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Lamorinda Schools

Lafayette Elementary • Los Perales • Miramonte • Orinda Academy Orinda Intermediate • Saklan Valley School • Sleepy Hollow Springhill • Stanley Middle • St. Perpetua School • Wagner Ranch

Acalanes Student Awarded \$10K Scholarship



Danielle Rasooly Photo provided

Acalanes High School senior Danielle Rasooly was recently recognized by the Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation as "one of the country's most outstanding high school seniors," receiving a \$10,000 Regional Coca-Cola Scholarship for col-

lege after demonstrating "academic and civic excellence" in her school and community.

Rasooly was one of 252 high school students who competed for the 52 National Scholarships of \$20,000 and 200 Regional scholarships of \$10,000 during the Coca-Cola Scholars Weekend, held April 2 through April 5 in Atlanta. Scholars were chosen from an initial applicant pool of more than 74,000 representing approximately 23,000 high schools nationwide.

During the Scholars Weekend, the 2009 class of Coca-Cola Scholars interviewed with a National Selection Committee representing education, business, government and arts leaders from across the country.

Arrest Made After Death of Miramonte Student

By Lee Borrowman

Joseph Loudon, a sixteen year-old sophomore at Miramonte High School and member of the school's track and football teams, was pronounced dead at midnight Saturday, May 23rd at Kaiser Medical Center in Walnut Creek. Loudon had reportedly been binge-drinking at a party near his home on Hillcrest Drive when he was found by friends, unconscious in a hallway. Police say that alcohol poisoning is the likely cause of the young man's death.

"There were massive quantities of alcohol at this party," said Orinda Police Chief William French. Police did not find any drugs on the premises.

According to French, the owners of the home in which the party was held were out of town, several hours away, on Saturday

night. The party was hosted by two people, age eighteen and nineteen years old. 18-year old Patrick Gabrielli, a junior at Miramonte, was arrested on charges of contributing to the delinquency of a minor and giving alcohol to a minor. He was subsequently released on \$5,000 bail.

French would not say if there would be other arrests but confirmed that there is an ongoing investigation. "That's what we're doing today," he said Monday, "conducting more interviews, trying to find out if there were (additional people) responsible." There were only about a dozen people in the house when police and paramedics arrived. "It's usual for them to scatter when they hear sirens," said French, who would not say whether those who remained ap-

peared to be intoxicated.

Why did this happen? French frequently raises the broader issue of the choices that we as a community make as to how we address the issue of teenage drinking; whether we look the other way or even allow teens to drink in our homes because 'they're going to do it anyway.' On Monday morning he added, "Everyone makes an individual choice. There was no indi-

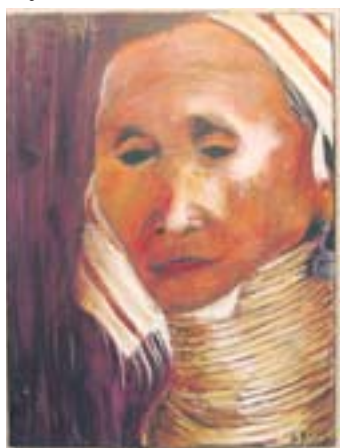
cation of forced drinking, no hazing. Even at sixteen, you make choices. The suspect also made a conscious choice to host the party. He bears some responsibility for what happened."

According to the Centers for Disease Control, 45% of teenagers drink alcohol, and of those who drink, 64% admit to binge-drinking.

Anyone with information about Loudon's death is urged to contact the Police at 284-5010.

Budding Artists Show Work at Local Teen Art Show

By Jean Follmer



Artist: Adrienne Snider



Artist: Amanda Griggs



A crowd of local art lovers attended the Teen Art Show at The Art Room in Lafayette on May 15, which featured works from nearly 30 local budding artists. "We had a big turnout. I was really impressed. Some of the students sold their pieces and the kids were just so excited," said owner Gi Gi Voris. Although most of the participants were local teenagers, some artists as

young as age 9 participated in the show. Voris said she plans to offer a student scholarship to The Art Room during each of its five sessions in the 2009-10 school year. "I really like being able to do things like this for my community," she said. The Art Room is located at 50 Lafayette Circle in Lafayette and can be reached at 299-1515 or www.theart-room.com. Photos Andy Scheck

Good Planning Is the Key to College Success

By Elizabeth LaScala, Ph.D.

