

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

today

Indio Open Air Market, 4-10 p.m. Wed. and Sat., Riverside County Fairgrounds, 46-350 Arabia St., Indio. 50 cents (909) 984-5131

Metal sculpture show, 11-4 p.m. Wed.-Sun., Ted Phillip Denton Working Studio and Gallery, Backstreet Art District, 2658 S. Cherokee Way, Palm Springs. (760) 780-8484

Palm Desert Certified Farmers' Market, 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Wed., Palm Desert Henderson Community Center, 72-559 Highway 111, Palm Desert. (760) 898-5250 or www.certifiedfarmersmarket.org

Rick Ross performing, 5 p.m. Wed., Escena Lounge & Grill, 1100 Clubhouse View, Palm Springs. Free. (760) 778-2737 Ext. 111

Community Blood Bank blood drive, 8 a.m., Palm Springs Motors, 69-200 Highway 111, Cathedral City. (760) 773-4190

Lawn bowling, 8:30 a.m., Joslyn Center, 73-750 Catalina Way, Palm Desert. \$3. (760) 340-3220

Art in the Square, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Indio Civic Center, 100 Civic Center Mall, Indio. Free. (760) 391-4120

Self defense: Tae Kwon Do, 9 a.m., Golden Rainbow Center — SAGE, 611 S. Palm Canyon Drive, Suite 201, Palm Springs. Free. (760) 416-7790

English class, 10 a.m., Cathedral Center, 37-171 W. Buddy Rogers Ave., Cathedral City. (760) 321-1548

Fit after 50 exercise, 10 a.m., Cathedral Center, 37-171 W. Buddy Rogers Ave., Cathedral City. (760) 321-1548

Chair yoga, 11 a.m., Cathedral Center, 37-171 W. Buddy Rogers Ave., Cathedral City. (760) 321-1548

Fit After Fifty, 11:30 a.m., Golden Rainbow Center, 610 S. Belardo Road, Suite 500, Palm Springs. \$3. (760) 416-7790

LifeStream blood donation drive, noon-4 p.m., Center for Employment Training, 49-111 Highway 111, Coachella. (800) 879-4484

Contract bridge, 12:30 p.m., Joslyn Center, 73750 Catalina, Palm Desert. (760) 340-3220

Knitting circle, 12:30 p.m., Mizell Senior Center, 480 S. Sunrise Way, Palm Springs. Free. (760) 323-5689

Duplicate bridge, 1 p.m., Cathedral Center, 37-171 W. Buddy Rogers Ave., Cathedral City. (760) 321-1548

Hot topics current affairs discussion group, open to the public. 1-3 p.m., Portola Community Center, 45-480 Portola Ave., Palm Desert. Free. olingail@yahoo.com

Movie matinee, 1 p.m., Joslyn Center, 73-750 Catalina Way, Palm Desert. \$3. (760) 340-3220

Open Bride Play, 1 p.m., Golden Rainbow Center — SAGE, 611 S. Palm Canyon Drive, Suite 201, Palm Springs. \$3-\$6. (760) 416-7790

Intermediate Spanish class, 1:30 p.m., Cathedral Center, 37-171 W. Buddy Rogers Ave., Cathedral City. (760) 321-1548

Adults molested as children support group, 4 p.m., Barbara Sinatra Children's Center, 39-000 Bob Hope Drive, Rancho Mirage.



DESERT SUN FILE PHOTO

Lawn bowlers compete in a lawn bowling tournament at the Joslyn Center. Lawn bowlers meet at 8:30 a.m. today at the center, 73-750 Catalina Way, in Palm Desert. \$3. Information: (760) 340-3220

(760) 340-2336

Italian American pasta social benefiting charity work, 5 p.m., Dolly Sinatra Lodge, Sons of Italy, 1700 Sahara St., Palm Springs. \$4-\$10. (760) 416-3184 or www.dollysinatralodge.org

Brian Nova performing, 6 p.m., Café des Beaux-Arts, 73-640 El Paseo, Palm Desert. (760) 346-0669

Great Outdoors activities planning & social group, with weekend camping trips, day hiking, social events and game night. 6 p.m., Golden Rainbow Center — SAGE, 611 S. Palm Canyon Drive, Suite 201, Palm Springs. Free. (760) 416-7790 or www.greatoutdoors.org/ps

Imagining the Future Wilson Center lectures, with topic "The Era of Limits: Is There a Water Policy to Save Us From Thirst?" 6 p.m., UCR Palm Desert, 75-080 Frank Sinatra Drive, Palm Desert. Free. (760) 834-0800

Open soccer tryouts for boys and girls ages 11-17, 6 p.m., Hovely Soccer Park, 74-735 Hovely Lane, Palm Desert. (760) 275-6337

CoDependents Anonymous support group, 6:30 p.m., Golden Rainbow Center — SAGE, 611 S. Palm Canyon Drive, Suite 201, Palm Springs. Free. (760) 416-7790 or www.grcps.org

Met Opera presents Gluck's "Iphigenie in Tauride" encore performance, 6:30 p.m., Century Theatres at The River, 71-800 Highway 111, Rancho Mirage. \$15-\$22. (760) 323-1244 or www.theoperalady.org

Round dancing, 6:30 p.m., Cathedral Center, 37-171 W. Buddy Rogers Ave., Cathedral City. (760) 321-1548

