



## Opening Day



Dear Friends,

Play ball! It was a privilege to join Santa Clarita Valley Youth Baseball at Castaic Sports Complex to throw the first pitch for their [Opening Day](#) ceremony. The return of youth sports across Los Angeles County is a welcomed sign of normalcy. Young athletes are so excited to be spending the season back on the field playing a game they love, being surrounded by friends, and getting cheered for by family.

As of today, Los Angeles County's [mask mandate has officially ended](#) in public

settings and businesses, marking an opening day of sorts for our communities. In addition to masks no longer being required, there is also no longer a vaccine mandate or testing requirement for patrons of bars, breweries, wineries, or outdoor mega events. Also crucial for our children, the masking requirement for schools will end on March 12. As our workplaces, schools, and favorite recreation activities are safely back in full swing, I hope this season is a breath of fresh air.

Best wishes,



Kathryn Barger

Supervisor, Fifth District

# Honoring Hillside



“Come together, right now... for the Hillside gala!” Inspired by The Beatles’ hit song, Hillside hosted an incredible 1960s-themed fundraiser that celebrated

peace, love, and hope. These values are nothing new to Hillside, whose mission has always been to help children and families heal, grow, and thrive.

[Support their mission.](#)

## Consul General



It was a pleasure to join community, government, and faith leaders to celebrate Consulate General of Armenia in Los Angeles Armen Baibourtian. During his time here, he was committed to serve the Armenian community, even amid challenges presented by horrific attacks on Armenia during a global pandemic. I'm grateful for his dedication to strengthen relationships between our jurisdictions and to uplift our vibrant Armenian diaspora—the largest anywhere in the world.

[Connect with the consulate.](#)

# Reforming Care



This week, [Governor Newsom](#) announced his plan for Care Court, an effort to bring healing to people living with debilitating mental illness on our streets. We need a coordinated and consistent approach to help these individuals, and Care Court is poised to deliver that through the courts system. Severe mental illness doesn't resolve itself. Until we take a firm approach, the homelessness crisis and suffering will continue to grow.

The onus of providing comprehensive treatment will fall on counties' shoulders, which will require an investment in resources and infrastructure. I look forward to working through those details when the time comes. I have spent years advocating for changes to the state's mental health laws. Care Court provides a new pathway to providing humane services to our most vulnerable population, which is an approach rooted in today's reality.

How many times have we walked by someone who is clearly having a psychotic episode, witnessing a crisis without being able to help? It's time to stop looking away and do something about it.

Read about my commitment to mental health reform.

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# Free Tax Prep



## **Good news!**

EITC could put up to \$6,728 into the pockets of eligible taxpayers

This year, more people than ever before can access thousands of dollars when they file a tax return. Put cash back in your pocket and receive credits tailor-made for your family, including those for youth and seniors through the Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit.

[Claim your credits.](#)

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# County Contracts



Los Angeles County is serving communities that were severely impacted by the pandemic by equipping them with investments from the American Rescue Plan Act and other funding sources. Through December 2024, the County is identifying a wide range of community-based organizations and businesses to give them the funds and tools they need to recover. Connect with the County to learn more about current solicitations and contracting opportunities.

[Invest in communities.](#)

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# Arts Grants for Schools



Does your school district want to expand arts education opportunities? Apply for free coaching and matching grants before March 9 with the L.A. County Arts Education Collective to provide students with amazing classes in dance, media, music, theatre, and visual arts.

[Get grants.](#)

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# Women's Fire Academy



March is Women's History Month and there is no better time to spotlight the incredible bravery, strength, and grit of the women in Los Angeles County's Fire Department. The Department is hosting its sixth Women's Fire Prep Academy Opening Day on Saturday, March 19, which provides participants with a chance to learn first-hand what it takes to be in the fire service. The opportunity is open to all women 18 and older and spots are available on a first come, first served basis.

[Learn more about the program.](#)

[Register for the Fire Prep Academy.](#)

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# Share Your Story



**CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!**

The PLUS ME project is hosting Motivational March, an effort to help students stay motivated on their journeys and to remind them that their stories matter. The 100 Volunteers, 100 Stories campaign creates a space where communities can courageously tell their stories where they are heard, valued, and celebrated. Throughout the month, they are placing role models in virtual classrooms to give back to youth in L.A. County. If you'd like to volunteer, I encourage you to sign up for this incredible opportunity.

[Sign up to inspire students.](https://www.theplusmeproject.org)

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