

# DEL MAR TIMES

Volume 22, Issue 15

www.delmartimes.net

April 11, 2019

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## Community



High school club helps build homes for families in Mexico. A7

## Lifestyle



See inside for a variety of photos of community events.

## Del Mar Times

An Edition of  
The San Diego  
Union-Tribune

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## Design meetings kick off for new Del Mar Heights School

BY KAREN BILLING

Built in 1958, Del Mar Heights School is long overdue for an upgrade and it is finally a possibility due to the passage of Measure MM.

While bond money will fund improvements at all eight schools, the largest construction projects will be the complete renovation of Del Mar Heights and the construction of the new school in Pacific Highlands Ranch.

The April 1 kick-off of the planning and design phase for a newly imagined Del Mar Heights was very exciting for Del Mar Union School District President Erica Halpern, a Del Mar Heights parent and former PTA president at the school. Before she joined the board in 2015, she was a part of the district's facilities master plan process, laying the road map for making the best use of its facilities.

"This day has been a long time coming," Halpern said. "I've sat in countless meetings about how to make this facility match what is happening in our educational program. It's exciting to start the process of what is going to be a spectacular school."

At the school board's March 28 meeting, they approved the architectural contract with Baker Nowicki Design Studio to design Del  
**SEE DESIGN, A21**



KAREN BILLING

Del Mar Heights community members brainstorm about the new school.

## The girl who writes children's books

BY KAREN BILLING

Carmel Valley resident Danielle Depratt Koelbl and her 5-year-old daughter Taylor have turned their bedtime storytelling routine into a sweet series of little books with big lessons. The mother-daughter team has published "The Girl Who Loves Unicorns" and "The Girl Who Asked for Presents," available for purchase on Amazon and recently donated into the collections at the Del Mar and Carmel Valley Libraries.

"I love being a children's book author," said Depratt Koelbl, who hopes that their little books spark creativity, determination and time well spent with a friend or loved one.

Taylor, a preschool student at Horizon Prep who will be in kindergarten at Sage Canyon Elementary School this fall, said "spending time with mommy" was her favorite part of the creative book-writing experience.

She also had an ulterior motive: "I wanted to write books to help kids stay up later," the tot author said with a giggle.

Depratt Koelbl and her husband are Wisconsin natives who came to California to attend college. They have lived in the Solana Beach, Del Mar and Carmel Valley area for the last 10 years, parents to Danielle and her 3-year-old sister Alex.

"What started it all was when Taylor was 4-and-a-half, we were going through common



KAREN BILLING

Taylor and her mom Danielle Depratt Koelbl have published two children's books.

parent-child disconnects, like her always asking for treats and presents," Depratt Koelbl said.

"I don't do it anymore," Taylor clarified for the record.

Depratt Koelbl figured out that bedtime was the one time Taylor really wanted to listen—as she is a strong advocate of kids staying up later.

"At bedtime, I started creating stories that were half about her. Very quickly she identified that they were half about her so she

started contributing to the stories," Depratt Koelbl said.

She found that the stories helped facilitate discussions between mom and daughter about different topics, their storytelling often winding their way toward a useful lesson, valuable moral and a happy light's out.

Depratt Koelbl got the idea to turn their stories into children's books and together they wrote six books in four weeks. It can be hard

**SEE BOOKS, A23**

## Solana Beach electorate faces vote over proposed residential senior-care development

BY MICHAEL J. WILLIAMS

For the first time, Solana Beach voters soon will exercise the right they gave themselves nearly 19 years ago to decide whether the city's general plan can be altered to allow more intensive uses.

A special election will be conducted May 7 to ask the electorate if it will authorize a change to a tiny section of the general plan, the city's master land-use guide.

In November 2000, city residents

passed Proposition T, the Community Protection Act, with a 62 percent approval rate. No one until now has submitted a land-use proposal within the small, mostly built-out city that triggered the act's application.

The currently proposed general plan change would theoretically allow a senior-care apartment development, with a maximum of 99 beds, on 2.9 acres at 959 Genevieve Street that abut the east side of Interstate 5. The general

plan now calls for the property to be developed with single family homes on minimum 1/2-acre lots.

Passage of the ballot question labeled Measure B would not approve the actual project, which would ultimately need the City Council's blessing.

John DeWald of project developer RhodesMoore LLC said it has taken about eight years of working on the

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## North Coast Sheriff's Station to hold 'Coffee with the Community' April 18

The North Coast Sheriff's Station is holding a Coffee with the Community on Thursday, April 18, 9 a.m.-11 a.m. at McDonald's, 1064 N. El Camino Real, Encinitas.

This is an opportunity to connect with the San Diego County Sheriff's Department over a cup of coffee. Event participants will have the chance to ask questions, voice concerns and get to know deputies who patrol their neighborhood.

Get crime prevention tips and learn more about free safety programs. Questions? Call Crime Prevention Specialist Jonathan Simon at 760-966-3588.

### FROM HOMES, A7

and streamline the process. And every month, a group of high school students goes across the border to one of the two community centers built by Casas de Luz and teaches a class or has a "fun day" with the kids.

The club also recently started an initiative called "Despensas de Luz" to deliver groceries to needy families. The nonprofit also provides meal programs for local kids and a Christmas holiday party each year.

