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OCTOBER 2026
VOLUME 33 NO. 9

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- Turtle Bay Exploration Park
- US Airsoft World
- Waterworks Park
- When Pie Meets Bread

NORTH STATE Parent

FOR PARENTS • FOR COMMUNITY • FOR HEALTH



On the Cover: We are thrilled to feature this beautiful portrait of a Chico mother and daughter, **Brenda and Ella Gonzales**, on this month's cover, captured back in 2021 by *Lisa Tosi Photography*.

While this photo catches a fleeting moment of childhood, that young girl has since grown into a busy sophomore in high school who now spends her time tearing up the soccer field. We love celebrating the families that make Chico such a vibrant place to live, grow and play!



- 6 **Be the Change**
Be The Change - Drew & Kaylee Silva:
A "Third Place" to Disconnect from
Devices & Reconnect with Community
By Jenna Christophersen
- 8 North State Mamapreneurs
- 12 Three Chico Sarahs: Brewing Their
Own Paths in Business & Community
By Julia Plotkina
- 14 Harvest Happenings
- 18 The End of the Self-Abandoning Mother
By Alexis Asbe
- 20 **Siskiyou County News**
Take a Walk on the Sunny Side at
Sunflower Pumpkin Patch
By Stacey Leigh Mohr
- 11 Childcare & Preschool Directory
- 24 **This is Tehama**
Planting Seeds - Pam Maret's 50 Years
of Nurturing the Next Generation
By Kate Hiller
- 26 How to Communicate Your Child's
Needs to First Responders

Cover Photo by *Lisa Tosi Photography*.
Serving Chico and surrounding areas
for 25 years, Lisa has provided many
wonderful covers for North State Parent
magazine. Her approach to photography
is personal, relaxed and natural, with a
goal to create images that feel authentic
to every person in front of her camera.
Her studio's rural setting offers natural
lighting and provides opportunities for
outdoor photography. Lisa also travels to
client locations throughout the area and
offers private mini sessions as well as
event-day mini sessions throughout
the year. lisatosi.com.

DEAR READERS

As we approach the end of 2026, we here at North State Parent are mindful of the challenges we have collectively faced this year, and we especially admire how our local businesses have risen to meet these challenges. We are honored to feature three Sarahs on pages 12 & 13, owners of restaurants in Chico offering delicious beverages and scrumptious fare. These women have bravely faced the odds and are operating successful businesses in difficult economic times.

In the pages of this issue, you'll read about some other dynamic entrepreneurial women in our Mamapreneur feature. We started highlighting Mamapreneurs over 20 years ago to honor moms who are negotiating the unique challenges of blending family with business ownership. We encourage all women to take care of themselves and to live the lives they want to amid the many demands placed on them.

Our fall magazine is filled with our best picks to take the family for a visit. Enjoy seasonal fruits, veggies, and especially pumpkins. Start a new family tradition and visit many farms this season.

We are celebrating our 33rd year of serving North State parents and families! It's been a long and winding road these past 33 years. What a journey. Sorta like parenting! We treasure hearing from you so please let us know if we have been helpful. This gives us the boost we need! We wish you a fall filled with warm family memories.

Stacey Pamela

and the North State Parent
magazine team



OUR SUPPORTIVE DISPLAY ADVERTISERS

Anderson Heights Preschool	11
Book Family Farm	15
Butte County Public Health	2
Chico Chai	13
Chico & Yuba Sutter Marketplace	15
Chico Montessori Children's House	11
Chico Performances	5
Columbia's Lion Cubs Preschool	11
Country Pumpkins	30
Creekside Counseling	27
Dr. Moorea Blythe	9

Enterprise Elementary Preschool	11
Far Northern Regional Center	29
Gather Coffee House & Supper Club	13
Greenville Rancheria	27
Historic Hawes Farms	15
JEDI	10
Julia's Fruit Stand	10
Kevin Shearer, DDS	23
Kids Interconnections Preschool and TK	11
Kindred Hearts	5, 9
Kotasik Daycare	11

Palermo Union Elem. School District	11
Poppy & Fig	9
Lauer Electric, LLC	23
Lisa Tosi Photography	10
Matrix Cards & Games	7
Meadow Lane Preschool	11
Northern Valley Catholic Social Services	27
Palermo Union Elementary District	11
Patrick Ranch Museum	15
Phoenix Charter Academy College View	5
Redding Christian Preschool & TK	11

Sacramento River Discovery Center	5
Shasta Head Start, Shasta County	11
Shasta Head Start, Siskiyou County	11, 23
Siskiyou Child Care Council	11
Sweet Bean Coffee Shop	13
Trinity Lutheran Early Learning Center	11
Turtle Bay Exploration Park	14
United Way of Northern California	3
West Redding Preschool & After School Program	11, 27
When Pie Meets Bread	3

SERVING FAMILIES IN BUTTE, GLENN, SHASTA, SISKIYOU & TEHAMA COUNTIES

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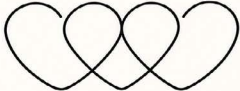
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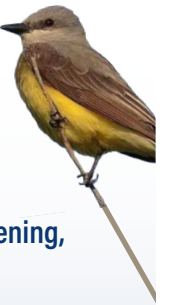
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12/12, 2 & 7:30 p.m.
12/13, 2 p.m.



1.29.27-1.31.27

Chico Community Ballet
The Land of Oz

1/29, 6:30 p.m.
1/30, 1 & 6:30 p.m.
1/31, 1 p.m.



2.10.27

**Ballet Folklórico de
México de Amalia
Hernández**

7:30 p.m.



3.3.27

**Cirque Kalabanté
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6:30 p.m.

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THE MISSION OF OUR BE THE CHANGE COLUMN IS TO FEATURE COMMUNITY MEMBERS FROM THE NORTH STATE WHO ARE ACTIVELY MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN COMMUNITY LIFE. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO NOMINATE SOMEONE WHO IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE, PLEASE EMAIL PN@NORTHSTATEPARENT.COM.

drew & kaylee silva

A “THIRD PLACE” TO DISCONNECT FROM DEVICES AND RECONNECT WITH COMMUNITY

When they heard of the “third place” theory introduced by sociologist [Ray Oldenburg](#), Drew and Kaylee Silva knew the term encapsulated their vision for Matrix Cards & Games in the Redding community.

“Third places” are places other than home (the “first place”) and work (the “second place”) that build up a sense of safety, social connection and belonging. So much more than a game retail store, [Matrix](#) exists to make room – literally and metaphorically – for connection and community. Since taking over ownership of the store in 2023, the Silvas have intentionally shaped it into a place for kids and families to, as Drew says, “disconnect from the devices in front of them and reconnect friends and family across the table.”

Matrix’s wide selection and intentionally immersive experience mean there is a niche – and a network of fellow nerds – for everyone who walks into the store.

As you enter, you may notice a pleasant aroma and curated music wafting through the air while you browse colorful displays of Pokémon cards or Magic: The Gathering. You might snatch a mint from a bowl as you walk by to peruse kits for building Gunpla snap-fit figures and models.

By engaging all five senses, the Silvas reduce the felt need for Matrix guests to keep checking their phones – one step toward disconnecting to reconnect.

