

Published October 8th, 2014

**'Hike for Shelter' on Oct. 19***Submitted by Chris Flitter*

Participants get a high vantage point on Mount Diablo at last year's Hike for Shelter event. Photo provided

and abilities, from walkers to seasoned hikers, offering three trails, from a 2.4-mile family hike, a 5.2-mile moderate hike and a 6.7-mile Summit hike. A post-hike celebration includes a catered lunch, local celebrity speakers including Frank Somerville of KTVU as host, and fundraising prizes.

"Our daughter Claire feels Hiking for Shelter is a great opportunity for our family to do some community service as a unit," Armstrong said. "The children love the hike but also see that not every child has a home and how tough that can be. It scares them a little but more importantly it drives home the importance of community service."

Contra Costa County estimates there are approximately 8,250 homeless at any one time, including over 2,000 children. According to Armstrong, Shelter Inc. served 5,000 people last year who were homeless or at risk of homelessness, with 95 percent of those who were at risk of homelessness were able to stay in their homes, and 76 percent of those who were homeless were moved back into a permanent home due to the community's support.

Lafayette resident, Stefanie Cannizzo is planning to attend the event once again. "I love participating in Hike for Shelter every year because it's a great way for me and my friends to take some time away from our everyday lives and focus on the people who benefit from the work Shelter Inc. does," she said.

For information, visit <http://shelterincofccc.org/events/hike/index.html>.

Last year, more than 70 Lamorinda residents were among the 225 participants of the Hike for Shelter event at Mount Diablo State Park, and longtime Lafayette resident Bill Armstrong hopes even more turn out Oct. 19 at the fifth annual event to raise funds and awareness of homelessness in Contra Costa County.

"After I retired, I learned of a growing problem in our community, which is increasing homelessness for low-income families," said Armstrong, who serves on the board of directors as treasurer at Shelter Inc. He and his wife, Marilyne, their three daughters, three sons-in-law and nine grandchildren, participated in last year's event.

"The biggest misconception is the face of homelessness. Many of our homeless clients have been homeless for years, couch hopping, sleeping in cars or in an unsafe environment for a family to live. These people are rarely seen by the public. The recent fact is that California accounts for one-fifth of all homeless school children in the country!"

The family-friendly event is open to all ages

Reach the reporter at: [info@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:info@lamorindaweekly.com)

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA