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Ken Dieball, lead instructor of the Ridgecrest First Aid and Disaster Preparedness, instructed attendees on the critical items to have on hand in case of an emergency.
DARLA A. BAKER/THE DAILY INDEPENDENT

Hope Center clients learn about disaster preparedness

By Darla A. Baker
The Daily Independent

Last Friday, the Hope Center invited clients and guests to take a moment out of their day to learn how to prepare in case of an emergency.

Guest speakers for

this month's presentation was Ken Dieball, lead instructor, and Peggy Spraker, events coordinator, of the Ridgecrest First Aid and Disaster Preparedness group, who spoke about what items are essential to have on hand in case

of a fire.

Dieball has over 20 years of disaster experience and has been with the American Red Cross for over 21 years.

"I have responded to over 40 major disasters. This is what I do. This is what I know," Dieball

said.

The overall objective of the all volunteer group is to help local residents and neighboring areas to be prepared before, during and after a disaster, including

See PREP, A8



Kevin La Brie and Yihfen Chen (also the acting coach and director for production) during a dress rehearsal for Mozart's 'Magic Flute,' a Ridgecrest Opera Workshop production.
SUBMITTED PHOTO

Third time's a charm for Ridgecrest Opera Workshop and Mozart's 'Magic Flute'

News release

Undeterred by the COVID-19 pandemic, The Ridgecrest Opera Workshop is gearing up to present its third production of Mozart's Magic Flute.

The first virtual production involved a youth cast, as did the recent spectacular one-night only outdoor production.

The workshop's third production of the Magic Flute will include adult cast members and be presented Thursday, Sept. 30; Friday, Oct. 1, and Satur-

day, Oct. 2 at 6:30 p.m. Doors open at 6 p.m. The performance venue is in a local Ridgecrest garden located at 958 Leslie St. with a parking lot entrance just past Brady Street.

The cast features talented local performers with Larry Cosner III as the hilariously relatable Papageno, John Jensen as the dashing Prince Tamino, Yihfen Chen as the beloved Princess Pamina, Emily Ommen as the mystical Queen of the Night, Jordan Covert as the desperately lonely Monostatos, Stacey Jensen as the lovely Papagena,

and Kevin La Brie, reprising his role as the commanding High Priest Sarastro.

Also joining these characters are the magical Three Ladies played by Kirsten Jensen, Stacey Jensen, and Elizabeth Pomazal, a charming trio that guides Prince Tamino and Papageno through their journey, eventually leading the men to mysterious spirits, danced by Jaime Louer and Sasha Podel.

See OPERA, A8

Parents warned of TikTok theft trend at schools

Staff report

Sierra Sands Unified School District superintendent Dave Ostash sent a message to parents via ParentSquare regarding a trend spreading on social media platform TikTok where youth steal objects after items started being stolen from the district's schools.

"We have come to learn that a recent topic trending among children and teens on TikTok is called 'Devious Licks' where students steal objects and show off what they've taken in their own social media posts," Ostash said. "Unfortunately, we believe this trend has made its way into some of our schools."

Ostash said the district has been dealing with a spike in vandalism and stolen items, especially in school bathrooms, that mimics the popular TikTok trend.

"This theft and vandalism cannot be tolerated," he said. "It is costly, it is placing undue stress on our school staff who work diligently to ensure our campuses are clean and safe, and our students are being negatively impacted."

Ostash asked that families in town speak to their children about social media, current trends taking place, and how these temporary fads can ultimately impact their lives and future.

"Please know that damage and/or theft may be reported to local law enforcement and if our school staff determine who is responsible for theft or damage to our schools, there will be fully appropriate consequences," he said.

Several students across the United States have been arrested after stealing items to post videos on TikTok. The platform has banned the videos.

Centers for Disease Control expands booster eligibility

News release

The CDC has expanded its recommendations for the COVID-19 booster, just days after receiving FDA authorization for use in senior citizens and certain high-risk groups.

The original approval to those 65 and older, residents in long-term care settings, and people over 50 with underlying conditions still applies.

People aged 18-49 with underlying medical conditions and those aged 18-64 who are at increased risk for COVID exposure and transmission because of an occupational or institutional setting may now also

receive the booster shot. The recommendation for Pfizer-BioNTech boosters for these select populations applies 6 months after completion of their primary series.

Ridgecrest Regional Hospital has responded by scheduling eligible patients for a drive-through clinic in early October and offering Pfizer booster vaccine clinics to front line workers.

For those who received Moderna or J&J, no booster is authorized at this time.

CDC continues to recommend third doses of mRNA vaccine for severely immunocompro-

mised persons at least 28 days after the second dose (12+ years for Pfizer; 18+ years for Moderna)

"We are excited to get the green light on Pfizer boosters. This is another important milestone in combatting the virus and getting our community protected," said RRH administrator and Vaccine Task Force Leader Michelle Whalley. "As with our initial efforts last December and early into 2021, when vaccines were first released, our vaccine team is prepared to provide Pfizer boosters to our elderly population, skilled-nursing residents and those age

50 and older who are high risk medically, as well as continuing to prioritize getting first doses to those not yet vaccinated."

For a comprehensive list of eligible medical conditions see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/booster-shot.html>.

Patients who wish to obtain a first dose can ask their provider at any RRH clinic and walk-in vaccination appointments are also available at the RRH Urgent Care. For other local vaccination locations and availability visit myturn.ca.gov.



Staff ensures RRH has adequate vaccine supply to meet needs.
SUBMITTED PHOTO

How much will you need to retire? Let's talk.



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