

EDITORIAL: Thumbs up, thumbs down

Salvador and Ricarda Mendoza, and Ricarda's mother, Eliosa Rosas Garcia, left, who lives with them, have received a solar system for free, as part of a state program to help low-income people living in poor areas. It will save them utility costs so they can buy medicine that Salvador requires.

JOHN WALKER — THE FRESNO BEE [Buy Photo](#)

Thumbs up to Southeast Fresno resident **Salvador Mendoza and his family** for being one of 20 in Fresno expected to receive rooftop solar panel systems courtesy of a pilot program aimed at helping poor, vulnerable communities save money on electricity costs while combating climate change. The Mendozas received their panels Wednesday. It will be a big help to Salvador, who must pay about \$2,000 for drugs to treat his lung disease. Lower power bills certainly will make a difference. The [Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission](#) is managing the program statewide through the [California Department of Community Services and Development](#). The pilot aims to install more than 100 SunPower Corporation solar panel systems in Fresno, Sacramento, Merced, Madera, Tulare and Los Angeles counties. The California Environmental Protection Agency ranks the Mendozas' neighborhood among the riskiest places in the state to live, making it eligible for money to install greenhouse gas reduction measures, such as solar panels. Fresno has more than a dozen of the worst 20 places, primarily downtown, south and west.



Thumbs up to **Lou Azevedo** for his memorable 61st birthday this week, winning \$50,000 in golf tournament sponsored by the Fresno Chamber of Commerce. Azevedo was playing in a group that included his friend, Marty Fox, when he sank a hole in one on the par-3, 147-yard seventh hole. "That's a matter of dumb luck. But I guess I was a lucky guy today." There was luck all around that day, since the general contractor didn't even have to pay for the golf. He was given a free round of golf and a dinner at San Joaquin Country Club, courtesy of his daughter, Rachel Eslick, who is vice president of government affairs for the chamber.

Thumbs down to the **dozens of people who walked right by** a steady stream of water coming from a city of Fresno parking garage structure at Inyo Street and Van Ness Avenue without making a peep to the city about it. A Southern California visitor, however, was on the ball. He called City Hall about it and then notified The Bee's Mark Grossi, who checked out the situation. Yes, there was a sprinkler valve running illegally in the middle of the day at the garage and water was streaming into the gutter. City spokesman Mark Standriff said he appreciates the tip. "Glad he's on the scene," he said. "With over 1,330 irrigation systems citywide, it's hard to know where all the problems are. Will fix ASAP." He said the next day that the problem turned out to be a tough solve for the workers and the city finally had to shut down power to the garage to make the deluge stop. "The caller did the right thing by letting us know immediately. We need to have those calls." Here is the number: 621-5300 during work hours and 621-1100 for after-hours emergencies.

Thumbs up to the **Valley's Gold Ribbon Schools Award winners**. Eight Clovis Unified schools plus several other

Valley schools were honored this week with California's new award. The Gold Ribbons recognize schools that have excelled at launching the new math, English and science academic standards. The winning Clovis Schools were: Alta Sierra Intermediate, Clark Intermediate, Granite Ridge Intermediate, Kastner Intermediate, Buchanan High, Clovis High, Clovis North and Clovis West. Coalinga Middle, Huron Middle, Fowler High, Sanger High and Washington Academic Middle in Sanger also received the award. In Tulare County, Orosi High, Dinuba High, Harmony Magnet Academy and University Preparatory High earned the recognition. In Kings County, Lemoore Middle College High and Pioneer Middle Schools were honored.

Thumbs down to **Adrian Gamez and the Daniel Dupont family, all of Fresno**, for their embarrassing display on the syndicated television show "Judge Judy." A dispute over a handicapped parking spot led to Gamez being injured, and Vickie Dupont to begin a course of events that turned her family violent. The heroes in this melee were bystanders, who — you got it — shot video. Judge Judy Scheindlin ruled that the Duponts not only parked illegally but lied about the fight. At one point in this three-on-one battle with the 5-foot-3 Gamez, Vickie Dupont, a teacher, was videoed telling bystanders that Gamez tried to rape her, which was a lie, and even ordered her son, Demetri, to kick Gamez, which he did. Daniel Dupont, who stands 6-2, previously had punched Gamez in the face. Gamez should have learned a lesson that there is a reason we hire police officers to enforce laws — and he is not one of them. A parking spot is not worth bodily injury. With all this bad judgment going on, this could have been a much uglier ending if anyone had fallen wrong or been armed. Let's hope that the Duponts grow a conscience, and Gamez controls his temper and leaves the law enforcement to the experts. Don't embarrass our city any further, please.

.Thumbs up to **Brianna Ramirez of Parlier**, a teenager who lost an eye in a shooting earlier this year. Detectives surmise she was an innocent bystander caught in the crossfire in a battle between gangs. Brianna is already playing softball once again, practicing and doing so well she even surprises herself. "I would not have imagined myself here," she told KMPH 26. "I would have thought I would be in bed still." Her goal is to play in a Memorial Day tournament. She has to wear a custom-made helmet to protect her, and has launched a gofundme account to pay for it. The page is at gofundme.com/mi06kg. Her supporters hope to raise \$20,000. It was about three months ago when she was shot while riding home with her mother. The shoot-er still is at large. There is a \$9,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of the assailant. Details: 600-8204.

Thumbs up to **Farm Credit West for awarding four Valley agricultural students** \$1,500 each in scholarships. The students are Sarah Dreyer of Exeter, Elena Montemagni of Visalia, Matt Pandol III of Delano and Noah Rollin of Riverdale. Each student can renew their scholarship three times, for a total of \$6,000 in scholarships over four years.

Thumbs up to **Fresno State** for opening its first electric vehicle charging station this week. It is west of the Save Mart Center in parking Lot P2 (near the intersection of Woodrow Avenue and Matoian Way). The station, open to the public costs \$1 an hour for charging. The station features four Level 2 stalls (two- to three-hour charging) and two Level 3 stalls (20- to 30-minute charging). Good for the university; Fresno has a long way to go to catch up with other areas in accommodating the electric vehicles. It is only right that the university should lead the way.

Thumbs up to the **Saint Agnes Men's Club** for donating \$203,000 toward a dozen programs and services. The donation will provide new equipment and funding for community benefit and outreach programs, supplies and resources for patients and family members and funds for hospital expansion and renovation projects.