THE Rockridge News
www.rockridge.org
VOL 38 • NO. 11 • ISSUE NO. 414 • DECEMBER 2023 CIRCULATION: 6,300 RESIDENCES; 200 BUSINESSES
Sponsored by the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) • 4900 Shattuck Ave., PO Box 22504, Oakland 94609

Maison d'Etre Closing? Not Yet. Next Generation Steps Up

by Carol Kasparek

After a challenging couple of years, owners **Patty Brunn** and **Fred Womack** were facing a difficult decision for Maison d'Etre. Preparing for the holidays usually meant stocking additional beautiful objects for everyday use and unique gifts for a special occasion, then decorating the shop at night as a family with daughters **Lilly** and **Daisy**. "There's a feeling, vibration that we try to create in the store to help people celebrate life at home," says Patty.

This year, the feeling was going to be farewell. After 30 years on College Avenue, Fred now wants to move into estate and property work. Patty knew a time would come for her to shoulder fewer of the extensive buying responsibilities. The first week of November they announced on Instagram and in a statement posted in the shop window — Maison d'Etre would close on January 1, 2024. Strong reactions to the announcement reverberated not just throughout the neighborhood, but also within the family. Daisy had been working full-time in the shop while pursuing her artistic career with ceramics and graphics. Lilly had also been part of operations and purchasing but was planning to move to Southern California. Closing the store seemed set.

The fate of the business changed only a few days after the announcement. At a family dinner, the two daughters and Patty told Fred that Daisy wanted to take over the management of the store, with Lilly and Patty continuing to be involved with merchandise buying and store operations.

"They were scheming, and I had no idea," Fred admitted. Patty and the girls had discovered that letting go of the cherished business was not what they wanted. Exploring several scenarios, they devised a partnership that worked for each of them.

Daisy realized how much ownership she felt for the store, and stepped up to take on the challenge with Lilly joining the venture so they could

Maison d'Etre, see next page



Patty and Fred with their two daughters, Daisy and Lilly, who will be taking over the shop.



Find That Perfect Gift Along College Avenue

By Carol Kasparek and Gary Fine

Rockridge residents are exceptionally fortunate to have a multitude of devoted merchants offering delightfully fun and useful products to us yearlong. The holidays allow us to give gifts to our loved ones that they may use every day or treasure forever, simply for their inherent beauty.

Here is a small sampling of gift ideas recommended by local merchants that you'll find as you meander down College Avenue. Begin your holiday journey at College and Claremont, then head South toward Broadway… and spread the joy. And remember: Gift certificates for things like services, clothing, classes, and meals, also make much-appreciated presents.

Avenue Shops, see next page

Maison d'Etre, from front page

continue to work together. By November 14, the "goodbye letter" was removed from the shop window and a notice of congratulations to the daughters was quickly posted to Instagram. "An eleventh-hour syndrome, I think," ventured Patty.

"Our parents gave us this amazing little life with this store," says Lilly, "We're doing something we're scared of, but doing it together." Daisy will focus on organization and systems while Lilly will continue to assist with buying and presentation. Patty will shepherd as needed.

The store will be closed from January through March while the family regroups and to allow time for the sisters to add their personal style and make other enhancements. "We will be rearranging the space, creating a more efficient work area, and upgrading our point-of-sale system," explained Daisy. Check their website for dates as they are set.

"We are so fortunate to be able to pass this treasured creation on to our children," expressed Patty. "Not many businesses are able to stay in the family these days." As for the two daughters, "We are looking forward to following in their footsteps and learning from the best." Rockridge is fortunate that Maison d'Etre is reviving that time-honored tradition of family succession. ■

Avenue Shops, from front page

Murasaki Futon and Fine Bedding / 6050 College



Ramen bowls and paper lanterns adorn the windows of this Avenue veteran. **Ed Murasaki's** family has owned the store for 39 years, adding tableware, pillows, charms, and chopsticks to its extensive futon inventory. "Like most immigrant families, we've worked through a lot," he says, noting that Pandemic supply chain issues are mostly resolved. Devoted regular customers who have brought the store through tough times can now find the full array of appliqued covers and cushions they are accustomed to finding at Murasaki's.

Love Again Fabrics / 6030 College



"We give people the opportunity to rediscover beautiful fabrics and handmade accessories," says **Mary Norman**, who opened the doors to the transformed space only six weeks ago. Vintage fabrics from estates and donations along with original sewing patterns from the mid-century distinguish the light, airy space. Sewing lessons and machine time rentals help customers make use of the classic materials. Caftans, hand mitts, hats, lap quilts with hand warmers, and no-sew fleece blankets are available for those who want a finished artisanal creation.

Avenue Shops, see next page

The Rockridge News

The Rockridge News was founded in March 1986 by **Don Kinkead** and is published monthly (except August). It is sponsored by the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC), a nonprofit public benefit organization founded to: preserve and enhance the unique character of the Rockridge neighborhood; promote the health, safety and quality of life of its residents; furnish a forum for community involvement; and provide leadership and representation of neighborhood interests.

Rockridge News Production

Anna L. Marks ..... Editor & Layout Artist
Jo Ellis ..... Assistant Editor & Ad Manager
Susan Montauk..... Business & Distribution Manager
Judith Doner Berne..... Senior Contributing Writer

RCPC Board of Directors, 2023-24

Casey Farmer ..... Chair
Robin McDonnell ..... Vice-Chair
Ben Friedman ..... Secretary
Louisa Bukiet ..... Treasurer

Mark Aaronson, Aly Bonde, Andrew Charman, Annette Floystrup, Star Lightner, Tom Lollini, Kirk Peterson, Ken Rich, Zac Unger

Contact the board: chair@rockridge.org
For information: info@rockridge.org

Contacting the *Rockidge News*

Are there community issues you'd like to see covered in the *Rockridge News*? Have questions about newsletter distribution? Want to volunteer to be a *Rockridge News* block captain? We'd love to hear from you.

Want to write a letter to the Editor? Lletters are limited to 450 words and are published at the editors discretion. Send letters to: editor@rockridge.org. Please be sure to include your name, email address, city and street of residence. **All submissions accepted for publication are subject to editing for clarity and brevity.**

The Rockridge News reserves the right to refuse any articles, letters, or advertisements.

Newsletter Subscriptions

To subscribe to *The Rockridge News*, send your check for $20, payable to *RCPC* with "Rockridge News" noted on the memo line.

