

# ANNUAL REPORT



2019

CITY OF GONZALES



OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER,  
RENÉ L. MENDEZ



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

COVER	COVER	
TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE	1
GONZALES CITY COUNCIL	PAGE	2
LETTER FROM THE CITY MANAGER	PAGES	3-4
<b>CITY ADMINISTRATION</b>	PAGE	5
ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION CULTURE OF HEALTH PRIZE	PAGE	6
GONZALES IN THE NEWS	PAGES	7-8
<b><u>SPECIAL INITIATIVES:</u></b>		
THE GONZALES WAY	PAGE	9
HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES	PAGE	10
GONZALES YOUTH COUNCIL	PAGES	11-15
MEASURE K COMMUNITY ACTION GRANTS	PAGE	16
INTERNET 4 ALL	PAGE	17
GONZALES GROWS GREEN	PAGES	18-20
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	PAGE	21
FIRE DEPARTMENT	PAGES	22-23
POLICE DEPARTMENT	PAGES	24-26
COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT	PAGES	27-29
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT	PAGES	30-32
RECREATION DEPARTMENT	PAGES	33-36
2019 RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT	PAGES	37-38
COMMUNITY PARTNERS	PAGE	39
FARWELL HAROLD WOLGAMOTT	PAGE	40
PHOTO CREDITS	PAGE	41



## GONZALES CITY COUNCIL



**Maria Orozco, Mayor**  
2 Year Term  
City Council Member from  
2001-2008  
First Elected Mayor: 2008  
Current Term Expires: 2020



**Scott Funk, Mayor Pro Tempore**  
4 Year Term  
Appointed: 2008 Elected: 2016  
Current Term Expires: 2020



**Liz Silva, Council Member**  
4 Year Term  
Appointed: 2009 Elected: 2014  
Current Term Expires: 2022



**Lorraine Worthy, Council Member**  
4 Year Term  
Elected: 2018  
Current Term Expires: 2022



**Paul Miller, Council Member**  
4 Year Term  
Elected: 2018  
Current Term Expires: 2022



## LETTER FROM THE OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER



Gonzales City Manager/  
City Clerk, René L. Mendez (2005)



Deputy City Manager/  
Special Projects Director,  
Mark L. Hartunian, J.D. (2016)



Executive Assistant to the City  
Manager/Deputy City Clerk,  
Mary Villegas (1996)

You often hear talk in Gonzales about “**The Gonzales Way**,” which is a mindset about our community’s ability to “**Love, Care & Connect**” with each other. It is something that we at City Hall practice daily, which your City Council insists and directs us to follow. It is this mindset that frames everything we do, which I hope you will see exhibited in the activities, programs, and projects highlighted in this Annual Report.

We are very proud of our Youth 21<sup>st</sup> Century Success Initiative, which places our youth at the forefront. You will see the city’s commitment to this initiative in the banners celebrating our college-bound youth, robust after school and youth programs, the Gonzales Youth Council, recreational preschool, supporting and funding the Hartnell Promise, the construction of a Teen Innovation Center, and Friends, Family, and Neighbors’ (FFN) playgroups, designed to improve and provide resources to the large segment of our community, young children. Also, we are developing a unique partnership with CSU-Monterey Bay and The Middlebury Institute of International Studies (MIIS) that will, over time, enhance resources for our community and our youth.

We have launched a senior citizens initiative, and I invite you to become a member of our Seniors Action Team to help inform and develop the necessary programming.

City staff are working hard on the city’s Future Growth Plan to bring much-needed housing, parks, community buildings, and neighborhood commercial spaces to Gonzales. Over time, this will include the development and construction of new schools, especially a critically needed new elementary school. There is important work being done on circulation improvements that will help reduce the traffic congestion at Fifth Street and Highway 101.

(continued next page)



# LETTER FROM THE OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

(CONTINUED)

## 2019 QUICK FACTS:

- Budget general reserve \$1 million
- Operating reserve \$1.2 million
- Total city budget \$16.3 million
- General fund expenditures \$5.8 million

## 2018/2019 General Fund Expenditures

- 49.4% Police Services
- 12.4% Parks, Rec, Aquatics & Youth
- 11.9% Fire Services
- 7.4% TUT Initiatives
- 7.2% City Manager/Finance
- 5.4% Planning & Building
- 2.5% GG Bldg. & Non-dept.
- 0.9% City Attorney
- 0.6% City Council



[View the Entire 2019/2020 Fiscal Year Budget Here](#)

The overall City Budget is approximately \$16.3 million, with the General Fund portion at \$5.7 million. The General Fund is important, because that is the area of the budget that funds many programs and core services. For example, did you know that, after Public Safety, the second-largest portion of the General Fund budget is for recreation and youth programs? Also, we are one of only two cities in Monterey County designated as a “low financial risk community” by the California State Auditor’s Office. Furthermore, we have a reserve balance of \$2.1 million. This is important because it allows for funding of projects, programs, and initiatives.

The city is working hard on economic development to bring good-paying jobs to our community. In this report, you will read about the many new businesses coming to Gonzales in 2020 and others that are expanding and hiring.

In 2017, the Gonzales City Council adopted a Broadband Infrastructure Strategy. In this report, you will learn about the city’s (first-of-its-kind) partnership with T-Mobile to provide free basic wireless internet service to every Gonzales household through the use of hotspots.

In 2019, Gonzales was one of five communities nationwide to be recognized by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation as a Culture of Health prize winner. This award is the direct result of the “Gonzales Way” and the partnership that exists among all of us. In addition to the \$25,000 prize funds received, this designation will allow the city to pursue other funding opportunities and resources to continue to help improve and move our community forward.

I cannot end without mentioning how important it is to **vote in the upcoming election and to participate and be counted in the 2020 Census**. It is of paramount importance for every member of our community to be counted because that will result in funds and other opportunities for our schools and community.

Yours in community,

René L. Mendez, City Manager



# GONZALES CITY ADMINISTRATION



Senior Accounting Technician,  
Elizabeth Jimenez (1996)



Accounting Specialist,  
Veronica Gonzalez (1999)



Administrative Assistant,  
Alejandra Flores (2019)

## SERVING THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY

Administrative staff at Gonzales City Hall are the people that keep the city moving. They are there with a friendly greeting to residents, contractors, and businesses who walk in or telephone the city with questions and needs to keep their projects moving. They serve multiple city departments, keep billing and accounts payable in order, manage audits, and assist with recreation program signups. Their bilingual language skills allow them to serve the entire community in a value-added capacity. These competent staff members enjoy their work and will tell anyone who asks that they find meaning and satisfaction in answering questions, solving problems, and providing exemplary customer service. This is how they do their part in showing the Love, Care & Connect that is The Gonzales Way.



# ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION CULTURE OF HEALTH PRIZE



[Video: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Culture of Health](#)

[Prize Winner 2019: City of Gonzales](#)



2019 RWJF Culture of Health Prize Winner  
**Gonzales, California**



## Why Gonzales was chosen from nearly 200 communities for the national Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Prize

Gonzales is one of five winners of the 2019 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Culture of Health Prize. The Prize honors and elevates communities for working at the forefront of advancing health, opportunity, and equity.

Gonzales was chosen from nearly 200 communities across the country for pursuing innovative ideas and bringing partners together to rally around a shared vision of health. Over the past decade, this has led to real progress on youth engagement, economic development, health care access, and sustainability.

"The 2019 RWJF Culture of Health Prize winners recognize that health is about more than just healthcare. It's about what happens where we live, work, learn, and play. They are fundamentally reshaping their communities so that everyone has a fair opportunity for health and well-being," said Richard Besser, MD, president and CEO of RWJF.

"These communities show the nation that solutions are within our grasp when we use local data to identify challenges and work together to implement solutions brought forward by residents."

[Read the Foundation's web story on the City of Gonzales](#)

"Residents describe the Gonzales Way as a genuine feeling that they can be a force for improving well-being in their community. It's heralded on banners hanging from streetlights and matter-of-factly mentioned in conversation by people who have lived there all their lives or just moved to town... Gonzales reflects how a small community can tap the insight and power of its residents to create change and expand opportunities."





