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CURRENT

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Dear Reader,

Arts and Culture El Dorado is deeply honored and excited to help the El Dorado Irrigation District celebrate their centennial with “Water Ways”, a new exhibition in our Switchboard Gallery. The cover of this issue features an image from the exhibition overlaid with the title “Current”. This title evokes water—the flows managed for a hundred years by EID—but also flows of other kinds encountered in these articles: the flowing molten glass in 2BGlass’s hot shop and studio in Cameron Park; the artistic energy flowing through the Tahoe area as a number of public art projects get underway. “Current” also evokes the present, the most recent, such as the 2025-2027 El Dorado County Poet Laureate, Moira Magneson, who is profiled in these pages and for whom river currents are an enduring source of inspiration, and the ongoing programs and services provided throughout El Dorado County by Arts and Culture El Dorado, which are featured at the end of this issue.

Finally, the title echoes the name of one of our other publications, “Creative Currents”, a regular column in the Mountain Democrat. These columns profile local creatives, whose practices range from the culinary to the performing arts, and celebrate the good work they do in our community. If you haven’t encountered these columns yet, you can find them on our website at www.artsandcultureeldorado.org/creative-currents.

Thank you for supporting culture and the arts in El Dorado County.



Public Art in Motion: Meyers Roundabout Projects Advance

After an overwhelmingly successful public survey, Arts and Culture El Dorado is moving full steam ahead with plans to bring public art into the Meyers roundabouts.

Nearly 400 community members participated in the survey, and fewer than one percent expressed concerns about the addition of art in these spaces. The response signals strong local support and sets a clear foundation for the project's next steps.

The feedback gathered is now being carefully compiled and will inform the forthcoming Request for Proposals (RFP). Artists will be asked to consider the survey results as they develop their concepts, ensuring the final designs reflect the character, history, and vision of the South Shore community. Contracts with the County and Caltrans are currently being finalized, and once complete, the RFP will be released for a two-month submission period.

During that time, artists from across the region will be invited to apply. Proposals will be reviewed by a selection committee made up of community members who represent a diverse range of perspectives. Evaluation will focus on qualifications, artistic vision, design quality, and feasibility, with preference given to artists who live and work locally. This inclusive process is designed to highlight both artistic excellence and community connection.

Simultaneously, Arts and Culture El Dorado will launch a fundraising campaign to help bring these ambitious projects to life. The success of the Meyers roundabout art installations will depend on community support and successful fundraising efforts.

If all proceeds as planned, installation is expected in fall 2026, pending permitting and approvals. Those interested in staying informed or contributing to the effort can find updates and opportunities on Arts and Culture El Dorado's website. Click the QR code below to sign up for updates and learn more about the project.



**sign up for news about
the Meyers roundabout
artworks.**

The Meyers roundabout initiative is a clear example of public art in motion: shaped by community voices, guided by collaboration, and designed to leave a lasting cultural imprint on El Dorado County.

Chemistry & Alchemy

in cameron park

2BGlass, a glassblowing studio and giftshop in Cameron Park, started as a dream shared by two brothers: Tate and Aaron Bezdek. The Bezdek brothers, who are originally from Cameron Park, have been blowing glass together since they were 17, working in hot shops and production studios in Sacramento and Berkeley. It was while they were working in Berkeley that the idea for 2BGlass crystallized—and where they met their business partner, Ash Koss.



“We were all dreamers with big ideas,” Ash says. “We just decided to jump into this together.” In 2019, the trio obtained a 5,000-square-foot space in Cameron Park. “We found the perfect building here in Cameron Park,” Ash explains. “We feel so lucky. Once we found this place, it was really apparent that we were supposed to be here. It feels like home.” More than just a homecoming for the brothers, it was the realization of their dream and the start of a remarkable story for 2BGlass.

Tate, Aaron, and Ash started out with a wide-ranging vision of the services they could offer, from glass artworks, which they have displayed throughout Northern California, to glassblowing workshops for members of the community. The pandemic, which started shortly after they moved into their space in Cameron Park, only pushed them to be more creative. “To survive during Covid we had to be scrappy and resourceful, but now that we are scaling the business, we’re focusing on pumpkins, ornaments, and drinkware. We want to be a celebration-focused gift shop.”

The pumpkins, in particular, have become a kind of mascot for 2BGlass: “Most glassblowers don’t want to make pumpkins, because they’re one of the first things you learn to make and they cover a lot of the technical skills,” Ash explains. “But people absolutely love pumpkins, and no one else has given this much time and consideration to making pumpkins really exceptional. It’s kind of an underdog thing for us.” The pumpkins also inspired one of their most popular events: The Handblown Glass Pumpkin Patch, which takes place in September and October. “The energy and the vibes that we have at the events are so contagious. It’s like an adult scavenger hunt. And it’s

contagious for us as well—we really enjoy doing it because we can see everyone having so much fun.”

