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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

## PTA Reflections Program Is Currently Underway

Submitted by Rachel Browne and Linda Murphy



Murphy Baker works on an entry at one of the Burton Valley Elementary PTA Reflections Workshops. Photo submitted

Each fall, the PTA sponsors the Reflections Program, a fine arts recognition and achievement program designed to encourage children to express their individuality and creativity through various artistic media. This fall, students at Burton Valley, Lafayette, Camino Pablo, Los Perales, and Rheem Elementary Schools and Stanley and Joaquin Moraga Middle Schools have an opportunity to participate in this program. Since late-Septem-

ber, students have been exploring and interpreting this year's theme: "Beauty is . . ."

On Oct. 15, in conjunction with a PTA meeting and Parent Education workshop, Burton Valley Elementary School will host a showcase displaying all entries it receives. It will also showcase the entries at Math Night on Oct. 22.

The value of fine arts in a child's intellectual development has been well documented. The

Reflection Program seeks to encourage students to explore and learn about various art forms. Although most entries are submitted in the visual arts category (drawings, paintings, sketches, etc.), many students submit entries in the remaining five categories: literature (poems, stories, etc.), photography, dance choreography, music composition, and film/video production. Creating art is a valuable learning process that challenges students to use their critical thinking skills as well as their creative talents as they create a piece of art that reflects their interpretation of the chosen theme. Since the program's establishment in 1969, more than ten million students have participated nationwide.

The goal is to promote art, but Reflections includes a competition in which the entries received will be critiqued against other entries from the same grade division so that outstanding work from the appropriate age and skill level can be recognized. The four grade divisions are: preschool through second grade, third through fifth grade, sixth through eighth grade, and ninth

through twelfth grade. The top entries will be advanced to the Las Trampas PTA Showcase, to be held at Walnut Creek Intermediate School on Dec. 6. The top entries from that Showcase are advanced to the District Showcase, which draws entries from all of Contra Costa County. A select few from the county are then advanced to the State Convention where they are again showcased.

Last year, three Burton Valley students had their entries advanced to the District Level Showcase that was held in January: Keily Sarica for visual arts, Marcello Severo for musical composition, and Emmersen Webb for photography. Marcello's composition was then advanced to the State Convention in May, where it received an Award of Merit.

Students interested in participating in Reflections should contact the individual schools for entry forms, rules, and deadlines.

To learn more about Reflections and to view past winners, please see <http://www.capta.org/sections/programs/reflections.cfm>.



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## Students Participate in Worldwide Song for Peace

By Jennifer Wake



Diablo Valley Montessori teachers signed the song, "Light a Candle for Peace," with students as part of a worldwide recognition of the United Nations International Day of Peace. Photo Jennifer Wake

Students from Diablo Valley Montessori School in Lafayette gathered in their front play area on Sept. 21, surrounding a lit candle and waiting for their turn to sing a song for peace that was being sung across the globe. The 120 students, who ranged in age from 3 months (although they didn't sing) to 6 years old, sang "Light a Candle for Peace" for five min-

utes while teachers kneeled before them using sign language to guide the children through the lyrics.

The song, which was coordinated in 35 countries among more than 80,000 children, was part of a worldwide campaign at Montessori schools across the globe to recognize the United Nations' International Day of Peace.

"The song made its way from

New Zealand to Hawaii and was sung in 20 languages, in 24 different time zones," Diablo Valley Montessori School Director Suzette Smith said. Diablo Valley Montessori students were assigned to sing for five minutes starting at 10:33 a.m.

"This special day coincides with our school's value education program which will highlight the values of peace, respect, tolerance

and responsibility this year," Smith said. "Maria Montessori believed in the power of children. Montessori programs emphasize learning about other cultures and the basic needs of all people. Additionally our young children are learning about what peace means and how they can incorporate peace into their lives."

According to Smith, Montessori schools founder Marie Montessori once said, "Establishing everlasting peace is the work of education; all politics can do is keep us out of war."

"This was not about the politics of peace, but about learning how to live in a peaceful world," Smith added. "The children are our future, and I personally believe that if adults across the world teach peaceful ways of interacting with each other there is hope for world peace."