## GONZALES IN THE NEWS

On the next two pages, you will find a sampling of the many news stories reported on Gonzales in 2019 along with links to the full stories, videos, and podcasts. The City of Gonzales is proud of the work that is being done by members of the community as they seek to find their place in The Gonzales Way. These stories are a reminder that, whatever your passion or talent, our community is waiting for you to put your signature on your unique version of Love, Care & Connect.

### The Salinas Valley City Where Kids Come First

KCRW Zócalo Connecting California Podcast Hosted by Joe Matthews 01/10/2019

If new California Governor Gavin Newsom wants to change the status quo, as he has pledged, Zocalo Public Square commentator Joe Mathews says he could take a look at the small city of Gonzales in Monterey County. Officials there have followed up their rhetoric with policies that are making a difference. [Listen here...](#)

Joe Mathews, Connecting California: Salinas Californian 01/11/2019

If California were to put the needs of its poor kids first, what would that look like? A lot like Gonzales, a city of 9,000—many of them farmworkers—in the Salinas Valley. [Read more...](#)

### Gonzales Student Going to D.C. for U.S. Senate Youth Program

Project CommUNITY, KSBW Television 02/03/2019 [Watch here...](#)

### Senior Swarm Preps Youth for College

Samantha Bengtson, Gonzales Tribune 04/25/2019

As Gonzales High School students get closer to graduation, a series of workshops have been developed called “Senior Swarm” to aid the next phase of their education and lives. [Read more...](#)

### Hungry to Change the World

Claudia Meléndez Salinas, Voices of Monterey Bay 04/11/2019

In order to fully understand the feat that Cindy Aguilar-Castañeda pulled off, a little bit of background is in order. In early March, Cindy, 18, was one of two young Californians to represent the Golden State in the United States Senate Youth Program, which brings 104 young people to Washington D.C. to see first-hand how the federal government works. [Read more...](#)







### Connecting California: 'Our community put us first.' Fabiola Moreno Ruelas Pays it Forward

Joe Matthews, Zócalo Public Square/Desert Sun 09/13/2019

This spring – as federal prosecutors announced a major college admissions scandal that had ensnared wealthy movie stars and prominent Californians, who paid millions in bribes to get their kids into elite universities – a poor kid from a poor California town faced her own dilemma about money and universities: How could she use her own meager bank account to help others go to college? [Read more...](#)

### A Cure for the “Varsity Blues”

KCRW Zócalo Connecting California Podcast Hosted by Joe Matthews 09/19/2019

When the college admissions scandal –also known as “Varsity Blues” – exploded this spring, a lot of people were not surprised by its revelations: Rich folks using their resources to gain an unfair advantage is not exactly a shock. But Zocalo Public Square commentator Joe Mathews may have found the perfect antidote to “Varsity Blues,” and her name is Fabiola Ruelas. [Listen here...](#)

### Gonzales Given Top National Health Award

MSN.com/KSBW Television 11/13/2019

The city is one of just five national winners of the 2019 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Culture of Health Prize. [Watch here...](#)

### Latino Cities among Culture of Health Prize Winners!

Cliff Despres, Salud America 11/12/2019

A majority-Latino community is among the five winners of the 2019 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Culture of Health Prize! Gonzales, Calif. (94% Latino), was chosen from nearly 200 applicants. Two other cities with large Latino populations—Lake County, Colo. (36% Latino) and Broward County, Fla. (30% Latino)—also won the health prize. Greenville County, S.C., and Sitka, Alaska, also received the prize. [Read more...](#)



## SPECIAL INITIATIVE: THE GONZALES WAY



*Project CommUNITY feature on KSBW Television:  
Gonzales High School Grads Featured on Banners Around Town.*

### CELEBRATING STUDENT SUCCESS

Director of College and Career Readiness for Gonzales Unified School District, Candice McFarland Camacho, had been looking for different ways to highlight student success. In the fall of 2019, Alberto Cortez-Perez, the South Monterey County Lead Facilitator for the UCSC Gear Up grant, brought her an idea that he had seen in a community in Southern California. He described a community banner program highlighting graduating students and their college of choice.

Camacho brought the project concept to City Manager René Mendez and Superintendent Yvette Irving. Both encouraged her to move forward with the project, with the City of Gonzales and the school district agreeing to co-fund the project. Forty students signed up to take a photo holding the pennant of the college they would attend in the fall.

The response from the community was positive. The project received local media attention, and other communities in the region called to learn more about how they could do the same for their youth. Community members liked the program so much that the district has received offers to fund the next round. Camacho says that donations are gladly accepted.

For the graduating class of 2020, Camacho is hoping to double the graduating student's participation. She says that the banners not only celebrate current graduate's success, but they give younger students something for which to aim. Going to college, trade school, or serving one's country becomes a community norm, an expectation.



## SPECIAL INITIATIVE: HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES (HiAP)



### EXPANSION OF TAYLOR FARMS FAMILY HEALTH & WELLNESS CENTER

Salinas Valley Memorial Healthcare System (SVMHS) was able to secure a capacity grant from the Central California Alliance for Health (CCAH). The \$2.65 million grant program is focused on supporting health care providers in delivering timely access to quality health care services and increasing Medi-Cal capacity within CCAH's service area. With the grant money, SVMHS was able to procure the lot adjacent to the existing Taylor Farms Family Health and Wellness Center clinic located on Fifth Street in Gonzales.

The existing OSHPD-3 Licensed Outpatient Center offers individual and family medicine including annual sports and school physicals, laboratory services, asthma care testing (results on-site), diabetes screening, diagnosis and management, wellness programs, patient immunizations education, and x-ray services. The **12,800 sq. foot expansion** of the existing 6,400 sq. foot clinic site will allow for a large expansion of services to Gonzales residents and surrounding communities in South Monterey County.

Programs under consideration within expansion include wellness and special care clinic services such as pediatrics, cardiopulmonary, women's health, pulmonology, behavioral health, and counseling space. The addition of conference and exercise areas can be used to facilitate small to large groups for programs such as wellness and diabetes education, newborn classes, yoga and pilates, childbirth and parenting classes, CPR, and nutrition counseling and wellness coaching.

Construction of the addition began in 2019 and is set to be completed in early 2020.



## SPECIAL INITIATIVE: GONZALES YOUTH COUNCIL



### YOUTH LEADING THE GONZALES WAY

Our youth continue to prove they are not just the leaders of tomorrow but are the leaders of today. Throughout 2019, our Youth Commissioners and Youth Council shared their insights with city and school district leadership and took action to improve the resources needed for youth to succeed. This included responding to interest from youth and adult allies beyond Gonzales, who sought to launch similar youth civic leadership development programs in Soledad and advising adult allies via the Robert Wood Johnson National Health Prize convening in Princeton, New Jersey. The following are highlights of how our young leaders are making a difference.

**Teen Innovation Center:** The Gonzales Youth Council (GYC) continues to progress towards moving its vision for Teen Innovation Center into reality. During the spring of 2019, Youth Commissioners Cindy Aguilar and Nayeli Gomez spearheaded an update to the City Council supported by the '18-'19 Gonzales Youth Council, in hopes of securing ongoing support. In this presentation, they affirmed their "Big Why:"

*"We want to create a safe and resourceful place where students can take academics beyond the classroom by immersing themselves into 21<sup>st</sup> Century programs and activities in order to promote college and career readiness, academic success, entrepreneurship, and, most importantly, to spark innovation."*

The '19-'20 Youth Commissioners and GYC continue to provide input and advocacy for the design and planning of the Teen Innovation Center. The Gonzales City Council and the City of Gonzales continue to be responsive to youth advocacy for establishing the Center, including enlisting the support of an architectural design firm, InStudio Architecture and Patrick Dobbins, Public Works Director and City Engineer. At this time, the city is determining the budget and financing for the project.

The GYC is gaining additional interest and support from community members. For example, upon learning through an article about the city's investment in youth leadership, and the GYC's desire to have a Teen Innovation Center, a community member was inspired to send a donation to the project.

