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SANTA MARIA JOINT UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

October 29, 2020

It's a wrap for The Patch, where high school students provided the spirit of Halloween to residents of the Santa Maria Valley.

For five weeks, students greeted all those wishing to find the perfect pumpkin while enjoying agricultural exhibits, a “spooky stroll” and a photo booth at Los Flores Ranch Park. Pumpkins sold out the final weekend.

“The Patch team is thankful for our supportive school and community,” said Pioneer Valley High School student leader Marc Cabeliza. “We appreciate the amount of love and memories you have provided us and we look forward to serving you all again next year.”

Students gained leadership and community service opportunities while showcasing their work in production agriculture, explained Tyler Dickinson, Panther ag teacher.

The Patch is a partnership between the City of Santa Maria Recreation and Parks Department, Betteravia Farms and many other local businesses to provide scholarships for the students who spend months organizing and operating the attraction. In the first two seasons, the effort generated more than \$30,000 for the youth involved.

The yearly project recently gained statewide recognition with the 2020 Helen Putnam Award for Excellence in City-Business Relations. The award highlights programs that “development community leaders, identifies and meets community needs and create a vibrant economic climate through partnerships.”

Pioneer juniors Juliet Martinez Aparicio and Melizabeth Peinado, from the student leadership board, organized a sunflower exhibit, scavenger hunt and a “Pinktober” booth for Mission Hope Cancer Center. They decorated pink pumpkins, sold apparel and served as advocates for Breast Cancer Awareness month. Proceeds were donated to Mission Hope. “Thank you to everyone who supported our Pinktober event at The Patch, it was a memorable event and we hope that students will carry on the tradition of Pinktober in the future,” said Aparicio.

Strawberries were the subject of an exhibit organized by Cabeliza, Pioneer senior Leadership Board member and FFA president. Focusing on the Santa Barbara County's top commodity, he coordinated with industry leaders at Driscoll's company and passed out some 500 boxes of the favorite fruit. He also provided visitors with educational materials from the California Strawberry Commission to advocate for this important local crop.

“Amidst these unusual times, students continue to persevere in bringing The Patch to life,” said Dickinson. “Even though this year has presented many challenges, students continue to collaborate and provide an enriching, educational and festive fall event for the community at large.”

To see event highlights persons can follow @thepatchsantamaria on Instagram, Facebook and the website:www.thepatchsantamaria.com.

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