In addition to the song, which included the refrain "Sing Peace Around the World," students learned about children from other cultures and the different places throughout the world where other children were singing.

"Learning about other cultures is always an ongoing part of our curriculum," Smith said. "We have puzzle maps where children can learn the names of countries, and have events that bring foods from other countries for children to taste. We want them to understand they're not the only people on the earth."

## Ask Dr. Harold

### Navigating Bipolar Disorder

By Dr. Harold Jules Hoyle, Ph.D.

Dear Dr. Harold, A student at Santa Clara recently asked me, "My nephew has been diagnosed as bipolar disorder. What does that mean and what do I do?"

At its core, bipolar disorder is a mood disorder with mania and depression as the two actors. For mania, think super elevated mood, like a child that is having a laughing attack for several days and reduced need for sleep, aggressiveness, hyper-sexuality, massive tantrums and irritability. In adolescents, drugs like speed or cocaine in their different forms will need to be ruled out because they can cause this type of increase in mood. For depressed mood, you may need to think differently for children and adolescents. Children and adolescents are more likely than adults to act out when depressed, although they can have typical depressive symptoms as well. If you have evidence of these types of mood disorders, then take your child directly to your medical doctor. This is not a time to see if the behavior is a phase or to wait it out. Although bipolar disorder is rare in children and adolescents, early diagnosis and treatment can greatly improve the prognosis.

#### What is it?

Presently, there are two main types of bipolar diagnoses; Bipolar I and Bipolar II. Bipolar I is diagnosed once a person has at least one manic episode or mixed episodes (manic and major depressive episode). Bipolar II is diagnosed when there are recurring depressive episodes with at least one hypomanic episode (an episode of elevated mood not reaching as high a degree or duration as a full manic episode).

#### Treatment

This is a disorder that will most often be treated with medication and psychotherapy. The med-

ications have significant side effects, so be sure you ask a lot of questions and monitor the side effects closely. As far as a therapist, interview and chose a therapist whose practice includes young people with this diagnosis. In school, the child or adolescent may qualify for Special Education services under the category of Emotional Disturbance. See what resources the schools have for the child as they spend a good percentage of their young lives in school.

#### What can you do?

Educate yourself and your family as to the challenges. The Child and Adolescent Bipolar Foundation is a great source of information (<http://www.bpkids.org>). Catching a manic or depressed mood before it becomes an episode can be very important. There can be other issues like ADHD or oppositional behavior present so make sure you get a full picture of the challenges that your child faces. The children I have worked with who have this disorder have real challenges. At their core, these kids are beautiful individuals with challenges in their moods and emotions.



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## Girl Scout Adult Leaders Recognized

Submitted By Linda Bailey Wurgley



Council and National Award Winners Left to Right Front: Sue Olson, Cathy VandenBerge, Alison Wash, Back Row, left to right: Cathy Hopper, Jenny Burford, Anne Mitchell. Photo submitted

Lafayette Girl Scouts recently celebrated Leader Appreciation Day, honored five year anniversaries and selected Adult Leaders for truly significant service. The Northern California area council and national awards recognize outstanding accomplishments that go well beyond what would be expected for the position held.

Outstanding Leaders, Jenny Burford, Cathy Hopper, Sue Olson, Cathy VandenBerge, and Appreciation Pin recipients Linda Hargreaves and Alison Wash received

national awards for their significant contributions.

Highlights of the award criteria are: Selecting a wide range of program activities to provide leadership experience, helping girls to recognize, understand, practice the values of inclusive behavior and meeting goals in membership growth, retention, fund development, or increased community visibility.

In addition, Anne Mitchell, a Girl Scout of 43 years, received the council award, Maud Whalen Continued Exceptional Service for con-

sistently performing at a level that exceeds position expectations combined with being an exceptional role model for adults and girls. Over the years, Anne has held numerous Girl Scout, school and community leadership positions. "By her own example of leadership and service at Service Unit meetings, Leader meetings and within the community, Anne continues to inspire others to volunteer and become involved."

The evening was capped by honoring Adult Leaders whose

Ambassador Girls were graduating from high school, joining the adult ranks, attending college this Fall or beginning exciting life journeys.





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