(continued next page)



## SPECIAL INITIATIVE: GONZALES YOUTH COUNCIL



### YOUTH LEADING THE GONZALES WAY (CONTINUED)

**Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Site Visit:** In the Spring of 2019, the GYC assisted with hosting the foundation's site visit. In addition to a presentation and Q&A between the GYC and RWJF Site Visit Team, Youth Commissioner Cindy Aguilar served on the Community Leaders Panel alongside Mayor Maria Orozco, City Manager Rene Mendez, Superintendent Yvette Irving, Assistant Superintendent Mary Dawson, and Monterey County Health Department Health in All Policies Manager Carmen Gil; and Youth Commissioner Nayeli Gomez facilitated the Community Conversation between the RWJF Site Team and over 25 community members. Further, Youth Commissioner Isabel Mendoza served as part of the city's Delegation Team, who accepted the Culture of Health Prize. She had the opportunity to network with community leaders across the country, many wanting to know more about how to establish a youth council in their communities.

**Youth Commissioner Summer Fellowship:** The newly appointed Youth Commissioners - Amy Perez, Isabel Mendoza, and Madisyn Schweitzer - gained an understanding of City governance and operations through Department Immersions, participated in leadership development workshops and received coaching to prepare them for a successful term. As the capstone to this experience, they recruited the '19-'20 GYC and planned and facilitated the GYC Orientation and Training.

**National Night Out:** In August of 2019, the GYC continued what has now become a tradition of partnering with the Gonzales Police Department on the community-wide National Night Out celebration. The GYC planned and implemented fun, engaging activities such as Cop Potato and Pin the Badge.

**Youth Mental Health:** The 2019/2020 GYC cohort identified mental health as a priority area to address and began action planning in Fall 2019. We're looking forward to the positive outcomes of their effort.

**Senior Swarm:** The GYC continues to move the Senior Swarm action project forward. Initially developed and led by Youth Commissioner Cindy Aguilar, the Senior Swarm continues to be a signature project of the Gonzales Youth Council aimed at mobilizing Gonzales High School Seniors to pursue higher education through information, community engagement and relationship building with Adult Allies. The '19-'20 Youth Commissioners are collaborating with Cindy to sustain and build upon the success of this college readiness project. (See full spotlight on page 14.)



## SPECIAL INITIATIVE: GONZALES YOUTH COUNCIL



### 2019/2020 YOUTH COMMISSIONERS

"Empowering youth to give back to our community is crucial, and among the most rewarding has been serving as Youth Commissioner and being part of the Youth Council. This experience has presented me with many opportunities. I am extremely blessed have been able to get to know the people who work for our community. I have developed strong, caring relationships with those inside and outside of our community. I have been inspired to pursue a career in public policy so I can come back to my town and serve them." **-Youth Commissioner, Isabel Mendoza**

"Working with the youth in my community has been eye-opening and inspiring. I have learned that when you give people the power and knowledge to speak up, they will. Serving as a Youth Commissioner for the GYC opened up a world of experience that I would have never imagined would become a reality, such as meeting and working with city officials and different departments of the City of Gonzales. In the summer of 2019, I had the opportunity to work with younger people in our small town. That experience made me realize that I want to pursue a career that will allow me to work with the children in our community. I am truly grateful to have had this positive encounter with my community and the adult allies." **-Youth Commissioner, Amy Perez**


"When entering the youth commissioner position, you are truly rushed with all these possibilities to make a change within your community. Initially, I knew that I would be able to make some waves in different aspects of Gonzales. The degree to which I am actively serving my peers is astonishing. My favorite part of this experience has been working directly with my peers to help them sort through the challenges that arise in the senior year of high school. The Senior Swarm program that has become a key project for our term has made me more comfortable with sharing my knowledge with others, making this opportunity so much more than just a youth-held position within the community." **-Youth Commissioner, Madisyn Schweitzer**

**'18-'19 Gonzales Youth Council:** Cindy Aguilar - Youth Commissioner, Nayeli Gomez - Youth Commissioner, Abran Magana, Andrew Funk, Angela Rodriguez, Carolina Perez-Reyes, Dylan Cervantes, Jesus Trujillo, Julissa Aldaco, Madisyn Schweitzer, Priscilla Flores, Scott Funk **'19-'20 Gonzales Youth Council:** Amy Perez - Youth Commissioner, Isabel Mendoza - Youth Commissioner, Madisyn Schweitzer - Youth Commissioner, Aidan Cervantez, Alexa Hernandez, Andrew Funk, Angela Rodriguez, Danielle Javier, Lorena Flores, Luke Naegle, Magaly Santos, Paulina Rivas, Ruby Virgen



# SPECIAL INITIATIVE: GONZALES YOUTH COUNCIL

## GONZALES HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR SWARM



### SENIOR SWARM

All workshops will be from 5pm-8pm @GHS Library

November 15, 2018 CSU/UC/COMMON APP	January 17, 2019 FAFSA & GOAL SETTING
February 7, 2019 SUBMITTING FASFA!	March 21, 2019 JOB READY (RESUME/INTERVIEW PREP)

JOIN US FOR "SENIOR SWARM" WORKSHOPS TO:  
Receive guidance on your college applications, build relationships with community members, enjoy snacks, win prizes, learn from inspiring individuals, and clear some tardies :)

### SENIOR SWARM COLLEGE PREPAREDNESS WORKSHOPS

The **Senior Swarm** project was launched by 2018/2019 Gonzales Youth Commissioner, Cindy Aguilar-Castañeda, as a community action project that came out of her work as a Bezos Scholar. Funded by a **Measure K Community Action Grant** and funding from the **Bezos Foundation**, she and her team created a five workshop peer-to-peer series for graduating seniors that included:

- Writing Personal Statements (College Apps);
- FAFSA and Goals Setting (Financial Aid and Life Skills);
- Senior Panel: Q & A session with incoming GHS Freshmen
- How to Choose your College (Financial Aid, Budgeting, Decision Making)
- Senior Swarm Celebration: Appreciation for Senior Swarm Participants and College Celebration

Thirty-seven students attended the workshops, and four Interact Club members volunteered. CSUMB scholars assisted students with reviews of personal statements the week UC applications were due. Adult allies from the community of Gonzales provided support, guidance, and what they had learned from their own college experiences.

The Gonzales Youth Council is carrying the program forward as one of its priorities for 2019/2020.

SENIORS, DO YOU NEED HELP WITH YOUR COLLEGE APPLICATIONS?

## JOIN US FOR 'SENIOR SWARM'

To learn more about and work on:  
How to effectively complete college applications and craft your Personal Statement

**\*\*You can clear tardies\*\***

11.15.18 FROM 5PM-8PM GHS LIBRARY

SNACKS, INCENTIVES, AND INSPIRATION WILL BE PROVIDED

"[Senior Swarm] was great and the speakers were very inspiring and helpful."

-Miguel Arreola Camacho,  
Senior @ GHS

"[I really enjoyed] being able to talk to different people who experienced what I will soon be going through."

-Jerusalen Valdez,  
Senior @ GHS

 [Click here to view the full project report](#)



# SPECIAL INITIATIVE: GONZALES YOUTH COUNCIL

YOUTH IN THE NEWS



---

*GYC Youth Commissioner Alumni, Fabiola Moreno starts a scholarship for Gonzales High School students.*



[\*Read her story here.\*](#)

---

---

*GYC Youth Commissioner Alumni, Cindy Aguilar Castañeda was a 2018 Bezos Scholarship Winner. In 2019 she developed the "Senior Swarm" program, assisting Gonzales youth in preparing for college.*



[\*Read her story here.\*](#)

---



---

*Community activist and GYC member, Magaly Santos becomes the youngest person to be accepted into the Women's Earth Alliance Accelerator Program.*



[\*Read her story here\*](#)



[\*Watch the YouTube video here.\*](#)

---





## SPECIAL INITIATIVE: MEASURE K COMMUNITY ACTION GRANTS



### \$27,000 MEASURE K 2018/2019 GRANTS

#### GUSD Theatre Group (Pride Players)

Purchase of wireless audio equipment for community theatre productions. Supported six community theatre events in the year purchased.

#### Latinos Unidos de América de Tatesosco (LUDA)

Expansion of the annual Cinco de Mayo community festival with the addition of Aztec and Ballet Folklorico dancers and demonstrations of traditional Mexican crafts and games by local artists.

#### Padres Especiales Unidos

Funding to provide monthly meetings, community outreach, special activities, events, and outings for parents with children with developmental disabilities.

#### Gonzales Youth Guardians

Youth community group doing outreach to senior citizens by hosting a Grand Royal Tea Party where youth interact with, serve, and show appreciation for the senior community. Additionally funded a field trip for youth to a Fresno State College basketball game.

