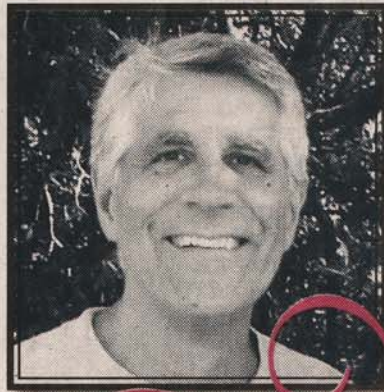


The Napa Chamber Foundation and Mechanics Bank  
are proud to present the 4th annual

*Outstanding  
Nonprofit  
Employee  
of the Year*

**Bob Pallas**  
Connolly Ranch



Napa Valley  
*Community Awards*

A group of homeless children, most of whom had never ventured out of San Francisco, were reveling in their first visit to a real farm: Napa's Connolly Ranch. Gazing wide-eyed upon a grazing cow, one child murmured "Wow...I thought cows were only on TV."

Moments like that make it all worthwhile for Bob Pallas, executive director and chairman of Connolly Ranch, a 12-acre spread just minutes from downtown Napa. Its mission: to connect kids to nature through farm-based environmental education.

"You should come on over – we've got five new baby goats and they are the cutest things you can imagine," he insisted to a recent caller as a gaggle of honking geese furnished a background cacophony. His life today bears little resemblance to his previous career, when he was an executive for a top national ad agency and then ran his own firm with his artist wife, Kristine.


"The difference between the advertising world and this world? It's night and day," he explained. "I have no stress here."

But his financial talents invigorated Connolly: when he came on board in 2005 the nonprofit ranch had a \$60,000 deficit. Within one year, that became a \$30,000 surplus. He also secured grant funding to enable children who couldn't afford the \$4 field trip fee to come to the ranch, so that today more than half of its 2,500 student visitors are free. And he established the Napa Valley Art Festival, with \$150,000 in fine art sold in the first two years – 40 percent benefitting the ranch.

Under his leadership, Connolly Ranch created two popular summer camps: "Life on the Farm," where children work with farm animals, garden, build birdhouses and have fun outdoors, and "Dirt to Dine," an inventive program with chef Michael Chiarello to help children understand the origin of their food.

A typical Monday, for example, might have all 28 young participants milking a goat, while in the afternoon they learn to transform goat milk into cheese and butter. On another day the focus is on wheat, culminating in pizza-making in the ranch's adobe oven, where temperatures can soar above 700 degrees and cook a pizza in less than a minute.

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