



Winners Celebrate at Moraga Rotary Field Day Photo provided

## Kids and Rotarians Come Out to Play!

By Lee Borrowman

In the fresh air and sunshine of last week, and with permission to run, jump and throw to their hearts' content, elementary school children in grades 3-5 from Camino Pablo, Los Perales, Rheem and Saklan Valley had a ball playing in the sun last week at Moraga Rotary's annual Field Day, held at Joaquin Moraga on May 9. And if the smiles on the faces of the Rotarians were any clue, there were some adults present who enjoyed the afternoon nearly as much as the kids.

According to Rotarian Al Simonsen, a record 194 students turned out for this year's event. The kids compete against others in the same grade and of the same gender, in events such as a sack race, 50-yard dash, softball throw, and the long jump; younger children do a standing long jump, older ones get to run and jump into a bed of oft-raked sand. There are 1st, 2nd and 3rd place awards given to the winners in each category, and ribbons for Participation for those who do not win, place or show.

"Students compete for themselves, their teachers and their schools," explains Simonsen. This year, Los Perales edged out Rheem for the High Participant Award, with 74 LP Panthers and 73 Rheem Roadrunners participating. Los Perales lost its long-held domination of the High Point School Award, as Camino Pablo came out on top by one point, 89-88 (five points are awarded to the winner of an event, three points for 2nd and one point for 3rd place). The High Point Class was Mrs. Fallon's 4th grade CP class, with 47 total points. The High Point Girl, who won the same award last year as a 3rd grader, was Bridget Coleman who is now in 4th grade at CP, and the High Point Boy was Parker Lothamer, a Rheem 4th grader.

A long-standing tradition in Moraga and Orinda (Orinda Rotary held its event on May 12), Rotary Field Day is both "an opportunity to give back to our community, and gives us a way to stay connected to the kids," said Rotarian Bill Foley. "And it gives me a reason to take off work for an afternoon!" continued Foley, whose day job is being Chief of the Dept. of Public Safety at St. Mary's College. "Kids come back each year until they go on to middle-school. It's not so much about the competition, it's about doing your best." Foley says he still has a 2nd place medal won at a Rotary Field Day when he was in 4th grade at Del Rey (presumably this was more than a few years ago).

There was a respectable level of athleticism on display. Some of the boys seemed to fly through the air at the (running) long jump, and 50-yard dashers whizzed past in a blur, some with pony tails flying. Both boys and girls drilled softballs through hanging tires. Gabriela

Diaz-Valdes, who took 1st place in the 3rd grade girls standing long jump, said, "I can't stop to talk now, they're going to start the next race without me!" Her enthusiasm was echoed across the JM school field all afternoon.

There was an abundance of energy at the event as well. "The girls are pretty good, they keep themselves organized" said Foley, who was stationed at the standing long jump and surrounded by kids clamoring for their scores and jockeying for position. Then he laughed, "But you should have seen the 3rd grade boys! It was like herding butterflies without a net!"



Gabriela Diaz-Valdes (CP), Sarah Day (Saklan) and Danielle Norris (LP)



5th grade girls 50 yard dash

Photos by Lee Borrowman



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