

THE TOWNE LOCAL **Bonita**

NOV 2024 | ISSUE 2



LOCAL ROYALTY

Meet Miss Bonita &
Miss Chula Vista

FEATURED BUSINESS

40 Years of Service:
Yavorsky Properties

PEACE OF MIND

100 Years of Glen Abbey
Pre-Plan with Delia Pearsons

YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY MAGAZINE

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WELCOME FROM THE EDITOR

Gratitude All Around



JEFF BETTGER
PUBLISHING DIRECTOR

We have reached that time of year again. The time when we remember to be thankful. Thankful for a bountiful harvest. Thankful for our health. Thankful for the kindness of others. Thankful for loved ones that gather over special meals.

This year, I am thankful for you. The readers of The Towne Local Bonita. I am thankful for our creative team and our excellent local business partners. I am thankful for those who have given their time to sit down with me for an interview.

With great enthusiasm, we are thankful for the continued opportunity to bring you the best of Bonita.

I am thankful for you. The readers of The Towne Local Bonita.



On the Cover: Kid Chalk Art Event hosted by Bonita Optimists Friend of Youth. Picture taken by Kim Skulavik.

Meet the Team



Jeff Bettger
Publishing Director
Jeff@TheTowneLocalBonita.com



Tony Ross
Owner
tony@thetownelocal.com



Eddie Flores
Photographer
eddie@ilovelife photography.com



Kim Skulavik
Creative Director
kim@thetownelocal.com

Local Special Events

NOV
9



KUMEYAAY ART EXHIBITION

The Bonita Museum and Cultural Center hosted an exhibition of Kumeyaay art. The exhibition was curated by artist Johnny Bear Contreras.

NOV
17



GATHERING OF NATIONS

The Bonita Museum also hosted a Gathering of Nations, with traditional dancing, drumming, and singing from several performing groups.

NOV
14



BOTANICAL GARDEN

President of Southwestern College, Dr. Mark Sanchez, led a ribbon cutting ceremony to open the new four acre Botanical Garden and new tennis court complex on the campus.



Antonio Gastelum of the Soaring Eagles Native American Indian Cultural Dance Group explains the significance and history of his clothing pieces.

THANK YOU TO OUR *Business Partners*

Need a service? Consider these excellent local businesses. Find their ads throughout this issue. To learn even more about their services, see more photos, and read an interview with the owner, go to our website at www.TheTowneLocalBonita.com, scroll down, and click on their logo! Support your local businesses! Are you interested in advertising your business in future issues? Contact us!

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BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Suzanne Yavorsky CELEBRATES 40 YEARS

SERVING THE REAL ESTATE NEEDS OF BONITA AND THE SOUTH BAY AREA



Suzanne Yavorsky has been a mainstay in Real Estate and Property Management for Bonita and South Bay for 40 years and she is still going strong. Suzanne and her office manages nearly 200 single family homes in the Bonita and San Diego area and represents many homeowners who are selling their homes.

Yavorsky Properties is located by Lolitas and Chase bank by the corner of Bonita Road and Otay Lakes Road and has been located in Bonita for her entire career. Her father, John Yavorsky owned a longtime Real Estate company in the area and Suzanne was born and raised in this community and graduated from San Diego State University.

She bought the company from her father 40 years ago to carry-on the family Realtor history. Along the way she has been recognized as a leader in the community. She was very honored to serve as President of the Pacific Southwest Association of Realtors which was emblematic of her commitment to her profession and her community. Prior to that she served ten years on this association's

professional standards committee. She served as President of the Chula Vista Kiwanis Club which did charity work for those in need. She also has been a longtime supporter in kids' baseball and softball teams, as well as other local charities. In her career as an independent Real Estate Broker, Suzanne resisted the call for consolidation over the years and has remained independent. Her dynamic office takes pride in personalized connection with its clients. She is one of the very few property management offices that makes regular personalized visits to her client's rental properties to make sure that their investment is well cared for.

Suzanne, who lives in Bonita with her husband, Dean Knuth, says that she takes pride in her job every day. Bonita and Chula Vista are fortunate to have a dynamic professional like Suzanne. Bonita offers a small town environment where you see familiar faces all the time, Most of the homes are custom homes on ½ acre or more, neighborhoods are well cared for with a pride of ownership feel. I enjoyed horseback riding as a child and young adult and still enjoy still seeing the horses. Bonita also offers serenity from the bustling world yet you can still get to the airport in 20 minutes. The Chula Vista Golf course offers a wonderful walking path around it and is in constant use from sun up to sun down, the park is always having family gatherings. Bonita is simply Bonita.