Through their own childhood experiences and research they have heard about



Drew and Kaylee pose here with the store mascot, Velomachus, who has been a fixture in the store since week one.
Photos by Kate Hiller

at conferences throughout the country, Drew and Kaylee have learned games have the potential to develop critical thinking, cooperation, communication, perseverance, problem-solving and pure human connection. Upon buying Matrix, they began organizing special events as well as weekly game times for different groups. Ben Arntson, a friend, customer and consultant for Matrix since the Silvas took ownership, points out that these events usually do not generate a profit for the store. But they do generate what the Silvas value more: community.

SUPPORTING AND EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION

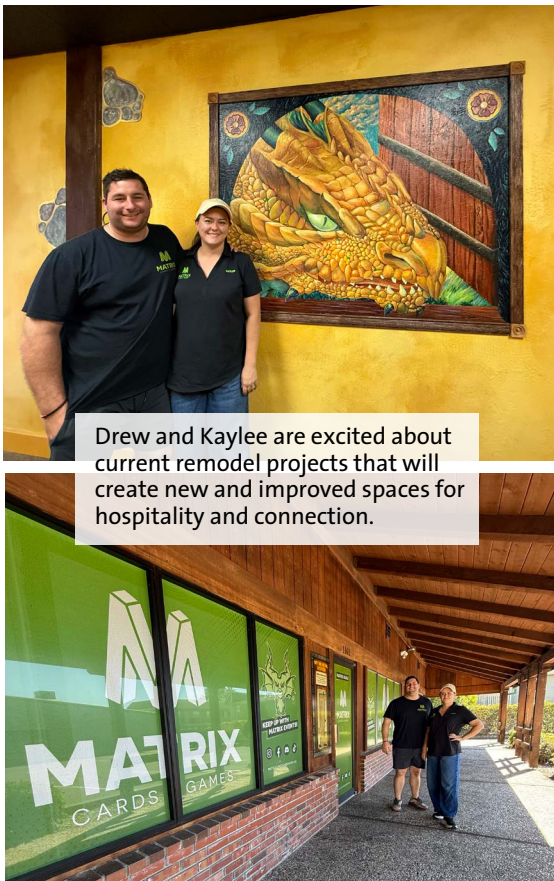
Drew says, “of all things,” the Dungeons & Dragons (D & D) program has become especially effective toward building community for families, including those whose kids are on the autism spectrum or have other learning needs. For kids who struggle to focus, this highly collaborative, interactive game exercises sustained concentration skills. “You have to have something creative enough to capture their attention, because unfortunately kids have been trained at a young age to have an attention span that is about 15 seconds,” Drew observes. “We know how the real world is; I wish we could get through all our problems in 15 seconds! So how do you capture that attention longer?”

One answer, it seems, involves gathering “a table full of people being silly, about to go slay a dragon with their swords.” Every week, the D & D group attracts two children-only tables (for kids 12 years old and under) and at least one family table, which helps kids build community with each other, their parents and other adults. “You’ll get a shy kid who comes in with his dad every single Saturday night, and then, sooner or later, he just sees you as a normal fixture, and this shy kid just opens up because he’s comfortable interacting with you,” Drew says. As a result of becoming “a normal fixture” in the lives of many youths in Redding, the Silvas frequently attend theater performances and sports events, showing their support extends beyond the four walls and working hours of the store.

Loving and supporting youth means more to the Silvas than only applauding a job well done. As former tennis coaches and juvenile detention officers, they both seek to support kids toward their higher potential. “We’ve never babied kids,” Drew says. “We help kids learn to lose respectfully and humbly. The foundation of our community going forward will be the next generation. Kaylee and I were born and raised here. We’re here to stay because we love the community.”

The Silvas have even hired some of the “kids” who have grown up around Matrix, including Ben’s daughter. Ben describes the Silvas as deeply generous with their time and resources, especially for kids who lack support or resources at home. He fondly recalls Kaylee empowering his daughter’s 3D printing when she was younger and spending time discussing her ideas for owning her own business someday. According to Ben, the Silvas “want to build a place that people come to work, and it’s not just their first job, it’s their job where they can stay as long as they want to. For a business owner to think that way and constantly try to find ways to take better care of employees – that’s a pretty rare thing.”

👍 Please say you saw it in North State Parent magazine. This helps us grow!



Drew and Kaylee are excited about current remodel projects that will create new and improved spaces for hospitality and connection.

ROLE MODELING HOW TO CARE FOR THE NORTH STATE COMMUNITY

Ben recounts a recent email sent to Matrix’s 12 employees that encouraged them to be mindful of their growing responsibility as role models in the community and asked them to share any community initiatives Matrix should be involved in. “What kind of boss wakes up on a random Wednesday and sends an email like that?” Ben says. “It’s absolutely encouraging.”

Beyond paid staff, Matrix’s Community Ambassador program also empowers people who are passionate about a given intellectual property to build up the community.

“If we have a regular customer who paints every day, and somebody is asking me about paints, I’m going to get them connected,” Kaylee says. Drew describes it as an “organically grassroots style, so other people who are much more passionate about it are stimulating those parts of the community.”

Drew and Kaylee see Matrix as an opportunity

to create belonging for those who “haven’t really found a place where they felt like they fit in,” to give back to the community that raised them and to strengthen it for future generations. “Spend some time with the Silvas,” Ben says, “and the most important thing you learn having walked away from them is love. They demonstrate it is more than a noun; it is a verb and requires action, which they embody every day.” ■

Jenna Christophersen is a Chico native who fell in love with writing as she wrote her first words as a student at McManus Elementary School.





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espresso



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CORTADO
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steamed milk



CAPPUCCINO
6oz
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2oz steamed milk
2oz espresso*



LATTE
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*milk foam
8-12oz steamed milk
2oz espresso*



MOCHA
12 / 16oz
*topped with whip cream
dark or white chocolate
8-12oz steamed milk
2oz espresso*



Sarah Goings with her baby, Granger, enjoy the good life at her coffee shop, Sweet Bean, located in Chico. To hear more of her story and learn about other entrepreneurial women, please see page 12.

Women-owned businesses are shaking up the business world, demonstrating a revolutionary and remarkably successful paradigm for running a business.

More importantly, women-owned businesses are giving a tremendous boost to the economy here in the North State and throughout the U.S. With everything they do, Mamapreneurs are modeling responsibility, integrity, resilience and a can-do spirit that encourages the next generation to express their interests and do what they love. Read about these remarkable women who are showing their children that they can be leaders in their own lives!



MAMAPRENEUR



Jenny Maiorano
POPPY & FIG
IN BUSINESS
SINCE 2021

My enthusiasm for shopping secondhand grew from treasure hunting at garage sales with my grandfather into years of reselling – first online, then via a mobile boutique and now a storefront. The best advice I received was, “You can do it all, just not at the same time.” Shifting from perfection to seasonal harmony changed everything. Some weeks require business focus; others demand family presence. This perspective gives me grace to protect my passion. When times get difficult, I anchor in my “why” and lean on community. I want my children to see a mother who faces obstacles with resilience. Fellow women business owners remind me that a hard day is just a chapter, not the whole story, helping me take the next step. Poppy & Fig offers finely curated secondhand clothing and accessories, high end brands at affordable prices, personal shopping, private events and styling.



(530) 592-6958 • 225 MAIN STREET, SUITE L • CHICO

MAMAPRENEUR



My work focuses on perinatal mental health, early childhood, trauma and supporting families. I was inspired to build my practice to provide more specialized care in our community. It has been a privilege to walk alongside families through some of life's most joyful, challenging and unexpected chapters.