#### Adventure Seeking Seniors

Establish a new group focused on social activities for senior citizens. Events included field trips, transportation, meals, and special holiday themed lunch gatherings.

#### Senior Swarm

Established a youth-led five workshop series aimed at high school seniors. Workshops had special guest speakers (adults and peers now in college) and presented useful "how to" information on all of the challenges faced as youth move on to higher education (paperwork, finances, housing, living independently, part-time work, resumes, etc.)



[View Past & Current Grant Recipient Reports Here](#)



## SPECIAL INITIATIVE: INTERNET 4 ALL



### ALL GONZALES HOUSEHOLDS QUALIFY FOR FREE BROADBAND INTERNET SERVICE

The **Internet 4 All** initiative is a result of a unique partnership between the City of Gonzales and the **T-Mobile for Education** program. Through this initiative, Gonzales residents can receive a 4G LTE Wi-Fi hotspot that will provide unlimited high-speed internet access and support up to 12 concurrent connections at no cost. The wireless devices are being provided to the community through T-Mobile's **EmpowerED 2.0** program. A total of 2,000 hotspots (one per household) will be available for distribution.

"This initiative is one of the cornerstones of the City's strategy to continue to improve and serve our residents and is essential for our community to thrive and be competitive in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," said René Mendez, Gonzales City Manager.

In 2017 the City of Gonzales adopted a Broadband Infrastructure Strategy and its core goal was to provide basic and reliable internet service to every household in Gonzales. The partnership with T-Mobile and the **Internet 4 All** initiative (Broadband for All) was approved by the City of Gonzales City Council in October 2019. The City of Gonzales is the first city on the Central Coast to provide basic level broadband service to all households.

In addition to hotspots, the partnership between the City of Gonzales and T-Mobile included a significant investment of funds in the city's overall wireless infrastructure to allow for users to achieve download and upload speeds well above the FCC's standards.

The program began with a soft launch at CHISPA Canyon Creek Townhomes and Fanoé Vista Apartments in February 2020. Following the launch, the City began distributing wireless hotspot devices to Gonzales residents at special pickup events.



# SPECIAL INITIATIVE: GONZALES GROWS GREEN (G3)

## CANYON CREEK PARK WATERSHED PROTECTION PROJECT



### THE GONZALES SLOUGH-WATERTABLE AND WETLAND

What are young people from the GYC and GHS Interact Club doing early morning on a damp and foggy Saturday in Gonzales? Planting native plants in the Gonzales Slough at Canyon Creek Park, of course.

This is the second activity in a project collaboration between these youth service groups, Gonzales Public Works, and the Watershed Guardians Program from the Museum of Natural History in Pacific Grove. This project was partially funded by a grant the museum received from the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

The project kicked off in mid-December 2019 with a thorough cleaning of the slough (lots of trash hidden in the mud and muck, including a shopping cart!).

The second weekend activity, held in January 2020, involved the planting of native plants that support wildlife and pollinators who frequent the slough. A big bonus was being able to purchase the plants from the native plant nursery at MEarth in Carmel Valley.

Soon, interpretive signs will be placed in the park to explain how the local watershed works and the variety of birds, waterfowl, insects, and amphibians that depend on the slough for food, shelter, and reproduction.



## Clean Water Starts Here! ¡El Agua Limpia Comienza Aquí!

A watershed is an area where all water drains into the same river, and eventually to the sea. We are in the Salinas River watershed, and we rely on this watershed for our water supply.

Una cuenca es un área donde toda el agua dreña en el mismo río, y eventualmente al mar. Estamos en la cuenca del Río Salinas y confiamos en esta cuenca para nuestro suministro de agua.

You can help the plants and keep our watershed clean by disposing of common pollutants properly and not in our drains.

Puede ayudar a las plantas y mantener limpia nuestra cuenca al eliminar los contaminantes comunes de manera adecuada y no en nuestros desagües.

**Common pollutants:** Motor Oil, Fertilizer, Pesticides, Animal Waste, Litter, Sediment

**Contaminantes comunes:** aceite de motor, fertilizante, pesticidas, desechos animales, basura, sedimentos

**Farms | Granjas**

Plants take up some of the nutrients that come from farm runoff. If all the nutrients go into the river, they can cause a gas growth which can kill fish and lead to bad taste and odors in drinking water.

Las plantas absorben algunos de los nutrientes que provienen de la escorrentía de la granja. Si todos los nutrientes entran al río, pueden causar el crecimiento de algas que pueden matar a los peces y provocar mal sabor y olores en el agua potable.

**Ocean | Oceano**

**Towns | Pueblos**

Plants reduce chemicals from homes, cars, and farms that can enter through runoff. These chemicals can kill some of the smaller organisms, like insects and frogs, that keep the river's ecosystem healthy.

Las plantas reducen los productos químicos de los hogares, automóviles y granjas que pueden ingresar a través de la escorrentía. Estas sustancias químicas pueden matar algunos de los organismos más pequeños, como los insectos y las ranas, que mantienen saludable el ecosistema del río.

**Sediment | Sedimento**

Plants and their roots catch sediment entering the watershed, reducing erosion. Sediment can increase flooding, damage stream habitat, and fill reservoirs.

Las plantas y sus raíces atrapan sedimentos que entran en la cuenca, lo que reduce la erosión. Los sedimentos pueden aumentar las inundaciones, dañar el hábitat de la corriente y llenar los reservorios.

*Canyon Creek Park  
Interpretive Signage:  
Watershed Model*

*Canyon Creek Park  
Interpretive Signage: The  
Wildlife of Canyon Creek Park*

## The Wildlife of Canyon Creek Park La Vida Silvestre del Parque Canyon Creek

This park is an important home to many different animals like birds, insects, and amphibians. The native plants that fill this park benefit wildlife in many different ways.

Este parque es un hogar importante para muchos animales, como pájaros, insectos y anfibios. Las plantas nativas que llenan este parque benefician a la vida silvestre de muchas maneras diferentes.

The Purple Sage provides nectar for insects and hummingbirds. The Showy Milkweed provides an important home and food for monarch butterfly caterpillars. The Big Berry Manzanita provides food and good hiding places for many species.

Purple Sage proporciona néctar para insectos y colibríes. Showy Milkweed proporciona un importante hogar y alimento para las orugas de la mariposa monarca. Big Berry Manzanita proporciona comida y buenos escondites para muchas especies.

You can visit the Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History -- free admission for Monterey County residents -- to learn more about the plants and animals that live in our area.

Puede visitar el Museo de Historia Natural de Pacific Grove -- entrada gratuita para los residentes del condado de Monterey -- para obtener más información sobre las plantas y los animales que viven en nuestra área.



## SPECIAL INITIATIVE: GONZALES GROWS GREEN (G3) MEASURE K COMMUNITY ACTION GRANT FUNDED OWL BOX PROJECT



### SUPPORTING LEARNING & THE ECOSYSTEM

Youth participating in the City of Gonzales Winter Day Camp program were able to paint a barn owl nesting box, purchased through a Measure K Community Action Grant applied for by community member, Anna Mae Gazo. The box was purchased from *Humane Wildlife Control, Inc.* in Moss Landing. [You can learn more about their barn owl box program here.](#)

The box will be placed near the Vosti Community Center near the Public Works Department shop so that it will have access to WiFi Internet service. The box will have a live-feed camera installed that will provide youth with the ability to keep an eye on the nesting area in the box and observe the new family that moves in over the next year.

Public Works staff was able to make a template for the box so that they can build more boxes in the future. If this project is successful, the staff can add additional nesting boxes for barn owls along the Gonzales Slough corridor throughout the city. Barn owls are important to the Gonzales Slough ecosystem because they feed on undesirable rodents that, kept unchecked, can throw the ecosystem off balance.



## SPECIAL INITIATIVE: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

WELCOME CARMEN GIL!



### DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Carmen Gil has been hired for an exciting new senior leadership position responsible for building upon the City of Gonzales' longstanding commitment to innovation and deep community engagement and strategic partnerships for improving the quality of life for its community members. She will work to strengthen, create, coordinate, and facilitate high-impact public/private, cross-sector community engagement and strategic partnerships with residents (youth, adults and seniors), businesses, educational, non-profit, philanthropic and other governmental entities to address and increase the sustainability of systemic changes relevant to the City's Mission, Vision, Core Values, and highest public service priorities and community improvement goals.

