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“Mayor’s Cup of Joe” Column 2: Upcoming Summer Events Offer Us a Chance to Step Up!

Two important summer events are approaching: the City’s annual Festival of Balloons Fourth of July parade and the Special Olympics celebration. While one of event has a long tradition and the other is new to our City, both offer a chance to come together and exhibit the spirit of volunteerism that is a hallmark of our small town.

This Saturday’s Festival of Balloons will be a great event for children of all ages. It has been a part of our town for over 30 years, and is an example of the volunteerism that makes our community special. The Grand Marshalls this will be seven local South Pasadena Special Olympics athletes who have competed in past events: Eric Alvarez, Noelle Baldauf, Harrison Hoffman, Paul Lewis, Tim O’Connor, Miguel Munoz, and Debbie Sanchez. These seven individuals are great examples of our city’s spirit of dedication and hard-work.

The Special Olympics World Games will take place just a few weeks later, from July 25 to August 2. While the center of the action will be Los Angeles, from July 22 to 24 South Pasadena residents have a chance to welcome delegations from the countries of Paraguay and Morocco. The local organizing committee has scheduled three days of recreation, entertainment, and cultural exchange right here in South Pasadena.

The morning of July 22, the athletes will arrive in town. I encourage everyone to join me under the street banner on Fair Oaks Avenue located near Bristol Farms at approximately 10:30 am to welcome the delegates to town – we will all have the chance to learn cheers in Arabic, Spanish and French. After training that morning, the delegates will participate in fun activities over the next few days, including a City-hosted barbeque luncheon at Garfield Park on July 23. Members of the public will also have the chance to participate in a large community art project with the delegates on the 23rd. For more details about how you can be a part of this, please contact Host Town Committee Co-Chair Laura Kieffer at laurakieffer@me.com.

After the delegations leave our community, I hope that all residents take the time to attend the Special Olympics World Games from July 25 to August 2 and cheer on all of the amazing athletes. **We are a City that cares, we are a City that shares, and we are a City that steps up.** The Special Olympics offers us a great chance to step up and become more accepting and inclusive of all people with disabilities.

Council approved the budget for Fiscal Year 2015-16 at our June 17 meeting. This year's budget is balanced, has a healthy reserve, and includes funding for vital programs including the Garfield Reservoir upgrades and street and sidewalk repairs.

Join me next month as we learn about our efforts to meet the State-mandated drought requirements, including the limitation on irrigation of landscape to two days per week. Also, we'll meet some of the 130 residents who participate in the City's turf rebate program. Email Debby Figoni, Water Conservation Specialist, with questions: dfigoni@southpasadenaca.gov.

Finally, we adjourned the last City Council meeting in honor of former Councilmember David Margrave, who as Councilmember Michael Cacciotti noted was "an indefatigable worker, who was untiring in his efforts to support South Pasadena". He will be dearly missed by us all.

-Your Mayor, Robert Joe, rjoe@southpasadenaca.gov