From left to right: Pictured are office manager Lily Solano, Suzanne Yavorsky, assistant office manager Jennifer Gamino, and front office receptionist Maggie Villarreal. Photos by Love Life Photography.

100TH ANNIVERSARY GLEN ABBEY

PRE-PLANNING: PEACE OF MIND WITH DELIA PEARSONS



As you travel east on Bonita Road from Highway 805, you notice a large open, grassy area on your right. This 100-year-old landmark is Glen Abbey. Graced with the architectural landscape design of the famous Kate Sessions, Glen Abbey remains one of the most beautiful landscapes in San Diego County.

In addition to the main building you encounter upon exiting Bonita Road, the park boasts the remarkable Chapel of the Roses. Modeled after an English Church, the Chapel of the Roses has an indoor garden and outdoor space for

receptions. In addition to funeral services, it is used for weddings and Quinceaneras

But most people know Glen Abbey as the final resting place of a family member, friend or neighbor. To learn more about the importance of pre-planning, I interviewed Delia Pearsons, a Pre-planning Ambassador for Dignity Memorial. Thinking about our future resting plans can be emotional. I was lucky to find Delia to be a warm, caring, vivacious person. We talked about the comfort and serenity that comes from knowing your legacy is recorded and ensuring your family is

protected financially.

Delia Pearsons has always been a caring person. A native San Diegan, she attended USD for both undergraduate and graduate



coursework in Special Education. She worked as a teacher at Juvenile Hall working with at-risk populations and alternative populations. She is most proud of the teamwork in her role in piloting the Polinsky Child Center. Her final teaching assignment was her role as Education Specialist supporting unhoused youths at the Monarch School. She also started her own company working with children on the autism spectrum. She retired after a 30-year rewarding career with the San Diego County of Education.

Shortly thereafter, her mother became ill and required more attention.

When her mother passed, Delia found her new passion while going through the funeral planning process for her mother. She knew she could bring comfort and her education expertise to families in need of pre-planning.

Delia impressed me with multiple pre-planning options that support cultural preferences. For example, the Hispana Division can help families that have other family members who live in Mexico. They can arrange through the Mexican Consulate for a one-day visa for those family members. If the final resting place will be in Mexico, Dignity Memorial can handle the

transporting of the loved one to Mexico (or to the Philippines). Delia is bilingual and can explain all the options as needed. If the family requests, the loved one can be taken to the surviving family's home for a 24-hour viewing with no additional costs. Glen Abbey has four premium venues. The Magnolia Room in the main building can accommodate 300 people. The Chapel of the Roses 150 people. The Orchid room featuring both indoor and outdoor venues, and soon the all-glass Hilltop Mausoleum with magnificent views will be open in 2025.

Delia also took the time to explain the benefits that veterans have and how

THE HILLTOP MAUSOLEUM



they can be used at Glen Abbey. Another amazing benefit is the Family First Benefit. If a child or grandchild under the age of 25 passes away, they get the same like for like benefits.

When I asked Delia about the importance of pre-planning, I could tell a change in her voice. She shared that without pre-planning, there can be additional emotional and financial hardship on the remaining family as they struggle with their trauma and grief. With pre-planning, once a loved one passes, the family calls Glen Abbey and they arrange for the loved one to be secured within 3 hours. An arranger will work with the family to work out all the logistics.

The pre-planning process includes options for funeral services, type of burial, and burial location, such as in-ground, mausoleums, estates and build to suite options. The cost of burial space and services increase over time, as with all things. One can rest assured knowing that your legacy is recorded, and prices are locked in at the lowest rate. For more information and a park tour, contact Delia Pearsons:



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INSPIRING LOCAL PAGEANT QUEENS

COMMITMENT, CARING, COMMUNITY

WRITTEN BY: JEFF BETTGER

I grew up watching pageants such as Miss USA and Miss Universe. I watched them evolve from primarily a beauty contest, to a beauty and talent contest, to a beauty with social question/answer contest. This week, I had the great fortune of interviewing three local pageant winners. I present their interviews as a series of three related articles. Andria Elam is both the recent Mrs. California and the Director of the Miss Bonita and Miss Chula Vista pageants. Our newly crowned Miss Bonita is Alicia Ontiveros, and our newly crowned Miss Chula Vista is Isabel Caballero. As you will see, Alicia and Isabel will bring fresh energy and new perspectives to our community events. They will serve as excellent ambassadors with Andria's experience and expertise to guide them.