### ABOUT CARMEN

Mrs. Gil has a long trajectory of working with community in various capacities. She has a keen ability to develop relationships that go beyond transactional to transformational. During the last five years, she served as the **Health in All Policies (HiAP)** Manager for the Monterey County Health Department, where she raised over 3.5 million dollars for programs that advanced equity and supported resident leadership and capacity building. There she led the development of the **Health and Wellness Element for the City of Gonzales' General Plan**. She has worked through private and public partnerships to address issues of housing, homelessness, health access and infrastructure, among others. Before working for the County of Monterey, she worked as the Manager for **Building Healthy Communities**, a statewide initiative of The California Endowment, where she collaborated with numerous community organizations and grassroots groups to advance health and equity. There she implemented numerous successful community-driven projects and effectively engaged the public in policy and decision-making opportunities. She was instrumental in the **expansion of Salinas Valley Memorial Hospital into the Gonzales community**, and most recently, led the expansion of **Ciclovía** into the four South Monterey County communities, including Gonzales in 2018. She holds a BA in Social Work from San Jose State University and a Master's degree in Public Administration/Health Services Administration from the University of San Francisco. In 2014, she was elected to join the **Board of Directors for Salinas Valley Memorial Hospital**, which she served for four years. She lives in Gonzales with her husband and three daughters.



## FIRE DEPARTMENT



Gonzales Fire Chief/Fire Marshall,  
Jason Muscio (2007)  
10 Years of Volunteer Service

### 2019 GONZALES FIRE DEPARTMENT QUICK FACTS:

- Incident Responses: 833
- Type of Response:
  - Medical & Motor Vehicle 62% (515)
  - Good Intent\* 20% (163)
  - All Others 18% (155)



*View the entire Gonzales Fire Department 2019 Annual Report [here](#)*

### MEET THE CHIEF

Fire Chief Jason Muscio began his career in the fire service in 1997 as a volunteer firefighter with the Gonzales Fire Department. In 2003 Muscio accepted a full-time Fire Engineer position with the Greenfield Fire District and served there for four years while continuing to serve Gonzales as a volunteer firefighter.

In 2007 the City of Gonzales added a full-time firefighter position, and Muscio took that opportunity to become the first full-time firefighter in his hometown. Muscio has held the rank of firefighter, Lieutenant, Captain, and Assistant Chief before his promotion to Fire Chief in 2017.

Chief Muscio currently leads the fire department consisting of four full-time personnel and eighteen volunteer firefighters, responding to over 800 calls for service annually.

Muscio is a third-generation Gonzales resident and a 1994 graduate of Gonzales High School. He and his wife Tammy live in Gonzales, and three of his adult children, all Gonzales High School graduates also live in the city. He enjoys the outdoors in his spare time and operates a small cattle ranch along with his father and son.

### DEPARTMENT CORE PURPOSE & SERVICES

Our firefighters take pride in providing safe and effective emergency response, as well as public education and fire prevention activities. We appreciate the fact that our residents treat us with respect and welcome us into their homes, even during what can be the most difficult time in a person's life. The community we serve is our extended family, and we look forward to continuing to serve for many years to come.

\*Incident responses with "Good Intent" reflect dispatched calls where the issue was resolved or non-existent upon arrival of department staff.



## FIRE DEPARTMENT



### YOUR FIREFIGHTERS

In 2019, the Gonzales Fire Department (GFD) consisted of eighteen firefighters (four full-time and fourteen volunteers). Of that number, six are Gonzales residents, while the remaining twelve commute to staff the department during twelve-hour shifts.

### 2019 SUMMARY

The past year for the GFD was one of the busiest years in our 109-year history. Despite having run approximately 100 more calls than the previous year, the Fire Department was able to maintain our standard of rapid, safe, and efficient response 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. As to improve on the standard, the Gonzales Fire Department has made improvements to training, equipment, and staffing.

### 2019 SUMMARY & HIGHLIGHTS

**SUMMER JUNIOR FIRE ACADEMY:** This year's Junior Firefighter Academy was another success! In collaboration with the Gonzales Recreation Department, GFD Junior Firefighters had the opportunity to participate in trainings regarding such topics as first-aid, rescue tools, and fire suppression.

**HORSE RESCUE:** One unique experience Gonzales firefighters were able to assist in this past winter was the rescue of a horse from a freezing pool. Thanks to the cooperation of the Monterey County SPCA and the quick thinking of Engine 8111's crew, the water was emptied from the pool, and the horse was pulled to safety.





## POLICE DEPARTMENT



Gonzales Chief of Police,  
Keith Wise (1992)

### 2019 GONZALES POLICE DEPARTMENT QUICK FACTS:

- Incident Responses: 9,388
- Reports Generated: 941
- Juvenile Diversion in Lieu of Arrest: 17

### MEET THE CHIEF

Police Chief, Keith Wise has served as Chief of the Gonzales Police Department since 2017. Chief Wise has 34 years of law enforcement experience and began his career as a Police Officer in 1986 for the City of San Juan Bautista. He joined the Gonzales Police Department in 1992 as an Officer and rose through the ranks holding positions of Police Explorer Advisor, Field Training Officer, Corporal, Sergeant, Deputy Chief, and currently Chief of Police.

Chief Wise is a member of the National Police Chief's Association, The California Police Chief's Association, Monterey County Chief Law Enforcement Officers Association, as well as being a member of the Gonzales Rotary and many other associations and groups.

Chief Wise is dedicated and committed to the City of Gonzales and enjoys serving those who live, work, and visit here. Chief Wise's top priority is to protect and serve the community by enforcing and upholding laws and by working with everyone to strengthen relationships to address quality of life issues through a service-based community policing philosophy that forms partnerships and relationships with residents, schools and businesses. Chief Wise takes great pride in these partnerships that have allowed Gonzales to remain one of the safest communities in Monterey County.

In 2019, the Department continued its commitment to strengthening ongoing partnerships and community relations that furthers the City of Gonzales vision, mission, goals, and values. The Department actively participates in various community-oriented policing projects. These projects focus and engage our community with opportunities to *serve, care,* and *connect* in our efforts to strengthen law enforcement and community relations.



[View the entire Gonzales  
Police Department 2019  
Annual Report here](#)





Records Supervisor,  
Andrea Casillas (2013)



Administrative Assistant,  
Esther Valdez (2015)



## 2019 KEY FOCUS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### STRENGTHENING LAW ENFORCEMENT AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS EVENTS

- Fourth of July in the Park
- Orange and Black 5K Run
- Dia del Niño
- Grandparents Day
- Holiday Tree Lighting
- 4C4P Block Party
- Annual AIDS Life Cycle Ride
- Memorial Day Remembrance
- St. Theodore's Good Friday Parade
- Relay for Life

### POLICE DEPARTMENT SPONSORED EVENTS

- National Night Out
- National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day
- Denim Day
- Youth Police Academy
- Educational and School Safety Presentations
- Animal Clinic and Registration
- Operation Holiday Joy
- Department Tours
- Surprise Day at the Park

## POLICE DEPARTMENT

### 2019 SPONSORED EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

- The Police Department held the annual *Dog Licensing Clinic* where rabies vaccinations and microchipping services were provided.
- *National Night Out*, with the collaboration of several community-based organizations, successfully held an impactful community event with over 1,000 attendees. The Department plans on hosting another N.N.O. in August 2020.
- Gonzales Police Department has hosted and participated for several years in collecting hundreds of pounds of unwanted prescription drugs during the annual *National Prescription Drug Take-Back Days*
- In partnership with the Gonzales Recreation department, the Gonzales Police Department held the first-ever *Youth Police Academy*.
- On Christmas morning, Chief Wise along with Corporal Solis, Officer Doughty, and Officer Pruneda delivered gifts to over 30 Gonzales families as part of *Operation Joy*.



Thank you for serving the public and all the difficult jobs you do most of all Thank you for the assistance you gave me and my family. Thank you to all the other officers for their services.  
- Gloria



Dear Chief Wise,  
Thank you so much for fitting us into your busy schedule to kick off our summer fellowship with you and the Gonzales Police Department. It was honor to get to know you in regards to your career path and the fundamental workings of the department. We are thankful for the service you and your officers do for the city of Gonzales and look forward to working with the department on National Night Out and other ventures!

