

*The Board of Supervisors of  
Contra Costa County, California*

In the matter of:

**Resolution No. 2020/4**

**Recognizing Don and Joan Kurtz and the 1888 One Room Schoolhouse Program**

Whereas; In 1996, Don and Joan Kurtz had the idea to start a living history program for the students of the San Ramon Valley. It would take place at the historic Tassajara Grammar School which is owned and operated by The Museum of the San Ramon Valley and is on the National Register of Historic Places. The program steps students back in time so that they experience a school day in 1888. Using period readers, hand held slates for arithmetic, quill and ink pens for penmanship and 19th century games for recess, the students experience a school day as their 19th century counterparts would have enjoyed.

Whereas; The program runs each year from January to June. Since the Kurtz's began the program, 47,000 third grade students have had a school day in 1888. They have come from 26 schools and represent public, private and home schooled children. The program has operated long enough that parents who attended this program as a third grader are now sending their children to the program. The program is now an important part of the local history requirement for San Ramon Valley schools.

Whereas; Since 1996, Don and Joan Kurtz have developed the school curriculum, scheduled schools, ordered supplies, and trained volunteer teachers to deliver the day's lessons. They teach on site during the week and return on weekends to ready the school for the next week's learning. And now, approaching the age of 90, have been doing this for 23 years. They are the glue that keeps this wonderful volunteer program going.

Whereas; The students are able to put their school day into context and compare their modern school day with that of their student counterparts 130 years ago. For many students this is the beginning of recognizing the value of history and their appreciation of historical sites as living places. These young people are temporally unplugged and get an appreciation of the life that they currently live but also an appreciation for the past and what a child's day was like a 130 years ago. This experience stays with them to become one of their fondest childhood memories. So much so that a bride recently chose the school for her wedding day because of her love for her experience as a third grader at the school. Experiential programs like this teach students the value of history by making it fun and memorable and instill in them a sense of history that will make them better stewards of their historical heritage as adults.

Whereas; Because of the day in and day out commitment, their hard work and dedication to this important experience, and the sense of appreciation of history instilled in the young students that attend the One Room School, Joan and Don Kurtz and the historic program that they created are worthy of being recognized.

That the Board of Supervisors hereby honor and thank Don and Joan Kurtz for their contributions to their community.

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**CANDACE ANDERSEN**  
Chair, District II Supervisor

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**JOHN GIOIA**

Chair, District I Supervisor

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**DIANE BURGIS**

District III Supervisor

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**KAREN MITCHOFF**

District IV Supervisor

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**FEDERAL D. GLOVER**

District V Supervisor

I hereby certify that this is a true and correct copy of an  
action taken  
and entered on the minutes of the Board of Supervisors on  
the date  
shown.

ATTESTED: January 21, 2020

David J. Twa,

By: \_\_\_\_\_, Deputy