# Business Connection

PLEASANTON CHAMBER of COMMERCE

www.pleasanton.org

We are the community that helps businesses start, grow, & thrive.

November 2026


# Pleasanton Welcomes New Sutter Health Care Center

On Sept. 21, Sutter Health began serving patients at Pleasanton Care Complex located at 4480 Willow Road, the latest healthcare facility to open its doors in the city. The 64,000-square-foot medical center represents a significant investment in expanding healthcare access for residents of Pleasanton and the greater Tri-Valley region.

The facility was designed around the needs of patients and their families, with comprehensive care provided by Palo Alto Foundation Medical Group physicians. By bringing a wide range of specialty services together under one roof, the center makes it easier for patients to receive coordinated care close to home.

Specialties currently offered at Pleasanton Care Complex include:

- Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT)
- Audiology
- Gastroenterology
- Liver Care
- Neuroscience Services
- Orthopedics
- Podiatry
- Surgery
- Urology
- Vision Care (Ophthalmology and Optometry)
- Laboratory Services
- Imaging Services
- Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Services

These services provide residents with convenient access to specialty physicians, diagnostic testing, imaging, rehabilitation services and coordinated treatment plans without having to travel outside the Tri-Valley area.



Sutter Health representatives, community leaders and Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce members celebrate the opening of Sutter Health's new 64,000-square-foot Pleasanton Care Complex at 4480 Willow Road during a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

A new ambulatory surgery center, located adjacent to the care complex, is scheduled to open in January 2027, further expanding access to outpatient procedures and specialty care in the community.

Julie Testa, Pleasanton City Councilmember for District 3, noted that bringing multiple specialties together will make care more convenient, connected and accessible throughout the Tri-Valley area.

"Pleasanton did just receive an award of the best place to live and raise a family," said Testa. "Aren't we that much luckier to have this amazing facility in Pleasanton?"

"Adding healthcare infrastructure is important as the Tri-Valley continues to grow", said David Haubert, Alameda County Supervisor, District 1.

"It's investments like this that are essential to our growing resident base so they can access high-quality healthcare close to home."

Sutter Health has a growing presence in the community. In July, Sutter opened Pleasanton Care Center at 5075 Hopyard Road. That location offers physical therapy, advanced imaging services, and full-service pediatric urgent care, expanding options for families throughout the region.

Together, the Pleasanton Care Center and Pleasanton Care Complex are expanding access to healthcare services closer to where people live and work while supporting the community's continued growth.

"We really provide comprehensive care to this community to ensure they get the right care," said Kevin Cook, president of Sutter Health's Greater Silicon Valley Division.

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Stay connected with the Chamber

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# The Forgotten Power of "Local"

We live in a wonderful time. Never before have we been able to experience so much of the world from home. We can shop on our phones and have our purchases delivered to our door in hours—or sometimes minutes. That convenience is remarkable. But somewhere along the way, we may have forgotten the power of "local."



**Brock Roby**
Chair of the Board
Pleasanton Chamber

As I wind down my year as Chair of the Pleasanton Chamber Board, I want to offer five reminders of what local means to each of us.

**L is for Leadership.** Local decisions shape the everyday life of our community: how we plan for growth, support businesses and invest in public services. We have just come through local elections. The people elected to lead Pleasanton understand our community in a way no distant decision-maker can. That is why the Chamber takes its role in local civic life seriously, including endorsing candidates we believe will make a positive difference for our community and its economic vitality.

**O is for Opportunity.** Local businesses create opportunities close to home: for entrepreneurs to build something of their own, for residents to find work, and for neighbors to turn ideas into services and products we value. A purchase from a local business can help keep those opportunities here. Capital One Shopping reports that up to $73 of every $100 spent at a small business remains in the community where it was spent.

**C is for Community.** Local businesses are part of the fabric of a place. Small businesses (under 50 employees) make up 91% of the Pleasanton Chamber. They know their customers, hire their neighbors and often support local causes. And a healthy local economy helps sustain the services we rely on, from schools and parks to roads and public safety. As well, small businesses make up to 136% more charitable donations per employee than businesses with 500-or-more employees. When we choose local, we help strengthen the network that makes a community work.

**A is for Amenities.** So much of what we all enjoy about life in Pleasanton is due to the presence of our small businesses. For example, Pleasanton's downtown is more than a place to shop or grab a meal. It's a place to meet a friend, browse a bookstore, enjoy an event and spend time among neighbors. Those amenities make our city more inviting and give people reasons to gather. They thrive when residents and visitors make them part of everyday life. Additionally, local shopping helps reduce the carbon footprint associated with long-distance shipping and transportation.

**L is for Lifestyle.** "Local" helps create the small-town feel many of us cherish, alongside the convenience and variety of a vibrant city. It's the familiar face behind the counter, the quick stop downtown and the chance to run into someone you know. These moments may seem small, but together they shape how it feels to live here. A recent national survey indicates that 63% of Americans are willing to spend an additional $150 per month on average to ensure the survival of their local stores.

