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Lamorinda Schools

OIS Science Fair a Success

By Jean Follmer



Photo Chris Severson

Orinda Intermediate School (OIS) recently held its much anticipated tri-annual Science Fair. The parking lot overflowed as well over 1,000 people attended the 2008 OIS Science Fair. With over 30 interactive science demonstration stations, there were plenty of activities to choose from. The demonstration stations offered chemistry, medical science, life science, "fun" science and astronomy. Some of the demonstrations at the chemistry stations included chemical reactions and explosions. Medical science provided the chance to see real body parts like eyeballs, dissected hearts

and joint replacement techniques. Life science stressed the importance of creek preservation and "fun" science made ice cream with liquid nitrogen. The astronomy section was outside and provided telescopes for star gazing and constellation identification. Some of the presenters were from Chevron, Lawrence Livermore Laboratory, Clorox, Alta Bates Medical Center, UC Berkeley, Kaiser Permanente, Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory and Miramonte High School.

The event was coordinated by Glorietta Elementary parent Chris Severson. Severson has four chil-

dren: three at Glorietta and one in preschool. Although his kids aren't at OIS yet, Severson became involved because 2005 OIS Science Fair coordinator, Andy Sorenson, was looking for help. The OIS Science Fair is a huge undertaking. "We started having steering committee meetings in March. By the beginning of August, we were a full committee," said Severson. "Our focus group was middle school aged kids and younger. Miramonte kids were our helpers throughout the fair. A lot of the scientists (at the fair) have children in the district and/or live locally," said Severson.

Saklan Valley School Students Travel Outside of the Classroom

Submitted by Debbie Parish



Front Row: Jenny Faddis, Hanna Beckman, Grant Franklin, Jack Ginsburg, Jessica Wilcox, Abby Mueller, Gabe Binder, Haley Wilcox, Elise Filter, Stephanie Jump Back Row: Charlie Thimesch, Michael Lumley Photo submitted

Fifth and eighth grade students from Saklan Valley School had the wonderful opportunity to experience learning outside of the classroom this month. Experiential education is a key characteristic of Saklan's academic program and both grade levels were able to discover this firsthand.

Saklan's eighth grade students attended a weeklong environmental education program at Caritas Creek in Occidental, CA. In total, there were over sixty five students from three different schools in the Bay Area. Program activities were inquiry-based, allowing students to explore the natural world, build community with others and develop self-reflection and communication skills.

Saklan students found themselves living and working with students they had never met before with the goal of empowering themselves to share their discoveries with one another. Upon returning to campus, Saklan's eighth graders reported that they have a greater understanding of their responsibili-

ties as peace-makers and as ecological stewards.

Haley Wilcox, a Saklan student for 9 years, said, "It was really fun! We learned more about each other in one week than we have in our years together at Saklan. It was fun to watch us all break out of our shells and be open to new ideas. This experience has definitely helped me, especially in preparing me for high school."

Diane Faddis, a Saklan parent for 11 years, said, "As a parent, this was a wonderful opportunity for my daughter. She had the opportunity to work with a diverse group of kids, make connections, and step outside her comfort zone. With the transition to high school approaching, I saw this as an amazing opportunity for our kids to challenge themselves. Saklan has always provided our students with opportunities like this."

The very same week, Saklan's fifth graders attended The MOSAIC Project in Napa. MOSAIC is a non-profit organization that unites fourth and fifth graders from different schools with markedly different so-

cioeconomic, racial, and ethnic make-up. Students are given the opportunity to experience firsthand a diverse setting in which all is welcomed and respected. MOSAIC addresses issues of difference, building self-esteem and community, and providing students with the essential skills to thrive in an increasingly diverse society, empowering them to strive for peace. Saklan students were encouraged to appreciate each individual's contribution and the value of community.

Two of Saklan's fifth graders, Lauren Quittman and Sarah Dey, said the program taught them how to change the world to make it a better place. Lauren said, "They taught us how to be assertive, not to be passive and not to be aggressive. They also taught us to be empathetic." Sarah was excited to report that "we learned how to communicate with each other and to celebrate diversity. I also met a lot of new kids. MOSAIC means Mutual respect for others, Open mindedness, Self respect, Attitude, Individuality and Community. We definitely did all of that."

Sleepy Hollow Dedicates New Building to Liv Milan

By Jean Follmer



More than 100 Sleepy Hollow parents and students gathered for its annual "Scary Story Night," made especially sweet by the official dedication of the school's parent-club funded new before-and-after school care and enrichment center. Photo provided

The determined efforts of many Sleepy Hollow parents and supporters paid off. Last week, Sleepy Hollow honored Liv Milan, the 20+ year Director of the Sleepy Hollow Before and After School Club (B/ASC) with the opening of the new Liv Milan B/ASC Enrichment Center.

"Students and parents alike love Liv Milan and I think this dedication is proof of that," said Milan's daughter, Kari-Anne Milan. Over 100 Sleepy Hollow students and parents gathered for the event. The dedication of the building to Liv Milan coincided with Sleepy Hollow's annual Scary

Story Night. "We've never done story reading outside before. It was really a great community building event," said Sleepy Hollow parent Trish Cetrone.

