

# COUNCILMAN OLIVERIO PROPOSES VISION ZERO INITIATIVE TO IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

*Contracting with other law enforcement agencies would help*

BY LEETA-ROSE BALLESTER

With a mission to end pedestrian fatalities in San Jose, a proposal is on the table to reduce speed limits and heighten enforcement of traffic laws.

The Vision Zero Initiative, which has been pitched by District 6 Councilman Pierluigi Oliverio, would entail red light cameras at troubled intersections, a reduction of speed in school zones to 15 mph and a possible contract with the California Highway Patrol or the Santa Clara County Sheriff to cite unlawful drivers.

"Outside of lowering or limiting pedestrian death, it would bring tranquility," Oliverio said. "It's a multi-pronged attack where you plan to manage it many ways."

Oliverio, who had previously rallied to lower speeds around some of the schools in his district, said he wants to see safety improved for pedestrians around all of San Jose's schools.

Red light cameras would be installed at the "highest crash intersections" under the program, he said, and fines from citations would go toward paying for the equipment.

"The money is there," Oliverio said. "It's a case of, 'Is it a priority?'"

The Vision Zero proposal also asks city officials to consider contracting with CHP or the sheriff's department to enforce the reduced speed limit and other traffic laws, focusing first on areas prone to collisions.

Funding to bring in another agency would come from "unspent funds from over 120 unfilled police officer positions," according to Oliverio's memorandum proposing the program.

"It's going to take years to ramp up [our numbers of] police officers," he said, adding that a contract with other agencies in the meantime could mean safer streets for pedestrians.

Oakland, Stockton and Santa Cruz are among the local cities that have similar contracts with the CHP.

Parent and San Jose resident Jay Hann said his son's school could definitely use traffic calming and enforcement at pick-up and drop-off times.

"If they could post someone here and address not just the speeding but other issues, it could help," he said,

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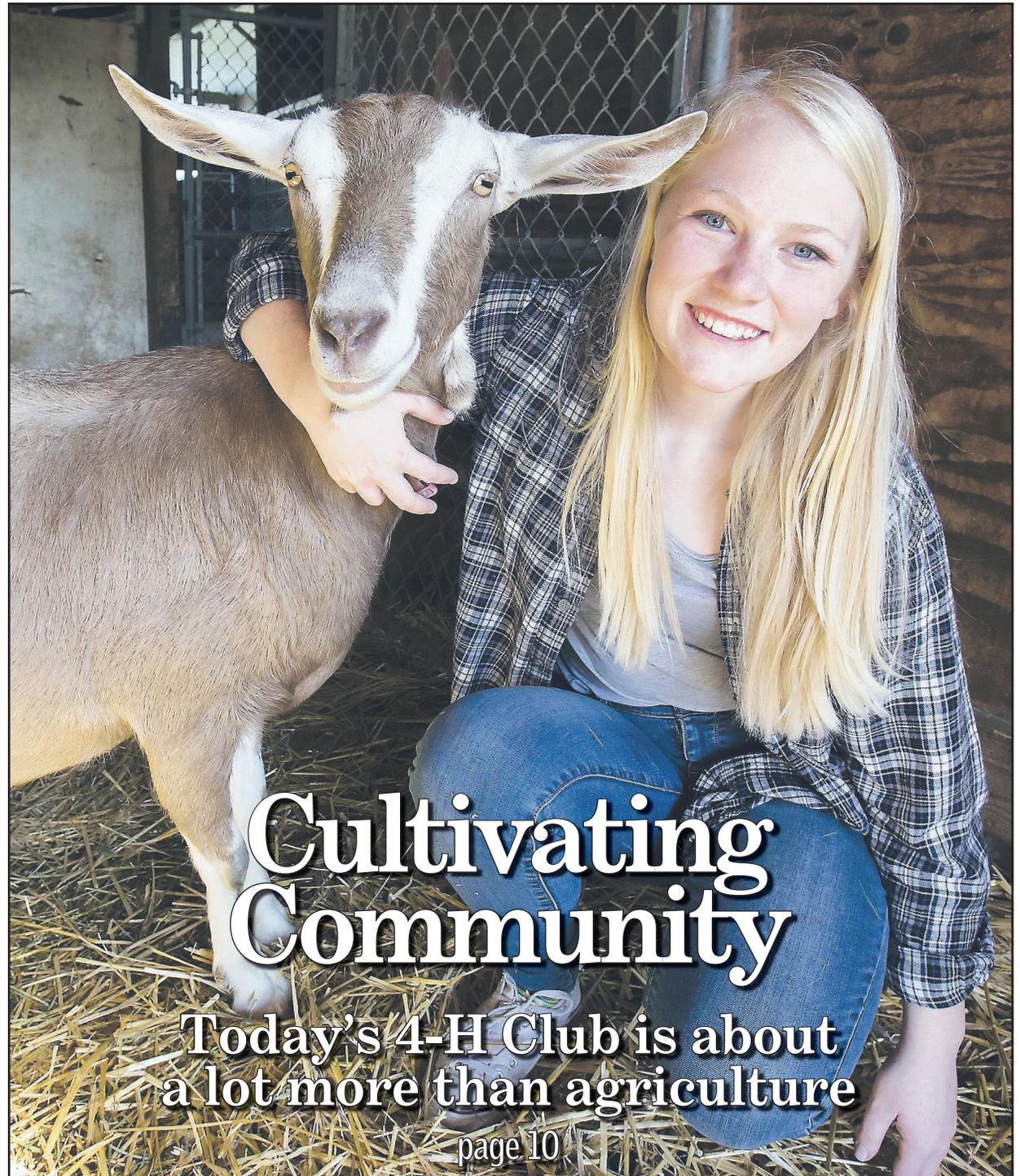


