

SCHOOL CALENDAR

School Governing Board Meetings

Acalanes Union

High School District
Board Room AUHSD Office
1212 Pleasant Hill Rd, Lafayette
Wednesday, April 29, 2009 at 7:30

Lafayette School District

LAFSD Office
3477 School Street, Lafayette
Wednesday, May 13, 2009 at 7:00

Orinda Union School District

OUSD Office
8 Altarinda Road, Orinda
Monday, May 11 at 4:00

Moraga School District

Joaquin Moraga Intermediate
School Auditorium
1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga
Tuesday, May 12 at 7:30

Rheem Elementary Gets Garden Help



Photo Jeremy Foster

With the help of Donald L. Rheem Elementary School teacher Sarah Stocco, 12 high school students from the Student Conservation Association's Bay Area Conservation Leadership Corps (SCA) and their guests helped build a trail up the hill through the new school garden, construct planter boxes, and clear trash and other debris from a nearby stream on March 22. This service project was made possible by the planning of these twelve second or third year SCA members, SCA crew leaders, and Stocco, who is an SCA alumna. The San Francisco Bay Area CLC program is a high school level conservation training ground that is part of SCA, a national youth conservation organization. For more information on the SCA, please visit: www.thesca.org.

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Lamorinda Schools

Ask Dr. Harold Autism Spectrum Disorders

By Dr. Harold Jules Hoyle, Ph.D.

I was recently at a volleyball game at Campo, when a parent I was talking to told me that her nephew was diagnosed with high functioning Autism. She asked me, "What does that mean and what should I do?"

So here is some background and a short rundown on the recent research on children with Autism.

Autism (first described in 1943 by Leo Kanner and in 1944 by Hans Asperger) is characterized by clinically significant behavior involving: 1) Social impairment, 2) Communication impairment, 3) Repetitive behaviors/interests. Clinicians observe a child's behavior in order to diagnose it. Asperger's disorder does not have the language or cognitive delays that can be a part of an Autism diagnosis.

In the past several years, terminology has changed from talking about just Autism and Asperger's disorders to talking about Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). More recently, the research community has begun using the term Autisms. This is because there is growing evidence that there are different Autisms. Some kids have seizure disorders, some have anxiety, some have gastro-intestinal issues, and many other subtypes. The key point researchers and clinicians agree upon is Autism is not one thing.

As far as what causes Autism, the most controversial theory has

been childhood inoculations. Leading researchers in this field, however, have ruled out inoculations as the direct cause for the increased diagnosis of Autism, so I recommend you make decisions about childhood inoculations with your pediatrician and not based on what I write, what you see on TV, or what you find on the Internet. What we do know is that ASDs are developmental disorders of the brain. The interactions between genes, the body's immune system, and the environment are being studied at a remarkable rate and new studies come out each month. One of the leading research centers in the world is just up the road at UC Davis' MIND Institute. They have tremendous resources on their Web site.

So what do you do if your child is diagnosed with an ASD?

Treatment professionals agree on one thing: Early intervention is important. Because there are many Autisms, kids may or may not respond to a particular treatment. A special diet might significantly change the lives of some kids, but not others. Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) might work well for many kids, but not for others. Treatment specialists are now recommending individualizing treatment planning for kids. This is where you reach out to professionals and organizations for support

and advice.

I recommend a combination of direct intervention with the child, support services for the child and family, and everyone in the family or who works with the child get educated about how they can help in their role.

The medical professionals who diagnose ASDs should refer the family to the appropriate services for the age of the child. Autism is covered under Special Education Law and an Individual Family Service Plan IFSP for birth to 5 or and Individual Education Program IEP K-12 should be implemented as soon as possible.

Here is a list of resources: 1) CARE Parent Network is a local resource for families of children with Autism and other developmental disabilities, 2) The Orion Academy in Moraga is a nationally recognized, accredited school for children on the spectrum, 3) I recommend books by Temple Grandin, 4) A short novel that many people say helps them understand the thinking of kids with ASD is, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* by Mark Haddon.

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Talented Students Honored at OAC Visual Arts Competition

By Jean Follmer



Pictured from left to right are: 1st Place Photography Andrew Moore - Miramonte Senior, 2nd Place 3D Marisa Rowland - Miramonte Senior, 2nd Place Photography Erin Cherry - Miramonte Sophomore, 1st Place 3D Michael Nohr - Miramonte Senior

Photo Jean Follmer

Winners of the 2009 High School Visual Arts Competition were announced last Friday at the packed Orinda Library Gallery reception, hosted by The Orinda Arts Council (OAC). The 6th annual competition was open to all high school students living or attending school in Lamorinda, with more than 160 entries submitted this year by students from Bentley, Campolindo, Holden, Miramonte and Orinda Academy.

