

County groups giving Vietnam needed support

The country has had a large COVID-19 outbreak. It has few vaccines and only about 7% of the people are vaccinated.

BY BEN BRAZIL

As Vietnam contends with a massive COVID-19 outbreak, two Orange County organizations are trying to help the country by providing supplies and outreach.

For much of the pandemic, Vietnam was spared the worst due to an effective public health strategy. But the ultra-contagious Delta variant of the coronavirus has torn through the country.

Prior to the variant's arrival in April, the country had recorded less than 3,000 cases. It's now up to 563,676, according to the World Health Organization.

Quynh Kieu, who founded the Fountain Valley-based Project Vietnam Foundation in 1996, said the virus is spreading like a wildfire because only about 7% of people in Vietnam are vaccinated.

"The area is so infectious that even if you use traditional quarantining and tracing of the people who are affected, it's impossible to stop, unless you have vaccines," Kieu said. "Vietnam has few vaccines."

Quynh Le, director of public health programs at Project Vietnam, mentioned that wearing masks in Vietnam is widely accepted, which shows the virulence of the Delta variant.

Project Vietnam regularly went on medical mission trips to Vietnam, but the pandemic has prevented the nonprofit's members from traveling to the country. That has made it more challenging to assist the country, but the group is still doing all it can before it can begin traveling back next year.

In the meantime, the group is maintaining its presence in the country, providing personal protection equipment, or PPE, and offering online educational sessions.

"So it has been difficult, but if there's a will, there's a way," Kieu said. "We try and continue to assist very actively. So for example, yesterday, I just shipped three pallets to Vietnam. And we're in the process of doing some further shipping containers. So we can help in either way."

The nonprofit recently took part in a conference with more

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After mourning the death of its legendary founders

MANIC HISPANIC IS 'BACK IN BROWN'

The Chicano parody punk band returns with a new lineup and album following the passing of members Gabby Gaborno and Steve Soto.

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

Call Manic Hispanic one of the most subversive bands ever to emerge from Orange County, and its members just might laugh off the suggestion.

The group's origin story started with a half-serious conversation in 1992, after all, between founding members Steve Soto and Mike "Gabby" Gaborno when both worked at the Doctor Dream Records warehouse in Orange. The pair mused about what forming a Freddy Fender cover band would sound like in



MANIC HISPANIC'S new album is "Back in Brown."

shared reverence of the beloved Tex-Mex balladeer. By that time, Soto estab-

lished himself on O.C.'s punk scene as a member of Agent Orange and the Adolescents;

Gaborno chiseled his onstage charisma as lead singer of the Cadillac Tramps. Like star players on a super team, they culled musicians from other bands to form Manic Hispanic, a project that didn't spoof Chicano crooners but punk rock classics, instead.

Manic Hispanic turned assimilation on its head with reformed songs like the Ramones-inspired "The I.N.S. Took My Novia Away," that were as funny as they were furious. And the band did it all while dressed as cholos onstage. The band released four albums and turned annual Cinco de Mayo shows into rituals where the country's Mexican misfits slandanced into whites in sweaty solidarity.

No matter how grand Manic Hispanic's powder keg of an impact has been for

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TOP: MANIC HISPANIC band members, from left, Efre "Chuy Luis" Martinez Schulz, Louie "Juan Solo" Perez III, Gilbert "Dreamer" Pichardo, Elvis Cortez, Ruben "Chino" Rivera and Maurice "Mo Grease" Torres, in Fullerton on Tuesday. Pichardo wears a jacket memorializing Gabby "Jefe" Gaborno and Steve "Hoakie" Soto.

Photos by Raul Roa | Staff Photographer

'Chopped' champion Shachi Mehra gets saucy with Spice Girl Sauces

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

The road to making Chef Shachi Mehra's line of Spice Girl Sauces a reality began when she competed on the Food Network's show "Chopped" back in 2019.

