

Acalanes High School | Bentley School | Burton Valley | Camino Pablo | Campolindo | Contra Costa Jewish Day School | Del Rey Donald L. Rheem | Glorietta | Happy Valley | Joaquin Moraga

Lamorinda Schools

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

SCHOOL CALENDAR

Acalanes Union High School District Board Room AUHSD Office 1212 Pleasant Hill Rd, Lafayette TONIGHT: Wednesday, April 13, 7:30pm Wednesday, May 4, 7:30pm	Orinda Union School District OUSD Office 8 Altarinda Road, Orinda Monday, May 9, 4pm
Lafayette School District LAFSD Office 3477 School Street, Lafayette TONIGHT Wednesday, April 13, 7pm Wednesday, May 11, 7pm	Moraga School District Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School Auditorium 1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga Tuesday, May 10, 7:30pm

Ross Wins Again

Submitted by Marice George



Miramonte student Selena Ross (right) and Lions Regional Student Speaker Chair Denny Grottrian. Photo provided

Regular readers of the Lamorinda Weekly are familiar with Miramonte senior Selena Ross, the winner of the local Lions Speaker Contest. On March 27 the Multiple District Four California Lions Regional Level Speech Contest was held at the Contra Costa Water District Board Offices, and Ross won again in this third round of competi-

tion. The topic was "Enforcing Our Borders: State vs. Federal Rights." Ross now goes on to the District Level Round to be held on April 23 at 2:00 p.m. at the Boy Scout Hall, 101 Davis Street in San Leandro, California. Ross was sponsored by the Moraga Lions Club, and is in the running for \$21,000 in scholarship money.

Ryerson Says Treat Your Partner Like a Dog

By Andrea A. Firth



Margie Ryerson with her "partners" Photo provided

"Nelson was really the impetus for the book," says author Margie Ryerson referring to her three-year old labradoodle and her new book, *Treat Your Partner Like a Dog, How to Breed a Better Relationship*. "This huge, gentle dog has such a personality and is so gregarious, I spend a lot of time at the dog park," says Ryerson explaining that her pooch has transformed her from a dog owner to a real dog person. And, as she watched Nelson socializing and observed the exuberance "dog people" share with their "best friends," it set her to thinking about the parallels between how we treat our dogs and how we should treat our partners.

to focus on that is encouraging," she says. In addition to the entertaining comparisons between how to treat one's dog and one's partner in Ryerson's book, it also includes amusing cartoons by artist Barry Hunau.

Ryerson advocates the use of calm assertiveness in a relationship and compares this approach to the way a dog responds well to a strong but calmly and respectfully delivered message. "Assertiveness requires using good judgment, and timing is important," says Ryerson who also emphasizes the importance of supportive and consistent non-verbal communication. "70% of our communication is nonverbal. Your face has to match your words."

Throughout the book Ryerson provides real-life examples and lists of tips and techniques to support these communication principles. "I hope couples will get help from reading the examples and make use of tips and techniques," says Ryerson, but she adds that just like training your dog, it takes practice.

Read an excerpt from Ryerson's book in her Family Focus column on page D8.

Margie Ryerson, MFT, has been a columnist for the Lamorinda Weekly for two years. Cartoonist Barry Hunau, who is also a Lamorinda Weekly regular contributor, provided the illustrations for her book. *Treat Your Partner Like A Dog, How to Breed a Better Relationship* is available at Orinda Books and online through iUniverse. Ryerson will discuss her new book at Orinda Books on Saturday, April 16th at 2:00 p.m.

OIS Students Take Action Locally, Globally

By Cathy Dausman



7th graders at Orinda Intermediate School, Millie Kirchberg (left) and Isabelle Sato are involved in their science class' Take Action Program this semester. Photo C. Dausman

Millie Kirchberg and Isabelle Sato know they are privileged to live in Orinda. But they are developing compassion for the less fortunate worldwide through a science program at their school. They explain in a letter they wrote to Lamorinda Weekly:

"We are 7th grade students at Orinda Intermediate School and are working on a "Take Action Project" for our science class. Each student has chosen a problem that they feel strongly about and have spent the past month researching and organizing ideas to raise awareness."

"It's about the process," says teacher and Science Department Chair Sue Boudreau. "It's the social aspect of kids working with friends." Boudreau developed the Take Action Project (TAP) curriculum at OIS three years ago and wants it to be "fun and imaginative" for her students. To date, some 900 students have participated in the project.

