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Senior Prom Draws More Than 300 Seniors for a Fun Filled Evening



Perris seniors hit the dance floor May 19 during the 5th Annual Senior Prom at the Bob Glass Gym. This year's extravaganza attracted about 300 people.

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The retirees, grandparents and great grandparents took to heart the theme of the annual Senior Prom sponsored by the City of Perris.

"A Masquerade Ball" was the theme of the 2018 extravaganza and most of the 300 seniors 55 and older donned masks of one sort or another. There were green masks, black masks, red masks and silver masks. There were feathered masks, Egyptian-themed masks, joker masks, tiara masks. A Zorro mask. Even a wrestling mask.

The 5th annual Senior Prom continues an important part of the City's commitment to providing healthy and fun activities to all Perris residents.

Part of the City's ongoing Live Well Perris healthy eating active living campaign, the Senior Prom encourages men and women in their golden years to get out of the house, mingle with their peers, enjoy a great dinner and get on the dance floor to move their muscles and burn some calories.

"Our Senior Prom is an event that is widely anticipated and attracts folks not just from Perris but from surrounding communities," said Recreation Coordinator Cynthia Mendez, who coordinated the May 19 prom at the Bob Glass Gym. "Our City goes out of its way to treat seniors with the dignity and respect they've earned. It's an honor to host this event on their behalf every year."

Wanted and appreciated



Senior Prom Queen Yolanda Tovar and King Louie Arellano pose for a photo moments after being crowned. With them are Perris City Councilman David Starr Rabb, City Councilwoman Rita Rogers and Mayor Michael Vargas.

Perris Mayor Michael Vargas and City Councilmembers David Starr Rabb and Rita Rogers attended this year's extravaganza.

"This is a fantastic event," Vargas said. "It's great to see so many senior out here to enjoy themselves. I'm so glad the City continues to support this great event. It makes seniors feel wanted and appreciated. It's a rewarding feeling to see such a huge turnout. Such a turnout validates all of our efforts to engage our seniors in Perris and beyond."

Rabb said the Prom is special because "it honors and recognizes our seniors."

"The City is committed to high-quality events for residents of all ages," Rabb said. "The Senior Prom provides a good time so our residents do not have to go out of town to enjoy themselves."

Rogers called the Senior Prom one of her favorite events sponsored by the City.

"It's such a joy to see seniors in their 80s and 90s having a wonderful time," Rogers said. "They're all dressed to the 9s! Let's have a party."



Prom King Louie Arellano and Queen Yolanda Tovar share a dance during the Senior Prom May 19 at the Bob Glass Gymnasium.

Volunteers from the City's Youth Advisory Committee served meals to the seniors. Dinner included baked chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, a quinoa salad and cheesecake. The band Dock Rock It served up live music with selections from Motown, rhythm-and-blue and ZZ Top. All seniors received complimentary portraits.

Can't miss this party!

Perris residents Jose and Teresa Izaguirre never miss a Senior Prom and danced to most of the musical numbers.

"We cannot miss this party!" said Teresa Izaguirre, 65. "It so much fun. It makes you forget your stress and problems. The staff at the Senior Center treat us so good. They make us feel special. We love going to the Senior Center. We always have a good time there."

Jose Izaguirre, 70, said the Senior Prom makes seniors feel valued.

"We've worked hard all our lives and now that we are retired, we look forward to these kind of events," he said. "The City of Perris is wonderful. We love the Senior Prom because for the food, the music, the dancing and to see friends. It's a fun place to be."



Musical entertainment during the Senior Prom was provided by Dock Rock It.

Frank Whitfield, 71, and his wife, Misa, 76, live outside Perris but have become regulars at the Senior Center. They like the variety of activities the center provides and the caring staff who looks after them. There's Zumba, arts and crafts, board games, computer access, monthly birthday remembrances and hot coffee every morning.

The Senior Prom was the Whitfields first major City-sponsored event they've attended. It won't be their last.

"We're enjoying ourselves," Frank Whitfield said.

Frank Whitfield shoots pool three days a week at the Senior Center. He enjoys the company of his peers, who represent many cultures and backgrounds. Misa Whitfield spends one day a week cleaning the couple's Juniper Flats home. The other days she's passing time at the City's Senior Center.

"I love the people in Perris," Misa Whitfield said. "I've met a lot of nice people here and I feel good. I used to stay home—but not anymore."

King and Queen



Perris residents Teresa and Jose Izaguirre danced most of the night away at the City of Perris annual Senior Prom.

The highlight of the evening came with the announcement of the 2018 prom king and queen. Louie Arellano, 58, put on the king's crown while Yolanda Tovar, 72, graced the prom by donning her tiara. The two shared a dance.

Arellano and Tovar, in addition to taking advantage of the many programs offered at the Senior Center, also volunteer there. Tovar also volunteers at the Mead Valley Senior Center.

"I've been in Perris all my life," Tovar said. "There's so much to do here!"

Arellano said many seniors "come alive" when they attend events geared for them, whether it's weekly exercise classes at the Senior Center or once-a-year spectacle like the Senior Prom.

"When we're out here we don't feel alone," Arellano said. "We feel welcome."



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