On behalf of the Youth Commissioners,

Malya Sunday



# COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING DEPARTMENT



Department Head/  
Community & Economic  
Development Director,  
Matthew Sundt (2018)



Planning & Building  
Department  
Administrative Assistant,  
Tencia Vargas (2007)

## COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT SERVICES

The Community & Economic Development Department supports the Vision and Mission of the City by providing professional planning services to the City of Gonzales. The department promotes quality of life in Gonzales through careful attention to the city's physical and social development requirements. The department promotes economic development consistent with the City Council's goals and the city's adopted plans and programs.

The department processes applications for all physical development involving private land to include conditional use permits, site plan permits, sign permits, and annexations, as well as subdivisions large and small. The department works closely with applicants, other city departments, and county and state agencies to ensure development conforms to requirements and the best contemporary practices. The department manages environmental review for projects and supports the Planning Commission and City Council and is also responsible for maintaining and updating the Zoning Ordinance and Gonzales General Plan. Other activities include the administration of grant applications and affordable housing programs. The department also works on economic development through outreach assistance to property owners and developers in the promotion of the city.

## PLANNING DEPARTMENT SERVICES

The Planning Department supports the Vision and Mission of the City by providing excellent service in a friendly, cost-effective manner to ensure the community's safety is sustainable.

Construction inspections and plan reviews for building code compliance are the primary functions of this department. The department maintains the permit issuance and fee collection system, the Construction & Demolition Debris Diversion Program, the Gonzales Employee Housing Program, the Abandoned and Distressed Residential Property Program, and the Safety Assessment Program to assess disaster damage when needed. Department staff coordinate efforts with other departments and assist with the Code Enforcement Program and the Storm Water Runoff Program.



# COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING DEPARTMENT



## 2019 KEY FOCUS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Complete the two Supplemental Environmental Impact Reports related to the Vista Lucia and Puente del Monte annexation projects;
  - Submit the annexation application to the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) for review and approval;
- Assist City Manager and City Engineer with Gonzales Electrical Authority Micro-Grid;
- Process application for pending Concentric Power offices, warehousing, and electrical substation and assist City Engineer with same;
- Assist City Manager and City Engineer in obtaining approval from Union Pacific Railroad to create a new railroad crossing to serve the industrial park;
- Work with Papé Material Handling to open their new Gonzales facility; and
- Work with Caraccioli Cellars to open up their winery and tasting room in the former Jackpot building.

## 2019 SUCCESSES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Completed the 130,000 square-foot Mann Packing/Del Monte Fresh vegetable processing center;
- Commenced with Gonzales City Code amendments resulting in two new Chapters: Chpt. 4.8 - Sidewalk Vending; Chpt. 4.22 - Storage Containers; and substantial amendments to Chpt. 12.



## COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING DEPARTMENT



### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FEATURE:

The **Gonzales Shopping Center**, located on Fifth Street and Highway 101 in Gonzales, welcomed **Santa Fe Foods** in 2019. **Subway** opened a new drive-through for convenient food service to local residents and highway travelers. In 2019, property owners, Robert and Maia Palmer invested in property improvements including a comprehensive upgrade of paving and sidewalks that meet the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Under the management of Beau Oxsen of Shaw Development, the building has been repainted and refreshed. In 2020, shoppers can expect to see new energy-efficient lighting features added as well as a new roof. Investments in properties such as this drive economic development, increase sales revenue for the business occupying the shopping center, and increase sales tax revenue for the city.

In 2020, the city will help **Pacheco's Water Store** celebrate a new and expanded location in the downtown shopping district. **Mann Packing/Del Monte Fresh** has plans to fully occupy and staff their new fresh-cut processing facility. The City of Gonzales is excited to welcome **Braga Fresh/Josie's Organics**, **Church Brothers**, **Papé Material Handling**, **American BioSciences, Inc.**, and **Caraccioli Cellars** to our business community.

The department would like to recognize Special Projects Manager and Deputy City Manager, Mark Hartunian for his exemplary work ethic and problem-solving on projects in 2019. His vast array of experiences, education, approach to addressing issues, and working with people has greatly benefited department staff's work and created a cohesive work environment at City Hall. Mark is an outstanding asset, and we are lucky to have such a person at City Hall.



# PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT



Director of Public Works &  
City Engineer, Patrick Dobbins  
(2018)



Public Works Department  
Administrative Assistant,  
Andrea Navarrete (2017)

## DEPARTMENT SERVICES

The Public Works Department keeps our municipal infrastructure humming 24/7. Department staff ensures clean water flows to homes and businesses, wastewater goes where it should for treatment, and our roadways are maintained. We also take care of city vehicles, buildings, parks, trees, and landscaped areas.

Public Works staff coordinates with public agencies such as the County of Monterey, CalTrans, Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, and Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) on efforts to maintain the city's infrastructure.

The department reviews and inspects improvements that are constructed by private developers. We ensure that the work complies with city standards and permit requirements.

## 2019 KEY FOCUS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### New Industrial Wastewater Treatment System

The City-owned wastewater treatment plant processes all residential, commercial, and industrial wastewater. Due to economic expansion in the Gonzales Commercial Industrial Agricultural Business Park, the current plant is near its capacity.

To prepare for the expansion of housing resources in Gonzales, the city is moving ahead with a solution that will expand water treatment capacity and allow for separately treated industrial water to be recycled and used as irrigation water for local farmers. This expansion will reduce energy use, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and help the city meet its climate action goals. This project will foster the opportunity for continued economic development and job creation by greatly increasing water treatment capacity for the business park development.

### Sphere of Influence Growth Area (East of Highway 101)

In 2019 the Public Works Director worked closely with the Community Development Director related to the two proposed development

(continued next page)



## PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

### 2019 PUBLIC WORKS QUICK FACTS:

#### Public Works Staff Manages:

- 1 million gallons of wastewater per day
- 1,900 water & sewer connections
- 22 miles of streets & alleys
- 32 city fleet vehicles
- 13 assessment districts
- 8 parks & recreation facilities
- 3 municipal drinking water wells

(continued)

projects (Vista Lucia and Puente Del Monte) in the City's Sphere of Influence (SOI). This includes review and comment on the four Technical Master Plans (Traffic, Water, Wastewater and Drainage) prepared by the consultant; Assisting with presenting the four Master Plans (Traffic, Water, Wastewater and Drainage) at Planning Commission and City Council meetings; Coordination with staff at CalTrans District 5 and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County to obtain comments and feedback on the SOI Traffic Study; Coordination with staff at the County of Monterey to obtain comments and feedback on the proposed road improvements for Associated Lane and Fanoe Road; Supporting the Community Development Director's Request for Proposal issued to Environmental Consultants for preparation of Supplemental EIRs for both proposed developments; and Participation in bi-monthly meetings with all stakeholders.



Public Works Mechanic II,  
Raymond Vasquez (2007)

### 2019 PUBLIC WORKS EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR: RAYMOND VASQUEZ

Raymond Vasquez is the fleet mechanic for all City of Gonzales vehicles, motors, heavy equipment, and engines. His job title does not describe the breadth of responsibility Raymond carries daily. This Master Mechanic, with specialized diesel mechanic training, services police and fire department vehicles, all city equipment from small engines to tractors to electrical control panels, and lift stations and generators associated with the wastewater treatment plant.

Raymond is known to his colleagues as a resourceful person who spends hours researching and keeping his skills up-to-date. His supervisor, Tiffany Twisslemann, says he is extremely organized and runs a clean and safe mechanic shop. "He can fix anything," she says, "and if some new technology comes up, he goes and gets the training to keep up." The Public Works Department is grateful for Raymond's service to our community and would like to congratulate him on this well-earned recognition.





## PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT



*City of Gonzales Public Works  
Staff Receives 2019  
Transportation Excellence  
Awards from Transportation  
Agency for  
Monterey County*

The Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) awarded the City of Gonzales Public Works Department a **2019 Transportation Excellence Group Award** for their work on the City's "Fifth Street Bridge Pilot Traffic/Pedestrian Safety Program" at an awards ceremony held during the TAMC board meeting on January 22, 2020. The award honors the City of Gonzales public works staff for their outstanding efforts to improve transportation in Monterey County.

