

Summer 2023

FriendsNews



Friends of Deer Hollow Farm is a non-profit organization supporting Deer Hollow Farm and its educational programs.



2023 Spring Farm Tours Attract Over 1,050 Participants!

by Lubab Sheet-Davis

A big **THANK YOU** to the more than 1,050 attendees, volunteers and docents, and farm staff who came out to support two very successful 2023 Spring Farm Tours, held on March 25 and on Earth Day, April 22, 2023 from 10am to 2pm. Attendees got the opportunity to be up close with the animals, including new arrivals, participate in a number of educational activities and support the farm.

There were many smiles and satisfied visitors, enjoying the beauty and wonder of spring time at Deer Hollow Farm and Rancho San Antonio. The weather was perfect, visitors were happy, and there was hardly any waiting time at each station. Not surprisingly the new baby goats and lambs were some of the biggest attractions. There were also a number of educational activities for kids and adults alike, including planting a seed, creating wooly bracelets sourced from the farm's own sheep, touching a cow and watching goat milking. Those that were particularly adventurous had the opportunity to touch and hold a snake in the Nature Center.

In 2023, 1,063 attendees helped to raise \$8,636 to support the farm animals through a \$7 admission fee per attendee over the age of one and Friends of Deer Hollow Farm merchandise sales.

Thanks again to everyone who participated in the 2023 Spring Farm Tours and for your support of Deer Hollow Farm! We

hope to see you again soon.

To give you an idea of some of the costs associated with supporting the animals:

- \$35 buys a bale of hay or alfalfa feed,
- \$50 supports a goat herd for two days,
- \$100 supports a sheep herd for almost a week and
- \$250 can support cow with feed and care for a month.

Be sure to save the date for Spooky Times on Saturday October 21, 2023, 10am to 3pm! Admission fee is \$7 per person over the age of one and \$5 for those in costume! All proceeds go towards supporting the farm.



Farm Updates

Welcoming Micaela McGrath

by Tara Sreekrishnan

Deer Hollow Farm has welcomed its newest team member, Micaela McGrath, who will be joining the Farm as a weekend staff member, bringing her infectious enthusiasm and love for animals – especially goats – to the Farm! Micaela’s journey to Deer Hollow Farm is rooted in a connection to animals that began at an early age, as well as a desire to share this passion with others.



Growing up, and to this day, she would often rescue animals in her local neighborhood, from baby ducklings to Saint Bernard’s, to ensure their safe return home. Her neighbors would always call on her whenever their pet went missing, and Micaela would come to the rescue, reuniting them with their loved ones.

It was during the pandemic when she went on a hike along the Rancho San Antonio Trail with her mother and, as fate would have it, Friends of Deer Hollow Farm Board Member Jaime Villarreal welcomed Micaela into the Farm where she was immediately enchanted by the Nigerian dwarf goats.

“I was happy I was able to actually go and experience it in person,” Micaela recalls. “Every time I’m there, I get to be happy and be around the animals.”

From childhood pets to volunteering at the Children’s Family Farm in the San Francisco Zoo, her connection with animals has always brought her happiness. Her dream is to one day work with giraffes!

When you visit Deer Hollow Farm, you will often find Micaela engaged in one-on-one conversations with visitors, especially in the goat area. What brings her joy is seeing visitors she’s taught about goats return, bringing their families and friends along with them so they too can discover the Farm.

Pictured above, Micaela holds “Valentino”, a baby goat she lovingly nicknamed. She first held Valentino when he was just two days old, and she’s seen him grow into the gentle, young goat he is today.

With the firm belief that all creatures, big or small, deserve our empathy and respect, Micaela enjoys sharing with the public that animals are not just food, and finds it rewarding to see community members learn something new about the animals at the Farm every time they visit.

The Farm’s Partnerships

by Jaime Villarreal

Visitors may wonder who runs the Farm and what does the Farm provide? There are several agencies and groups that support the Farm’s education programs and daily operations.

The City of Mountain View manages the educational, livestock and volunteer programs at the Farm. In the 1970’s, when the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD) acquired the Farm, the City answered MROSD’s call to find a partner to oversee programs by providing Recreation Staff to coordinate operations and the educational programs, a Livestock Coordinator, and seasonal staff to support the school year and summer camp programs. These staff members enable school year classes such as the Farm and Garden Program, Life Science Hikes, Fleece and Milk, and Native American Ohlone studies. They also

oversee the volunteer program, which involves recruiting, training and overseeing Barnyard Docents, all farm volunteers that help with livestock chores and school year classes, as well as miscellaneous projects and public events. Farm staff and volunteers work together so that the public has access to the farmyard during visiting hours.



