

AUSTIN

## Organizations focus on giving for Valentine's Day

By [Jordan Gass-Pooré](#) | 6:00 AM Feb. 10, 2012  
CST



Photo by Aleyda Londono

Those wooing a loved one this Valentine's Day can have the added benefit of helping someone they have never met.

The [Greater San Marcos Youth Council](#) will receive a share of sales from a package deal created by three small businesses.

And widows in Rwanda will benefit when community members take part in the True Vineyard Ministries 10th Annual Chocolate-Covered Strawberry Sale.

### **Greater San Marcos Youth Council**

Dena Dupuie, owner of [DVine Marketing](#) in Driftwood, said she is an advocate for small businesses helping local charities.

Dupuie joined Thalia Morgan, owner of [Wild Bunches Floral](#) in Dripping Springs, and Jill Rouse of [JillyBean's Bakery](#) in Georgetown to support GSMYC.

The three created an \$85 package that included a dozen red roses, six cake balls and a bottle of wine; \$20 from each order will be donated to the GSMYC.

Dupuie said she started her business because she was passionate about helping small businesses and nonprofits with their fundraising.

"My daughter is adopted, and I really appreciate the work that the youth council is doing," Dupuie said.

GSMYC was created 25 years ago. The center provides resources and counseling services to children and families in Hays County.

Executive Director Julia Ramsay New said the facility assists an average of 600–700 families each year.

"We are not going to judge you [and] we are not going to criticize you, we are just going to figure out what it is you need to take good care of yourself and your children," Ramsay New said.

GSMYC will use the money raised by the Valentine's Day fundraiser to provide food, clothing, heaters in the winter and fans in the summer, Ramsay New said. The shelter cares for four children and has 12 beds available at the facility.

"I think small business is still the backbone of our nation," Ramsay New said. "The folks that we are working with to do this particular fundraiser are hardworking people who are trying to make a decent living and give back at the same time."

Dupuie also organized an online auction to benefit GSMYC. The auction will be open until March 4 and includes several golf packages, a trip to Canada, spa massage certificates and many other items.

Dupuie said she hopes to raise \$10,000 with the auction. She also plans to organize a Mother's Day package to benefit GSMYC.

Morgan said she was motivated to help Dupuie create the Valentine's Day package after learning about GSMYC's recent budget cuts.

"We have done a lot of [work with] nonprofits, whether it is reaching out to schools [or] holding multiple benefits," Morgan said.

Morgan's flower shop ordered 500 roses for Valentine's Day, and she said she is optimistic about how much they can raise for GSMYC. She said they feel they have been successful because the community has gotten involved.

Rouse began her cake ball bakery less than a year ago and said she was happy to participate in helping GSMYC.

"I think it is a great cause, and anytime I can get with somebody and their business,

especially when it is helping others, I definitely want to contribute," Rouse said.

## **10 years of chocolate-covered strawberries**

The Vineyard Marketplace is calling on San Marcos community members to help its mission by purchasing chocolate-covered strawberries.

All proceeds from organization's [10th Annual Valentine's Day Chocolate-Covered Strawberry Sale](#) will benefit the group's efforts in Rwanda.

More than 150 volunteers will hand-dip, package and sell the chocolate-covered strawberries through Feb. 14 at several San Marcos locations.

"It has a lot of heart and love behind it," said Jillian Trujillo, True Vineyard Ministries communications officer.

The organization works with churches and organizations in Rwanda to provide entrepreneurial opportunities for widows.

"We're not about giving just a handout to these women," Trujillo said. "They do earn their own living wage."

Rachel Nehme, assistant director, said the organization helps 27 widows in Rwanda by training them for technical and vocational work. Through this work, the women have the opportunity to lift themselves and their families out of poverty.

Some widows in Rwanda participate in True Vineyard Ministries' primary initiative, Handspun Hope. The organization employs a full-time shepherd and assistants in the country to care for a flock of merino sheep.

The wool is brought to the widows' cooperative, where they clean, spin and dye it using local plants to create organic merino yarn.

The yarn is sold through [KidKnits](#), an Austin-based nonprofit, in their children's craft kits. The kits come in cloth bags and include a biography of the widow who spun the yarn and what the purchase supported.

KidKnits was started by a 9-year-old girl in 2010, who was inspired to help the people of Rwanda after hearing about True Vineyard initiatives.

Trujillo said KidKnits is in talks with representatives from Hobby Lobby and Whole Foods to sell the kits in their stores.