As their business and their impact on the community continue to grow, so too does their social media following. In fact, a few videos on YouTube and Instagram have gone viral. “It’s really powerful to experience what that kind of exposure can do for a small business,” Ash says. “It’s great to see how much appreciation there is for the craft. It’s rewarding, and it’s a great reminder—sometimes when you’re around glassblowing all day, you can forget how cool it is. It’s so fun to be able to share it with people.”

Ash credits teamwork for the success of 2BGlass. Each of the three co-owners has their own area of expertise, but they are united by a shared vision. “This didn’t happen overnight, but we have three brains pushing this forward and keeping us all accountable. Having business partners is invaluable, even just to keep you sane after you’ve worked 24 days in a row,” Ash explains.

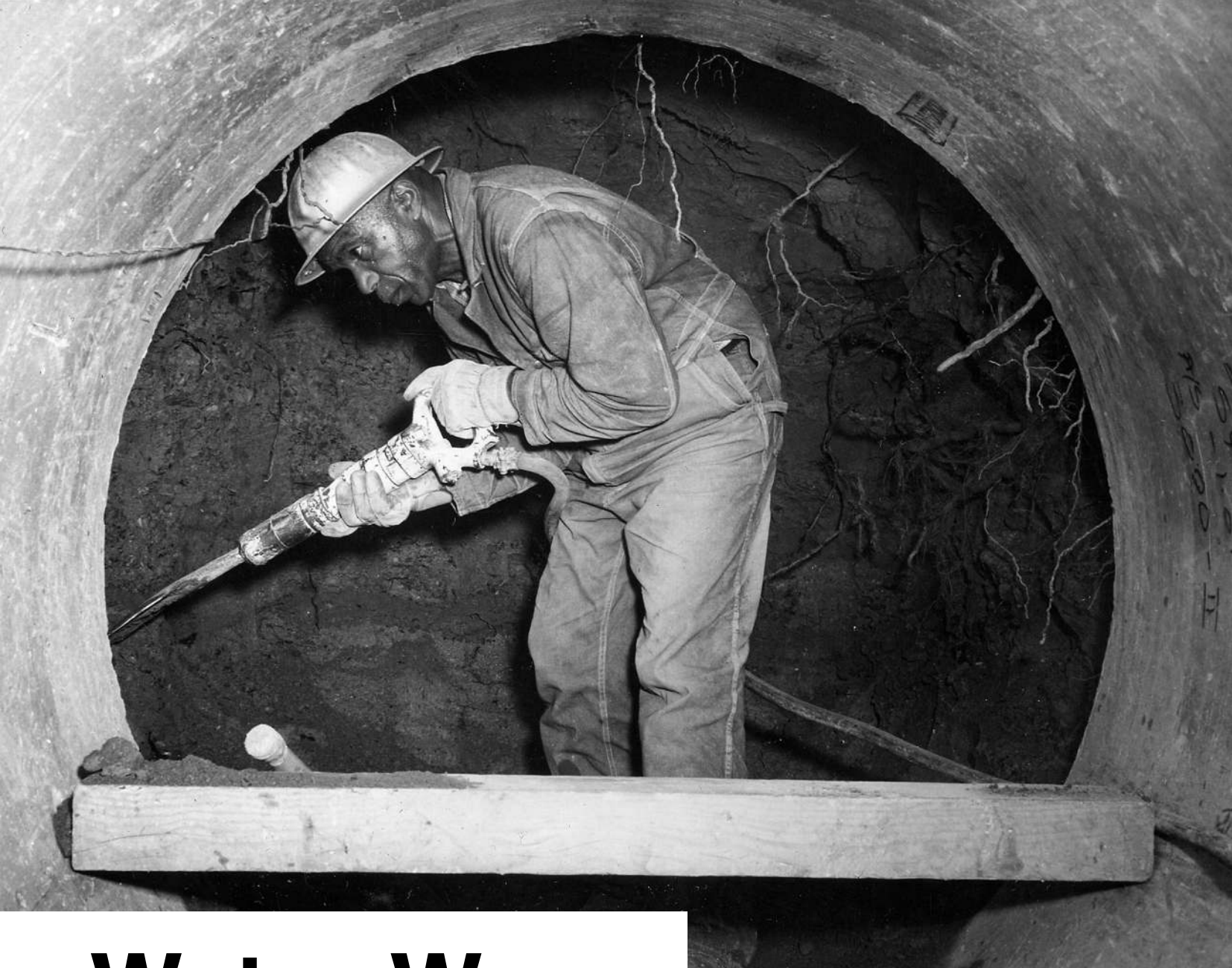
The hard work is paying off, but it is also a reward in itself. “Owning a glassblowing studio, I’m surrounded by color all the time... I could be filling out a spreadsheet, but it still feels like I’m working with color and being creative. Also, you’re working with fire. It’s kind of hardcore. Glass is fun and rough and ancient. It has so much character to it. It’s sand, soda, and lime, this powdery, dull, gritty material that turns into something crystal clear, solid and smooth. The chemistry, the alchemy—it’s just amazing. It’s magic on earth.”

To learn more about 2BGlass, visit www.2bglass.com or follow them @2BGlass on YouTube, Instagram, or TikTok.



Aaron Bezdek, Tate Bezdek, and Ash Koss





Water Ways

"Water Ways: El Dorado Irrigation District's Centennial", the new exhibition in Switchboard Gallery, located at 525 Main Street in Placerville, will run through October 5, 2025. The following is a curatorial note from Marya Osucha, Exhibitions Curator.

In 1977, celebrated California journalist Joan Didion wrote an essay entitled "Holy Water," in which she marvels at the intricacies of water management in California, describing her interest in California waterworks as obsessive: "Not many people I know," she writes, "carry their end of the conversation when I want to talk about water deliveries, even when I stress that these

deliveries affect their lives, indirectly, every day." Didion goes on to state, "As it happens my own reverence for water has always taken the form of this constant meditation upon where the water is, of an obsessive interest not in the politics of water but in the waterworks themselves, in the movement of water through aqueducts and siphons and pumps and forebays and afterbays and weirs and drains, in plumbing on the grand scale."

I first read this essay twenty-some years ago, and it was to this essay my mind first returned when I was approached with the idea for an

exhibition in partnership with the El Dorado Irrigation District (EID). Our lives, our communities, our economies depend on successful management of natural resources. I recalled the poetry that Didion was able to see imbedded in California's intricate system of waterways. I hoped to find a way to bring some of this poetry to the visual material that would comprise our exhibition.

Looking at the history of infrastructure, in this case water management, provides us with a different lens for understanding ourselves, our dependency on natural resources, and



"Our infrastructural systems tell a story of who we are as a society or even a civilization, one that's about the relationship we have with one another and the planet that's our home."

- Deb Chachra, *How Infrastructure Works: Inside the Systems That Shape Our World*



our shifting values as a community. In planning this exhibition, our curatorial team has taken inspiration from engineering scholar Deb Chachra and her book *How Infrastructure Works: Inside the Systems that Shape Our World* when she states: "Infrastructure is inextricable from culture, woven as it is into our daily life as well as our history, politics, civic life, and our visions for our families and our communities."

To explore this idea, EID invited us to select images from their extensive photographic archive. The exhibition includes photographs dating back to the early 20th century, as communities continued to shift following the California Gold Rush, through to the present day. Many of the photographs on display are black and white, exquisitely composed by unknown photographers, and sit squarely at a pivotal moment in the history of photography. During the first half of the 20th century, photographers such as Lewis Hine and Margaret Bourke-White

documented the changing industrial landscape of the United States. Just as in their celebrated photographs, the images included in *Water Ways* expose the beauty in the mechanical, and the engaging contrast between industrial and organic forms.

While examining how El Dorado County's waterways intersect with our communities and cultures, we must acknowledge that indigenous communities had been managing and stewarding natural waterways long before California Gold Rush migrants rushed to the area and began to claim water rights as their own. We must then acknowledge, as Chachra poignantly says, that "It's impossible to extricate infrastructure from a larger history of conquest, colonialism, and capitalism [...]." To ignore this chapter of our regional history and the development of the infrastructure we continue to rely on today would be negligent.

Many of the reservoirs that are still in use for agricultural irrigation and

drinking water began as privately-owned water sources; they served as ill-gotten business ventures for a select few who hadn't prospered in their hunt for gold and saw opportunity in other natural resources. What began as private enterprise eventually fell under the purview of a public agency committed to ensuring a secure water supply and supporting the growth of an agricultural economy. In 1925, El Dorado County residents voted to form El Dorado Irrigation District.