GIVING Forward

LEARNING TO WALK THE RUNWAYS

Look up the word “multi-talented” in the dictionary, and you should see the name Andria Elam. She is a dancer, a singer, a former cheerleader, Thoroughbred Racehorse Aftercare advocate, and more. For this interview, I will limit the discussion to Andria’s experience being a beauty pageant contestant and now the Director of the local Miss Bonita and Miss Chula Vista pageants. As one might expect given her background, Andria is a pleasure to interview and so well spoken. Therefore, I will provide the questions I asked of her and her direct answers.

GROWING UP

I was born and raised in Bonita. Being an equestrian, I have always loved it here. Growing up, my family and I loved going to Bonitafest and watching the parade. These days, I enjoy being a volunteer on the Bonitafest organizing committee. It is important to keep the tradition alive for new generations.

ENTERING BEAUTY PAGEANTS

When I was young, of course I loved the sparkly crowns. But over time, I learned that there was much more to pageantry. I saw it as a way to get further involved with the community.



PHOTO CREDIT: INTUITION DESIGN PHOTOGRAPHY

ANDRIA ELAM

Mrs. California United States 2021



REFLECTING ON THE JOURNEY

It was a bit overwhelming because there was a large age range of contestants. I decided to use that experience as an opportunity to learn and grow from those who had more experience or talent.

COUNTING THE CROWNS

I have competed in twenty-two pageants and have been blessed to win six titles.

LESSON LEARNED

I learned to push myself out of my comfort zone and learn new skills. I have been dancing since I was 4 years old, but I had to work on my public speaking and interview skills. I learned that I can do more than I originally thought.

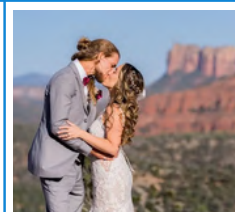
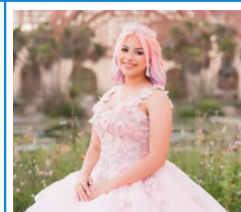
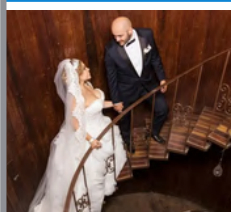
I learned to push myself out of my comfort zone and learn new skills. I have been dancing since I was 4 years old but I had to work on my public speaking.

UNFORGETTABLE PAGEANT MISHAPS

When I was competing for the Mrs. West Coast pageant. My high heel shoe fell apart just as I was about to go on stage. A contestant in a different category saw my predicament. She ran, got some double-stick tape, and helped me patch together my shoe. I was so impressed that a fellow contestant would help me. In the end, she won Ms. West Coast, and I won Mrs. West Coast. We had a great year attending events together. Shout out to my friend, Millie!



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FROM CROWN TO CLIPBOARD

BECOME DIRECTOR FOR THE PAGEANTS

The pageants have a really long history. The Miss Chula Vista pageant began in the 1920's but became a consistent event starting in the 1940's. The Miss Bonita pageant was founded in 1986 by Lorraine Johnson. After she passed, the pageant was not conducted for several years. I assumed the directorship in 2017 and put the two pageants together under the same program.

BEHIND THE SCENES

It is a lot of work. Right now, the pageant consists of just an interview portion. I am hoping that as the program grows, we can have a full stage pageant with several different categories of competition. But even with just the interview segment, it takes a lot of preparation. We were fortunate to have the support of the Bonita Museum and Cultural Center to host our event. Before the event, of course, there is the recruiting of contestants and staying in contact with them. It is really important that they have a great experience from their first communication with me through the interview process, regardless of the outcome. I spend a lot of time answering their questions via calls and email. I want them to feel comfortable and prepared for the interviews.

