

Richmond Main Street is dedicated to revitalizing downtown Richmond as a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly urban village, offering products, services, and arts and entertainment that reflects the community's rich and diverse heritage.

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HEARD ON MAIN STREET

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RMSI Delivers on Its Goal of Providing Resources to Local Businesses

Staying true to its commitment to link local small businesses, emerging entrepreneurs, and start-ups to pertinent and timely resources, Richmond Main Street Initiative (RMSI) provided another series of the successful Start and Grow Smart classes last fall and organized its first ever Small Business Bootcamp and Mixer in January. These programs are one part of RMSI's strategy to boost economic development in Downtown by strengthening existing merchants and facilitating new business starts in the district. "A multi-pronged strategy makes sense for Downtown Richmond," says Johnasies McGraw, Program, Strategy, and Development Consultant. "In order to cultivate a sustainable crop of local businesses that believe in the vision for Downtown growth, we have to provide aspiring entrepreneurs with the technical resources to succeed, and proactively showcase real estate and other opportunities available. This way we are teaching businesses how to be successful and providing them with an opportunity to be part of our Downtown's economic revitalization."



Executive Director Amanda Elliott kicking off RMSI's Small Business Bootcamp & Mixer event on January 15, 2013.

Local Businesses Get in Shape with One-Day Bootcamp



On Tuesday, January 15th, 46 current and aspiring small business owners gathered in Downtown Richmond for RMSI's inaugural Small Business Bootcamp and Mixer. The all-day event featured four interactive panel discussions with over a dozen small business experts, technical assistance providers, bank representatives, and successful local entrepreneurs who shared knowledge, best practices, and current statistics relevant for small businesses operating in Richmond.

Following the last panelist discussion, Bootcamp participants walked along historic Main Street and joined Downtown merchants for a networking mixer at a nearby available commercial space. "We received a huge response to the Bootcamp, which really demonstrates the demand for relevant and practical business knowledge, networking, and real estate opportunities in Richmond," says Outreach Coordinator, Alicia Gallo. "We are grateful to Wells Fargo, Mechanics Bank, and Chevron for their support of these programs which are making such a big impact in Downtown."

Start and Grow Smart Yields Promising Results

Read about the return of this popular small business assistance program on page 4.

Main Street Welcomes New Businesses



Joy Cafe

1400 Macdonald Avenue



Archiscape Design

Market Square Mall
322 Harbour Way, #26



Richmond Denim Xchange

Market Square Mall
322 Harbour Way, #1A

With a new coat of paint the Joy Café (formerly Golden Star Café) re-opened under new management last July. This family-owned diner serves up favorite American and Chinese dishes for breakfast, lunch, and dinner six days a week. Specialties include something for everyone: savory chow mein noodles, honey-spicy chicken wings, and pot stickers, as well as fried catfish and cheeseburgers made with a fresh ground beef patty.

To place to-go or catering orders, call (510) 234-0573.

“Archiscape Designs is where landscape spaces and building spaces blur the lines,” explains Cliff Sorrell, the owner of one of Downtown’s newest merchants. Mr. Sorrell relocated his design business to Downtown Richmond’s Market Square Mall last July to better serve his clients. Archiscape Designs utilizes a collaborative approach to creating interior spaces and landscapes for residential and commercial clients.

For more information or to make an appointment call (510) 408-9787 or email cliff@archisapedesign.com.

Richmond Denim Xchange opened its doors with a grand opening celebration on January 12th. This eclectic consignment store, which proudly offers a variety of new and upcycled clothing, furniture, and accessories, is a dream come true for owner Tyann Sorrell. This mom-and-pop clothing store brings together Mrs. Sorrell’s passion for art, denim, sustainability, and Richmond.

Richmond Denim Xchange is open Tuesday-Friday, noon-6pm.

