chopped Leeks
Pinch of salt
3 tablespoons grated Parmesan or Pecorino cheese

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Melt butter in skillet over medium heat and add the chopped leeks and salt. Cook, stirring until leeks begin to soften. Remove from heat. On a chopping board lay out the flatbread and spoon the leeks and butter over the surface of the bread then sprinkle with cheese. Starting from the short side roll up the bread and slice it into approximately 1/2" pinwheels. Place pinwheels on baking sheet and bake in the oven until they start to brown which should take about 5 to 10 minutes. Remove from the oven and serve. These pinwheels make a tasty hors d'oeuvre much like a puff pastry and are best served warm. Makes 12 to 15 pinwheels.

*Note

You can find flatbread at most grocery stores in the bread section. I use Atoria's Traditional Lavash. They come in a package of 5 flatbreads. The above recipe is for 1 flatbread. If you are serving many people increase the filling to cover as many flatbreads as you think you will need. You can find a description of this bread online at atoriasfamilybakery.com

Capay Valley Flora, Fauna and Farms Capay Valley Regeneration

By Pamela Bateman

Red Maids Wildflowers



Springtime comes early to the mild climate of the Capay Valley. Native wildflowers begin blooming in February and sometimes earlier. One of our very showy wildflowers is called Red Maids, *Calandrinia menziesii*, an annual found in grasslands, disturbed areas and along trails and roads. Growing throughout the Pacific region this plant is a spreading annual herb that grows to about sixteen inches high with five bright pink to magenta petals with a white center and bright yellow anthers. The flowers are photoneustic meaning they respond to light closing up without sunlight or when skies are cloudy. They are an important nectar source for bees and the seeds are eaten by birds, insects and small mammals.

Red Maids is a myrmecochorous plant meaning that the seeds have an extra part on them that attracts ants. Myrmecochory is a plant's way of dispersing seed throughout the landscape. The ants carry the seed back to their nest to consume the elaiosome, the fleshy structure attached to the seed, yet leave the seed within or deposited just outside of the nest. Myrmecochory gives the plant several advantages namely seed dispersal, reduction of seed consumption by rodents, placement of seeds in fertile areas around the ant nest and fire protection in fire-prone landscapes as the seeds are carried underground. Since the seeds have been removed from the area right next to the mother plant they also will have less seedling competition when they germinate. The process rewards the ants with a source of food and aids the plant in reproduction.

The flowers and foliage of Red Maids are edible but do contain oxalic acid, like many other plants such as spinach, and should be eaten in small quantities. However, cooking reduces soluble oxalate. Native People highly value the flowers, foliage and black oil-rich seeds of Red Maids. When Native People practice cultural burns, a clearing of the land with controlled fire, wildflowers, including Red Maids and other plants, grow in great numbers. Historically Native People have eaten the leaves and shoots of this plant and the seeds are collected, winnowed, toasted and ground into a flour to make nutritious balls or cakes. In the past seeds were so highly valued that anthropologists have found Red Maid seeds in containers at burial sites. In February Red Maids should start making their appearance throughout the Capay Valley.



ESPARTO FOOTBALL 2026 Poker Tournament Fundraiser

Who: The **Esparto High School Football Program**, the **Esparto Junior Spartan Football Program**, and the **Esparto High School Athletic Booster Club**

What: Third Annual Texas Hold'em Poker Tournament Fundraiser

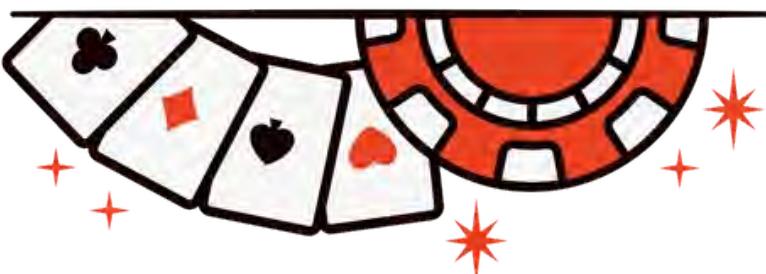
Where: Madison Town Hall located at 29041 Main Street, Madison, Ca.