Wednesday night dance, playing contemporary and traditional dance music. 7-9:30 p.m., Palm Springs Pavilion, 401 S. Pavilion Way, Palm Springs. \$5-\$8. (760) 323-8272

thursday

"Bette Davis Speaks," starring Linda Gray. 7 p.m. Thu.-Sat.; 2 p.m. Sat.-Sun., Indian Wells Theater, 37-500 Cook St., Palm Desert. \$39. (760) 341-6909 or www.iwthetheater.com

"Fully Committed," a Coyote Stateworks production. 7 p.m. Thu.-Sat.; 2 and

6:30 p.m. Sun., Palm Springs Woman's Club, 314 S. Cahuilla Road, Palm Springs. \$20-\$25. (800) 838-3006 or www.coyotestageworks.org

Desert Sunrise Toastmasters public speaking skills development meeting, Portola Community Center, 45-480 Portola Ave., Palm Desert. (760) 992-5563 or www.toastmaster.org

Palm Springs VillageFest, featuring vendors, food, and entertainment. 6 p.m., Downtown Palm Springs, Palm Canyon Drive, Palm Springs. (760) 320-3781

Rose Mallet performing, 5 p.m. Thu. Escena Lounge & Grill, 1100 Clubhouse View, Palm Springs. Free. (760) 778-2737, Ext. 111

Royal Palms ballroom dancing, Open to the public. 7-9:30 p.m. the first and third Thu. of each month. Royal Palms, 34-851 Date Palm Drive, Cathedral City. \$5. (760) 325-4403

Thursday morning hikes, 9-11:30 a.m., Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument Visitor Center, 51-500 Highway 74, Palm Desert. Free. (760) 862-9084 or www.desertmountains.org

Guided bird hike, 8 a.m., Coachella Valley Preserve, 29-200 Thousand Palms Canyon Road, Thousand Palms. Free. (760) 343-2733

Party bridge, 9 a.m., Cathedral Center, 37-171 W. Buddy Rogers Ave., Cathedral City. (760) 321-1548

It's Story Time at the library, for toddlers up to three years of age and children from three to five years of age. 10-11:50 a.m., Palm Springs Public Library, 300 S. Sunrise Way, Palm Springs. Free. (760) 322-7323 or www.PalmSpringsLibrary.org

Meet mystery writer Teresa Burrell, 11 a.m., Barnes & Noble Bookstore, Westfield Palm Desert, 72-840 Highway 111, Palm Desert. Free. (760) 346-0725

Palm Springs Republican Womens Federation luncheon, with guest speaker Morris Beschloss. 11 a.m., Seven Lakes Country Club, 4100 Seven Lakes Drive, Palm Springs. \$30. (760) 837-7072

Palm Desert-Indian Wells Women's Club benefit luncheon, 11:15 a.m., Desert Willow Golf Resort, 38995 Desert Willow Drive, Palm Desert. \$27. (760) 360-5021

Submit information at mydesert.com/cs.

coachella valley

Contest motivates students to fill out financial aid form

BY MICHELLE MITCHELL
The Desert Sun

About 44 percent of the eligible high school seniors in the Coachella Valley filled out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid during a competition between Coachella Valley high schools.

"We exceeded our expectations," said Angel Meraz, student services coordinator with Pathways to Success who helped coordinate the "Battle of the High Schools."

"Our belief is that more students will be attending college this upcoming year because they had the opportunity to fill out the FAFSA," she said.

The competition was launched in January as a way to encourage more Coachella Valley high school students to take this first step in securing federal financial aid.

The competition is part of the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership's goal to create a well-educated work force and bolster the higher education culture in the Coachella Valley.

Research shows that students are more likely to go on to higher education if they have filled out the FAFSA, Meraz said.

Indio High, Desert Mirage High and Coachella Valley High had the highest participation rates in their school districts and received \$3,000 for the senior class.

La Familia Continuation High school in Thermal was the top alternative school and won \$1,000.

"It was a really fun experience working with Pathways to get these students to get their competitive spirit out," said Lizette Solorzano, a counselor at Desert Mirage High.

The counselors have always reached out to eligible

"Our belief is that more students will be attending college this upcoming year because they had the opportunity to fill out the FAFSA."

ANGEL MERAZ, student services coordinator with Pathways to Success

seniors and offered them help filling out the federal form, but the competition increased parents' awareness and student motivation and built school spirit, Desert Mirage counselor Gloria Gaytan said.

Often students assume that college is out of their price range and the federal FAFSA form can be complicated and intimidating, especially for first-generation college students.

"Sometimes it's like pulling teeth to get the kids to do it," said Rudy Ramirez, principal of Indio High School which had 65 percent of seniors participate — the highest in the valley.

"That means more kids are going to be getting financial aid, more kids are going to be going on to college," he said. "In the long run, it's a real positive thing."

The competition also initiated a base line to show schools how many students finish the FAFSA, something that wasn't consistently tracked before.

CVEP estimated that 20 to 30 percent of eligible students completed the form valley-wide in past years, Meraz said.

"It helps us to stay motivated," Gaytan said. "Next year, I want to do more than 60 percent."

Michelle Mitchell covers education for The Desert Sun. Reach her at michelle.mitchell@thedesertsun.com or (760) 778-4642.

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