

Mt. Helix Park's Magazine

FROM THE TOP

ISSUE 12 FALL/WINTER 2018



*Dedicated to Preserving
Mt. Helix Nature Theatre & Park*

**11th annual
heART of
Mt. Helix**

**Volunteer
Spotlight**

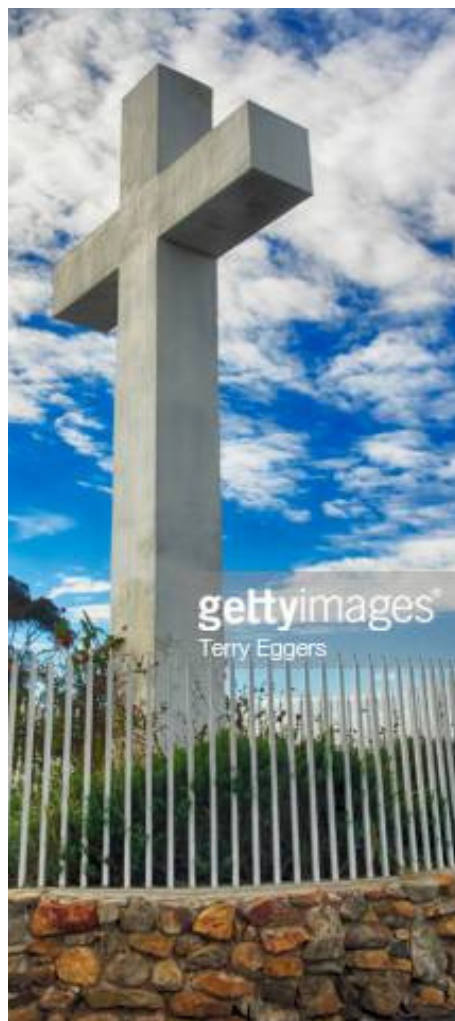
**Volunteer
SEARCH**

**BUTTERFLIES
in the PARK**

PARK HOURS

SEPT 1 - OCT 31: 5:30 AM TO 7:00 PM | NOV 1 - FEB 28: 5:30 AM TO 5:30 PM
MARCH 1 - MAY 31: 5:30 AM TO 8:00 PM | JUNE 1 - AUG 31: 5:30 AM TO 8:30 PM

NATURE | EVENTS | LOCAL HISTORY | PEOPLE | PRESERVATION



Make a difference!

Our members, volunteers, and donors allow us to serve the community and keep the Park open for all to enjoy.

The Mt Helix Park Foundation does not receive government funding.

Family Memberships start at just \$35

Becoming a Park member not only gives you invitations to wonderful events at the Park but also ensures it is here for the next generation.

MtHelixPark.org

MT. HELIX PARK

From the Top is a semi-annual publication of Mt. Helix Park.

To contact the Editor call 619-741-4363 or email nroberts@mthelixpark.org. © Copyright 2018 Mt. Helix Park

EDITORS

Alice Smith, Nicole Roberts,
Tracey Stotz, Ammy Brown

WRITERS

Peggy Junker, Nicole Roberts,
Jeff Swiney

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Gary Junker, Peggy Junker,
Nicole Roberts, Hunter Hartmann

COVER PHOTOGRAPH

Steven Rotsart

GRAPHIC DESIGN / LAYOUT

Victoria Vinton
Coyote Press Graphics

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Nicole Roberts

ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Peggy Junker

WEDDING & SPECIAL EVENT COORDINATOR

Cynthia Bauer

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Norm Hapke, PRESIDENT
Tracey Stotz, SECRETARY
Jeff Swiney, VP of FACILITIES
Robert Ball, PAST PRESIDENT

David Avants	Keith Meeker
Ron Brady	Andrew Phemister
Sharon Bullard	Ed Piffard
Helgi Gudmundson	Krista Bishop Powers
Caroline Harrod	Alice W. Smith
Christopher Kilrain	Don Teemsma

Bring in your used ink cartridges and we will recycle them with profits going directly to Mt. Helix Park. Drop them in our mail box (located behind the stage) anytime or stop by the under-stage office Monday, Wednesday or Friday from 9 am until noon.



like us on facebook



www.mthelixpark.org

From the Executive Director

Nicole Roberts
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Mt. Helix Park Foundation



The most satisfying aspect of my job—even better than the location of my office located at Mt. Helix Park, the short 5-mile commute to work, and even the guarantee of a parking spot—is the positive work environment that is defined by a diverse group of volunteers whom I have the privilege of serving.