Mail payment to: **RCPC,** 4900 Shattuck Avenue, PO Box 22504, Oakland, CA, 94609

Display Ad Deadline for JANUARY 2024: December 18, 2023

Advertising rates are $28/column inch. Six-month pre-pay rates available. For display ads, call Jo Ellis at 510-653-3210 (**after noon**), or email **joellis1@hotmail.com**.

Classifieds: Email Susan at **smontauk@gmail.com**.

Views expressed in published articles do not necessarily reflect those of The Rockridge News, *its editor, or the board of directors of the Rockridge Community Planning Council.*

Avenue Shops, from previous page

ReUp Refill Shop / 6025 College

Visit your local zero waste grocery store — the Re-Up Refill Shop offers thoughtful, reusable gift items this holiday season. Zero Waste starter gift sets make it easy to give a gift without the waste. Reminder: Seniors get 10 percent off every Wednesday at the refill shop.

Xocolate / 5854 College



"Bring back the candy dish." **Frankie Fernandez** and **Melena Lopez** have a goal beyond offering chocolate delights created in their East Bay facility. Customers can choose candy dishes from three iconic glass styles to fill with the many flavors, shapes, and colors of candy throughout the shop. The unusual glow-in-the-dark Vaseline glass is available along with shimmering Carnival glass and traditional Depression-era glass. The owners encourage customers to create a distinctive holiday spread with their chocolate pastrami and brie, Turkish Delight, and halvah. Shimmering chocolate buddhas are a stunning centerpiece for any table.

My Emergency Guy / 6019 College

You may grant someone's fondest (or most frantic) wish with a gift from these guys who provide technical support for folks who need help with their phones or laptops. A wide array of stylish phone covers, earbuds, and phone chargers are on display. Expect personal, helpful, and kind advice, even for those technically challenged.

Planterday / 6004 College

According to owners **Matt Day** and **Yumi**, these plants are on a mission. "Planterday is dedicated to destigmatizing mental health and promoting mental health resources. We donate a portion of our monthly proceeds to suicide prevention and crisis support services in our local community. We are incredibly honored to have Oaklandish, Oakland's beloved Civic Pride by Design brand, design and print our new shop tote bags. Design inspired by our daily P.O.V. as we aim to spread horticultural therapy throughout Oakland and beyond."

Lesley Evers / 5709 College

Oakland designer **Lesley Evers** is doubling her retail space on College, taking over the space previously occupied by Mignonne. Manager **Linda Atkinson** predicts their expansion will be completed in time for the holidays. Timing is perfect for the addition of mugs, pillow shams, bedding, jewelry, and pajamas. Approximately 70 percent of their items are locally produced.

Maison d'Etre / 5640 College



On the 30th anniversary on College Avenue, owners **Fred** and **Patty** announced a major transition. Daughters **Daisy** and **Lilly** will be taking over management of the beloved establishment (see front page story). This holiday will feature their traditional ceramics, cookware, cookbooks, barware, and plush goodies for adults and children.

Highwire Coffee Roasters / 5655 College

Celebrate the holidays every morning with Highwire's Celebration 2023 blend. Manager **Nick Kujawski** describes it as having notes of dark

Avenue Shops, see next page

Rockridge News: District Captain Route Available

by Susan Montauk, Rockridge News Distribution Manager


The Rockridge News

Many thanks to **Celia Camargo**, **Kenyatta Davis**, **Paul Goodman** and **Andra Pligavko** for volunteering to be Block Captains for four of our stalwarts who had to give up their routes. It is constantly gratifying to see our community members step up to preserve the door-to-door delivery system of the *Rockridge News* which we have enjoyed for more than 35 years.

We have one opening for a volunteer this month, that of District Captain. This job requires drops of bundles that will be delivered to your doorstep. The four drops are located in the Chabot Road area east (uphill side) of College Avenue so it would be best to bring on a volunteer who lives in that area. **Toni Ellis** has had this route for decades but must retire now and we thank her profusely for all her years of service.

- **District Captain for Routes 02A, 02B, 02C, 02D — Manor Crest, Chabolyn, Chabot Crest, Roanoke**

District Captains deliver bundles to Block Captains, directly to their front porches, the first weekend of each month (except August). Call 510/547-3855 or email Susan at smontauk@gmail.com to volunteer. ■

Happy Holidays to You
and a
Healthy and Safe 2024
corcoran
ICON PROPERTIES
Anne D. Brandon, Realtor
510.682.6644 | 510.339.9290
Anne.Brandon@corcoranicon.com
AnneDBrandon.com
Lic# 01877719
© 2023 Corcoran Icon Properties. All rights reserved.
Each franchise is independently owned and operated.



Darin J. Worm
BROKER
510.504.4960
djworm@centurioninsurance.net
Centurion Insurance Agency
Commercial + Personal + Life + Health
An Independent Insurance Brokerage providing cost effective, comprehensive Insurance products and services since 1947.
www.centurioninsurance.net

Appleberry PLUMBING
We go with the flow!
PROMPT & EXPERIENCED
RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCIAL/RESTAURANT
(415) 738-9944
appleberryplumbing.com
Bonded & Insured. License #996032

Avenue Shops, from previous page

cherry and raisin. New this year, a holiday corner featuring handmade matcha bowls by local artist **Mitsuko Siegrist**. Nick will be demonstrating the process for preparing the matcha every day throughout the season. Included in the corner are gift-worthy beverages and gear for both coffee and tea aficionados.

Open Mind Music / 5521 College



Henry Wimmer and **Monica Smith** celebrate decades of music every day. Their message for the holidays: "We hope to host a special holiday event, TBD. We will definitely have on hand: gift cards, Xmas records, new and used records, CDs ($5 and up), and vinyl from ABBA to Zappa — for newbies and collectors, alike. Wait, there's more… including vintage and recent T-shirts; works by local artists including renderings of Bowie, Cobain, Nina Simone, Ray Charles; 13 jazz icons (charcoal sketch limited prints, $100 unframed). Look for a big 30th celebration coming 2024."

Crush On College/Tootsies / 5523 College

Neighborhood tootsies will be warm and snazzy with their array of socks and footwear. Difficult to find Ugg colors and styles. **Liz Taylor** and her team can help with choosing proper sizes and selecting matching jewelry, nail wear, and fashionable hats.