Of course, shopping locally can't meet every need, and convenience matters. But when we have a choice, choosing a Pleasanton business is one simple way to invest in the place we call home. Local is not just where we shop. It is how we shape our community, support our neighbors and preserve the lifestyle we value.

– Brock Roby, 2026 Board Chair

## Business Spotlight






The So Unique Painting team poses with one of the company's crews, highlighting the skilled professionals and dedicated staff behind more than 50 years of quality painting services throughout the Tri-Valley and Bay Area.

# 50 Years of Quality, Craftsmanship, and Community

For more than 50 years, So Unique Painting has been helping homeowners and businesses throughout the Tri-Valley and Bay Area transform their spaces with professional painting services and exceptional customer care.

What began as a passion for restoring homes has grown into one of the region's most trusted painting companies. Owner and founder started painting homes while still in high school and quickly discovered a love for bringing old buildings back to life. That dedication to craftsmanship continues to guide the company today.

So Unique Painting is a full-service residential and commercial painting contractor specializing in interior and exterior painting, cabinet refinishing, trim work, drywall repair, wallpaper removal, texturing, and surface preparation. Whether it's a small touch-up project or a large-scale commercial job, the team approaches every project with the same attention to detail and commitment to quality.

The company's reputation has been built on reliability, consistency, and long-term relationships. Many clients return for multiple projects over the years and regularly refer friends, neighbors, and family members. From projects valued at a few hundred dollars to large commercial contracts, So Unique Painting takes pride in delivering the same level of care and professionalism every time. They also stand behind their work with a six-year written warranty—the longest offered in the Bay Area.

Today, So Unique Painting employs 25 team members across six crews, with each foreman having been with the company between 12 and 35 years. That longevity reflects the company's family-oriented culture and commitment to both employees and customers.

"One of the most rewarding parts of this work is seeing how a fresh paint project can completely transform a space and make customers excited about their homes again," says the owner. "We believe great painting is about more than color—it's about trust, reliability, and helping customers feel proud of their space."

As a true hometown business, So Unique Painting is grateful for the community's support over the past five decades and looks forward to serving local homeowners and businesses for many years to come.

So Unique Painting & Decorating®
Quality. Reliability. Uniquely Yours.
Since 1976
50th ANNIVERSARY

1177 F Quarry Lane Pleasanton | (925) 225-1021 | Email: painting@so-unique.net | www.so-unique.net

## Business Spotlight

# Live & Smile Dental & Orthodontics: Helping Pleasanton Families Love Their Smiles



The team at Live & Smile Dental & Orthodontics is dedicated to helping Pleasanton families achieve healthier, more confident smiles through personalized dental care for patients of all ages.

Since 2011, Live & Smile Dental & Orthodontics has been helping Tri-Valley residents achieve healthier, more confident smiles through comprehensive dental care for the entire family. In 2026, the practice moved into a new, larger office at 5906 Stoneridge Mall Road in Pleasanton, expanding its space to serve patients of all ages.

Founded by Dr. Zoe Huang, Live & Smile was inspired by a personal desire to help others. Her dream of becoming a dentist began with wanting to help her mother with her dentures. Today, she combines her passion for hands-on craftsmanship with a commitment to improving patients' lives through healthier teeth and beautiful smiles. For Dr. Huang, one of the most rewarding parts of dentistry is seeing patients smile, whether they are relieved of pain or have gained newfound confidence.

The practice offers a wide range of services under one roof, including general and family dentistry, cosmetic treatments, dental implants, dentures, gum care, oral surgery, wisdom teeth removal and emergency dental services. Patients can also receive orthodontic treatment, including traditional braces and Invisalign, for children, teens and adults. With general dentists and specialists working together, the team can coordinate personalized treatment plans and help families manage their dental needs in one convenient location.

Patient comfort is a priority at Live & Smile. Treatment rooms feature TVs, headphones, blankets and pillows, while nitrous oxide is available for patients who experience dental anxiety. A children's play area helps make visits more welcoming for younger patients. The practice also offers Saturday appointments, in-office membership plans and CareCredit financing, and accepts most PPO dental insurance plans.

Over the years, Live & Smile has built lasting relationships with families throughout the Tri-Valley, with many patients returning for more than a decade. Parents often share how the team has helped their children feel comfortable and confident during dental visits. This commitment to personalized care and a welcoming environment reflects the practice's goal of making quality dental care accessible and positive for every patient.

Whether patients need routine preventive care, cosmetic dentistry, orthodontic treatment or help with a dental emergency, Live & Smile Dental & Orthodontics welcomes new patients of all ages.

As Dr. Huang puts it, "Come to Live & Smile and fall in love with your smile."

5906 Stoneridge Mall Road, Pleasanton | New Patients: (925) 319-6670
Website: www.liveandsmiledental.com | Instagram: @liveandsmiledental

## Business Spotlight

# Protecting What Matters: Eminent Valley Insurance Agency Takes a Personal Approach to Coverage


Harish Monga of Eminent Valley Insurance Agency helps Tri-Valley individuals, families, property owners, and businesses find insurance coverage tailored to their unique needs.