This may be the typical culture within a non-profit organization; however, there is something extra special about our volunteers who consist of the board of directors, committee members, adopters of park plots, bi-weekly maintenance workers, event staff, and the countless nameless neighbors who habitually pick up litter on their daily walks. In my opinion, the devotion of our volunteers is directly related to reasons for our Park being tagged the “The Crown Jewel of East County.”

Just recently I was posed the question of, “why this title?” The reflection that ensued was enlightening, as I had never really tried to articulate this before. I feel the answers are as diverse as the individuals whose lives have been touched in some way by a visit to Mt. Helix Park. For me, I think as a reference to a “Crown Jewel,” the Park is characterized as a rare and precious commodity for the purity of its natural state. Also, like a “Crown Jewel,” the Park is a priceless gem for the unique ways it uplifts our spirits, calms our worries, provides a natural gym to increase our health and wellness, and brings together our members of our community.

In the same way crown jewels are passed down from leader to leader, so has the Park. Now in the hands of the Mt. Helix Park Foundation, the Park is looking better than ever. The Foundation volunteers work tirelessly to keep this gem maintained, protected, and also accessible to all. As you read through this issue, you will get a glimpse into our work and the opportunities we create to share our jewels with all of you. The Park was given as a gift to you, and me, and all of mankind to enjoy free of charge. It’s a special place that, in my mind, forever qualifies it as “The Crown Jewel of East County.” ■



From the Foundation President

Norm Hapke
PRESIDENT
Mt. Helix Park Foundation

As a serving board member, I was selected recently by my fellow board members to become president of the Mt. Helix Park Foundation. This is both an honor and duty, and I am grateful to the board members who work diligently for the Park and the many volunteers who bring to the Park their love and service. I will do my best to ensure that our efforts will keep the Park clean, safe, and beautiful for the residents of East County. ■

See more about Norm Hapke on page 7.

Help Wanted!

Mt. Helix Park Facilities Volunteer

Mt. Helix Park is looking for an individual to help provide support for the facilities maintenance of Mt. Helix Park. Ideally, this would be a retired individual who, under direction of the Vice President of Facilities, assists in the day-to-day maintenance of the Park. General Duties:

- Masonry repairs of rock walls
- Asphalt road patching and sealing
- Hand watering of plants as required
- Minor repairs to electrical wiring and understanding circuit breakers functioning, repair of office lighting equipment
- Trail maintenance
- Maintenance of irrigation systems
- Painting of park facilities
- Maintenance of the main gates and programming of gates controller



Approximate period of work would be 10 to 20 hours per week. If you are interested and/or would like more

information on this volunteer position, please contact Executive Director Nicole Roberts at nroberts@mtelix-park.org or 619-741-4363.

11th Annual heART of Mt. Helix

by: Peggy Junker

Ask anyone what they liked about the annual heART of Mt. Helix event and chances are you'll get a different answer every time. But there is no doubt that one of the top three components making this "party on the hill" stand out is the food. Whether it's sliders from the Hills, Thai Chicken Lollipops from Terra, dessert from Mary's Donuts, or the pastries from Café Carmel Bakery, this event showcases some of the area's top fare.

Without a doubt the entertainment also ranks among the most popular reasons for ensuring the evening's success. Guests were abuzz over this year's 5-piece Good Mojo Band. Playing at Mt. Helix Park for the first time, they rocked audiences at the top of the hill with a memorable, high-energy classic-rock repertoire. Closing the evening for the fifth year were the ever-popular and utterly danceable Mighty Untouchables. Also performing throughout the evening were the talented Marissa Grace (vocalist), Ben Read (pianist) and a surprise performance by the Choral Club's Mink Pack.

Event Co-chair, Dianne McCann, says that one of the things that makes the heART event so successful is that they keep it fresh. "We always have something different and unique," she explains, giving this year's performance by the California Rhythm Project as a primary example. Featuring seven tap dancers on the main stage, these entertainers "were from another era," describes McCann. "It was a moment out of time. It took you back to Frank Sinatra, classics and tuxedos. It was Broadway play-esque right here on the hill," she added.

Continued on page 5



All 2018 heART of Mt. Helix photos by Gary Junker.



Community Events Calendar

2nd annual Harvest Family Festival

FREE Sunday, October 28, 2 - 5 p.m.