True Vineyard is in the process of leasing land in Rwanda because of the high demand for the merino yarn.

Trujillo said the organization needs more space to house the sheep and more workers to create the yarn. She said the True Vineyard team will travel to Rwanda for two weeks in March to help build a fence for the sheep.

She became involved with the nonprofit after a friend participated in a mission trip to

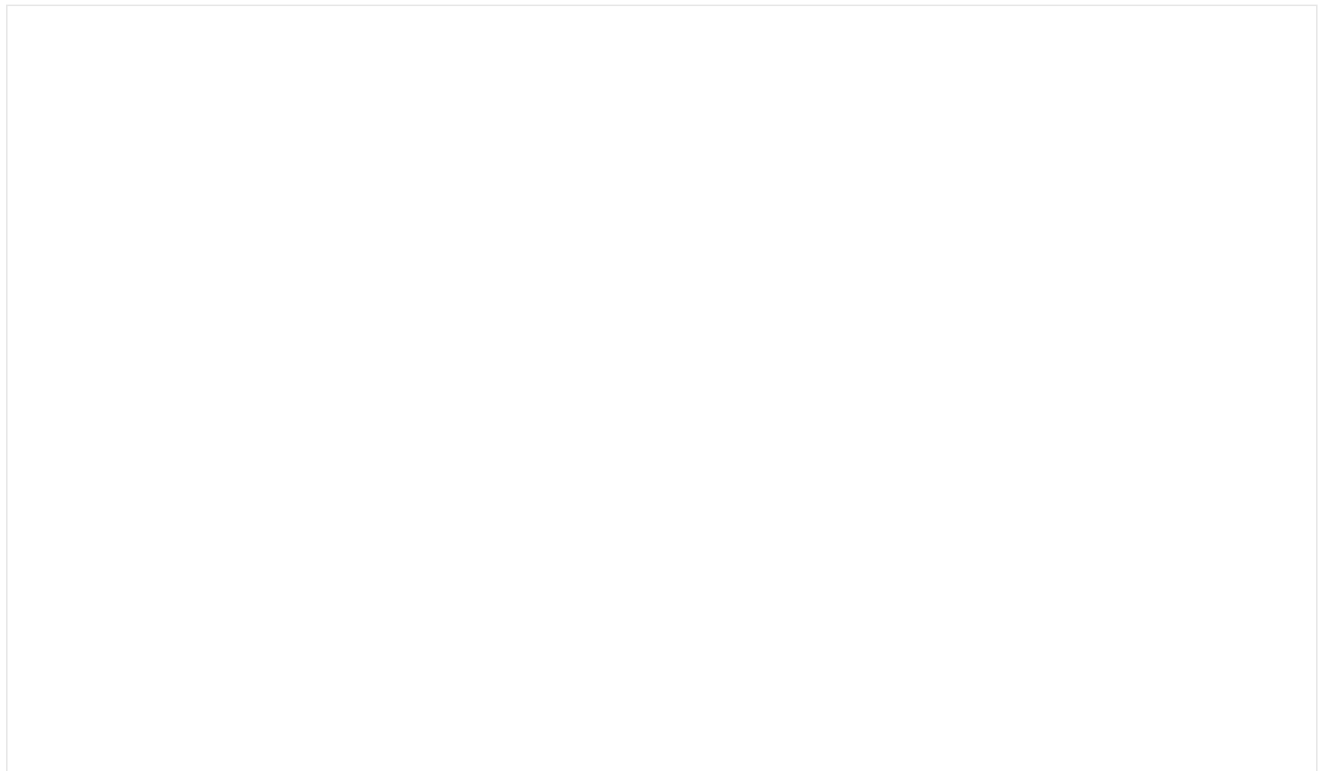
Rwanda. Trujillo's visit in March will be her first to the country.

Through her work for True Vineyard, Trujillo said she has learned about the effects of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and has heard stories about the widows employed by the organization.

"I can't wait to make that connection and actually meet them," she said. "The entire community was shaken by the genocide. Their hurt goes beyond a level that we can understand in the States. So I'm interested in seeing what True Vineyard is doing to comfort that, what we're doing to bring up leaders in the community."

The group's chocolate-covered strawberries will be sold at seven San Marcos locations, including the nonprofit's fair trade boutique, The Vineyard Marketplace; First United Methodist Church; B&J Pharmacy; Victory Cleaners; Sam's Wholesale Club; and Central Texas Medical Center. The Stone Coffee & Juice Bar in New Braunfels will also sell the sweets.

