

College Admissions Is Tough!

Writing your college essay does not have to be.



Elizabeth helps you write essays that are thoughtful, well-constructed and highlight your unique personality and special experiences.

"Christian was selected as a Reynolds Scholar at Wake Forest University. We would like to thank you for all that you've done for him—this would not have happened without you."
~The Medved Family, April 2012



Elizabeth LaScala, PhD
Certified College Advisor
www.doingcollege.com

Call Elizabeth 925 891-4491 or email elizabeth@doingcollege.com.

Doing College Essay Workshops in July and August or by personal appointment.

Miramonte Art Center Enters New Era

Submitted by Catherine Soso



Art by Bridget Bitzer

Photos provided

Deborah Hovey-LaCour has brought a new approach to teaching art at Miramonte High School. Her previous career as a graphic designer and art director in San Francisco brings an added benefit to her curriculum. She is a painter and a photographer who also loves drawing the guild models, and provides her honors and AP art students the chance to work with them as well.

"I hope the time spent in my classes is not only enlightening as to the importance and power of art in our lives, but is helpful for my teens to discover themselves and what is in their 'heart of hearts' – the place from which they must create," says Hovey-LaCour, who believes art can be cathartic for those who are stressed or distraught over things that occur in this most challenging period of their lives.

The art classes at Miramonte are very different from those in the middle schools. Students learn techniques and theory but also learn to weave meaning into their work. Students do critical analysis and learn about old masters as well as contemporary artists in all sorts of disciplines.

"My students are asked to work from a personal place. I have portfolios on everything from environmental activism to the suffering of kids with eating disorders, from the pain of losing one's mother to the physical workings of the human body in correlation with machines," she says.

Hovey-LaCour would like to see the Miramonte Art Center become the heart of the campus, where students can come through and enjoy the space while viewing artwork by their peers in the upstairs gallery. She has thought of showing art documentaries at lunch for her colleagues and any students interested in art. She takes her students to the deYoung Museum and SF-MOMA each year and sometimes has Open Studio Saturday where they can draw, mat some work, eat pizza and photograph pieces for their AP portfolios.

Student art is exhibited in the community and they participate in local and national competitions. Hovey-LaCour brings in friends who work in the art world – illustrators, painters and designers. She always has four or five former students come in to talk with her advanced students about the art programs at their four-year and art colleges. Sometimes former students join them for critiques and encourage her current students to work hard.

She facilitates mock interviews, portfolio experience and resume building to aid students in choosing a career. "It's staggering how many jobs there are in fine art, design, museum work, film and architecture. They all begin with the fundamentals which are offered by high school art teachers," states Hovey-LaCour. "These fields are very competitive, so why not begin training in high school before the high tuition fees begin?"

School District Case Settled

By Sophie Braccini

The insurance company for the Moraga School District reached a negotiated settlement in the lawsuit versus Kristen Cunnane arising out of sexual abuse in the 1990s, according to a statement released May 14. Under the terms of the settlement, the district's insurer will pay Cunnane \$2.85 million. These funds will not come from the district's general fund and will not impact operations at district's schools.

"I am grateful that the District, its insurers and I have reached a resolution, and that current students and staff will not be adversely affected in any way," stated Cunnane through her attorney. "I look forward to continuing to raise awareness around preventability and encouraging school districts everywhere to do everything they can to keep their schools safe. I also hope that sharing my experience has helped others who may be in the grips of abuse or struggling with its consequences."

"Throughout this case, our board has expressed the hope that we could find an agreement that would work for everyone involved," said Superintendent Bruce Burns. "The news that our insurance company reached a settlement with Ms. Cunnane's lawyers was very welcome."

Following the discovery of the

more than 20-year-old abuse and the prison sentence of one abuser, it was revealed that Moraga School District personnel at the time had failed its legal obligation to report the suspected abuse. Since the finding last year, the Moraga School District has overhauled the training of its employees, and funded, in partnership with the Lafayette and Orinda school districts, a full-time educator who will teach safety programs to children and parents in the three districts. "We understand that as educators, we are trusted with the safety of our community's children," said Burns. "We are committed to providing our community's children an excellent education in a safe environment. We are going to continue the work of enhancing student safety and doing all that we can to make sure nothing like this happens again in our district."

As part of the settlement, the lawsuit brought by Cunnane against the district and three former administrators will be dismissed. There are still three other pending lawsuits arising from sexual abuse by a former teacher in the 1990s. "We will continue to work toward agreements in these cases that will help the victims continue healing and allow our district to continue its work to educate and protect our children," said Burns.

Sleepy Hollow Parents' Club Celebrates Retiring Teachers

Submitted by Ginny Ross



Trudy Barron Photos provided

beloved teachers, Liv Milan and Trudy Barron, hosted by the Sleepy Hollow Parents' Club at the school.

Milan began working at Sleepy Hollow School in 1984 as a noon supervisor and later as an assistant in classrooms. Eventually she became coordinator of the school's after-school program. In this role she felt she could do the most good for kids at the school in need of extra attention. Milan will miss the students, their hugs and funny stories, but looks forward to playing tennis more and spending time with her grandchildren.

Barron has taught kindergarten at Sleepy Hollow for nearly 20 years. She has always had a warm, welcoming classroom that helped her students get their education started right. Her love of music has been a tremendous asset in her classroom, where she plays the guitar and sings with her students every day. She too looks forward to retirement, traveling and spending time with family.

Beverages will be provided, and attendees are invited to bring a plate of cookies to share.

If you are unable to attend the event, but wish to send a personal greeting to Milan or Barron, please mail it to Sleepy Hollow School, 20 Washington Lane, Orinda, CA 94563.



Liv Milan

Former students and their families are invited to attend a retirement reception Wednesday, May 29 for two



Art by Julia Albo



Poster by Liana Shaw

2013 SUMMER CAMPS/Classes

See alphabetical listing of 40 camps and classes on page C4-C6

LAMORINDA WEEKLY

Independent, locally owned and operated!

please...



...thanks

NEWSPAPER