Downtown Updates

The East Bay Center for the Performing Arts unveiled a vibrant interactive digital artpiece by local artist Scott Snibbe in September 2012. The multi-screen installation incorporates viewers’ actions into a film featuring silhouette images of local Center performers in a series of shifting vignettes. **Long-time Downtown business James P. Richardson, CPA moved to a new location** in August. Visit this full-service accounting firm at their new offices, 325 11th Street, for all your tax preparation needs.

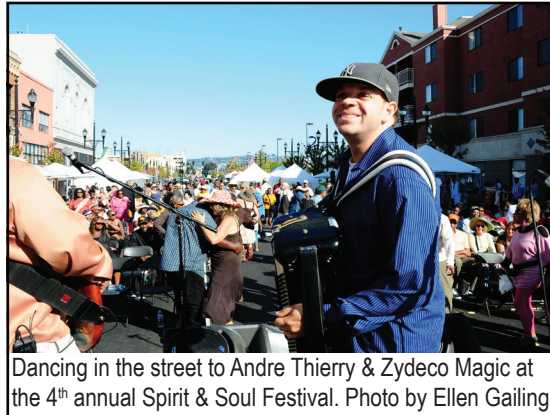


The Richmond Main Street Farmers’ Market ended its first season with a special Halloween market on October 31st filled with decorated booths, seasonal produce, and holiday treats. RMSI is pleased to announce the return of this popular market for a full season starting on Wednesday, May 8th! **The Richmond office for Teach for America is now located in Downtown Richmond.** They recently moved into Suite 11 of the Market Square Mall. **Hercules-based LeChat Nail Care Supply is expanding to Richmond.** LeChat is currently remodeling the historic Bank of American building located at 217 Harbour Way. **Building Blocks for Kids Collaborative has relocated to the 2nd floor office spaces at 312 9th Street** and is looking forward to utilizing the ground floor space (310 9th Street) for community meetings and activities, such as continuing the free Richmond Main Street Zumba fitness classes.

Festivals Bring Downtown to Life

Richmond in Motion with Soul, Art and Music

Saturday, September 29th marked another historic “first” for Downtown Richmond: a street festival on Macdonald Avenue celebrating the rejuvenation of Historic Downtown and the arts in this vibrant community. “We really wanted to highlight the community aspect of the revitalization of Downtown, so it seemed only natural that we hold our signature event on Main Street,” says Amanda Elliott, Executive Director of



Dancing in the street to Andre Thierry & Zydeco Magic at the 4th annual Spirit & Soul Festival. Photo by Ellen Gailing.

RMSI. Over 1000 community members visited the 4th annual Spirit & Soul Festival and Fundraiser to enjoy phenomenal musical performances by local favorites Andre Thierry & Zydeco Magic, Tia Carroll, and Clangin’ and Bangin’, set within an elegant outdoor bazaar atmosphere complete with a range of fine dining showcasing local restaurants and food trucks, a wine and spirits garden, unique artisan shopping, and exclusive silent auction prizes. With help from Mayor Gayle McLaughlin, RMSI honored Jerrold Hatchett, Arnie Kasendorf, Jordan Simmons, and Mary Lavergne as Downtown Champions and recognized the contributions that the Neighborhood Ambassadors have made in keeping the district clean and safe.

The jubilation continued beyond Spirit & Soul on 11th Street with the East Bay Center for the Performing Arts’ Richmond Arts in Motion, a special event in celebration of their new interactive window display by acclaimed Bay Area digital artist Scott Snibbe, featuring carnival games, arts and crafts, street performances, a special dedication ceremony, and indoor reception.

Holiday Lights & Festival Bring Joy to Downtown



A little girl meets Santa at the annual Downtown Holiday Festival. Photo by Ellen Gailing.

The air was teeming with excitement as dozens of families filed out of the East Bay Center for the Performing Arts on Wednesday, December 12th into the chilly evening air. Following the Center’s Son de la Tierra group performing a La Rama procession, the crowd gathered on 11th Street to enjoy traditional holiday music, dance, carols, and remarks by City officials and community representatives, who led a countdown to the grand finale of the annual Downtown Holiday Festival: the magical, simultaneous illumination of dozens of snowflakes and wreath shaped street lights along Macdonald Avenue.

