



Rau Park History

Throughout her life, Janet Rau has been committed to the betterment of life for the youth of Elk Grove. Through her tireless efforts, Elk Grove has reaped the rewards of the countless hours Jan has spent giving back to her community.

In 1957, Jan came to Elk Grove with her parents, Everett and Jane Bradley, and her 2 sisters and brother - Judy, Susanne and Mark. Her father began teaching at Elk Grove Elementary and later went on to teach mathematics at Joseph Kerr Middle School. Her mother was instrumental as a volunteer in beginning the Elk Grove Unified School District's resources center in the 1960s and volunteered with Project R.I.D.E. and tutored a disabled child in the mid 1980s.

Jan began her college career at California State University, Sacramento (CSUS) in 1957 and graduated in 1960 with a bachelor's degree in physical education. After graduating from CSUS, Jan took a teaching position at Covina High School in Orange County, beginning her lifelong career as an educator. Jan returned to Elk Grove in 1969 to be close to her family and became a physical education teacher at Elk Grove High School. As a physical education teacher, Jan regularly went above and beyond her job title by assisting the gymnastics team, advising the drill team and the bowling team, and coaching the track team - a job she continued for 12 years. Her commitment to her students still shows today in that she has not lost touch with many of them.

Jan was involved in beginning the Elk Grove Recreation Association in the early 1970s. The association provided men's baseball leagues in Elk Grove Regional Park and volleyball at Joseph Kerr Middle School for the public. In the mid 1970s, Jan became a board member for the Elk Grove Park and Recreation District, appointed by Henry Kloss. As a part of her duties as board member, Jan helped develop neighborhood parks on land set aside for parks and approved the development of Strauss Island in Elk Grove Regional Park. In the 1980s, Jan volunteered on the Master Plan Task Force and the Park Naming Committee as well.

Jan also worked to improve local sports venues as a member of the Board of Directors for Home Field Advantage (HFA), a fundraising organization designed to improve sport facilities in Elk Grove. The concept of HFA was conceived after Elk Grove High School's football team made it to the playoffs and lost home field advantage because of inadequate facilities. While Jan served on the board, HFA brought lighting and better seating to the football stadium at Elk Grove High School, developed more soccer facilities and ballparks and brought solar heating to Elk Grove Pool in Elk Grove Regional Park. Their annual major fundraiser was a celebrity dinner

auction and board members were instrumental in inviting celebrities such as former Olympian swimmers Summer Sanders and Jeff Float as guests of honor.

Jan retired from teaching after 24 years of teaching at Elk Grove High School and 26 years overall in 1993, all the while being involved in volunteering with First Baptist Church of Elk Grove's youth group. Jan served on the youth board and caregivers' board. Jan volunteered as a Sunday School teacher and annually went on youth retreats to Hume Lake as a counselor, assisting children in their spiritual growth. Jan also served on the Board of Directors for the Elk Grove Teen Center for several years. Jan's volunteerism took her halfway around the world twice in the 1990s to the country of Cameroon in the heart of Africa. While in Cameroon, Jan participated and assisted in roofing a church, constructing a new facility and refurbishing a medical clinic.

For the past 7 years, Jan has been involved as a mentor in the Heart to Heart program, a program geared toward mentoring young mothers as they deal with motherhood. As a member of Heart to Heart, Jan has participated in numerous monthly projects, including making baby blankets and filling bags with hygienic products for the homeless and the women of W.E.A.V.E. (Women Escaping a Violent Environment). Jan is also a volunteer with AWANA Clubs International through First Baptist Church in Elk Grove. She works with the 3-4 year old age group in the Christ-centered bible-training program, specifically assisting them with arts and crafts.

Jan is married to Reinold "Rinny" Rau and they have 2 children, Joe Rau - an engineer in the Elk Grove Fire Department - and Shari Salazar. Jan and Rinny are grandparents to 11 grandchildren and 1 great-grandchild. Jan Rau's consistent efforts to reach out to the youth and promote physical activity in Elk Grove, is more than enough reason to honor her with a park in her name. Through her efforts, she has been an asset to improving the quality of life in Elk Grove and this park serves as a tribute to all the time and effort she put into improving our community.

The information within this document was created at the time of park dedication and may not be current.