

Chris Savarese: A Man of Genuine Hello!

Leigh Zamora

Can you recall a day or a moment in your life when you were so deeply caught up in the thoughts of what you needed to do next, a bill that needed to be payed or an email that needed to be returned? Then, like a burst of sunshine through your blinders, a stranger looks at you, makes eye contact, smiles and says a simple, "Hello!" You look up, you have made a connection, you are now in the present moment and your day has completely shifted. You feel lighter, brighter, a genuine smile now radiates across your face. Chances are, you may have just come into contact with Encinitas' own Chris Savarese. Raised in Encinitas, Chris is an amazing member of our community and a living example of his personal ideology that, "being good to people around you creates bonds, networks and creates a community!"

Always leading with an attitude that streams fun, balanced with responsibility, Chris can be found working his way up to Court 1 at the Moonlight Beach volleyball courts or hitting the sand courts at ViaSat Inc. in his fulfilling occupation as electrical engineer. A man that weaves joy and responsibility throughout his individual life, magical new marriage and career corner, Chris equates much of his balanced success to a life lived in Encinitas, "a community that asks what are you doing today, not what do you do for your job?"

Present day Encinitas is described by Chris as a "cozy community on a good path forward." He believes that it is the people in Encinitas that always have and continue to make it the grounded and unique community it is today. He recalls a time during his youth when the community came together to picket and ultimately push out an adult club that was fishing for space at the old Garcia's shopping center off of Encinitas Boulevard. Due to the fact that people in this community are, "ok talking to each other and staying connected," Encinitas generates a special bond interlinking happy individuals that care for one another, their community and humanity as a whole.

While a student at Diegueno Middle School, Chris would wake, grab a quick breakfast and "roll down the hill behind my house, making it to class just in time!" He finished many of his junior high school days on the black tops there playing roller blade hockey amongst teachers and friends. Before graduating San Diegueno High School in 1995, Chris accrued the empowering lesson of non judgmental action while on his high school debate team. His debate experience encouraged him to truly see another's perspective by stepping into their shoes and really connecting with their side. "In return," Chris states, "you allow yourself to come back to your beliefs, see them more clearly and be able to define your side better and understand the whole situation better." Chris took this powerful tool with him as he completed degrees from both Trinity College and UC Berkeley.

It was this same open minded perspective that landed Chris his first job at the old AMC Theater that once existed where the current Staples now resides on El Camino Real. Showcasing his fun, responsible approach to life, fifteen year old Chris typed up his application and taped his resume and letters of reference to the back. Originally turned away because he was too young to legally work, AMC Theaters, impressed with his application, called him one

year later as promised, on the day of his sixteenth birthday to hire him on. It was there, as a ticket collector, that Chris made it his daily mission to connect distracted people to the beauty of the present moment with simple eye contact and a genuine greeting. "It made me feel good, it made them feel good, it just seemed like an open way to be, to connect with people, to sort of break that barrier of 'the world revolves around me, it doesn't matter what happens to other people, as long as I'm ok;' to just enjoy a brief moment with another human being that you have never met before."

Chris carries these early positive life interactions into his present day life choices and experiences . He is clear about the positive role Encinitas has played in his youth, the rooted life it allows for him now and the cozy conscious community it is looking forward. The next time you are busy, streamlining ahead, take a moment, look up into the eyes of a stranger and say a genuine, "Hello!" For in accordance to this, you, like Chris, are contributing to this amazing community of Encinitas where Chris authentically describes, "people feel good, they are happy and it feeds back into itself!"