Dr. Moorea Blythe
Clinical Psychologist
PsyD • PMH-C

As a new mom to a baby boy, I am learning that balancing parenthood and professional life is both meaningful and hard. Flexibility, intentionality, slowing down, and support from others have become especially important. What I have enjoyed most is how becoming a parent has deepened my perspective on work I already cared about, strengthening my appreciation for early support, relationships, community and my commitment to serving families throughout the North State.

Moorea Blythe, PsyD, PMH-C
CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST
IN BUSINESS SINCE 2023

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MAMAPRENEUR



Kindred Hearts, Inc. grew out of my own

experience as an adoptive mom and my work as a therapist supporting foster and adoptive families. I saw firsthand how difficult it could be to find support that truly understood the complexities of parenting children who have experienced trauma. I wanted to create the kind of place where these families felt understood, supported and genuinely cared for. Kindred Hearts has grown into more than I ever imagined, but our purpose has never changed: to meet families where they are and provide the support they need. Some days I juggle parenting and owning a business really well, and some days I absolutely do not!



Haley Bagnaschi
KINDRED HEARTS, INC.
IN BUSINESS SINCE 2022

I've learned that balance doesn't mean giving everything equal attention every day. Sometimes my business needs more of me, and sometimes my girls do. I try to be present for whichever needs me most and give myself grace when I can't do everything perfectly. My girls have grown up alongside Kindred Hearts. They've watched the long days and hard decisions, but they've also watched an idea become something that serves so many families. I hope they learn that you can be a mom, have big dreams, work incredibly hard and still create a life that is your own.

(530) 539-1612 • 2110 FERRY ST. ANDERSON • KINDREDHEARTSPROGRAM.COM



From our archives, October 2012.
Mom Lisa Jeter, daughter Briana and Annabelle, the Little Red Hen.
Photo by Tracey Hedge Photography.

MAMAPRÉNEUR

On November 8, 2018, the lives of our best friends, John and Tracy Parks, changed forever. As the Camp Fire swept through Paradise, they evacuated to our home. When they learned that their home had burned to the ground, they never left.

Next door to our home was a small “granny unit” that, at the time, served as the office for Julia’s Fruit Stand. Almost overnight, the office was transformed into a home for John and Tracy. In the midst of unimaginable loss, the four of us discovered an unexpected gift: the joy of living next door to our very best friends.

It has now been eight years and Tracy continues to teach in Paradise during the school year, but when summer arrives, her heart belongs to Julia’s Fruit Stand. She works alongside us seven days a week and is a familiar face at our Wednesday and Saturday farmers’ markets. She has become an irreplaceable part of the

fruit stand. The Camp Fire brought tremendous loss, but from that tragedy grew a blessing we never could have planned. What began with opening our home to our best friends became eight years of shared meals, laughter, hard work, long summer days and countless memories.



The Brandts & The Parks
OWNERS: JAMES & KATHY BRANDT
IN BUSINESS SINCE 2001

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MAMAPRÉNEUR

After more than 25 years in business, I still love what I do! My photography business has given me the opportunity to be creative, connect with people, and document the moments that matter most to them. Over the years, I’ve continued to focus on keeping my approach to photography personal, relaxed and natural. Whether I’m photographing a family, a high school senior, an engagement session or a local business professional, my goal is to create images that feel authentic to every person I photograph. I believe the best photographs happen when people feel comfortable in front of the camera, rather than overly posed or pressured to “perform.” My focus during a session is that every person feels at ease and leaves feeling like the session was more pleasant, easy and enjoyable than expected. Not everyone loves being in front of the camera, but I’m proud to say that my sessions feel more like friends meeting up for a friendly chat, than a client showing up and being asked to perform. I will forever be grateful for these interactions. I’m so thankful for my longtime clients, as well as the new clients who have continued to grow my business. I appreciate each and every one of you more than you know. And, of course, thank you to my family



Lisa Tosi
LISA TOSI PHOTOGRAPHY
IN BUSINESS SINCE 2001



for hanging in there through the late-night editing sessions and everything that comes with being a small-business owner. I couldn’t continue doing what I love without all of you!

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MAMAPRÉNEUR



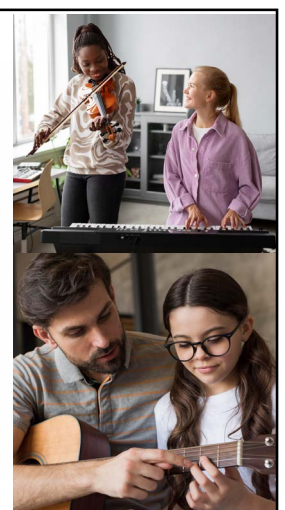
Nancy Swift
CEO AND FOUNDER OF JEDI
IN BUSINESS SINCE 1999

The mission of JEDI is to increase the economic well-being of people and communities through business development and wealth creation. As I and a group of community members looked around the county and thought about who was making a difference and could provide more if barriers were reduced, we saw small business owners! We knew they provided tax revenue for cities, jobs, support of family households, innovation and creative new energy. That has always been true and still is. I have a particular interest in assisting women to help use business development to grow their economic stability.

mindfulness! I am blessed to have adopted two daughters during the growth of JEDI, and they have led parallel lives! I am a role model for them, but it does take time away from being present with them. When they were little, childcare was a big deal. (That may be why JEDI has active support programs for child care).



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SHASTA COUNTY

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Meadow Lane Preschool

PU

2770 Balls Ferry Rd. Anderson • (530) 378-7030
cuesd.com ⓓⓈⓂ Ages: 2-5 yrs • M-F, 7:45am-5:30pm
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Anderson Heights Preschool

PU

1530 Spruce St. Anderson • (530) 378-7050
cuesd.com ⓓⓈⓂ Ages: 2-5 yrs • M-F, 8am-11:30am
 Every child deserves a nurturing and engaging environment to learn and grow. Our play-based curriculum encourages creativity and social development, laying a foundation for future success. Lic# 455408602

Redding Christian Preschool & TK

PR

2960 Hartnell Avenue, Redding, CA 96002
 (530)248-2960 • reddingchristian.com.
 Preschool: Ages: 2.5-4 yrs • M-F, 7:30am-4:30pm; mid-Aug to beginning of June. 3-5 half or full days.
 TK: Ages: 4-5 years • M-F AM class 8-11am; PM class 11:45-2:45pm; mid-August to beginning of June.
 Private Christian preschool and pre-kindergarten offers hands-on learning and academic skill-building, focusing on spiritual, academic, social and physical development. Lic# 455406244

Shasta Head Start Child Development, Inc.

PR

375 Lake Blvd. Redding • (530) 241-1036
shastaheadstart.org. ⓓⓈⓂ Ages: 0-5 yrs • M-F, 8am-4:30pm. Private, non-profit provides high quality childcare and social services to low-income children and their families in Shasta, Siskiyou and Trinity counties. Lic# 4455406084

Trinity Lutheran Early Learning Center

PR

2440 Hilltop Drive, Redding • (530) 221-6686
trinityearlylearningcenter.com • crystal@reddingtlc.org ⓓⓈⓂ Ages: 0-5 yrs, M-F, 7:30am-5:30pm. Lunch served.
 A meaningful Christian education. Experienced teachers teach the love of Christ and curriculum to ensure each child is ready for kindergarten and beyond. Lic# 4151373105

West Redding Preschool & Afterschool Programs

PR

3490 Placer Street, Redding • (530) 243-2225
westreddingpreschool.com
 ⓓⓈⓂ Ages: 6wks-12 yrs • M-F, 7am - 5:30pm
 An educationally based curriculum. Our goal is to prepare each child today for the educational challenges that they may face tomorrow. Lic# 455401406

SISKIYOU COUNTY

Shasta Head Start Child Development, Inc.

