



WELCOME



Welcome to *Transformed Under the Pepper Tree*. In this monthly magazine, you will read stories of how God is changing people's lives at PazNaz, transforming them into the image of Jesus Christ by the power of his Spirit!

You might be asking, "Where can I find information about a specific PazNaz event?" Some information about specific events on campus is found within these pages, but each month *Transformed* is focused on relating stories about what PazNaz is really all about. Rather than programs or events, there are stories about changed lives, stories about people coming in contact with the Savior, and people exploring what it means to become a follower of him. It is exciting to hear what God is doing in the lives of people!

Years ago, Pastor Earl Lee and a group of staff members gathered around a pepper tree located on the northern-most point of what was to become the site for First Church of the Nazarene of Pasadena. They dreamed and prayed that God would provide a place where more people could find power for living through Jesus. What began then has been going on for over thirty years as men and women, boys and girls have come into relationship with Christ in significant ways under the shade of that old pepper tree. The mission of the church hasn't changed. May it continue to flourish as people experience the transforming power of Christ.

Blessings,

B. Scott Anderson
Executive Pastor

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MY CALL TO SENIOR PASTORAL MINISTRY

from Pastor Tara Beth Leach

Reprinted from www.missioalliance.org/call-senior-pastoral-ministry

Last November I received a phone call out of the blue that the First Church of the Nazarene of Pasadena (a.k.a. PazNaz) was interested in talking with me as a potential candidate for their next Senior Pastor. I was stunned to say the least, and I might have even laughed. You see, PazNaz is a church in my tradition that has roots to the founder, Phineas F. Bresee. It is also a church that has always been known for being progressive, “cutting edge,” and thriving. The former pastor, Scott Daniels, was known for his dynamic teaching and preaching. So naturally when I received the phone call my response was something like, “Who me?”

A Pastor’s Heart

Since I can remember, I’ve had a pastor’s heart. Often times when I hear someone talk badly about the Church, I get offended in the way a sibling gets offended when someone is talking about her sister—“Hey, don’t talk about my sister like that!” I ache to see the Church live into the fullness of holiness to which she has been called. I long to see the Church lean into the power of the Spirit as she joins God on mission in this world.

Ever since I was a teenager, these longings have laid heavy on my heart, and I’ve wanted nothing more than to use my gifts to edify the bride. One time, when I was 16 years old, I pulled over on the side of a road, turned the worship music on full blast, got out of my car, pulled out my Bible, and began to preach to the cornfields. Preaching to the cornfields might seem odd, but my passion and fire to preach was alive.

My sophomore year of college, I traveled to South Africa for three months with *Youth in Mission*. For three weeks leading up to the trip, I spent time in training at this lovely

church called “PazNaz.” While I was there, I decided to meander through the building to do some exploring. Eventually, I made my way into the sanctuary and onto the platform and stood behind the pulpit. Much like any young preacher would, I scanned my eyes across the 1,800 seat sanctuary and wondered to myself, “What if I get to pastor this church someday?”

When someone talks bad about the Church, I get offended like someone is talking about my family

Wonderings & Burdens

We wonder many things in life, and often times our wondering’s are fleeting. So when I received a phone call on that blustery cold day in November that PazNaz might be interested in me as their next pastor, I laughed. Reflecting back, I am reminded of Genesis 18 when the Lord told Abraham that his wife, Sarah, who was old in her age, would soon have a son. Listening in on the conversation, Sarah has this response: “So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, ‘After I am worn out and my lord is old, will I now have this pleasure?’”

In Sarah’s view, she only saw barriers and impossibilities. Similarly, when I realized PazNaz might be a possibility for me, I at first saw barriers and impossibilities. I am young; although I have been pastoring for 12 years, I have not yet been a *senior* pastor; I don’t have my doctorate like Scott Daniels does; I am a woman.