Location: Mt. Helix Park

Host: MHPF & GMIA

www.mthelixpark.org



GMIA Walk Up to Mt Helix

FREE Saturday, January 5, 10 a.m. to Noon

Walk begins at the San Miguel Fire Station. Sponsored by: GMIA

www.gmia.net



13th annual Home Tour "Modern Mud"

Saturday, November 3, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Sponsored by: La Mesa Historical Society.

Tickets: http://bit.ly/hometour_mthelix



Yoga in the Park

Weekly, M-W-F 9 to 10:15 a.m.

All levels, Suggested donation \$10-15

Read about Rose Walters, yoga instructor, celebrating 10 years teaching at Mt. Helix Park. [Click Here for Story](#)



28th annual Sing-along Caroling

FREE Saturday, December 15, 4 - 7 p.m.

Location: Mt. Helix Park

Host: MHPF

www.mthelixpark.org



SAVE THE DATE 94th annual Easter Sunrise Service

Mt. Helix Park Amphitheater

FREE Sunday, April 21, 2019

www.mthelixpark.org



Board member and local resident, Ron Brady, praised not only the food and music, but also this year's auctioneer, Zack Krone of California Coast. The auctioneer's role is crucial as the heART event is one of this non-profit Park's primary avenues for revenue, and Zack Krone dazzled the crowd into bidding with his high energy, quick wit, and playful demeanor.

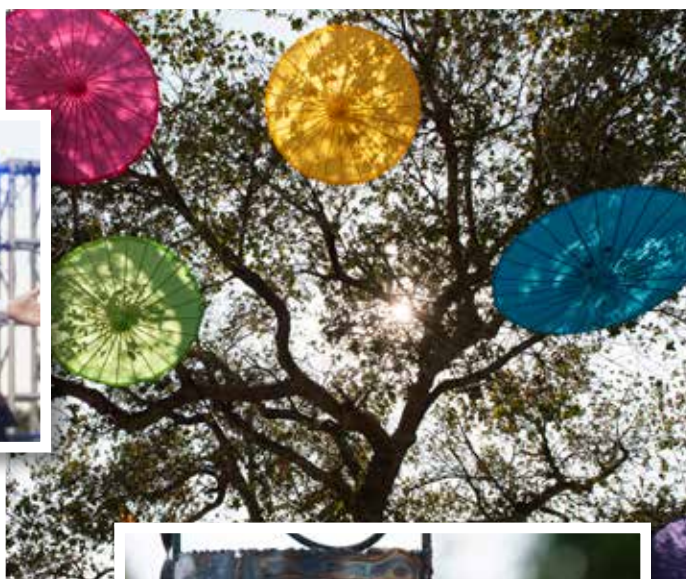
And of course – the volunteers. "I think for a complicated venue, the committee does an outstanding job," he says of the all-volunteer crew that coordinates this event each year.

It goes without saying that the heART would not be what it is without the "ART." Local artists provided not only live demos, and pieces from their collections, but winning juried art as well.

"It hits me as a magical place to be," remarks McCann of this very special venue. "When we're up at the top by the cross, and you can see the sun setting, the music playing... I don't think it gets better than that."

The heART of Mt. Helix is the primary gala/fundraiser benefiting Mt. Helix Park, a 501(c)(3) non-profit park. This year's heART raised roughly \$90,000. Expressing her appreciation, Executive Director Nicole Roberts stated, "I give credit to our generous community of businesses and individuals for all that we accomplish during this event. The money raised ultimately enhances the lives of thousands of visitors who enjoy Mt. Helix Park on an annual basis."

This event occurs the second week in August each year. For information on next year's heART of Mt. Helix event, or to volunteer, visit www.mthelixpark.org or call the Park office at (619) 741-4363. ■



2018 heART of Mt. Helix Sponsors


Your generous donation of time, talents, goods, services, and financial support contributed to a net revenue of \$90,000 that benefits thousands of people who visit Mt. Helix Park on an annual basis. Your support ensures Mt. Helix Park remains well maintained and open free of charge every day of the year. ***Thank you for being a part of our success!***

RESTAURANTS



Anthony's Fish Grotto
Brew Spot Coffee
Brigantine
Cafe Carmel Bakery
Cali Comfort
Casa de Pico
D'Amatos Pizza
Dream Dinners
Edible Arrangements
Hooleys
Mary's Donuts
Menchie's Frozen Yogurt
Pick Up Stix
Posh Nosh
Terra American Bistro
The Edge Mediterranean Grill
The Hills Local Pub