PR

710 Everitt Memorial Hwy, Mt Shasta • (530) 918-2550
shastaheadstart.org
 ⓓⓈⓂ Ages: 0-5 yrs • M-F, 8am-4:30pm
 Private, non-profit provides high quality childcare and social services to low-income children and their families. Locations in Mt Shasta, Weed and Yreka. Lic# 445406084

Siskiyou Child Care Council

PR

Fort Jones, McCloud, Dunsmuir, Lane Street (Yreka)
 SisQ Kids (Weed) • (530) 938-2748
tstacher@siskiyouchildcare.org
siskiyouchildcare.org
 We believe that every child is unique and of supreme worth. Our state preschools provide care in a nurturing environment designed to foster development of positive self esteem, emotional well-being, social skills, independence, creativity, and problem solving. Call for more information about any of our schools. Lic # 475403153, 475404269, 475404757, 475408055, 475408138.

TEHAMA COUNTY

Kotasik Daycare

PR

2 Sutter Street, Suite C, Red Bluff • (530) 727-9607
 ⓈⓂ Ages: 2-5yrs • M-F, 7:30am-5:30pm
 All staff are fully qualified, first aid and CPR certified. Drop-ins welcome. Subsidized payment accepted. Breakfast and Lunch served family-style. Lic# 525407977

ⓓ = Diapers Accepted
 Ⓢ = Snacks Served
 Ⓜ = Meals Served

PR = Private
 PU = Public



Three Chico Sarahs

Brewing Their Own Paths in Business & Community

There is no single path to building a meaningful business. In Chico, three women named Sarah have each created a distinctive place to drink, eat and connect: **Sarah Goings** of Sweet Bean Coffee House, **Sarah Adams** of Chico Chai and **Sarah Fragoso** of Gather Coffee House and Supper Club. Their journeys grew from their passions and different life experiences, united by a willingness to bring their visions to life.



A Leap of Faith: Sweet Bean Coffee House

Owning a coffee shop had long been a dream for Sarah Goings, who now co-owns Sweet Bean with her husband. A semester studying abroad in Italy deepened her love of coffee. Still, they joked that opening a shop would require a million dollars and might have to be a retirement dream.

Growing up watching her mother operate businesses for 30 years made entrepreneurship feel possible. When a space designed for a coffee shop became available in north Chico, Sarah and her husband took a leap of faith. “It was the opportunity we didn’t know we were looking for,” Sarah recalls. Sarah initially worried the location might not attract enough traffic. But on the Friday morning of our meeting, Sweet Bean buzzed with conversation as women with small children, seniors and friends gathered around tables.

Customers can settle in, indoors or outside, or use the drive-through for locally roasted coffee, house-made bagel sandwiches and breakfast burritos, and locally sourced or house-made pastries. Artwork by a local artist adds to the welcoming neighborhood feel that has developed around the coffee shop.

Outside, Sarah held her wiggly 5-month-old son, Granger. Raising three children under six while running a business is both her “biggest hurdle” and “biggest blessing.” Perfect balance never truly arrives, she says, but the flexibility allows her to be present for her children while helping support her family.

The experience proved their old joke wrong. “We definitely did not have to be millionaires,” Sarah acknowledges with a laugh. Her advice to aspiring entrepreneurs is to start small, take it one step at a time and trust that a dream may be more within reach than it seems.



From Fresh Chai to a Gathering Place: Chico Chai

For Sarah Adams, Chico Chai grew from a lifelong love of tea and plants. After discovering chai as a young adult, she learned the basic method for making this delicious drink from a local chai maker and began experimenting with tea and spices.

A career as a wildlife biologist eventually left little time to make chai, yet she could not find the kind she loved locally. Sarah found herself wondering, “What if my life were making chai?” She decided to find out. Drawing on her scientific background, Sarah filled Mason jars with different versions and asked friends to sample them. Their feedback helped shape the recipe that became Chico Chai.

With help from friends, family and the community, Chico Chai grew from a commercial kitchen and farmers markets into a wholesale business serving cafes throughout the region.

Sarah had imagined opening a tea house for years, but COVID halted her first attempt, eventually making room for something better: a building large enough for both production and the Chico Chai House. When I met Sarah on a weekday afternoon, the nearly full tea house felt lively but unhurried. Accessible pathways, lower counters and a children’s corner reflect her vision for an inclusive space. As Sarah described those choices, a customer in a wheelchair entered – a simple moment showing that vision in action.

Free skill-sharing workshops, community groups and exhibits by local artists further bring that vision to life. Chico’s community helped Chico Chai take root, and Chico Chai now offers that community a place to come together and grow.





Raising the Bar: Gather Coffee House and Supper Club

Sarah Fragoso grew up cooking beside her mother, who milled wheat, baked bread and prepared nearly everything from scratch. “I don’t have a memory of not cooking,” Sarah says. That passion remained constant as Sarah raised her family and followed a winding path through fitness and nutrition, cookbook writing and other business ventures. She built toward her restaurant dream through intimate supper club dinners throughout Chico, honing her craft and eventually attracting a waiting list of hundreds.

Knowing the demands of running a restaurant, Sarah waited until her kids graduated from high school. By then, she had spent years refining her vision and building a community around her food. Gather became its culmination. “If I’m going to do this, I will do it with my whole heart and my whole soul,” Sarah says.

Every aspect of Gather reflects that intention, from thoughtfully sourced ingredients to food made from scratch. Produce comes from local farms, proteins are carefully sourced and even syrups and dressings are made in-house, reflecting Sarah’s commitment to knowing what goes into the food she serves.

For Sarah, nourishment extends beyond the plate. She describes nourishing food as “a spiritual connection” but says it is also about “the relationships that you’re building” – knowing the farmers who grow her ingredients, remembering customers’ names, making eye contact and considering what someone might be going through when they walk through the door.

Local farmers, artists and makers contribute what they create; employees bring their knowledge and talents; and customers are nourished through both food and experience. Together, that synergy creates something uniquely Gather. That connection extends throughout the space, with tables, artwork, floral arrangements, food and other products created or supplied by locals. Perhaps Sarah sums it up best: “The whole place is Chico.”

Three Paths, Shared Community

The three Sarahs remind us that entrepreneurship does not follow a single formula. Each brings her own passions and experiences, contributing a distinct thread to the vibrant, interconnected tapestry of stories, relationships and gathering places that make Chico Chico. Their stories invite us not only to explore the places their passions created but to imagine what might become possible if we were willing to take a chance on a passion of our own.

SWEET BEAN COFFEE HOUSE
3010 FLORAL AVENUE, SUITE 135, CHICO
530.965.5039
SWEETBEANCHICO.COM

CHICO CHAI
1441 PARK AVENUE, CHICO
530.897.0822
CHICOCHAI.COM

GATHER COFFEE HOUSE AND SUPPER CLUB
196 COHASSET ROAD, SUITE 150, CHICO
530.399.0167
GATHERCHICO.COM



Julia Plotkina is a Chico-based writer and homeschooling parent. She holds a Master’s in Business Management and has over 10 years of experience as a business consultant. Her personal and volunteer work centers on education, well-being, and community.



