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**Life in LAMORINDA**

**Residents Eager to Participate in Urban Farmers Pilot Program**

By Cathy Tyson



Julia Myall's backyard, future home of a bounty of organic produce; plant-covered building in background is the future home of a chicken coop

You provide the land and water and get free abundant fresh organic produce; The Urban Farmers provides expertise and labor. That simple concept has taken off like wildfire in Lafayette. The organization was looking for 20 homeowners to sign up their backyards for the pilot project, now there are 115, and counting, locals who want to get in on it. "The response has been unbelievable," said Siamack Sioshansi, Urban Farmers' director, all via word of mouth and in Lafayette school newsletters.

"It's a revolutionary idea in Lafayette," said Yvette Lindgren, "we have a large lawn that is just not sustainable anymore. This is going to change the way people think of their backyards. We are really excited about it." Beth Ferree, PhD, another participant said, "The whole slow food and local food movements have engaged a lot of people's interest."

Photo Cathy Tyson  
A gardener herself, she adds, "There is something about working in the garden that's healing."

Chef, cook book author, and kitchen designer with Jack London Kitchen and Bath Gallery Julia Myall has a dream backyard waiting to be cultivated. Spacious, fenced, with existing irrigation, lots of sunshine and natural drainage, she can't wait for the Urban Farmers team to bring in and set up raised beds. Because she wants to educate fellow participants about how to prepare the vegetables in their boxes, she's looking forward to setting up regular free cooking classes in her future outdoor kitchen.

The concept was germinated this summer by Sioshansi's son, Cameron and a good friend and fellow Lake Forest College student, Alexander Agosta. They were home for the summer and unable to find employment, so were prompted

by Sioshansi to list their passions. Water, the environment, pesticide, reducing carbon footprints were some of their concerns.

This list ultimately morphed into a business plan that engaged the young men for ten hours a day until they had to go back to school in Illinois. Sioshansi is the founder and past CEO of Object Ware, formerly with Apple and IBM, and has a tremendous amount of technical expertise. Drawing on his farming background, he is tending the fledgling non-profit and watching it grow exponentially while the students are away at school.

How exactly does it work? Backyard farmers will get their generous share of organic communally produced fruits and vegetables. Homeowners can participate as much or as little as they please. Urban Farmers growers will design, plant, cultivate and harvest. Neighbors who don't have space for a garden can purchase boxes of fresh produce by paying in advance for weekly deliveries throughout the year. Fees paid go directly to pay a living wage to growers, and a portion of each harvest goes to charity.

For more information on the project, or to sign up for a Community Supported Agriculture box to enjoy the bounty of neighborhood edible gardens, go to www.theurbanfarmers.org and look for the contact us section. The Urban Farmers is looking for volunteers and interns, see website for contact information.

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**Dr. and Mrs. Mutch on BUILDING A LEGACY**

by denise leming



Dr. and Mrs. Mutch

Everyone's life tells a story, some would say; a story that goes from one generation and is passed on to another. It's a story that you write yourself. Every paragraph is penned by your own hand, by the choices you make. The path you take and the people you meet along the way make a difference. They all help determine how your individual legacy turns out.

Dr. and Mrs. Mutch are residents at Moraga Royale, where they have lived for a year. They agreed to share some of their experiences as children, parents and grandparents. How the decisions they made along the way may have impacted their legacy.

Married for the past sixty-two years the couple seems to have developed a unison that can only come with spending a lifetime together. They are a handsome couple, figures that move with grace and ease as they gently settle in to share the past. Dr. Mutch, looking over the brim of his glasses, with eyes that twinkle begins to recollect how he and his lovely wife first met. Mrs. Mutch, (Mary Lou), sits quietly with a demure smile and looks on. "In brief, we first met at UC Berkeley, Mary Lou was a freshman and I was on my last year studying pre-med, we married four years later."

The couple, both native to California grew up in Northern California, Mary Lou in Piedmont and Dr. Mutch in San Francisco. After completing an Internship at UCSF, Dr. Mutch did a tour of duty in Korea for the US Army assigned to the Surgical Unit. His bride eagerly awaited his return. Upon discharge from the army the couple purchased a home in Orinda in 1954 and Dr. Mutch began a private practice in Oakland specializing in colon and rectal surgery. Along the way, they were blessed

with two children, a boy and a girl who live close.

According to their daughter, Martha Holistlaw, "Mom and dad were very involved in our community in addition to always being the host house for mine and my brother's friends through the growing up years." Their son William Mutch III commented that, "The sense of family first and education gave me something to pass on." The couple remained in Orinda until moving to Moraga Royale in 2008.

When asked what they enjoy doing for fun they both reply, "Spending time with family and doing some of the things we like...golfing, gardening and travel have been past loves." Mary Lou continues to be involved as a member of the Orinda Garden Club and is also thinking about joining the Moraga Royale Garden Club somewhere in the future. Dr. Mutch enjoys his leisure time and hearing about his grandchildren's careers and academic progress. "I have six grandchildren and our youngest plays football at Acalanes." Reflecting back on his brief stint playing football for UC Berkeley he says, "I worked during the summer taking ten Units, so they wouldn't let me play even though I took fall and spring classes. If I hadn't taken the classes I would have been eligible to play, which never made any sense to me." Mary Lou offers a quiet chuckle; "Somehow football and being a medical student just don't go together." This brings a smile to her husband's face...the doctor.

When asked how their lives were impacted by their parents and grandparents, both stressed the importance of a, "good education." Mary Lou goes on to say, "They definitely are a good part of why we both earned our degrees." Dr. Mutch offered, "Education is the key and both of my children and all of our grandchildren have gone on to achieve a higher education, except for our youngest grandson who is still in high school and I expect he will follow along as well."

With that said Dr. Mutch offers one last comment with regards to the value of a being a grandparent, "My grandparents had an impact on me whether directly or indirectly by their examples and their modeling. Their wisdom and guidance influenced me greatly; I hope I have been able to impart the same to ours."

Contact us at 376-8900 for more information or to schedule a tour. Please join us in celebrating Grandparents Day, Saturday, September 19th from 11-1 pm at Moraga Royale, 1600 Canyon Road at the corner of Country Club Drive, Moraga.

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