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A Lifetime of Caring

By Bobbie Dodson



From left, John, Elizabeth, Tyler, Robert, and Ann Hofinga Photo Terry Riggins

As a single parent who raised four children in Orinda, Tyler Hofinga has a set of parental responsibilities to which he subscribes that include: love the child before you; build responsibility and independence; foster creativity; allow risk taking; and balance love and discipline. His children seem to exhibit the same leadership qualities he has.

His sons, John and Robert, played lacrosse, starting at Glorietta Elementary School and through college, where both served as captain of the team in their senior year at Cal. His girls, Ann and Elizabeth, chose crew as their sport. Ann was captain of the Oakland Strokes and went on to serve as captain of the University of Pennsylvania. As a junior at Miramonte High School, Elizabeth was chosen captain of the Oakland Strokes.

A family friend and Orinda portrait photographer, Terry Riggins, says, "Tyler is a dedicated father with four amazing kids. I suspect

they are equally as proud of him as he is of them."

Last year Hofinga received the Jefferson Award for his public service, and he has served as chairman of the San Francisco Authors Luncheon, scheduled for Oct. 25, now in its 26th year, which raises funds for the National Kidney Foundation. Carrie Schwab Pomerantz, president of the Charles Schwab Foundation, says, "Tyler has created a wonderful cultural event. He puts his whole heart into it."

"We have an outstanding selection of authors," Hofinga says. "They include Kelly Corrigan, Arianna Huffington, Susan Freeland, Christopher Kostow, Norman Lear and Eric Litwin. This event has grown into the Bay Area's premier literary event, with some 1,000 attendees. I'm proud that we raise around \$500,000 each year for the National Kidney Foundation, which does an amazing job in improving the health and well-being of individuals and families affected by kidney disease, and increasing the availability of all organs for transplantation."

Although one might think with the amount of work he puts into this event there would be no time for other causes, he manages to serve in a great many ways.

For years he has been involved in the Education Foundation of Orinda as his four children attended Orinda schools. "Besides raising money for schools, I've attended countless sporting events," he says. "I think it's so important to be there for your kids so I've made it a priority." And as an alumni scholar at UC Berkeley, Hofinga endowed a \$50,000 scholarship so with the funds generated, two students receive a \$2,000 scholarship each year.

Even in high school, Hofinga was an outstanding leader, with nine scholarships and awards noted in his senior year at John W. North High School's award night in Riverside, Calif. He now serves as a mentor for high school students. "I introduce them to opportunities they wouldn't otherwise have, helping with charities, finding jobs, getting their resume in order. All kids need is an adult to care, and a lot of kids don't have parents that involved so I try to step in and move them forward," Hofinga explains.

What motivates him? "I feel I've been extraordinarily fortunate in my life. I come from a family of modest means. Literally I came from nothing, earned the right to go to UC Berkeley, and have had a successful business career," he says. With specialties in Internet services and computer software sales and sales management, Hofinga has worked for IBM, Bank of America, Lotus

Development, Oracle, Salesforce, Microsoft and is now at Teradata as client director, responsible for the largest healthcare company in the United States, Kaiser Permanente.

With this success comes responsibility, Hofinga believes. "I call it 'pay it forward,' as I give back to the community. I try to focus on what is important to me - health issues, underserved communities, the environment and children's activities." He has done this in many ways.

When the Orinda Library was built, Hofinga endowed the Children's Reading Room. On the board of the Oakland Zoo, he endowed the African Lazy River exhibit for the new Children's Zoo. Zoo Director, Dr. Joel Parrot, says, "Not only does Tyler give money, he has a lot of energy and is a great spokesperson for getting the word out to the community as to how great the zoo is."

Tim O'Keefe, executive director of Shelter Inc., echoes those sentiments. "I know that many other nonprofit organizations, schools, and his church, Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian, are direct beneficiaries of Tyler's largesse. He has never ceased to amaze me not only for his generosity but also with his tremendous talent. ... People like Tyler make the world a little better for the rest of us. It's been an honor to know him and call him my friend."

San Francisco Author's Luncheon

Authors Kelly Corrigan, Arianna Huffington, Susan Freeland, Christopher Kostow, Norman Lear and Eric Litwin will be at the Hilton San Francisco Union Square to sign books at the beginning and end of the San Francisco Authors Luncheon, which starts at 10 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 25. Tickets are \$135. For information, visit <http://www.kidney.org/offices/nkf-serving-northern-california-pacific-northwest>.

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