When: Saturday, March 14th, 2026, Dinner at 6:00 pm and the Poker Tournament starts at 7:00 pm

Why: This event will help raise funds necessary for the successful running of the Esparto High School Football Program and the Esparto Junior Spartans Football Program

Cost: \$50 per player includes buy in and dinner
\$375 for a Table of Eight (8) includes buy ins and Dinner for Eight (8)
\$20 for Dinner Only
All Donations are gladly accepted!!

Other: No host bar (Wine and Beer Only)
Non-Cash Gift Card Prizes for 1st - \$300, 2nd - \$200, 3rd - \$100, Non-Cash Gift Basket Prizes for 4th-6th Place
Raffles for other prizes and gift baskets!!



Winters Express partners with Esparto Chamber to publish official Almond Festival Guide

The Winters Express, in partnership with McNaughton Newspapers, is proud to collaborate with the Esparto Regional Chamber of Commerce to publish the official guide for the Capay Valley Almond Festival. As part of this partnership, the Winters Express will handle the publication and all advertising for the festival, helping showcase the Capay Valley's vibrant community and celebrated local traditions.

For me, this project is personal. As a graduate of Winters High School, I grew up in the Western Yolo area and have fond memories of attending the Almond Festival as a teenager. Today, as the editor of the Winters Express, I am passionate about strengthening community connections and providing more coverage of Esparto and the Capay Valley. I firmly believe that when small communities work together, they can accomplish great things.

I have been in publishing since 2006 and became the editor of the Winters Express in 2019. Since then, I have led numerous community engagement initiatives—from hosting monthly coffee chats with local officials to volunteering with multiple nonprofits to foster intergenerational engagement. Projects like the Almond Festival guide are part of my ongoing commitment to building connections, celebrating local traditions, and giving our communities a platform to shine.

The Capay Valley Almond Festival guide will be distributed in the Winters Express and the Davis Enterprise. In partnership with the Esparto Chamber, copies will also be distributed throughout the Capay Valley, providing advertisers with a strong community reach.

For more information about how to be part of the special section, contact David DeLeon, of the Express, at david@wintersexpress.com or 530.219.3399.

We are excited to help bring the Capay Valley Almond Festival to life on the page and to support the Chamber in connecting local residents and visitors to this beloved celebration.





District Update: 2026–27 Calendar, Strategic Plan Implementation, Athletics, and State Testing

In December, the School District adopted a new calendar for the 2026–27 school year. This revision was made to ensure we can accommodate the number of Extended Learning Opportunities Program days available while also providing staff adequate time to clean, repair, and prepare school sites for the 2026–27 school year.

Families, staff, and students can view the updated 2026–27 calendar on the district website: <https://edo.eusdk12.org/>

Main Calendar Changes

- The school year will begin **after the Yolo County Fair**.
- The district will **not take the third week of Winter Break**.

The District also continues important work connected to our **Strategic Plan and Graduate Profile**. This spring, we are maintaining momentum through **districtwide professional learning and training** aligned to our instructional priorities and the outcomes we want for every student.

Recently, the District hosted a Study Tour for visiting school districts.

We appreciated the opportunity to share our work and learn alongside colleagues from other communities. Their feedback and insights will help inform our continuous improvement efforts moving forward.

Athletics are active across the District as well. **Winter sports are at mid-season, and spring sports are preparing to begin tryouts**. We appreciate the commitment of our student-athletes, coaches, and families.

Finally, spring also brings the annual **State Testing season**. Additional details and specific testing dates will be shared in next month's update.

There are many great things happening across our schools, and we appreciate the continued partnership of our families, staff, and community.

