

March

The landlord, impressed by Diego's sincerity, agreed to rent him the space. After a few years Leftside Printing started to get traction and started to secure contracts with local Cities, School district and other larger companies. After 6 years in 2019 Diego was Ready to move back to a larger place and looked to Downtown Richmond.

The struggles didn't stop there. When COVID-19 hit, Leftside Printing, like many businesses, was affected by the pandemic. With a nonprofit status, Diego was unable to pay rent and sought to cancel the lease. The landlord offered an unusual solution: continue paying for the space while keeping operations minimal. Diego learned from the 2008 Market crash and understood how business works. "Where there is a tragic there is an opportunity for success" Leftside Printing partnered with Richmond Main Street_ and the San Pablo EDC to provide free signs and banners to local businesses to help them communicate and engage with customers during the pandemic. Diego even began producing social distancing stickers and masks, further solidifying his role as a community ally. After a year, the business made a full recovery, tripling its net income from 2018.

His partnership with the Richmond Police Activities League (RPAL) also became a key part of Leftside's legacy, especially with its youth programs and soccer league that served as a foundation for many young athletes.



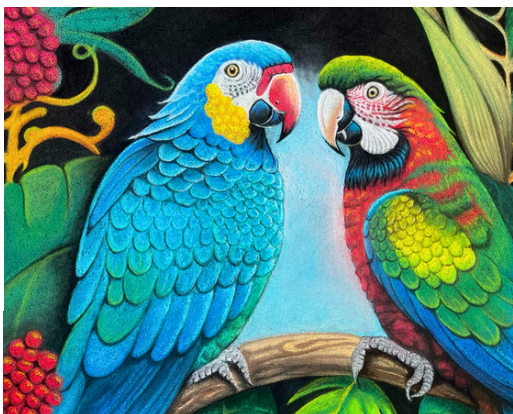
LEFTSIDE PRINTING

Diego's journey into the world of printing is as much about perseverance and vision as it is about building a legacy for the community. Diego and his family came to Richmond in 1978, Growing up in the city of Richmond, he recalls walking the streets with his father in the early 80's, shopping and enjoying the local vibe. Little did he know that years later, the very streets he walked would be home to his own business, Leftside Printing.

Diego's venture into the printing business started out of necessity. At the time, there were no print shops in Richmond, so Diego sought to learn the trade by visiting neighboring cities. However, every attempt to gain experience or volunteer at other print shops ended in rejection. Undeterred, Diego took matters into his own hands and started his own business, and those same businesses that turned him away came calling years later, offering to sell him equipment because they were closing shop.

Starting small, Diego rented a space on MacDonald Avenue, right adjacent to Foods Co, and began his printing venture. The first location was a humble house that was zoned for business use but still felt like a home. Over time, the business grew and moved to bigger spaces. From a small one-bedroom apartment to a larger location at McDonald and 28th Street, Diego's printing operation began to take shape. Two years later, a larger space became available in a former school building and opened a 2nd shop in Berkeley CA.

However, the 2008 economic downturn posed a serious challenge. With the market crash, Leftside Printing faced a significant loss and was forced to go bankrupt, Diego was forced to close his location in Berkeley and downsize. Despite these challenges, Diego wasn't ready to give up. He moved to a smaller spot at 31st and Macdonald, focusing solely on screen printing. When the opportunity arose to move to a new location on 23rd, Diego took a chance, even though it meant writing a letter to the landlord explaining his situation honestly.



In his personal life, Diego's passion for art and creativity shines through. A natural artist since kindergarten, Diego's love for art has led him to teach digital art at the high school level. He has also participated in and won numerous national art contests, even sharing the experience with his wife. The couple regularly attends a national tournament in Reno, where they compete in chalk art contests, winning first place on several occasions.



Diego's dedication to building both athletes and community is evident in his work as the Entrepreneurship teacher and Director of Athletics at Richmond High School. Over the years, Diego has played a pivotal role in shaping the school's athletic programs, ensuring that each student has the opportunity to thrive and develop both on and off the field. His leadership extends beyond just coaching and organizing events; it's about creating an environment where young athletes feel empowered to pursue their passions and push their limits, knowing that their success is a reflection of both their hard work and the support of the community around them.

The founding of Richmond SOL 22 years ago stands as one of his most significant contributions to the community. Richmond SOL (RSOL) is a soccer league that offers local youth the chance to not only learn soccer but also develop essential life skills. Over the years, the program has cultivated not just skilled athletes but also community leaders, with participants actively engaging in park cleanups and youth development training. RSOL is unique in being the only program with a National Premier Team featuring Richmond-based players. Many of the young athletes Diego has coached have returned to teach the next generation, passing on both their skills and the values they learned. Through this initiative, Diego has helped create a tightly-knit community where children grow not only as athletes but also as mentors, demonstrating that the lessons learned in sports extend well beyond the field. Now, as a teacher, Diego continues his work by inspiring youth to pursue entrepreneurship.

Beyond the printing business, Diego has always had a strong focus on community involvement. His children, who have grown up alongside the business, continue to be active in supporting Leftside Printing's operations and customer service. Diego's belief in nurturing the potential of young people has led him to support educational and athletic programs, fostering a new generation of leaders, coaches, and volunteers.

Diego's other passion lies in the world of lowrider cars. In 2016 He founded a successful coalition of lowrider car clubs, hosting sanctioned car shows and organizing car-related events in Richmond. He played a pivotal role in the annual Richmond Cruising Classic event, which now draws car enthusiasts from all over Northern California.

Diego and his team at Leftside Printing also give back to the community in meaningful ways. Each year, they organize a food drive during Thanksgiving, distributing 400 bags of food to local families in need. In partnership with local barbers and beauty salons, they offer free services to make the holiday season brighter for many in the Richmond area.

Additionally, Leftside Printing has an event space that's become a community hub for various celebrations. Whether it's a wedding, quinceañera, or birthday party, the event space is available for rent, supporting local events while strengthening the sense of community. Adjacent to the event space is a soccer field where kids, ages four and up, practice three times a week, fostering athletic development and teamwork in the heart of the city.

Diego's journey is a testament to the power of resilience, vision, and community. From a humble printing shop to a thriving business that's given back to its community in countless ways, Leftside Printing has become an institution in Richmond. With the support of his family, his dedication to his craft, and his belief in the power of community, Diego continues to leave a lasting legacy. As Leftside Printing grows, it not only supports the local economy but nurtures the spirit of togetherness that defines the heart of Richmond.

Diego is the Board President of Richmond Main Street, and has been on the Board for many years. He offers our Downtown and the Board, his knowledge and business acumen, guiding small businesses for growth and success. With Diego's participation and his Richmond SOL, at the RMSI Spirit and Soul Event, he shares his passions and youth leadership to the community. Diego's commitment and love for his hometown, making him an invaluable force in Richmond's ongoing development.



Leftside Printing
1420 Macdonald Ave.
Hours: Mon - Fri 12pm-6pm|Sat 10am-2pm
@leftsideprinting



Richmond SOL
1420 Macdonald Ave.
Please Call for more information
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richmondsol.org



Leftside Event Space
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