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Subject: REALTORS Help Livermore Students Connect
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**REALTORS® HELP LIVERMORE STUDENTS
CONNECT**

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Pleasanton, California (August 31, 2020) – Local REALTORS® are helping Livermore students stay connected during the COVID-19 crisis.

“Every year we host a fundraiser to support the Livermore School District,” said Barbara Benotto, Chairperson of the Real Estate Alliance of Livermore (REAL). “When we spoke with the school board this Spring, we learned that the district loaned out over 3,000 Chrome books to students in need for distance learning and it was still 80 laptops short. It became clear to us that our fundraising should be focused on giving all students equal access to technology.” Benotto explained their goal was to “provide a laptop and internet access to every student who needs it.”

Historically, REAL has used live auctions during their Thursday morning meetings at the First Street Alehouse as fundraisers. During the COVID-19 crisis, REAL has transitioned to an online meeting format and both maintained and even increased meeting participation. Benotto said, “since we could not host an in-person fundraiser this year we decided to do it virtually.”

Benotto said the online fundraiser provided two, unique opportunities to participate. She explained, “We created a webpage similar to a wedding registry where contributors could specify how many Chrome books, internet access and hot spots and other items they wanted to purchase.”

The REAL team also set up the Dream Big School Drive online silent auction. “More than a dozen local businesses and REALTORS® donated items to auction off,” Benotto said.

“Including airplane and helicopter rides, a fancy purse and accessories, a golf adventure and a Tahoe get-away.”

Philomena Rambo, Director of Community Engagement for the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District said, “This year's goal to raise \$25,000 to support student technology needs came at the perfect time to keep our students and teachers connected during distance

learning. We are able to purchase hotspots for students without internet access, as well as Chromebooks and headsets for students who need to borrow devices to learn at home.” Making this technology available to Livermore students means more than simply replicating the classroom environment. Rambo said, “Connecting students to teachers online goes beyond teaching and learning - this connection provides social emotional support which is so very important during this pandemic.”

Rambo shared that the latest fundraiser continues the tradition of Livermore REALTORS® supporting Livermore schools. She said, “Shout out to Barbara Benotto and her team for their enthusiasm and leadership that encouraged so many donations from the REAL and Livermore community. Over the past few years, they have raised money to outfit new teacher's classrooms, fill student backpacks, provide a literacy enrichment program, and support the Livermore Shakespeare Festival's So Wise So Young program in our second grade classrooms. LVJUSD has a true partner in REAL.”

Benotto said REALTORS® used their own technology expertise to make the virtual fundraiser possible. “It was truly a team effort with outreach through our meetings, our email blasts and promotion through Facebook. We also had videos from teachers and students talking about distance learning and how important Chrome books are to them,” Benotto said.

“We are so grateful to the Real Estate Alliance of Livermore for their ongoing support and incredible generosity over the years,” said Rambo.

About the Bay East Association of REALTORS®

The Bay East Association of REALTORS® is a professional trade association serving more than 5,500 residential and commercial real estate professionals throughout the San Francisco Bay Area by providing programs and services to enhance their ability to conduct business with integrity and competence. Bay East offers access to the Multiple Listing Service, professional development training, advocacy to protect private property rights and promote home ownership and a variety of networking opportunities and events.

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