Christina (Christy) Goennier Ed.D.
Superintendent
Esparto Unified School District

Esparto Unified School District Master Calendar for 2026-27

August	Pup	Wk
3	4	5
10	11	12
17	18	19
24	25	26
31		
	8	10
September		
1	2	3
8	9	10
14	15	16
21	22	23
28	29	30
	21	21
October		
5	6	7
12	13	14
19	20	21
26	27	28
	21	21
November		
2	3	4
9	10	11
16	17	18
23	24	25
30		
	15	15
December		
1	2	3
8	9	10
14	15	16
21	22	23
28	29	30
	14	14
January		
4	5	6
11	12	13
18	19	20
25	26	27
	19	19
February		
1	2	3
8	9	10
15	16	17
22	23	24
	18	18
March		
1	2	3
8	9	10
15	16	17
22	23	24
29	30	31
	20	20
April		
5	6	7
12	13	14
19	20	21
26	27	28
	20	20
May		
3	4	5
10	11	12
17	18	19
24	25	26
31		
	20	20
June		
1	2	3
8	9	10
14	15	16
21	22	23
28	29	30
	4	4
Total Student Days	180	
Total Work Days		182

Legend:

- Teacher Work Day/No Students
- School Recess/Holiday
- Contract Minimum Days
- Conference/Minimum Days
- High School/Middle School Minimum Day
- Early Release Day
- Early Release Day OR Minimum Day

New Staff Orientation Day: August 14, 2026
Certificated Work Day: August 18, 2026
All Staff Report Back: August 19, 2026
First Day of School: August 20, 2026
Last Day of School: June 4, 2027

SCHOOL NOT IN SESSION:

July	4	Independence Day
September	7	Labor Day
October	12	Non work day
November	11	Veterans' Day
November	23-27	Fall Break
December	21-31	Winter Break
January	1	Winter Break
January	18	Martin Luther King Day
February	12	Non work day
February	15	Presidents Day
March	29-31	Spring Break
April	1-2	Spring Break
May	31	Memorial Day

DISTRICT MINIMUM DAYS OR EARLY RELEASE DAYS:

*All Wednesdays, except 11/18 for EES, are Early Release Days at all school sites check school schedule for release time.

October	9	EHS/EMS Only
October	22-23	EHS/EMS Only -Teacher Conferences
November	16-20	EES Only Teacher Conferences
November	20	Contract Minimum Day
December	17	EHS/EMS Only - Finals
December	18	Contract Minimum Day
March	19	EHS/EMS Only
March	26	Contract Minimum Day
June	3	EHS/EMS Only - Finals
June	4	Contract Minimum Day

LAST DAY OF QUARTERS (6-12)

October	9	End of 1st Quarter
December	18	End of 2nd Quarter/ 1st Semester
March	19	End of 3rd Quarter
June	4	End of 4th Quarter/2nd Semester

LAST DAY OF TRIMESTER (K-5)

November	6	End of 1st Trimester
March	3	End of 2nd Trimester
June	4	End of 3rd Trimester

BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHTS:

August	27	Elementary School
August	26	Middle School
September	3	High School

EHS GRADUATION:

June 4, 2027

MHS GRADUATION:

June 2, 2027

8TH GRADE Promotion

June 3, 2027

5TH GRADE Promotion

June 1, 2027

12/30/2025 8:08 AM

From Vision to Action: Esparto Unified's Graduate Profile Progress

Esparto Unified is excited to provide a community update on our work in developing a Graduate Profile to support college, career, and life readiness. During the 2022-2023 school year, Esparto Unified began efforts to develop a Graduate Profile. The Graduate Profile was developed with input from over 140 community members, including EUSD staff, students, parents, school board members, and representatives from local businesses and organizations. Through focus groups and workshops, this team identified six competencies that the community determined are essential for student success in college, career, and life. The six competencies that were identified are: Career, Collaboration/Teamwork/Citizenship, Critical Thinking/Problem Solving, Well-Being, Financial Literacy, and Communication. These competencies are essential skills that students will begin to develop as early as TK and Kindergarten and master in high school.

