



**Independent, locally owned and operated!**

www.lamorindaweekly.com 925-377-0977

Published November 10th, 2010

## Lamorinda Alcohol Policy Coalition

By Sophie Braccini



Jaime Rich gives a presentation in Orinda Photo  
Sophie Braccini

Jaime Rich was excited as she stood before an audience in Orinda to talk about the Lamorinda Alcohol Policy Coalition. Some key stakeholders were in attendance - Lamorinda's three police chiefs, a middle school principal or two, Orinda City Council member Sue Severson, Moraga Parks and Recreation staffer Kimberly Nelson, and several parents.

Rich's objective is to form an ongoing coalition that will act to reduce youth access to alcohol and underage drinking, and to create a healthy and safe environment in Lamorinda. Anyone interested in this project is welcome to attend the Coalition's monthly meetings. The group meets twice on the third Wednesday of every month - once in the morning, from 10:00-11:30 a.m. in Orinda City Hall's Community Room at 22 Orinda Way; and again from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. at Supervisor Gayle Uilkema's office at 3338 Mt. Diablo Blvd. in Lafayette. The next meeting date is November 17.

Rich was hired by the Center for Human Development, a community-based organization that since 1972 has provided wellness programs and support aimed at empowering people and promoting positive growth, to start a coalition in Lamorinda. Rich, an Orinda mother of two teenagers, had a career as a Clinical Exercise Physiologist. Her passion for prevention and wellness led her to volunteer in the schools. She is the co-chair of the Healthy Choice Committee at Miramonte High School. "In our school district alcohol is the drug of choice for many teens," says Rich, "the purpose of the coalition is to increase community awareness, and improve the social norm regarding underage and binge drinking."

During the first meeting Rich conducted brainstorming exercises to identify the audience's perception of the problem, as well as possible corrective actions. "Parents are often in denial that there is a problem," said Severson. "We've noticed a growing lack of respect

for authority," said Moraga Police Chief Bob Priebe. "We have a feeling of entitlement here," said a mother would rather not be identified, "there is a perception that we can break the rules because we run the show."

"Parents model for their kids," said another mother, "if they see that the only way their parents have fun is through drinking, they will want to do the same."

Participants were just as vocal when they started brainstorming solutions. "I'd like to see in print the police reports for 'disturbing the peace' infractions," said a mother. "A local network could serve as a support system for parents who want a change," proposed another parent.

"We'd like to see the County make some changes in the legislation, commit resources and add teeth to the juvenile punishment system," said Priebe.

"Maybe we could revisit our social ordinance," said Severson, "and clearly state what is not acceptable." Nelson added, "The youth groups, such as the Moraga Youth Involvement Committee, could get involved and give their perspective."

At the end of the meeting, Rich asked participants to reach out to different community groups and ask for their participation. "The coalition depends on community members being involved," she stated, "we need a consistent number of people from police, local governments, schools, parents and young people to continue to attend." Interested parties unable to come to the meetings are encouraged to contact Rich at [Jaime@chd-prevention.org](mailto:Jaime@chd-prevention.org) to offer suggestions or ask to receive Rich's monthly updates regarding the Coalition's progress.

Reach the reporter at: [sophie@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sophie@lamorindaweekly.com)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA