

Team Bentley Runs to Raise Funds for Growing Robotics Program

Submitted by Jenna Starkey



Team Bentley

Photo provided

Bentley School, which has campuses in Oakland and Lafayette, is fielding its fourth annual team of runners and walkers for the Oakland Running Festival on Sunday, March 23. Team Bentley has grown steadily over the last three years from 125 runners to 175 runners. Its mission is to model a healthy lifestyle for and with its children. The team is represented in every race length by students, parents, faculty, or a combination thereof.

The 5K is the most popular race length, with runners as young as kindergarten. They field multiple marathon relay teams from the middle school, and have had an integrated faculty/parent team. In addition, they have helped several middle and upper school students complete their first half marathon. Team Bentley is one of the largest groups represented at the Oakland Running Festival. Structured as a fundraiser, over the last

three years Team Bentley has cumulatively donated more than \$35,000 to projects or programs at the school. In 2013, funds were allocated to a library renovation on Bentley's Oakland campus.

This year, all proceeds will fund Bentley's Remote Operating Vehicle (ROV) program, which promotes problem solving through engineering. Bentley's upper school ROV team won the Best Engineering and Design Award at the

12th Annual Marine Advanced Technology Education ROV Competition last year in Monterey. The middle school will launch the first ROV class in 2014. As part of this effort, students will design, build, and test ROVs, with the goal of representing Bentley at the regional competition in Monterey.

For more information, please contact Team Bentley co-chairs, Leslie Bodner and Mona Sillers, at TeamBentley2014@gmail.com.

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.

“Voices On Poverty”

A community event designed to make a difference

Submitted by Casey Sasner

According to U.S. census data and the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano, 1 in 6 people are considered “food insecure” and 107,000 people are living in poverty in Contra Costa County. On Feb. 23, the community is invited to attend “Voices On Poverty,” an event designed to raise awareness of poverty in the county.

The idea for the event began four years ago, when Temple Isaiah began a community organizing initiative to learn what was in the hearts and on the minds of its congregants – what were they worried about, what they wanted to work on. Organizers conducted house meetings, one-on-ones and temple-wide events. Through the process, they learned that congregants were thinking a lot about how the recession was affecting folks here in Contra Costa County – the jobless, homeless, working poor, and under-employed – and decided to use the passion for social action to make a difference.

Conducting over 100 meetings over the course of a year, organizers from Temple Isaiah met with executive directors of non-profits, non-governmental organizations, service providers, funders, county employees, those living in poverty, political figures, and the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County and their social justice alliance. In late January, Temple Isaiah and the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County co-hosted a lunch attended by 110 clergy and lay leaders where they discussed

the issues of poverty and decided to create an interfaith coalition.

“Voices On Poverty” will feature a series of speakers who will share stories about struggling with poverty or working in service on the problem. Small group conversations will be facilitated where participants will consider how faith and community-based organizations can advance the fight against poverty. Opportunities for engagement will also be presented. The event will also honor the hundreds of volunteers in the interfaith community who work on Winter Nights, the rotating family shelter which operates from October through May. Winter Nights is a program of the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County.

Jasmine Tarkoff, leader of the effort, said of the event, “Our hope is to get the community to begin confronting the issues around poverty in Contra Costa County and figure out how we might work together on solutions. We know that hearing stories is the best way to put a face on poverty and that’s why we felt this would be a good way of raising awareness.” All community members who are concerned about poverty are encouraged to attend.

“Voices On Poverty” will be held from 3 to 5 p.m. in the social hall of Temple Isaiah, 945 Risa Road, Lafayette. The event is free and open to the public. To RSVP, visit www.temple-isiah.org/voicesonpoverty.