With the competencies identified, the district's next step was to move from "Poster to Practice"- we had the "what", but needed to develop the "how". Last year, during the 2024-2025 school year, a team of EUSD teachers, coordinators, and administrators joined a workgroup through the organization Scaling Student Success. This organization's mission is to, *"holistically and equitably prepare young people in CA for future success in college, career, and civic life. We pursue our mission by working with school districts and communities to redefine success, prioritizing the skills and competencies each and every child needs to reach their potential."* Through collaboration with Scaling Student Success, EUSD developed Learner Progressions for each competency of the Graduate Profile.

Learner Progressions are clearly defined pathways that describe how students develop the knowledge, skills, and mindsets of the EUSD Graduate Profile over time. They outline what growth looks like from early grades through high school. By identifying specifically what each competency looks like at each grade level, the Graduate Profile is brought to life as an attainable goal.

This school year, Esparto Unified is focusing on further developing three of the Graduate Profile Competencies: Collaboration/Teamwork/Citizenship, Well-Being, and Communication. In December of 2025, the EUSD Scaling Student Success team presented the drafted Learner Progressions for these three competencies to all EUSD teachers. Teachers had the opportunity to review the progressions and collaboratively provide feedback. The EUSD team made revisions to the Learner Progressions based upon that input.

In January of 2026, Esparto's teachers took the next step of beginning to identify the Adult Practices that will support students' progress in meeting the learner progressions. Teacher leaders from each EUSD site began collaborating on defining the Lesson Designs and Instructional Practices that grade levels will commit to implementing to ensure student mastery of the Graduate Profile's learner outcomes. Teachers will continue to further refine this work for the remainder of the 2025-2026 school year.

Implementation of these three competencies will begin in the 2026-2027 school year with a scorecard rubric to measure and monitor progress. The 2026-2027 school year will also bring a continuation of this work by repeating the process with our remaining three Graduate Profile Competencies: Career, Critical Thinking/Problem Solving, and Financial Literacy.

EUSD will continue to share updates and progress on the development and implementation of the Graduate Profile. The Graduate is posted alongside the Strategic Plan on the district's website: <https://www.eusdk12.org/home>. If you have any questions about the Graduate Profile or Learner Progressions, please contact Kate Diezel.

Kate Diezel
College & Career Readiness Coordinator
Esparto Unified School District
kdiezel@eusdk12.org
(530) 787-3405 ex. 213

Graduate Profile on page 9.

RISE Inc. Afterschool Program Hosts Successful Winter Intersession!

Laughter, learning, and adventure filled the week for Esparto Elementary students during the Afterschool Program's Winter Intersession. In partnership with Esparto Unified School District and the Esparto Scholars Program, from January 5–9, Esparto Elementary and Middle School students participated in the Afterschool Program's Winter Intersession, a week full of fun, learning, and unforgettable experiences. For the first two days, students stayed on campus where they enjoyed a variety of games, activities, and crafts. One of the biggest highlights was a fun rally where students had the chance to participate in activities and win prizes. The excitement and smiles showed just how much the students were enjoying their time together. Throughout the week, students also went on three exciting field trips. Our first trip was to the NorCal Aquarium & Wildlife in Folsom, where students learned about different animals through hands-on experiences. They were able to touch animals and even participate in a mini squid dissection, making it both educational and exciting. The second field trip took us to the Exploratorium in San Francisco.

Students explored the museum's interactive exhibits, discovered new ideas, and learned about science and innovation in a fun and engaging way. To end the week, students visited Urban Air in Sacramento. There, they enjoyed jumping, sliding, obstacle courses, and even a mini zipline. Students also enjoyed pizza, making it a perfect way to wrap up a great week. Overall, Winter Intersession was an amazing experience. Students had fun, learned new things, and created lasting memories.