For many Tri-Valley residents, insurance is something they buy once and rarely think about again, until they need it. The team at Eminent Valley Insurance Agency is working to change that.

Eminent Valley is an independent agency serving individuals, families, property owners, and small businesses across Pleasanton and the greater Bay Area. The agency offers homeowners, condo, renters, auto, landlord, and personal umbrella coverage, including options for high-value homes. Business clients can find commercial coverage for small businesses, contractors, and restaurants, and the agency also helps with health and dental plans through Covered California and major carriers. Because Eminent Valley works with a wide range of insurance companies, the team shops the market for each client rather than offering a one-size-fits-all product.

What truly sets the agency apart is its people and its place within the broader Eminent Valley family, built around a simple promise: "Buy It. Manage It. Insure It." The agency's insurance professionals have been in the industry since 1989. They work alongside Eminent Valley's real estate brokerage, property management, and exit planning services, backed by more than $120 million in closed real estate transactions and over 20 years in IT.

"Our clients don't need five different advisors," the team says. "They need one team that understands the whole picture."

The agency grew directly out of Eminent Valley's real estate work. Over the years, the team watched clients struggle with coverage at critical moments, from policy delays before closing to landlords discovering gaps in their rental coverage. In 2025, Eminent Valley launched its independent insurance agency (CA Insurance Agency License #6016332), bringing together seasoned insurance professionals to give clients more choice along with the personal guidance they already valued.

The team takes pride in explaining policies in plain language and reviewing coverage before problems arise. Their favorite part of the work is the long-term relationships: helping the same family buy a home, insure it, add a rental property, and eventually protect a business.

"Insurance shouldn't be something you buy once and forget," the team says. "It should grow with your life, your home, and your business."

Eminent Valley offers free coverage reviews for Tri-Valley homeowners, landlords, and business owners.

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# October Networking Mixer Brings Members Together at Livermore-Pleasanton Elks Lodge #2117


New Chamber members were recognized at the October Networking Mixer, receiving their membership plaques and celebrating their connection to the Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce.

The Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce's October Networking Mixer brought Chamber members and Livermore-Pleasanton Elks memberstogether on October 14 for an evening of networking, conversation, and community connections. Hosted by Livermore-Pleasanton Elks Lodge #2117, the event provided a welcoming opportunity for attendees to meet new people, catch up with familiar faces, and build relationships with fellow members.

The mixer also offered an opportunity to highlight and welcome new Chamber members, helping introduce them to the local business community and encouraging new connections. Guests enjoyed delicious bites from Domenico's Deli, Strizzi's, and Gay Nineties Pizza while mingling throughout the evening.

The Pleasanton Chamber thanks Livermore-Pleasanton Elks Lodge #2117 for hosting this successful event, along with Domenico's Deli, Strizzi's, and Gay Nineties Pizza for providing a wonderful selection of food. We appreciate everyone who joined us and continues to make our networking events a great way to connect, collaborate, and strengthen our local business community!

## Business Spotlight

# Pivot Craft Kitchen & Sports Bar Is Ready for Football Season

Pivot Craft Kitchen & Sports Bar is a new Pleasanton destination bringing together scratch-made food, sports, interactive entertainment and flexible group experiences under one roof.

Located at the Four Points by Sheraton Pleasanton, Pivot opens daily at 6:30 a.m. for breakfast and welcomes guests throughout the day for business meetings, casual meals, happy hours, celebrations and sporting events. Pivot was created to offer more than the traditional sports-bar experience, giving guests a place where they can eat well, watch the game, entertain clients and gather with friends or coworkers.

With televisions throughout the restaurant and access to NFL Sunday Ticket, Pivot plans to show a wide variety of football games throughout the season, including professional, college and international matchups when broadcasts are available.

This fall, guests can expect rotating food and drink specials, appearances from beer ambassadors representing different brands and the wood-fired grill running every Sunday. The goal is simple: to become Pleasanton's destination for all things football.

Pivot can accommodate everything from smaller semi-private gatherings to fully private events and larger groups of approximately 60 to 80 guests. Its Topgolf Swing Suites are available for groups of eight or more interested in reserved playing time, food and beverage service or an experience lasting longer than two hours.

For groups seeking additional privacy, Pivot's NBA Suite provides a comfortable setting for meetings, presentations, seated meals and watch parties. The dining table seats up to eight guests. For a more casual gathering, four armchairs and a large couch allow up to 15 guests to sit throughout the suite or up to 20 guests to attend a standing reception.

The private suite also includes a 98-inch television with an interactive Zoom camera, NFL Sunday Ticket, high-speed Wi-Fi, dedicated food and beverage service and climate-controlled lounge seating.

Pivot recently added several new menu items, including a Cobb salad that has quickly become a team favorite, as well as a new selection of desserts. Its new catering program also makes it easy to bring Pivot to offices, homes, meetings and game-day gatherings.

