

## Miramonte Breathalyzes All Students Attending Dances

By Cathy Tyson

In the past, school administrators always had the option of breathalyzing students attending school functions if they had, "reasonable suspicion" of alcohol use or suspect a student has alcohol in a purse or backpack. The current policy for Miramonte is to screen all attendees of dances, including Junior Prom and the Senior Ball. The school wants to help students make healthy choices, so providing a safe environment where they can have fun is a priority.

Acalanes and Las Lomas already screen every student. Campolindo didn't at their recent dance, but according to Associate Principal Paul Mack they're going to give it a try and see how it goes at the next dance on December seventh.

"We try to be open and transparent in our decisions," says Miramonte Associate Principal Sharon Bartlett. Admission to the Fall Dance went, "very quickly. We had four lines - three administrators and one teacher." Students were required to speak normally into the unit for a count of seven.

"No one complained. This is clearly the way schools are going." Although a breathalyzer test wouldn't indicate use of marijuana, administrators are able to look in student's eyes, exchange a few pleasantries and look for signs of impairment.

No one was found to be under the influence at the dance; everyone appeared to have a wonderful time. The penalty for being under the influence of any kind of substance on school property is a mandatory five-day suspension; the school also informs the police.

"This is not a district policy, but the district is very supportive in helping students make better choices," continues Bartlett. Football games at all of the schools are open to the community, so the schools don't check everyone, but they have breathalyzer units available, if needed.

At Acalanes, Associate Principal Jan Carlson notes, "we check every single student. It's part of the culture of the school. We have an alcohol free environment."



Raised crosswalk on Camino Pablo, Moraga

## CP Students Walk to School!

By Lee Borrowman

Those subjects of much recent controversy, often referred to as The Bumps on Camino Pablo, arrived just in time for local students as Camino Pablo Elementary School kicks off its new "Walk/Ride to School Day" on September 19. The program, coordinated by CP parents Kirsten Buckley, Lauren Woolsey and Shelley Neustrom, encourages students to wear red and walk or ride to school once a month.

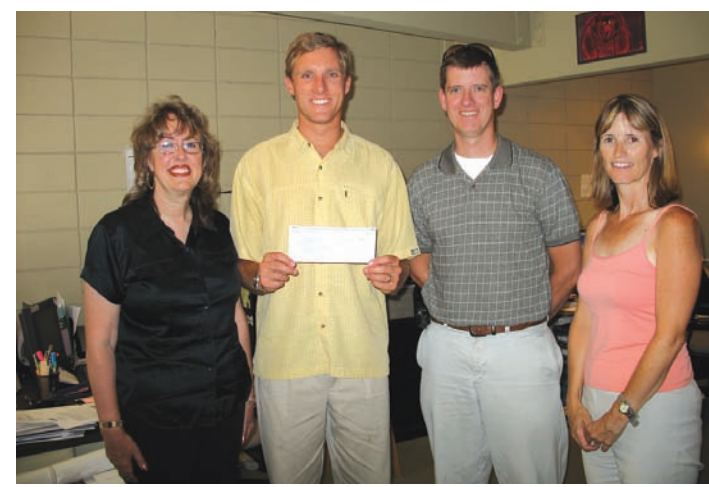
Buckley describes how the idea arose: "A couple of my friends and I were talking about ideas to drum up some school/community spirit. One friend who had lived in San Diego said they had a walk to school day that was a big hit."

Organizers hope to incorporate Life Skills and ideas such as healthy living, safety and concern for the environment into a regular event that will build community and strengthen school spirit. "We thought once a month was a realistic goal and a good place to start," said Buckley, continuing, "We'd love it if it turned into once a week."

The Moraga Police Department was invited to come the morning of the first walk and talk to students about safety. Buckley says, "For the most part, a walk/ride to CP is safe. We have new raised crosswalks at the school and new bike paths along Camino Pablo."

National Walk to School Day is coming up on October 3.