Strawberries may be preordered and also are available for delivery. The sale raised \$10,000 in 2011.



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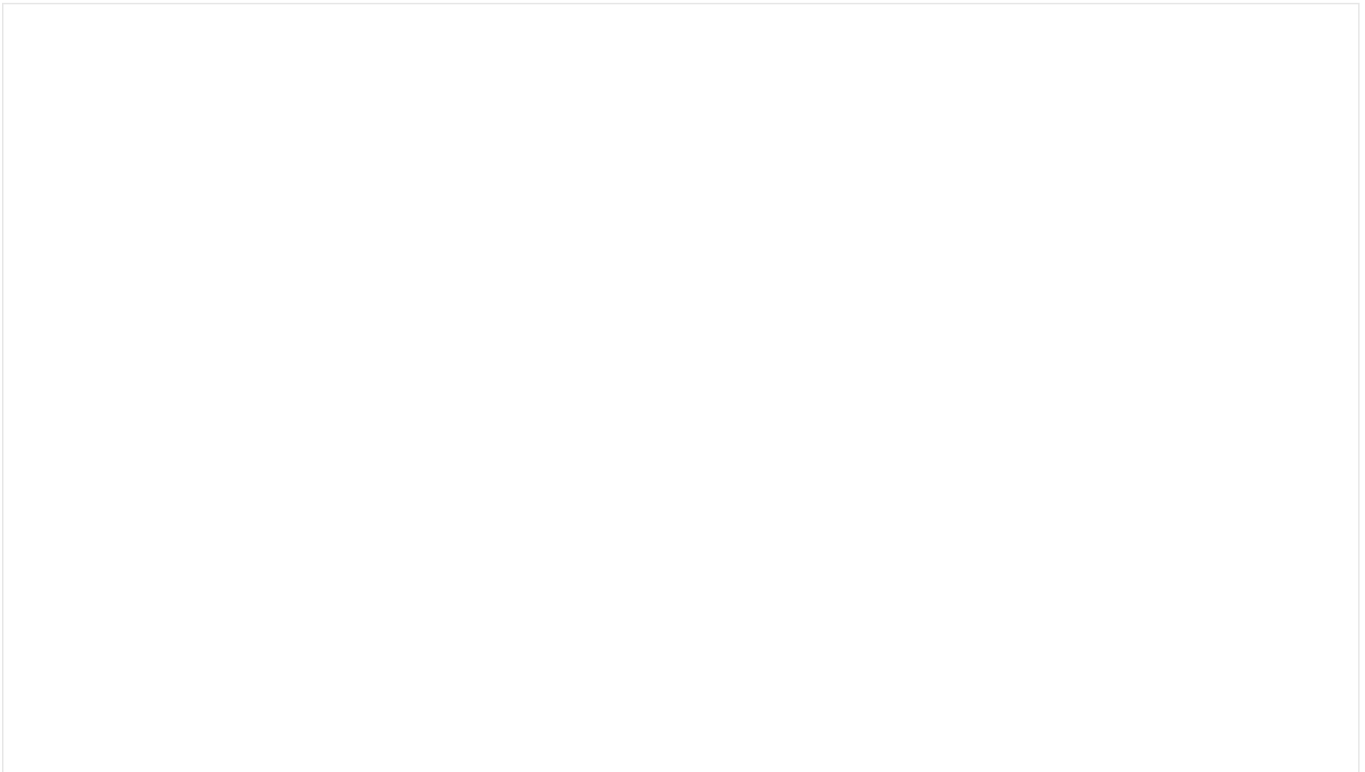
By **Jordan Gass-Pooré**

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## MOST RECENT



### **2 San Marcos Jimmy John's locations now closed**

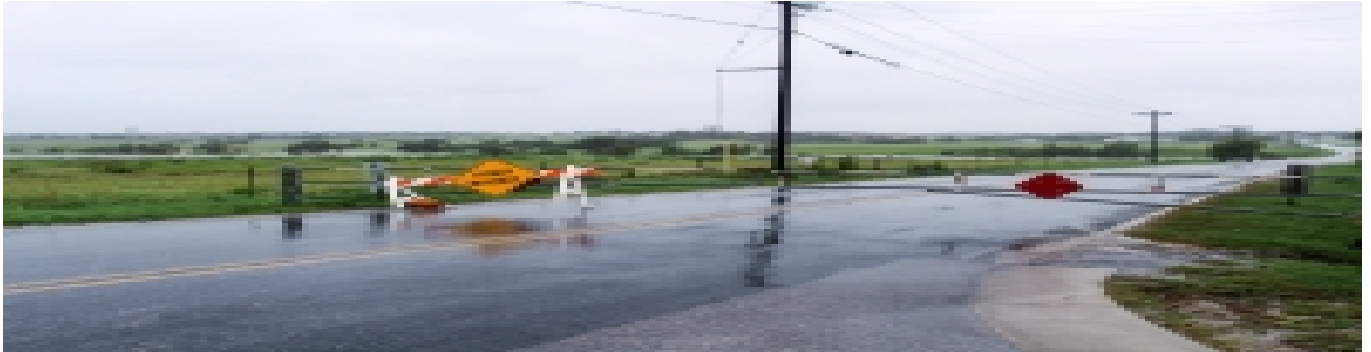
Both establishments have posted signs of closure thanking customers and employees for their support.