"When they asked, 'What are you going to do with your winnings?' I said I was going to start a sauce line," said Mehra, who is the chef/owner at Adya Indian street food restaurants in Anaheim and Irvine.

It was the first time she talked about her sauce line idea to anyone besides her friends and family.

Mehra did end up winning in the final round of Season 43, Episode 7 of "Chopped."

"Well, now I just said it on national TV," Mehra recalled thinking. "I better get this thing rolling."

Then when the pandemic hit, she became focused on making sure her restaurants survived. It seemed like a good time to develop a brand that was separate from the physical locations.

"I wanted the sauce really to have its own identity because when people think of Adya, they think of Indian food, and I want this sauce to be more than just In-



Photos courtesy of Mona Shah

SHACHI MEHRA has launched Spice Girl Sauces in Orange County.

dian," Mehra said.

Spice Girl Sauce Original Hot Sauce is the first in the line of sauces Mehra has spent the past couple of years developing. Her husband, Maneesh Rawat, was insistent her face be on the label, an idea Mehra said she originally wasn't wild about.

"I thought it would be super weird," she says.

But in the end Mehra said she saw the importance of putting a

female Indian founder on the label.

Although the sauce flavors are Indian influenced, Mehra said the sauce isn't just for Indian food.

"This is a sauce you can put on your breakfast sandwich or on your tacos or on a BLT or in your pasta ...anywhere you want to add a level of flavor and heat," Mehra said. "It is still rooted in In-

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MEHRA, THE CHEF/OWNER at Adya Indian street food restaurants in Anaheim and Irvine, said her sauce flavors aren't just for Indian food.

SANTA ANA PASSES SWEEPING CLIMATE RESOLUTION

City Council members approve a plan that joins some other cities in Orange County in committing to 100% renewable energy usage by 2045.

BY BEN BRAZIL

The Santa Ana City Council approved a sweeping resolution on Tuesday night aimed at combating the rapid onset of climate change, committing to 100% clean and renewable energy usage by 2045.

Santa Ana is joining a few other Orange County cities that are working on curbing greenhouse gas emissions. Irvine became the first city in Orange County to pledge carbon neutrality last month.

As California begins exploring ways to become carbon neutral by 2035, cities are faced with quickly adopting their own climate action plans to help the state achieve its goal.

The approval of the Santa Ana resolution comes on the heels of the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's alarming report calling climate change a "code red for humanity"

that is already being felt across the world and will only continue to accelerate.

Councilwoman Jessie Lopez, who requested the item with help from Councilwoman Thai Viet Phan, said the resolution will act as a blueprint for the city.

"We have seen the ocean be on literal fire," Lopez said. "Northern California is currently burning as we speak. And we've seen firsthand ... how unprepared we are when we are dealing with these crises. We also understand the low-income communities and communities of color are going to continue to be negatively impacted."

Phan said the resolution will also make it easier for the city to get state and federal grants.

"Gov. Newsom is already committing to appropriating millions of dollars to addressing climate change, and so has the Biden administration," Phan said. "Because we are a low-income community that has a high need, by approving this resolution, we're telling other governments, 'Hey, we have a game plan here, and we just need your help to do it.'"

The resolution includes a host of items, including a commitment by the city to investigate and implement policies that limit or prevent the expansion of the use of fossil fuels and

supporting more open space to stem pollution. The city is also committing to look into promoting decarbonization and the electrification of buildings and transportation.

The resolution also takes aim at the proliferation of lead in the city, a longstanding issue in Santa Ana that largely affects poorer neighborhoods.

The resolution says that the city will investigate and implement policies to limit or prevent exposure to lead and other environmental toxins.

Last year, a local environmental group, along with UC Irvine and other community members, released a study showing that low-income and predominantly Latino neighborhoods in Santa Ana are affected by toxic lead.

The researchers found that thousands of children in Santa Ana are particularly at risk. Neighborhoods housing more than

28,000 children had maximum lead concentrations exceeding 80 ppm, and 12,000 of those children were in neighborhoods with lead concentrations above 400 ppm, the Environmental Protection Agency's recommendation for play areas.