EID continues their dedication to providing clean water originating in the high Sierra. Their water management continues to help shape economic, ecological, and cultural aspects of El Dorado County. Agriculture remains an economic cornerstone. The outdoor recreation opportunities that EID fosters still attract visitors and new residents. The story of EID is the story of us, it's a story of change, and it's a story of throughlines.

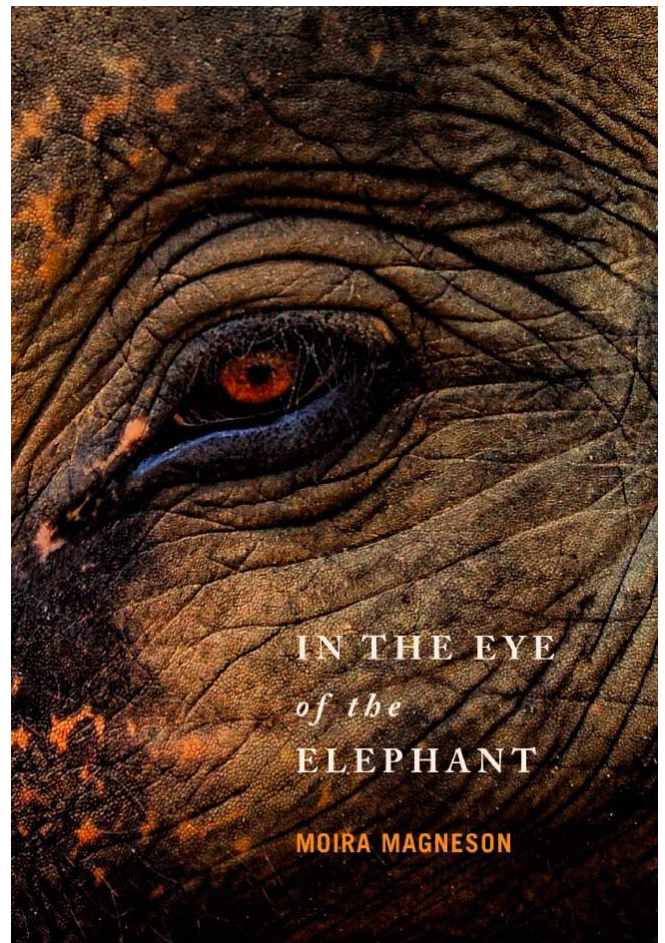
PORTALS INTO POETRY: MOIRA MAGNESON, POET LAUREATE

Moira Magneson, a Placerville-based poet, was recently announced by Arts and Culture El Dorado as the 2025-2027 El Dorado County Poet Laureate. The post of El Dorado County Poet Laureate is bestowed on a noted local poet to honor his or her body of work and to celebrate poetry as an art form. The Poet Laureate acts as an ambassador for the literary arts in El Dorado County, with a special poetry project and a literary tour of the County on the Laureate Trail.

The author of “A River Called Home: A River Fable”, an illustrated novella, and “In the Eye of the Elephant”, a full-length collection of poetry, Moira is a sharp observer of wild things—places, animals, and human interiority—and a poet who finds inspiration in every aspect of El Dorado County. “My poems are largely narrative poems. They’re stories, really, and El Dorado County is so rich in stories—it’s rich with beauty, history, and turmoil.”

Moira may be the quintessential El Dorado County poet, but she was born and raised in the Bay Area. Her studies took her up and down the West Coast, from Washington’s College of the Evergreens to UC Davis, and eventually into the American Heartland for a Masters of Fine Arts at the prestigious Iowa Writers’ Workshop. After a stint writing for the TV Show “Divorce Court” in Los Angeles (“It was a hoot,” she recalls), Moira returned to the Bay Area. All along, there were rivers: “The thread of rivers started in high school and has been a continuous thread ever since,” Moira explains. “I worked as a river guide to support myself through school—and because I loved it, too. Many of my poems address rivers.” The river eventually brought her to Placerville: she met her husband, Eric, on a river trip in Nepal, and moved with him to Placerville in 1997.

Moira, who has taught poetry for much of her career, brings an educator’s sensibility to the Poet Laureate position. “So much of poetry is about mystery, but my goal is to demystify poetry and make it approachable for people,” she says. “People have often been made to think that poetry is dead and stale and obscure. I want it to have life and not be a corpse.” For Moira, introducing people to poetry is akin to guiding them “through the wardrobe in *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*: you go into this incredible land that people don’t know about or only knew about once upon a time, through nursery rhymes, this territory that is both known and unknown.”



