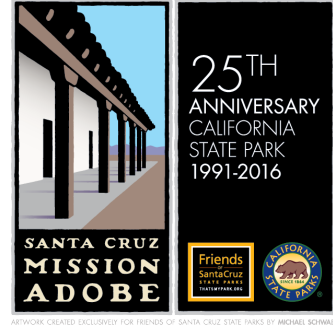


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



SANTA CRUZ MISSION STATE HISTORIC PARK MARKS 25TH ANNIVERSARY WITH SHOWCASE OF STUDENT MISSION PROJECTS & MURAL INSTALLATION

EVENTS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC, AND VOLUNTEERS ARE WELCOME

MAY 17, 2016 – SANTA CRUZ, CA—Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks (Friends), a local non-profit supporting dozens of state parks and beaches in Santa Cruz and San Mateo counties, today announced the 25th Anniversary of the opening of Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park will be commemorated with a new community event, the Student Mission Project Showcase on May 21 from 12-3 p.m. at the park.

Highlighting excellence in Mission history education, the exhibit will include local student projects from Santa Cruz County elementary schools and highlight their efforts to present the complexity and impacts of California's Mission history. The event will include a showcase of student projects that depict details of the California Missions and explain the impact the Mission period had on the lives of people in California at the time.

Along with viewing the projects, the afternoon's activities will include making your own tortillas on the *comal* and a hands-on archeology station. Patrick Orozco and the Amah KaTura dancers will share songs, history, and Indian culture.

Also Saturday, May 21, a new mural featuring a design by two Mission Hill Middle School students will be installed on a series of existing retaining walls along the park's Mission Street boundary, facing downtown Santa Cruz. This project commemorates the 25th Anniversary of the opening of the park.

Katherine Tkoch, 12, and Flora Chatwin, 13, entered winning designs in the contest, and worked with their teacher, noted local artist Kathleen Crocetti, to combine their designs.

The combined design will be recreated in tesserae, a colorful tile that will be formed in the shape of the artists' design to create the mosaic mural. Community volunteers and Mission Hill Middle School students, in cooperation with Friends and California State Parks, will install the public art May 21-23. The installation will take place under Crocetti's direction. Students from Mission Hill Middle School will apply the finishing touches May 23, 2016.

"Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park is a special place that draws visitors of all ages to explore the area's complex history and learn about historic preservation," said Bonny Hawley,

executive director of Friends. "These two events provide creative opportunities for our community to mark the anniversary of this important cultural resource."

Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park is located at 144 School St. in Santa Cruz.

About Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park

Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park, "Your State Park Downtown," is home to the oldest building in Santa Cruz County. Built between 1822 and 1824 by local Ohlonean and Yokuts Indians, the park's signature adobe is the only remaining structure from Mission Santa Cruz, founded in 1791. One of just four adobe buildings left in Santa Cruz County — and sometimes confused with the nearby replica mission chapel — it is the only building of its kind preserved as a museum in the State of California. The adobe served as housing for Neophyte families who lived and worked at the Mission, which operated until 1834 when it was secularized. After decades of private ownership, the adobe was sold to the State of California, extensively restored and finally opened in 1991 to the public as the Santa Cruz Mission SHP. The park celebrates its 25th year in 2016.

Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks saved Santa Cruz Mission SHP from closure in 2012. Friends funds interpretation services and a portion of park operations, and also runs the Mission ParkStore. In addition, Friends has implemented key improvements at the park, including a remodel of the patio, the opening of new interpretive exhibits, renovated outdoor cooking facilities and new hours of operation to serve local school children. Friends also established the Summer Series, a popular series of cultural events at the Mission that culminates with the Mole & Mariachi Festival each September. The park is supported by the Mission Committee, members of which include representatives of Friends, State Parks and dedicated community volunteers. For more information about Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park, visit www.thatsmypark.org/projects/santa-cruz-mission or www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=548.

About Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks

Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks is an entrepreneurial nonprofit sustaining the legacy of our state parks and beaches. Through an innovative partnership with California State Parks, and by leveraging local community support, Friends provides funding for educational programs, visitor services and capital projects. Founded in 1976, Friends is passionately dedicated to the preservation of our spectacular natural environment and rich cultural history. Friends also operates ParkStores offering nature- and history-themed merchandise for sale to benefit local parks and beaches. ParkStore locations include Natural Bridges, New Brighton, Santa Cruz Mission, Seacliff, Wilder Ranch, Online and PopUp stores at special events. Learn more at ThatsMyPark.org or via Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and Pinterest.

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