But the builds can't happen until the money is raised. To that end, a special

fundraising event for Casas de Luz is being held on May 3 from 6 to 10 p.m. It's a concert called "Viva la Luz!" and will feature local singer-songwriter Lee Coulter. Drinks, desserts and a silent auction will be included and babysitting is available. Tickets are \$25 each or four for \$80 (babysitting extra). The event will be held at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of San Dieguito at 1036 Solana Drive in Solana Beach. For tickets, go to [vivalaluz.brownpapertickets.com](http://vivalaluz.brownpapertickets.com). Tickets are also available at the door for \$30 each.

### FROM SPORTS, A16

They were among five Torrey Pines players with three hits. Valentina Perrone, who had had three hits and three RBI, freshman Kyra Chan and sophomore Kaili Aqui were the others.

Two days later Katie Walling had six hits including two home runs and drove in six runs as the Falcons defeated Granite Hills 9-3 two days later.

Chan had four hits including a double and White homered.

The Falcons improved to 11-5 overall for the season.

#### Volleyball:

Torrey Pines defeated Francis Parker 2-0 (25-18, 25-20) in the championship match of the Valhalla Tournament on April 6.

Will Meader led the Falcons with 10 kills as the Falcons ran their winning streak to 21 matches.

Tournament MVP David Codling and Nick Slight each had four kills.

The Falcons improved to 28-1 overall for the season.

### FROM BOOKS, A1

to communicate with kids sometimes, she said, and working on the books together created some special bonding moments.

A friend and graphic designer in Chicago, Erin Bonham, offered to illustrate two of the books and the first book, "The Girl Who Asked for Presents," was accepted into the Kindle Direct Publishing/Amazon on-demand print at no charge. The book was ranked the #1 new release in Early Children's Education and held a Top 100 Children's spot for its first two months on Amazon.

"It teaches you that you should be thankful for your toys and that there's something special even in empty boxes because you can make a castle or doghouses or whatever," Taylor said.

Taylor came up with the story for their second published book, "The Girl Who Loves Unicorns," while on her way to a unicorn birthday party. In the story, a little girl is determined to find a unicorn, working with her mom to try and entice a unicorn to come by setting out treats like lollipops and marshmallows, stickers and a sparkly headband.

Taylor came up with the ending that the little girl knew it was unlikely that a unicorn would visit because "they live at the top of rainbows"—she says, "I really just wanted to

imagine I could find one just so I could spend time with you."

"My heart melted," Depratt Koelbl said of the sweet ending. "Taylor is my snuggle bug, she wants to snuggle and play with me all the time."

In the end, a unicorn is peeking through the window as the mom and daughter devise a plan for how they can find a mermaid. "Unicorns" was released on Amazon a few weeks ago and has ranked #9 new release in Children's Values Books and #3 in Early Children's Education.

Depratt Koelbl loves the message of that book, reminding parents and families about the importance of spending time together. She admits that she can get caught up in work sometimes as the president and CEO of a healthcare software company but she has realized that, "The only project that really matters is making sure that I raise good and empathetic humans, being a mommy and showing my girls that they can do anything."

"Time spent together is the best time spent," she adds, noting that her girls never let her forget a "family day."

The Koelbls submitted several manuscripts to publishers in February including "The Girl Who Says 'That's Mine'" and "The Girl Who Wants to Choose Her Outfits" and "The Girl Who Asks For Treats"—similar to the book about asking for presents, an adult finds a

sneaky way to get children to appreciate a healthy snack.

Depratt Koelbl said being artistic does not come natural to her as it does to her daughter. Taylor has a big imagination and she loves to sing and write songs, draw and send handwritten letters to her family members in Wisconsin.

Taylor is also an avid reader and the family is always swapping books with friends. Taylor said her favorite books are "Danny Dog," a book about a rescue dog written by another local author Sid Shapira, and "Clean Water for Elirose" by Ariah Fine about a group of children that realizes they can make a difference in the world by saving up money to build a well for those who don't have water. After reading that book, Taylor said she wanted to help others too.

Depratt Koelbl has also been inspired to make a difference—she is hoping to donate "The Girl Who..." and "The Boy Who..." books to Rady Children's Hospital, books with blank pages so every kid can write their own stories.

"So many positive things have come from our project, whether it's another child saying, 'Wait. Taylor wrote this? Can I write a book too?' Yes you can! Or a parent telling me their children now create castles out of Amazon boxes because there is beauty in an empty box," Depratt Koelbl said. "It makes me feel so wonderful that my family, and other people, are finding tiny moments as a result of our hard work."

"The Girl Who Asked For Presents" and "The Girl Who Loves Unicorns" are available on Amazon.com.



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## Easter Sunrise Service

In Balboa Park

at the Spreckels Organ Pavillion

Sunday April 21, 2019 6:30 – 7:30 a.m.

#### Message

Rev. Paul Cunningham  
La Jolla Presbyterian Church

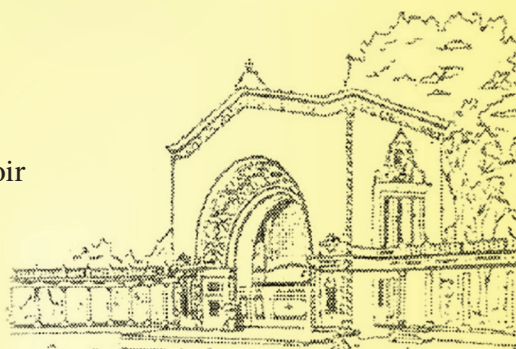
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