The California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment considers anything above 80 ppm in a residential area as hazardous to human health.

Councilman Phil Bacerra, the only dissenting vote on the resolution, said he supports addressing climate change, but the resolution isn't necessary because the city is already pursuing many of the goals mentioned in it.

"Some of the actions called for in this resolution can and should be pursued, and they don't need a resolution to move forward with," Bacerra said.

"Yes, let's end new fossil fuel exploration and expansion. Although, I don't know that Santa Ana has any current efforts to expand or explore for fossil fuels here but, yes, absolutely. Let's make sure we don't do that. And let's absolutely implement policies that are going to limit toxins and other polluting materials from impacting our residents. But we are already doing that, we're updating our general plan

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Courtesy of Children's Bureau

THE CHILDREN'S BUREAU is offering a virtual way for residents to learn about becoming foster or foster-adopt parents.

Children's Bureau launches webinar orientation for potential foster families

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

Since COVID-19 has brought all in-person foster care-adoption resource parent orientations to a halt, the Children's Bureau is now offering a virtual way for residents to learn about becoming foster or foster-adopt parents.

The Children's Bureau team announced, via news release, plans to host a live Zoom orientation for individuals or couples who are interested in learning more about becoming resource parents on Thursday from 4 to 5 p.m. Virtual orientations are also scheduled for Oct. 21, Nov. 18 and Dec. 16.

For those unable to virtually attend the scheduled Zoom orientations, a Power Point orientation will be made available to those who send a request to rfrecruitment@all4kids.org.

As resource parents, individuals must be prepared to foster and adopt a child, al-

though not all resource parents adopt.

Foster parenting or family foster care usually lasts for a temporary period of time that ranges from a few weeks to a year or more, and in the best cases the children are eventually reunited with their parents or relatives.

Becoming a foster-adoptive parent can mean creating a safe space for a child to grow up in if they are unable to return to their birth parents or relatives.

The pandemic has increased the need for foster and foster-adoptive parents to help local at-risk youth stay in their communities.

Siblings are in particular need of families willing to take in more than one child and keep them together. According to the press release, at least 10 sibling sets are turned away each week due to a lack of willing families.

In a YouTube video pro-

vided by the agency, a married couple identified as Brittany and Jeremy extol the virtues of being a foster parent. It "lets you help someone in their time of need," Brittany said. "You're the support system for a child and for their parents."

The couple also has three biological children of their own.

The bureau's news release notes all individuals are welcome to apply to become a resource parent, regardless of race, age, religion, disability, marital status, ethnic background, sexual orientation and gender identity.

Qualifying families will receive training and support from the Children's Bureau, including a preservice training program where residents have the chance to develop skills needed to foster and foster-adopt.

Family development specialists and social workers are made available to re-

source parents.

In addition, the Children's Bureau provides financial support by way of a monetary stipend and Medi-Cal to assist in the children's care.

"Children's Bureau has been there to help get us through the challenging times and to celebrate the special moments, especially when the adoption of our two children was finalized," Jeremy explains in the video.

The Children's Bureau is a nonprofit agency helping 50,000 at-risk children and parents each year throughout Los Angeles and Orange counties. Foster Care and Adoption Programs are available in Kern, Orange, San Bernardino, and Los Angeles counties.

For more information, visit all4kids.org.

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than 100 Vietnamese physicians to share knowledge and best practices surrounding the treatment of COVID-19.

"Some of the concepts that we traditionally used to take care of people with critical needs in the hospital are not valid, they have to be adapted and changed," Kieu said. "We would like Vietnam to learn from the mistakes that we did in the beginning."

The group is also continuing to offer webinars of one of its longstanding programs in Vietnam that trains pediatricians to address the needs of developmentally challenged children.

For this work, Project Vietnam partners with children's hospitals in Vietnam.