BEVERAGE SPONSOR




Ballast Point Brewery
Helix Brewing Company
St. Petersburg Vodka
San Diego Distillery

MUSICIANS

Ben Read
California Rhythm Project Classic Tap!
Choral Club of San Diego - Mink Pack
Good Mojo Band
Marissa Grace
Mighty Untouchables

ARTISTS (LIVE DEMO)



Sally Ault
Cayce Hanalei
Chuck McPherson
Roz Oserin
Penelope Quirk
Chris Witnik

SPONSORS



Ron & Mary Alice Brady
The Late Jack & Mary Lentz
Norm & Valerie Hapke
Mark & Maria Allan
Eric & Babs Fletcher
McCann Family & Friends
Spring Valley Veterinary Clinic
Tracey Stotz, Broker/REALTOR
Enhancery Jewelers
Bank of Southern California
Jenal Engineering Corp.
Rancho Valhalla Nursery
O's Printing
Planter Paradise
The Lunch Box
CBC Technical
Nainsook Framing + Art
Think Your T-Shirt
La Mesa Historical Society
Judy & Keith Meeker
Bob Blessing

VOLUNTEER GROUPS

Miss El Cajon Pageant
Miss Santee and Miss Teen Santee Pageant
East County Transitional Living Center
SPRITES of East County
Boys to Men
Just Serve
Boy Scout Troup 319


GOLF CART DONOR




Anne Erdman

continued ...

AUCTION ITEM DONORS




Act II
Alvarado Institute of Skin Care
Robert & Debbie Ball
Banbu Sushi
Bob & Kimberly Bardin
Camp Bow Wow
Camp Run-A -Mutt
Casa de Oro Eyecare
Casino Knights
CeramicCafe
Cooking 4 Life
East County YMCA
Del Mar Thoroughbred Club
Emerald Isle Golf Course
Enhancery Jewelers
Flagship Cruises & Events
Gaston Martinez, Wine Consultant
John Grasberger
Grossmont Dermatology
Cayce Hanalei
Claudia Hicks
Leah Higgins
Hilton Garden Inn San Diego Old Town
Dr. Curtis Howard DDS
Jeff Sirota
Johnny B's
Al & Janet Johnstone
Katie's Healing Kitchen
Larry Kennard
KPBS
Lisa's Leaves
Lion's Club
Living Coast Discovery Center
Laura Lothian
Mancini Acupuncture/Center for Integrative Care
Dianne McCann
Chuck McPherson
Mingei International Museum
Miss La Mesa Pageant
Mt. Helix Park Foundation
Nainsook Framing + Art
The New Children's Museum
The Old Globe
One World Architecture
Roz Oserin
Picaboo
Edmond Piffard



Pret-A-Porter Salon & Spa
Mary Qualls
Penny Quirk
RCP Block & Brick
Nicole Roberts
San Diego Air & Space Museum
San Diego Museum of Art
San Diego Natural History Museum
San Diego Repertory Theatre
Cynthia Santos
Six Flags Magic Mountain
Sky Sailing, Inc.
Spring Valley Veterinary Clinic
Steele Canyon Golf Club
Sycuan Casino
Jeff Swiney
TNT Bros. Auto Detailing

heART COMMITTEE



Dianne McCann
Donna Bloomer
Emmy Camarena
Dick Conklin
Susan Conklin
Karen Eames
Jamie French
Kathy White
Kimberly Bardin
Claudia Hicks
Chuck McPherson
Roz Oserin
Anice Plikaytis
Ammy Provancha
Mary Qualls
Mike Qualls
Betsy Quinn
Chris Quinn
Larisa Rotsart
Kimberly Sant
Ruth Simpson
Sharon Smith



A special thanks to Susan Conklin
for her original artwork used on the
heART invitation and program.

Butterflies are Free to Fly on Mt. Helix

by: Peggy Junker

Despite dwindling numbers and grim odds, the Hermes copper butterfly (*Lycaena Hermes*) did not make its way on to the list of endangered species, although it appears to still be under consideration. According to scientific maps delineating this rare species' habitat, it is surrounding Mt. Helix Park.

Naturalist and Park plant aficionado, Ed Piffard, thinks this might be evidence that the elusive butterfly could be sniffing around this open space haven, and he is hoping that humans, who are contributing to the reduction of this insect's habitat, might also have a hand in helping to improve its numbers.

As fate would have it, Mt. Helix Park is home to several groves of healthy *Rhamnus crocea*, or Spiny Redberry bush. This very same plant is the only known host to the larvae of these rare butterflies.