GoldenBug / 5520 College

Their new location has allowed them to expand their accessories, toys, and gear. Owner **Emily Goldberg** highlights craft kits along with warm and toasty hats and mittens for the season. A key feature is the area for kids so adults can focus on shopping while the kids enjoy playtime.

Sobu / 5451 College



Avenue Shops, see next page

HAPPY HOLIDAYS
from
CLAUDIA MILLS
REAL ESTATE TEAM
510.350.6419 | claudia@cmret.com | www.ClaudiaMillsRealEstateTeam.com

Avenue Shops, see next page

Creations from local artisans along with striking pieces from around the world, curated by co-owner **Laleh Latini**, fill this wonderful design shop. Bay Area offerings include **Jason Stropleo** pomegranate seeds, **Robert Salton Stall** handmade stools, and **Mary Smyer** platters.

Atomic Garden / 5453 College

Owners **Heather** and **Jamie** describe their wares as "thoughtfully curated life essentials." Their thoughts for possible gifts this holiday include the Atomic Garden x Heavenly Soap Company, Gold Soap; In August Day and Night Mugs from Prague; Alaya Tea, organic, grown in India (women-owned); Primal Curiosities Hand Loomed Fingerless Gloves made in Oakland; and the Twee Unicorn Chalk for kids.

Chocolate Dragon Bittersweet Café / 5427 College

How to make chocolate even more delectable this season? Drink it. The Chocolate Dragon features a huge array of intense chocolate mixes from local artisans and producers around the globe, including the Dragon blend made for just this shop. Let your taste travel to Ecuador for the Cacoco dark chocolate mix enhanced with Damascus Rose and Reishi, and to Spain for the Blanxart churro-dipping concoction. Endorfin in Berkeley uses coconut milk and coconut sugars in their powders. Be sure to zoom over to the Karácsony wafers from Hungary in the cool Space Travel box. Yes, must be said… it's out of this world.

YOUR LOCAL
REFILL SHOP
[BULK] [ZERO-WASTE]
GROCERY SHOPPING WITHOUT THE WASTE

ReUpRefills.org
6025 COLLEGE AVE. OAKLAND

Pegasus Books / 5560 College
East Bay Booksellers / 5433 College

Go independent with these dedicated booksellers. Pegasus is a holiday destination for 2024 calendars (for those who don't want to wait until January for their annual sales event). East Bay Booksellers has a variety of journals and notebooks to choose from, as well as timely gift cards.

Serrahna / 5303 College



Serrahna — where an oasis of Indian textiles in a broad spectrum of colors await inside. Attractive scarves, beaded bracelets, gemstone jewelry, fingerless gloves, sage sticks, and handmade owner-designed boots and sneakers fill the space. Staff members are also color theorists, notes staff member **Norma Wood**, and can help customers with "easy, healthy, happy acquisitions." Owner **Andrea Serrahn** (pictured above) offers advice for all her customers: find the queen in you.

Old Crow Tattoo / 5251 Broadway

Home to world-class tattooer **Hannah Wolf**, Old Crow will have two events going on in December.
1) A warm clothing drive all of December — accepting donations for the local unhoused; and
2) A Winter Solstice Flash Day on December 16. Gift certificates are available. ■

December Events at the Rockridge Library

5366 College Ave.
at Manila
510-597-5017

For Children:

Storytime Thursdays and Saturdays; 10:30am

Chess Club: Wednesday 12/6 at 4pm. No Chess 12/13-12/27. All ages and skill-levels welcome.

Read to a Dog: Thursdays at 4pm. Coco & Scout alternate weeks. They are trained to listen to young people practice reading aloud.

Intergenerational Origami: First Tuesday, 12/5, at 4pm, Third Tuesday, 12/19, at 6:30pm. All ages and skill-levels welcome.

Kamishibai Showcase: Tuesday, 12/19, 6:30pm. New and experienced paper theater performers of all ages. Audience participation prizes!

Winter Bingo: Prize books for kids ages 1 to 13 who complete five or more BINGO activities: 12/27/2023 through 1/27/2024.

For Teens

Holiday Pizza Party: Snacks, Crafts, and Games. Wednesday 12/13; 2pm. Presented by the Rockridge Teen Advisory Board

Teen Advisory Board: Wednesday, 12/13; 4-5pm. Join the Rockridge Branch Library Teen Advisory Board (TAB) and take an active role in creating, planning, and implementing programs and services you want to see at your local library. Every 2nd Wednesday in the TeenZone. New members welcome.

For Adults

Rockridge Book Club: Every 2nd Saturday. Please call 510-597-5017 for more info and to get a copy of the book. December's book is Solito: A Memoir by Javier Zamora

The 34th Annual PEN Oakland-Josephine Miles Literary Awards: Saturday, December 2nd 2-5pm. PEN Oakland announces the winners of the 34th Annual PEN Oakland Josephine Miles Awards. The 2023 PEN Oakland Award winners will be formally recognized.

Gallery Space: "The Power of Community" featuring works by Burton Edwards, George Famous, Scott Lamb, Meg Levine, and Nicole Rubio. Reception: December 9. from 1- 2:15pm

Holiday Hours:
The library will be closed Saturday through Tuesday, 12/23-12/26, and Monday, 1/1.

Hours:
Mon, Thurs, Sat 10am to 5:30pm
Tuesday and Wednesday - 10am to 8pm
Closed on Sundays

Please also check the online calendar at:
www.oaklandlibrary.org/events.

Land Use Committee Meeting

The Rockridge community is encouraged to participate in LUC meetings where elements of the General Plan Update will be a primary topic of conversation.

Meetings, now being held at 7:30pm on the 3rd Wednesday of each month, will resume in January 2024 on Zoom.

To participate, or to request links, email landuse@rockridge.org.

College Avenue
Presbyterian Church
5951 College Avenue | 94618
(510) 658-3665 | www.capcoakland.org
safe | open | real

Get festive ready with Oakland's newest women's boutique. Perfect for a gift for you or for someone on your list.
MARKET
5914 College Avenue
Oakland
market_oakland

State of California Gets More Involved in New Housing Approvals

by Ken Rich, RCPC Land Use Chair

The nature of new housing development approvals is continuing to evolve as Sacramento gets increasingly involved in what used to be a purely local decision-making process. Responding to the statewide housing crisis, California lawmakers have been busy for the past several years passing legislation that serves to change the balance of power between Sacramento and local city halls when it comes to approving new housing development.

