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PRESS RELEASE

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Cities of Cupertino, Saratoga, Campbell Receive Prestigious Helen Putnam Award for Youth Focused Political Forum

CUPERTINO, CA – The cities of Cupertino, Saratoga, and Campbell are honored to announce that they have received a prestigious Helen Putnam Award from the League of California Cities for the “Pizza and Politics” political forum for teens.

The program, implemented in 2012, is facilitated during election years (2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2020), and is typically a live televised event. The event was created by teens and for teens, encouraging their engagement and understanding of the civic process.

“The City of Cupertino and our City Council are greatly honored that our efforts over the years to encourage civic involvement at an early age have received this prestigious state-wide recognition,” Cupertino Mayor Darcy Paul said. “In a spirit of cooperation with the cities of Campbell and Saratoga, we have worked hard to provide meaningful opportunities for the next generation of engaged participants to continue our society’s larger project of a public and democratic process that has real integrity. I would like to extend particular thanks to Cupertino’s staff for their assiduous and dedicated efforts over the years in building up these award-winning programs.”

The forums have included debates from candidates competing for positions in the local school districts, city councils, California State Assembly Districts 28, as well as regional Democratic and Republican representatives speaking on behalf of presidential candidates. All events have had very strong attendance with more than 125 audience members during live events and 500-plus views from live event and on-demand recordings.

“Pizza and Politics was started by the Saratoga Youth Commission and Cupertino Teen Commission with the simple goal of empowering the teens in our community to host their own political forum, provide youth with the chance to connect with local leaders, and raise

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awareness about matters important to them,” said Saratoga Mayor Yan Zhao, adding that Campbell joined soon after. “I’m truly impressed by the ability of the Saratoga, Cupertino, and Campbell commissions ability to strengthen the place of youth in politics by hosting a forum by teens for teens.”

The goal of the event is two-fold:

- Expose youth and teens to an official political forum in which they would be able to take a participatory role.
- Create awareness to the current election topics at-hand, which would allow teens to take an active role in civic engagement and prepare themselves to become informed citizens when they reached legal voting age.

“Campbell is committed to engaging with our youth by fostering opportunities to explore what matters to them in today’s world,” said Campbell Mayor Elizabeth “Liz” Gibbons. “The Pizza and Politics Forum expands their networking opportunities on the critical topic of politics. Thank you for recognizing the collaboration between our cities to help inform our youth.”

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