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chicochai.com



Sweet Bean
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530.965.5039
sweetbeanchico.com



Gather Coffee House
& Supper Club
196 Cohasset Rd. #150
Chico
530.399.0167
gatherchico.com



EMOTIONS AT PLAY

WITH PIXAR'S INSIDE OUT



Now - Jan 3, 2027
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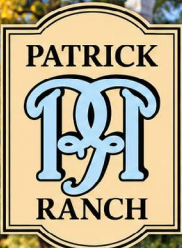
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Patrick Ranch Museum
AUTUMN FEST & PUMPKIN PATCH
DURHAM
 Saturdays and Sundays in October
 10 am – 4 pm
 Admission \$6. Free parking.
 Haunted House presented by Boy Scout Troop 31
 Oct. 9-11, 16-18, 23-25 and 30, 6-9 p.m.
 Reserve your spot online.

Grand Opening
Oct. 3 & 4
 Food, craft and activity vendors

Pumpkin Patch
 Pick your perfect pumpkin and enjoy family activities.

Historic Farmhouse Tours
 Explore the Glenwood farmhouse and grounds.

Crafts, Activities & More!
 Kids' crafts & seasonal fun for the whole family.

10381 MIDWAY, BETWEEN CHICO & DURHAM • PATRICKRANCHMUSEUM.ORG



Join us for
COSTUME CONTESTS & FAMILY CRAFTS
 October 24 | 12pm–2pm
 West Court Near JCPenney & Planet Fitness
 Register on our Website

DOGGIE COSTUME CONTEST 12:00pm
KID'S COSTUME CONTEST* 1:00pm *10 and under

Anna & Elsa Ice Princesses
 Will be Attending!



JOIN US for some FAMILY FUN!

CHICO Marketplace
 Ticket/Event info: ShopChico Marketplace.com

NORTH STATE
Parent

Find more Harvest events by visiting our calendar at:
northstateparent.com/calendar





Hope Academy at Book Family Farm



Sunflower Pumpkin Patch at Cornerstone Farm



WE GROW MEMORIES
 Our season is October 4th thru October 27th



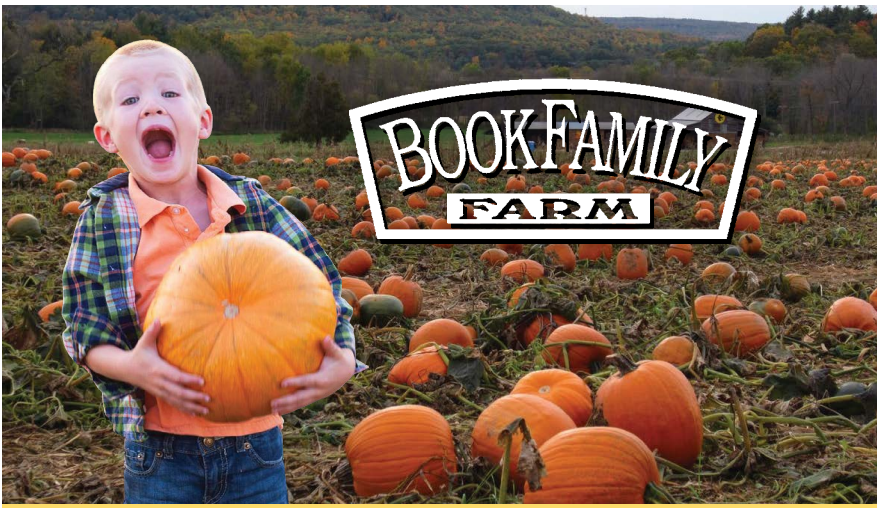



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Open to the public in October Mon - Sat, 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.
 153 Heavy Horse Lane, Durham • 530-342-4375
bookfamilyfarm.net

HARVEST HAPPENINGS 2026

Start a new Autumn
Family Tradition and visit
these Northern California
farms and events -
fun for all ages!



1. Chico Marketplace Costume Contests & Family Fun

Oct. 24, 12-2pm. Free admission. Frankenstein & his Bride will be visiting! Doggie Costume Contest with the Butte Humane Society helping to judge. Kid's Costume Contests (children 10 & under). 1920 E. Market Street. Pre-register at shopchicomarketplace.com/events/costume-contests-family-crafts.

2. Book Family Farm, Durham

Oct. 1-31, Mon-Sat, 9am-6pm. Free admission and parking. This longtime family-owned pumpkin patch and farm beckons pumpkin enthusiasts to pick by size from hundreds of pumpkins. The many animals at this old-fashioned family farm hold a special charm for young children. Little ones will love the cows, pigs and dozens of goats and Henny Penny the chicken and her chicken friends! Lots of pumpkins to pick from and fall decorations for purchase. 153 Heavy Horse Lane, bookfamilyfarm.net.



3. Bountiful Butte College Harvest Festival, Butte College Main Campus

Oct 10, 10am -3pm. Free, family-friendly. Pumpkins, sweet treats, music and activities. ADA-compliant. Anyone requiring a specific accommodation or adjustment should contact Hunter Elliott no later than five business days before the event. Call (530)893-7574 or email elliottthu@butte.edu. butte.edu/harvest.



4. Country Pumpkins, Orland

Daily Oct. 1-31, 10am-6pm (maze closes at 5pm) Family-owned. Free admission and parking, free petting zoo and hay pyramid. Acres of pumpkins and interesting gourds and a country store with a variety of jams, jellies, local honey, pumpkin butter and syrup and other farm products. Families can have bales of fun on the hay pyramid and hay slide. An observation beehive introduces children to the important role these insects play in agriculture. Eight-acre corn maze, \$5 per person; proceeds of the maze benefit 4-H programs and other local nonprofit organizations. On select nights, the brave of heart (10 years and older) can visit the Haunted Maze 7-10pm.

Bring flashlights and friends! \$15 per person. CASH only. 7152 Highway 32, Look for signs between Road P and Stony Creek. countrypumpkins.org.



5. 28th Annual Dairyville Orchard Festival, Los Molinos

Oct. 17, 10am-4pm. Celebrate the harvest season with fresh locally grown walnuts, almonds, prunes, olives and much more. Unique arts and crafts, live entertainment, children's activities, a big display of antique tractors and orchard equipment and lots of delicious food. Free admission and parking. All proceeds help fund local scholarships. Lassen View Elementary School, 10818 Hwy 99E. dairyvillefestival.com.



6. Dunsmuir Harvest Festival

Oct. 10, 11am- 1pm. Free. Live music and kids' activities, light refreshments and so much fun. Bring your favorite homemade pie to enter in a contest. Top three pies receive amazing prizes. Dunsmuir Community Gardens, at the intersection of Sacramento and Cedar Streets in downtown Dunsmuir.

7. Historic Hawes Farms, Anderson

Oct. 3 – Nov 1. Fridays, 5-10pm; Saturdays, 10am-11pm, Sundays 10am-4pm. Various admission prices depending on rides. Bumper cars, go-karts, haunted attractions, roller coaster, mechanical bull, jumbo slide, pumpkin blaster and more! Hawes Express train rides, interact with farm animals, stroll through the corn maze and visit the eight-acre pumpkin patch with 50+ pumpkin and gourd varieties. Check website for specialty events and admission fees. 16465 Deschutes Road. (530)365-2332. historichawesfarm.com.

