

THE RICHMOND STANDARD

Spring Fling livens up East Richmond Heights

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Photo courtesy of Supervisor John Gioia's Facebook page.

By Zach Chouteau

A bustling Spring Fling BBQ celebration on the afternoon of Sunday, May 7, brought about 100 residents of East Richmond Heights for a neighborhood bash highlighted by fantastic pot-luck food and an appearance by Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia.

The festivities were held in the parking lot of the Arlington Market and hosted by the store's owners—brothers Najeeb and Saleh Alqablani, who with their families also supplied much of the refreshment for the potluck party.

Featured delicacies included delicious grilled lamb and chicken, Baklava and other home-made baked goods, hot dogs and many other treats. Furry and feathered friends were also invited, spurring several dog owners to tag along with their pooches—and birds that included a gorgeous white parrot and exotic speckled hen of some kind.

Supervisor Gioia, accompanied by District Coordinator James F. Lyon, made a few community announcements and spent plenty of time socializing with attendees.

"The active neighborhood leadership knows that a community that sticks together is stronger and safer," Gioia said in a Facebook post praising the event. "We are forming a Municipal Advisory Council in unincorporated East Richmond to strengthen input to the County."

Longtime Kennedy High teacher Mike Peritz—who now oversees the Eagle Foundation that supports the school—was also among the party-goers. The Arlington Market's owners and some neighbors also mentioned the help of Natalie Kniess, a local community organizer in East Richmond Heights, as being pivotal in the smoothly run affair.

The East Richmond Heights neighborhood reportedly is readying for another community shindig on Sunday, July 16, in front of the Gyuto Foundation, a Buddhist monastery at 6401 Bernhard Avenue, to benefit Mira Vista School.