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**Communities Celebrate  
Grand Opening of Neighborhood Centers**  
*Neighborhood Associations will run facility*

*San José* --- Councilmember Forrest Williams and the San Jose Redevelopment Agency will join the Edenvale and Great Oaks neighborhoods in celebration of the grand opening of two new neighborhood centers on **Saturday, January 22 at 11:30 a.m.**, starting at Stipe Elementary School and concluding at Edenvale Elementary School.

The opening of these facilities topped the neighborhoods' list of priority projects as part of the City of San José Strong Neighborhoods Initiative (SNI).

"I congratulate Edenvale Roundtable Community Association (ERCA) and Great Oaks Neighborhood Association (GONA) for their dedication and perseverance to obtain neighborhood centers for their respective community," said Councilmember Forrest Williams, whose council district includes the Edenvale-Great Oaks SNI Area. "I am very pleased to see these two neighborhood centers open. They will provide the ERCA and GONA neighborhoods a place to meet and host community activities."

"This could not have been realized without the strong partnership of the Oak Grove School District, the City of San José, the San Jose Redevelopment Agency (SJRA) and Edenvale/Great Oaks Plan Implementation Coalition (EGOPIC). I extend my thanks for everyone's hard work to realize this dream of improving the Edenvale and Great Oaks neighborhoods."

The neighborhood associations will be responsible for the operation of the two centers, handling everything from program planning and service delivery to room reservations and maintenance.

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“I am ecstatic—it’s hard to find the words to describe what this means to me and our neighborhood. It’s been a long haul, but well worth all the time and effort,” said Tami Moore, president of EGOPIIC and ERCA. “This is one more thing we accomplished as a group, as a community, and it will open doors for other communities as well.”

The two new neighborhood centers are a welcome addition for the community’s diverse residents. On any given day, more than 100 families are served at the existing decade-old ERCA portable located on the grounds of Edenvale Elementary School. In the GONA neighborhood to the north, there is no existing center.

“For our community, the centers signify a home. A home that will provide so many more ways to further enrich our community,” said Moore.

GONA residents will be able to hold regular meetings in their own center, while ERCA residents will feel comfortable, not cramped, when they visit their center for services. Services offered will include a food bank, a clothes closet, migrant education, and the community’s own expanded holiday help program.

The holiday help program is supported through contributions from the Family Giving Tree, Dolce/Hayes Mansion, Oak Grove School District staff, Cathedral of Faith, South Hill Community, Holy Family, and St. Vincent de Paul churches; Union United Youth Group, the Edenvale Youth and Family Center, senior Girl Scout troop # 973, as well as private contributors.

The new GONA center will also provide a meeting space for many different events and meetings, and the community hopes to provide a neighborhood computer center in the near future.

“Once open, we will partner with existing and new community groups to offer outreach services,” said David Sommers, president of GONA. “In the evening, we plan to have community group meetings, adult education classes, and during the day, the school may want to use the center. We plan to make it an open center for all.”

The partnership between GONA and Resources for Families and Communities (RFC) is just one example of a strong bond between the neighborhood association and a non-profit agency. RFC will act as the fiscal agent and provide initial program support for the GONA neighborhood center.

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ERCA and GONA joined forces to create one neighborhood voice, known as the Edenvale/Great Oaks Plan Implementation Coalition (EGOPIC). EGOPIC serves as the SNI Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC) with the focus on completing projects identified in their neighborhood.

EGOPIC envisioned neighborhood hubs where community development activities and other services would strengthen and support the neighborhood associations and residents. This vision has become a reality through a strong partnership between EGOPIC, the Oak Grove School District, the City of San José Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS) and the San Jose Redevelopment Agency.

“We are committed to delivering the neighborhood top priority projects in our SNI communities,” said Harry Mavrogenes, executive director for San Jose Redevelopment Agency. “We want the community to know that they will be rewarded for their dedication and hard work to bring projects like this forward.”

The GONA and ERCA centers are located on the grounds of Stipe and Edenvale Elementary Schools, respectively. The 960 square-foot GONA and 1,960 square-foot ERCA modular neighborhood centers will each include a multi-purpose area, kitchen, office space, restrooms, and landscaped patio areas.

Funding for the \$483,700 ERCA and \$244,200 GONA facilities was provided by the San Jose Redevelopment Agency and grants from the City of San José Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy.

This South San José neighborhood has a long history of leadership. It is one of a handful of communities that began dreaming about its ideal community in 1997 through the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy before it was updated and merged into an SNI area.

The San Jose Redevelopment Agency is dedicated to improving the quality of life for all who live and work in San José. Governed by the City Council, the SJRA facilitates and oversees comprehensive programs for development to revitalize the City’s Downtown, neighborhoods, and industrial areas. For more information, visit [www.sjredevelopment.org](http://www.sjredevelopment.org).

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