Boudreau says she was inspired to develop a curriculum "to empower, educate and inspire young people" after learning the dire predictions of climate change in the next 100 years. Fellow science teachers Karen Snelson and Kim Campbell-White ensure that each 7th grader experiences TAP. According to Boudreau, a year-end online student survey consistently ranks TAP "the number one thing they will remember from 7th grade science."

Educators from Australia, Hong Kong and Canada have inquired about the TAP program. Boudreau has made curriculum presentations at St. Mary's College and to National Science Teachers Association conferences in Phoenix and San Francisco. Her project information was also published in the October 10, 2010 edition of NSTA "Science Scope" magazine. Those who use the project are very encouraging. One Washington science teacher writes: "my students and I are LOVING the take action project."

Millie and Isabelle's letter continues:

"Our focus concerns the unsanitary water conditions affecting millions of people in Haiti. After much thoughtful research and an interview with a Lawrence Berkeley Lab specialist, we have decided to fundraise for the non-profit organization, Global Giving, in support of clean water in Haiti."

The girls expect to raise \$300, \$1,000 or \$5,000, depending on which student is talking. Boudreau says most students raise very little money, although a TAP project to benefit Lou Gehrig's disease (ALS) two years ago netted \$33,000. But students are not graded on how much they raise. TAP teaches them to think ahead and work with a partner, "skills and attitudes that will

help them later in life," says Boudreau.

"To raise money, we are doing a walk-a-thon on Saturday, April 23, 2011 at the Lafayette Reservoir starting at 10:00 AM."

Millie and Isabelle will walk six miles for pledges, wearing tee shirts they'll design. They showed a video they created themselves, "Dirty Drinking Water;" in class.

Global Giving is just one example of many charities students have selected, and there are many other fundraising events. Campbell-White says past TAP students have held bake sales, swim-a-thons, setup lemonade stands, volunteered at shelters and soup kitchens, animal rescue programs; beach clean ups, tree plantings, written letters to government entities, and held a dance fundraiser. TAP projects from Campbell-White's classes include work for Save the Bay Campaign, Susan G Komen for the Cure, UNICEF, World Health Organization, Cool California, The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, World Wildlife Fund, Food 4 Africa, Amazon Watch, and The Hunger Project, among many others.

Boudreau is Isabelle's teacher; Campbell-White teaches Millie, whose older brother completed TAP two years ago. Because of that "she's always asking questions," says Campbell-White. "As teachers, we love to see students gain interest in current events, relevant topics, and science. We like to give the students a lot of choice in the classroom creating a sense of ownership and practicing decision-making skills."

The girls, along with their classmates, are already learning valuable lessons. "I wish I could make more money [for a cause] and work less," says Isabelle. As for Millie, she's learned what charitable fundraisers everywhere know: that "money doesn't grow on trees."

Donations to Global Giving can be sent care of Orinda Intermediate School, 80 Ivy Drive, Orinda, CA 94563. Mark the envelope: attn: Kim Campbell-White and Sue Boudreau.

Lafayette Elementary Student Council Organizes Drive to Help Sister School in Haiti

By Rosylyn Aragonés Stenzel



Lafayette Elementary Student Council members pose in front of banner before sending it off - along with over 650 pencils - to sister school in Haiti. Photo Pam Severson

Lafayette Elementary Student Council is leading the way for its school to help children in Haiti. Recently, the student council organized a pencil drive to give to students at Victor Hugo School in Gonaives, Haiti. Along with over 650 pencils, they sent a banner that read, "We love our sister school!" Almost all Lafayette Elementary students from each grade signed the banner.

They found out about the opportunity to help Haitian kids through Grace Linderholm, a junior at Acalanes High School. Grace visited

Haiti last year with her mother during a medical mission trip. Moved by the poverty and severe lack of resources, Grace, a Lafayette Elementary School alumna, decided to do something about it. She contacted the PTA to propose a partnership with Victor Hugo School.

Student council decided to take on the challenge, and at the request of the principal at Victor Hugo, sent unsharpened pencils; because in Haiti, pencil shavings are used as kindling. Besides the pencil drive, student council organized a sock hop

dance where they collected backpacks and raised over a thousand dollars for their sister school.

Student council officers Pia Dovichi, Caden Moses, Gia Roberts, and Chase Severson, said that they've learned much from this experience including realizing how fortunate they are and wanting to share it, plus as Chase summed it up, "It feels good when you give something to them."

For more information on how you can support this partnership, contact leopardersisterschool@gmail.com.

**Submit stories to
schooldesk@lamorindaweekly.com**