Customers can review the catering menu and order directly through the Cater Now button on Pivot's website. There is no need to call, making it simple to feed a group while watching the game at home.

To inquire about Topgolf, private events, the NBA Suite or group reservations, visit:
**pivotcraftkitchenandsportsbar.tripleseat.com/party_request/48300**

5121 Hopyard Rd, Pleasanton | www.pivotpleasanton.com
(925) 800-7655 | Monday - Sunday: 6:30 am - 10:00 pm







Pivot's welcoming space combines a modern, polished atmosphere with sports-inspired décor, creating a comfortable setting for connection, conversation and community.

## Business Spotlight

# Guided by the Light: The Story Behind Lighthouse Digital Productions

El Aranas didn't set out to build websites. He set out to stop trading time for money — and rediscover the creative spirit he'd been missing.

For years, El Aranas worked as a dental assistant, a steady job that paid the bills but left little room for the creativity he'd always carried with him. Years earlier, he'd earned a degree in computer programming and spent his free time doing charcoal figure drawings and portraits — technically minded and artistically driven, but with no outlet that combined the two.

When AI began reshaping how small businesses could compete online, El saw an opportunity — not just to build a business, but to build a life with time freedom, the ability to work and travel on his own terms. "My creative juices are back online," he says, "no pun intended." Combining his technical background with his creative eye felt like the natural next step, and in 2022, Lighthouse Digital Productions was born, starting as a home-based business in San Francisco.

The Lighthouse name carries real meaning. El has been fascinated by lighthouses since first seeing Pigeon Point Lighthouse in Pescadero — struck not just by their function, warning ships away from dangerous shallows and rocky coastlines, but by their sheer majestic beauty and what they symbolize globally as guidance, strength, safety, and hope. "When I see lighthouses, it reminds me also to BE A LIGHT in this world," El says.

Today, Lighthouse Digital Productions helps small business owners build a professional, trustworthy online presence — primarily through custom website design and development, paired with tools like online scheduling, estimate calculators, and client questionnaires that make it easier for customers to do business with them. El's ideal client is a small business owner who does great work in person but hasn't yet claimed their place as a key player in their industry's online space. His process is hands-on: he typically approaches new business owners with a website that has their company information and pictures built to about 85% completion, so the client sees what's possible for their business. "I only work with business owners that need my services," El explains, "such as an underperforming website that's slow to load, has low conversion rates, poor mobile usability, low star reviews, or no website at all."

That approach led to one of El's proud moments. He built a website for an insurance agent who, by his own account, hadn't been especially active in growing his business. Seeing a professional website he'd never had before — polished, on-brand, something he could be excited about again — something in him lit up. He was so moved by the finished product that he had new business cards made to match his new brand colors and logo. "We never know the kind of impact we can make on others," El says, "when we remember to shine our light."



El Aranas, founder of Lighthouse Digital Productions, combines his technical expertise and creative vision to help small businesses build a professional online presence and shine in their industries.

What sets El apart isn't just the work — it's who he's doing it for. "I'm all about the community," he says. "I love small business owners for their courage, their vision, their tenacity to do whatever it takes with that entrepreneurial spirit." Having made his own leap from a corporate-style job into work he believes in, El says he's continually inspired by clients making that same jump — from a 9-to-5 into the business they always dreamed of running.

That philosophy shows up in how he treats people. "Namaste — the light in me sees the light in you," El says. "I believe we're all here to learn, grow, and lift each other along the way. Whether you're a first-time entrepreneur or ten years into your dream, I meet you where you are in your struggles and needs, with kindness, respect and a desire to make you shine!"

El was so happy when an office in downtown Pleasanton became available. "There's something about Pleasanton — that neighborly, family feeling," he says. He's a regular presence at Chamber events, where he says he goes to stay inspired and listen for opportunities to be of service, and he loves to support local nonprofits and churches in the community.

Joining the Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce was a natural next step. "I wanted to make real connections with other business owners who understand the importance of professional associations," El says, "and to support the Chamber for all that it offers its community."

El Aranas, Founder, Lighthouse Digital Productions | 350 Main St, Suite H3, Pleasanton | (877) 505-7007
support@lighthousedigitalproductions.com | LighthouseDigitalProductions.com

## Business Spotlight

# Payments Made Personal: NRG Payments Puts Relationships First

For many businesses, payment processing is an essential part of daily operations, but understanding the costs, technology and options behind it can be complicated. NRG Payments, LLC, is working to make that process simpler by combining payment solutions with personalized service and a commitment to supporting local businesses.

Launched in January 2025, NRG Payments helps retailers, restaurants, professional service providers, auto shops, salons, e-commerce businesses and other small to mid-sized companies accept payments reliably and efficiently. Its services include credit and debit card processing, point-of-sale systems, e-commerce payments, ACH transfers, mobile and contactless payments, and customized pricing options.