FUNDING THE EVENTS

Our program is funded completely by local groups and organizations, and independent donors. As far as organizing the event, I did most of the work myself. Luckily, I had one of my good friends, Sarah Way assist me, and my husband also helped with whatever needed to be done. I am thankful for our volunteer interview judges this year: Ron Bolles, Ernesto Castaneda, and Claudia Alarcon.

Our program is funded completely by local groups and organizations, and independent donors. As far as organizing the event, I did most of the work myself.

INTO THE COMMUNITY ON GOING DUTIES

I want to give the woman an opportunity to really have their voices be heard. That goes beyond community appearances. I really encourage them to have their own platform, which is a charity or cause they feel really passionate about promoting. I encourage them to consider competing in a regional or state pageant. I make sure they are prepared for each community appearance. We work on public speaking and interview skills, how to walk in high heels, and how to do their hair and makeup.



GUIDING THE CROWN

I told them to take it all in, don't get overwhelmed, and to enjoy every moment. I told them they will get out of the year exactly what they put into it.

A YEAR IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Each title holder have difference scheduled appearance and events they attend. Generally, making one appearance every 10-14 days is great. Obviously, schedules get very busy during the holiday season. Different community groups come to me asking to schedule an appearance, but I really encourage the title holders to find their own appearances related to the causes that they are passionate about.

ADVICE FOR THE FUTURE

Competing in a pageant is such a great way to challenge and push yourself to grow to new levels. I would encourage anyone to apply. This year, each contestant received one hour of private coaching with



me, so that they felt really prepared and could share the best version of themselves with the judges.

GET UP AND DANCE!

I've been teaching Ballroom, Latin and social dancing for over 20 years, and used to compete professionally in International Latin. I teach all levels but specialize in beginners. After working at most of the major Ballroom studios in San Diego, I took my program on the road to teach private lessons at my students' locations of choice. This helps everyone feel relaxed, comfortable and safe. I also teach a lot of wedding couples for their first dance, father-daughter, and mother-son dances. Anyone who might be interested in taking lessons can message me through Instagram, @andriamelam. It's a fun way to connect with your partner and get great exercise!

For more information on how to support the pageant programs, email Director@missbonita.org

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ALICIA ONTIVEROS

Miss Bonita 2024



Diamonds on the field, Diamonds on the crown

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MISS BONITA AND MISS CHULA VISTA PAGEANT

The newly crowned Miss Bonita, Alicia Ontiveros, is not one to shy away from new challenges. While most people tend to stay within their known comfort zone, Miss Bonita shows us the value of trying something new. Of course she has the natural beauty found in pageant winners. But it is her pleasant personality, friendly smile and likeable demeanor that make talking to this 26-year-old a joy.

TRADITION

Alicia grew up in Bonita. She went to Allen Elementary School, Bonita Middle School, and Bonita Vista High School. She appreciates the sense of community she felt growing up in Bonita and wants to do her part to maintain and strengthen it. When asked what she likes most about Bonita, she immediately explains that she loves having a home with a yard big enough to have animals and a ranch life. Growing up, her family had 3 horses, chickens, 2 sheep and 2 goats. Now they have chickens, goats and a pig.

Alicia is the youngest in her family and has a strong sense of tradition. Her faith is a central part of her life. She led bible study groups while at college in Michigan and now continues to volunteer at the church where her grandparents started a Latino worship group in the 70's. Is it important to Alicia to keep the culture and community going strong for the present and future.

If you wanted to find Alicia in her youth, you would have been smart to find the nearest softball field. She says she dedicated herself 24/7 to softball. As a youth, she played for Bonita Valley. In high school, she was a utility player for BVHS. In college, she played second base. Alicia still currently plays in a local softball league.

COURAGE

After graduating from college, Alicia returned to Bonita with a degree in Biology. But life threw her a curve ball. Based on an advertisement and with her love of softball and baseball, she applied to be a ball girl for the San Diego Padres in 2021.



Unfortunately, she was not selected. However, the idea of working within Major League Baseball ignited something inside her. The following year, her sister showed her an announcement that the San Diego Padres baseball team had positions open for ticketing agents. Alicia says that she was not sure she would get the job, but given her willingness to try something new, she decided to apply anyway. Little did she know that applying for the job would change her life. After her interview, she was not only hired but was hired to be a ticketing supervisor! Alicia has held that position for two years now. She smiles when explaining her excitement when Padres players stop in the office to say hello! Given her passion for softball and baseball, this is her dream job. She hopes her future career will continue to be with the Padres and Major League Baseball.