But over time, my heart for this potential calling to PazNaz turned from fear into love. The Spirit showed me that although I wasn’t “Scott Daniels” or the wonderful pastors of the past, I am Tara Beth, and God has called me to pastor in the way that only I can pastor, in the power of God’s Spirit, and I’ll never be ashamed of that. The same burden

that I’ve had for the universal church became a burden for PazNaz. I began to imagine the possibilities instead of the impossibilities; I began to dream what it would be like to join PazNaz on mission. Eventually my own voice of doubt and fear faded to the background and God’s voice became louder and clearer. Confirmation after confirmation began to tumble into our lives and

there I was at the crossroads of a call: Will I answer God’s call?

After months of prayer and discernment, and after walking with countless friends, family members, and mentors, God’s call became abundantly clear – God was calling my family to join PazNaz on mission, and God was calling me to be their Senior Pastor. On Sunday, April 3, our family shared a meal with some of our dearest friends, the Rozko family, as we waited for the phone call from PazNaz to hear the final church vote. Late Sunday afternoon we received a call that PazNaz voted a resounding “yes” to call me as their Senior Pastor. We busted out the sparkling grape juice (we are Nazarene’s after all!) and together celebrated that moment.

On May 22, 2016, I will stand behind the pulpit of the denomination’s founder, Phineas F. Bresee, and preach my first sermon in this 110-year-old church where I will stand in line of countless wonderful pastors and preachers. I am sure I will have many more moments where I’ll say, “Who me, Lord?!” but I’ll do it with my eyes on King Jesus, clinging to His power, in the posture of ruthless trust. Even as I type this today, it’s hard to believe that in just a few short weeks I will be the Senior Pastor of the First Church of the Nazarene of Pasadena.

Thanks Be to God

If Phineas F. Bresee were still around today, I think he would be smiling ear to ear to see a woman preaching from his pulpit. You see, the Church of the Nazarene has been ordaining and calling women since its inception, but for complicated reasons, women have had difficulty finding positions. It’s hard for me not to recognize the greatness of this moment—a church boldly and courageously calling a woman to be their senior pastor.

Although I wish I could say this is the norm for my denomination, we aren’t there quite yet. But I thank God for women like Carla Sunberg, Shawna Songer Gaines, Tara Thomas Smith, Aimee Copley Mulder, Amanda Cash, Brooklyn Lindsey, Chipso Makwakwa, Dana Preusch, Elizabeth Bjorling Poest, Elizabeth Faye Shaw, Kara Lyons-Pardue, Marissa Lynn Coblentz, Susan Armstrong, Olivia Craker Metcalf, Robbie Cansler, and many (MANY) more who are leading the way. Each of these women have inspired me and I thank God for them often.

I am also grateful to women like Mandy Smith, Tracey Bianchi, and Jackie Roese who have modeled to me in incredible ways the role of a woman pastor. And finally, I am grateful for the men and women who embolden women, and in particular, the men and women who have emboldened me to PazNaz, including Scot McKnight, Larry Rench, Kevin Mannoia, Dana Freeborn, Sharon Densford, the PazNaz Board, JR and Amy Rozko, John Bowling, Dan Boone, Mark Quanstrom, Dennis King, Greg Garman, Dan Meyer, JR Forasteros, Jory Micah, and many, many more.

It is my hope and prayer that Nazarene churches and non-Nazarene churches continue to follow the lead of these great men and women. Thanks be to God!

