

Angel Gomez, Club Director of Sales

Angel's *Be Alive!*



HERITAGE PARK – Santa Fe Springs

Hello again, everybody!

Happy New Year, everyone! Let's start the year with a casual walk and history lesson.

This month, we are going to the city of Santa Fe Springs to visit one of many historical points of interest in the city. Our "Be Alive!" this month is Heritage Park. It's amazing, with many things to see. Heritage Park is a gorgeous, landscaped six-acre reconstructed ranch estate from the late 1800s. On most weekends you will usually see photographers shooting *quinceañeras*, weddings and family photos. The park has lots of character and many instructional exhibits too.

This park is not for hiking or jogging, but just walking leisurely and enjoying all the scenery in the immediate area. The park is so relaxing you will want to sit down and enjoy your surroundings. I have been here lots of times over the years and have always felt like it was a brand new experience. There is a small café in the park; stop by and have a coffee or small lunch. The museum is really cool and, of course Heritage Park is a wonderful place to bring your family. Bring your kids, grandkids and parents, too. This is historic area for everyone to enjoy, and let's not forget an educational experience.

Let's begin!

The park is a historic site operated by the Santa Fe Springs City Library. The building and the grounds have been restored to show the elegant ranch style from the late 1800s. There are a few exhibits on each side of the park telling the story of the original people of the region, the Tongva/Gabrielino American Indians, in a gorgeous display surrounded by trees in the west side of the park. Coming in at the park's entrance, you come upon the railroad exhibit featuring a vintage steam locomotive. Also in the park are the ruins of a large adobe home, built during Mexican rule.

There is also a carriage barn, which is now a museum.

Carriage Barn

Heritage Park's carriage barn once housed horses and carriages. Today, it contains a museum filled with turn of the century artifacts and memorabilia. Built in 1880 by a Midwesterner named Hawkins, the carriage barn was reconstructed in 1987 based on a photograph taken 100 years earlier. The carriage barn exhibition is designed to show how life was led in this region from 1880 to 1920. It is divided into sections or sets that illustrate the subjects of transportation ("Horse and Buggy Days"), education ("Little Lake School Days"), making a living ("A Living from the Land"), recreation and technology ("Inventing a Better Life") and home-making ("Keeping a Home"). Also in the exhibition is the Santa Fe Springs Mercantile, a four-passenger surrey, timeline and hands-on display for kids.

Tank House Windmill Building

Farmers once pumped ground water out of these buildings, using the wind for pumping power. The restored tank house at Heritage Park could still do this job today if necessary. The windmill was constructed in 1880 in a Carpenter Gothic style to match the carriage barn. If you get a chance, the view from the top is spectacular!

The Plant Conservatory

English country gentlemen once built these structures as nurseries for their exotic hothouse plants. Around 1870, Missouri transplant Eli Hawkins built one at his estate, too. The conservatory is a plant-filled room perfect for reflection and a popular backdrop for wedding ceremonies.

Heritage Park

12100 Mora Dr. • Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670
(562) 946-6476

Area: Six-acre park with historic buildings, a railroad exhibit, and a bird aviary.

Activities: Walking, bird watching, exploring.

Hours: Mon. – Fri.: 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Sat. – Sun.: 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Carriage Barn: Sun., Tues., Thurs.: noon - 4 p.m.

Railroad Exhibit: Daily: noon to 4 p.m. Closed on major holidays.

Directions: From downtown, take the 5 South, then take exit 124 to merge onto the 605 north. Take exit 12 for Telegraph Road toward Santa Fe Springs. Keep right at the fork. Follow signs for Telegraph Road East and merge onto Telegraph Road. Turn right onto Heritage Park Drive. Then turn left onto Mora Drive.

Bird Aviary

Numerous pampered birds keep the area around the aviary filled with song. The aviary was added to the estate in approximately 1916 by the last private owner, Margaret Slusher.

Adobe Foundation

Long before the United States included California, a Mexican, Patricio Ontiveros, lived in an adobe home he built close to where the carriage barn now stands. Archaeologists found the stone foundation of the home in the 1980s. Nearby they discovered a huge trash pit filled with the bones of cattle slaughtered on the rancho and the family's household trash.

Railroad Exhibit

The City of Santa Fe Springs owes a lot to the presence of two railroad lines. The railroad exhibit tells the story of the City's railroad history through the careful restora-

tion of the Santa Fe Railway depot, tracks and signals. At the center of this exhibit sits the No. 870, a restored steam locomotive, and its tender, along with a refrigerated boxcar and caboose. Although no longer operative, this Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe line engine reminds visitors that the little town of Fulton Wells was so pleased to have a railroad line built through here in the 1870s that it changed its name to Santa Fe Springs. The exhibit includes two meeting rooms, a picnic area and a rose garden.

Heritage Park in Santa Fe Springs is a wonderful place to spend the day, or an afternoon. See you next month.

Don't forget to bring your camera, take lots of photos and send them to me at angelomez@cityemployeesclub.com. Bring water, snacks and maybe some sunscreen.

**As always, Be Alive!,
Angel**



The Plant Conservatory.



Aden and I at the Tankhouse Windmill Building.

RIGHT: The Adobe Foundation, former home of Patricio Ontiveros.



A huge trash pit filled with the bones of cattle slaughtered on the rancho along with the original occupant's household trash.



The carriage barn is now a museum with lots of artifacts.



Aden and Angel Jr. wave a big happy hello from the Railroad Exhibit.



Angel Jr. and Aden in the engine section of the train.



Angel Jr. and Aden outside Tongva-style home.



The Adobe Foundation and rancho lifestyle informational boards.