A PAGEANT? ME?

Given her job and many activities, you might assume that Alicia would be satisfied. You would

Alicia's caring heart is displayed when she starts talking about the sense of depression and anxiety she felt in college. During that time, she soon realized that other young people her age were feeling the same.

be wrong. Earlier this year, she saw an announcement on social media for the Miss Bonita Pageant. Alicia had never entered a pageant before, but again realized the importance of stepping out of her comfort zone. She wanted to push herself to get out and talk with people. She felt that being Miss Bonita would give her an opportunity to help people in the community. With a positive attitude of “take opportunities that present themselves,” she submitted her application. After receiving information on what to expect, Alicia went before the panel of judges for an interview. The next day, she was informed that she would be the new Miss Bonita! Talking to her for this interview, I can see why the judges selected her.

COMPASSION

Alicia’s caring heart is displayed when she starts talking about the sense of depression and anxiety she felt in college. During that time, she soon realized that other young people her age were

feeling the same. COVID was especially difficult on her because she was used to being around people and having social interactions. Feeling isolated and not connected was difficult. She now realizes that mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety, can be struggles for people of all ages.

As the goal for her year as Miss Bonita, Alicia wants to bring forth the issues of Mental Health. She knows it is difficult for people, especially young people, to admit having these feelings, and have an even harder time asking for help. With the upcoming Holiday season, many people can feel lonely. Alicia feels that even simple gestures, such as asking people how they are doing, can have a huge positive impact. During her upcoming year as Miss Bonita, Alicia looks forward to meeting people and engaging in conversations. With her warm and caring personality, taking a photo with Miss Bonita will certainly brighten the day of the people lucky to meet her.



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TRADITION with a Twist

With a classic type of beauty, Isabel Caballero's new crown and sash seem a natural fit. As a student at SDSU, Isabel has already accomplished much, but has her sights set on even higher goals. As our interview began, I was expecting Isabel to be well-spoken, but what I was not expecting was their strong sense of self and a maturity well beyond their years. (The interchangeable use of "she" and "they" is Isabel's preferred choice of personal pronouns. They further prefer the term Latinx as a gender-neutral description over Latino or Latina.)

ISABEL CABALLERO

Miss Chula Vista 2024

ENTHUSIASM

Isabel is the child of two educators. They grew up in Chula Vista and attended CVLCC middle school and then Bonita Vista High School. When asked for a favorite memory growing up, Isabel remembered going to the Bonita Library summer reading program and being happy to receive a little toy.

In high school, Isabel enjoyed being active in different clubs. They were a member of the award-winning Sound Unlimited group, a member of ASB, a member of Junior Optimists, and the President of the Robotics club. I then asked Isabel what it was like going through COVID during her Senior year.

COVID

Isabel explained that she missed out on her senior year activities. They saw many classmates fall into depression. In hindsight, Isabel recognizes that there were not enough resources available to students, depression was not widely talked about, and any available resources were not easy to access. It was a struggle for many students feeling the pressure of keeping up grades without in-person support from staff and normal class instruction. Isabel explained that without a “normal” senior year, they felt like they went from being a junior to going straight into college. They felt that a normal senior year was needed to transition from a high school identity to college life.

IDENTITY

Speaking of identity. . . What would it be like to love your family and your culture, but realize that you are different from them? What if your differences do not align well with the traditions and expectations of that culture? Would you be strong enough to tell others about your differences, or would you hide it as long as possible?

While in middle school, Isabel started to realize that not everybody thought or felt about things the way she did. After much introspection and research, Isabel was brave enough to tell loved ones that she was queer. This was not easy. Not everybody understood and to this day, it is a struggle to find spaces where they feel comfortable. Isabel emphasized the importance of people listening in earnest rather than making assumptions or trying to make inaccurate connections.

MISS CHULA VISTA

When asked why she wanted to be Miss Chula Vista, Isabel explained she wanted to represent Chula Vista because it is her home, the place where she grew up. Isabel decided to apply for Miss Chula Vista as a result of knowing previous Miss Chula Vista title holders. To start the process, the initial application required basic biographical information, such as past leadership roles and awards. Applicants cannot be over the age of twenty-six. Applicants must state a platform they want to support, and they must agree to participate in the year-long activities if chosen as the next Miss Chula Vista.

