



## Hot News from the Oxnard Salsa Festival!

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### **Oxnard Salsa Festival Names Participants For Its “Dancing With Our Community Stars Contest and Charity Fundraiser”**

Oxnard, Calif.—Six community leaders will put on their dancing shoes for charity during the “2017 Dancing With Our Community Stars Dance Contest and Charity Fundraiser,” Sunday, July 30 at 1 p.m. during the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Oxnard Salsa Festival in Oxnard.

The contest is a salsa version of the hit TV show “Dancing With The Stars.” Local celebrities are paired with the area’s top dance instructors for a salsa showdown at the festival main stage dance floor.

The dancers are competing for the “Judge’s Choice Award” for the best routine. Just as important is the “People’s Choice Award,” given to the dancer who raises the most money for his or her charity. Donations can be made online at [www.OxnardSalsaFestival.com](http://www.OxnardSalsaFestival.com). Fundraising events by the participating charities are taking place in June and July. Donations will also be accepted during the festival at the “Dancing With Our Community Stars” booth. Over the years, the contest has raised more than \$750,000 for local charities.

Here are the 2017 dance competitors.

--Alys Martinez, dancing for the [Dream Foundation](#). Her instructor is Tino G.

--Caryl Cantrell, dancing for [Project Understanding](#). Her instructor is Lovie Hernandez.

--Julien Martinez, dancing for the [Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Oxnard and Port Hueneme](#). His instructor is Diana Porter.

--Marie Taylor-Briggs, dancing for [Oxnard Police Activities League](#) (PAL). Her instructor is Jesse “Chuy” Rodriguez.

--Marisa Trujillo-Martinez, dancing for [I'm a Kid Who Can](#). Her instructor is Ottis Gillespie.

--Suzie Azucena-Gomez, dancing for [El Concilio Family Services](#). Her instructor is Conrad Diaz.

## Meet the Stars

**Alys Martinez** is a general assignment multimedia journalist for KEYT-TV. She taught third-grade in a bilingual classroom in Long Beach. Although she loved teaching, she decided to pursue a career in journalism. She spent four years at KABC-TV in Los Angeles and is now at KEYT. The [Dream Foundation](#) serves terminally ill adults and their families by fulfilling their dreams that offer inspiration, comfort and closure.

**Caryl Cantrell** is a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation Venturan. When not working at Macerich, which manages centers such as Pacific View in Ventura and La Cumbre Plaza in Santa Barbara, she is serving on the board of Project Understanding of Ventura County. [Project Understanding](#) is a nonprofit organization that helps the less fortunate in the community through its food bank, housing assistance and tutoring program.

**Julien Martinez** is a 21-year-old Oxnard native attending Oxnard College. He shares his love for the arts by teaching photography to students in grades 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> in the Oxnard School District. He was a contestant on NBC's "The Voice," which gave him the confidence to pursue his dream of becoming a recording artist. The [Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Oxnard and Port Hueneme](#) helps kids reach their full potential as productive, responsible and caring citizens through its after-school centers and programs.

**Marie Taylor-Briggs** retired in 2012 after 20 years with the City of Oxnard. She is an original [Oxnard Police Activities League](#) (PAL) board member, serving more than 20 years. Most recently, she volunteered at the Dallas Cowboys training camp, working and helping to recruit and supervise volunteers at a PAL-benefiting vendor booth. The booth generated more than \$60,000 for local youth. PAL is a citywide, after-school crime prevention program that builds positive relationships between youth, police officers and the community.

**Marisa Trujillo-Martinez** was born in Mexico but has lived in Oxnard since she was seven. She has been married to her high school sweetheart Rodrigo for 35 years. They have four boys and three grandchildren. As the parent of a murdered son, Trujillo-Martinez started a chapter of "Parents of Murdered Children" committed to serving the needs of grieving families. She speaks to youth about violence and how it impacts families. [I'm a Kid Who Can](#) supports underserved youth in the areas of education, sports, art, leadership and personal development.

**Suzie Azucena-Gomez** retired this year following a 20-year broadcasting career. She was an Emmy award-winning news anchor/reporter for Telemundo 52 Los Angeles. [El Concilio Family Services](#) is a community service organization providing assistance to the under-served, many of which are low-income agricultural workers and their families.

## **About the Oxnard Salsa Festival**

The 24th Annual Oxnard Salsa Festival is presented by the Oxnard Downtowners and sponsored by Bud Light, Gold Coast Broadcasting, Mission Foods, Oxnard Convention & Visitors Bureau, Premier America and other community partners. The festival takes place Saturday and Sunday, July 29 and 30 at [Plaza Park](#), Fifth and "B" streets in historic downtown Oxnard from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. both days.

The two-day event draws an estimated 45,000 festivalgoers. Event highlights include live entertainment, a salsa-tasting tent, an eclectic vendor marketplace, international foods, a kids' play zone and a salsa recipe contest. Admission and parking are free. Main stage open seating is \$5. For more information, go to [www.oxnardsalsafestival.com](http://www.oxnardsalsafestival.com).

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