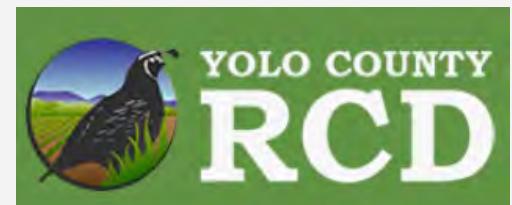
The Afterschool Program is proud to provide opportunities like this for our students and families.



More Winter Intersession photos on page 10.

2026 Farm and Ranch Programs 101 Workshop

(February 10, 2026) – The Yolo County Resource Conservation District (RCD) is hosting the 2026 Farm and Ranch Programs 101 to bring together local, state, and federal agencies and Yolo County agricultural producers on Tuesday, February 10, 2026 from 9:00 am to 11:30 am at the Yolo County Farm Bureau (69 W Kentucky Ave, Woodland, CA 95695). The Programs 101 event will feature short 7-minute presentations from agency representatives about free technical assistance and funding opportunities to support your farm and ranch.



Agencies and programs featured will be the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service's Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Yolo Solano Air Quality Management District's 2026 Grant Solicitation, Yolo County RCD's Mobile Irrigation Lab, Farm Service Agency's Loans and Farm Bill Programs, California Dept of Food and Agriculture's Healthy Soils Program & the State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program, Project Apis m. Seed for Bees Program, University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources, and the Community Alliance for Family Farmers.

Farmers and ranchers from Yolo County are invited to join this free, informational session which starts at 9 am with free coffee and breakfast. At 9:30 AM, seven-minute presentations from each agency will begin and continue until approximately 10:30 am. At 10:30 AM, there will be a Q & A session and the option for one-on-ones between growers and agency representatives. Space is limited – please RSVP by filling out the registration form at <https://tinyurl.com/prog101-2026>.

Join us to learn about funding programs, technical assistance support, and meet/ask questions of your local agency representatives on Tuesday, February 10th at 9 am! Programs featured are optional, non-regulatory, and are meant to support the agricultural operations of Yolo County with financial or technical assistance.

For questions, please reach out to Conor Higgins, Yolo County RCD's Ag Program Manager, at higgins@yolorc.org or call 530-661-1688 ext 4.





Almond Festival Book Sale

Espero Library
February 21-22 • 10-4

Rumsey Hall
February 22 • 10-4

FRIENDS OF THE
ESPARTO REGIONAL
LIBRARY

Supporting Library programs for
everyone in the Capay Valley

ferl95627@gmail.com



LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS[®]
OF YOLO COUNTY

32nd Annual State of the Community Luncheon



Guest Speaker

California State Senator
District 3
Christopher Cabaldon

Friday, February 27, 2026

12 pm to 1:30 pm

Yolo Event Center, Woodland

TICKETS AND INFO AVAILABLE AT LWVYOLO.ORG

UNTIL FEB. 16, 2026

**ALMOND FESTIVAL
COUNTRY STORE**



Sunday, February 22nd, from 8am to 3pm

COUNTRYSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH
On the Corner of Grafton and Fremont in Espero

**LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU!
COME JOIN US FOR:**

**Baked Goods Almond Roca
White Elephants Fabric
Free Coffee
Quilt Raffle Drawing at 3pm**

CHILDREN'S DENTAL HEALTH MONTH



SHOW YOUR TEETH SOME LOVE

Early checkups help protect growing smiles and give parents the tools they need to support lifelong oral health.

At Winters Healthcare, we believe every child deserves access to compassionate, preventive dental care, regardless of insurance coverage.

 **wintershealthcare**

CALL TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT - WINTERS: (530) 795-0898 | ESPARTO: (530) 787-3454
BECAUSE EVERY SMILE DESERVES A LITTLE EXTRA LOVE—GENTLE DENTAL CARE FOR GROWING SMILES

CAPAY VALLEY FOOD DISTRIBUTIONS

Espero - RISE, Inc.
Thursday, February 5th and 19th starts @ 9:30am

Monday, February 23rd starts @ 10:30am

Food Pantry Every Friday, 2:00pm - 5:00pm (17317 Fremont Street, Espero CA)
Madison Community Committee Food Closet
Monday, February 9th and 23rd starts @ 4:00pm
(28963 Main St, Madison, CA)
Guinda Grange Hall
Monday, February 9th and 23rd starts @ 9:30am
(16787 Forest Ave, Guinda, CA)

The Astronomer's Chair

The Astronomer's chair sits empty
The stars are floating by. No one
Is looking through the eyepiece,
I wonder why? Perhaps because
It is New Year's Eve and the
Astronomer has gone to celebrate.

After the stroke of midnight
Again the Astronomer will take
His place. There is so much to
See now, the winter stars do
Show. Taurus, Orion and the
Pleiades, their on display you
Know! Nebula and clusters there
Is so much to see. As I start the
New Year, another year older I
Will be!

By Clarence G. Underwood



**Road Trip
BAR & GRILL**

**VALENTINE'S DAY
ON SATURDAY
FEBRUARY 14TH**

**MAKE RESERVATIONS TODAY!
530-796-3777**



The Annual
Almond Festival '26

FEBRUARY 21 - 22
SATURDAY + SUNDAY

SHOW THE RIDE
SP
**BIKES-N-KIDS
SOUND OFF
BIKE SHOW**

**SATURDAY, 2/21*
12 PM - 4 PM**

**SUNDAY, 2/22*
12 PM - 4 PM**

**Weather permitting.
Follow us on Facebook for updates.*

**THE
FRYED BROTHERS
BAND**



24989 STATE HWY. 16 • CAPAY, CA • [530] 796-3777
ROADTRIPBG.COM CLOSED MONDAY - TUESDAY

Selling Soon? Here's What Most Agents Won't Tell You!

As your local expert in residential real estate, land, and country homes, I know that selling here takes more than just putting your property on the market—it requires smart strategy, and strong visibility

Most Agents Don't Offer This—But I Do

-  Strategic scroll stopping Video & Social Media Marketing
-  Targeted Ads + Custom Property Websites
-  Local **PLUS** National Buyer Exposure
-  Free Home Value Report—**Even if You're Not Ready Yet**

I live here, work here, and market like no one else. Thinking of selling this year? Let's chat—I'll give you real answers and a real plan. Call or text me today to get started!

Local Realtor
Strong Networks & Connections!

(530) 713.6121

l.pillard@gmail.com




Linda Pillard
REAL ESTATE GROUP
TRUSTED REAL ESTATE CONSULTANT

Lic: 01208519



 Green Fields
Real Estate of California


YOCHA DEHE
GOLF CLUB

 **TROON GOLF**®


CACHE CREEK
CASINO RESORT

cachecreek.com

Full Belly Farm

530-796-2214

www.fullbellyfarm.com

CSA boxes available
for pickup at the farm
or in Esparto.



Need Help?

**St. Vincent de Paul
is available to help those in need.**

For more information call (530) 312-8967

D. Warren Insurance Agency

Brookie Jo Campbell

Lic.# OD21886

main 530-787-3558
fax 530-787-3233

brookiejs@outlook.com

Auto, Home, Life
Farm, Commercial, Health

17309 Fremont St
Esparto, Ca, 95627



MANAS RANCH

25838 County Road 21a
Esparto, CA 95627
(530) 787-3228
Fax (530) 787-1878
Fred and Alice Manas

SÉKA HILLS



Experience a Taste of the Capay Valley

SAVOR OUR EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OILS, ESTATE WINES, HONEY
AND MORE AT OUR TWO TASTING ROOMS.

