

What Do You Know About “The Luck of the Draw?”

By Jean Follmer



It all started five years ago when LASF was approached by Fastframe of Lafayette owner, Anthony Ruiz. Mr. Ruiz wanted to partner with LASF to display the artwork of elementary students throughout the Lafayette community. LASF agreed and “The Luck of the Draw” was born. Ruiz’ distaste for judging artwork led to the random drawing of student names from each of the elementary schools. He believes that “all art is valid,” including the art of children. He furthers this thought by saying “much of (the students’) artwork is really pretty good. It’s certainly better than Blue Canvas at MOMA.”

Throughout the school year, LASF teachers work with students in each of the Lafayette schools. Gigi Voris, an LASF teacher at



Emma Workman, 1st grade, Springhill Elementary Photo J. Follmer

Happy Valley Elementary and owner of The Art Room in Lafayette, says the LASF teachers “try to schedule projects to coincide with what the students are studying in class.” Toward the end of the academic year, each of the schools holds its annual art show. After the art show, student names are drawn for next year’s Luck of the Draw and the winning artists are notified. At that point, the winning artwork is sent to Fastframe of Lafayette for framing. Ruiz donates his time, talent and materials to mat and frame each of the pieces. LASF Art Chair Sandra Pazos said, “Anthony should get a lot of credit for this. It takes a lot of his time.” Ruiz loves his work and says, “You need to find something you really enjoy and that pleases you. If you’re doing what you love to do, it’s not always about the money.” Ruiz also donates his leftover scraps and supplies to the LASF art teachers throughout the year.

Each fall, The Luck of Draw holds an opening night at the gallery in Fastframe of Lafayette. The artists, their families and members of the community are all invited to attend. This year was the biggest turnout so far. Ruiz said the event has become so popular, “it’s reached the point where kids and families are looking for it.” After opening night, the artwork is displayed at Fastframe of Lafayette before rotating to the

Town Hall Theatre, Chow, Papillion and then back to the schools. The framed artwork is ultimately returned to each artist.

One of the lucky artists this year is Springhill Elementary first grader, Emma Workman. Emma created her piece last year in her kindergarten LASF art class. Emma wants to be an artist or a rock star when she grows up. Emma brought her whole family to the Luck of the Draw opening night and really enjoyed it. Emma said, “Art is so fun and when you do it lots of times you’ll be better and you can write a book with it.” One of Emma’s favorite books is

“The Lion and the Little Red Bird” by Elisa Klevin because she loves the artwork in it. She had the chance to meet Elisa Klevin at the Lafayette Library. When asked what her favorite LASF project this year is, she said it’s the desert one “where you tear the paper.” In the spring, Emma’s framed piece will be returned to her and she’ll be able to enjoy the LASF Luck of the Draw for years to come.

Since Luck of the Draw has been so warmly received in Lafayette, Ruiz thinks it would be great to get something similar going in Moraga and Orinda too. The fact that each student has a chance of winning is the essential element of the program to Ruiz. It encourages them to find their inner artist and be confident about it. Ruiz strongly believes that anyone can be an artist and “children shouldn’t be told not to draw”. He says The Luck of the Draw “encourages personal well being. It’s about kids feeling good.”

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