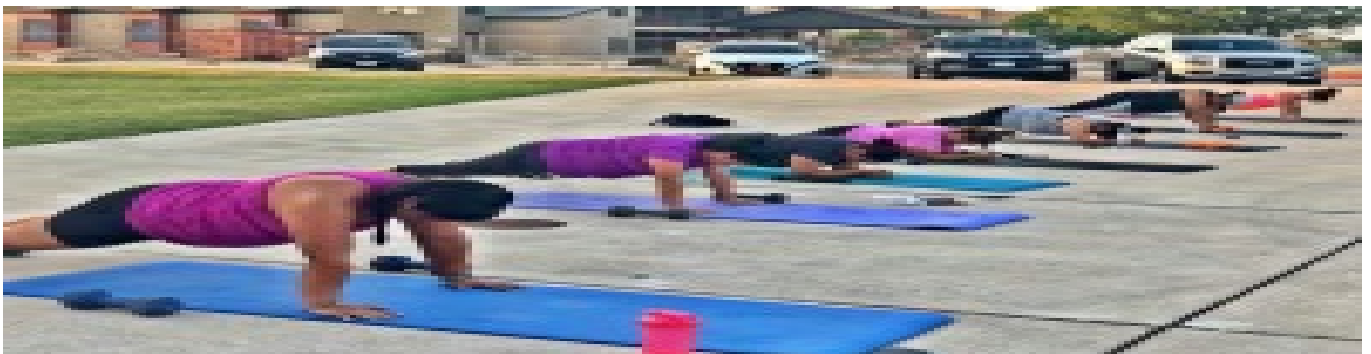
## **Boozy Bark to celebrate one-year anniversary in San Marcos**

The dog day care offers indoor and outdoor play and a BYOB off-leash dog park.



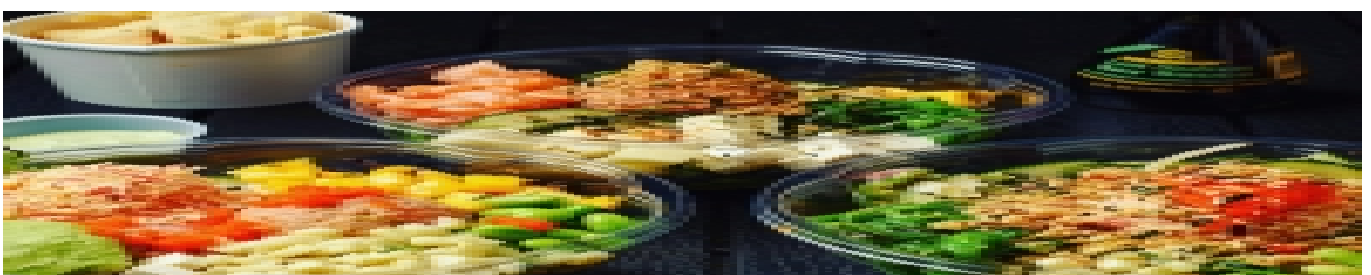
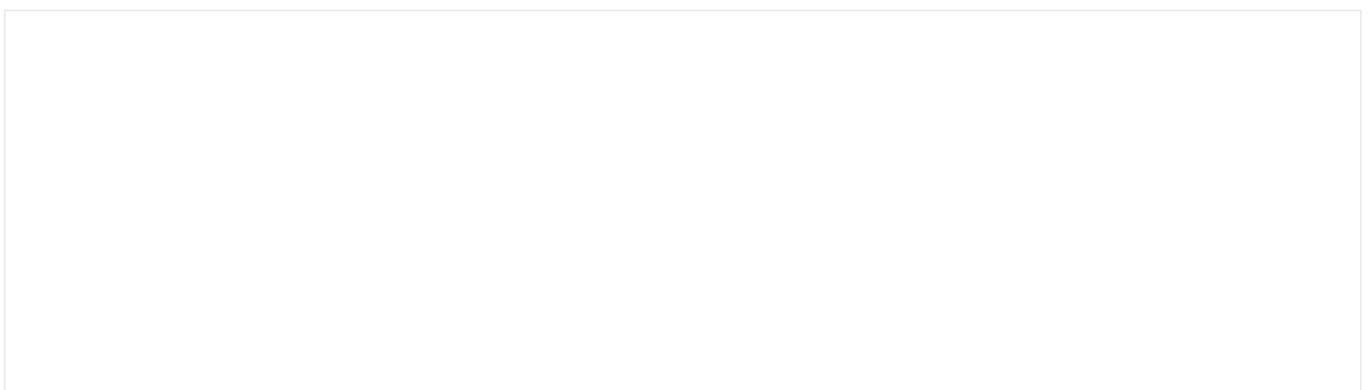
## **San Marcos City Council weighs allocation of \$24 million in disaster mitigation funding**

