



8th Annual Festival in the Park

The “8th Annual Festival in the Park” was an outstanding success bringing neighbors together to celebrate from all over District 1 on September 20, 2008. The day began with glorious fall weather and the Westmont High School Marching Band playing the “Star Spangled Banner.” San José Mayor Chuck Reed welcomed the opening of the festival and Danny Hull, a former member of the Doobie Brothers, after changing into his new Pete Constant District 1 Staff t-shirt, grabbed the stage and entertained the crowds by singing and playing world-class saxophone and harmonica. A special treat for everyone was the performance by Teen Idol winner, Brenley Yamakoshi, who sang “Colors of the Wind” on the main stage. Brenley’s homegrown talent was appreciated by everyone!

Several couples took advantage of the infield dance floor spinning their partners to the music and District 1 resident and Hathaway Park Neighborhood Association Board member Rich McCoy did a fantastic job as Master of Ceremonies keeping the good times moving along.

In addition to dancing, neighbors had access to over 30 resource vendors who filled the basketball courts of the park while Office of Therapeutic Services staff led a demonstration of wheelchair basketball. Shelley Ash, a resident of District 1 and Kaiser Permanente’s Health booth representative, teamed up with 24 Hour Fitness and reported taking a total of 45 blood pressures from neighbors including performing body fat screenings.

According to Ash, “Our neighbors asked intriguing questions around health, such as the value of a healthy diet and regular exercise to the various resources around District 1 for family recreation and fitness. It was my honor and privilege to volunteer on Saturday.”

Kids made the rounds of activities from the Library Mobile to the jump houses, to the very popular dunk tank, then on to the craft tables staffed by library personnel, and finally to the carnival games out on the field.

Participation of city safety personnel are one of the big highlights of the festival every year. The Shark’s Fire Truck attracted kids of all ages with red plastic fire hats being given out to up and coming firefighters. The Police Canine Unit demonstrated the close working relationship of a highly trained dog and an officer. Working closely with our Police Lieutenant on the ground, the Police helicopter made an exact 3 p.m. flyover Hathaway Park.

The food line was popular and thanks to the work of members and spouses from the Association of San José Retired Police Officers and Firefighters the food was cooked to perfection! There were 1,300 free hamburgers, hotdogs, and veggie burgers served and 1,300 ice cream bars consumed. Many residents were able to meet new faces at the food tables and strike up conversations in a relaxed atmosphere in contrast to the busy weekdays schedules that don't allow for casual, "get to know you" exchanges. Some residents found out they only live a few houses apart. This is the real goal of the festival; to connect residents with each other to build a sense of community and to connect them with the resources that will help them achieve that goal.

One need that came up during the planning of the festival was larger capacity food tents to serve the increasing number of participants. Construction of a couple of new food tents by some willing Eagle Scout candidates would be fantastic for next year's event (call the District 1 office at 408-535-4901 if you are an Eagle Scout candidate looking for a project).