Boxes, Bags and Bins of Books Benefit Schools

Submitted by Greg Davis



Hannah Wells and Kate Walner Photo provided

As part of their participation in the Julie Fouly Sports Leadership Academy, local Lafayette resident Kate Walner and her friend Hannah Wells, both age 14, set out to collect books for underserved schools in the Mt. Diablo and Oakland unified school districts. Walner, a soccer player from Montclair Soccer Club, reached out to her friends from soccer clubs in our local community including California Magic and East Bay Eclipse. “Due to great support from California Magic and East Bay Eclipse soccer clubs, we collected nearly 4,000 books that were distributed among six different schools,” said Walner. “This is great for students in these underfunded schools because they now have more and a better variety of reading material. It also creates awareness of the need for books in local schools among the soccer players from the clubs that participated.”

Leader of the Popcorn Pack

Submitted by Justin Steele



Jackson Steele, a scout with Cub Scout Pack 200, smashed his Pack's fundraising record last year by selling \$3,124 worth of popcorn throughout Lafayette. This year he nearly doubled that effort by selling a whopping \$5,823, which likely made him the top seller in the state of California. Both years Jackson has been honored at half court during a Golden State Warriors game as the number one seller in this region. His tireless efforts week after week have earned a lot of extra funds for his local council and his pack, which is comprised mainly of Springhill Elementary School students.

Stellar seller Jackson Steele Photo provided

Lafayette Community Foundation Awards Grant to WomenSing for Free Music Performances in Lafayette

Submitted by Linda Infelise



Teresa Geringer, Lafayette Community Foundation president, presents the Lafayette Community Foundation grant to WomenSing's board president, Ann Dzuna, along with members of the Youth Inspiring Youth - Commissioning Emerging Composers committee. From left: Teresa Caldwell (Lafayette), Teresa Geringer, Rachel Eidbo, Patti Sax (Lafayette), Amy Hiestand (Orinda), Ann Dzuna (Moraga), Patty Murray (Orinda). Photo provided

The Lafayette Community Foundation awarded an excellence grant of \$2,500 that enables the local women's chorus WomenSing to expand artistic programming in

Lafayette. The Foundation invests in programs and projects that enhance the civic, cultural, educational and environmental health of the city. Its grant to WomenSing makes possible a week-

end of free public performances April 11-12, giving local audiences an insider's view of a composer's creative process and the ways that choral singers respond to challenging new music. Three local choruses will participate including WomenSing.

Founded in 1965, WomenSing, is an award-winning chorus of nearly 50 women from the Lamorinda and East Bay areas. Its signature project is Youth Inspiring Youth – Commissioning Emerging Composers. Young California composers, ages 18-30, compete for paid commissions to create new choral works for the chorus. The texts are provided by award-winning children's poetry from the River of Words Project of the Center for Environmental Literacy at Saint Mary's College in Moraga.

According to WomenSing artistic director, Martin Benvenuto, Ph.D., “Youth Inspiring Youth has already given birth to nine remarkable choral compositions by young California composers. With this generous grant, we can expand our workshops and performances in ways that give the public additional insight into the exciting challenges of performing new music.”

The winning composers for the current year

are Chris Castro and Jordan Nelson. Castro is a graduate student in composition at UC Davis. He earned a bachelor of music from the Juilliard School where his award-winning composition, *Monolith (A Symphonic Sketch)* was premiered by the Juilliard Orchestra. For his commission, he has chosen a powerful poem entitled ‘Poseidon's Steeds’ written by Allegra Hyde when she was 14. Allegra is now pursuing an MFA at Arizona State, while actively writing poetry and short stories.

Nelson teaches music theory at Colburn Conservatory of Music and is working towards his doctor of musical arts in Composition at USC. His accomplishments range from orchestral works to chamber music for both acoustic and electro-acoustic ensembles. Nelson selected a set of 10 haiku-like mini-poems entitled “Ten Ways of Looking at the Sun”, written by Sophie Anderson, age 13 at the time. Sophie, now a cellist living in Seattle, is very excited about having her poetry set to music.

For information about the upcoming WomenSing “Treble Voices Now Festival” April 11-12, as well as other performances and workshops, visit womensing.org.