The most potentially controversial of these changes involve the expansion of what are called "ministerial" approvals of new housing projects. This means that if a proposed new residential development meets the zoning rules that are on the books, it must be approved by City staff with no public hearings or involvement of the Planning Commission or City Council. This will increasingly affect housing approvals in Oakland over the coming few years, and the City is now at work creating "objective design standards" to be incorporated into the City's zoning.

These standards are permitted under the new State regulations as long as they don't serve to chill the development of new housing. Based on an Oakland zoning code amendment proposed by Councilmember Kalb, the developers of projects to be approved ministerially will be required to give notice to residents and property owners within 300 feet, even though there is no public hearing process.

The following are some recently enacted State bills to be aware of:

SB423: Mandates ministerial approvals for most new housing in jurisdictions (such as Oakland) that aren't meeting their newly increased state housing allocations. (Due to the way in which the State measures how cities meet their housing allocation, the provisions of the law will not take effect in Oakland for a few years.)

SB4: Mandates ministerial approvals for certain low- and moderate income housing projects to be constructed on the property of private colleges and religious institutions.

AB1633: Prohibits cities or counties from using the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to inappropriately hold up approvals for housing development projects in urbanized areas.

AB1287: Increases the size of the state density bonus to 70 percent for projects that include at least 20 percent of units affordable to families making less than 50 percent of the area median income. This means, in effect, that projects including that substantial number of units affordable to families considered to be "very low income" will be permitted to build 70 percent more units than the zoning would otherwise allow. ■

ART TILE
tile ▪ countertops ▪ flooring
4336 Broadway
Oakland
510.547.8288
www.arttileoakland.com

COLLINS ROOFING
Family Owned & Operated
(510) 444-2220
www.collinsroofing.com
Quality Work • Free Estimates
Lic # 695711

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor: My wife and I just received notice in the mail that, effective January, our homeowner insurance carrier (Liberty Mutual) will not renew our policy. The stated reason is that their underwriter has determined that, "The property insured under this policy is located in a region where the dwellings are considered to be too densely concentrated for us to continue to provide coverage." In a follow-up phone call, I was told that Liberty Mutual intends to withdraw entirely from selling California homeowner insurance.

The density on our street (Ocean View Drive), under RM-1 zoning, is roughly 11 units per acre. That's about average for much of Rockridge. The City has, in the new general plan, upzoned our area of Lower Rockridge to a considerably higher density. Could this be related to our insurance cancellation?

I'm wondering if we're just the first few houses to fall victim to a potential stampede of homeowner insurance carriers pulling out of California thanks to Legislature policies, coupled with the risks of wildfires and fires after earthquakes, that have scared insurance companies away.

Stuart Flashman
Ocean View Drive ■



Remy is a 2-year-old chocolate lab who has a passion for food and retrieving sticks. Although he has a "resting sad/serious face," he is a playful and friendly pup. He loves to visit Cole Hardware for the treats. If you see him around the neighborhood, be sure to say hi… the man loves attention.



This is Katze ("cat" in German), an 8ish-year-old Tuxedo cat who really knows her way around a paper bag. She's generally surly, sports a permanent expression of disdain on her furry face, and has been known to bat with her delicate white paws at the ankles of anyone she thinks might be responsible for serving her dinner. She loves a warm patch of sun, and clawing mercilessly at the wooden deck. You might spot her watching you like a judgmental gargoyle from a window on your next neighborhood walk.

editor@rockridge.org

Arellano
Family Hair Care
Haircuts • Color • Hair Extensions
Perms • Smoothing Treatments
Special Occasion Hair Styling
10% off for Rockridge Clients
Text or call (510) 207-4672
5475 College Ave
Oakland
Carlos Arellano

Rockridge Dental™
510.653.6677 rockdent.com
3rd Floor
Market Hall
Ste. 312
Bruce D. Fong, D.D.S.
Filippo Cangini, D.D.S, M.S.
Advanced Preventive, Restorative, Periodontal Gum Care, and Dental Implants.

Local Designer Finds Community Support in Rockridge

by Judith Doner Berne

eyes on Rockridge

With the expansion of **Lesley Evers** and the addition of **Taylor Jay** and her own DG Collective, **Devan Gregori** senses that College Avenue is turning into a mecca for designer-owned boutiques.

"I'm hoping that Rockridge becomes a fashion destination," Gregori said. "Along with small multi-brand shops, you're seeing Oakland designers open their own stores in our neighborhood."

The DG Collective at 5540 College, celebrates its first anniversary with an open house from 2pm to 5pm, on Sunday, December 10. "Everyone's invited," she said. "There will be drinks and food," including samples from Bad Walters Bootleg Ice Cream, which is set to open at the old Smitten location at 5800 College early next year.

Gregori, 35, is all about community. She credits her fellow frequenters of The RIC, the bar at 5515 College, for helping fulfill her dream of selling the clothes she designs from a brick-and-mortar store, rather than at pop-up sites. That's where she became friendly with **Gabe Marshank** who was just renovating his apartment/retail complex, The Clover. "I was his first retail tenant."

Her concept for the space included designing the black metal garment racks that **Lucas Ahlstrand**, a Rockridge friend from The RIC, built. Another fellow barmate, **Samuel Casebolt**, built her platforms and counter. And "all of the beer and wine for my opening came via **Scott Ayers**, co-owner of The RIC. It's the bar that keeps on giving."

That's also where she re-connected with her now-fiancé, **Matias Meneses,** whom she remembered from their years at Bishop O'Dowd High School, "I was definitely more of a nerd. He was a sports guy." After seeing him again at a fitness class at SWEAT just down the street, they began dating.

Now they live in a duplex two blocks from her shop in which his parents, **Alex Meneses** and **Luz Delaveal**, live on the floor above. "I do my designing at home for the most part," Gregori said. "We converted our second bedroom into a small studio space."

"Devan's a big dreamer and has a beautiful vision," said Matias, whose full-time job is director of engineering at a tech start-up. "I really believe in her." You can find him helping out behind the scenes and at the sales counter. He worked on the initial build of the shop along with his dad.

It turns out he's well qualified, having come of age at his parents' former College Avenue store, Baby World. "I got to grow up in my own toy store," Matias said. "I actually aided their marketing as a baby asleep in one of the for-sale cribs." In later years, he helped his dad with deliveries and assembling baby equipment out of their Telegraph Avenue location. He and Gregori recently re-visited the old Rockridge store, now occupied by the Xocolate Bar.

It's been a winding road for Gregori, an East Bay native who graduated from UC Berkeley with a degree in French. "No one told me to major in anything practical." She promptly headed to Lyon, France, to teach English. Dissatisfied with teaching, she enrolled in a French design school where, after three years of study, she received a dual degree including

Eyes on Rockridge, see next page

Holy Names High School



A COLLEGE PREP SCHOOL LIKE NO OTHER

In our intimate and open-minded community, students develop strong voices, deep compassion, and the skills and confidence they need to have a powerful impact on the world.

hnhsoakland.org

Experience * Knowledge * Performance

With Over 350 Real Estate Transactions

Market talk: Consumer Price Index for inflation (CPI) and the jobs report are two key monthly economic criteria impacting mortgage rates. The CPI rate decreased closer toward the Feds target so the market saw a .6%+ drop in average rates from September to November*. This helps Buyer purchasing power. The combination of homes languishing on the market, a seasonal lull during holiday distractions and lower rates might make it a great window to buy. By mid January, buyers are likely to be out in force again. If rates continue to stabilize or drop, it could be a better window for Sellers to bring homes to market in the new year as well, before an expected increase of new inventory or election year recession risks. Contact me to ask about our local micro markets! *Contact long time Rockridge resident and loan broker Zach.Griffin@USBank.com for competitive rates and more info on your specific loan qualifications.

December is Awareness Month for: HIV/AIDS, Universal Human Rights, Seasonal Affective Disorder, Learning a Foreign Language, Dressember, Disabilities, Procrastination, Read a New Book and Safe Toys & Gifts

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!



Perry Riani, Senior Associate

"2022 Real Trends America's Best Real Estate Professionals Top 1.49%"

1900 Mountain Blvd Oakland, CA 94611
1625 Shattuck Ave Berkeley, CA 94709
C: 510.813.3799 Perry.Riani@Compass.com
License # 01402540

COMPASS

Eyes on Rockridge, from previous page

a European Bachelor of Science in fashion design.

"It was the most exciting time of my younger life," Gregori said. After taking classes in a variety of arts, "I was surprised that I really liked fashion," which she describes as a "3-D malleable sculpture that goes on another sculpture, which is the human body."

An internship with a Japanese fashion designer and a job managing production for a Mexico City designer inspired Gregori to create her clothing line. She returned to the East Bay, moving to Rockridge where both her mom, **Jill Gregori**, and sister, **Chloe Gregori**, live. "I worked in tech to finance what I was trying to build."

Devan gravitates toward color blocking — a design concept that pairs two or three different colors together, inspired by the painter **Piet Mondrian**. Her clothes, she said, are "fun and functional, with pockets, elastic waists, and zippers to get over your hips. You can look elegant wearing things that are functional."

Appealing to both older and younger shoppers is also important to her. "I'm not designing for one kind of person. These pieces are made to last and everyone in your family can own one. You can wear a silhouette that feels safe, but take a chance on color. Or, you can go with a bland color, but a style you haven't worn before."

This first year has been an education, Devan said. "I've learned a lot about the ups and downs of retail — how to push through in the times that are rough and how important community is… it makes me so happy when people walk by and wave."

At the same time, "It's discouraging to watch people's cars being broken into." And, for the first time, she had to confront someone, who turned out to be unhoused, stealing from her store. With that in mind, she launched a warm clothing drive in conjunction with the nonprofit, City Team. You can drop off gently used clean clothing for kids and adults at the store now through December 31.



Clothing designer Devan Gregori at her retail shop on College Ave.

"I like the way she took something negative and made it positive," said **Diane**, a long-time Rockridge resident, who asked that her last name not be used. "I'm older, but her clothes appeal to a lot of demographics and all kinds of body types. Her tailoring is amazing."

"Her style is really different and fun," said **Katie Koelle**, a Rockridge resident and Berkeley City College professor who has several DG Collective pieces. "Her clothes are special. It's great to have designers in the neighborhood."

"It's been such a family affair," Devan said, noting that Matias' sister is a reliable fill-in salesperson, and their dog Stella (featured in last month's *Dogs of Rockridge*) is part of the shop's welcoming committee. Her mom gives helpful hints for her designs like sleeve length and not making the V-necks too low. "I'm just proud that I have a store in the neighborhood that I live in."

If you have an idea for an Eyes on Rockridge story, please email judyberne@att.net. ■



Embrace the Spirit of the Season: Shop Local

by Jody Colley, Rockridge District Association

As the holiday season approaches, it's time to celebrate the joy of giving and supporting our local community. The Rockridge district is a vibrant and diverse neighborhood that offers a wide array of unique stores and businesses. By shopping in town, we support local entrepreneurs and find one-of-a-kind gifts for our loved ones. Enjoy the holiday lights as you explore some of the fantastic local businesses in the neighborhood that deserve our attention.

Rockridge is a haven for independent boutiques that offer a carefully curated selection of goods. From fashion and accessories to home decor and artisanal products, you'll find something special for everyone on your list (for specific gift ideas, see front page article).

Rockridge is also a food lover's paradise with an abundance of local restaurants, cafes, and specialty food stores. This holiday season, consider gifting delectable treats from the many restaurants in our area. It's a fantastic way to support local chefs and savor the flavors of Rockridge.

If you're looking for one-of-a-kind, handmade gifts, Rockridge has you covered. Keep an eye out for pop-up events happening in the district during the holiday season. Rockridge merchants often feature talented local artists, craftsmen, and designers who pour their creativity into unique creations.

In the digital age, book and record stores hold a special place in our hearts. Rockridge is fortunate to have a handful of these treasured community gems. By purchasing your books and music from these experts in their trades, you can get recommendations for timeless gifts that can truly impact people's lives.

Make a conscious choice to shop locally and support the Rockridge district. By doing so, you not only contribute to the local economy but also foster a strong sense of community and preserve the one-of-a-kind character of our neighborhood. Happy shopping, and happy holidays to all. ■



During this holiday season Rockridge comes alive with caroling by the Piedmont Troubadours, a professional youth ensemble. On Saturdays, December 2, 9, and 16, these quartets of young talent will share the festive spirit as you shop, dine, and stop by the many service providers along the Avenue.

COLE HARDWARE
SINCE 1920
Cole. Hardware for the soul.
We sell nuts and bolts,
mops and brooms,
pots and plants,
bbqs and briquettes,
mugs and mandolines,
sockets and switches,
knobs and keys,
sponges and squeegees,
plungers and pipes,
and we sell pies too!
TRY A PIE!
$2 OFF
RRNEWS
Valid through 12.31.2023


MOTLEY TEAM
DRE 01265873 | 01798658

Competition Drives Price in November

Closing date	BR	BA	Address	Original price	List price	DOM	Selling price
11/1/2023	2	1	5833 Patton St	$1,049,000	$1,049,000	16	$1,280,000
11/2/2023	2	1	5328 James Avenue	$1,100,000	$1,100,000	10	$1,570,000
11/8/2023	5	3	5867 Ocean View Drive	$1,695,000	$1,599,000	80	$1,570,000
11/13/2023	3	3	5638 Oak Grove Ave	$1,729,000	$1,595,000	33	$1,900,000
11/21/2023	2	1	339 Glendale Ave	$1,600,000	$1,600,000	0	$1,600,000
11/27/2023	4	3	5811 Mendocino Ave	$1,749,000	$1,749,000	11	$1,900,000

Home sold in November closed 10% over the asking price on average.

Specializing in Rockridge | 510.501.3764 | MotleyTeam.com
Want the highest possible price? Call us and we will show you how we will get it!
COMPASS
Compass is a real estate broker licensed by the State of California and abides by Equal Housing Opportunity laws. License Number 01866771. All material presented herein is intended for informational purposes only and is compiled from sources deemed reliable but has not been verified. Changes in price, condition, sale or withdrawal may be made without notice. No statement is made as to accuracy of any description. All measurements and square footage are approximate.

Beer Baron will be offering the following throughout the holidays:

- Private events and parties with no minimum, Sundays thru Thursdays.
- Purchase a $50 gift card and receive an additional $10 gift card; Purchase a $100 gift card and receive an additional $20 gift card.
- Holiday cocktails will focus on seasonal flavors, such as:
  Classic House Made Egg Nog
  Hot Buttered Rum
  Glistening Treetops: Spiced Gin, Pomegranate, Cranberry Pear
  Let it Snow: Creamy, Minty, Smoked Whiskey Cocktail
  Oreo Espresso Martini

Love + Chocolate

Now that Love + Chocolate is officially open, they are decked out for the holidays and have many special items and activities planned. This family-owned shop is filled with gorgeous gift boxes for whatever winter holiday you are celebrating. They will be hosting pop-ups and offering tastings throughout the season — Mon. to Sat., 10am to a6pm; Sun. noon to 5pm. ■

Best Bites on College Avenue

The Amazing Dish: Chickpea Brot

Im Moment Kaffee
5254 College Avenue



A quaint coffee shop & lunch spot, with German, Ethiopian, and Eritrean influences.

"This sandwich is heavenly — scrumptious chickpeas marinated in Eritrean spices with fresh greens and tomatoes on perfect levain bread."

(Submitted by Casey Farmer, RCPC Chair)

Do you have a favorite bite at a Rockridge restaurant? If so, send us your "Best Bite" and photo to editor@rockridge.org.

Rebrand: Pop-Up @ Re-Up Refills

Saturday, December 9 | noon to 2pm



Drench your skin in refillable and sustainable facial care with Rebrand. The perfect gift for the holidays... bring your face, bring a friend, and get ready to have glowing and nourished skin. ■

Winter Solstice: The Longest Night of the Year Labyrinth Walk and Fire

Celebrate this auspicious day pointing to hope amidst fear, light that darkness cannot overcome. **College Avenue Presbyterian Church** is hosting a celebration of the light shining in the darkness at sunset, **December 21, from 5pm to 7pm,** in our church garden.

Meditate as you walk through a Labyrinth of Light and enjoy a smore over a fire, or join us for a Christmas Eve Celebration with candles, carols, kid's pageant and chocolate. **December 24, 7pm,** at 5951 College Avenue; www.capcoakland.org. ■

JUST LISTED

Magical Craftsman!

5648 Oak Grove

5 BED / 1.5 BATH / 2,161 SF

HOME SWEET HOME
JUST STEPS AWAY

DANIEL STEA
OVER 100 HOMES SOLD IN ROCKRIDGE
510.843.6400

DRE # 01221457



BPAD

ADU's
NEW HOMES
KITCHEN + BATHS
HISTORIC RENOVATIONS

BUTTRICK PROJECTS
ARCHITECTURE+DESIGN

www.buttrickprojects.com

Member 1% FOR THE PLANET

Bring Your Own Party: Neighbors Get Together to Stay Connected

by Rachel Hollowgrass

When neighborhood residents find unique ways to interact with each other, it's wonderful. When we have opportunities to share, receive, as well as give back, it allows us to feel safe, seen, and emotionally attached. In Rockridge, neighbors have found very fun and creative ways to stay connected. And sometimes, challenges and adversity have brought us closer together. Below are stories of local gatherings that hopefully will inspire even more ways to get together for fun, friendship, and support.



Photo: Rachel Hallowgrass

Neighbors in Fairview Park gather for "National Night Out."

Fairview Park

For years, Fairview Park neighbors have gotten to know each other pretty well. They had a great email list and an annual block party, but they wanted to do more. They tried holding meetings of topical importance, but attendance was always low.

Just before the pandemic, neighbors noticed that people loved to get together to have coffee and chat, so they began holding monthly outdoor coffee klatch/fundraisers called "Bring Your Own Cup" (BYOC). Like the coffee, attendance was strong and stimulating.

When the pandemic slowed the cadence and the world seemed less safe, neighbors knew each other well enough to start relying on each other in various ways. At first, the requests were simple, such as borrowing a cookie sheet in exchange for freshly baked cookies. Requests were quickly met, sometimes within minutes.

Eventually, in-person gatherings started up again, including "Bring Your Own Cocktail" parties and "Walk to the Beer Garden" excursions. Then there was basketball night and a backyard cinema showing. They even organized a visit from an organic soft-serve ice cream truck. These were all popular with dozens of neighbors joining in, and continue to this day.

Colby Street

Sarah found that she and her neighbors became much closer during the pandemic. When schools were locked down, parents had to find a way to care for their kids while continuing to work. Conflicts about parenting emerged when a few families banded together to share childcare that led to some hard conversations. By talking through the issues, parents moved from casually acquainted neighbors to a tight-knit community.

