

New neighborhood fest readies for July debut

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By Zach Chouteau

The East Richmond Heights neighborhood is gearing up for a brand-new street festival that it plans to make into a yearly celebration, enlivened by the countless artists and musicians who call the area home.

Slated for Sunday, July 16 from noon until 6 p.m., the 1st Annual East Richmond Heights Art & Music Festival will be staged just outside the charming Gyuto

Foundation monastery on Bernhard Avenue, at the corner of Elm Avenue. The free event has been spearheaded by Richmonder Natalie Kniess, who recently shared some details on the shindig with the *Standard*.



“I am a neighborhood organizer in East Richmond Heights and for years have known about the myriad of artists and musicians that live in the hills; I call them the ‘hillies,’” she remarked. “The Gyuto Foundation is such a special location and Leonard Sweet from the Elm Street Blues Band volunteered to help organize the stage and sound on the corner of Elm Street and Bernhard. It supports our county school—Mira Vista. I have such a terrific team of neighborhood professionals and uber moms from the PTA. I could not have asked for a better team of volunteers.”

Kniess said the big event came together very quickly and effortlessly, and included support from Supervisor John Gioia as well as the friendly monks from the monastery.

“We have over 15 performing artists and our list of exhibitors keeps growing,” Kniess added. “I expect the roster to be around 30 exhibitors. It’s going to be a great day!”

As of June 28, the following musical performers and art exhibitors were confirmed, with numerous others expected to also participate:

Musical acts: Balianese Gamelan Musicians; Dave Ridnell; Eli De Yoe; Jan & Mike; Jenny Jup Benorden; Matthew Heulitt; Mira Vista School Glee Club; Pete Madsen; Steve Gibson Band; The Elm Street Blues Band; The Ghost Kings; The Secret Identities; and Turpentine Remedy.

Artists/exhibitors: A&J Jewels; Alex James; Anja Borgstrom; Chico Coelho; Gary Becker; John Moore; Linda Ruiz-Lozito; Mark Conrad; Mike Chavez, Jr.; Rebeca Gonzalez; Ross Holzman; Ugandan Artists (8).

Proceeds raised at the celebration benefit the Mira Vista Art & Music Programs and the Save the Elm Street Oak Project.

To find out more about the event, email Natalie Kniess at nataliekniess9@gmail.com.

*Zach Chouteau is a longtime travel writer and editor, and currently blogs about group and family getaways at **Pineapple Go**.*