8. Hoes Down Festival, Guinda

Oct. 3, 11am-11pm. Travel to beautiful Capay Valley for this not-to-be-missed event on the 400-acre, certified organic Full Belly Farm. Healthy food, contra dancing, melon eating contest, informative farm tours, live music, flower farming, kids' maker area, dried flower wreath barn, workshops on bug hunting and more. 16141 Road 43. fullbellyfarm.com for fees, volunteer opportunities and live music schedule.



9. Johnny Appleseed Days, Paradise

Oct. 3-4, 10am-5pm; Oct. 5, 10am-4pm. Free admission. Apple pie and ice cream and fresh apples. North State Artisans vendors. Hometown entertainment. Home-steading resources, small-scale farming and self-sufficient living growing, raising and preserving. Delicious food for purchase. Terry Ashe Recreation Center and Park 6626 Skyway. paradisechamber.com/johnny-appleseed-days.

10. Hillside Poms, Corning

Check facebook for hours & season length. Text for availability. 1271 Capay Rd, Corning (530) 228-3050, facebook.com/hillsidepoms. Text to reserve your time to come pick your own pomegranates or

18 ►



purchase a pre-picked box of delicious, chemical-free pomegranates to juice, jelly or eat fresh. This unique, seed-like fruit offers not only a refreshing, crisp flavor, but great health benefits, including high quantities of antioxidants and Vitamin C. Families with children of all ages welcome.

11. Julia's Fruit Stand, Los Molinos

Every day 8am-6pm, rain or shine, until Oct. 31. Nestled amid beautiful orchards, the stand has been a venue for fresh, delicious farm produce grown by the Brandt family and their neighbors for 26 years. In the autumn, get tree-ripened apples of several varieties, including Somerset, Granny Smith and Fuji. Other seasonal fruits and vegetables for sale. Julia's Fruit Stand Pumpkin Patch offers 20 varieties of colorful pumpkins in all shapes and sizes. (530)354-4775. 11475 CA-99. juliafruitstand.com.

12. Manton Apple Festival, Manton Parks Community Center
Oct. 3, 9am-4pm. Free admission and parking a short walk away. Live music all-day. Apple-pie baking contest and over 100 booths. Local apples, pies for sale. All proceeds from booth rentals and pie sales support a variety of local Manton non-profit organizations and fund scholarships for Manton area students. 31345 Forward Rd. (530)474-5541. mantonapple.com.

13. Annual McCloud Apple Harvest Festival

Historic Main Street, McCloud. Oct. 10. 10am - 4pm. Live music all day! The Gnarly Pints (upbeat string and folk-rock) and Tempest (globally renowned hybrid of high energy Norwegian folk meets rock). Food trucks, beer booth, artisan vendors, pumpkin patch, a petting zoo, face painting, puppet show, wagon rides, fresh pressed apple cider, apple dessert contest, home-made pies for sale, fresh apples for the taking and much more. mccloudchamber.com.

14. Noble Orchards, Paradise

As the last remaining apple orchard in the area, it offers a unique taste of the region's agricultural heritage. Early summer, enjoy tree-ripened freestone peaches and nectarines and beginning in Aug, a fruitful apple season featuring over twenty varieties including Gala, Fuji, Pink Lady and rare heirloom varieties. Check their Facebook for current hours and latest fruits available. U Pick may be available after mid-Oct. Families and fruit enthusiasts are invited to participate in an apple U-Pick experience. Pick your own apples straight from the tree until supplies run out. Apple cider is available for purchase.



Additional products from previous years of operation will be added back as feasible. Apples are available by pound, pre-bagged or by half and full bushel boxes. facebook.com/NobleOrchards.

15. Notre Dame School Fall Festival

Oct. 17, 11-4pm • Notre Dame School, 435 Hazel Street, Chico. Free admission & street parking. Enjoy a day filled with family fun activities and delicious food. We'll have carnival games, music, face painting, cake walks, bounce house, prizes and plenty of tasty food and drinks. Open to the public. All proceeds from the event will directly support the growth and education of Notre Dame students. ndschico.org.

16. Patrick Ranch Museum Autumn Fest & Pumpkin Patch, Durham

Grand Opening Oct. 3 & 4, in collaboration with Divine Sundays, will feature food and craft + activity vendors. Open Saturdays and Sundays through October 30, 10am-4pm and 6-9 pm Oct. 9-11, 16-18, 23-25 and 30. Admission \$6. Free parking. "Then and Now" exhibits with interactive displays. Every weekend: children's crafts and activities, pumpkin chunking, tram rides for the entire family, pony carriage rides (2nd & 3rd weekend) and tours of the historic Glenwood farmhouse. Lunch is available at the on-site cafe. Acres of traditional and unusual varieties of pumpkins and gourds to choose from. Haunted House, in collaboration with Boy Scout Troop 31, 10381 Midway, between Chico and Durham. Check patrickranchmuseum.org for information.

17. Sunflower Pumpkin Patch at Cornerstone Farm, Gazelle

Fridays-Sundays in October, 10am-6pm. Free admission. Three acres of pumpkin fun for the whole family! 3075 Scarface Rd. (530)598-7996. Find them on Facebook, or email johnthkiro@gmail.com.

18. Wild Horse Sanctuary, Shingletown

FREE guided wild horse viewing by appointment. Call to schedule your field trip. Check out our website for special events. (530) 474-5770. wildhorsesanctuary.org.



VISIT THESE FARMS & FARM EVENTS THIS FALL

Autumn is a wonderful time to celebrate the end of summer! All around the North State this month, families can enjoy fall season events and family farms with apple picking, pumpkin harvests, the fun of hayrides and, depending on the farm, visits with friendly farm animals. Here are our top picks for seasonal family fun this beautiful month of October.

Enjoy your time together.

- Pamela, North State
Parent Magazine
Publisher



Photo courtesy of
Book Family Farm

THE END OF THE SELF-ABANDONING MOTHER



Photo provided by Alexis Asbe

A mother choosing herself is not choosing herself instead of her family. She's choosing for everyone.

For all of us trying to be perfect mothers, I hope we're finally done confusing self-abandonment with virtue. I hope we're finally retiring motherhood's favorite forms of virtue signaling:

Over giving. Martyrdom. Self-sacrifice disguised as love. Self-abandonment in the name of our children or partner. Believing we don't need exercise, rest, pleasure, friendship or a life of our own. Thinking we have to do it all alone.

The self-abandoning mother has become a cultural icon, the patron saint of cold coffee, invisible needs, chronic exhaustion and insisting she's "fine" while running on fumes. We've mistaken depletion for devotion. Burnout for love. Exhaustion from commitment.

The Truth

Children should grow up building forts. Getting dirty. Following their curiosity. Creating adventures out of nothing. Eating cereal out of the box under a dark sky and a million stars. And frankly, so should grown-ups.

When my daughter was 2, I sold my first company because she wanted her real mom, not a nanny. Was I a perfect mother? Not even close. I made lots of mistakes. I was late for school pickup. Sometimes dinner came out of a drive-thru. Sometimes the laundry sat.

Sometimes I was building a business while trying to figure out who I was becoming. I wore what turned me on. I questioned rules. I changed my mind. I reinvented myself. I pursued dreams bigger than my certainty.