2012 marked a special milestone for this beloved community event: for the first time in several years the Downtown Holiday Festival returned to the historic Main Street district. “The past few festivals were held at the Nevin Community Center due to the limited number of facilities in Downtown capable of hosting large crowds. All of that has changed with the newly renovated

East Bay Center facility,” explains Outreach Coordinator Alicia Gallo. RMSI proudly partnered with the Center to bring holiday cheer to over 500 hundred Iron Triangle families in the heart of Downtown with an evening filled with memorable activities: visits with Santa, spectacular performances by the Center’s youth companies, gift giving, balloon animals from Buki the Clown, holiday shopping, and delicious holiday goodies. Every child had the opportunity to meet Santa and receive a wrapped present and a gift bag filled with small toys and fresh fruit.

Stakeholders Help Shape Historic Main Street

On January 10th, RMSI welcomed the community to their annual stakeholders’ meeting. RMSI staff provided residents and business/property owners with an update on the progress made in 2012 and asked for help in shaping short- and long-term revitalization efforts in Downtown. Stakeholders participated in visioning exercises designed to identify and prioritize the services covered by the newly created DRPBID, which passed with overwhelming support and approved by the Richmond City Council in July 2012. RMSI also turned to their online community for input by sending out surveys via eblasts, Facebook, Twitter, and their website. In the coming weeks, RMSI will analyze the results from the visioning exercise and completed surveys to ensure that the community’s vision for Downtown becomes a reality.

Start and Grow Smart Yields Promising Results

The second installment of Start and Grow Smart—an innovative educational program made possible through a partnership between RMSI and Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center— provided free business classes and consulting sessions to 31 startups and home-based businesses in Richmond last fall. Through the program’s classroom sessions participants received valuable information on how to develop and refine their own business plans, as well as a clear roadmap for moving forward with their ideas.

To further help participants maintain momentum in executing their business plans, the program also included free, individualized one-on-one sessions with a small business consultant. To date, three participants from the 2012 Start & Grow Smart program are moving forward with realizing their business goals thanks to their newly attained knowledge and skills, and support from career coach Vaneese Johnson.

“This program is invaluable,” says Start & Grow Smart student and owner of PG Fit, Pam Grimm. “Thanks to the classes and Vaneese’s support, I now have a clear vision and the confidence to persevere until I realize my business aspirations.”

Zumba Fitness Returns to Downtown by Popular Demand

After a two month hiatus, RMSI’s free Zumba Fitness classes resumed in September 2012. The well-attended trial period classes which took place earlier in the year and served, on average, 50 people per week, helped RMSI secure additional funding for the classes from West County Healthy Eating Active Living Collaborative (HEAL). For this second round of classes RMSI added a lunch-time session, increasing the number of free exercise opportunities in the Downtown area to three per week. “Due to the funding cycle with HEAL, we had to temporarily postpone the classes at the end of 2012,” explains Amanda Elliott, “but thankfully the break didn’t last too long.” Classes resumed once again in mid-February and will last through the end of June.

Class Schedule

When: Thursdays, 6pm & 7:15pm
Location: 310 9th Street

(9th St & Macdonald Ave)
For more information, call (510) 236-4049 or visit www.richmondmainstreet.org/news-events/zumba-classes.

Public Art Brings Downtown to Life

Art In Windows Fall 2012

On Friday, November 9th, Richmond Main Street held a reception and art walk for the Fall 2012 Art In Windows exhibition featuring works by Frederick Franklin. Franklin—a Richmond resident who has been actively working to revitalize the Iron Triangle for over 30 years—is a self-taught artist with a unique style that incorporates collage, caricature, and bold color. His exhibition, *Frame-Up 94801: Drawing Heroes in the Iron Triangle*, features more than twenty works on paper that pay tribute to black history and heritage, local heroes making positive change in the community, and the annual Iron Triangle Picnic. In addition to creating an opportunity for the public to appreciate Franklin’s work, on display at 400 Marina Way and the RMSI office, the reception also featured a tour of Downtown’s public art displays, including Kaiser Permanente’s *Well into the Future*—large-scale installations comprised of photographs and steel structures to illustrate Richmond’s shipyard heritage—which they dedicated in October. The reception concluded with light refreshments and a special address by Franklin who spoke about his ever-growing body of work that draws upon and contributes to the rich history and heritage of the Iron Triangle and its residents.



