

## What happened to these inspiring, ordinary people?

By Joe Rodriguez Mercury News Columnist San Jose Mercury News

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This column usually introduces readers to inspiring people who have never been in the news, but it often leaves readers wondering: What ever will come of them? From four idealistic women on an inner-city mission to immigrant storytellers and the Taiwanese dude who rode his bicycle around the world, let's catch up to the East Side/West Side class of 2013.

**Idealism blossoms:** The beautiful partnership between four, professional white women and dozens of low-income, Latino school parents continues to blossom.

"We believe in collaborating with parents, educators and mentors to help stretch the hearts and minds of all young students in Silicon Valley," says Rochelle Hall, a co-founder of the Collaborative Community Program at Washington Elementary.

Based at Washington Elementary School south of downtown San Jose, the four-year-old group believes teaching parents how to deal with multiple challenges at home and work will help their children learn more at school. Now up to 50 families, the group has added or beefed up classes on stress reduction, family planning, nutrition, fraud prevention and immigration law. The Washington schoolchildren became pen pals last year with students at Blossom Hill School in Los Gatos.

**And idealism struggles:** Bill Kleidon and his son George started the Northside Youth Sports League after youth sports virtually disappeared from north central San Jose. Their two-year-old, volunteer driven league now has 500 eager elementary and middle school kids playing flag football, baseball and basketball, but it's in financial trouble.

"The league is hemorrhaging," Bill Kleidon says.

After paying \$1,800 to use a public park and \$1,200 for insurance last year, the league still owes on the flag football jerseys and can't order basketball jerseys. A spaghetti dinner fundraiser is planned for Jan. 11. Kleidon can be reached at [bkalumniassociation@yahoo.com](mailto:bkalumniassociation@yahoo.com) or 408-205-9335.

**A "Bruno" goes to Paris:** Joan Brodovsky sold 15 "Brunos" last year at a unique art show and has moved into prefabricated house she designed herself.

"The two highs in my life this year were the exhibit and the new house," she says.

Her late husband, Bruno Schwebel, was a multitalented refugee from Nazi Europe who settled in Mexico, pioneered television in that country, played championship chess and painted bold canvasses that captured the strengths of landscapes. A San Jose native, Brodovsky met Schwebel in Mexico City.

After the couple retired to Mountain View, Schwebel painted Point Lobos, Alum Rock Park and other Northern California landscapes. After his death, Brodovsky found herself in a small apartment with too many paintings. She will donate the unsold paintings to museums. One "Bruno" will go with her to Paris, where she will hang it in the apartment of a niece and hang around the City of Light for a month.

Piggybackr fame: After launching Piggybackr, a "crowdfunding" website for kids to raise money online for schools, sports teams and social causes, Andrea Lo has become a philanthropy star. But she's too modest about it.

"Piggybackr's founder was also recently honored by Town & Country Magazine as one of 50 top philanthropists," she writes in an email.

Well, Lo is the founder. The national magazine honored her in November for innovation and harnessing the Internet for the greater good.

"Piggybackr has grown tremendously," the UC Berkeley graduate says, adding that the sites now reaches young people in 47 states after its launch in April. The site encourages young people to help their communities while protecting them from Internet scammers and predators.

Storytellers wanted Almost anyone with roots somewhere else can post their immigration story on [www.MadeIntoAmerica.com](http://www.MadeIntoAmerica.com), but they'll probably need a helping hand.

"We've found that many people have a story about themselves or an ancestor that they are proud to share but still do not find the time to put it in writing on the website," says Elliot Margolies, director of the nonprofit project.

The site features only about 80 stories so far, so he's putting together a volunteer corps of "reporter-writers" who will conduct more interviews. For example, he's recruited Peninsula students to interview seniors, Jewish survivors of the Holocaust and immigrant day laborers. To encourage individual contributions, the project is hosting public "salons" where a handful of immigrants blessed with the gift of public speaking tell their stories live to audiences.

How high is the sky?

It looks like Ethan Chang, a genuine free spirit from Taiwan, made it back home in late September after traveling more than 20,000 miles around the world on a bicycle. East Side/West Side interviewed him during a stop at his uncle's in Cupertino and followed him on his blog, <http://ethan-around-the-world.blogspot.com>.

The crude translation software into English doesn't do justice to a chronicle written in Mandarin, but Chang's photos are fantastic and one of his last posts actually sounds like the poetic ending of a long trip that sparks a lifelong pursuit:

"Because I do not know how high the sky, how thick ... So I'm going to travel."