PRESS RELEASE

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San Ramon Chamber Announces 2025 Business and Community Award Winners

San Ramon, CA - November 3, 2025 — The San Ramon Chamber of Commerce is proud to announce the winners of the **2025 Annual Business and Community Awards**. These awards celebrate individuals, businesses, and organizations that demonstrate excellence, innovation, and community commitment.

For more than 40 years, the San Ramon Chamber has recognized outstanding leaders who make San Ramon a stronger and more connected community. The awards highlight those who have gone above and beyond to improve local business, education, and civic life.

2025 Award Winners

- **Citizen of the Year:** Alec Hurd - For over twenty years, Alec has helped lead Scouts of America Troop 834 in San Ramon, guiding nearly 70 scouts and 17 adult leaders. His motto, "scouting is about outings," reflects his focus on building character, leadership, and a love of the outdoors. An Eagle Scout and dedicated mentor, Alec has inspired both youth and adults through hands-on experiences and the "patrol method," fostering confidence and teamwork. Beyond scouting, he serves on the San Ramon Education Foundation Board, as District Commissioner for the Meridian District, and as Chair of San Ramon's 2024 Climate Action Committee. Alec's leadership and service continue to strengthen the San Ramon community.
- **Business Person or Business of the Year:** Danielle Croghan, They Made - San Ramon's premier DIY and small-batch manufacturing hub. TheyMade offers walk-ins, parties, summer camps, and makers nights, where customers can screen print tees, tie-dye shoes, decorate sunglasses, and more. Danielle fosters a culture of mentorship, collaboration, and community engagement, supporting local entrepreneurs, schools, and STEM programs. Known for ethical, transparent, and sustainable practices, TheyMade integrates innovative tools like AI-assisted design to help clients bring ideas to life. Beyond business, Danielle champions local events, small vendors, and underrepresented makers, strengthening San Ramon's economy, creativity, and community.

- **Community Educator of the Year:** Jennifer Tejada, Diablo Valley College - (New category for 2025) With over 30 years of dedication to higher education in San Ramon, Jennifer contributed as faculty and later as Dean at Diablo Valley College, San Ramon. She helped grow the campus into a vibrant learning center for more than 3,000 students, including dual-enrolled high schoolers. Jennifer supported students, faculty, and staff with care, mentorship, and a personal touch, leaving a lasting impact on the campus community. Beyond DVC, she contributes to Leadership San Ramon and previously served on the Chamber board, demonstrating a sustained commitment to education and community development.
- **Employee of the Year:** James Spielvogel, San Ramon Parks and Community Services - James won for his outstanding dedication, professionalism, and service excellence. Known for going above and beyond, he consistently exceeds expectations, bringing creativity, attention to detail, and a positive attitude to every task. His exceptional customer service skills were evident in his work on the San Ramon Chamber's Hootenanny event at Forest Home Farms, where he seamlessly supported every aspect of the event. James steps in wherever needed, delivering high-quality results with a smile, embodying a spirit of service and teamwork that strengthens both the workplace and the broader community.
- **"Green" Company or Individual of the Year:** Stanford Health Care Tri-Valley - Stanford Health Care (SHC) won for its leadership in sustainability across energy, waste, and emissions. SHC sources 100% renewable energy, cut nitrous oxide emissions by 96%, and diverts 44% of waste from landfills. Sustainable commuting programs reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips by hundreds each day. Staff and community engage in climate-health education, food recovery, and eco-friendly initiatives. With cost savings, regulatory compliance beyond requirements, and national recognition—including Practice Greenhealth Top 25 Environmental Excellence and SHC–Tri-Valley as a Partner for Change—SHC demonstrates measurable environmental impact and sets a benchmark for sustainable healthcare.
- **Non-Profit of the Year:** Fostering Wishes - (New category for 2025) Recognized for its outstanding dedication to improving the lives of foster youth through compassionate, community-driven programs. Operating as a 100% volunteer-run organization, 98% of funds go directly to children in need. Its programs—including a Holiday Gift Drive, Duffle Bag Program, Teen Empowerment Program, and Trade School Scholarships—serve thousands of foster youth annually, helping meet

essential needs and foster inclusion, confidence, and self-sufficiency. Fostering Wishes also empowers youth leaders, raises awareness, and advocates for foster children, earning national recognition for transparency and impact while creating lasting community connections and hope for every child it serves.

- **Educator of the Year (SRVUSD):** Sandy Kontilis, Principal at Pine Valley Middle School - Selected by the San Ramon Valley Unified School District (SRVUSD), this award honors an educator who inspires students and colleagues alike through excellence in teaching and leadership within the school community. As Principal of Pine Valley Middle School, she has created a student-centered culture that promotes academic excellence, social-emotional growth, and community engagement. Sandy mentors staff, builds strong family partnerships, and inspires students to reach their potential. Her vision, compassion, and commitment to empowering learners make her an outstanding educator and role model in the district.
- **Ambassador of the Year:** Robert Downum, Liberty Tax Service - Chosen by the Chamber Ambassador Chair, this award recognizes a volunteer whose dedication, energy, and service make a lasting impact on the San Ramon Chamber of Commerce. Robert consistently welcomes new members, supports Chamber events, and fosters meaningful connections across the business community. By embodying the Chamber's spirit of collaboration and engagement, he ensures that members feel valued, that events run smoothly, and that local businesses succeed. This award honors Robert's leadership, commitment, and extraordinary contributions to strengthening both the Chamber and the broader San Ramon business community.
- **Teen Citizen of the Year (Teen Council):** Danya Prakash, senior at California High School - Selected by the San Ramon Teen Council, the Outstanding Teen Citizenship Award honors a San Ramon teen making a meaningful community impact. The 2025 recipient, Danya, has transformed lives through her nonprofit, Humanities in Focus, advocating for neurodiverse students and raising over $400,000 for a Bay Area autism-focused school. She amplifies voices through podcasts and social media, reaching over 16,000 viewers, and promotes student safety by implementing Narcan distribution and overdose education across high schools. Danya's leadership, empathy, and advocacy have strengthened community connections, fostered inclusion, and helped make San Ramon safer, more compassionate, and more supportive for all residents.

“These awards shine a light on those who are helping shape San Ramon’s future,” said Danielle Cook, San Ramon Chamber President & CEO. “Each recipient reflects our Chamber’s mission of connecting for success—through leadership, innovation, and community involvement.”

Winners will be honored at the **Annual Business and Community Awards Dinner** on **Wednesday, December 3, 2025**, at **The Bridges Golf Club in San Ramon**.

For more information about the San Ramon Chamber of Commerce and its programs, visit **www.sanramon.org**.