



Press Release
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Supervisor Simitian, Mayor Wei, and Community Leaders Celebrate Ribbon-Cutting and Naming Ceremony at Camp Via West

CUPERTINO, CA –On August 2, 2023, Santa Clara County Supervisor Joe Simitian, Cupertino Mayor Hung Wei, and other community leaders gathered to celebrate Camp Via West's newly renovated sports field with a ribbon cutting and naming ceremony. Children and adults with developmental disabilities will enjoy a more inclusive and accessible social and recreational camp experience thanks to support from Santa Clara County, Helpers Community, and private donations.

Camp Via West, one of the few remaining camps serving children and adults with developmental disabilities in the region, provides a wide variety of respite and inclusion camps on a beautiful 13.5-acre campus nestled in the Cupertino foothills. "Inclusivity is no longer just a buzzword. AbilityPath and Camp Via West have made it a reality. This new sports field, in the heart of the valley, will hopefully alleviate some longstanding accessibility challenges for our community members with disabilities who want to engage in camp activities," said Simitian. "I'm delighted we're making our community more accessible for all."

The new sports field features multi-use turf with football and soccer lines, ADA-compliant bathrooms, a concession stand, tents for shade, and new sports equipment with storage. Additionally, it allows community partnerships with organizations like Special Olympics Northern California, which announced a new collaboration with Camp Via West, an affiliate of AbilityPath, to use the field.

"It's a spectacular place. Our goal is to use this new state-of-the-art facility to really power up our local athletic programs and athletes. Here, we can showcase the athletes' abilities and break down stereotypes. It's a gathering place for spectators to engage in and support the disabilities community," said David Solo, CEO of Special Olympics of Northern California. "Additionally, this collaboration brings much potential for the families we serve to attend the camp too."

Individuals with disabilities of all ages come to Camp Via West from nine counties in the greater Bay Area where they enjoy swimming, hiking, riding horses, arts and crafts, theater, and other sporting activities in its new athletic field.

"It's a wonderful, safe place where families can connect. Children can learn, grow, and play with their peers, build friendships, develop self-confidence, and enjoy physical activity in this gem of our great city," said Mayor Wei. "Camp Via West has a special place in my heart. It's not just a place for people to come and be served. It's a place where all of us can find some hope in the world."

In June 2022, Camp Via West became an affiliate of AbilityPath, one of the largest and oldest nonprofits on the Peninsula, serving children and adults with developmental disabilities and their families.

"When AbilityPath and Camp Via West joined forces just over a year ago, we knew it was an extraordinary place. A place that had the potential to be an even greater destination for those we serve," said Bryan Neider, CEO of AbilityPath and Camp Via West. "We wanted the Camp experience to be the best it could be for the campers and the entire community. They deserve nothing less!"

Neider added, "Investing in infrastructure improvements now will pay off for years to come. Investing in the well-being and development of our campers is part of our larger, collective mission of creating innovative programs that promote inclusion and provide opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families to thrive."

During the ribbon-cutting ceremony, Neider announced that the sports field would be dedicated in memory of one of Camp Via West's long-time campers, Bryce Dolinko. The field will be named the Camp Via West Sports Field in memory of Bryce Dolinko. Bryce's mother and father, Erin and Adam Dolinko, attended the event to accept the honors.

"We became involved in Camp Via West more than 15 years ago. Since our son passed, all we have are our memories. And many of our most cherished memories were made at this camp," said Dolinko, on behalf of him and his wife Erin. "Now, other families will also have the opportunity to create memories and enjoy this newly improved camp experience. It's truly a lovely way to honor our son's memory."

Schools, churches, and organizations can utilize Camp Via West for group retreats. "The Bay Area now has a beautiful new outdoor space thanks to all of our supporters, funders, and community members who believe in our vision for equality and opportunity for people of ALL abilities," Neider said. "It's a living example of what full inclusion can be."

"The pandemic has shown us that outdoor spaces are here to stay," said Supervisor Simitian. "Investing in inclusive and accessible facilities like Camp Via West should be the norm, not the exception."

To learn more about Camp Via West, visit viaservices.org/programs/camp-via-west/

About Camp Via West

One of the few remaining camps serving individuals with developmental disabilities in the region, Camp Via West provides programming and a wide variety of respite and inclusion camps for children and adults in Santa Clara County on a 13.5-acre campus located on County-owned land in the Cupertino foothills. Their innovative programs are supervised by trained staff who help campers learn new skills, develop meaningful relationships, and build confidence while enjoying the outdoors. Camp Via West offers sessions specifically designed for young people ages 5 to 17 and specific sessions geared to young adults and adults, including seniors, with a wide array of activities, including swimming, arts and crafts, sports and games, and gardening. The camp typically serves anywhere from 450 to 800 campers each summer. For more information, visit [Camp Via West](#).

About AbilityPath

AbilityPath has been a cornerstone of our community for 100 years, providing a lifespan of support services to individuals with special needs and developmental disabilities in the greater Bay Area. Our mission is to empower people with special needs to achieve their full potential through innovative, inclusive programs and community partnerships. With educational, therapeutic, vocational, and family support services, we are distinctive in providing support to an individual throughout their lifetime. We collaborate with businesses, third-party providers, local nonprofits, and various organizations to bring the highest quality services to the children, youth, and adults in our programs. Together, we are creating a world where people of all abilities are fully accepted, respected, and included in all aspects of life – in the classroom, the workplace, and in our communities. Join us in “Inspiring Inclusion.” For more information, visit abilitypath.org.