Students and their families don't need me to tell them that it is a different world today than it was 20 years ago. As we adjust to new economic and social realities, we also must adapt to the changing landscape of attending college. Planning for college was always important and it is even more important now. Good planning is critical to success, especially if students are going to public institutions of higher learning. As one example, seniors who applied to the University of California and California State University systems faced more enrollment caps, earlier deadlines, and less flexibility regarding adherence to admission requirements. The new rules are, "Be on time and be complete!"

Newly admitted students must plan well to maximize their educational experience and increase chances to graduate on schedule. This is particularly critical now because budgetary constraints have led to fee increases and fewer course sessions. Here are some tips:

- Consider attending school year round; newly accepted students may want to take courses during the incoming quarter before the beginning of the freshman year and during summers to get and maintain a strong academic edge
- Register as soon as an electronic bulletin comes out to maximize chances of getting the classes you want. Many public universities are cutting the number of class sessions offered in order to save dollars, and this trend is expected to continue.
- Consider enrollment at more than one college (for example, take classes at a local community college as well as the California State University you are attending).
- Think about taking an on-line course. For students who can learn in this environment, these

courses present a way to maximize enrollment and stretch educational dollars.

- Get a good academic start, and do not fail or quit a class. Don't wait to experience a problem; instead take advantage of the help that exists on campus. Go to faculty office hours, check out peer tutoring, and join study groups.
- Get your text books and supplies early, be ready for the start of classes, and then consider taking a class just for fun to lighten your work; ping pong, yoga, step aerobics are one credit classes that provide a much needed break in a long school week.
- Finally, get an early jump on work study if it is offered in your financial aid package. If you plan your work study well every quarter (or semester), it will maximize your earning potential over the course of your college career.

University of California Admissions Update for Current High School Students

Good planning means staying up to date with current information and policies. Fall 2009 applications rose for the fifth year in a row, increasing by 3.2% for freshmen. This represents a total of 127,000 applications. Due to the budget crisis, the UC system cut freshmen enrollment by 2,300, resulting in new enrollment caps at some UC campuses. When compared to fall 2008 figures, preliminary numbers show a reduction in admit rates at Davis, Irvine, San Diego, Santa Barbara and Santa Cruz. Merced and Riverside admit rates increased slightly, while Berkeley and UCLA remained flat.

When you look at the number of required courses for admission to the UC campuses, admitted students take more than the 15 year-long courses required for eligibility. Specifically, the average number of

year-long college preparatory classes range from a high of 24.5 at Berkeley to a low of 22.5 at Riverside and Merced. These numbers mean that the UC campuses remain highly selective schools, and it is important to plan your high school years accordingly if you plan to apply. Challenge yourself with rigorous coursework at your high school while "protecting" your GPA. In other words, take challenging coursework that you can complete successfully with good grades. Remember that each campus does its own comprehensive review, taking into account courses offered at the high school you attended, as well as life circumstances, essays, extracurricular activities, employment and more. You are more than just a number! Stay balanced and keep college admissions in perspective. Remember that when you plan to meet UC requirements you are also planning to meet the requirements of many other fine public and private colleges and universities nationwide.



Elizabeth LaScala, Ph.D. is an independent college admissions advisor located in Lafayette, California. Her goal is to help students and their families understand the college admissions process, research college and career options, create a college list and prepare a strong, organized and cohesive application. Dr. LaScala is a member of NACAC, WACAC, and HECA and earned a certification in College Admissions and Career Planning from University of California at Berkeley. Contact her at (925) 891-4491 or elizabeth@doingcollege.com.

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