The neighborhood children became each other's social outlets. The pandemic brought them together and now it feels like the best parts of the

BYOP, see next page

GoldStar Beauty Lounge
5332 College Ave, Oakland
(510) 428-4011
Helping you look and feel your best
Hair Cut – $35 and up – men, women, kids
Nail Care – manicures & pedicures
Waxing – eyebrows, lips, chin, and more
Hours: Tue–Sat 10 am–7 pm
Walk-ins welcome



Calling the Bay Area **home for over 55 years.**
FREMONT BANK
www.fremontbank.com
Visit us at College & Claremont Avenues.
6300 College Avenue, Suite 160
(510) 851-7741
Equal Housing Lender | Member FDIC | NMLS #478471 | DEP-1435-0220



BYOP, from previous page

1950s as the children have lots of options for nearby playdates.

The adults remain connected too. Over the summer, preparation was made for a backyard stage area for performances. On a single day, neighbors converged, barn-raising style, and completed the project. At the subsequent block party, children used the stage for an impromptu talent show and karaoke event. It was an exuberant expression of play and community.

Maxwell Park

While some neighborhoods outside the borders of Rockridge may have few cafes, they are not without good coffee. For 14 years, a coffee truck has been coming to Maxwell Park on Fridays — it's like an ice cream truck for adults.

On a recent Friday morning, a dozen neighbors lined up, ready for the "Get Goes" coffee truck to arrive. They were busy chatting about their families, retirement, and what to drink that morning. There were many happy smiles as orders for fresh-brewed lattes and mochas were filled. More than just a coffee truck, Get Goes also offers voter registration… a great way to build civic engagement.

Neighbors Respond

Naomi: "Just after we moved in, there was National Night Out. I'd never been to anything like that before. It was lovely to see all the ages and people interacting. The food was excellent. After National Night Out, it was easy to go to the coffee event. Now that we are connected, it's easier to use email about daycare, diapers, etc. Now we know a lot of people. We see them on the street. I met someone who also commutes to San Francisco. He told me about the E bus."

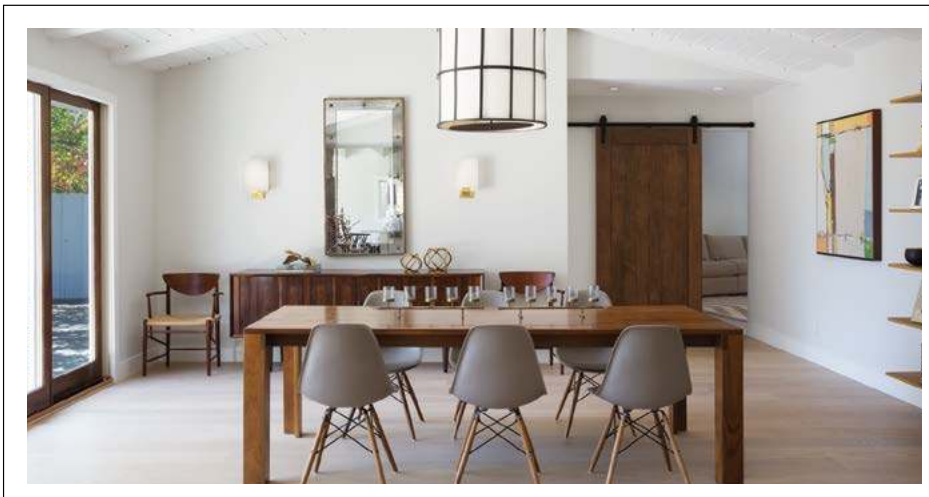
Gil: "There's BYOC, there's email, there are multiple modes to staying connected. Moving here from South Africa, it's exceeded my expectations."

Erika: "The email list, that's the key. It's the starting point to staying connected. It feels much safer when I'm walking home from the market. If something happened, I could call out to my neighbors by name. It feels special when your neighbors are in touch with each other."

How about you? How does your neighborhood stay connected? Share your anecdotes and we will include them in future articles. Write to Rachel at rachelhollowgrass@gmail.com. ■







Breakfast is Now Being Served at ACRE



ACRE Restaurant will now be serving breakfast in the downstairs cafe, Monday through Friday, from 8am to 11am. Owner Dirk Tolsma says, "Come over for a warm place to have coffee and socialize, and a-treat-yourself kind of morning with coffee, pastries, and eggs…and maybe even Champagne."

Tuesdays Uncorked

Every Tuesday this month, enjoy half off their entire sparkling collection with some real steals — a great reason to make Tuesday a night out.

Coming in January

Look for upcoming Neighborhood Night on Wednesdays, featuring live jazz and a two-course meal for $55. ■

OPEN
TIL 8PM
THURSDAYS!
SUPPORT
SMALL SHOPS
7,14,21
DECEMBER
DISCOUNTS/RAFFLES
BEVERAGES/TREATS
FREE GIFTWRAPPING
NATHAN & CO
TOOTSIES/CRUSH
TAYLOR JAY
DEVAN GREGORI
OPEN MIND MUSIC
BELLA VITA
COLE HARDWARE
GOLDENBUG KIDS

AMATO
ARCHITECTURE
T 510.420.0210 · M 510.499.2080
1396 Park Ave · Emeryville, CA 94608
www.amatoarchitecture.com

CREATIONS
BERKELEY
a space to create
YOGA FAIRIES
& WIZARDS
COSTUME TEA PARTY
AGES 2&3 and 4&5
Arrive in your costume and explore the magic of movement through yoga poses, dance and games!
INFO, SCHEDULE & REGISTRATION:
CREATIONSBERKELEY.COM
1640 MLK Jr. Way (at Virginia), Berkeley

LAW OFFICE OF
DAVE KARLINSKY
725 WASHINGTON ST., SUITE 313 OAKLAND, CA 94607
(510) 788-5700 WWW.DAVEKARLINSKYLAW.COM
Practicing exclusively in the area of trusts and estates:
• Estate planning
• Probate / trust administration
• Dispute resolution
• Special needs trusts
Please contact me during regular business hours to schedule an appointment.

TREE SCULPTURE
COMPLETE TREE CARE
Proudly serving Rockridge since 1965!
(510) 562-4000
www.treesculpture.com
Fully Insured | Certified Arborists | Lic #655977

RN Classifieds

List your 36-word message here for only $22 (phone number counts as one word). Make check payable to RCPC, and write "Rockridge News Classifieds" in the memo line. **The deadline for January's issue is Dec 18** (available Jan 6). Mail to: RCPC, 4900 Shattuck Ave., PO Box 22504, Oakland, 94609-20131. For more information, email Susan at smontauk@gmail.com.

