

**CAROLING CHILDREN
SPREAD CHEER
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Dr. Byron D. Clift Breland

Breland appointed new Chancellor for San Jose-Evergreen Community District

The San Jose – Evergreen Community College District (SJEC-CD) board of trustees has appointed a new chancellor unanimously selecting Dr. Byron D. Clift Breland for the position.

Dr. Clift Breland previously served as San Jose City College (SJCC) president from 2013 until his appointment as interim chancellor in July 2018. He has held numerous instructional and admin-
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Evergreen-East Valley Family YMCA manager joyfully inspires all

*Lupe Ruvalcaba celebrates
23 years of helping others*

By Kevin Larsen
Times Staff Writer

The Evergreen - East Valley Family YMCA on White Road is a deeply caring organization.

The YMCA is much more than a place for one to get a workout, as the atmosphere inside the facility exudes wellness because of the way everyone is treated. When you walk through the door you are family.

Lupe Ruvalcaba oversees the Evergreen-East Valley Family YMCA facility, with a management style that is strong and also maternal.

Stepping through the door 23 years ago, she gradually worked her way up the ladder while refining her skill set to become Executive Director. To create balance, she finds ways to make each person comfortable as she speaks with them.

The people who greet you are upbeat, kind, and part of your community family. It's a bustling place.

A member relates an experience in
See RUVALCABA, page 10



Lupe Ruvalcaba oversees the East Valley Family YMCA facility and she is strong and maternal in her management style, which she has developed over her 23 year career with the YMCA.

OPINION: Community can rally for victims of the Camp Fire

By Kari Trautman
Special to the Times

The deadliest and most destructive fire in California history erupted at dawn on Nov. 8 in Paradise, and within minutes, stiff winds whipped it into a monster.

At first what has come to be known as the Camp Fire devoured 10 football-fields of terrain every minute, and then moved onto the neighborhoods. The fire hit so fast and so hard that many people had no time to react and if they did escape it literally was with just the shirt on their back.

Flames virtually destroyed the entire 27,000-population town of Paradise and surrounding communities. What makes this especially devastating is that typically with these types of events there is a community rally to pull

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An El Dorado NF engine holds a firing operation on Division LL of the Camp Fire.
Photo Credit: Mike Loeffler, ENF. Photo via Flickr.com - CC2.0



San Jose-Evergreen

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Times **Cover Story**

Ruvalcaba

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seeing Ruvalcaba in action. “The community knows to go to her. Once there was a young youth who lost their mother. Ruvalcaba was informed of the tragedy and she ensured that the child was enrolled in summer camp to get the joy of being nurtured with new friends. For eight weeks the youth bridged the void felt by their loss.”

She doesn’t settle for waiting for time to slowly pass by. Instead, she is a whirlwind in the way she masterfully accomplishes myriads of projects all day, week, month, year and decade. But equally as important in completion of the tasks is in the process of striving to make things happen, she ensures everyone is happy too. When work is joyful, people are happy in what they do. This creates a warm atmosphere for all.

There is a special secret that she reveals. She succeeds by listening to others. Not only does she hear what people say but she uses skills of empathy to truly unlock new solutions to what might be perceived as unfixable problems.

Finding that winning feeling

This is one of the epicenters of well-being in our area that day in and day out consistently offers quality services that inspire individuals and families in developing to their fullest potential in

mind, body and spirit.

Multitude of services offered

The Evergreen – East Valley Family YMCA is a positive force in the community, with more than 100 exercise classes for members each week as well as additional programs which positively impact people to create a healthy community.

“Strengthening the community is our cause,” is stated in their mission statement. The staff works side by side to make sure, regardless of age, income or background, everyone has the opportunity to enrich their lives by learning to grow and thrive.

There is a focus on Youth Development, Healthy Living and Social Responsibility which helps improve the community. The “Y” nurtures the potential of everyone and improves the health of the community while also offering opportunities for giving back to the community.

After school programs, Day and Holiday Camp, Parent engagement, swimming, youth sports, Early Learning Readiness and a vast number of other programs run like clockwork.

The YMCA also has expanded to offer a Diabetes Prevention Program, Senior Enhance-Fitness classes, Cancer survivor - Living Strong Living Well Program, Tae Kwon Do, Weight Loss Challenge support program, over 100 Group Exercise Classes for all fitness levels and ages including Zumba, Cycling, Yoga, Body Pump, Aqua

Aerobics, and much more.

Cause Driven

“The “Y” team leaders are cause driven in striving to help others and we’re determined to do this by finding genuine ways,” explained Ruvalcaba. “Being positive really matters here; every day matters. I think it is important for people to love what they do. If not, best to do something else that interests you so that you find your passion in doing something that motivates you and is inspiring to you.” One elderly man backs up this statement and earlier in the day, while having coffee in the entrance, stated, “There is zero negativity here!”