But there is one thing I did relentlessly. I refused to let rhinos live in my house. You know, the giant things everyone sees but nobody talks about. The resentment. The drinking. The affair. The loneliness. The marriage that's quietly dying. The child who's hurting. The fear. The truth sitting in the middle of the room while everyone politely pretends not to see it.

I wasn't interested in raising children who knew how to perform. I wanted to raise children who knew how to tell the truth.

So, I told the truth. Sometimes awkwardly. Sometimes imperfectly. Sometimes through tears. But I told the truth.

And I taught my children to tell the truth too. What I did right was let my children watch a woman grow. They watched me fall down and get back up. They watched me evolve. They watched me apologize when I was wrong. They watched me learn. They watched me leave things that no longer fit. They watched me tell the truth. They watched me choose myself without abandoning them.

The Part I Wish More Women Understood

A mother choosing herself is not choosing herself instead of her family. She's choosing for everyone.

When a woman is running on empty, she isn't giving her children, partner, business or community the best of who she is. She's giving them whatever is left. An exhausted version. A resentful version. A disconnected version. Somewhere along the way, women were taught that suffering earns gold stars. That doing hard things is proof of love. That exhaustion is evidence of commitment. That productivity is virtue.

So, we settle for half living while calling it responsibility. We celebrate burnout and call it dedication. We abandon ourselves and call it motherhood.

But What if We've Gotten it Backwards?

What if our children don't need mothers who are endlessly available? What if they need mothers who are fully alive? Women who laugh. Women who have dreams. Women who create. Women who rest. Women who have boundaries. Women who trust themselves.

Women who know how to receive. Women who model what it looks like to have a life. Because that woman doesn't just change her own life. She changes everyone around her.

In a culture obsessed with screens, performance, optimization and perfection, where children are over-supervised, adults are over-scheduled and genuine connection is becoming increasingly rare, the antidote might be simpler than we think.

More blanket forts. More imagination. More stars. More boredom.

More real conversations. More scraped knees. More neighborhood adventures. More people figuring things out for themselves. More adults who remember how to play. More women who stop abandoning themselves in the name of being needed.

Maybe the next generation doesn't need perfect mothers. Maybe they need women who show them what it looks like to become themselves. And maybe the end of the self-abandoning mother is exactly where that begins.

When a woman stops abandoning herself, everyone benefits. Her children. Her friendships. Her work. Her community. And yes, her partner.

Because most people don't want more of our sacrifice. They want more of us. The alive version. The present version. The laughing version. The woman who is nourished enough to bring her full self into the room. ■

I wasn't interested in raising children who knew how to perform. I wanted to raise children who knew how to tell the truth.



Alexis Asbe is a teacher of the feminine, guide and private adviser for women. She leads The Aligned Feminine Collective, a monthly mentor membership for women who are ready to stop abandoning themselves and begin creating lives rooted in self-worth, nervous system regulation, authentic desire, meaningful relationships, wellness and abundance. For more information, go to alexisasbe.com.

Siskiyou County News

Take a Walk on the Sunny Side at Sunflower Pumpkin Patch

Word has it that the best pumpkin patch in Siskiyou County is just up Hwy 5 in Gazelle. Owned and operated by 45-year Siskiyou County farming couple Kirsten Olsen and John Tannaci, Sunflower pumpkin patch offers families the pick of pumpkins in all shapes and sizes, from pie pumpkin size to 100 lb. behemoths, grown right on their organic farm.

Looking for Odd Pumpkins?

“John and I are bent toward the unusual pumpkins,” says

Kirsten, the delightful and sunny co-owner of Cornerstone Farm, the home of Sunflower Pumpkin Patch. “People will see a pumpkin out in the field and say, ‘That is so odd.’ We like to save the seeds from these pumpkins so we can grow more unusual pumpkins.”

They will often offer the odd pumpkins free to families who find them in the extensive pumpkin fields, with the agreement they will give the pumpkin seeds back when they are done with the pumpkin.

23 ►



Pumpkins of all sizes, from pumpkin pie to behemoth, and plenty of fun family photo ops abound at Sunflower Pumpkin Patch. Photo by Pamela Newman.

22 ►

Decades of Farming Experience Leads to a New Venture

Kirsten and John owned Hunter Orchards for 25 years. With over 2,000 fruit trees, it was the go-to U-pick fruit orchard with arguably the most popular pumpkin patch in Siskiyou County. In 2003 they bought a piece of land three miles away that was a hay farm with a house on it. “But every year we were not getting younger,” says Kirsten. John says, “Orcharding is a young person’s sport.”

So, in 2015 they sold Hunter Orchards and moved to the hay farm to start an organic farm that, in addition to wheat, including a 4,000-year-old wheat variety, grows certified organic produce which they sell at the Mount Shasta Farmers Market. Fun fact: Kirsten and John founded the Mount Shasta Farmers Market in 1999, a bustling market filled with vendors of everything from organic fruits and vegetables to locally raised meat to local soaps and facial potions, jewelry, gifts and more.

Sunflower Pumpkin Patch Is Born

About five years ago, they decided to add a pumpkin patch to the farm. “We didn’t advertise at first. We just opened the gates to see what would happen,” says Kirsten. They were surprised at the response. “People found us! And teachers found us. All it takes is a couple of teachers to spread the word.” Kirsten

explains that a trip to the pumpkin patch is the perfect field trip because it’s often the first field trip of the school year. “Parents come and it’s a neat little activity for everyone to gather ‘round,” she says.

Besides fields loaded with a wide variety of pumpkins from which to choose, Sunflower Pumpkin Patch has a straw bale made of straw from their wheat fields cut after the wheat heads have been harvested. In addition, there are lots of places around the farm to take fun and memorable family photos.

“The cool thing about growing grain,” says Kirsten, “is that after we harvest the wheat heads and then the wheat straw for the straw bales, hundreds of geese and even some sandhill cranes come to the fields to glean the seeds left after harvest. Children who come to morning field trips can see hundreds of birds landing in the field and pecking up the seeds.”

Sunflower Pumpkin Patch is open every Friday, Saturday and Sunday in October, 10am-6pm for an authentic farm experience. Admission is free, and they charge per pound for pumpkins. “There is plenty ‘o parking,” Kirsten says. “Families are welcome to come and have fun, even if they don’t purchase pumpkins.” She asks that you please leave your pets at home.

Find them on [Facebook](#) to keep up with the latest pumpkiny developments. ■



Pumpkin patch adventures were a traditional part of Halloween for Stacey and her young boys. Back then, the goal was to find the “perfect” pumpkin. Now she looks for the bumpy, odd pumpkins to proudly place on her front porch.





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planting seeds

PAM MARET'S 50 YEARS OF NURTURING THE NEXT GENERATION AT FIRST CHURCH OF GOD PRESCHOOL

Some people set out to find a calling, but Red Bluff educator Pam Maret found hers quietly, almost by accident, when she was still a teenager. For the last 50 years, she has tried to stay true to that calling with every child who has walked into her classroom.

Caring Mentors and High School Guidance Leads to Lifelong Career

Pam recalls the moment that a Red Bluff High School Work Experience teacher shaped her life. “He asked, ‘What would you like to be when you grow up?’ I was a junior at the time and answered, ‘I don’t know.’ He then pressed further by asking if there was anything I liked doing. I said, ‘I like being around kids.’”

