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LGHS UP hosts virtual TEDx Event

by Esther Sun
Editor-in-Chief

LGHS hosted its first virtual TEDxLos Gatos High School event over Zoom on Oct. 10, with 91 total attendees tuning in to watch a diverse slate of presentations regarding climate change.

Planned and hosted by students from the Unconditionally Positive (UP) program at LGHS, the event took place from three to five PM over Zoom and allowed Los Gatos community members to attend free of charge. The evening's theme was "Countdown," which focused on creating "a global initiative pursuing solutions to the climate crisis," according to the TEDxLGHS website.



courtesy countdown.youtube

COUNTDOWN TO WHAT: The architect of the Paris Agreement spoke on a video.

The event lineup included interviews with local community members and professional climate change activists, as well as videos from the parent TED organization that officially licensed the LGHS event. According to senior **Rachelle Desantis**, a member of the UP program who helps plan TEDxLGHS events, the student planners for LGHS Countdown hoped to incorporate educational content about both global and local aspects of climate change.

Students from UP interviewed LGHS faculty, including AP Environmental Science teacher **Amelia De La Paz**, ELD teacher **Kim Burlinson**, Spanish teacher **Paddy O'Regan**, and former AP Biology teacher **Steve Hammack**. Many of the spotlighted teachers have been pushing for many years for LGHS to approve programs for recycling and other sustainable planning. Student interviewees included senior **Lany Tran**, the president of the Environmental Outreach Club that has recently hosted a series of "Climate Talks" with scientists, professors, and researchers about specific aspects of climate change.

Seniors **Beatrice Mihalache**, **Owen Tsunoda**, **Dylan Chin**, and other LGHS students who attended the virtual Climate Reality Leadership Corps training this past summer also gave a presentation on the Climate Reality Project, a global network of activists who work to raise awareness about climate change.

Outside of the district, students from UP spoke with Harriet Harvey-Horn, a director of the Climate Reality Project's Santa Clara County chapter, about sustainable initiatives, as well as Alice Sung, a sustainability consultant whose specific areas of focus include green building, zero net energy, water reuse, and zero carbon consulting. In particular, Sung elaborated on her collaboration with Los Gatos-Saratoga Union School District administrators to work towards a zero-carbon initiative for the district.

Though the event couldn't take place in person like traditional TEDxLGHS events, the student planners from UP worked hard to recreate an experience that was just as informative and inspiring as those from previous events.



courtesy S.Raygani

THIS DOESN'T SUCC: Isabella Scott poses with a succulent at Spring into Green.

"I hope that people [who come to the event] will leave with the takeaway that there is a lot that they can do to help fight climate change," Desantis told El Gato News. "There are a lot of local initiatives and work that students at the high school and people in the community are doing, so if you want to get involved in Los Gatos or anywhere in Santa Clara County, you can totally do that."



UP TO THE EL GATO WEBSITE: Although initially debuting on Oct. 10, many UP student interviews and presentations are available on the El Gato website. Open up your camera and scan this QR code to be taken to a playlist of the videos from the official TEDxLGHS event.

Local election candidates speak out

by Lexi Kupor
Public Relations Manager

For weeks, a rainbow of local candidate signs has brought a vivid, electoral spirit to the most frequented traffic lights, businesses, and crosswalks throughout the Los Gatos community. On Nov. 3, Los Gatos citizens have the opportunity to voice their political opinions through the Town Council election.

This year, there are three available council seats composed of one two-year term — sought after by candidates Rob Stephenson and Mary Badame — and two four-year terms — sought after by candidates Matthew Hudes, Michael Kane, Larry Maggio, Heidi Owens, and Maria Ristow. For many candidates, top campaign priorities encompass local economic recovery, historic preservation, and traffic and parking amelioration.



courtesy Los Gatos Chambers

A (NOT SO) STARRY NIGHT: Downtown Los Gatos streets light up at night.

Addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and its peripheral implications also remains a prime objective. Owens, for example, described her fears concerning "isolation and loneliness for our seniors," and she plans to "implement a seniors call center, staffed by Town staff to call and check in with our seniors" if elected. Additionally, Kane

emphasized the importance of alleviating the pandemic's effects on Los Gatos by describing that "the challenges we face today are not those of yesterday." He detailed goals to implement measures ensuring the "vitality and health" of local businesses, while Ristow stated the need to "examine the new realities and adapt our policies, our buildings, and our processes."

An especially relevant political topic this election season is fostering and supporting diversity developments in Los Gatos. Candidates such as Owens and Kane suggested support for increasingly affordable housing as a possible method to augment local diversity and accessibility.

"Housing is perhaps the largest obstacle we must surmount in order to achieve socioeconomic and racial diversity in our town," Ristow concurred. "We must continue, and build upon, the work we have only just started... Los Gatos will become an even better place when we choose to be a community of racial and socioeconomic diversity," she added.

Government transparency constitutes an additional concern for many voters. Utilizing KCAT TV and the Los Gatos Weekly to provide regular town council updates provides an opportunity to address this apprehension, Kane explained, adding that this initiative may increase the chances that local residents "will respond and get engaged so I can hear what they think."

While most high school students are not able to vote this year, civic engagement is still feasible; "attend the planning commissions hearings and the town council meetings," Kane advised. Meetings are broadcast and recorded via KCAT TV while social distancing measures stay in place, and Ristow emphasized her support for "continuing remote participation once in-person meetings resume" to ensure maximum community involvement. Kane also encouraged students to "write letters [and make] phone calls on issues that are concerning them."

This year's election will prove to be extremely decisive, especially considering the political turmoil on the national stage. As Kane explained, "Things need to change guided by government, or things will change not guided by government... I'd like to be part of that change." Through upcoming local elections, all citizens can assist in producing the change necessary for an inclusive, advancing society.

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courtesy wikimedia commons

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courtesy U.Kausik

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