MROSD is the steward of the entire Preserve. They provide a maintenance staff member that is responsible for the upkeep

Farm Updates

of the grounds and facilities, and oversees maintenance projects around Farm property. This individual also assists with livestock care and is a contact for public requests and inquiries. From time to time, MROSD also provides extra manpower or contracts out to support larger projects. For example, recently they provided staff to help clear some of the brush along the perimeter to improve wildland defensible space. MROSD Rangers are there to oversee visitor safety on MROSD Preserves.

The Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department provides significant funds to support Farm operations.

Friends of Deer Hollow Farm is a non-profit organization that supports the Farm. They provide funding for school year program scholarships, livestock expenses such as feed, tools, medication, and veterinary expenses, as well as enhancement projects that benefit the educational and livestock programs.

These agencies are at the forefront of ensuring that the Farm remains in operation. Other agencies and community groups, such as Boys and Girls Scouts, Rotary Clubs, Day Worker Center of Mountain View, the Los Altos Mountain View Community Foundation, the Town of Los Altos Hills, and local companies contribute to keeping the Farm's operations, education programs and barnyard open for the public to enjoy.

Photos from 2023 Spring Farm Tour



Farm Updates (cont'd)

Interview with a Teacher

By Jaime Villarreal

Each year, schools in the area will reach out to outside educational centers, like Deer Hollow Farm, to supplement their school curriculum. School teachers will go through a registration process in the summer and will select either Farm



and Garden, Ohlone Studies or Life Science. Farm staff will welcome them at a gathering place inside Rancho San Antonio Preserve, assign a docent and guide small groups of students alongside school teachers and chaperones. We asked one teacher, **Kerri Fox** from the Monta Loma Elementary School, a few questions about her experiences at the Farm.

1. **What brings your class to Deer Hollow Farm?** Our kindergartners come to the Farm each year for the 'Farm and Garden' program, in connection with our Science Standards around plants and animals, their needs, and how animals and plants help us meet our needs, as well.

2. **Are there benefits to outdoor education?** There are so many benefits to outdoor, hands-on educational experiences! Kindergartners have only been on the planet for 5 or 6 years, and the opportunity to walk in the fresh air and use all their senses to learn is invaluable. Our smallest students are able to listen for bird songs, hear the cows moo and chickens cackle, and get so excited. Being able to enter the animal pens, see what the animals eat and how they get water, and actually touch many of them is memorable. It inspires writing, develops vocabulary in our English Language Learners, and expands our students' perspectives on the world. Many of our students are socioeconomically disadvantaged, and would otherwise be unlikely to have experiences outside their small urban neighborhood. We are grateful to the Friends of Deer Hollow Farm for funding our trips each year!

3. **What are some of the comments from your students?** They told me how the goats nibbled on some of their clothes, how the sheep were shy, so they had to sit quietly for them. They told me about how one of the chickens had a 'crazy haircut', and how the geese are the watchdogs of a farm, and let everyone know when something is wrong or different. My students explained how the pigs like to be in the mud to stay cool - they like to be dirty! - that they were enormous, and their names are George and Martha. They described how soft and warm the rabbits were, and how their hands felt nice and smooth after petting the sheep (from the lanolin in the wool). They told me about how smart

the goats and sheep must be to use the water spigot---They have to push on it! They even explained how to tell the two cows (Roxie and Jellybean) apart - because Jellybean has a darker face. They are still processing that cows and goats (and sheep) give us milk, that chickens give us eggs, and that many of the animals give us food as meat, but the conversations are ongoing!

4. **What would you tell other teachers who are considering enrolling in a class?** I would unequivocally recommend the trip! I have also attended during my years as a first grade teacher, and these classes never fail to be great. The docents are knowledgeable and patient with the littlest students, and the programs are very well organized. This would have been my 20th field trip to the Farm (if I remember correctly!), and just by hearing from my students I know that it was another fabulous trip.

5. **Any additional comments?** Deer Hollow Farm is really a treasure for our local community. I brought my own family to visit countless times when my daughter was young, and I've heard great things about the summer camp programs from my former students as well. I know the popularity and attendance at Rancho San Antonio has increased dramatically during and since COVID, but the Farm managers are doing a great job balancing creating a welcoming atmosphere for all while still preserving the working farm and education programs. We are ever so grateful to Jessica Morgan and the Deer Hollow staff, and the Friends of Deer Hollow Farm for providing these programs to our students year after year.

