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Vuafu Goes to Iowa!

Submitted by Michelle Regan



Lafayette fourth and fifth grade Odyssey of the Mind Division 1 "Driver's Test" team, back row, from left: Peter Husch, Kaitlyn Srinivasan, and Matthew Brock-Utne; front row: Cole Regan, Nathaniel McManus, Charlie Schofield, and William McGlothlen. Photo provided

Vuafu, his professor, and mechanic are bringing Mr. Head Guy (George Peterson Sanders, aka GPS) along with two narrators, a carrot-eating bunny, and a robot bunny car to Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa to compete in Odyssey of the Mind's World Finals Driver's Test. These characters, portrayed by Lafayette fourth and fifth grade students sponsored by Burton Valley Elementary School, conduct an original 8-minute performance where Vuafu, an absent-minded adolescent carrot, takes his driver's test in a robot bunny car designed and built solely by the

Lafayette students. The vehicle, disguised as a robot bunny to protect carrot personalities (like Vuafu), must complete a series of challenges outlined by the competition rules all while being an integral part of the group's overall student-created performance. Competition vehicle performance requirements include using two different methods of propulsion; picking an item up, transporting it, and delivering it to a new location; knocking over an item; and crashing through a wall. The Burton Valley based team advances to this World competition

event to compete against teams from all over the globe after securing a first place finish at the San Francisco Bay Region competition and a second place finish at the California state competition. Stay tuned for World competition results! Students between the kindergarten grade and university level who are interested in being part of a team to compete in Odyssey of the Mind, or adults able to coach a student team, can go to <http://www.odysseyofthemind.com> to learn more about the program.

Share Your Celebrations and Remembrances
If you would like to share an announcement about a special event or achievement, such as a wedding, engagement, scholarship or graduation of a local resident, or about a special person from Lamorinda who has passed, send a photo along with your text (up to 250 words) to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com, and include "Celebrations and Remembrances" in the subject line.

TEEN SCENE

Too Much Stress is Harming Today's Teens

By Henna Hundal

When most people think about the life of a teenager, what typically comes to mind is days of cruising the mall, riding bikes around town, hanging out with friends, going to parties, and building lasting memories. After all, you're only young once, right? Maybe so, but new research is indicating that the teenagers of today aren't really living the kick-back, carefree lifestyle. According to the American Psychological Association, today's young people are more stressed out than ever – in fact, even more stressed out than adults! Junior Hunter M. says, "I find myself becoming stressed out about once or twice a day."

In February of this year, the APA released the results from its 2013 Stress in America Survey, and the statistics are both very troubling and very telling. Participants in the survey rated their daily stress levels on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 representing the least amount of daily stress and 10 representing the most. Out of the 1,018 teenagers who took the survey, the average stress rating was 5.8. On the contrary, the adults who took the survey had an average stress rating of 5.1. Junior Isaac M. says, "We teens usually get stressed out when we act irresponsibly, like procrastinate, and don't take measures carefully. When we don't manage our time well, the feelings of stress start kicking in."

Undoubtedly, school is a key root of the stress, according to the teenagers who participated in the survey. Not to mention, 31 percent of the surveyed kids said that all the school-year stress often makes them feel overwhelmed, and another 30 percent reported that it makes them feel depressed. It's so concerning that such a

large group of young people have self-reported higher stress levels than adults, as stress can have detrimental effects on a growing person's health. For example, it can lead to overeating, headaches, high blood pressure, heart problems, and anxiety. As senior Arezu K. points out, "All that tension and pressure is definitely not good for our bodies."

Clearly, this epidemic of stress hitting teenagers needs to be turned around in some way. Whether that means putting minor tasks on the backburner for a while, or whether it means readjusting one's agenda to better reflect what one is able to manage, it's crucial to find a way to get a handle on all the tension. "When I know I need to let off some pressure, I go outside and take a walk around the block," says Hunter.

Basking in the outdoors is just one of the many great ways to de-stress. Turn on some music, phone a friend, find a fun hobby, take some deep breaths: releasing the tension is crucial. The teenage years of our lives should be times of enjoyment, growth, and relaxation – not ones marred by stress.



Express Yourself!® Teen Radio Reporter/Co-Host and Be the Star You Are!® volunteer, Henna Hundal, is an 11th grader on a mission to empower the younger generation to lead active, healthy lives.

Teen Scene is YOUR voice. If you have something to say or have writing skills and want to be part of our Teen Scene team, email our Teen Coach, Cynthia Brian, Cynthia@CynthiaBrian.com.

The opinions expressed in Teen Scene are those of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly.

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