

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.

Historic Lafayette Boy Scout Cabin Undergoes Renovations

Submitted by Stephanie Reilly



Troop 204 Scouts John Shepherd, Jackson Reilly, Jared Steuber, Matt Shepherd, Isaac Evans, Arlo Evans, Quinn Elle and Scoutmaster Tom Steuber recently visited the cabin to view the renovation work in progress. Photo provided

After Troop 204 Scoutmaster Tom Steuber and Dads' Club President Scott Newman realized several years ago that the log cabin at the corner of School Street and First Street in Lafayette – home to the Lafayette Boy Scout Troop 204 for over 66 years – was sinking due to age, the soil and the type of foundation, the Troop decided it was important to “Save the Cabin” for future generations of Scouts.

The rustic cabin has been a symbol and integral part of Troop life: in 1948, funds were donated in memory of Morris Hunt Slater by his sister to the Troop to build a cabin as a place for the Troop to meet, plan and grow.

The work will be completed by Ned Clyde Construction and Leap Frog Plumbing. Both companies were very enthusiastic about the project since they had either Scouts that had been in the troop or were Scouts themselves. Before the construction company could start work, teams of Scouts and their parent volunteers worked to empty the cabin, preserve the Troop's memorabilia, and store equipment.

The Troop plans to return to their cabin at the first of the year to a much more solid and preserved structure for at least another 66 years. To learn more, visit www.204cabin.org.

'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

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 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 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://shelterincfcc.org/events/hike/index.html>.

TEEN SCENE

A Teen's Independence

By Youngjoo Ahn

Turning 18 is a monumental landmark in the life of a teen. Adulthood marks the ability to vote as well as a newfound independence outside of school and a parent's supervision. This independence comes in many forms, whether it is the joy of ordering anything from the Internet without parental consent, the annoyance of having to do your own laundry, or the challenges of traveling alone.

I recently visited Boston for a college trip and realized the true weight of independence. It was liberating to travel alone for the first time, however, I soon was overwhelmed with the difficulties. On my outbound leg, my connecting flight was significantly delayed and I had to completely alter my trip plans, taking a train from Newark, N.J., to Springfield, Mass. My first night in Boston was spent without any of my luggage. My return flight left at 4 a.m. and without my parent's guidance, I had to finagle the flight delays and the unscheduled stops in Texas on my own. Although I used my problem solving skills to stay as calm as possible, to say that I

was a bit stressed is an understatement. While independence looks glamorous and adventurous in teen movies, in real life, it presents unexpected and frightening responsibilities for the uninitiated.

While traveling alone marks a step towards adulthood, independence is also about the little things. “I'm excited to hang out with friends whenever I want,” graduated senior Roland Zhu said. “The possibilities to snack at night are also exciting.” Senior Julia Meckes commented, “Receiving my driver's license has given me a great sense of freedom because now my activities are on my own terms. It is so much easier to do things by myself.” Graduated senior Michelle Wu discovered her independence in “braving an East Coast winter and being able to freely explore the city on my own terms.”

Senior Sarah Rockwood has a different perspective about independence. “You reach a point where no one views you as a child anymore, but rather a young adult, mature enough to make your own decisions. Freedom comes at the price of more responsibility.” Rock-

wood elaborated. “By having a job, I'm financially independent and am able to go out more than my younger sister because my parents trust me more. However, I have to make more sacrifices to maintain this liberty and I have to be accountable for everything I do.”

When we are young, all we want to be is “older” so we can be on our own and make our own decisions. Now that I have arrived, independence is both scary and exhilarating.



A 2014 Miramonte graduate, Youngjoo Ahn is the host of Express Yourself™ Teen Radio, and an officer in Club Be the Star You Are!®. She traveled to Korea independently this summer.

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

Community Service

Raised Up to Give Back

SMC student one of 32 tutors helping less privileged

Submitted by Julie Schmit



Saint Mary's College freshman Samantha Coale tutors fourth grade student, Emily Tula. Photo Daniel Scherer

Samantha Coale, a freshman at Saint Mary's College, has wanted to be a teacher since she was in the third grade. Now, the 18-year-old from Moraga is putting that desire to the test. She's a volunteer tutor at the Monument Crisis Center in Concord, tutoring elementary grade students.

“It feels good to volunteer, and I get to work with all grade levels,” Coale says. She also gets leadership class credit at her school.

The Monument Crisis Center's After School Café Program has expanded to more than 75 students and

is looking for more volunteer tutors.

The center, which provides food and other safety-net services at no cost to thousands of low-income households in Contra Costa County, has 32 volunteer tutors. It wants more so that each student can develop a relationship with a particular tutor.

“A one-to-one relationship is especially important,” says Alice Rector, 69, a retired speech and language pathologist who volunteers to mentor the tutors. Numerous studies have shown the value of one-to-one tutoring. (Read more

about this study at <http://nichcy.org/research/summaries/abstract3>). Teachers are constantly challenged to find time to work with students individually.

Most of the center's tutors are in high school or college and tutor elementary school children. Some of the center's current tutors were once tutored in the After School Café Program. Others simply want to help or give back. The center expanded its tutoring program to three afternoons a week and has launched a tutoring program for middle school students, too. Included within the tutoring programs are homework assistance, special subject tutoring, computer time in the Rotary Learning Lab, art projects, educational games, and healthy snacks.

“It is very rewarding,” says Sandra Scherer, the center's executive director. “Our families tell me how important this program is to them. Their children gain self-confidence, a sense of pride and enthusiasm for learning. This program improves not only the individual but creates positive impact and dynamic change in the greater community.”

For more information, or to volunteer, contact Scherer at (925) 825-7751.

Lamorinda Members Celebrate National 4-H Week

Submitted by Mary Halpin



Lamorinda 4-H members and their animals at a recent event.

Photo Michelle Chan

The members of Lamorinda 4-H will be supporting National 4-H Week Oct. 5-11 by wearing their T-shirts to school, hanging banners at the Orinda BART station and Acalanes High School, and presenting a poster outlining the history of Lamorinda 4-H at the

Lafayette Library and Community Center. They also plan to spread the word about the organization by distributing bookmarks at all of the county libraries and local book stores.