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Community Service

We are pleased to make space available whenever possible for some of Lamorinda's dedicated community service organizations to submit news and information about their activities. Submissions can be sent to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com with the subject header In Service to the Community.

DAR Honors Good Citizens Contest Winners for 2013

Submitted by Nira Horeis



From left, DAR Good Citizen Chairman Barbara Snyder, Joshua Nederhood, Madeline Yzurdiaga, Natalie Goepel, Wynn O'Donnell, Breanna Correll, and DAR Regent Brenna Shafizadeh. Photo Provided

The Daughters of the American Revolution, Acalanes Chapter, honored the 2013 winners of their annual DAR Good Citizens Program and Scholarship Contest Feb. 2. High school senior contestants were asked to describe how they demonstrate the qualities of dependability, service, leadership and patriotism in their daily lives and to submit two letters of recommendation along with an official grade transcript. Further, they completed a timed essay entitled, *Our American Heritage and Our Responsibility for Preserving It: How are Our Freedoms and Responsibilities as Good Citizens Changing?*

This year's chapter winner was Miramonte High School senior Breanna Correll. At school Correll enjoys crew, Latin club, public speaking, mock trial, sign language and softball. Her community service includes VP of Reach, Amor Ministries and working for Texas LLYC.

Other contestants included

Acalanes senior Natalie Goepel who has served as sports editor and business manager of the Blueprint, Acalanes' nationally-ranked high school newspaper. She also participates in softball, volleyball, Best Buddies club and National Federation of Press Women. Her community work includes Build-On Club, LOPC disaster relief volunteer, SPLASH and LOPC youth group. Madeline Yzurdiaga, of Campolindo High School, participates in model UN, mock trial, youth and government, Bhangra Dance club and is a candidate for national merit scholar. Her community service includes National Charity League, food bank volunteer, Family Care Alliance, and Girl Scouts.

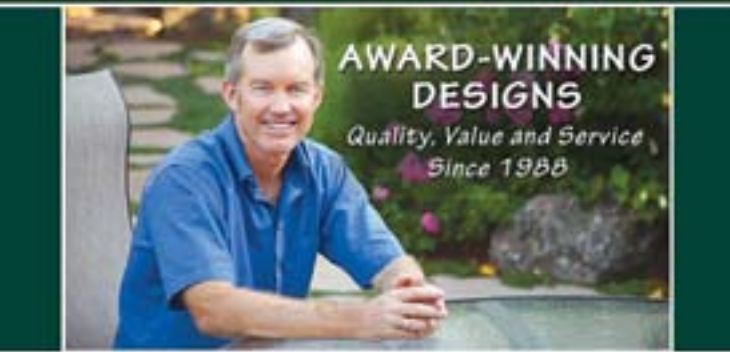
Joshua Nederhood of Contra Costa Christian School is active in student council, cross country team, soccer, volleyball, speech and debate, drama, film and culture club, CFS and is an AP scholar. Through his church he has gone on mission

trips to Mexico, Uganda and the Philippines and has helped his family host 10 international students in his home. Wynn O'Donnell of Las Lomas High School has participated in student government, tennis and French club and has performed in community theater since grade school, playing many roles. She has served as a volunteer camp counselor and been a lector at Sunday mass at her church.

These exceptional students attended a luncheon with the members of Acalanes Chapter of DAR, where each winner was asked to read their essay aloud for the members. Each winner was given a DAR Good Citizen Pin, a scholarship check and an American flag that has previously been flown over the U.S. capital building. After the presentation, the participants and their families joined the DAR chapter for lunch and socializing.

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Youth Homes Plants 100-Tree Fruit Orchard at Licensed Group Home

Submitted by Laurel Pendleton



Local volunteers including members of the Lafayette Community Garden, The Urban Farmers, and Youth Homes, Inc., help plant at the Cherry Lane Residence in Lafayette off Pleasant Hill Road. Photos provided

As part of its successful job training program for current and former foster youth, Youth Homes planted the Youth Homes Promise Orchard Feb. 14, which consists of 100 trees at its Cherry Lane facility in Lafayette. Youth Homes worked collaboratively with key partners including the Lafayette Community Garden as well as The Urban Farmers in coordinating this project.

Trees and garden will be tended by current and former foster youth from Youth Homes throughout the year. Tree varieties include peaches, pears, apples, apricots and figs. Current foster residents can apply to work in the Promise Garden Summer Job Program, spending 10 weeks learning about job readiness.

"This unique orchard project re-confirms the idea that Youth Homes is the place where hope lives and grows," said Youth Homes Director of Development Laurel Pendleton.

Former foster youth will work in the orchard year round as they build job readiness through the TAY Labor Program. This unique project provides job training to former foster

youth hired by Youth Homes to work in the community on projects ranging from light landscaping and yard clean-up to the installation of retaining walls and laying sod.

In California, it is estimated that between 20 to 50 percent of youth will face homelessness in the months following their exit from the foster system. Youth involved in education or job programs like the TAY Labor Program can qualify for important services like transitional housing, providing them with ongoing support during this critical time.

"The first landscaping project of its kind on a licensed group home property, the fruit orchard provides abundant learning opportunities as well as radically changing the outlook for foster youth," said Pendleton. "Through the generosity and forward thinking of Episcopal Charities, Youth Homes has been able to transform this dreary landscape into an oasis for youth in need."

Along with planting fruit trees, Youth Homes will be installing lavender along the driveway, increasing curb appeal as well as providing a

calming influence for all residents, staff and visitors. Additionally, with a recently installed grey water system and six gallon onsite water tank, Youth Homes will be able to use reclaimed rainwater to irrigate the orchard, creating an even greener environment.

For more information about Youth Homes visit www.youth-homes.org or call (925) 933-2627.



Youth Homes Program Director Kim Chilvers and Executive Director Stuart McCullough on planting day.

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