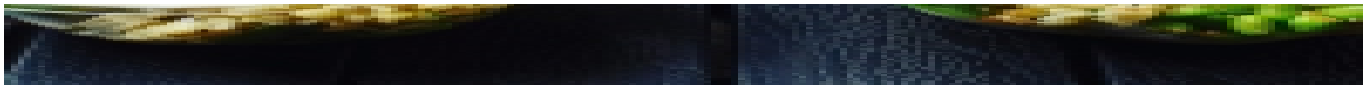
The city received the grant to aid primarily in preventing flood damage.



## **Pink Velvet Training opens in Buda**

Trainer Jessica Garcia offers a group-style workout for women in Buda.





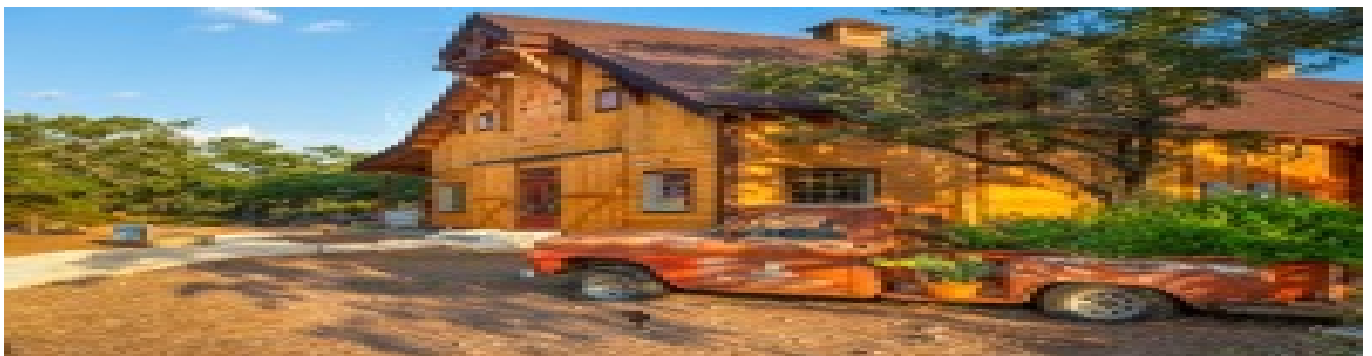
## Hawaii Poke now open at The Lyndon in San Marcos

The poke bar offers 18 toppings.



## Buda plans to address transportation and mobility challenges with new master plan

The city will offer a chance for more public participation in early 2020.



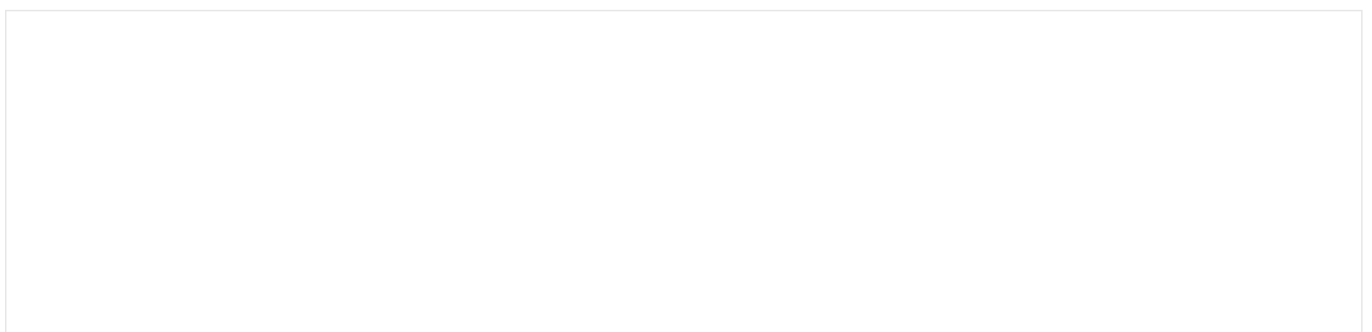
## Roughhouse Brewing to celebrate first anniversary in San Marcos with Jan. 18 event