In hindsight, Isabel recognizes that there were not enough resources available to students, depression was not widely talked about, and any available resources were not easy to access.



After the interview process with the judges, Isabel went out for dinner with her mother the next evening. It was then that they received the good news that she was the new Miss Chula Vista! I asked Isabel about her expectations for the upcoming year. She joked that thankfully the crown is not too heavy and is comfortable to wear, which is nice given the many public appearances she and Miss Bonita will make this year. Being Mis Chula Vista, Isabel hopes they can be a comfort to other young people struggling to announce their personal preferences.

APPLIED RESEARCH

Isabel's long-term goal is to earn a Ph.D. in psychology, and to continue doing research on the effects of substance abuse on pre-natal babies. Not only lab work, but to get out into the communities and advocate that the key to preventing substance abuse is not starting in the first place. Isabel wants to hold seminars at high schools, emphasizing the need to de-normalize drug use. Students need to be made aware that the use of drugs, such as cannabis, is dangerous. It can be a gateway to other more harmful drugs, students can suffer from "cannabis use disorder," and the ever-present danger of cannabis being laced with fatal drugs such as Fentanyl. It is critical for the youth of today to understand that they can die from an opiate overdose.

Isabel Caballero is articulate and thoughtful. We are fortunate to have a Miss Chula Vista who is comfortable talking about a wide range of topics and who always brings her natural cheerful smile. Thank you, Isabel, for sharing some of your thoughts, goals, and turning points in your life's journey.

JEFF'S FINAL THOUGHT

Some people have a gift for conversation that makes time fly by. Such was my experience interviewing Andria, Alicia, and Isabel. In my youth, my father would sometimes describe a person as a being a "firecracker." He never defined what he meant, but from multiple examples, I induced that he was referring to a person with great energy, enthusiasm, and as he would say, spunk. Or maybe he meant the type of charisma that can light up a room. Andria Elam, Alicia Ontiveros and Isabel Caballero are all firecrackers!



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Your Health

*Each month, we will explore some of the many ways we can improve our physical, mental, and emotional health through exercise, massage, hobbies, etc. **This month, Kip Leggett explains the many benefits of Tai Chi. Tai Chi is an ancient system of movements originating in China. Unlike other martial arts, Tai Chi is practiced slowly, with emphasis on balance, posture, and breathing.***



MEET KIP LEGGETT

Kip started his martial arts journey studying traditional Karate. He then had the opportunity to study Tai Chi. Kip has been teaching Tai Chi in Bonita since 1986. He offers Yang Style Taiji instruction in a small class setting. Instruction includes the traditional long form and push hand practice.

1

Tai Chi as a Lifelong Practice

It is most commonly practiced in the U.S. by seniors and middle-age students, however, I recommend it for all ages. Younger students can benefit from Tai Chi practice in many ways.

2

Advantage of Tai Chi's Slow Movements

In order to heighten a calm awareness of inner energy and flowing balance of mind and body, Tai Chi must first be practiced slowly and with great focus.

3

Proper Breathing is Important

It is important to let one's breathing be natural. If Tai Chi is performed properly, the breath will slow down and deepen. A deep breath should be from one's stomach, not just the lungs.



4

Improving Balance

Regular Tai Chi practice will improve one's mental and physical balance. The bodyweight is carefully shifted from one leg to the other during each movement. This requires control of your body and proper posture.

5

No Experience Necessary

Physical fitness is always advantageous, but no prior experience is necessary to practice Tai Chi. The only thing required is a desire to learn.

The best way to learn more about Bonita Tai Chi is to visit bonitataichi.com or email kip@bonitataichi.com.