The Farm is welcoming about 4,200 K-4th grade students this school year, from October through May. Registration for the 2023-24 school year will open August 1st.

Registration forms are posted on the City of Mountain View, Deer Hollow Farm website: mountainview.gov/deerhollowfarm

Save the Date for Spooky Times at the Farm Saturday, October 21

The Farm's annual Spooky Times event will be Saturday, October 21 from 10am to 3pm. So save the date and join us for some Halloween fun and frights!

Friends Board News

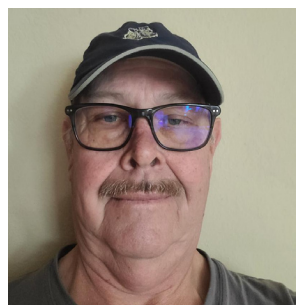
The Board Welcomes Four New Members

by Tara Sreekrishnan

The FODHF Board welcomes four new Board members this year – they each bring a unique perspective and passion for supporting the Farm. Join us in giving them a warm welcome!

Jaime Villarreal

If you've ever visited the Farm, then chances are you've met the dedicated, generous, and exceptionally kind Jaime Vaillarreal. Jaime is a Bay Area native and Sunnyvale resident who worked in high-tech for 28 years before working for



twelve years at Deer Hollow Farm through the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, followed by a few years working part-time at the Farm. He is currently a Deer Hollow Farm volunteer through the City of Mountain View. We could not be more excited to welcome Jaime to our Board!

Lubab Sheet-Davis

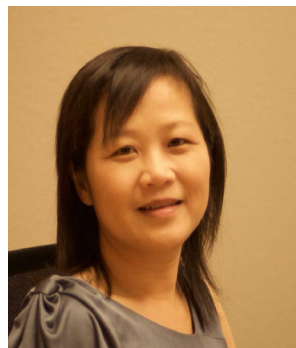
Lubab Sheet-Davis serves on our Events and Merchandise Committee. She is a tech industry veteran, and currently



serves on several industrial advisory boards. She is an aspiring backyard bee-keeper with a passion for sustainable gardening and urban farming. Lubab previously served on the boards of Full Circle Farm, Loaves & Fishes Family Kitchen and the The Youth Foundation. She and her husband are long time Mountain View residents and enjoy frequenting the Farm.

Charlotte Xia

Charlotte Xia is our new Board Secretary and believes that Deer Hollow Farm should remain a cherished gem in our urban community. A resident of Cupertino, she has worked in corporate finance for over



20 years and has volunteered at several non-profit organizations, including serving treasurer roles at her local Boy Scouts and Homeowners Association. She enjoys outdoor activities such as hiking, biking, running and keeping herself busy on local trails.

Sheikh Nayeem

Sheikh Nayeem, the newest member of our Grants



Committee, has lived in San Jose for over 30 years. He is an energy and sustainability professional that has worked for the City of San Jose, Cisco, Stanford Hospitals and CSU Maritime Academy. He brings to the Board public and private sector experience in sustainability and corporate social responsibility, including his proficiency as a grant writer and in facility management.

FODHF Board Members

(From left to right)

Charlotte Xia (Board Secretary), Judy Blumenstein (Board Treasurer), Jack Kay, Sheikh Nayeem, Tara Sreekrishnan (Interim Board President), Jaime Villarreal, Lubab Sheet-Davis, and Renee Blitzer



Wonderful Friends

We gratefully acknowledge these generous friends and community organizations who contributed to Friends of Deer Hollow Farm between November 1, 2022 and April 30, 2023.

Grants

Los Altos Community
Foundation
Santa Clara County

Donations

Red-Tailed Hawk (\$1,000 to \$12,000)

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David & Karen Jessen
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Please join these amazing Wonderful Friends and donate to Friends of Deer Hollow Farm.
You can make your gift via credit card or PayPal at www.DeerHollowFarmFriends.org.

Thank you to Hassan Lashgari and his team at Pine Press, who have printed this color newsletter for the price of black & white.



Deer Hollow Farm is a ten-acre educational farm in Rancho San Antonio County Park & Open Space Preserve, 22500 Cristo Rey Dr, Cupertino, CA 95014. For information, call 650-903-6430.

FriendsNews is published by FoDHF for donors who want to help preserve and improve Deer Hollow Farm. website www.deerhollowfarmfriends.org email info@deerhollowfarmfriends.org



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Your next ***FriendsNews*** will be mailed in December 2023

To Our Friends



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