Project Vietnam is part of the Vietnamese American Non-Governmental Organization, or VANGO Network, another Fountain Valley-based group that has been helping with community development efforts in Vietnam. The nonprofit was formed in 2004 by two dozen organizations that decided to form one united group. Kieu serves on the board of the VANGO Network.

Thien-Nhien Luong, president of VANGO Network's board of directors, said the nonprofit is largely sending PPE to badly hit provinces in Vietnam, including in Thua Thien Hue,



Allen J. Schaben | Los Angeles Times

A SHOPPER wearing a mask walks by A Dong Supermarket in Little Saigon in Westminster.

where the group's office is located.

The group is also putting together "COVID kits" for the community. Those differ a bit from kits they distributed last year that contained educational material and food because some provinces suffered from food shortages.

"People were going hungry," Luong said. "Right now our food is OK in some provinces, so we focus on a COVID kit where we have educational and prevention brochures, and PPE with disposable masks, hand sanitizer and over-the-counter medication."

Luong said she is also focusing on reaching out to local leaders to educate them so they can play a role

in finding local solutions to help their communities in Vietnam.

During the pandemic, Project Vietnam and the VANGO Network have been assisting the Vietnamese community in Orange County.

Luong said the VANGO Network held information sessions on Zoom, distributed a lot of PPE locally and manufactured and paid for aerosol intubation boxes, which were shipped to Orange County hospitals.

The network also worked with OC Mask Masters, which donates hand-sewn masks, mask extenders and face shields to hospitals, healthcare workers, first responders and essential workers.

"The Vietnamese American community in Orange County is so resilient and so strong and so generous," Luong said.

Neither California nor the county has data just on the Vietnamese residents of Orange County. Instead, the population is included in the county's Asian American data. According to the state, Asian Americans have received 21.2% of the vaccines administered in the county and make up 18.2% of the vaccine-eligible population.

Kieu said the Vietnamese community is twice as likely to be vaccinated than the general community because it is respectful of

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ORANGE COUNTY'S FIRST-EVER PAIR OF POET LAUREATES MAKE THEIR DEBUT

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

Above the din of cumbias and a nearby vegan food fest, Dr. Natalie J. Graham's poetic cadence soothed the crowd that gathered last month in downtown Santa Ana to hear her read.

Seated in front of LibroMobile's garage entrance, she began with works of other poets before turning to poems of her own.

In the middle of "The Watcher, Visiting Hours," a poem about prison, Graham drew a metaphor out with her words about pregnancy and an orange, which is also the namesake crop of the county she now works and lives in.

*I say think of what an orange can be,
not just food
but the seed inside the seed, like God.*

*Rot too. You say, it can rot, too
Rot is always gathering in its patches.*

The audience latched onto every word and the space between them.

Graham ended her reading with a selection from Juan Felipe Herrera, a former poet laureate of both California and the United States. The invocation proved fitting.

Graham's appearance that afternoon at LibroMobile also served as a public introduction for a distinction of her own as Orange County's first-ever poet laureate.

In April, LibroMobile teamed with Orange County Public Libraries for the inaugural program, which also included the appointment of a youth poet laureate. Graham, chair of the African American Studies department at Cal State Fullerton, saw a solicitation for applications on social media and submitted her work.

A panel of judges based their decision this summer equally on account of poetry and social engagement.

Graham, a Buena Park resident, was announced as O.C. poet laureate last month alongside Tina Mai, a 16-year-old writer from Newport Beach, as O.C. youth poet laureate.

Both will serve one-year terms. "I always credit my first introduction to poetry to my mom,"

Graham said. "She wrote poems for folks for their birthday or to celebrate their anniversaries. She considered herself a writer so the way she communicated her thanks, gratitude and joy was through poetry."

Graham grew up in Gainesville, Fla. As a young girl, she recalled watching an episode of "The Oprah Winfrey Show" about journaling every day and did just that. Later on, Graham's reverence for verses led to an academic interest in hip-hop and Black poetics. Her dissertation was on rapper Lil' Wayne.

