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VibeSolano Alliance Opens Vallejo's First Public Labyrinth

The VibeSolano Alliance announces the opening of Vallejo's first public labyrinth July 31, 2020. Located at Grant Mahony Park near the intersection of Mariposa and Illinois Streets, the labyrinth, a walking meditation path, is encircled by sycamore trees cascading shade on the labyrinth on sunny days. While walking the labyrinth, one may also enjoy a view of the adjacent Grant Mahony rose garden.

"We invite the public to take turns (while social distancing) meandering along the new labyrinth as a way of reducing stress, getting some time outdoors in our beautiful parks, and achieving spiritual oneness," said Phillip McCoy, superintendent with Greater Vallejo Recreation District (GVRD), and chair of the VibeSolano Alliance's (VSA) labyrinth workgroup.

The idea for Vallejo's first public labyrinth was initiated when funding to promote physical activity and walkability became available in 2018. Modest, \$2,000 mini-grants were offered to the community by Solano Public Health, through VibeSolano's/VibeSolano Alliance's Solano Moves workgroup, led by Kirbee Brooks, health education specialist.

The late Maria Guevara, Vallejo Together founder, encouraged both the Community Presbyterian Church and Congregation B'nai Israel to apply for the mini-grant funds to build a labyrinth on the waterfront. Each church was awarded a mini-grant towards the project, but they hit a roadblock when the waterfront developments were delayed indefinitely.

"Due to the generosity of GVRD, we were able to find a new location for the labyrinth at Grant Mahony Park," explained VSA Chair Michael Brito, Director of Operations for The Salvation Army KROC Center. "VibeSolano Alliance rescued the project. The labyrinth's key partners include GVRD, The Salvation Army KROC Center, and Solano Public Health/VibeSolano," Brito said.

Master Labyrinth Builder Lars Howlett of Discover Labyrinths, LLC, designed the circular VSA labyrinth. It's based on the medieval, 7-circuit Chartres Essence with a "seed of life" pattern at the center of its 35-foot diameter cement pad. Its green color coordinates with the nearby play structure and it blends seamlessly with the rose garden. Future additions will include signage and the installation of three park benches around the labyrinth, according to McCoy.

"VibeSolano hopes that this labyrinth will become a special 'place of the heart' for nearby residents and those who come to visit," said Robin Cox, senior health services manager with Solano Public Health leading VibeSolano, and staff to the VibeSolano Alliance. "We hope that it will help people de-stress in turbulent times, meditate, and get some physical activity in fresh air, all of which contribute to improved wellness," added Cox.

“The labyrinth is now open and ready for use, whether you prefer to walk the labyrinth, sit and enjoy a book, or picnic on the grass next to the labyrinth there is something for everyone to enjoy,” McCoy said. “This park was named for Grant Mahony who was a Vallejo veteran and WWII ace combat pilot war hero. We hope that other veterans will find this a place for relaxation and rejuvenation,” McCoy added.

Funding for the labyrinth came from the Greater Vallejo Recreation District, and Solano Public Health in partnership with the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation. In addition, both Congregation B’nai Israel and Community Presbyterian Church contributed the mini-grant funds that they were awarded.

“The VibeSolano Alliance is a countywide partnership that brings community members and leaders together to create a more vibrant, equitable and healthy Solano, with an emphasis on chronic disease prevention. The VSA strives to help each of Solano’s seven municipalities, and Solano County as a whole, to create environments where everyone has an opportunity to thrive,” Cox said. The VSA also serves in an advisory capacity to VibeSolano as needed. For more information on VSA, please email to info@vibesolano.com.

Grant Mahony Park is located at 1948 Illinois Street near the intersection of Illinois and Mariposa Streets in Vallejo. The park is open from dawn to dusk.

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