




San Jose Parks Foundation Honors

Thursday, August 10, 2023 5:30pm – 7:30pm
Veggielution, 647 S. King Rd, San Jose 95116

The 2023 Honorees

Veggielution – Shiloh Ballard – Ed Solis

Sponsored by: 

Veggielution



Veggielution

The mission of Veggielution is to connect people from diverse backgrounds outdoors through food and farming to build community in East San José.

Founded in 2008, the 2-acre community farm and gathering space is located in Emma Prusch Farm Park in the Mayfair neighborhood, one of the most impoverished areas in Silicon Valley. Mayfair residents suffer from conditions that affect many immigrant and working-class populations, including higher rates of obesity and diabetes, significant education and earning gaps, lack of access to safe, well-maintained outdoor spaces, and limited options for fresh, healthy food.

The Veggielution Team – of staff, volunteers and donors – believes in building social capital--the network of social connections that exist between people, which enable and encourage social cooperation and civic engagement--is the key to addressing these issues. There are three areas of impact - Community Engagement, Youth Education, and Leadership Development.

Veggielution empowers youth and adults from diverse backgrounds to create a sustainable food system in San Jose. This unique urban farm engages the community by providing access to healthy and local food, creating youth leadership opportunities, and developing creative solutions to social and environmental justice issues.

After 15 years, Veggielution is an essential part of the Eastside Community with impact beyond its borders that touches thousands and is an example of a park that really is a community treasure.

Shiloh Ballard



As the esteemed Executive Director of the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition (SVBC) and a lover of harnessing the power of the people to build more healthy & just communities, Shiloh Ballard has had an outsized impact on the entire community, even those who never ride a bicycle.

Shiloh took over leadership of SVBC after devoting over 14 years at the Silicon Valley Leadership Group as Senior Vice President of Housing and Community Development. In her role with the Leadership Group, Shiloh helped direct the organization's housing, transportation and land use policy portfolio working with industry, civic, and community leaders to develop innovative solutions to the region's growth challenges.

She has combined her broad knowledge of and great love for her community to have a major, lasting impact on the lives of thousands of citizens. As an example of her leadership, Shiloh is a member of the San José Planning Commission.

Shiloh has led SVBC in its efforts to build healthier and more just communities by making bicycling safe and accessible for everyone. As the primary advocacy group for bicyclists and would-be bicyclists in Silicon Valley, her leadership in this regard has had a positive impact on all transportation.

She has educated civic leaders, as well as the general public through a myriad of programs, including Safe Routes to School Programs for youth and adult bike safety classes. Annual Events include Bike To Wherever Day and Silicon Valley Bike Summit. Shiloh Ballard is the ultimate "biketivist".

Needless to say, her work has had a profoundly positive effect on San Jose's Parks & Trails and will continue to have an impact for the foreseeable future.

Ed Solis



Ed Solis

Ed Solis is an energized and energizing individual. When people first hear Ed speak about his work, they want to join him and follow him. His passion is contagious and it is why he is being honored this year by San Jose Parks Foundation.

He has spent over two decades devoting his energy and expertise to San Jose's Department of Parks Recreation & Neighborhood Services (PRNS) as a leader in various areas and endeavors. As a combat veteran who determined to do good in the world after his service, Ed has made good on that goal... and then some!

As Recreation Superintendent for the City of San José, Ed Solis has created and managed Viva CalleSJ Open Streets Program, which temporarily transforms several miles of San José's roads into a car-free park. The program nurtures social integration and connects communities across the city by bridging social, economic and geographic divides.

Ed attended a workshop in Guadalajara, Mexico nearly a decade ago that was led by Gil Peñalosa, the esteemed former-Mayor of Bogotá, Columbia, who was promoting his 'Open Streets Movement'. Twenty-six American cities sent representatives, but only Ed returned to his city to create an Open Streets event – he called it Viva CalleSJ, and it has become one of the most successful public events ever staged in San Jose.

As of now, hundreds of thousands of pedestrians, skaters, skate boarders, bicyclists, runners, hikers, in every kind of configuration from small family to clubs and groups, have participated in the periodic Viva CalleSJ extravaganzas, where every kind of people-powered vehicle inhabits miles of secured, car-free streets.

Viva CalleSJ has become a great unifying, uplifting event that occurs three times each year, creating a virtual park across San Jose. Drawing tens of thousands of people each time, Viva CalleSJ will always provide an element of Ed's enthusiasm.