SÉKA HILLS OLIVE MILL AND TASTING ROOM

19326 COUNTY ROAD 78 | BROOKS, CA 95606
OPEN WEDNESDAY TO SUNDAY, 11:00AM - 5:00PM

SÉKA HILLS MIDTOWN TASTING ROOM

1733 S STREET | SACRAMENTO | CA | 95811
OPEN WEDNESDAY TO MONDAY, 11:00AM - 8:00PM

SEKAHILLS.COM

Welcome to

**St. Martin De Porres
Catholic Mission Church**

25633 W. Grafton Street - Esparto, CA 95627

Join us in our celebrations of the Holy Mass

Mass Schedule

Saturday 7:00 p.m. Spanish

Sunday 8:30 a.m. English

Wednesday 6:00 p.m. Bilingual

Confession

Sunday 8:00 a.m. - 8:20 a.m.

Come to me, all you who labor and are
burdened, and I will give you rest.
(Matthew 11:28)

Parish Office

51 Main Street, Winters, CA 95694
(530)795-2230

Road Trip
BAR & GRILL

The Annual
Almond Festival '26

JOIN US ALL WEEKEND!
FEBRUARY 21 - 22

SATURDAY, 2/21*
BIKES-N-KIDS SOUND OFF BIKE SHOW
12 PM - 4 PM


SUNDAY, 2/22*
THE FRYED BROTHERS BAND
12 PM - 4 PM

*Weather permitting. Follow us on Facebook for updates.

24989 STATE HWY. 16 • CAPAY, CA • [530] 796-3777
ROADTRIPBG.COM CLOSED MONDAY - TUESDAY



Tables now available
for inside dining

16939 Yolo ave.
Espero, Ca 95627
530-787-3532
eltorofood@gmail.com

Espero's Local Meat Market and Taqueria

- Party trays Available
- Rice and Beans
- Chicken Fajitas
- Chicken Enchiladas
- Chile Verde Beef
- Carnitas

Online ordering available at
eltoroespero.com

J&L Lawn Maintenance offers lawn maintenance, cleanup, bush trimming, sprinkler repairs, window screen repairs, window cleaning, hauling, & gutter cleaning. Don't be afraid to text or call for an estimate and any information on our services!

#1 Juan Solis: (530)-848-2824

#2 Leonardo Solis: (530)-631-9283



Sunday Services

WORSHIP - 9:00 AM • SUNDAY'S TABLE - 10:00 AM
CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL - 9:00-10:30 AM

Everyone Welcome!

Located at 26479 Grafton St, Espero, CA 95627
(on the corner of Grafton and Fremont streets)

For more information call 530-787-4040 or visit espartocountrysidechurch.org

DURST
 **ORGANIC**
GROWERS 

James & Deborah Durst
26100 County Road 16
Espero, CA 95627
530-787-3390

Candice Schaer, B.Sc., MT, HHP
Holistic Health Practitioner
Therapeutic Bodywork
Guinda, California
858-232-1005



Make Time for Yourself in Your Life

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Please contact the group you are interested in, to see if they are still meeting at this time.

AA Meeting: Tuesday at 7 pm in the basement of the Countryside Community Church in Esparto. 1 hour open.

AA Spanish: Alcohólicos Anónimos: Detrás de El Toro. Los lunes, miércoles, y viernes a las 7 pm - 9 pm.

Al-Anon: Countryside Community Church on Tuesday from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Al-Anon Spanish: Spanish Al-Anon: Detrás de El Toro (26628 N. Grafton St.). Los Martes a las 7 pm - 8:30 pm.

Capay Cemetery District Board meeting: Held on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 6pm at the Esparto Community Hall, 17020 Yolo Avenue, Esparto, CA 95627.

Capay Valley Christian Fellowship: 11am adult Sunday school; 11:45am social; 12:10pm - 1:10pm worship/children's Sunday School at Guinda Community Church.

Capay Valley Fire Commission Meeting: Meets the 2nd Monday of each month at 6:30 pm at the Guinda Fire Station.

Capay Valley Garden Club: 4th Wednesdays, 6 pm, location varies, see Facebook page for more information.

Capay Valley General Plan Advisory Committee: Meets every 1st Wednesday at 7 pm at the Grange Hall in Guinda. Open to all.