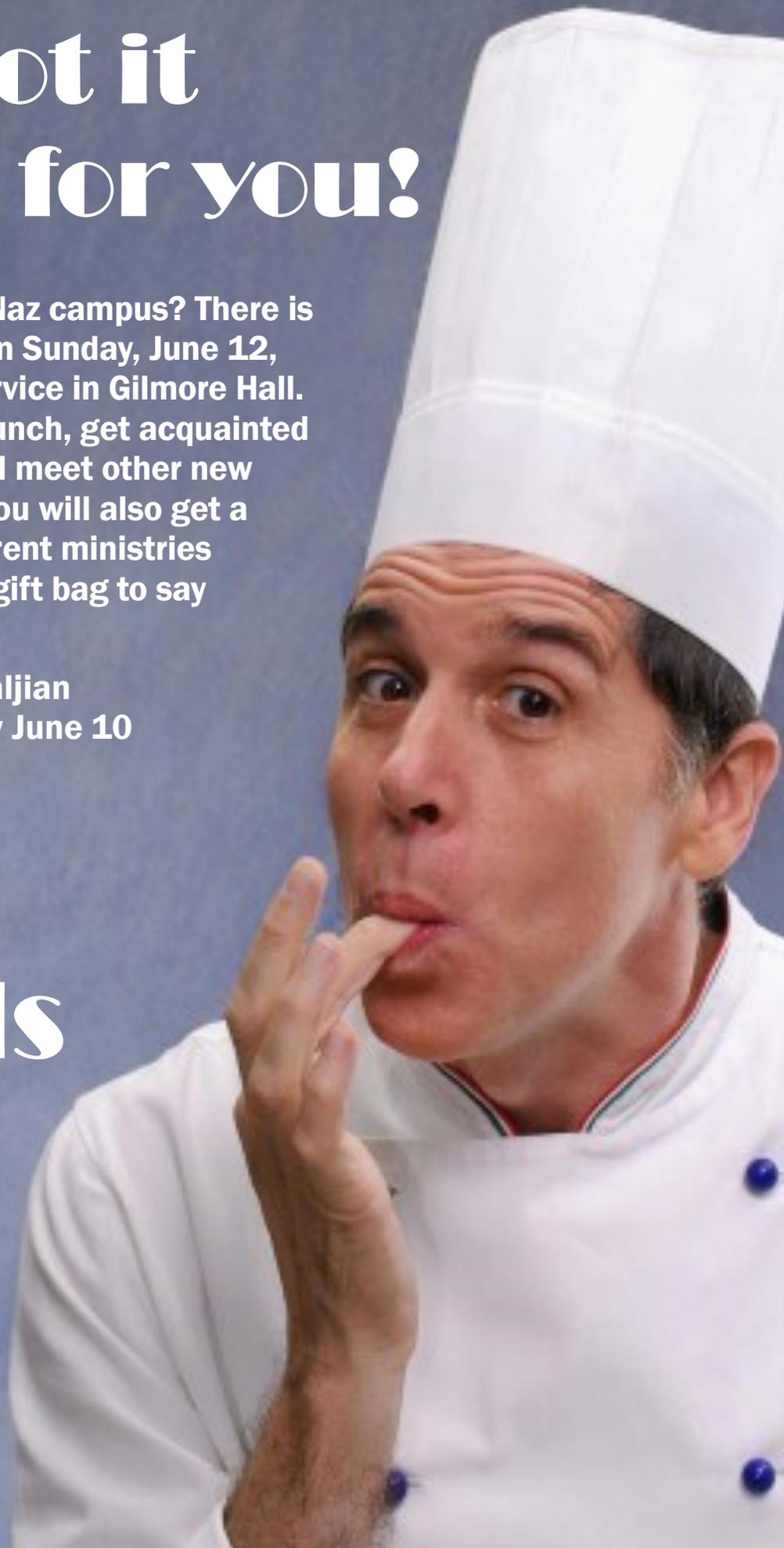
- Pastor Tara Beth Leach

We've got it cookin' for you!

Fairly new around the PazNaz campus? There is a luncheon in your honor on **Sunday, June 12**, following the **10:30 am** service in Gilmore Hall. You will enjoy a delicious lunch, get acquainted with the Pastoral staff, and meet other new friends around the table. You will also get a great overview of the different ministries available at PazNaz and a gift bag to say "Thanks for being here!"