According to Piffard, the Cedar Fire in 2003 and the Witch Fire in 2007 that ravaged much of San Diego County also devastated the Hermes copper's habitat. Scientific journals estimated that as much as 39 percent of all populations were destroyed.

"Redberry doesn't recover all that well from fire," explains Piffard of a plant with which he is very familiar. "I was so excited to find out that the Redberry was such a crucial plant because there is just so much of it on top of Mt. Helix," he adds.

Although these slow growing species are currently thirsty from the long hot summer, they are expected to bounce back with seasonal rain. For the past couple of years Piffard has been instrumental in working with the Park's Habitat Restoration Group to plant more of the Spiny Redberry. Getting new specimens to thrive, however, can be tricky.

"Because we have little irrigation, we have real trouble getting them established," points out Piffard. Even with irrigation, he acknowledges that this variety can be fickle. However, Piffard and his team don't give up easily and from 2014 to 2018 they planted roughly 20 Spiny Redberry with some success.

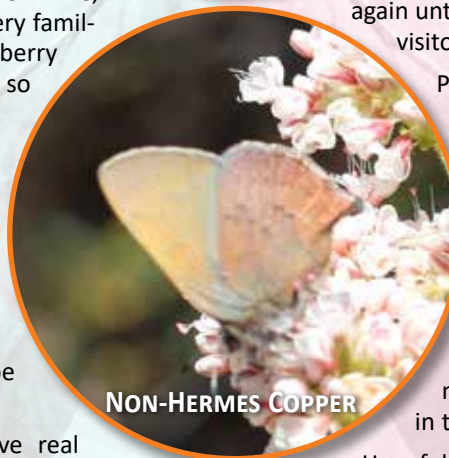
Flanked by a mix of custom homes and a natural wooded setting, Mt. Helix Park has several points in its favor when vying for a spot as home to the next Hermes copper population. This 12-acre open space Park offers a ready supply of mature Spiny Redberry bushes and is therefore prime real estate even from a butterfly standpoint.



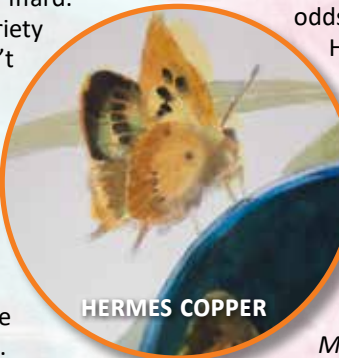
BEHR'S METALMARK



ACMON BLUE



NON-HERMES COPPER



HERMES COPPER

"Most of the butterflies are hilltoppers," states Piffard. "They go to the hilltops to breed," he explains. But since most of the other local hills are covered in development, he believes the Park's natural, open landscape will give it an even greater appeal.

"Mt. Helix has potential...maybe the Park can be a sort of a sanctuary," says an optimistic Piffard. "Many of the local plants here are hosts," he adds, pointing out the prevalence of native Buckwheat which provides nectar for the adult Hermes copper.

He says the Park is already home to a plethora of other local butterfly species such as the Acamen Blue, the Mulcins Admiral, Swallowtail and Monarch, to name a few. Anyone who has visited the Park recently can attest to the fact that the butterfly population is well represented in general.

Spend a few minutes sitting in the Park's amphitheater, and you will likely witness the constant dance performed by butterflies there as they court one another. Hovering just above the steps, they parade their show of color until they are noticed. Stopping periodically in nearby groves of Lemonade Berry, Spiny Redberry, Buckwheat, Sugarbush and Black Sage, they stretch out their wings and then take flight again until they find a mate. Some drift so close to Park visitors they can hear the sound of their wings.

Piffard says he has personally never seen a Hermes copper in the Park. A small butterfly with a wingspan of between one and 1.25 inches, it is primarily brown with yellow highlights on both the wings and tail. Mature larvae are about 13 millimeters and are primarily bright green. They reportedly prefer host plants in canyons and on the north facing slopes surrounded by plants that provide nectar for the adults, such as native California Buckwheat, which is abundant in the Park.

Hopeful that a community effort could increase the odds of Hermes copper taking up residence on Mt.

Helix, Piffard says he would like to see locals add Spiny Redberry to their landscapes as well as other host plants for the Hermes and other butterfly species.