When applying for professor positions, Cal State Fullerton stood out for its longstanding inclusion of hip-hop culture in the curriculum. She moved to O.C. in 2013 and became an associate professor of African American Studies at the university. Graham later wrote "Begin With a Failed Body," a collection of poems rooted in the South and concerned with concepts of history, trauma and frailty.

The book, her first, won the 2016 Cave Canem Poetry Prize, which is dedicated to Black poets.

As poet laureate, she'll be doing more readings across the county at libraries, museums and cultural centers as will Mai, her youthful colleague.

"I found poetry to be a really unique way of expressing my family's history, heritage and culture," said Mai, a Chinese immigrant. "In addition to being able to share more of a youth perspective, I also really want to work on a lot of community projects."

The emerging wordsmith has earned recognition for her writing from the Library of Congress and the Poetry Society of the U.K. The O.C. youth poet laureate appointment is an honor much closer to home.

"I'm really excited to be able to read in front of newer audiences and people I've never met before," Mai said. "I hope that they'll enjoy my work."

Like most teens, Mai is uncertain about what she wants to do with the rest of her life but is confident that poetry will always accompany her along the way.

Graham and Mai met briefly for the first time last month after accepting their appointments and



Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

DR. NATALIE J. GRAHAM, a Cal State Fullerton professor, is Orange County's first-ever poet laureate.



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

TINA MAI is the newly appointed O.C. youth poet laureate. She's a 16-year-old writer from Newport Beach.

reunited again for the reading at LibroMobile. Both express admiration for each other and look forward to the year to come.

Amid the upheaval of the pandemic, the mission of poetry and its local laureates may be more

important than ever.

"The intent of a poem is to slow us down," Graham said.

"It causes us to meditate on a line, not even a sentence. It allows us to explore connections that aren't readily apparent. Poetry pro-

vides an opportunity for us to think more slowly and outside of a lot of the structures that we're used to working inside of."

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SPICE

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dian flavors and it has that Indian soul, but it still works on a lot of stuff.”

The Indian soul comes from cumin, garlic, four different chilis and black pepper. The depth of flavor comes from the way those different ingredients are layered into the sauce that comes in a 6-ounce bottle for \$10.

“The garlic is roasted, the cumin is bloomed in oil and the black pepper is bloomed in oil, and all of these things are cooked and then mixed together,” she said.

It’s a method Mehra said leads to a complexity consumers are hard-pressed to find outside of Indian cuisine.

“The thing that makes you want to go back and eat it again is that there is so much happening in your mouth, and that to me is really what makes Indian food so fascinating and interesting,” she said. “It is the layers of flavor that we inherently have in our food.”

Mehra isn’t the only local chef getting saucy. Other Orange County chefs are heating things up with bottled and jarred hot sauces too.

Most recently the Huntington Beach fast-casual seafood restaurant, Slapfish, has entered the market with a line of three hot sauces launched just last week.

Chef Andrew Gruel introduced three hot sauces flavors; cali verde, pineapple habanero and Trinidad pepper, which can be purchased on the Slapfish website for \$8 a bottle.

Forward-thinking seafood concept, O Sea in Old Town Orange also sells its own salsa.



Don Leach | Staff Photographer

SLAPFISH FOUNDER and CEO Andrew Gruel in his Huntington Beach location. Slapfish has introduced three hot sauces recently.



Courtesy of Taco Maria

SALSAS NEGRA from Taco Maria.

“The salsa macha was actually one of the first recipes we wrote,” said O Sea owner, Mike Flynn. The restaurant serves the popular salsa over burrata cheese to create a dish that Flynn describes as Old World meets New World.

“We are taking this old, traditional, Italian cheese and serving it in what we think is a very Southern California set, with salsa macha,” Flynn said.

The salsa is made from dried chilies, garlic, almonds, sesame seeds, vinegar and honey, giving it a flavor that is sweet, spicy and nutty. Flynn said the restaurant received so many requests for the salsa macha, owners developed a packaging program and began selling it at O Sea in 4-ounce jars for \$7.95 in late August.