# Rose Garden Resident

179

\$1.00

Volume 12, Issue 25 April 3, 2015 www.community-newspapers.com



PHOTOGRAPH BY JACQUELINE RAMSEYER

A MediaNews Group NEWSPAPER

## Cultivating Community

Today's 4-H Club is about a lot more than agriculture

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Jackie Penner, 16, president of the Homesteaders 4-H Club, is seen here with one of the farm's dairy goats. The 4-H club is for youths 5-19 and covers projects from caring for dairy and meat goats to beekeeping and outdoor adventures.



Anna Amaro, 14, spends some quality time with her Nigerian dwarf goat Griffin at the Homesteaders 4-H Club. Anna started caring for the goat when it was 2 weeks old; Griffin is now 4.

# Growing Interest

## Local 4-H Clubs have waiting lists to join

By LEETA-ROSE BALLESTER

Photographs by JACQUELINE RAMSEYER

**W**hen the 4-H club started in 1902 as the Corn Growing Club, it was an after-school agriculture-based youth group. Now, more than a century later, the youth-led clubs have gone in as many directions as the children involved can take them.

Santa Clara County has nine

main 4-H clubs that draw kids from all areas—depending on what each club has to offer. And a youth who joins a club nearest to them is free to join projects at another club.

The club has become one of the largest youth development programs in the nation, and waiting lists have started to form at the local level.

### Taking the lead

Jackie Penner, 16, said she has grown from a shy 10-year-old to a confident leader in her time with the club.

She is the president of the Homesteaders 4-H, which operates the last ranch in the city of Santa Clara in a collaborative ef-

fort with Master Gardeners.

“What I like is that you can do anything,” she said, as she made her rounds around the barn. “You don’t have to follow another group; you can choose your own path.”

Though each club has monthly all-group meetings, the members, ages 5-19, can sign up for a number of projects and committees.

Each of those project groups will have their own meetings as well.

Jill Willard, a parent volunteer for the Rolling Hills 4-H based in Cupertino, said that the youth do everything from budgets to scheduling for their projects.

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“Where else can you do something and no one can get upset?” she asked. “It’s about the learning process. The kids do it; we’re just there.”

Letting the children lead their own activities—and make some mistakes along the way—can be hard for parents but, Willard said, it fosters growth in many facets of life.

“Because it’s hands on and it promotes the youth, it’s a really good experience,” she said.

For Jackie, who is now mentoring younger children in Homesteaders, 4-H has helped her see her “real potential.”

“I was able to start taking on leadership opportunities,” she said. “You learn a lot about responsibility, public speaking and communications.”

Those themes are integrated into nearly every aspect of the club, according to the teenager.

### In the barn

Ilan Montes, 15, lets out his brood of hens and looks into the rabbit pens, and talks about things he has learned.

Chickens take dirt baths to keep pests away. Goats’ hooves need to be shaved. Rabbits’ teeth grow, and that’s why they gnaw on things.



Elan Montes, 15, talks about caring for chickens and how new additions to the ranch such as Anouk, seen here, have to spend time in quarantine before joining the brood.

He has connected with his animals and can explain why they do some of the things they do.

