



# Heritage Park

## 1st Annual Celebration



April 3<sup>rd</sup> was a day of celebration for the Heritage Park neighborhood as residents came together to celebrate a year of accomplishments. The celebration was hosted by Supervisor Perez, in partnership with California State University Bakersfield Delta Zeta Tau, Carnales Unidos Car Club, Community Action Partnership of Kern County—Head Start, local resident leaders, Promotoras de Salud, Omni Family Health, Stay Focused Ministries' and Kern County's Fire, Human Services, Parks and Recreation, Public Health, Veterans Services Departments. The whole family was able to participate in basketball games, picnic games (e.g. corn hole toss), skate park competition, a soccer clinic and a wonderful bbq that was prepared by the Kern County Fire Department. In addition, free health screenings and a mini-health and community resources fair were offered. Throughout the day, residents enthusiastically expressed interest in having similar events more often to 1) actively use the park and 2) get to know more of their neighbors; and to continue moving this improvement project forward.

Heritage Park, located at the corner of Mt. Vernon Ave and Bernard St, is one of the few large greenspaces in East Bakersfield. It provides serenity in the middle of an urban area with older trees that provide an abundance of natural shade, and it also has numerous amenities for physical activity, including a basketball court, skate park, soccer field, and a playground for young children. Local residents and youth, with support from local agencies, have developed and agreed upon a new park master plan. With time and funding, Heritage Park will be transformed into a park with complete sidewalks, walking paths, and additional lighting. In addition, residents and youth would like to see a dog park, a new and improved garden area, and more restrooms. As part of this project, residents and youth have helped organize park clean-ups to maintain and upkeep the park.

In the past year, the Kern County Parks and Recreation Department has been a great partner by helping coordinate and plan improvement and/or beautification projects. New waste bins have been placed throughout the park near some picnic areas and the bus stop. Residents voiced their concerns about sand levels in the playground and the Department ordered new sand and coordinated with one of the scheduled clean-ups to have residents and youth help with the installation. A local youth soccer team has helped in maintaining the soccer field by leveling the ground and outlining the field. Lastly, the basketball court has been resurfaced in East Bakersfield High colors in recognition of the great work students have done in assessing and volunteering at the park.

The improvement project at Heritage Park is a great example of residents and youth working together with local agencies and organizations and thriving in creating healthy places to live, work, and play.