“It is jarred in-house and has about a two-week shelf life,” Flynn said. “The feedback I have gotten from our guests is it doesn’t really matter because it doesn’t last two weeks in your fridge. It is usually finished before then.”

Flynn says guests have also made requests for the restaurant’s cocktail-style sauce it serves with

oysters that he calls a Thai red curry sauce.

“We can have that conversation if the demand is there,” Flynn said, “but right now we just want to focus on the one product. It is a really special product.”

At Taco Maria in Costa Mesa, Chef Carlos Salgado’s salsa negra has been a mainstay since the early days.

Sometimes referred to as salsa macha, the salsa contains chile de árbol, garlic and sugarcane.

“Salsa negra has been a part of the Taco Maria pantry since we opened, and it has as many uses in the home kitchen as we find for it in the restaurant,” said Taco Maria general manager Emilie Coulson Salgado.

During the pandemic the Michelin-starred restaurant sold 8-ounce jars of the inky sauce along with its chile morita salsa, salad dressing and pickles as a part of its “Taco Maria at Home” menu.

Although Taco Maria has returned to dine-in service and is no longer selling “Taco Maria at Home” products, salsa negra is still for sale at the restaurant.

Mehra believes now is the time for chefs to appeal to home cooks.

“One thing I think the pandemic has done is make a lot of people cook at home,” Mehra said, “and there is a space for chefs to create products for people to take home ... If you can go online and buy something made by a chef that you trust, so you can have some portion of that experience at home, absolutely people are looking for that.”

Taco Maria and O Sea make and jar their salsa in-house, which Mehra knew was an option.

But she also knew that in order

to go big she would need to outsource.

“For me, there is a way I can make it in restaurant, put it in a bottle and sell,” Mehra said, “but because I wanted to start it in a way that we could scale up quickly, I wanted to go with a co-packer from the beginning.”

She tapped Irvine-based Village Green Foods as her contract packager.

“I can make what would be considered a mini batch at my house, but when you multiply the recipe by 500, things change and flavors change, so we made it four or five times to make sure it was what we wanted it to be.”

Village Green assisted with salt and sugar levels, shelf life and product consistency.

“The process has been interesting and fun,” Mehra said. “Doing a sauce that you are selling in a store is a completely different business than running a restaurant.”

Mehra said she didn’t mind all the reading, learning and webinars.

“It is really nice to have the product at the end of it.”

The part that has been most challenging is getting used to her face on the bottle.

“I will be honest, it has taken me about a month or so to get used to it because it is weird to see your face on a jar. Now I am able to look at it and appreciate why that is important.”

Buy Spice Girl Sauce Original Hot Sauce at both Adya locations, Orange Home Grown Farmers & Artisans Market or by visiting spicegirlsauces.com.

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Scott Smeltzer | Staff Photographer

TRACY THI Vinh Nguen, left, Hiep Truong, Quynh Kieu and Nam Quyen of Project Vietnam.

VIETNAM

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health issues and the safety of their families.

“The Vietnamese community is very eager to be vaccinated,” Kieu said. “There are still some young people who think they are invincible and don’t want it, but mostly the proportion of Vietnamese Americans who are vaccinated is very high.”

Kieu is heavily invested in educating the local Vietnamese community. She said she appears on television to provide updates on the pandemic and address other questions that may be lingering in the community. Project Vietnam also produces weekly podcasts in Vietnamese. Project Vietnam also provided PPE to dozens of local nursing facilities.

Last year, Project Vietnam conducted a months-

long project testing 1,900 people in the Vietnamese American communities of Westminster, Garden Grove and parts of Fountain Valley and Santa Ana. It was among one of the first testing efforts in the country to target a specific ethnicity. Project Vietnam has worked with UC Irvine’s Institute for Clinical and Translational Science, which aims to improve health-based research.

It is one of 11 sites in California that are a part of the National Institutes of Health Community Engagement Alliance initiative.

