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# Eight Orinda Students Receive High Honors from Johns Hopkins CTY Academic Talent Search

Submitted by Wendy Meckes



Wagner Ranch Elementary School student Alex Meckes was one of eight Orinda students from the U.S. and around the world who earned High Honors for their exceptional performance on an above-grade-level test as part of the 2013-14 Johns Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth (CTY). Other students included Thomas Boneysteele (The Seven Hills School), John Mark Holbrook (Orinda Intermediate School),

Manu Prabandham (Sleepy Hollow Elementary), Chinmai Srinivas (OIS), Gautum Srinivas (OIS), Jeffae Schroff (home school) and Jerrae Schroff (home school). These students, who scored exceptionally high and were invited to a special award ceremony, also qualified for CTY's residential summer programs, online classes, and family academic programs. For more information about enrolling in the CTY Talent Search, go to www.cty.jhu.edu.

Alex Meckes with his High Honors certificate

Photo provided

## THE APP RAP

By Alex Pawlakos

**App:** Any.DO by Any.DO  
**For:** iPhones and Android phones  
**Price:** Free

Many smartphone owners use their phone as a "to-do" list, not just for appointments, but also to remember other tasks and things they want to do or accomplish. There are several good apps that enable you to organize and prioritize a to-do list, but the best of the bunch is an easy to use, very handy free app called, *Any.DO*. This very popular app will not only remind you of appointments, meetings and commitments, but it will keep you aware of tasks that you need to do over the course of a day, a week, or even longer. Also, *Any.DO* can be set to activate at times you prescribe. As you scan through your scheduled list of upcoming duties, you have the ability to move upcoming events and responsibilities to "later" if your schedule changes. Within the category of "later," you can move the job forward to any time period you choose, includ-

ing tomorrow, next week, or even "someday." The app makes it easy to reschedule and reprioritize duties and responsibilities in a matter of seconds. If you like being organized and utilize to-do lists, you will love *Any.DO*.



Alex Pawlakos enjoys biking, weightlifting, and tutoring in his spare time. He is a reporter on *Express Yourself!*™ Teen Radio.

## TEEN SCENE

### Positivity Power

By Caie Kelley

What is the power of positivity? I was trying to explain to my friend the value of considering different perspectives when looking at an issue. I have definitely found myself on certain nights – I won't say how many – complaining to my friends about little things that aren't a big deal but feel vitally important to me. But I've found when I've broken those negative patterns and chosen to talk about what's working, I quickly realize how much I have to be grateful for. So now I think a little differently. Yes, sometimes I'm a little stressed about not having enough time to check off every item on my to-do list, yet I am healthy, I have a wonderful group of family and friends, and I find my work fulfilling. These are all positives and it doesn't get any better than that.

Beyond my personal experiences, how do other Lamorinda teens approach positivity?

Mariel S., an incoming senior, explained that her secret to a positive outlook lies in not taking life too seriously: "Sometimes, it's a matter of spending time with my friends watching chick flicks and giggling about Channing Tatum – I try to surround myself with friends who make me laugh."

Julia D., a Miramonte June graduate, echoed Mariel's sentiment when she said, "I've gotten to the point where I know what matters to me, like talking to my dad, and so I do that often. I also avoid uncomfortable social situations that can hurt my positive outlook." Sommar V., an incoming junior, pointed to her father as a source of stability as well. "I enjoy long car rides home with my dad, because we have one-on-one time to talk which I really value," she said.

For most Lamorinda teens, focusing on these simple moments help them retain a positive outlook. "I find swim coaching rewarding because teaching kids is

something that I love to do, and because I'm working with people I admire. I feel positive," said Katie L., a senior at Campolindo High School. Similarly, "Riding horses is fulfilling because it is such a mental game. It requires my full attention and stops me from stressing about other things, and it is easy to see when I am making progress," added Sasha H., a local teen who attended Athenian.

Whether it's a movie night or an extracurricular activity, these teens tend to look on the bright side. We have a choice of seeing a glass half full or half empty. Attitudes are contagious. Is yours worth catching?



A recent Miramonte graduate, Caie Kelley, is a gold medal swimmer, piano teacher, VP of Club BSYA, co-host/reporter on the radio program, *Express Yourself!*™, and award winning speaker/debater.

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

## 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](mailto:storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com), and include "Celebrations and Remembrances" in the subject line.

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