OUSD Superintendent Dr. Joe Jaconette read "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" and OUSD Board of Education member Pam West performed dramatic audience participation readings of "Where the Wild Things Are" and "Room on a Broom" with Orinda's past Mayor and current City Council Member Steve Glazer.

"Our campus is maxed out on space...in order to provide educational enrichment programs like

daily Spanish language classes, we needed additional classrooms. The Liv Milan B/ASC Enrichment Center has one dedicated homework room for students and tutor sessions plus two classrooms used for enrichment classes and parent club meetings. The building also provides dedicated restrooms and a kitchen facility all dedicated to childcare services," said Cetrone.

Cetrone said there was a "huge need for larger before and after school care for students." The average daily attendance ranges from 60 to 150 students. Due to the state budget crisis, the Orinda School District was not in a position to contribute funds toward the project. The total project cost was about \$420,000 and was paid for completely by the Parent Club and a generous legacy donor. A portion of the total project cost also included updates to Sleepy Hollow's existing computer lab. Cetrone said Glorietta Elementary recently completed a similar modular building and "Wagner Ranch was ahead of its time when it installed a similar building approximately 7 years ago for the same reasons." Cetrone said the event was so touching that the Parent Club received another \$5,000 in funds - bringing its Legacy Donation Fund (specifically for the building) to \$75,000.

Dear Dr. Harold,

How do I know the difference between normal acting out and if my kid needs to see a therapist?

By Dr. Harold Jules Hoyle Ph.D.

When our bodies are broken or out of balance, it is often quite clear when we need to go to the doctor and when we do not. When our behaviors, thoughts or emotions are out of balance it can be more difficult. If you have kids now, you were raised in a time when therapy had much more of a negative stigma than it does for the current generation. When Tiger Woods needs a golf coach, it shows our society opening up to the fact that we could all use a little help. I am consistently surprised at how many young people will say, "Yeah, most of my friends have gone to see someone about something", the reality is therapists can be very helpful for folks who are going through a rough transition, so below I will provide you with some tips for knowing when to go and seek help.

Know your kids

One of the first questions a mental health professional will ask you is, "What brings you here and is this a change for your child?" Catching a change in behavior, thoughts, emotions, sleep, eating or interaction with friends is only possible if you know what your kid's behavior is like in those areas. I just listed the first categories that will be of interest to mental health professionals. When and if you go to a professional, you will be asked about these areas. For one kid, deciding to skip a meal is not out of the ordinary, for another it indicates that

something needs attention. Your child needs balance. They need to develop their intellect (school, adventure), their body (exercise, sports), their social life (family and friends), and their spiritual life (your religious tradition and the sense of the beautiful and divine). These are the proactive areas to work on with your kids. The most common areas of distress for kids are anxiety, depression, anger, and developmental issues.

Connect with the school, and other adults who interact with you child

You see your child primarily in one of the venues in life; their home life. They spend a great deal of time at school or your house of worship or music lesson or with coaches, siblings or friends. These are all resources for you in collecting the data that you need to make a decision. If the child always has a headache when sport is brought up, but in no other area, then you probably have some work to do in that one area. If all of the areas in your child's life are seeing behavioral changes, you should start looking into professional to work with your child or adolescent.

Next steps when you think it is time

Get an appointment with your child's pediatrician in order to answer the first question we want answered, "To what degree is there a medical cause for what is going on?"



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If there is a medical issue then any type of talk therapy will not be the whole solution. It could be part of the solution, but not the whole. Once you have taken care of that, many health plans have some short term therapy and can be helpful in diagnosis and short term treatment. Another option is private practitioners. Since children and adolescents are not likely to get up in the morning and say, "Hey mom can I go to therapy today?", finding the right therapist can be important. The therapeutic relationship can be difficult to predict. Spend some time making sure that there is a good match between your child and the therapist. Then work closely with them towards a solution. Good treatment can work wonders.

2nd Annual Tim Truesdell MS Walk-a-thon Coming Up


By Jean Follmer

Miramonte Seniors Alex Gompertz and Hannah Wood will sponsor the 2nd annual Tim Truesdell Multiple Sclerosis Walk-a-thon on November 22. Through the event, Gompertz and Wood seek to raise funds to further research the treatment of MS. Tim Truesdell is Alex's cousin and he is currently suffering from Multiple Sclerosis. Alex said the event will be held in special memory of Tim's late Godfather, Doug Gillespie. Gillespie was an ardent supporter of the 1st annual walk-a-thon.

Alex's brother, Max Gompertz, started the walk-a-thon for his Eagle Scout Project two years ago. Alex and Hannah are developing a "Multiple Sclerosis Walkathon Manual" to ensure that the walk-a-thon continues in future years. The manual will be given to both the Miramonte Leadership Class and Boy Scout Troop 233. The 1st annual walk-a-thon raised over \$10,000 for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. Alex and Hannah hope to raise even more funds this year.

Alex and Hannah encourage

the community to participate in this healthy activity while raising money for a worthwhile cause. The walk-a-thon is open to the public and first aid and water stations will be set up along the walking route. You can join Alex and Hannah at the Moraga Commons parking lot on November 22 from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. Donations can be made to National Multiple Sclerosis Society and either dropped off at the walk or mailed to Alex Gompertz, 14 Oak Drive, Orinda, CA, 94563.



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All are welcome!

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