The institute received funding to work with groups in the county who assist vulnerable populations. It has provided funding to Project Vietnam and Madison Park Neighborhood Assn. in Santa Ana in order to foster community education and outreach and to identify barriers that

stand in the way of providing health services, such as vaccine hesitancy.

Robynn Zender, the community health research manager at the institute, said the institute chose Project Vietnam because the organization does a good job at building and maintaining trust with the local Vietnamese community, which is in need of resources.

“People think of Orange County as this wealthy, upscale beach community,” Zender said. “There’s just this whole other part of Orange County, which is severely underserved and in need of resources.”

“Project Vietnam does a very good job of building relationships that are just critical for anybody being able to be effective at getting services and needs to the community.”

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CLIMATE

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right now, and the policies that we will put in there, I believe will accomplish that.

“This is a very aspirational resolution. And again, there are some things that we should really look at, but I think there’s just some things that really we don’t need a resolution to do. In fact, half of the things in here we’re already pursuing.”

Lopez took aim at Bacer- ra’s comments.

“The fact is that we have known about lead in the city for a really long time, and what has been done about that? ... Nothing,” Lopez said. “And so we need something like this to keep ourselves accountable.”

Ayn Craciun, a policy advocate with the local Climate Action Campaign, provided an emailed comment on the resolution on Wednesday.

“The resolution is an important first step, but now we need to see the words

coupled with immediate action to clean the air, protect public health and prepare Santa Ana families for a changed future,” Craciun said.

“The dates for action are inadequate for meeting the resolution’s own goals, and it’s unclear what next steps the city will take.”

The resolution also commits the city to continue looking into joining a Community Choice Energy program, which can increase local use of renewable energy and potentially lower rates for residents.

Orange County cities have for the last year been considering CCE programs as climate change has become a more important issue for residents.

A Chapman University survey found this year that 79% of respondents consider the threat of climate change to be a serious problem.

CCE programs provide cities with an alternative to major energy providers like Southern California Edison, the energy titan that serves most of Orange County and the region.

Through a CCE, local governments can retain control of purchasing power, setting rates and collecting revenue, though the local utility still maintains the electrical grid. CCEs can choose to purchase more renewable energy sources.

A few Orange County cities are either taking part in or exploring CCE programs. The Orange County Power Authority is the first and only CCE in the county. It includes Huntington Beach, Buena Park, Fullerton and Irvine, which spearheaded the effort.

The Laguna Beach City Council voted last month to pursue joining a CCE, but it’s considering options outside the O.C. Power Authority, which has drawn criticism for how committed it is to renewable energy and the qualifications of its chief executive, Brian Probsky.

San Clemente and Aliso Viejo are also looking into joining a local CCE program.

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After 4 decades, the family behind Taqueria De Anda is keeping it simple

BY SARAH MOSQUEDA

Consider the Mexican street taco, superior in its simplicity.

"Our concept is very basic and simple," said Jaime De Anda, partner at popular Orange County taco chain Taqueria De Anda. "Onion, cilantro and salsa."

The distinct characteristics of Taqueria De Anda's authentic Mexican tacos make them a favored meal that can be found across Orange County at any of its 12 locations.

But Taqueria De Anda's style of street taco wasn't always so plentiful.

When Jaime's father, Rafael "Don Rafa" De Anda migrated to Fullerton in the 1960s, he learned the traditional flavors he used at his taco cart back in Jalisco were not as easy to come by in Orange County. So Rafael and his wife, Guadalupe "Doña Lupe" De Anda, decided to bring their tacos to the Fullerton community.

Jaime said his parents always knew they wanted to open a business. "So the first idea was to save up a little bit of money and buy a lunch truck," he said.

By 1980, the family had a truck parked near the corner of Valencia Drive and Highland Avenue in Fullerton that served a simple menu of tacos and agua frescas.

"Our original menu was carne asada, al pastor, cabeza, lengua and cecil," Jaime said.