For the last 15 years, the City of Gonzales has studied ways to improve the Highway 101/Fifth Street interchange. Structural improvements needed to widen the bridge and associated on/off ramps are estimated to cost over \$6 million and take over five years, while the Traffic/Pedestrian Safety Program has an annual cost of \$70,000. The ability to quickly implement this program has greatly improved traffic flow at this interchange and is a great benefit to the community.

This main freeway interchange is congested during the morning commute from residents driving to work and children walking to school. The City of Gonzales Public Works staff members were nominated for their efforts directing traffic and pedestrians at the Fifth Street bridge during the morning commute hour, a project that started as a pilot program during the 2018-2019 school year.

Each morning from 7:15 a.m. until 8:00 a.m., four staff members and one supervisor are on-hand to move the traffic queues through both on/off ramps while juggling the pedestrian movements. As a result, motorists have learned to be more intentional approaching the on/off ramps as they look for the public works staff to move the vehicles as a queue.

As a result of the staff's work, the delay for morning commutes has decreased significantly. Bridge crossing, which used to take more than 20 minutes, now takes less than 5 minutes. The program has increased the safety of the school children who are more mindful using the crosswalks at the on/off-ramps. An unexpected benefit of the program is the personal connections public works staff are making with the children they see each day.



# RECREATION DEPARTMENT



Sara Papineau-Brandt,  
Recreation Programs  
Coordinator (2006)



Julie Douglas,  
Youth Programs  
Coordinator (2016)



Isabel Navarro,  
Sports & Senior Programs  
Coordinator (2016)

## DEPARTMENT SERVICES

The City of Gonzales Recreation Department's mission to "Love, Care & Connect" is born of the theory that recreation is important to a community for the promotion of "the things you do for fun."

Relaxation, exercise, and stress management fit in with the city's "Health in all Policies" goal for the community. It is well-known that communities with good recreation programs directly and positively affect the quality of life of its residents.

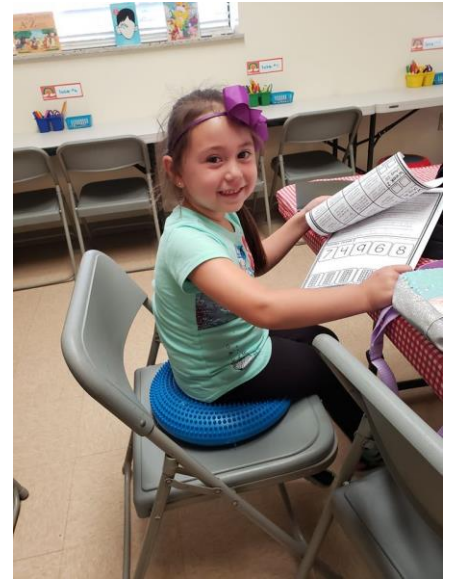
Gonzales Recreation offers youth and adult sports programs and boasts a modern community pool with swim programs for every member of the community. The department offers year-round after school, school break, summer, winter, spring, and fall day-camp programming. The department hosts, co-sponsors, and supports many special community events.

## 2019 KEY FOCUS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Transition TK-5<sup>th</sup> grade after-school program from GUSD to Gonzales Recreation "Kid Power" program at Vosti Center (80 students)
- Transition management of the Friends, Family & Neighbors' program to Community Action Partnership SLO (CAPSLO)
- Establish a Recreational Preschool program (focus on early childhood education) including sensory furniture & developmentally appropriate equipment
- Addition of a new technology lab at Vosti Center (10 laptops/25 tablets)
- Install two new community park play structures (selected by a vote of Gonzales youth)
- Implement a new swim lesson curriculum to increase achievement, help instructors teach skills, and help students progress through skills (10-hour staff inservice)
- A senior citizen program activity available every day during the summer of 2019
- Establish year-round adult sports programming: Basketball, co-ed volleyball, co-ed dodgeball, co-ed softball
- Establish a junior police officer program to compliment the summer recreation junior firefighter program



# RECREATION DEPARTMENT



## RECREATION DEPARTMENT



### 2019 RECREATION QUICK FACTS:

- 27 Summer Interns Employed
- 229 Summer Camp Program Participants
- Gonzales pool was open for programming 82.5 hours per week
- 308 Personalized holiday letter responses from the "Big Guy in the Red Suit"
- 99 Youth Participants in Community Theatre Program

### 2019 RECREATION VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR: ANNA MAE GAZO

Anna Mae Gazo, a retired educator, has been volunteering as a tutor for the City of Gonzales **Kid Power** after school program since 2018. She helps program participants with their assigned homework and helps to get them up-to-speed with their reading.

Program Director, Julie Douglas says that Anna Mae is a treasured asset to the program because she can give one-on-one attention to the kids who struggle the most. This allows staff to work in groups with kids who need less intensive tutoring. "Her teaching expertise is most valued to our team," says Douglas.

Douglas also says that she makes tutoring sessions so fun that the kids constantly ask if Anna Mae will be coming each day. They may also be excited because she often brings her senior labrador retriever, Emma with her. Douglas says that Emma is a calming influence on the kids. They pet her and love on her long enough to get their wiggles out, and, then, they are ready to settle down and learn. Emma naps quietly on the rug afterward.

"Anna Mae is greatly missed when she is not there, and we are so grateful to have her when she is," says Douglas. The City of Gonzales appreciates Anna Mae Gazo's volunteer service and thanks her for sharing her **Love, Care & Connect** with our young people!



### NEW PLAY STRUCTURE AT MEYER PARK

The 2019 Meyer Park Playground Project was to replace the park's 24-year-old play structure for youth ages 5 to 12. Recreation Department staff selected three structures that fit the project budget and footprint. They had previously sought input on the replacement playground structure at Canyon Creek for youth ages 2 to 5. That community engagement was so successful that the staff wanted to give the older children a chance to choose as well. Students at La Gloria School were polled on their choice as they came out of the cafeteria. 575 kids from kinder to fifth grade participated in the survey. The winning structure was installed in January 2020 and opened in February.



# RECREATION DEPARTMENT

CITY OF GONZALES RECREATION DEPARTMENT PROGRAMS GOAL=  
RECREATION PROGRAMS FOR ALL AGES



## Early Childhood (0-5)

Bilingual Story Time @ Library, FFN Playgroups, Kinder Ready Basketball, Kinder Ready Soccer, Mini T-Ball, Parent Child Play Groups 0-12 mo., Parent Child Play Groups 2-5, Recreational Preschool, Swim Lessons, Tot Swim, Wonder Camp, Dive-In Movies



## Youth (6-12)

After School Program, Character Development, Coding Club, Day Camp, Environmental Leadership Academy, Kid's Crafts, Musical Theatre Production, Summer School Swim, Swim Lessons 6 mo.-Adult, Theatre Camp, Tot Swim, Video Game Club, Youth Basketball, Youth Flag Football, Youth Indoor Soccer, Youth Soccer, Youth Sportsmanship Recognition, Youth Volleyball, Dive-In Movies



## Middle School (6-8th Grade)

Challenger Camp, Junior Firefighters, Junior Lifeguards, Junior Police Officers, Musical Theatre Production, Science Club, Summer School Swim, Swim Lessons 6 mo.-Adult, Theatre Camp, Video Game Club, Youth Basketball, Youth Coding Club, Dive-In Movies



## Teens (9-12th Grade)

Coding Club, Deep Water Aerobics, Journalism Workshop, Junior Firefighters, Junior Lifeguards, Junior Police Officers, Mermaid Aerobics, Outdoor Adventures, Pool Internship, Shallow Water Aerobics, Sports Internship, Summer Camp Internship, Summer Employment, Swim Lessons 6 mo.-Adult, Teen Night Special Event, Theatre Camp Internship, Video Game Club, Dive-In Movies



## Adults (18+)

Adult Co-ed Softball League, Co-ed Basketball League, Co-ed Flag Football League, Co-ed Indoor Soccer, Co-ed Volleyball League, Community Clean Up G3, Composting Workshop G3, Deep Water Aerobics, FFN Playgroups, Mermaid Aerobics, Open Gym, Shallow Water Aerobics, Volunteer Opportunities, Dive-In Movies



## Seniors (55+) & All Ages

Chair Fitness, Senior Rec. Committee, Senior Zumba, Senior Field Trips, Senior Socials, Senior Yoga, Shallow Water Aerobics, Dive-In Movies, Holiday Lights, Night Swim, Private Pool Parties, Recreation Swim, Sensory Safe Swim, Swim Lessons



## RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT: EMILY RIOS



---

*"I dream of a time in Gonzales where people say, 'There's always been a community musical.'"*

*-Emily Rios*

---

Emily Rios grew up in Chula Vista, California, near San Diego. She met her husband, Simon, at Fresno State. After graduating from college as a music major, she taught for three years in the Central Valley. "In many ways, Gonzales has a population that is similar to the one in which I grew up," she says.