Please RSVP to Stacey Maljian at smaljian@paznaz.org by **June 10** if you can attend.

New Friends Lunch





MISSIONS *in the* BLOOD

from *Leslie Prescott*

I have been part of a missionary family for nearly 50 years. For 35 years, my in-laws, Grace and Lyle Prescott, were missionaries in the Caribbean with the Church of the Nazarene. There was always “missionary talk” in our home. We loved hearing stories about how God was at work in Cuba, Puerto Rico, or the Virgin Islands. So it was no surprise to me when my oldest son, Clayton, as part of The Department of World Missions/Compassionate Ministries spent three years in Kosovo after the war helping families rebuild their homes and lives and living out Christ in that small Muslim village.

PazNaz has always been a mission-minded church giving many people, even our youth, the opportunity to serve God in various countries. Again, it was no surprise to me when my youngest son, Luke, took a group of high school students to Ecuador with Work & Witness. Following in my kids footsteps, I went on several Work & Witness trips to other countries including Africa, Peru, and Bulgaria. I guess you could say “missions” is in our blood. My daughter, Carolee, married a man who became a pastor and who grew up on the mission field in Africa. While they were dating, they shared missionary books written by their grandfathers: his grandfather started a work in Africa and her grandfather started a work in the Caribbean.

In July of 2013 I went to Nazarene Theological College (NTC) in Manchester, United Kingdom with our Work & Witness Team. There was so much to be done on the campus but, in addition to the maintenance work, the school needed help with their archives. That was of real interest to me so, while I was there for two weeks of work, I started praying and asking questions about the possibility of going back as a volunteer. I was willing to help in whatever way was needed, having no idea, really, what that would entail. But the seed was planted, and I wouldn't know what the Lord had in store for me unless I moved forward and allowed him to guide the process. It seemed daunting at first. How do you walk away from your home, family, church, and friends? I'm a homebody and have been known to get homesick so, every step of the way, I would remind myself of all the missionary stories I had heard and read. Those "called" would board a ship and travel three months to some exotic "heathen" land, waving goodbye to their loved ones for perhaps the last time, with no telephone communication, and letters could take weeks, if not months, to cross the ocean.

Fast forward to today and you will find that modern-day missionary work looks completely different. The Church of the Nazarene has always been involved in world missions and offers different ways of being involved around the world. While England does not seem to fit the traditional definition of "mission field," NTC, by its very missional calling, is in a perfect location to educate and train pastors and Christian workers from around the world who return to their countries of origin and continue to share the Gospel of Christ.

When I got home after those two weeks of Work & Witness, I told my family what I was thinking and they were totally supportive and encouraged me to look into it. I started communicating with the Nazarene Church's Department of World Mission/Mission Corps and started the process. It took from August 2013 to August 2014 to get everything in order. I found renters

for my house, which meant I had to clear out most of my belongings to make room for theirs. I applied for a tier five charity workers visa, a process that is not for the faint of heart: expensive, much scrutiny, and many delays. Then, how do you pack for nine months in another country over the winter months while keeping in mind the airline's weight restrictions? As all the major and minor tasks, down to the smallest detail, came together during that year (I even was able to find a kitty sitter for the entire time), I was more and more certain that, while I thought it was my bright idea to volunteer at NTC, it was really God who had planted the seed, then guided me through the year-long preparation process. I knew that he would be no less present with me while I was away from home.

I boarded a plane on September 8, 2014. Twelve hours later I was speeding down the Manchester motorway to the village of Didsbury, my ultimate destination being Nazarene Theological College, my home for the next nine months, all the while praying that God would use my willing heart and hands. The setting of the school is beautiful; the people there are warm, friendly, and very appreciative of folks who come to give their time. I showed up during the preparation for a couple of community events and the arrival and registration of new students. So it was all hands on deck. I got some on-the-job-training and quickly realized that getting settled into my on-campus flat and recuperating from jet lag would have to wait, or at least get squeezed in between all the events that happen at the beginning of a school year.