HIRING BRAIN GAMES INSTRUCTORS

For Seniors throughout the Bay Area Assisted Living and Memory Care, $25-$50 / hour. Visit: www.californiagamegirls.com and click yellow box WE ARE HIRING, upper right on homepage for details; cagamegirls@gmail.com; 925/212.4642.

HARDWOOD FLOORS

Install, sand/refinish, repair, re-coat existing. Large jobs or small. Twenty-plus years in Piedmont Ave/Rockridge. Bruce Williams Woodfloors. Please call or text Bruce at 510/652-8121. CA Lic # 913727 www.blwfloors.com.

Do you want to learn Spanish?

For a class, business or travel? Former highschool Spanish teacher Maestro Milosz is here to help! I tutor all ages and levels. $50/hour. My email is milosz@coho.org.

Celebrate the holidays!

Penelope's Aesthetics is offering a full European facial w/eyebrow wax for $99! Relax, refresh and rejuvenate for the holidays. Gift certificates available. What a fabulous gift! For yourself too. Call 510/594-1552; penelopecalef.com.

Defeat Your Inner Critic

Appreciate the good person you are. Follow through on your priorities. Challenge isolating thoughts and actions. Evening Women's group meets weekly. Carla, licensed since 1975. 510/655-7828.

Garden Maintenance, Cleanups & Design

Experienced team of two dedicated to the art of gardening. We specialize in garden maintenance, cleanups and custom garden designs. To contact us, please email yourgreengardeners@gmail.com. Check us out at www.yourgreengardeners.com.

Reward Based Dog Training

Does your adolescent pup need help with basic obedience, leash manners or impulse control? We offer private training customized to help your dog succeed! Please call 510/646-9657 or visit dogsquaddogtraining.com for more information and to get started.

Electrical Remodels and Repairs

Lighting up your holidays? I can help with that. I've been doing electrical work in Oakland and Berkeley for over 35 years. Sutorik & Company. www.sutorikandco.com. Lic #397149. 510/655-3677.

Handyman Service – House Repairs & Remodeling

Dry rot, kitchen and bath tile refurbishing or installation, window installation, plumbing, fence, deck & handrail repair, electrical wiring- fixtures, outlets. And much more. Call Juan 510/692-6399 or email jbahena.info@gmail.com.

3242 Linden Street, Oakland

2 bedroom/one bath; $2499first/$2499/1000sec – Available December 1st Close to SF, UC Berkeley/Bart. 408/685-3550/ melissabparker@gmail.com.

Handyman for Hire

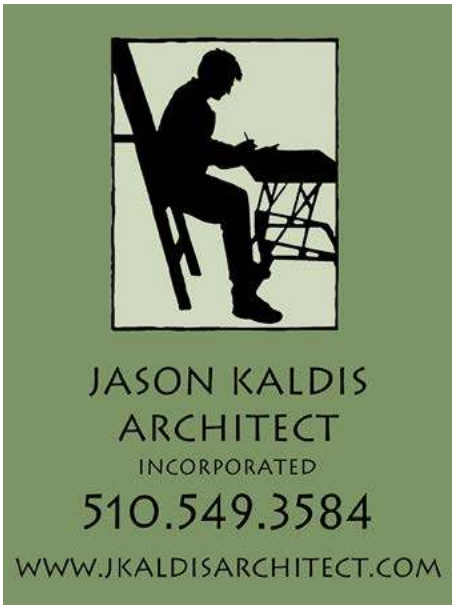
Multifaceted and well experienced. Hauling and towing available. No job too small. Reasonably priced. Lee Self. 707/223-1298-call and text. ■

Meeting Date: December 14, 7pm
Rockridge Library Conference Room

Speaker: DA Pamela Price

Questions for the speaker can be submitted in writing or on Zoom, or by email to chair@rockridgencpc.com. No questions will be taken during the meeting.

This will be a hybrid meeting for those who prefer to attend remotely. For Zoom link, visit: https://www.rockridgencpc.com/



Support the Rockridge Library!

- ☐ Bibliophile $250
- ☐ Book Lover $100
- ☐ Book Friend $50
- ☐ Bookworm $25
- ☐ Other ..... $___

Donations will also be shared with other Oakland library branches in need.

Friends of the Rockridge Library
P.O. Box 3723 Oakland, CA 94609
Contributions are tax deductible —
Federal Tax ID #45-3951826
https://www.rockridgefriends.org



JCCEastBay
Jewish Community Center of the East Bay

Building an inclusive community in the East Bay

www.jcceastbay.org
info@jcceastbay.org

OMNI
PAINTING & WATERPROOFING Inc.
COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL

INTERIOR-EXTERIOR
Professional preparation.
Many local references.
All work guaranteed.

(510) 654-3339
www.omnipainting.com

COME VISIT US AT THE CORNER OF LIFE & CHANGE



The GRUBB Co.
REALTORS

Ron Kriss, Broker
Lawton Associates
(c) 510-612-2547
RonKriss@JPS.net

LAWTON ASSOCIATES
REAL ESTATE BROKERAGE
DRE# 01417458

"#1 in Rockridge Real Estate"
199 Successful Sales in Rockridge

www.LawtonAssoc.com

Create some Joy

RON KRISS
Lawton Associates
510.612.2547
DRE #01417458

ANDREW PITARRE
Compass 415.342.9950
CalBRE #01867911

COMPETENCE
in Action

PIPE SPY®
License #: 754966

Keeping the Neighborhood Clean & Safe Everyday

(510) 465-3000

www.pipespy.com



Shoes on Solano
COMFORT IN STYLE

The largest selection of women's fashion comfort footwear in the Bay Area
5933 College Ave.
510.823.2290
Shop 24/7 Free Shipping
www.shoesonsolano.com

CYDNEY ORTZOW painting

Interior • Exterior
Lead-Certified Painters

For a free estimate
call Cydney
510 • 652 • 4034

BHR
BETTER HOMES REALTY

Celebrating 59 Years of Excellence in Real Estate Brokerage

For nearly six decades we've earned the loyalty of countless clients, helping them achieve the American Dream of home and investment property ownership. Our deep-rooted relationships within the community built on trust, has been pivotal in our journey. From first-time home buyers and seller representation, to seasoned investors, we've been privileged to be a part of your journeys.

Kevin Brown, Broker
Better Homes Realty, Rockridge
510.593.4780 | dre# 00644175