Ruvalcaba continued, “I like to lead by example and for me, I just love connecting with people for that makes me happy. Sometimes people have a concern and I try to meet everyone with a smile. I listen to their story and gain more information on the situation. Often through clarification issues are mended and solved. I always allow for listening for it builds trust and I can guide people to solutions.”

How will I present myself today?

“When I start each day, I ask myself, ‘how do I wish to present myself today,’” said Ruvalcaba. “This gets me started down the right path. Everything revolves around the people who work at the YMCA exuding a positive attitude! I get to know my members in this YMCA. The coffee at the entrance and the many tables allows groups of

people to meet each day and talk. When I speak to a member it is always individualized. When I understand my members I can find out in more depth their needs and this allows me to assist.”

Ruvalcaba continued, “At the end of each day I reflect on how it all went. I think about ways we created positive impact in the lives of our members. Sometimes things happen that are unexpected and I get strength and joy out of quickly managing the unexpected.”

Weight training offered

Weight training is one of many programs offered at the “Y”. Recently, a community member was not sure about using weight training equipment due to having lost a limb. Just as the person was ready to give up, Ruvalcaba stepped in and created with staff a new way of addressing the unique challenge. A wellness coach was called in to help develop a sophisticated workout that not only engaged the person into coming back but also developed strength in her body so that she could find that winning feeling to become a regular there. Ruvalcaba states, “I spoke with our wellness coach and exercises were carefully created so that a comfort level was developed which turned into trust. We wanted to let this person know that we were there for them and it was perhaps a scary moment in their life too.

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Times **Cover Story**

Chancellor

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istrative positions in K-12 and higher education.

During his time as SJCC president and his tenure as interim chancellor, Dr. Clift Breland worked to develop partnerships in Silicon Valley that provide meaningful educational and job training experiences for the diverse student body of SJCC and Evergreen Valley College. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in consumer economics and a Master of Science degree in family studies from the University of Maryland, College Park; a Master of Science in education and a Ph.D. in counseling psychology, both from the University of Southern California.

His innovative leadership has positioned SJCC among the top institutions in the nation in career education and workforce preparation. He now brings that innovative leadership to the entire District. “We are very fortunate to have such a visionary and transformative leader in Dr. Clift Breland to serve as District chancellor,” SJECCD Board President Mayra Cruz said. “Having such a great candidate already in the District ensures a smooth transition as we move into the next phase for SJECCD and continue the upward trajectory of the District.”

“I am thankful to the board of

trustees for placing their confidence in me to be the next chancellor of San Jose – Evergreen Community College District. The District’s values of opportunity, equity, and social justice align with my personal values as an educator,” said Dr. Clift Breland. “I am honored to have the opportunity to continue working alongside my colleagues, including San Jose City College Acting President Jorge Escobar and Evergreen Valley College President Keith Aytch in service to our students and the entire community. Our District is well-positioned for this next chapter.”

In November 2016, voters of the District passed Measure X, a \$748 million general obligation bond. “With Measure X, we have an opportunity to reshape our campuses and create truly cutting edge 21st Century teaching and learning environments,” said Dr. Clift Breland.

During a period when many community colleges around the state are experiencing declining enrollment, SJECCD has seen its enrollment increase in recent years. In 2017 the District launched the San Jose Promise, which provides up to two years of cost-free education for qualifying students. Currently, nearly 1,000 students are attending San Jose City College or Evergreen Valley College as part of this program.

For more information, visit www.sjeccd.edu.

Ruvalcaba

Continued from previous page
That’s what we do.” All this was only accomplished through Ruvalcaba’s talent of listening and caring and her harnessing the power of carefully trained workers, which was created by with the entire team’s help!

Social Responsibility

The YMCA is a very safe place for kids. Also, there are ways everyone can get financial assistance to make it possible to become a member. This allows for more children and families to participate.

Ms. Ruvalcaba has strengthened the Evergreen community as well as many other nearby communities. She has harnessed the carefully created ideas and programs from “Y” corporate, tailored them, added new twists and made them lovingly come alive for all. She works behind the scenes so to speak to craft new ideas to mesh well with the needs of the people in our local area.

The “Y” Annual Giving Campaign is a way the center raises funds for programs and services too! No other organization does it like the “Y” because Ruvalcaba ensures the center is relationship-based and involves members as she strives each day to make a positive community impact for all.

Editor’s note; Lupe Ruvalcaba, is a wife, mother and heart-centered community leader with more than two decades experience in organizational leadership and social services. Within

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–Lupe Ruvalcaba

this time she has led efforts that focus on best practices and positive adult and youth development. Over the years she has sat on the San Jose Mayor’s Gang Task Force when it first was initiated, and is a member of the San Jose East/Evergreen Rotary Club. She has been recognized with the Exemplary Leadership Award by Hispanic Portraits of Success and as a Phenomenal Woman by Santa Clara County Women’s Commission. She earned her Bachelor’s Degree in Social Work from San Jose State University and obtained her Master’s Degree in Human Services with Emphasis in Organizational Leadership from Springfield College.