



NEWS RELEASE

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Police Chief and School Principal Direct Traffic at for ‘Hike for Hope’

(DUBLIN, CA) When the gathering of nature lovers, hospice workers, and outdoor enthusiasts takes place at the annual *Hike for Hope* on April 30, 2011, retired Pleasanton Chief of Police Tim Neal will be manning the parking lot alongside past Amador High principal Cyril Bonanno. A popular event for hikers and families, *Hike for Hope* drew over 735 hikers last year and the committee hopes over 1,000 hikers will sign up this year.

Open to the public, *Hike for Hope* is unique and stands out from the typical run or walk on city streets. A non-competitive, memorial hike along the trails of the beautiful Sunol Regional Wilderness, the hike takes place starting anytime between 8:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. Hikers, many who are returning again, participate in memory or honor of a loved one. Proceeds support the valuable services of Hope Hospice in providing families with comfort, dignity and excellence.

Pleasanton luminary and *Hike for Hope* Chairperson, Dolores Bengtson, for whom the Aquatic Park was named, will join registered participants from the San Ramon and Tri-Valley. The fee to participate is \$25 (\$35 after April 18th) and hikers can invite their friends and co-workers to help sponsor their hike with pledges.

Kathy Molinari of Pleasanton got involved last year for the first time and plans to be involved again. She says, “I helped plan the memorial aspects of the event and felt it was important to offer something for the senses. My parents, who were both served by Hope Hospice, loved the outdoors. They taught me about every wild flower known to man. So I suggested we incorporate seed scattering as part of *Hike for Hope*. It’s a special connection to the promise of spring and new life. My whole family, including my grandkids, and good friends take part.”

Jean Sullivan has been attending the Tragic Loss group at the Hope Hospice Grief Support Center since last year. She lost her 37 year-old son unexpectedly about three years ago. Last year, to seek support for *Hike for Hope*, she wrote an article on her Facebook page about the hike and everyone responded...her son’s friends as well as her own. She wasn’t sure how she would actually feel on the day of the event. “But when I got there”, she said, “everyone was so up and chatty...so positive! The fact that I was on the trails with

others who were hiking in memory of someone they had lost made me feel great. Such a feeling of camaraderie, like, ‘We are all in this together to celebrate the life of someone special.’ I felt so connected to my son. And the event doesn’t take all day. It goes quickly and is so fulfilling.”

Because the hike is an opportunity to remember a loved one, each hiker is encouraged to bring a photo of the loved one for whom they will be hiking to place in a lanyard (provided by Hope Hospice) and wear around the neck. Hikers can choose from the (easy) two mile roundtrip Little Yosemite trek or combine it with the Canyon View Trail for a (moderate) three mile loop. The Yosemite trail is a popular destination for families with children who will be hiking with big wheel strollers and children in backpacks.

Joanie Fields is hiking with the ‘Class of ’64’ from Amador High School. One of their classmates died three years ago and some of the group will be hiking in his memory. Joanie states. “Allot of us were in school together from kindergarten through 12th grade and are native to the area. We plan to have a picnic after the hike so we can visit our friends, many of whom have lost someone special or have had a loved one in hospice care. It’s a different way of touching someone. It awakens you to others. It’s a meaningful way of giving back.” Joanie will post an announcement on her Facebook page to ask friends to help with a pledge.

Special features will delight hikers and are designed to bring moments of reflection, renewal, and education. Stan Goldberg, author of “Lessons for the Living” and a hospice volunteer, will provide musical interludes from a Japanese bamboo flute. An East Bay Parks naturalist will be on-site to answer questions about the park and to distribute brochures on the various wildflowers in bloom as well as information on poison oak, ticks, and snakes. . Along the trail, hikers will receive a packet of flower seeds, approved by Sunol’s botanist, to scatter as they walk or to use in their own garden at home.

Hope Hospice welcomes sponsorships from corporations and local businesses. Proceeds from the event will fund hospice care and our Grief Support Center, an open-to-the public resource for adults, teens, and children who are grieving the loss of a loved one.

Major sponsors include Chevron; Heritage Bank; Verizon, Braddock & Logan, Oliver de Silva and the San Ramon Regional Medical Center. Media sponsors include: Fox Channel 2, KKIQ Radio, Diablo Magazine, and Bay Area News Group newspapers.

For further information visit the hike’s website at www.thehikeforhope.com or call Pattie DiLauro, at 925-829-8770. Media representatives: contact Kathy Padro at (925) 829-8770 or kathyp@hopehospice.com

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About Hope Hospice

Hope Hospice, a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization since 1980, provides compassionate care, insight, and guidance as families navigate through the end-of-life process. The team of professionals, many with hospice and palliative care certification, provides emotional and spiritual support and state-of-the art methods of pain and symptom control to maximize quality of life. Hope Hospice serves families in Alamo, Blackhawk, Castro Valley, Diablo, Danville, Dublin, Livermore, Pleasanton, San Ramon, Sunol and the surrounding communities in the East Bay of San Francisco.

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