The family-operated brewery features beer, food, an outdoor stage and a playscape for children.

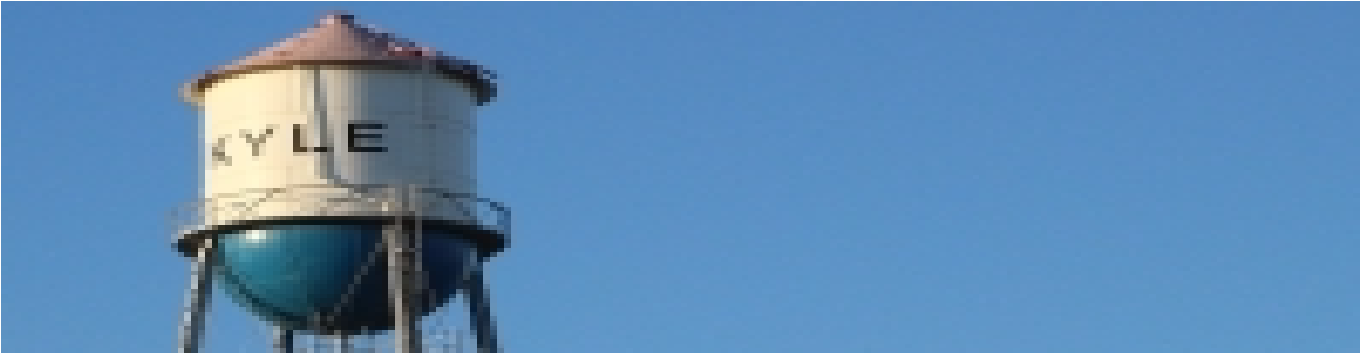


## Vue Dental celebrates one year in Kyle

Vue Dental, a practice run by Dr. Keshavi Patel, celebrated its first anniversary Dec. 8 at 22510 I-35, Ste. ...







## **Q&A: Get to know Michael Tobias and Brandy Heindl, candidates for Kyle's Jan. 25 special City Council election**

The election was called after Council Member Daphne Tenorio resigned.



## **Over the Moon Popcorn to hold January opening in San Marcos**

The shop will offer more than 50 flavors.

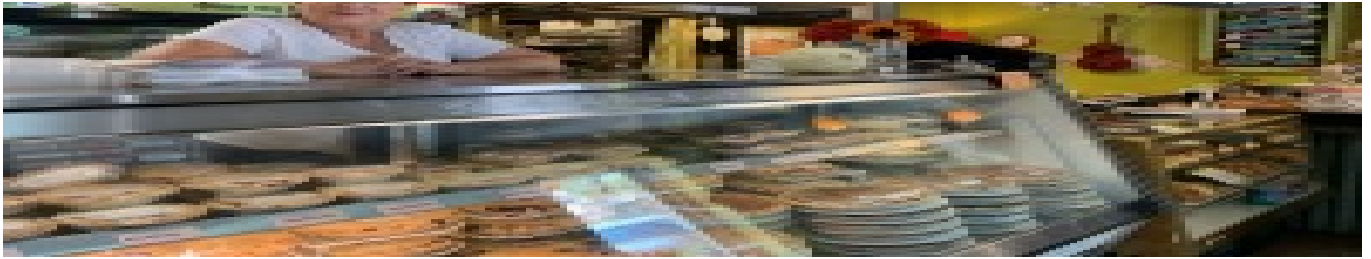


## **2019 YEAR IN REVIEW: 11 business profiles from San Marcos, Buda and Kyle**

Read all the 2019 business features from Community Impact Newspaper.







## 2019 YEAR IN REVIEW: 11 restaurant profiles from San Marcos, Buda and Kyle

Here are some great places to grab a meal in San Marcos, Buda and Kyle.



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