One of the new public art pieces commissioned by Kaiser Permanente on Macdonald Avenue between 7th and 8th Streets.

The Art of Living Black 2013

Richmond Main Street is proud to partner with the organizers of The Art of Living Black, the only annual non-juried exhibition and self-guided art tour in the Bay Area to exclusively feature regional artists of African descent. This year’s exhibition features the work of over 50 local artists on display at the Richmond Art Center and a number of satellite locations, including Richmond Main Street, which hosted a reception for the exhibition on Saturday, February 23rd. On view at RMSI’s office through the end of March are the works of Malik Seneferu, a self-taught artist who utilizes vibrant colors, symbols, and abstraction to explore his relationship to home and heritage, and Raymond Haywood who creates dynamic mixed-media compositions by ritualistically layering series of images.

Message from the Executive Director

The Richmond Main Street Initiative (RMSI) had a monumental 2012. Our programs, projects, and events soared to new heights. We are extremely proud to have the first and only business improvement district in the City of Richmond. We are thankful to our property/business owners, residents, and city council and staff who supported this effort to make it a reality. The Downtown Richmond Property Business Improvement District (DRPBID) will build on the investments already made in Downtown such as the new, beautiful streetscape on Macdonald and Nevin Avenues implemented by the former Redevelopment Agency, and the renovated East Bay Center for the Performing Arts, which has brought a state-of-the-art performing arts institution to Downtown. The DRPBID will also ensure that the community events and programs implemented by RMSI, which have made significant improvements to the district, continue. Ultimately, the DRPBID will create lasting results, making Downtown more economically viable, attractive, and safe.




Amanda Elliott
Executive Director

In 2013 we are reaching out to our constituents to invite them to share their ideas about important projects that will help build the DRPBID. We will continue to offer our signature Music on the Main, Spirit & Soul Festival, and Downtown Holiday Festival events that have drawn increasingly larger crowds each year, as well as welcome back the weekly certified Farmers' Market and Zumba fitness classes that bring health and wellness resources to the community.

RMSI is also making a concerted effort to offer more business assistance resources available to existing Downtown merchants and develop incentives to bring new sustainable businesses to Downtown. Our first ever Small Business Bootcamp & Mixer was a resounding success, with 46 current and aspiring small business owners gaining valuable information and networking connections. We look forward to building this program in the years to come. The hard work and investments in the community are paying off with several new business openings in Downtown. However, RMSI is keenly aware of the many difficulties our merchants face and the challenges that potential businesses have in acquiring guidance and capital. RMSI is working on a business incubation program to provide the support that established merchants and up-and-coming businesses need.

Richmond Main Street is spreading its wings and soaring to new heights in 2013 as a newly formed PBID. We invite you to join our efforts in Downtown's new chapter by participating in stakeholder meetings, volunteering at events, and supporting our merchants. Stay tuned for more good news to come!

Warm regards,

Amanda Elliott

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Our Staff

Amanda Elliott, Executive Director
Alicia Gallo, Outreach Coordinator
Johnasies McGraw, Program, Strategy, and Development Consultant



Our Volunteers are the HEART of Main Street

Richmond Main Street acknowledges and thanks all of the wonderful individuals who donate their time and effort to making our events and programs successful. You are the heart and soul of Downtown and we are forever grateful for your dedication to the revitalization of Historic Main Street.

THANK YOU!!!



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Join the efforts to Revitalize Downtown

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