Rather than offering every business the same package, NRG takes time to understand each customer's operations, challenges and goals. Whether a business needs updated equipment, additional payment methods, a closer look at processing costs or dependable support, the team works to find solutions that make sense for its needs.

NRG Payments was created by PayRio, a nationwide payment processing company founded in Danville in 2022 that specializes in high-risk and highly regulated industries. The experience gained through PayRio helped inspire the launch of NRG, extending that payments expertise and hands-on support to more traditional businesses.

Founder and CEO Aubrey Amatelli brings more than a decade of experience at J.P. Morgan Merchant Services to the business. During her career, she served as an Executive Director Commercial Banker specializing in Technology and Disruptive Commerce in Silicon Valley. That background shaped her belief that strong customer relationships are just as important as technical expertise.

"NRG Payments was built around relationships and community," Amatelli said. "We want to know the businesses we work with, understand what they need, and be the local partner they can actually pick up the phone and call when they need support."

Local service is a cornerstone of the company's approach. Greg Sampson serves as NRG's local consultant, providing East Bay business owners with a dedicated contact who understands their operations and can help them navigate payment processing with greater confidence.

Having experienced the challenges of building a business firsthand, the NRG team understands the importance of having partners who genuinely care about their customers' success. The company strives to provide the same thoughtful attention to a small business opening its first location as it would to a larger organization.

Based in downtown Danville, NRG Payments serves businesses throughout the East Bay, including Pleasanton, San Ramon and surrounding communities, as well as customers nationwide. Its philosophy remains consistent: understand the business first, recommend practical solutions and build relationships that last.



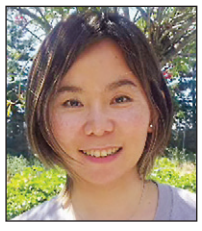

NRG Payments team members enjoy connecting with the community at a local event. The Danville-based company helps businesses simplify payment processing through personalized solutions, local expertise and relationship-driven service.

NRG Payments, LLC | 381 Hartz Ave., Suite A, Danville | (925) 444-0644
Greg Sampson, Local Consultant: greg@nrgpayments.com
General Inquiries: hello@nrgpayments.com | www.nrgpayments.com

## Business Spotlight

# Financial Advisor | Individual & Business Planning | Investment & Protection Strategies

As a Financial Advisor with Pacific Advisors, affiliated with Guardian Life Insurance Company of America, and with securities and advisory services offered through Park Avenue Securities, I work with individuals, families, and small business owners to develop practical, personalized financial strategies.



**DD Piyanontalee**
Financial Advisor

My approach begins with understanding the whole picture. Whether the focus is managing current cash flow, preparing for retirement income, planning for healthcare and long-term care, protecting income and assets, investing, or strengthening a business's retirement plan, my goal is to help clients make informed decisions that align with what matters most to them.

I often think of financial planning as planning for your days and making each day count. We don't simply move through life without thinking about where we're going; our financial lives deserve the same intentionality. I focus first on what we can control, helping make future goals more practical and achievable.

My earlier career in technology developed my interest in the dynamic and complex nature of problem-solving while sharpening my skills in technical analysis, attention to detail, and troubleshooting. I now bring those skills into financial analysis and planning, combining analytical thinking with a genuine interest in helping people.

For business owners, I help review and strengthen retirement plans, including 401(k) plans, with attention to plan costs, design, investment options, employee participation, and overall efficiency. I also provide employee financial education and help businesses navigate retirement savings programs and their responsibilities as employers.

Protection planning is another important part of my work, including life and disability protection and strategies designed to address long-term care and other financial risks. I'm particularly passionate about helping seniors and families think through the financial challenges that can arise later in life.

What sets my approach apart is simple: **listen first, build trust, and focus on practical strategies.** I believe financial planning should be understandable, personal, and connected to real life—not simply about numbers or products.

Whether planning for your personal future or your business's next chapter, I'm here to provide clarity, thoughtful guidance, and ongoing support.

PACIFIC ADVISORS®
*A Good Life for the Rest of Your Life™*

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## Membership Anniversaries

PLEASANTON CHAMBER of COMMERCE

During the past two months, over 85 businesses renewed their investment in the chamber, thereby demonstrating their continued commitment to community excellence while realizing the benefits, services, and representation associated with membership in Pleasanton's leading business organization.

We recommend that you look first to chamber members for your business and consumer needs.

