

PRESS RELEASE



For Immediate Release, October 4, 2018

Contacts for more information are listed on page 2

“Protecting What We Love”

Honoring the Closing of Sonoma Developmental Center after 127 Years in Operation

Eldridge, CA. As the Sonoma Developmental Center (SDC) in Eldridge, CA prepares to close its doors at the end of this year, the broader Sonoma Valley community is coming together to honor the people who have both worked and resided at this essential facility for persons with severe developmental disabilities. This is a bittersweet milestone. For those whose family members were long-time residents that had to be relocated, this has not been easy. For those who dedicated themselves to a career at SDC, this has not been easy. The SDC closure will have lasting effects on the residents and employees, the SDC land, and the surrounding community.

Under the theme of **Protecting What We Love**, the Parent Hospital Association (PHA), Glen Ellen Forum, Sonoma Land Trust and The Eldridge Portraits Project are serving as a host committee to sponsor three events commemorating and honoring the workers, residents and families of SDC (see below). **Protecting What We Love** captures the true essence of what the services and property represent to Sonoma—a lasting legacy of client care and stewardship of more than 860 acres of land. Each of the event sponsors brings a unique perspective and a history of working together to advocate for the people and the land of SDC. Through the “SDC Coalition” chaired by Sonoma County Supervisor Susan Gorin, these groups have partnered with Sonoma County agencies and other nonprofits to advocate for the needs of SDC residents as they move into community living arrangements, and to call for the preservation of SDC’s 700 acres of open space lands—especially those very special places on the property where time was spent with loved ones. The future of the SDC’s open space and wildlife corridor lands has not yet been determined, but the broader community is working together towards **Protecting What We Love**.

According to Kathleen Miller, PHA Co-Chair, “Such a critical event as this closure must be given the respect it deserves, and not simply erased and quickly forgotten. We must honor the past if we are to learn from it and if we are to move on. Now we must gather our resolve and look forward. While we must do everything we can to protect the legacy of SDC, our most critical task is to continue our advocacy to protect what we love – the people and the land.”

Protecting What We Love Community Events

Saturday, October 27 through November 4, 2018: Arnold Drive through the Village of Glen Ellen is being transformed into a gallery with imagery from the Eldridge Portraits Project. The Eldridge Portraits Project is comprised of a series of images of SDC residents and families taken by photographers Christian Pease and Joe Garappolo with Light11B.

Wednesday, October 31, 2018: SDC is hosting its final annual Halloween Parade starting at 10:30 am on Harney Circle on the SDC campus. Community groups are participating with float entries in honor of SDC employees who are expected to be furloughed December 31, 2018. This event is open to the public. PHA and Sonoma Land Trust are also hosting a lunch buffet for SDC employees to thank them for their many years of service.

Saturday, November 3, 2018: A thank-you and farewell celebration at the Hanna Boys Center, 17000 Arnold Dr., Sonoma, CA from 3 to 6 pm, with a brief program at 4 pm. The Eldridge Portraits Project compilation of SDC clients

and family photographic prints will also be on display at the event. Advanced registration through EventBrite begins October 5.

News Representatives May Contact the Following for More Information

- Parent's Hospital Association: Kathleen Miller, Co-Chair, (707) 291-3880, kimillerkoch@yahoo.com
- Sonoma Land Trust: John McCaull, (707) 974-0128 (cell), johnm@sonomalandtrust.org
- Glen Ellen Forum: Tracy Salcedo, (707) 246-0694, or Angela Nardo-Morgan (707) 217-8244 or Alice Horowitz (707) 292-7426, eldridgeforall@gmail.com
- The Eldridge Portraits Project: Christian Pease, (408) 202-3034 (cell), christian@light11b.com
- Susan Gorin, County of Sonoma Board of Supervisors, District 1, (707) 565-2241 Susan.Gorin@sonoma-county.org

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

Event Sponsor Information

[Parent Hospital Association](#)

[Sonoma Land Trust](#)

[Glen Ellen Forum](#)

The Eldridge Portraits Project, news article overview <http://www.kenwoodpress.com/pub/a/9948>

Sonoma Development Center History

<https://www.dds.ca.gov/Sonoma/History.cfm>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sonoma_Developmental_Center

<https://www.glenellenhistoricalsociety.org/>

Sonoma Development Center Closure Information

[State's Closure Webpage](#)

[Sonoma Magazine article – A World Apart – Sonoma Development Center](#)

[Sonoma News Opinion, Bill Lynch: Eldridge passes into history](#)

What is at Stake for the Future of the Sonoma Development Lands?

SDC Coalition website: [Transform SDC](#)

Sonoma County: [Sonoma County Supervisor Susan Gorin](#)

State of California: [Dept. of General Services 2018 Existing Conditions Assessment](#)

Related Articles:

June 22, 2018: <https://www.pressdemocrat.com/news/8461934-181/sonoma-valley-residents-to-help>

June 23, 2018: <https://www.pressdemocrat.com/news/8458300-181/nearing-closure-of-sonoma-developmental>

June 30, 2018: <https://www.pressdemocrat.com/opinion/8486543-181/pd-editorial-charting-a-new>

July 16, 2018: <https://www.greenbelt.org/blog/community-defends-wildlife-corridor-at-sonoma-developmental-center/>

September 1, 2018: <http://www.kenwoodpress.com/pub/a/10092> (Finances uncertain in long road ahead for SDC transition)

September 15, 2018: <http://www.kenwoodpress.com/pub/a/10114> (Legislators weigh in on SDC future)