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Summer School for Lamorinda Teachers

By Cathy Dausman



Bob Athayde Photo Andy Scheck

Some say the three favorite words in a teacher's vocabulary are June, July and August, but certain teachers disregard the lure of "down time" in favor of heading right back into the classroom during the summer. While some may be in it for an extra paycheck, or to offset education-related expenses like laptop computers or advanced education tuition, there is also pride in performance of a task done well.

Take, for example, Bob Athayde, who is Lafayette's Stanley Middle School music director nine months of the year. In addition to his week-long summer jazz camp, the Lafayette Summer Music Jazz Workshop at Stanley, Athayde brings a Jazz piano improv class, "From Blues to Boogie," to Lafayette's new School of Musical Arts, said SOMA director Xiomara Di Maio, who teaches Pre-Twinkle piano and voice classes for ages 4-8 during the summer. The Blues to Boogie class is designed for students ages 8-12 and piano skills are required.

Orinda Parks and Recreation Department re-branded what used to be known as "summer school" as Enrichment Camp when it acquired the program from the Orinda Union

School District. The camp hires about a dozen local school district teachers for summer work.

Lamorinda Weekly asked Jennifer Russell, parks, trails and recreation director for Lafayette, if the city hires school district teachers for summer work. "To my knowledge, no," she said. Russell said most of the staff hired for the City of Lafayette's summer recreation programs are either provided through the programs themselves (Mad Science and Make Me a Basketball Pro, for example) or provided by recreation leaders hired by the city as temporary summer employees (such as Camp Awesome and Lafayette Tiny Tots).

Several Moraga School District teachers sign on for summer school, using their own classrooms to teach, Moraga's Recreation Assistant Kim Burrowes said. One fifth grade Camino Pablo Elementary School teacher will teach algebra and geometry classes to teens; and kindergarten teachers Cathy Kathan, Bess Inzeo (Donald Rheem), Mary Ellen Viboch, Terry Miller (Los Perales) and Joanne McClellan and Sherry Doolittle (Camino Pablo) teach at least one week of an intro to kindergarten class.

"We love doing this!" Miller said. "Since we started, not one child who has been through our week-long program has had separation anxiety or tears the following August when school started." It also makes for "a great partnership between the town and the school district," Miller added.

(Note: Teacher-run camps are not necessarily endorsed, sponsored or approved by the Moraga School District).

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[back](#)

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