Doña Lupe would spend weekends preparing meat and making her signature salsa with tomatillos at home, while Don Rafa



AL PASTOR nachos at Taqueria De Anda.



TACOS MADE with carne asada, al pastor, pollo and carnitas at Taqueria De Anda.

would work the truck. "During the week he had his regular job, and on the weekends, he worked the truck," Jaime said.

But soon the demand for tacos led Don Rafa to quit his day job at a cement factory to pursue the restaurant business full time. After less than a year, the family bought a brick-and-mortar location near where they parked their truck. It was a small 600-square-foot space with just enough room for four tables.

The family moved the truck to a new location on 4th Street in Santa Ana where a following grew. A small store in La Habra followed.

"The growth came little by little," Jaime recalls. "If we find a good location,

then we jump on it."

Today, Taqueria De Anda's sleek corporate office stands where the original location once stood, overlooking its flagship Fullerton location across the street.

Jaime and siblings, Marcella, George, Lourdes and Juan are all partners in the business, and they are committed to continuing their traditions alongside their parents.

Though Jaime admitted it isn't always easy. "We are constantly trying to evolve but also maintain the same quality," he said. "We want to make it better, but we also don't want to make it too different."

Taqueria De Anda's menu offers a variety of tacos, burritos, rice and beans



Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

JAIME DE ANDA stands at the entrance to the original Taqueria De Anda in Fullerton.



Courtesy of Gary Apodaca

RAFAEL "DON RAFA" De Anda, who migrated to Fullerton in the 1960s, and his wife Guadalupe "Dona Lupe."

created with a traditional lineup of meat options like al pastor, carnitas, carne asada, buche, pollo and lengua. All tacos are topped with the same three simple ingredients — cilantro, onion and salsa.

The restaurants still use the same recipes Doña Lupe used, and the recipe for her signature salsa remains a closely guarded secret. (Only immediate De

Anda family members are allowed to craft the salsa at the restaurant chain's headquarters.)

Instead, Taqueria De Anda has found other ways to evolve.

The locations in Lake Forest and Mission Viejo for example, are considered Taqueria De Anda Grills. The Grill restaurants have more menu options, such as high-quality angus beef,

chorizo, bacon breakfast burritos and shrimp tacos. They also serve beer.

Jaime said the work ethic his parents demonstrated inspired him to work just as hard.

"Working alongside my dad in the restaurant, I used to admire the way he would talk to the customers, with such respect," Jaime said. "The business is what would pay our rent and pay our bills, so we owe everything to the business. We owe it all to our customers."

It is the customers and their love of Taqueria De Anda tacos that has kept the tradition going for the last 40 years, an anniversary Jaime said will not go uncelebrated.

"We wanted to do something last year, but we couldn't because of COVID, and this year we are still limited in what we can do but we might wait another year," Jaime said. "Definitely next year."

More immediately, fans can look forward to Taqueria De Anda's 13th location, set to open in Huntington Beach in October with a menu of the same simply delicious tacos.

To find your nearest Taqueria De Anda, visit taqueriadeanda.com.

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Apr 16 Waipuna
May 13 Makana: *The Gift of Slack Key Guitar*

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Oct 29 Eric Marienthal
Jan 28 JazzReach: *Sittin' In & Groovin' Out*
Feb 24 Joey DeFrancesco
Mar 10 Stacey Kent
Mar 25 *Bessie, Billie & Nina*
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May 12 Forman-Clayton-Hamilton
The Poll Winners Revisited
Jun 9 John Beasley's MONK'estra

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Jan 31 Fran Lebowitz
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Oct 23 *Croce Fabius Croce*
Jan 29 The Fabulous Thunderbirds
Feb 26 Storm Large & Le Bonheur
Mar 11 *Live from Laurel Canyon*
Mar 27 Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain
Apr 3 Jack Jones with The All-Star Band featuring Tom Scott & Graham Dechter
Apr 23 Shéla: *Natural Woman - A Night of Soul*

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Mar 13 Alicia Odewale: *Greenwood - A Century of Resilience*
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