Capay Valley Vision Board: Meets on the third Wednesday of every month at the Esparto Library at 6:30 p.m. (Meetings are OPEN TO THE PUBLIC)

Cottonwood Cemetery District: Next meeting will be on February 23rd, at the Esparto RISE office (17340 Yolo Avenue, Esparto).

Countryside Community Church: Sundays at 9 am Worship Service and Sunday School.

Esparto Ag Boosters: Meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 6 pm in the Ag Department at the high school.

Esparto Citizens Advisory Committee Planning Council: Meets 3rd Tuesday at 7 pm at the Esparto Regional Library.

Esparto Community Services District: Meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

Esparto Food Distributions: 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month from 9:30 am - Until supplies last and 4th Monday of the month 10:30am - noon.

Esparto Lions Club Meeting: Meets the 1st and 3rd Thursdays at the Boy Scout Cabin Social hour at 5:30pm, 6pm Dinner, For Zoom link, please call 530-787-3892.

Esparto Regional Chamber of Commerce: Meets monthly on the 2nd Thursday at 6pm, at Capay Valley Health & Community Center (17340 Yolo Avenue, Esparto). Questions, call (530) 787-3242.

Esparto Unified School Board Meeting: Meets on the 4th Wednesday at 6 pm in Room A - 7 at the High School.

Esparto Fire Commissioners Meeting: Meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at 6 pm at the Esparto Fire Station.

Food Pantry: Fridays at 2 pm - 5 pm. (17317 Fremont Street, Esparto)

Friends of Esparto Regional Library Board of Directors' Meeting: The 2nd Wednesday at 4 pm (except for July and November) at the Library.

Guinda Community Church: Sunday Service at 9 am.

Guinda Food Distribution: Yolo Food Bank 2nd and 4th Mondays, from 9:30 AM to 11 AM at the Grange Hall on Forest Ave. Drive through distribution, first come first served, line starts at 8:30 AM. Produce, canned food, dry goods, meat and dairy.

Homeschooling: Carly Castruita Gordon at (916) 616-5419.

Madison Advisory Committee: 4th Wednesday at 6 pm at the Madison Community Services District. No meetings in May, November or December.

Madison Community Committee: 3rd Thursday at 6 pm at the Madison Community Services District.

Madison Fire Commissioners Meeting: 1 pm on the 2nd Monday of each month at the Madison Fire Department at 17880 Stephens Street.

Madison Food Closet: Open on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month from 4pm to 5pm at the Madison Community Services District Building.

Madison Service District Meeting: 3rd Thursday at 6:00pm in the District office at 28963 Main Street in Madison.

New Life Christian Center in Madison: Sunday Service at 11:00am with Jr. Church for ages 5-12 years. Home Bible Studies on Wednesday.

On Fire Fellowship of Esparto: Sunday service at 9am. Bible Study: Wednesday at 6:30pm. Youth Group: Friday at 6:30pm; Ladies:1st/3rd Tuesday 6:30pm.

RISE Collaborative Meeting: 4th Friday of each month at 9am. Meeting held in-person at the RISE, Inc Esparto Office. (17340 Yolo Avenue, Esparto)

RISE Valley Seniors: Meets Tuesdays & Thursdays from 9am - 12pm at the RISE office. (17340 Yolo Avenue, Esparto)

Rumsey Improvement Assoc.: 1st Monday potlucks at Rumsey Hall October - June. Mingling at 6pm, food served at 6:30pm. Bring a dish to share & your own utensils.

St. Martin's Catholic Mission Church: English Mass: 8:30am on Sundays; Spanish Mass: 7pm on Saturdays. (25633 Grafton Street, Esparto)

Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW): Western Yolo Post 7143, meets 1st Wednesday each month, at Post Home, Orleans Street and Highway 16.

Western Yolo Grange: Meets on the 3rd Tuesday at 6:30 PM, except for July and August. All are welcome, you do not need to be a member to attend.

4-H: Meets at 6pm on the 3rd Tuesday of every month at the Esparto Community Hall, 17020 Yolo Avenue, Esparto CA.