As my weeks started to take on some routine, I found that my main responsibility was assisting in the library four days a week. In a library with about 30,000 volumes there was lots to do. There was

reshelving, labeling, numbering, and covering hundreds of books. It was general library work, which I had never done before but, the more I learned, the more I loved it! I was also able to assist the Archivist with some projects which was the very thing that caught my attention in the first place. In constant use by undergrads, MAs, PhDs, and lots of off-campus visitors alike, the library is the hub of the college, so I met lots of people and had great conversations over the circulation desk.

One day a week I was stationed at the reception desk located in a 125-year-old building, with its half-timbered construction, heavy oak woodwork, and creaky wood floors. I answered the phone and did tasks as required by the staff and faculty; however, all schedules were subject to change if there was an absence that needed covering or a special event that called for large scale food preparation. And there were quite a few of these instances that required many after-hour nights. Simply, I needed to be prepared for anything.

Faculty and staff met together regularly to pray for the students and the school so, in addition to totally enjoying the tasks I was given, there was another dimension to being there that far outweighed the "work:" watching the faculty and staff honor God to fulfill the mission of the school, and watching the students work to fulfill God's call on their lives.

My life has been enriched by this experience in so many ways. Being a part of Mission Corps in another part of the world was life-changing, not to mention that these people I had never met before have now become faces, names, and stories that I will remember forever.

- Leslie Prescott

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Women's Ministries

Testimony & Praise

Friday, June 3. at 7:00 pm in Lee Chapel

Come hear the testimonies of several PazNaz ladies, and share in a time of worship, food, and fellowship in Gilmore Hall following the service.

*For more information, contact Megan Marsh at mmarsh@paznaz.org or 626.351.2429.
Free childcare when you RSVP to Pastor Faith Romasco at fromasco@paznaz.org or 626.351.2469.*



RISE UP

**SIGN UP FOR A
CAMP NOW**

Week #1:

June 13-16, 8:30 am-12:30 pm
Cost: \$100

Week #2:

July 5-8, 8:30 am-12:30 pm
Cost: \$100



UPWARD
SPORTS
PLAY WITH PURPOSE

Registration for this Summer's Basketball Camps Is Now Available!

Camp is open to kids entering first grade through sixth grade

Contact League Director, Doug Ravasdy, at dravasdy@paznaz.org or 626.351.2456.

Register at: www.paznaz.mycustomevent.com



Finding A VOICE

from Norma Ramirez

For the past four years I have heard this word used to describe me: Uprooted. But what does it mean? Superficially, I knew what it meant. I thought of a tree being uprooted from the ground, but I never understood the depth of such imagery. If the tree stays that way, it dies. It can only survive if it is planted again. So, why were people using this metaphor to describe me? The truth is that people weren't describing me directly. Instead, this was used to describe the thousands of immigrant children who migrated from Mexico (and other Latin American countries) to the United States. My childhood story is that when I was five-years-old, my parents' immigrated to the United States along with my sister and me. It was my father who decided to come to the United States first, and then my mother, sister, and I followed months after.

I have one particular memory where the *coyote* (smuggler) was carrying my sister and my mother was carrying me, and he told everyone to just keep running straight if the police caught him. Fortunately, that didn't happen, but it did set the tone for the rest of the trip. We spent the night in various different houses on our way to Las Vegas, Nevada, and we were always told that no one could see us or be aware that we were there. Finally, we arrived at our destination and we lived what I considered a "normal" life.

I didn't know that I had a voice or a story to share until Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) came to pass in 2012. I didn't realize that I was "different" until it was time to start applying to college, when I was told that I

would not be able to go to college due to my immigration status. Around this time, there was also public upheaval about unfair immigration practices. In my high school, many students had walked out of class to march in solidarity with these issues – yet, I stayed in my seat. For the first time, I felt intense shame and fear for who I was. I became silent under the weight of a secret I never knew I had – I was an unauthorized Mexican student who had entered the US at the tender age of 5.