Beyond learning animal behavior, Ilan is gaining the skill of caring for others and taking care of the animals on a daily basis.

As ranch liaison, he also has a number of responsibilities to the animals and to his fellow club members, he said.

From feeding and cleaning out coops to helping pass ranch policies that would affect 4-H on a countywide level, the ranch has allowed the teen to take on more tasks as he gets older, he said.

There are aspects of farm life that many kids living in the hustle and bustle of Santa Clara County cities may not experience if it weren’t for clubs such as 4-H.

Jackie, waiting for her two goats to give birth, has rushed to the ranch each day after school to time contractions and prepare to deliver the babies on her own.

Since getting her goats, she has been tasked with giving vaccinations, feeding them, milking them and even driving to bring them on “dates.”

The dairy goat project is a long-term commitment because these animals won’t be sold at farm.

Youth ages 9 and up can take on the raising of large animals like goats and swine. Younger children are able to raise chickens, turkeys, rabbits, guinea pigs and pygmy goats.

When children do show an animal at the county fair, they must present to the judges and are graded on a rubric.

Colleen Alger, a San Jose resident and parent volunteer at the Coyote Crest club, said her two children learned a lot about public speaking from their experi-

ence at the fair.

“They are competing against themselves,” she said. “They get feedback from the judges, but most

their home clubs.

Simply put, 4-H isn’t just about agriculture these days. If the youth want it, they can do it.

“We do everything from computers to cooking to archery and animals,” Alger said.

There are ceramics and arts groups, knitting projects, photography and robotics, depending on which club you frequent, and the option is always there for a child to visit other 4-H clubs in the county.

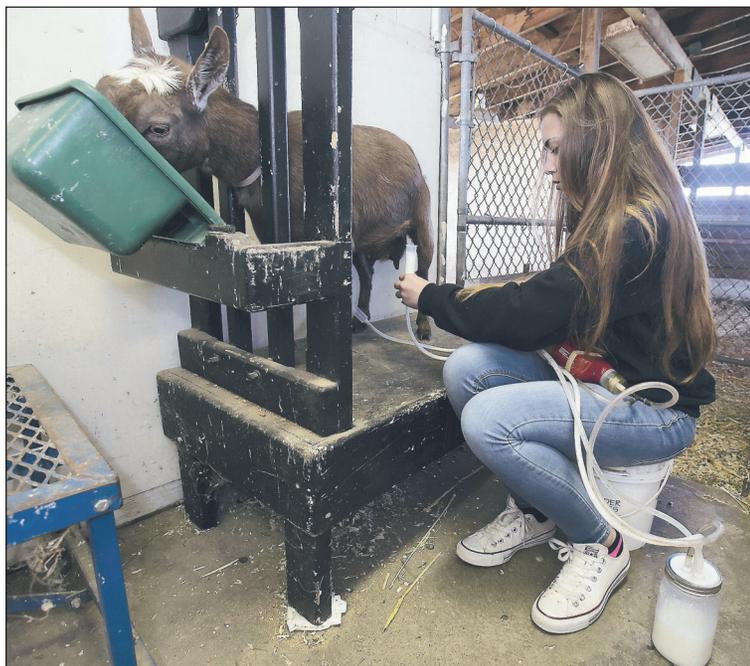
Alger said both she and her husband were 4-H kids and knew that their children could have an opportunity to try new things by joining.

By working on projects together, Ilan said he has forged friendships and values the social aspect of belonging to the club.

“The community is nice,” he said. “No matter what project you’re on, everyone knows you.”

And the parents become more involved than other activities where they might stand on the sidelines, even though it is youth led, said his mother Misty Montes.

“4-H is not a drop-off program,” she said. “It becomes a family thing. It’s an all-in-one program and it’s a natural progression



Anna Amaro’s Nigerian dwarf goat Griffin munches some food while Anna does the goat’s daily milking at the Homesteaders 4-H Club.



Members of the Homesteaders 4-H Club include, from left, parent volunteer Misty Montes, rabbit project teen leader Elan Montes, 15, president Jackie Penner, 16, and Teresa Heng-Penner, dairy goat project/community club leader.

importantly, the kids start the presentations at the peer level.”

### Varying interests

Boys and girls can also take on and suggest other projects to

from being a member to becoming a leader.”

For more information on the Homesteaders Ranch, visit [bit.ly/1HHh6ql](http://bit.ly/1HHh6ql). To find your closest 4-H club, visit [scc4h.org](http://scc4h.org).