For more information on butterfly friendly plants, visit the Park website at:

www.mthelixpark.org ■

From the top, photos by Hunter Hartmann: Behr's Metalmark, Acmon Blue and Non-Hermes Copper. Watercolor closeup from painting by Chuck McPherson.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Norm Hapke

by Peggy Junker

Every leader brings a unique skillset to the table that makes their governance effective. A seasoned director for two notable philanthropic organizations and newly elected board president, Norm Hapke, took the helm in April of this year as the third board president for the Mt. Helix Park Foundation. A resident of Mt. Helix since 1981, he and his wife, Valerie, are well-known movers and shakers both in the community of Mt. Helix and in the San Diego area.

Norm is no stranger to non-profit management, holding board positions on both the Jacobs Family Foundation, a philanthropic organization that supports under-invested neighborhoods in Southeast San Diego, as well as Project Concern International, a non-governmental organization which facilitates aid in over 16 countries. And although Norm has been a board member for the Park foundation since 2011, his new role has this former Marine officer at attention.

"I've found being president is a very active job," says Norm, explaining that he focuses on coordinating the efforts of board members to carry out board policies and decisions in a transparent manner, as well as encouraging everyone to work together to achieve board directed goals and objectives.

To make his job even more interesting, he points out that this is no ordinary board. "Typically, boards are supervisory," he notes. "But this board is a working board. Because there are few staff members, much of the work of the foundation falls to board members themselves," he explains, adding that day-to-day maintenance and much of the Park's programs are coordinated by board members and volunteers.

Norm's fondness for the Park developed even before his role on the board, during numerous walks to the Park with his children.



Photo by Gary Junker

"My son and I would hike from our house straight up to the cross," he recalls. "We had adventures. It was a neat thing for our children to be around," adding that he and his family have also been Park beneficiaries for many years.

Looking to the future, Norm identifies three distinct goals he has for the Park.

"We want to improve the physical part of the Park," says Norm. "That is to say that we are trying to develop physical improvements that will enhance the experience of the Park for visitors," he adds.

Norm says his second goal is to develop ways in which people can use the Park for fun, in a larger effort to involve more people in East County. Last, he says he would like to see the foundation work closely with other important local organizations, a gesture he believes is the key to a strong community.

Part of looking forward for Norm is looking back as he acknowledges the work of previous boards.

"We have a legacy from 1998 of people who did heroic things to make this park sustainable both legally and financially and their efforts have made a dramatic change in the Park for the people of East County," Norm points out. "What I'm hoping to do is to build on those things." ■

"Hermes Copper"

by Chuck McPherson, painted live at the 2018 heART of Mt. Helix



GREAT GIFT IDEA!

Now available on T-shirts and mugs

**Place your order today by calling
Think your T-Shirt at 1-619-670-7289**

*Merchandise proceeds benefit the
Mt. Helix Park Foundation*

Special thanks to our
merchandise printers,
Claudia and Neal Hicks
of Think your T-Shirt.



Short Sleeve T-Shirt \$22

Large Mug \$20

Additional apparel available upon request.

2ND ANNUAL

Halloween Harvest Family Festival

@ Mt Helix Park

GAMES &
CRAFTS

LIVE
MUSIC

FOOD
TRUCKS



PRIZES 4
COSTUMES

FACE
PAINT

AND
MORE!

Presented by:

**GMIA (Grossmont-Mt Helix Association)
&**

MHP (Mt Helix Park Foundation)

Take the shuttle from Fire Station 21
10105 Vivera Dr

Live Music by: facebook.com/TheRespondersSD



GROSSMONT - MT. HELIX
IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

More Info:

GMIA.net or MtHelixPark.org



MT. HELIX PARK
FOUNDATION

CAROLING *on* MT. HELIX

A free traditional holiday gathering at Mt. Helix Park

Saturday, December 15

4:00 pm–7:00 pm

(Program begins at 6 pm)

Join us for our 28th annual Christmas sing-a-long atop Mt. Helix! Fun for the whole family with photos and visits with Santa, Christmas crafts and delicious treats with warm drinks. Join in singing with a community choir as the Nativity is reenacted. **We will be collecting gently used blankets for the needy in our community if you'd like to leave yours behind!**



MT. HELIX PARK
FOUNDATION



PARKING

Parking and complimentary shuttle lots are located at the intersection of Vivera Dr. and Mt. Helix Dr. near the San Miguel fire station and at Grossmont High School. Shuttles will begin at 4 p.m. and run continuously throughout the event. The last shuttle ride down the mountain will be 7:45 p.m.