But I wanted to pursue a college degree. I had to figure out a way around the barriers to achieve this goal. I searched and was informed that I could attend a public institution, but I wouldn't be eligible for financial aid. Despite the demoralizing news, I decided to not give up, and my parents supported me as much as they could financially. I graduated from the College of Southern Nevada (CSN) with my AA in Psychology, and then transferred to the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) to pursue my BA in Psychology. After my first semester at UNLV, I didn't know how I would pay for the rest of my education since tuition had tripled and my parents could not afford it. Fortunately, DACA passed and I was able to have a work permit that allowed me to work to pay off my tuition. I graduated in May 2014 with my BA in Psychology.

In 2008, I started to volunteer with the annual Latino Youth Leadership Conference (LYLC), designed to encourage and equip high school juniors and seniors to pursue higher education. For a few years, I was the only person in this conference who was undocumented and attending college. As I started realizing that there were other students like me who believed that they couldn't go to college, I began

to share my experience and, slowly, more undocumented students began emerging as leaders.

I also volunteered at Hermandad Mexicana Transnacional (HMT). While I was at HMT, we collaborated with the Mexican Consulate in Las Vegas to host informational workshops on DACA and I did TV interviews. I grew in self-confidence and awareness that there were many others like me. Indeed, DACA and the volunteer work that I was engaged in helped me realize that I had a voice and a story to share.

Now, I am the first in my family and one of the few DACA students in the US in a doctorate program. In 2015, I was accepted into Fuller's Doctoral Program in Clinical Psychology. I didn't know if I would be able to attend due to tuition and living costs, but, again, I became my own advocate. I held an art show fundraiser where I sold my original photography and set up an online fundraiser account. I also advocated for myself with the school's president and dean. Thankfully, I was given a scholarship to cover the cost of my first academic year. Needless to say, in spite of the uncertainty of my academic career, my long-term vision is not deterred.

My vision is to continue building bridges between higher education institutions and Latino youth. When 21 DREAMers and I were invited to Mexico through the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the U.S-Mexico Foundation, I realized that we have a great opportunity to give voice to our community. Many of my peers (US Citizens, Legal Permanent Residents, DACA students, and undocumented students) often tell me that I inspire them to continue with their education. Academically, my research interests are focused on the psychological and academic

well-being of Latino youth. I am particularly interested in how trauma and parent-child relationships affect them and how effective clinical interventions can promote their health and stability. Throughout my graduate training, I plan to continue speaking, teaching, and promoting workshops so that more Latinos can attain higher education.

I connected with La Fuente Ministries through Fuller Theological Seminary. I knew that I wanted to attend a church that was led in Spanish and that was also involved in the community. So when I found out that La Fuente Ministries was a bilingual church and worked with the Immigration Resource Center of San Gabriel Valley, I knew that I had to go and check it out. I remember that during my first time at La Fuente Ministries there was a special moment given to talk about children with special needs, and I loved that because I had not seen that done before. Then, I remember that the message was on Ecclesiastes and "meaninglessness" and I appreciated the honesty, sincerity, and genuineness of the message. I remember noticing that the whole service felt very intentional. There was a goal behind every action and I believe that this goal is to manifest God's glory to every person that attends or visits. I feel known. I feel cared for in a way that meets the particularity of my situation here and as a whole person. I can call them my friends and after that, it is simply a matter of doing life together.

- Norma Ramirez

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A PASADENA PRIMETIME EVENT



THURSDAY, JUNE 9, AT 6:00 PM IN GILMORE HALL

SUMMER BAR-B-QUE

TICKETS ARE \$17 / PURCHASE YOURS BY JUNE 5
CONTACT SYLVA HEKIMIAN FOR MORE INFORMATION AT 626.351.2426.