

# ***BE IN THE KNOW...***

September 18, 2020

Dear Friends,

In my last update to you, I made a note of our staff's longevity. This week I add the theme of "making connections" because, in the non-profit world, that's what our financial and operational sustainability is all about.

With that said, congratulations to **Clara Levrault** and **Lee Osborne** for being elected Chair and Vice-Chair of our Board of Directors. Clara is a product of the La Quinta Club. She has now come full circle serving on the board.

Board longevity is right up there too! Amongst our 37 members, you have 490 years invested in operating this organization! The top third's service ranges between 15 years all the way to 42, with **John Foster** (West Coast Turf) and **Mark Nickerson** (Prime Time) at the high end. Although we have a diverse board, the ag industry is well represented, including **Osborne-Rincon, CPAs** specializing in agricultural accounting and which morphed over the years from the Indio firm, **Peterson, Slater & Butvidas** - of which all three principles also served as board members. To link all the connections even tighter, employee **Sharon Butvidas-O'Donnell** attended the grand opening of the Indio Boys Club in 1966 and is now a 10-year employee. A lot of history here.

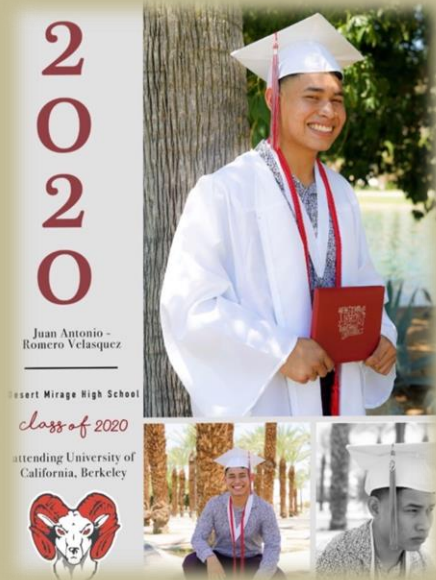
As I write this update, the **55<sup>th</sup> Annual Southwestern Growers Golf Tournament and Don Roberts, Sr. Car Drawing** are readying to take place. I am happy to report that all 400 raffle tickets sold out even before the practice rounds began. And we still had teams on a waitlist to play. It is especially thrilling to see third and fourth generation golfers returning to play. This tournament is all about connections and many years and of dedicated support. I cannot thank **the SWG Committee** (largely made up from the local farming community) and our in-house Special Events team, **Bridget Kerr and Susan Ogrodnick**, for generating such avid support for this popular tournament, especially during these challenging times of social distancing and new rules. It's just incredible what this team faced and what they conquered this year.

This week we reopened three Clubs: **La Quinta** on Monday, **Indio** on Wednesday, and **Mecca** today. **Coachella** will open on Monday. Staff and the Board of Directors put a lot of thought, time, and effort into methodically planning to reopen and reinvent our Clubs as safe distance learning centers. As a result, I am also happy to report that "smooth" describes how things went after wellness checks were performed on each of the kids who passed through our doors. The Clubs welcomed, on average, 10 -15 members who were able to log into their classrooms under the supervision of staff and then "after school" have help with tutoring, homework, or just have some plain ol' FUN. Yes, we can still provide that essential element, which is key to the Club Experience!



Back in June, I told you about **Juan Antonio-Romero Velasquez** from our Mecca Club who was sponsored by Bighorn residents/donors **Pam and Peter McIlroy** to attend UC Berkeley. Juan credits the Boys & Girls Clubs of Coachella Valley as one of the driving forces behind his academic objectives. Here's an excerpt from Juan himself:

*"It been kinda weird these past few days because of the fires but I'm doing good. My classes are going good but they are hard classes especially with all this zoom. Also it's a big change from high school to a university. Even a big change from College of the Desert to a University. Class is more intense and harder especially the readings. Also, my classes are graded on a curve so even if I get a 94 and everyone else in the class gets a 96 or higher I can get a C or lower for the class because of the curve. So I'm kinda sad about that 😞 but other than that I really like it in Berkeley. I'm still getting to meet new people but I try to keep my distance as the student Covid percent is going up because everyone is out and not in quarantine."*



That's Juan for you! Nothing less than an "A" is satisfactory for this aspiring young man!

A great ending to this week's update is excellent news that is the result of building on another new connection, that is, donors **Al and Cathy Annexstad**, also from Bighorn. They have agreed to sponsor a full scholarship for 7-year Mecca Club member **Gisselle Lopez**, a Criminal Justice and Forensic Science major. She is a freshman at College of the Desert with eventual plans for obtaining her Master's degree. Gisselle credits the Club's programs *New Beginnings* and *Diplomas to Degrees* for taking her in the right direction on her path to a better future. Oh, and the staff. Gisselle has a deep regard for the folks she says "made the Club her second home."

It just doesn't get any better than this!

As always, thank you for your support! And I look forward to connecting you with more good things that are happening at the Clubs.

*Quinton Egson*

**President & CEO**  
**38 years of humble service!**

