

Live at the Orinda 2013

By Sophie Braccini

You find all kinds of people in the moving world of stand-up comedy, and as comedian David Van Avermaete says, "It has changed a lot since the days guys were just telling bar jokes in front of an audience." This new creativity and diversity will be well represented at the 4th annual "Live at the Orinda" comedy night March 8 at the Orinda Theatre. The fundraising event for the Orinda Chamber of Commerce includes a diverse line-up of young and seasoned comedians bringing different vibes and a lot of energy to the historic theater.

Van Avermaete is new to the line-up this year. He is certainly a unique character on the comedy tour. A former business professional and CEO of Johnson & Johnson, a former pro-golfer, and father of four children ranging from age 9 to 27, he had many lives before heading back to school at the San Francisco



Will Durst



Wayne Coy



Kabir Singh (Kabeezy)



Arthur Gaus



David Van Avermaete

Comedy College eight years ago.

"I always loved watching comedians and even used some of their lines to spice up my presentations," he said, "so when I retired, I decided to make it a profession."

He went to school, started getting gigs and got a big professional push when he won second place at the San Francisco Comedy Competition five years ago. "It is a very exciting and fun life," says the San Ramon resident, "but if one of my sons told me he wanted to do it for

a living I would discourage him. It's like baseball: many try, but just a few get to be the big guys who really succeed." Van Avermaete draws his stories from his life – present and past – to create a performance that's contemporary, relevant to the audience and of course, very funny.

Returning to Orinda will be famous political humorist Will Durst who was a hit last year and will come with all new material. "We added some younger comedians to

our mix this year, too," added Orinda Chamber of Commerce's Rick Kattenburg who produces the show. "We'll have for the first time Kabir 'Kabeezy' Singh, one of the fastest rising stand-up comedians in the U.S., and Arthur Gaus who seamlessly moves from machine-gun staccato punch lines to artfully told stories with richly crafted characters."

Calicraft Brewing Company from Walnut Creek is donating the beer that will be served, along with

champagne and wine. Kattenburg added that this year the seats of the top three rows of the theater will be sold for \$25 to encourage younger viewers to come. "With our live video feed to the big screen, all seats are great ones," he added.

Advance discounted and VIP tickets may be reserved until March 7 on the Chamber website – www.OrindaChamber.org – or at First Republic Bank, 224 Brookwood Road. Tickets at the door (if available) will be \$40 per person.

Miramonte Graduate Discusses Ways to Keep Teens Safe

Sister-to-Sister summit helps middle school girls build sense of self
Submitted by Jen Vaccaro



Middle school participants and high school facilitators at last year's Sister-to-Sister summit. Photo provided

In 1984, during Erika Leonard's sophomore year at Miramonte High School, one of her classmates was murdered by a fellow Miramonte student – a shocking aberration in the safe and quiet community of Orinda. When Leonard graduated from Miramonte two years later, she became determined to help make life better for teens.

For the past 18 years, Leonard has taught personal safety techniques to adolescents and people of all ages and backgrounds, and is returning to Lamorinda March 16 to give a Kidpower workshop at the annual Sister-to-Sister summit at Bentley High School. Leonard, who now serves as program manager for Kidpower – an organization that teaches safety techniques – understands that anyone from any community can benefit from learning safety strategies.

Leonard's workshop will help

students project awareness; learn how to notice the signs of possible problems before they grow; how to create physical and emotional distance to be safe; set boundaries; use their voices and words in ways that can help move problems towards safety and resolution rather than escalation; and learn how to get help persistently and effectively.

Advocating for oneself in a strong and appropriate way is crucial for academic, social and professional success, explained Leonard, noting that these skills have taken on a new degree of relevance as adolescents navigate through internet and social media sites.

"My plan is for all participants to feel the greatest possible sense of confidence, that they have the power to make conscious choices to deal with potentially difficult situations with skill, strength, competence and grace," she said.

Sister-to-Sister, a nonprofit and Lamorinda-based group, selected Leonard to participate at its summit because her goals closely align with the Sister-to-Sister mission. Sister-to-Sister actively supports giving young women the tools to succeed in relationships and to build a strong sense of self. Professional women from the Lamorinda community train local high school girls to lead the summit day. The summit is held for middle school girls who come from all over the Bay Area. In addition to Leonard's presentation, the summit day includes a dynamic mix of interactive games and opportunities to form close connections with the other middle and high school participants.

To register for the March 16 Sister-to-Sister summit and to participate in Leonard's workshop, or to get more information, visit www.sister2sister.info.

Pajama Jam Dance at the Rheem Theatre



Photo Mina Lucacher

Hundreds of children came to the Rheem Theatre in their pajamas Feb. 23 for the first Pajama Jam concert organized by the Moraga Juniors. Local rock group Juice Box Heroes played for the children; the group was sponsored by J.F. Kapnek Trust, which is chaired by local pediatrician Daniel Robbins. The kids enjoyed a morning of dance and games at this sold-out fundraiser. Pajamas were also collected for local disadvantaged children. S. Braccini

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