

COMMUNITY Service

Matadors Want your Fruit and Veggies

By Maggie Sharpe



Left to right: Brandon Huang, Conor Volpe, Jonathan Wong, Ashraf Mathkour and Matt Ward, all juniors at Miramonte High School

Are your zucchini and tomato plants producing more than you and your next-door neighbors can eat? Orange and lemon trees laden, but you don't have the time or energy to get out and pick the fruit? Well, not to worry.

A group of Miramonte High School students has come up with a great idea for your extra fruit and vegetables. The students (juniors Conor Volpe, Brandon Huang, Matt Ward, Jonathan Wong and Ashraf Mathkour) have

organized a community service project this summer to gather fruit and vegetables from local residents in the Lamorinda area and donate them to the Contra Costa Food Bank in Concord. "We will pick the produce at a convenient time, give you as much as you want, then take the rest over to the food bank where people in need can get the fresh fruit and veggies," says Volpe, 16.

Volpe says he got the idea from seeing fruit in his neighbor-

hood just go to waste.

"Where I live there is lots of fruit just falling off the trees," he says. "A friend had so many pears on their tree that they didn't know what to do with them."

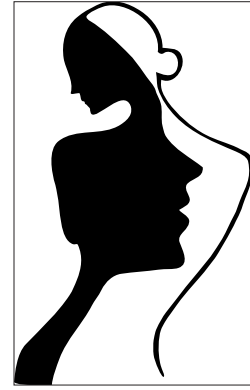
Volpe says the food bank is excited about the students' project.

"The lady at the food bank even said she would come and pick up the fruit and vegetables if we couldn't deliver them," says Volpe.

However, one of the students, Matt Ward, 16, says delivering the produce should be no problem.

"I drive a bus—a VW bus—so I can transport all the fruits and vegetables we can get," jokes Ward.

If you have fruit or vegetables that you would like the students to pick and donate to the food bank, please call 925-631-6635 or email extrafruit123@gmail.com. There is no charge and the donation may be used as a tax write-off.



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Local Child Safety Seat Inspections: August 19 Event and Beyond

Submitted by Grace Santos, Moraga Orinda Fire District



Photo provided

If you have children or grandchildren, you already know from experience that child safety seats are not as easy to master as one might expect. From selecting the right seat to understanding how seat belt systems lock, car seats can be very confusing.

According to the John Muir Trauma Services' Child Passenger Safety Program, 82 percent of the 2,300 car seats checked by its Contra Costa Car Seat Safety Coalition in 2008 were not used correctly. "This is not far off," says Child Passenger Safety Program Coordinator Carol Powers. "National rates claim 3 out of 4 car seats, or 75 percent of car seats are not installed properly."

Even though child safety seats have vastly improved over the years and the death rate for children by motor vehicle crashes has gone down, crashes still remain a top cause of death and injury to children. "Using a child safety seat correctly is the one variable that a parent or caregiver can most easily influence to keep a child safe while traveling on the road," says Powers.

What is a parent to do? Many caregivers are turning to the growing numbers of nationally certified car seat technicians to sort out their car seat conundrums. Getting your car seat's selection and installation checked by a trained professional is key.

Here in the Lamorinda area,

the closest place for a "car seat check" is at the Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD). The Fire District has long promoted child passenger safety education with certified child passenger safety technicians on staff. A founding member of the Contra Costa Car Seat Safety Coalition, MOFD collaborates to host public check-up events as well as its own car seat fitting stations.

"Our next Child Safety Seat Inspection event is Wednesday, August 19, from 10 a.m. to noon at Station 41, at 1280 Moraga Way in Moraga. It is open to anyone and best of all, it's free. But if you can't make the event, we do take appointments," says MOFD Firefighter Jon Bensley, coordinator of the District's car seat program and car seat technician.

To arrange an appointment, send an email to carseatmofd@gmail.com. Bensley advises planning ahead because advance notice helps in coordinating a meeting time and place with technicians who work a variety of shifts.

Be advised to bring your car seat instructions with you and install a new car seat before coming to the inspection event. "The instructions are the key to knowing how a car seat works. If you can't find your instructions, we won't turn you away. We keep instructions in our car seat supplies," says Powers, who coordi-

nates the team of Contra Costa Car Seat Safety Coalition technicians working the Moraga event.

Assisting with the August 19th Child Safety Seat Inspection event is newly certified car seat technician and MOFD Fire Prevention & Public Education Secretary, Grace Santos. If you have questions about the event, call Grace at 925-258-4525. Grace says that the fire station bays will be open for the event so there will be shade for most who attend.

If you have general questions about child passenger safety, call the Coalition phone line at 925-941-7989.

Lafayette Safety Fair – Families Come Out for the Show

On Saturday August 1 the first Lafayette Safety Fair was held at Stanley Middle School. The event was organized by the Lafayette Emergency Preparedness Commission and the Lafayette Crime Prevention Commission.

The beautiful summer sun shone brightly over the agencies that came to Lafayette to show residents the tools and support available to them to keep themselves and their families safe: our two local fire agencies, the Lafayette and East Bay Regional Park Police, Red Cross, child abuse services, animal rescue, disease prevention, and many others.

About 150 people showed up, mostly young families, attracted by the impressive exhibitions. The two helicopters that East Bay Park Police landed on Stanley's field were a big hit, as was the police K9 patrol, the mounted police and the bike rodeo.

"For a first time it was a good success," said Fred Lothrop, Chair of the Lafayette Emergency Preparedness Commission. "We felt very pleased that people were interested in the various aspects of safety, and with the excellent cooperation of all the agencies that came."

Lafayette City Manager Steve Falk came to the Fair and seemed impressed by the display. "Given all the equipment that was on the site, it would have been an ideal time to have an earthquake!" quipped Falk.

S. Braccini



Lafayette Police Officer teaches proper hand signals Photo Doug Kohen



David (14) and A.J. Boucher (16) of Orinda watched the REACH helicopter demo Photo Jim Boucher



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