

OPINION

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Pursuing a Brick-and-Mortar Mission

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“People need to see that, far from being an obstacle, the world’s diversity of languages, religions and traditions is a great treasure, affording us precious opportunities to recognize ourselves in others.”—Youssou N’Dour, musician.

Amazing what great words of wisdom you can find on a disposable Starbucks coffee cup. As the landscape of Santa Clarita changes, so will the dynamics within our community. Faces, places and favorite watering holes will take new shape. Cherished traditions and celebrations that may withstand the forces of change will likely see new customs added along the way.

Whether you embrace or defy the inevitability of change, one thing is for certain: shift happens. Population shifts, demographic shifts, and economic shifts occur over time. The key to responsible governance is how we manage those shifts and plan for changes as they arise.

Several years ago, severe overcrowding in our schools grew to crisis proportions. The community recognized the problem and responded with the passage of several local and state school construction bonds. Heartfelt thanks to residents who support our schools in ways that are direct and meaningful.

When it seemed the moral fiber of our community could use some strengthening, local city government and schools responded with the “Character Counts” program – a program dedicated to the proliferation of the six pillars of character: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. Santa Clarita remains a great place to live.

Now with diversity issues knocking on our door, it’s time again for a call to community action. Beyond tolerance, we need to advocate acceptance. It starts in the home, on the streets, and on the playing fields. It is reinforced in our schools, government offices, and

town hall gatherings. In every walk of life, we should look for opportunities to further acceptance and welcome the diversity within our community that change brings.

Will prejudice, bias and injustice ever vanish? In a perfect world, yes. In reality, probably not. But we can certainly work toward diminishing the intensity, frequency and occurrence of harmful events, hurtful words and disparaging attitudes.

Will playground bullying ever completely go away? Not likely, but instructional programs that teach children standards of appropriate behavior will help to a large degree.

Will schools ever become less crowded so that students can gain equal access to educational programs in safe learning environments? We're working on that.

In seven years since formation, the Santa Clarita Valley Facilities Foundation has grown in size, scope and structure providing financial assistance to the William S. Hart Union High School District. Golden Valley High School exemplifies the benefits that working together can produce.

The Facilities Foundation commends the public and private partnerships that pulled together in the spirit of teamwork to embark on a difficult journey. Golden Valley is the fruit of that labor in collaboration and partnership with the school district and the City of Santa Clarita.

As we celebrate past achievements, we look toward future school needs. What lies ahead for the Foundation and the Santa Clarita Valley? The answer is many good things. The Foundation will continue to pursue our brick-and-mortar mission lending assistance to the Hart District with school site acquisition and capital facility improvement projects for the benefit of students and community.

Envisioning a time and place in the not too distant future where every child has equal access to educational opportunities in safe learning environments, the Santa Clarita Valley Facilities Foundation is proud to partner in the community's future, bringing outside assistance to the complex world of school funding.