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In Neighborhoods

BUILDING A HEALTHY SACRAMENTO

Community Leaders Join Together to Restore Morrison Creek

BY EDGAR SANCHEZ

In 2017, the Avondale Glen Elder Neighborhood Association (AGENA) wanted to apply for a hefty state grant to help restore Morrison Creek, a storm water drainage canal that stretches from Rancho Cordova to Elk Grove.

But the application was never filed.

“When we went to fill it out, we realized we wouldn’t qualify,” said Nailah Pope-Harden, AGENA’s community organizer. “We didn’t have the right community parties to support the application and didn’t have the city of Sacramento involved.”

Fast forward two years and AGENA has a stronger coalition of support, with the city as a partner and The California Endowment’s backing. Pope-Harden said the group will apply for a \$1 million Urban Stream Restoration grant from the State Department of Water Resources (DWR). Sacramento city officials have called for additional outside funds for the creek’s revitalization, starting in Avondale Glen Elder in South Sacramento.

Potential features of the multi-phase project include gardens and a ½-mile bike trail from Power Inn Road to 65th Street.

“We’re trying to create healthier spaces in our underserved neighborhood,” said Pope-Harden, outreach coordinator for the Morrison Creek Project, a mixture of community partners that — in addition

to Sacramento — include AGENA, the Sacramento Community Committee, the newly formed Morrison Creek Community Committee and DWR.

Neglected for years, Morrison Creek’s unkempt banks don’t discourage litterbugs from dumping more refuse along its banks — from old mattresses and car tires to everyday household rubbish which includes diapers and plastic bags.

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Outreach coordinator, Morrison Creek Project

In 2017, AGENA’s call for volunteers to help clean the creek every three months brought many respondents. One of them was Sacramento City Councilman Eric Guerra, who represents Avondale Glen Elder and who has become a regular at the cleanup events.

“The creek is multi-jurisdictional. Some parts of it are owned by Sacramento or



Draden Graf and his son Riley, 10, live in a South Sacramento home beside Morrison Creek. They are excited about the prospect of a restoration project for the creek. Photo by Edgar Sanchez

Sacramento County and other sections are federal property,” which can make it difficult to allocate funds for cleanup efforts.

He and City Councilman Jeff Harris, both members of Sacramento’s Water Committee, have asked the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency to pursue federal monies to help Morrison Creek’s restoration. Draden Graf, who has lived in an Avondale Glen Elder home for decades next to Morrison Creek, welcomes the news about its cleanup and renewal.

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