In 2014, Emily and Simon decided to start a family, and they also decided that they wanted to be close to family. Simon Rios grew up in Gonzales, and much of his family is still rooted here. Simon took a position with PG&E's gas service department in the Salinas Valley, and Emily took the position of choir and guitar instructor for high school and middle school students at Gonzales Unified School District.

After putting down her roots in Gonzales, Emily participated in the Gonzales Recreation program's revitalization of community musical theatre in Gonzales where she serves as the musical director. The community's first production was the musical Annie. Since that time, she has participated as a volunteer in the Willy Wonka and Wizard of Oz musicals.

Music and performing arts are an important part of Emily's life. She says that having a community musical is a legacy she wants to leave to the community. "I dream of a time in Gonzales," she says "where people say, 'There's always been a musical!'"

Emily and her husband have two sons, Simon (2 years) and Alvaro (4 months). There came a time in her teaching career, where she decided to take some time off to be the primary caregiver for her children. Part of that meant organizing daily enrichment, outdoor, and socialization activities for her boys.

(continued next page)



## RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT: EMILY RIOS



---

*"When I advocate for my own children, I know that I'm also advocating for all of the children of Gonzales."*

*-Emily Rios*

---

Emily says that it was disappointing that most of the activities she wanted for her children were taking place in other cities in the county. As she did a bit of digging, she discovered that there were existing programs in Gonzales at the public library and through the City of Gonzales such as the Friends, Family & Neighbors' (FFN) playgroup.

Emily approached both the staff at the Gonzales Library and the recreation department to see if they would allow her to share her musical and teaching talents with the community. They both agreed her talents would be a welcome addition to their programs. In 2019, she started a bilingual summer storytime at the library, added a circle time offering music, singing, and dancing to the FFN playgroup, and started a summer theatre boot camp with the recreation department, culminating in an end-of-summer performance for parents.

The 2018 City of Gonzales Recreation Department Volunteer of the Year says she wants the children of Gonzales to have access to the same types of enrichment programs that are available in other cities. Emily is inspired by the culture of volunteerism in the community. She says that where activities are available, and she has a talent to offer, she wants to join in and share her gifts with others. "When I advocate for my own children, I know that I'm also advocating for all of the children of Gonzales."

Emily has also been actively engaged in civic activities in Gonzales. She says that she wants to continue her advocacy for a larger community center facility that can provide services and opportunities for all residents of Gonzales. "This is a great town. I feel safe here, and you can walk almost anywhere. While Gonzales has limited resources, we always seem to be able to come together and work it out for the benefit of our kids."



## COMMUNITY PARTNERS



Monterey School of Law • Gonzales Apostolic Church • Bright Beginnings • Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo (CAPSLO) • Alliance on Aging • Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) • Boys and Girls Clubs of Monterey County • Bright Futures Education Partnership • Central Coast Broadband Consortium • CHISPA • Clínica de Salud del Valle Salinas • County of Monterey • Cypress Church Gonzales • California Public Utilities Commission • Gonzales Chamber of Commerce • Gonzales Community Church Food Pantry & Clothing Closet • Gonzales High School Cheer • Gonzales High School Cross Country, Track & Field • Gonzales High School Football • Gonzales High School Interact Club • Gonzales Lions Club • Gonzales Little League • Gonzales Rotary Club • Adventure Seeking Seniors • Gonzales Scout Troop 370 • Gonzales Unified School District • Gonzales Volunteer Fire Department • Grupos Unidos • Olinga Learning • Gonzales Youth Guardians • Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey • CSU Monterey Bay • Monterey Bay Aquarium • Monterey Bay Air Resources District • Monterey Bay Community Power • Monterey Bay Economic Partnership • Monterey County Business Council • Monterey County Free Libraries • Monterey County Health Department: Administration, Public Health, Behavioral Health & Environmental Health Bureaus • Monterey County Housing Authority • Monterey Salinas Transit • Engie Services US • Poder Popular • Mechanics Bank • Salinas Valley Memorial Healthcare System • Salinas Valley Recycles • Salvation Army • Save the Whales • St. Theodore's Church • Sun Street Centers • Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) • Taylor Farms Family Health & Wellness Center • The Wahine Project • Women's Policy Institute • Gonzales Community Collaborative • Impact Monterey County • United Way • T-Mobile for Education • Hartnell College





# FAREWELL HAROLD WOLGAMOTT

YOU WILL BE MISSED!



## STAFF POSITIONS HELD

- Emergency Services Director/Special Project Analyst
- Staff Project Manager "Gonzales Grows Green"
- Gonzales Youth Council Advisor
- Director of Public Works, Building Official, Information Technology Lead
- Fire Services Director/Fire Marshall/Building Inspector
- Temporary/Acting Recreation & Economic Development

## COMMUNITY SERVICE

- Gonzales City Council (1986 - 2000) & Mayor (1992-1994)
- Gonzales Volunteer Fire Department (1973-2012)
- Chaperone: Environmental Leadership Academy, Outdoor Adventures
- Board of Directors: AMBAG, California Council of Gov., Western Council of Governments & Nat. Assn. of Regional Councils
- Emergency Medical Services Committee
- Groundwater Sustainability Agency advisory committee
- Operational Area Coordinating Committee

## HAROLD WOLGAMOTT RETIRES FROM CITY OF GONZALES

With his extensive educational background, including several specialized certifications, Harold Wolgamott was the go-to city employee with the City of Gonzales for over 47 years. Throughout his career, he served in city government at every level from volunteer, to department head, to elected government official. This experience made him a unique member of the City of Gonzales team, able to quickly assume the responsibilities of open department head positions, bridging the gap to keep city services operating seamlessly.

Gonzales residents and businesses benefited from his pursuit of excellence when it came to upholding the highest standards in public safety and service. This was exemplified in his positions as emergency services director, fire marshal, building official and building inspector, and through his many aspects of service in the fire department as an official and volunteer fire fighter.

Harold will be sorely missed by his colleagues at the City of Gonzales, who came to depend on him as a trusted advisor, a respected resource, and a team member who supported the growth and learning of his colleagues.

The staff at the City of Gonzales and the Gonzales City Council wish Harold many years of joy and as he heads off to new adventures with his wife, Cindy, children, and grandchildren.



## PHOTO CREDITS



### PHOTO CREDITS

The City of Gonzales wishes to thank the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and photographer Josh Kohanek for the many beautiful photos they have contributed to this publication. The photos listed below are: Copyright 2019 Josh Kohanek, courtesy of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Cover Page (L-R 1, 3, 4, 5, 7); Table of Contents (top-bottom 1-3); Page 6; Page 11 (1-3); Page 12 (1-3); Page 13 (1-2); Page 25; Page 28 (all photos); Page 37; Page 38; Page 39;

Other photo credits: Page 15 (photo 1 Vito Di Stefano); (photo 2 shared by Cindy Aguilar-Castañeda); (photo 3 Paige Green, courtesy of the Women's Earth Alliance)

Staff portraits provided by Gonzales Police Officer Santiago Melgoza and Johnny Cadenaz Photography. City Council Portraits provided by Johnny Cadenaz Photography and Monterey Salinas Transit (Councilmember Worthy).

The City of Gonzales is grateful for the many city staff members and community members who take a moment out of their work day to photograph and share special stories about the great work going on in our community. Their stories and photographs help us better understand and treasure the gift we have in one another.

Additional photo contributions from: Jean Salcido, Cindy Aguilar-Castañeda, Carmen Gil, Maury Treleven, Sara Papineau-Brandt, Julie Douglas, Tiffany Twisselmann, Fire Chief Jason Muscio, and Police Chief Keith Wise.