That simple answer was enough for him to connect her with the children’s program at First Church of God before it was a preschool and more of an extension of Sunday school. There, Pam met Ruth Hickman, who directed the program at the time, along with fellow teachers Nancy Casey and Carolyn Barber. Under their care, Pam found far more than a part-time job.

“They didn’t only love and nurture the children,” Pam says. “They loved and nurtured me, too. They were so patient and kind with me.” Watching how Ruth, Nancy and Carolyn poured themselves into the children, and into her, planted a seed that would define the rest of Pam’s life. Inspired by their example, Pam enrolled at Shasta College and earned her degree in early childhood education. As soon as she graduated, she returned to First Church of God to work alongside the women who had first taken her under their wing, and what had started as a high school job quietly became her ministry.

In the Footsteps of Mentors

Pam married during those early years, and her husband, Bruce, understood from early on that her work at First Church of God was more than a job. “My work at the preschool helped when things got tight,” she says, “but I was grateful that Bruce made it possible for me to keep following this as a calling rather than a job. He said, ‘I want to support you so that you can continue your ministry at the school.’” That support has carried her through 50 years in the classroom. One by one, the women who had directed the program before her stepped



Circle time is a favorite part of the day for Pam and her students. The students take turns with different classroom jobs, including looking out the window and giving a weather report as the class weather forecaster.

Photos by Kate Hiller

aside, and people began urging Pam to take on the role herself. "I kept declining," she admits. Eventually, she gave in, serving as director for 10 years – a role she says stretched her in the best ways. When the time came, she was glad to pass the position on to Amanda Eggleston, known to students as "Mrs. Eggs." "I find my joy in being in the classroom with the children," Pam says.

Thoughtful, Compassionate Teaching Ripples through the Generations

That joy has rippled through the community for generations, including for the Gross family. Pam taught Jay and Mary Gross's son and daughter, now 25 and 28, and currently she's teaching their grandson. "Generations have come through her classroom, and she diligently finds out their individual learning styles and developmental needs," Mary says. "She has been gracious and selfless and has blessed our family greatly. Thank you, Mrs. Maret! Your dedication and care have not gone unnoticed."

This is the kind of impact that comes from treating a classroom as a ministry, something that shows up not in a single lesson, but in the

life of a family across generations. Pam is often inspired by a quote sometimes attributed to C.S. Lewis: "Children are not a distraction from more important work. They are the most important work. In the end, the legacy that matters won't be what you built in the world. It will be who you raised and whether they felt safe, seen and loved in your presence."

Pam has seen that truth unfold again and again. "I believe children are perceptive enough to know when an adult isn't fully present," she says. "I make it a point to slow down, celebrate the seasons with the students and their families and keep a predictable structure that helps children feel safe."

Families who've come through her classroom feel the difference. "I learned just as much as my children when Mrs. Maret was their teacher," says Sonja Pieper, who went on to homeschool her own children after their years at First Church of God Preschool. "Mrs. Maret was a wealth of knowledge and I feel she set us all up for success during those early years. I could write a book about how wonderful she is."

When she hears praise like that, Pam deflects it gently. "That could only be the Lord working through the gift of this calling," she says, "and I hope to keep passing on the wonderful things that my mentors passed on to me."

Fifty years, roughly 50 students a year and more than 2,000 children and families later, Pam's ministry shows no signs of slowing down. She's entering her 51st year at First Church of God Preschool. "The Lord set me on this path," she says. "He hasn't told me this chapter is over yet."

What started as one teenager's honest answer to a simple question, "I like being around kids," has grown into a legacy of seeds planted, generation after generation. ■



Kate Hiller is thankful that her kids were impacted by Pam Maret's influence trickling down through her daughter, Misty, and into their lives through various ministries and homeschool adventures.



Peter is part of the second generation in his family to be nurtured in Pam's class. With over 50 years in the classroom, it would be impossible to measure the impact Pam has made on the families in the Tehama County community.

How to Communicate Your Child's Needs to First Responders

Your child may feel more comfortable with the appearance and uniforms of local emergency personnel if you and your child introduce yourselves. It can also alert local fire and law enforcement to recognize and understand your child's special needs should he or she elope frequently – or if meltdowns could be misinterpreted by well-meaning community members who call 911.



It's always scary when a child with a disability is in a situation where they need first responders, whether it's a paramedic during a medical emergency, law enforcement looking for them because they eloped, (when a child intentionally or impulsively leaves a safe area or caregiver's supervision without permission), or a firefighter assisting in a wildfire or house fire response. For the parents of these kids, there is another layer of fear: How will these first responders handle their child who may be nonverbal, resistant to help or aggressive?

Knowing how to communicate and convey information effectively matters because emergencies are fast-paced. A first responder may be in your house for less than 15 minutes, and in that window, they must figure out what's wrong, decide how urgent it is and choose what to do about it.

A law enforcement officer looking for your child also has very little time before the search gets harder. Knowing whether your child will respond to their name and whether they'll run toward or away from a stranger changes how the whole search effort is organized. First responders build a picture of your child from whatever information is available – and if that picture is missing a piece, they may fill the gap with the most common explanation rather than the right one.



WHAT FIRST RESPONDERS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR CHILD WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

When you're in the middle of a crisis, it's hard to think straight. You need to communicate the most important and relevant information about your child, but you may find yourself panicking and unable to relay what you need to.

A solution to this is to write or type out a one-page bulleted list of the most crucial information that first responders will need to know, such as:

- How your child communicates (if they are nonverbal)
- Primary diagnoses
- Current medications
- Allergies, including latex and adhesives
- Medical devices
- Baseline behaviors versus distress behaviors
- How they show pain
- Sensory issues
- Elopement risk
- What helps them calm down
- Who has legal authority to represent them (for older teens & young adults on conservatorship)

Keep copies where you will easily find them in an emergency. Hang one on the refrigerator, put one in the glove compartment of your car and upload digital copies onto your phone. The point of the list is for someone to understand your child's most pressing needs in a very short time because in an emergency no one will have time to flip through the thick medical binder you have carefully curated.

HOW TO BE PROACTIVE BEFORE AN EMERGENCY

Along with making a list before an emergency occurs, it's always a good idea to familiarize yourself with your local emergency response teams, especially in the rural areas here in the North State, where the first person to answer a call may be a volunteer firefighter. Most fire stations are happy to have visitors, and a quiet weekday morning is usually the best bet. For many children, meeting firefighters and paramedics and seeing fire engines and ambulances up close and personal in a calm environment can take away a lot of fear.

Introducing yourself and your child to local law enforcement can also go a long way if your child elopes frequently or if meltdowns could be misinterpreted by well-meaning community members who call 911. You can also call local nonemergency assistance services and ask about their special-needs registries or safety programs.

None of this guarantees things will go smoothly. Crises are messy and chaotic, and no amount of preparation makes them otherwise. But preparing yourself and your local first responders in advance can give you a little more peace of mind when almost nothing is under your control. ■



Shasta County author Jennifer Arnold is the mom of four, two of whom have been diagnosed with multiple special needs. She hopes to raise awareness of many issues that parents of special needs children face on a regular basis.




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From our archives October 2022. Spending the day playing in a pumpkin patch is a perfect outing for Redding Photographer [Ashley Moore](#), her husband, Tony and their children.





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18 Months Walk alone. Build a tower of three blocks. Use up to 15 words. Enjoy interacting with caregivers.

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Photo from our archives, October 2017.
Hillside Poms in Corning. Photo by
[Lisa Maglady, Modern Image Photography.](#)

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