**40 to 44 Years**
Peter MacDonald

**30 to 34 Years**
LogoBoss
The Club at Ruby Hill

**25 to 29 Years**
Tri-Valley Career Center
Hoge Fenton

**20 to 24 Years**
The Clorox Company
Kier & Wright Civil Engineers & Surveyors, Inc.
Best Western Plus Pleasanton Inn

**15 to 19 Years**
USA Mobil Drug Testing of the East Bay

**10 to 14 Years**
Pleasanton Gateway Shopping Center
John Muir Health
Pleasanton American Legion Post 237
Towne Center Books

**5 to 9 Years**
PCJ Real Estate Advisors, LLC
Metcon-Ti, Inc.
BYE Junk
Aloft Dublin-Pleasanton
Merrill Lynch, Michelle Massey
Jeanette Schaub Health & Wellness by Design
PMA Services
David Wong Chiropractic
Fondray

**1 to 4 Years**
Meadowlark Dairy
TownePlace Suites
SpringHill Suites
Garage Kings
Morgan Stanley – Grace L. Nash
Schooley Mitchell of SF Bay Area – Domingo
Seeds of Music Academy
Floor Coverings International
elas.inc.
Veterans Covert Protection Group
Poke House Pleasanton
OCD Anxiety Centers
iSMASH Pleasanton

## Business Spotlight

# More Than a Spa: Rooted Is Building a Wellness Community in Pleasanton




Rooted Wellness & Spa founder Lynn Smet is building a collaborative wellness community in Pleasanton, bringing experienced practitioners and a variety of wellness services together under one roof.

Walk into Rooted Wellness & Spa on any given day and you might find someone receiving an Ashiatsu massage, another client enjoying traditional Thai massage, or someone experiencing a facial, lymphatic massage or Reiki.

Come back in the evening and the treatment rooms may be quiet while something completely different is happening. A group might be gathering for a sound bath, learning from a functional medicine doctor or attending an event bringing multiple wellness modalities together.

That variety is exactly the point.

After more than 26 years as a massage therapist, Rooted founder Lynn Smet, CMT, has learned something about wellness: rarely does one practitioner have every answer.

"I've never believed that I have to be everything to every client," says Smet. "Sometimes the best thing I can do for someone is know another really good practitioner."

That philosophy became the foundation for Rooted Wellness & Spa.

### Somewhere Between a Spa and a Clinic

Rooted sits intentionally between two worlds.

Smet wanted to create an elevated, beautiful space with the warmth of a spa while bringing together experienced, credentialed practitioners capable of helping clients with more than an occasional hour of relaxation.

Many Rooted clients are navigating chronic pain, stress, recovery or ongoing concerns. Others simply want to take care of themselves.

"You can have chronic pain or stress, and still want a beautiful experience," says Smet. "Those two things shouldn't be mutually exclusive."

Rooted was designed to feel warm, comfortable and elevated, while giving clients access to practitioners with specialized education, credentials and distinct approaches to wellness.

### One Roof, Many Practitioners

Rooted isn't built around a standardized spa menu. It is built around its practitioners.

The growing collective includes professionals specializing in therapeutic and specialty massage, Ashiatsu, lymphatic and pregnancy massage, advanced skincare, Reiki, sound healing and other complementary wellness approaches.

Smet brings her own extensive background to that mix. In addition to 26 years in massage therapy, she specializes in Ashiatsu and advanced myofascial work, has extensive training in Thai massage, competes in professional massage competitions and teaches other massage therapists as a DeepFeet Bar Therapy instructor.

But one of the most important ideas behind Rooted is that no one practitioner is supposed to do everything.

Practitioners get to know each other's specialties and recognize when someone else in the collective may have something valuable to offer a client.

The question becomes less about, "How do I keep this client?" and more about, "Who else could help this person?"

For Smet, that's what a wellness collective should be.

### Rooted Is Still Growing

Smet isn't finished building the collective. Rooted is growing in nearly every direction, from adding practitioners and specialties to expanding community events and collaborations.

Next on Smet's wish list is acupuncture.

"I want an acupuncturist," she says. "Actually, I want two."

Acupuncture is a natural next modality for a collective increasingly focused on giving clients different ways to approach chronic pain, stress, recovery and long-term wellness.

Smet wants Rooted to continue growing thoughtfully, bringing in credentialed, experienced practitioners who are excellent at what they do, passionate about their specialties and interested in being part of a collaborative professional community.

The goal isn't to have every wellness service imaginable.

It's to have really good practitioners who know when their work can complement someone else's.

### Rooted After Hours

Some of the best examples of that philosophy happen when the regular appointment day ends.

Rooted has begun opening the space for evening events and experiences available to the broader community. These have included sound baths, group energy work and an educational event with a functional medicine doctor.

"Part of the fun is giving people a way to experience something they might never book on their own," says Smet. "You can come in, learn something, experience something new and meet practitioners you may not have known were right here in Pleasanton."

Those events allow Rooted's practitioners and other local wellness professionals to create experiences together that would be difficult to offer individually.

It turns the physical space into more than a collection of treatment rooms.

It becomes a gathering place.

### A Home for Practitioners, Too

That sense of community isn't only intended for clients.

After decades in the massage profession and years of building her own businesses, Smet understands both the freedom and isolation that can come with being an independent wellness practitioner.

At Rooted, practitioners maintain their individual identities and specialties while having the opportunity to work alongside other professionals.

They can collaborate on events, learn from each other, cross-refer clients and be part of a professional community without giving up what makes their individual practices unique.

It's a model based on the idea that independent doesn't have to mean alone.

