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Board Approves Supervisor Rickman's Proposals to Provide District Five Funds in Support of Local Programs

STOCKTON – At its Board meeting on Tuesday, June 30, 2026, the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors approved Supervisor Rickman's proposals to provide dedicated District 5 Funds to several worthy programs serving communities throughout the county.

Aaria's Blue Elephant will receive \$10,702 to cover costs for program equipment and materials that will further their abilities to serve their neurodivergent participants. Aaria's Blue Elephant is a nonprofit organization dedicated to neuro-inclusion, fostering inclusive events, promoting early intervention, and building a compassionate community through shared experiences, creating non-judgmental spaces where every child is celebrated for exactly who they are. The organization works to fill a critical gap in developmental needs by providing specialized, sensory-safe social and educational workshops for neurodiverse youth.

The Escalon Senior Fun Bunch will receive \$5,079 to cover program costs for efforts creating a social support network and a culture of belonging, promoting good health and providing valuable and pertinent information to seniors, with the goal of improving the participant's quality of life. The Escalon Senior Fun Bunch is an independently managed ministry of Saron Lutheran Church of Escalon, a nonprofit formed in 2019 to support and empower the senior population of Escalon through social events and education, with over 200 active members and increasing interest and participation. There are no fees charged to seniors to participate.

One Church Ripon will receive \$15,000 to replace outdated equipment and acquire additional technology, allowing them to enhance program quality, expand capacity, and reach more students. Offering programs to help foster growth in people's lives, one such program available to the public free-of-charge, is an after-school program for children and youth, providing a safe, encouraging, and creative environment where students can develop practical skills, build positive peer and mentor relationships, strengthen character, learn teamwork, and gain confidence in their future. This program currently offers hands-on training in a variety of creative arts (musicianship, video editing, creative writing, media content), communication skills (public speaking, vocal arts, presentation), and character development (mentorship, counseling support, leadership development), currently serving approximately 40 students, with interest growing.

"I hope I shall possess firmness and virtue enough to maintain (what I consider the most enviable of all titles), the character of an honest man."
- George Washington -

The Ripon Chamber of Commerce will receive \$2,519 to acquire decorative lighting to enhance the appearance of Main Street, creating a more inviting atmosphere as well as increasing safety, encouraging visitors to spend more time downtown supporting local businesses, boosting our local economy. The Chamber plays a key role in organizing and supporting numerous events that enrich the Ripon and surrounding communities and strengthen the local economy. Events include; the Almond Blossom Festival, Main Street Day, Ripon Porchfest, Brews and Bites, Taste of Ripon, Christmas Parade, and a variety of ribbon cuttings, farmer's markets, and seasonal celebrations.

The Greater Stockton Chamber of Commerce will receive \$3,000 to use towards fifteen (15) billboards buys in outreach efforts for the Standing Together Against All Regional Theft (STAART) initiative furthering awareness and encouraging business and community participation. STAART is an initiative launched by the Greater Stockton Chamber of Commerce in partnership with local law enforcement, the District Attorney's Office, and County support, to combat retail theft and improve community safety in San Joaquin County. STAART is designed to deter retail theft and other quality of life crimes by giving merchants and communities a simple way to safely document and submit incidents – retail theft, illegal dumping, sideshows, and related criminal activity – so the appropriate agency or business can act on it, build evidence, and increase accountability. Public awareness of the initiative and participation are key to STAART's effectiveness and success.

Tracy Interfaith Ministries will receive \$20,000 to replace their twenty (20) year old swamp cooler with two (2) new swamp coolers to help maintain a suitable workspace and lessen the strain on their refrigerated areas. Tracy Interfaith Ministries is a nonprofit volunteer-run organization based in Tracy that provides food, clothing, and assistance to low-income and homeless families and individuals. Tracy Interfaith has been undergoing facility upgrades yet has continued serving over one hundred (100) families a day. Maintenance of their swamp cooler has become costly and insufficient to cool the warehouse and adjacent workspace used by volunteers.

"Great communities are built one partnership at a time. By investing in organizations that support our children, care for our seniors, strengthen families, enhance public safety, and serve our neighbors, we're making an investment in the future of San Joaquin County," said District 5 Supervisor Robert Rickman.

For more about Supervisor Rickman, visit <https://www.sjgov.org/departments/bos/districts/district-5>.

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