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Jay Ingram reflects on future challenges for Moraga Parks and Recreation

By Sophie Braccini



Jay Ingram with his staff, Kimberly Nelson and Clinton Calkins. Photo Sophie Braccini

and the choices grew, including the mother-daughter tea, the creation of Camp Hacienda, the recent family campout, the spring egg hunt in the Moraga Commons Park, and the always sold-out breakfast with Santa and Santa home visits.

Ingram and his team also supported activities for adults such as the Pear and Wine Festival, the community garage sale, the holiday craft faire at the Hacienda, and recently the Hacienda Nights with food trucks and the leisure sports triathlon. Parks and Rec also catered to the older population by organizing senior trips in the Bay Area.

The Parks and Recreation staff recently unveiled the July activities calendar, which includes new activities such as Frisbee with the Cops on July 17 and Cornhole at the Commons on the evening of July 12. The five new dates for the food trucks at the Hacienda are also on the calendar, starting on July 14 and 28 (details at www.moraga.ca.us/dept/park-rec/prmonth).

Ingram says he will miss the people of Moraga the most. One of the best examples of the trust that was built between local service groups and government, he said, was the creation of the all-access playground, made possible through fundraising by the Moraga Rotary for the Commons Park.

"We have been able to work collaboratively and solve problems together," said Ingram. He added that the lack of funding in Moraga forced him to constantly ask for money from different groups when he wanted things done, but that was also how the synergy and trust was built.

While proud of the job he did, Ingram said he regrets a few things: First, that the community center called for in the parks and recreation master plan never came to fruition, due to lack of funding and public space to build it, and second, that the plan for the revitalization of the Hacienda de las Flores was not completed during his tenure. He noted that the committee working on this has plans to start with the creation of a restaurant there, and he hoped that it can be done while preserving the rental of the space for weddings and other events.

Ingram said that he will keep in touch with Moraga and promised to come back at least for the inauguration of the all-access playground.

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Moraga Parks and Recreation Director Jay Ingram left the town of Moraga after the Fourth of July festivities to take a new position in Pleasanton, where he will lead the much bigger community services department. Many in town expressed their sadness about seeing him go after 10 years, saying that he grew the department to a full-service level.

Ingram said he is proud of the work did and that he will miss the people on staff and in town whom he established great partnerships with over the years. He added that the greatest challenge of the coming months is to plan for the future of the Hacienda de las Flores.

In a recent letter to the board of the Moraga Park Foundation, its president, Karen Mendonca, wrote that over the past 10 years Ingram brought a calm, assured leadership presence to the Parks and Recreation Department and that he and his small, competent staff had worked together to accomplish big things.

Ingram certainly added a lot to the parks and recreation services. He explained that the three-person department grew in terms of programs and infrastructure. When he took over, Moraga had just terminated an agreement with Lafayette, which had been running the recreation activities for both communities. Moraga was left bare, but one by one, new activities were offered to residents

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