Miramonte Senior Andrew Moore was pleased with his first place win in photography. "I feel good. I can't find a job right now so it's good to have something (the prize money) for now," Moore said. He plans to attend Diablo Valley College in the fall and ultimately attend the California College of Art in Oakland.

Miramonte Sophomore Erin Cherry was clearly happy about her second place win in photography. Her piece, entitled "Winter Fairytale," featured a young girl posed in a sleeveless dress sitting on a dock covered in snow. Cherry said the photo was taken in Tahoe. "I saw the location and I'm just really into portraiture," she said.

Cash prizes totaling \$2,250 were awarded to the winners, including \$500 to each of the first place winners. Sixty of the students volunteered to sell their work, priced at their discretion (60 percent of any proceeds go to the student artist, and 40 percent to the Orinda Arts Council "to sustain and continue programs like this one").

Judges based their decisions on creativity and originality, content, and degree of expertise in the chosen medium. Each of the judges are professionals who either teach, practice or represent expertise in the individual mediums.

Heidi Donner, who has worked for the Hearst Art Gallery at Saint Mary's College for 20 years, is a repeat judge for the OAC competition and says it fills a true need in the community.

"The demise of the County-wide exhibition at Sun Valley Mall took away one of the few opportunities for art students to have their work displayed for general audiences. There are very few venues where one can see works by students from several high schools representing diverse art media," said Donner. "The Orinda Arts Council exhibition is especially vital because it provides an important public opportunity to recognize and reward the many serious and talented art students in our area. It is always wonderful to see strong

figurative work and large scale projects in two-dimensional work, and a love of the media's plasticity in three dimensional projects."

Erica Amundson, who teaches 2D and 3D art at Campolindo and Las Lomas High Schools, has been impressed by the high degree of organization in the show during the years that her students have participated, commenting on the worthwhile experience.

"It's not just that they got into an art show - it's that they got into a good show," said Amundson, who is personally doing a lot of drawing these days. "I'm in the throws of a big project - there's some sculpture but mostly drawing. I'm loving the whole new drawing movement right now."

Miramonte 3D teacher Gavin Kermode has attended the OAC Visual Arts Competition for several years. "It's nice for the students to actually see their work on display in a nice show like this one. It's one of the few shows that happens every year, so you can count on it," said Kermode, who has taught art at Miramonte for five years. "The support from the community, the parents and the students - I really couldn't ask for a better situation."

The artwork will be on display at the Orinda Library Gallery through April 30. Gallery hours of operation are Monday through Thursday 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Friday and Saturday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

And the Winners Are...

2D - Painting, Drawing, Printmaking, Mixed Media

1st Place - Brianna Roberts, "Guilty", Bentley Senior
2nd Place - Jessie Guilford, "Untitled", Bentley Sophomore
3rd Place - Evan Hynes, "Trees", Campolindo Senior
Honorable Mentions - Brian Van Horn - Miramonte, Lily Williams - Miramonte, Emmelin M. Crespi - Miramonte, Da Zahn - Miramonte, Soshia Young - Miramonte, Kathleen Sullivan - Bentley, Molly Fischer - Campolindo, James Darling - Miramonte, Jessica Leimone - Miramonte

3D - Ceramics, Sculpture, Jewelry, Construction

1st Place - Michael Nohr, "Birth?", Miramonte Senior
2nd Place - Marisa Rowland, "Untitled", Miramonte Senior
3rd Place - Melissa Miyamoto-Mills, "Trastle", Miramonte Senior
Honorable Mentions - Deeqa Mohamed - Bentley, Alex Nielsen - Bentley, Emily Turrentine - Bentley, James Darling - Miramonte, Katie Kortright - Miramonte, Austens Thomposon - Miramonte, Isabel Zucker - Miramonte, Elizabeth Berger - Miramonte

Photography - Manual and all Digital Arts

1st Place - Andrew Moore, "The Artist's Life", Miramonte Senior
2nd Place - Erin Cherry, "Winter Fairytale", Miramonte Sophomore
3rd Place - Julia Wang, "Xianese", Bentley Junior
Honorable Mentions - Frankie George - Campolindo, Allyson L. Wright - Campolindo, Emma Harwayne - Holden, Moriah Hodges - Miramonte, Melissa Chenok - Miramonte, Jaymie Henson-Guerra - Miramonte, Olivia Moore - Miramonte, Alexander Perry - Bentley, Holland Taylor - Bentley, Keaton Kenel - Campolindo