## Bike Race Benefits Local Education



Anne Granlund, Ryan Nickelson, Vaughn Van Note, Darci Chan

Not only was a good time had by all at the 3rd Annual Lafayette Criterium Bike Race, which took place last July, but the event raised funds for the Lafayette Arts & Science Foundation (LASF) as well.

LASF President Anne Granlund and Vice President Darci Chan accepted donations on behalf of LASF from Ryan Nickelson, Lafayette Criterium

Race Director, and Vaughn Van Note, Treasurer of the Contra Costa Cycling Club, the organization that coordinates the Criterium.

Donations included \$2,000 from sponsors Mt. Diablo National Bank and Greater Bay Bancorp Foundation and as well as proceeds from the Contra Costa Cycling Club's popular benefit raffle.

## "I Can Make a Difference By..."

By Sophie Braccini

How about encouraging our children to thrive in the arts and create just for the pleasure of creation? This is the purpose of the "Reflections" program, sponsored by the National Parent Teacher Association for students in grades K-12th at schools represented by a PTA branch.

Each year, children are given a theme and a choice of 6 different categories in which to illustrate it: visual art (2 dimensions only), literature (maximum 2000 words), photography, music, film/video (5 minutes max) and choreography. The program is in fact a competition, structured by age group, and from School to Council to District to County to State; your child's art could end up in Washington, D.C.

Every year hundreds of entries are submitted. They are recognized at each school, in a non-competitive way, and all works are displayed and recognized. The number of participants depends heavily on each school's staff support. For the 2006/2007 school year, student work from JM Intermediate, Burton Valley Elementary and Rheem Elementary ended up on display at the California PTA Convention in San Diego.

This year's theme is "I can make a difference by..." Children have until mid-October to submit a piece. Participating in Lamorinda schools are: Burton Valley, Stanley Middle School, Camino Pablo, Rheem, Los Perales and JM Intermediate. Information can be found on the schools' web sites or by contacting the PTA. The program's general web site is: www.capta.org/sections/programs/reflections.cfm

## Quality Family Time

By Margie Ryerson

Kevin, age 12, sat in my office expressing hurt and resentment that his father didn't spend more time with him. But when I met with Kevin's dad, he insisted that he did spend a great deal of time with Kevin. Needless to say, this was confusing.

In fact, Kevin's father devoted many hours each week assisting with Kevin's soccer team and attending every game. The team traveled, so he also went away with them several times a year. However, Kevin wasn't yearning for this type of interaction; rather he wanted time alone with his dad.

Families are busier than ever nowadays with so many tempting activities to fill their time. Parents want the best for their children, and this often means enrolling them in many programs - sports, music, tutoring, Scouts, church groups, drama, art, etc.

Friends and social activities are important. School is increasingly demanding. We all know the feeling of trying to juggle our family's schedules and still find time to be together.

With parents and children being pulled in so many directions, it is important to prioritize. This may mean that each child picks only one or two activities at a time. And perhaps each parent limits volunteer efforts for school, sports, and community, as well. While it is important to do our fair share, it is also crucial to safeguard sig-

nificant family time.

Family meals are extremely important. Ideally, eating dinner together can be the norm and not the exception. Mealtimes are wonderful opportunities to relax together and enjoy each other's company. It helps if complaints and criticisms are kept to a minimum; for example, this is not the time to discuss homework, grades, or disciplinary matters.

Other than vacations, many people tell me that their family recreational time often consists of attending children's events, or sharing pizza and a video, or socializing with other families. These activities are fine, of course, but adding more interactive times as a family, such as a bike ride, an ice-cream outing, a ferry ride across the Bay, or playing a board game at home can create meaningful experiences for everyone. Sometimes the most lasting memories can be these simple shared times together.

Of course, as your children grow older their schedules and desires may conflict with family plans. If your teen helps plan family activities and also has permission to opt out occasionally, you will have a better chance of eliciting positive participation.

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Annaluna (3 1/2) playing with her parents Roberto and Jennifer at the Orinda Community Park



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