### Putting Down Roots in Pleasanton

Ultimately, Smet wants Rooted to become the place people in Pleasanton and the Tri-Valley think of when they realize they may need more than one person in their wellness corner.

Maybe that starts with a massage, facial, lymphatic work, Reiki or a sound bath. Maybe someday soon, it's acupuncture.

Or maybe someone simply walks through the door for an evening event and discovers a practitioner or approach they never knew existed.

Rooted will continue to grow, but Smet is clear about what she doesn't want to lose along the way: experienced, credentialed practitioners, an elevated but welcoming environment, collaboration instead of competition, and the belief that taking care of yourself can be both purposeful and enjoyable.

"You shouldn't have to choose between a beautiful, relaxing environment and highly skilled practitioners," says Smet. "We want Rooted to be both."

And if the right practitioner for what you need happens to be down the hall?

Even better.

Rooted Wellness & Spa | 1987 Santa Rita Road Suite G, Pleasanton | 925-399-1184 | rootedwellnessandspa.com

## Business Spotlight

# Making Math Meaningful: Yajnik Businesses Helps Students Succeed in Math

For students who find math challenging, personalized instruction can make a meaningful difference. Through Yajnik Businesses, Pleasanton resident Kash Yajnik provides math tutoring to help students build confidence, strengthen their understanding and discover how mathematics applies to everyday life.

Yajnik provides one-on-one math tutoring for students in grades 3 through 8, high school and college. For younger students, instruction focuses on arithmetic and algebra while developing foundational learning skills and exploring practical applications of math in daily life. High school students receive individualized support in subjects including algebra, geometry, trigonometry and calculus. College students can also receive assistance with specialized topics such as number systems, Boolean algebra and Karnaugh maps used in logic function minimization.

Recognizing that every student learns differently, Yajnik adapts instruction to meet individual needs. Lessons can shift to different subjects as academic requirements change throughout the school year, and computer-based learning is incorporated when beneficial. Tutoring takes place in the student's home, providing a familiar learning environment with parent-supervised sessions and opportunities for direct communication with parents.

Yajnik brings a diverse educational and professional background to his tutoring business. He holds two master's degrees, including a Master of Science in Electrical Engineering with a concentration in logic design and a Master of Business Administration. His graduate research focused on logic minimization techniques, and his professional experience includes designing and building electronic circuits for tape recorders and computers.



**Kash Yajnik**
founder of
Yajnik Maths Tutor

In addition to his technical background, Yajnik spent more than six years teaching adults through English as a Second Language (ESL) programs at the Pleasanton Public Library. This experience further developed his ability to work with learners and support their educational goals.

As a startup business, Yajnik Businesses reflects Kash's enthusiasm for teaching and his interest in the practical applications of mathematics. His goal is to provide students with individualized guidance that helps them better understand challenging concepts and apply what they learn.

Yajnik Maths Tutor | (925) 963-4891 | Learn more at www.yajniktutor.com

## Ribbon Cuttings

Creating new jobs, stronger economy




**Futures Explored** – Located at 5990 Stoneridge Drive, Suite 106 Pleasanton, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating meaningful opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities through employment, education, and community engagement. Since 1964, Futures Explored has empowered individuals to build independence, develop valuable life and job skills, and achieve their personal goals through person-centered programs and services. Their work helps foster inclusion, dignity, and a stronger, more connected community for all.




**Live & Smile Dental & Orthodontics** – Located at 5906 Stoneridge Mall Road, Pleasanton, is a modern dental practice providing comprehensive dental and orthodontic care for patients of all ages. Their experienced team offers a wide range of services, including general dentistry, cosmetic treatments, dental implants, emergency care, and orthodontics, using advanced technology and a personalized approach. With a focus on comfort, education, and exceptional patient care, Live & Smile Dental & Orthodontics is dedicated to helping patients achieve healthy, confident smiles.

## Business Spotlight

# From the Alps to RP Hope: How One Family Turned a Diagnosis into a Mission

In the summer of 2019, during a month-long cycling tour from South Holland to Italy, one of the founders of RP Hope, Carin Elam, felt a small lump in her breast. She said nothing to the eleven others in the family-organized tour and continued the ride over the Alps on their way to Rome. A few days later, her daughter began noticing black spots in her vision and asked if others were dealing with the same issue. Assuming the change in vision was related to long days, cycling in the hot sun, she focused on nutrition, sun protection, and getting to the finish.

Energized by the ride, the family returned to South Holland, ready for work and the start of a new school year. Unfortunately, within weeks, doctors confirmed that the lump was breast cancer. The family took this in stride knowing that treatment options look good. The greater shock was learning that their daughter, then-16 and about to start her Junior year of high school, had retinitis pigmentosa, a rare, inherited retinal disease that leads to legal blindness. Doctors did not have treatment options for this. "She should never drive, genetic testing is available, she will more than likely lose most of her vision by her late twenties, I'm sorry." It was an overwhelming blur of information.