In teaching poetry, Moira also passes through a wardrobe of her own. “Your students come to you with the most amazing, heart-stopping array of stories. You begin to develop a reverence for stories as a consequence,” she explains. “It’s a two-way street with teaching—their bravery and their courage has helped me to be courageous with my writing.” As Poet Laureate, that two-way street will run through communities throughout El Dorado County. On the Laureate Trail, which brings the Poet Laureate to each branch library in the county, and through her poetry project, which each Poet Laureate develops during their term, Moira will act as an ambassador for the literary arts while building community around poetry. For Moira, connection—with rivers, animals, loved ones, communities—is at the very heart of the poetic impulse: “In order to write well, or in order to write a poem, it is a heart-opening process—the joy and the beauty and the sadness that come with having an open heart.”

During her term as Poet Laureate, Moira sees an opportunity to use poetry, that most human and humane of art forms, to uplift El Dorado County residents. “Poetry allows you to feel,” Moira says. “If you encounter the right poem for you—and everyone has a different portal into a poem—it affirms your humanity; it allows you to feel and reflect in ways that we might have forgotten how to. It lets us be bigger than ourselves.”

Requiem

This fall, every day on my way to work, I see
the slaughtered bucks slumped along the roadside,
huge dun-colored bodies stilled, the urgency
that summoned them long gone. Each animal I pass
I praise. And though I don’t believe, I say
a prayer—God bless—as if words were a bridge
they could clatter across, continuing on,
following the delicious tang and heat
of love, as if they could still couple, complete
themselves in the ecstasy each of us desires, as if
words could be something more than syllables
ghosting air on a dark November morning.



2023-2025 Poet Laureate Stephen Meadows with Moira Magneson

Support Our Programs

Arts and Culture El Dorado offers crucial programs and services throughout El Dorado County. From children to veterans, we are committed to serving our community. To support these programs, visit artsandcultureeldorado.org or follow the QR code.

We appreciate every donation, because every donation counts.



Young Artist Awards

This awards program recognizes the inspiring potential and exceptional promise of El Dorado County High School Juniors and Seniors in four categories: Music, Theatre, Visual Art, and Nature-Inspired Art. The students also receive a \$500 honorarium.



Arts Incubator

By helping local grassroots organizations achieve their full potential, the Arts Incubator enriches the cultural ecosystem of El Dorado County and acts as a bridge to connect local creatives to the larger community.



Poet Laureate

The post of El Dorado County Poet Laureate is bestowed on a noted local poet to honor his or her body of work and to celebrate poetry as an art form. The Poet Laureate acts as an ambassador for the literary arts in El Dorado County.



Veterans' Voices Writing Workshop

Veterans' Voices is a free writing workshop that is open to all veterans, from any branch of service. It offers a supportive environment and the tools needed for the writing of fiction and nonfiction stories, service related or not, as well as memoir, poetry and drama. Newcomers are always welcome.



Poetry Out Loud

Poetry Out Loud is a national poetry recitation competition for high school students. The aim of Poetry Out Loud is to encourage the study and appreciation of great poetry. The competition inspires hundreds of high school students each year to discover the beauty and brilliance of the literary canon.



Switchboard Gallery

Switchboard Gallery hosts a specially curated rotating exhibition series celebrating all that is exceptional about El Dorado County. The gallery, which is free to the public, is named as an homage to the building's original purpose as the Pacific Telephone Company building.



Slope & Basin

Slope & Basin is a regional literary journal publishing poetry and prose from writers based in El Dorado County. The journal's name embraces both the Western Slope of the Sierra Nevada and the Lake Tahoe Basin, reflecting our commitment to writers and readers in every corner of our County.

2025 Annual Benefit Supporters

Arts and Culture El Dorado thanks the generous patrons who supported our 2025 Annual Benefit, honoring Terrie Bennett, Christa Campbell, Krista Potter, and Wendy Thomas.

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Jacob Rigoli and Sean Manwaring

David and Terri Thomas

Robert and Georgia Toscano

Dave Warren

Marian Washburn

Wendy Westsmith

Paul Zappettini and Erin Dealey

Special thanks to Christa Campbell and her staff for hosting us at beautiful Rainbow Orchards.

In Memoriam: We were saddened to learn of the passing of Tish Langston, whose service to El Dorado County over many decades focused primarily on children with disabilities and their families. She supported our Young Artist Award program, for whom one of the awards is named – the Lanny Langston Award for Theater. Lanny, co-founder of Imagination Theater, was Tish's husband for nearly five decades.



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Arts and Culture El Dorado's mission to promote, connect, and empower arts and culture throughout the county is achieved by targeted programs and services, a vibrant gallery exhibition series, and a focus on initiatives which support and sustain the cultural life of the region.