

King and Queen of LAEF Royal Gala named

LAEF's Signature Fundraising event slated for Feb. 2023

FOR THE SUN

The Los Alamitos Education Foundation (LAEF) has announced the 2023 Royal Gala honorees will be retired principal Erin Kominsky as Queen and parent leader Dave Locke as King.

In a press release, Executive Director Carrie Logue announced the LAEF Board of Directors officially selected Kominsky and Locke, who will be crowned at the LAEF Royal Gala on Feb. 3 and will serve as the LAEF royal ambassadors for the year.

LAEF's signature fundraising event, The Royal Gala, will kick off this year's "Fundraising February for Los Al Kids" campaign, according to the release. The Royal Gala is the celebratory event in the month-long campaign that raises money for important programs for Los Al kids. Along with the Gala, the campaign will feature an online auction where anyone in the community can participate.

Business sponsorships are also available.

In June 2022, Mrs. Erin Kominsky retired as Principal of Oak Middle School after 38 years of service to the District. Prior to Oak, she served as Principal of Weaver Elementary School for 19 years, which included the reopening of the school in 1996.



Courtesy Photo

Retired principal Erin Kominsky as Queen and parent leader Dave Locke as King for the LAEF Royal Gala on Feb. 3.

Mrs. Kominsky's leadership of both school communities is truly unparalleled. She introduced many best practices, curriculum, and strategies that led to Weaver being rated as the #1 school in Orange County time and time again. The Weaver team was instrumental in bringing many new educational and instructional exercises that eventually became signature practices throughout the Los Alamitos Unified School District.

Erin was named Administrator of the Year in 2004, Woman of the Year for the California Legislature in 2005, and a National Distinguished Principal for the State of California in 2012.

Weaver received California Distinguished School, National Blue Ribbon, and Golden Bell awards.

Mrs. Kominsky's support for LAEF has been tremendous. She welcomed LAEF afterschool classes, STEAM Fairs, and fundraising efforts onto both campuses and encouraged families to participate and staff members to support them. She ran for Queen of Hearts in 2016-17 and per-

Please see LAEF, page 19



THE SUN DIAL

Breakfast with Santa set for Saturday at Marina Center

Thursdays
Senior Card Games

The Seal Beach Recreation and Community Services Department is excited to announce a new program for older adults – Senior Card Games.

The program is free to attend and is available for adults ages 60 years and older. The program takes place every Thursday at the North Seal Beach Center located at 3333 St. Cloud Drive from 1 to 3 p.m. Card games include, but are not limited to: Bridge, Cribbage, Rummy, Pinochle, and more.

For the convenience of participants, the Seal Beach Transportation Program regularly provides transportation to and from the North Seal Beach Center between the hours of 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Monday-Friday, with a lunch closure from noon to 1 p.m. For more information, please contact Anthony Nguyen via email at anguyen@sealbeachca.gov or by phone at (562) 431-2527 X 1344.

December 9
OLLI Winter Registration

On December 9, the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at California State University, Long Beach will begin registration for its Winter. Classes will be held on campus, at satellite community locations, and online using Zoom.

Members have access to enrolling in 75 classes, including 14 new ones, featuring literature, films, computer skills, music, art, crafting, exercise and wellness, writing, history, current events, investing, gardening, and many discussion groups. The seven-week session begins on January 4, 2023, and will be open to adults 50 and over. For more information including registration, visit the OLLI website at www.csulb.edu/olli.

Since 1996 OLLI at CSULB has been dedicated to enriching the lives of older adults through educational opportunities and social engagement.

December 10
Breakfast with Santa

The Breakfast with Santa event

Please see Sun Dial, page 18

Advertorial

Javier Gets His Life Back Thanks to Orthopedic Care

Javier Baeza was an aircraft mechanic for United. He earned his living by making sure every aircraft was ready for flight. It was honest work, and he worked hard.

Then the accident happened.

One day at work, Javier hit his head on a landing gear door. At first, the injury did not seem serious, until he experienced a stabbing sensation in his shoulder blade. Workers' compensation sent him to physical therapy for a year to solve the problem, but the pain never went away. Finally, Javier was sent to get an MRI to find what was wrong. The diagnosis... three crushed vertebrae in his spine.

Javier received reconstructive spinal surgery, but that surgery was only successful for a month because the cage placed around his spine was too large. This caused a serious infection in his throat, making his throat swollen to the point he could not breathe or swallow. He was rushed again to a local community hospital.

"I can remember the first time I went to the ER after that first surgery," says Javier. "I had to lift my head to the sky to breathe, and I had to spit into a bag because I couldn't even swallow my spit. It was horrible."

Javier went to the community hospital twice over the course of a year, but there wasn't a doctor who had the training to treat his complex case. Finally, he met Kushagra Verma, MD, orthopedic surgeon, Spine Health Center, MemorialCare Long Beach Medical Center.

"When I met Javier and learned of his condition, I told him to come to Long Beach Medical Center to get treated," said Dr. Verma. "He needed a very complex cervical reconstruction, a procedure that is usually done at academic institutions. Long Beach Medical Center is a tertiary leader in orthopedic surgery and one of the few hospitals equipped to handle complex cases like Javier's."

Javier needed reconstructive surgery again. This time, Dr. Verma wanted to make sure there were no complications.

"We created an incision in his neck to reach the faulty implants," said Dr. Verma. "We drilled into the bone, took out his old implants and put in a new plastic cage and screws to take pressure of the nerves in his neck."

After Javier's second surgery with Dr. Verma, everything changed. His throat was no longer swollen, and after two long years, he could breathe and swallow normally again.

"It's amazing that we could help Javier swallow and breathe again," said Dr. Verma. "With our help, we were able to help him get his life back."

Today, Javier is back at United as one of their aircraft inspectors. He still experiences some pain in his neck and shoulders, so he continues to meet with Dr. Verma to manage the pain and recovery.

"Thanks to Dr. Verma, I was finally able to get my life back," says Javier. "Without him, I don't know where I'd be."