Inspired to help others navigate this incredibly complex disease, Carin and her husband Eric founded RP Hope. It became a formal 501(c)(3) tax exempt nonprofit in 2021, run by volunteers looking to make a difference. Today, it's launching new, more robust online resources to help families seeking answers and connection.

### Support When It Matters Most

When a patient is diagnosed with RP, the conversation often ends with "I'm sorry." But it doesn't have to. RP Hope's online resources bridge the gap between diagnosis and understanding, connecting patients to the support, information, and community that can help at a very critical moment.

Newly diagnosed patients and families may have questions about next steps. RP Hope's support groups connect families with others who understand the journey. These connections can reduce anxiety and provide practical insights beyond medical expertise.

### Evidence-Based Information

RP Hope maintains comprehensive online research resources. Patients and families can gain access to current, accurate information about their form of the rare genetic retinal disease in a language they can understand—not medical jargon, but some guidance as researchers work tirelessly toward real therapies.

### Pathways to Clinical Trials

The landscape of RP treatment is evolving. RP Hope curates a summary of available clinical trials, helping patients understand their options. Early access to emerging therapies can make a meaningful difference.

### Raising Awareness & Research Dollars

Given that most RP patients maintain central vision, the vision loss is often invisible. A stranger may not understand that a person who is legally blind, with less than 20% functional vision, may need a cane for navigation but can read a text or look at a map. These same strangers can inadvertently judge and shame the person who is simply trying to get from point A to point B, already processing so much. To address this and raise awareness, as well as raise much needed research dollars, RP Hope organizes an annual spring fundraiser. It's global, virtual, and a blast. Learn more. Visit www.rphope.org, call 925.209.1440, or email information@rphope.org.

RP Hope | 4300 Black Ave, PO Box 1163, Pleasanton | 925.209.1440
information@rphope.org | www.rphope.org




RP Hope co-founders pose with their 2023 Spring Fundraiser race bib in front of the Golden Gate Bridge. Inspired by their family's experience with retinitis pigmentosa, they founded the nonprofit to connect patients and families with resources, support and hope.




# Ribbon Cuttings

**Creating new jobs, stronger economy**




**Domenico's Delicatessen** – Located at 201 Main Street, Suite E, Pleasanton, CA 94566, is an Italian-style deli specializing in handcrafted sandwiches, fresh salads, house-made pastas, and quality meats and cheeses prepared with fresh ingredients. Whether you're stopping in for a quick lunch, catering a gathering, or picking up a family meal, Domenico's offers a welcoming atmosphere and a menu inspired by classic Italian deli traditions. Their commitment to fresh, flavorful food and exceptional service has quickly made them a favorite destination in downtown Pleasanton.




**Bravazo Peruvian Cuisine** – Located at 428 Main Street, Pleasanton, CA 94566, is a family-owned restaurant serving fresh Peruvian-inspired cuisine for breakfast, lunch, and dinner in the heart of downtown Pleasanton. Their menu features flavorful favorites such as lomo saltado, ceviche, empanadas, pan con chicharrón, and other chef-crafted dishes that blend traditional Peruvian flavors with a modern touch. With a warm, welcoming atmosphere and a passion for quality ingredients, Bravazo offers a unique dining experience that celebrates the rich flavors of Peru.




**Fusion Wine Bar** – Located at 3030 Bernal Ave., Suite 220, Pleasanton, CA 94566, offers a unique dining experience that blends Vietnamese-inspired cuisine with an extensive selection of local wines, craft cocktails, beer, sake, and mocktails. Featuring shareable small plates, bold flavors, and a warm, modern atmosphere, Fusion Wine Bar is an inviting destination for date nights, gatherings with friends, and special celebrations. With indoor and outdoor seating, it provides a welcoming space to enjoy great food, exceptional drinks, and memorable hospitality.




**Firehouse Subs** – Firehouse Subs is a fast-casual restaurant located at 4233 Rosewood Dr, Suite 10 in Pleasanton, offering a variety of hot specialty subs, salads, sides, and catering options. Founded by firefighter brothers, the restaurant is known for its hearty, flavorful food and commitment to supporting first responders and local communities. The Pleasanton location provides a welcoming space for guests to enjoy their favorite subs while being part of the Firehouse Subs tradition of community service and giving back.




**Learn and Play Montessori School** – Learn and Play Montessori School is a Montessori preschool and childcare program located at 4671 Chabot Drive in Pleasanton. The school provides a nurturing, hands-on learning environment that encourages children's independence, curiosity, and development. Combining Montessori principles with opportunities for learning through play and exploration, Learn & Play Montessori School creates a supportive setting where children can learn, grow, and thrive.




**Trinity Lutheran Church** – Trinity Lutheran Church celebrated 60 years of ministry in Pleasanton, marking this milestone with its annual Oktoberfest event benefiting Little Miracles Inc. The celebration honored the church's longstanding commitment to faith, community service, and supporting local organizations. As an active community partner, Trinity Lutheran Church continues to bring people together through its ministries and outreach efforts. The Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce was pleased to celebrate this milestone with a special ribbon cutting.