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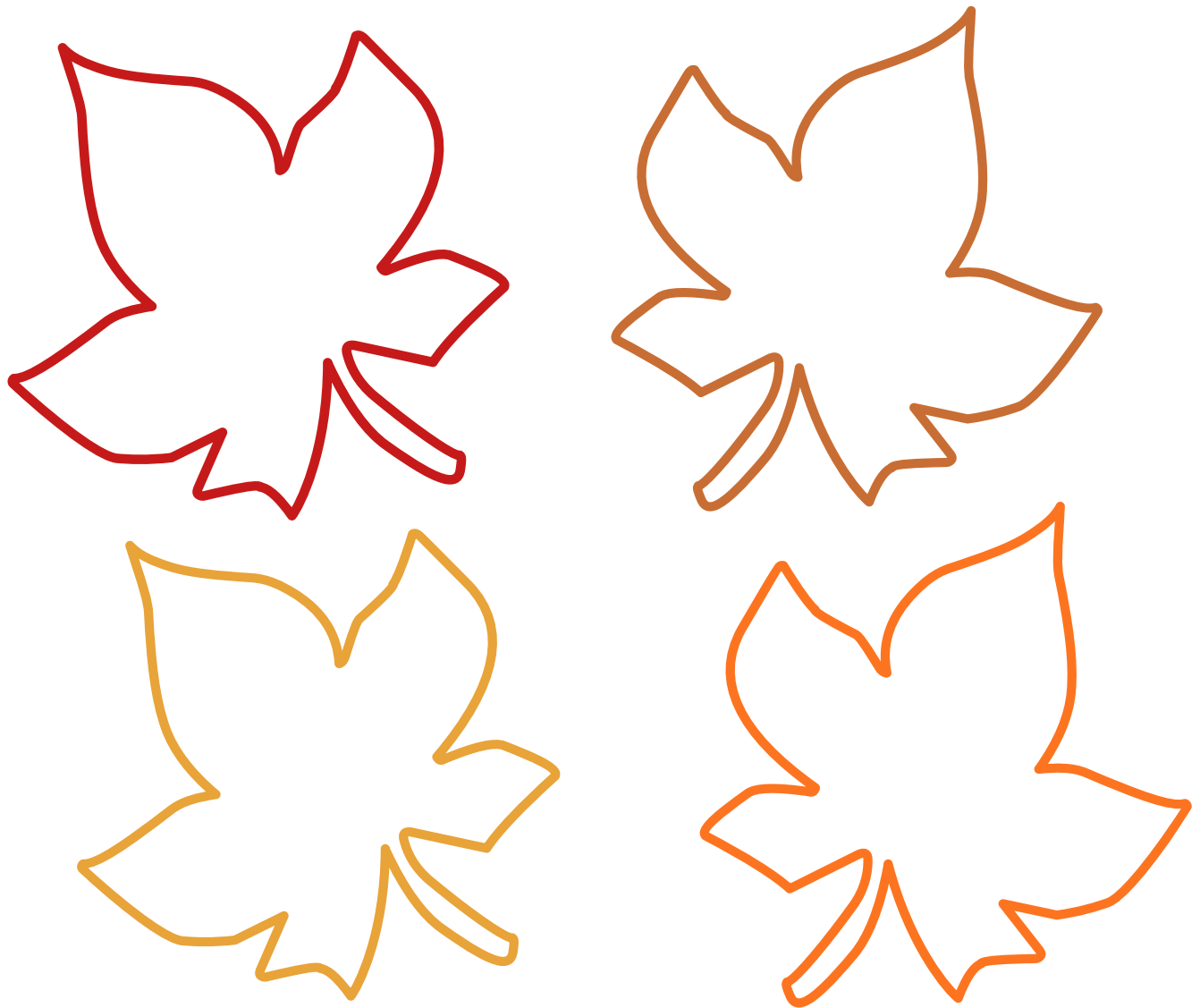
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FUN TIME

I AM THANKFUL FOR...

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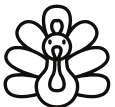










FUN TIME

I SPY FALL



There are ten Fall icons. Colour each set of icons as you find them.
Write the number in the box beside the icons you counted.

Poetry Corner

In Celebration of World Kindness Month

Thank you to Elizabeth Cox for organizing local Kindness Events.



THE COST OF KINDNESS

BY JEFF BETTGER

Nothing is free, they say.
Everybody has to pay,
one way or another.

But an act of kindness
doesn't need to cost a thing.
It's up to you what you give.

Kindness can be a win
in many different ways,
morally and even financially.

Weighing all prospects,
kindness always has the
greatest return on investment.

What kindness can you provide?
Simply take a look around and
see the endless possibilities.

Today I gave away my fries
to a thin homeless man.
He needed them more than I.

We may never know what stress
another may be suffering. But even
a simple smile costs nothing to invest.

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