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French Jewish Spy to Take Lamorindans Behind Nazi Enemy Lines March 15

By Laurie Snyder



Image Chabad of Contra Costa

"When you have reached the bottom of your fear, you have to go up." – Marthe Cohn

Her sister perished in the Nazi death camp at Auschwitz. Her fiancé was executed for helping the French Resistance. By the time she was in her mid-20s, she was carrying forged identification papers enabling her to move back and forth into Gestapo-controlled Germany.

And on March 15, Lamorindans will have a rare opportunity to hear Marthe Cohn give firsthand testimony about what life was like in Nazi-occupied France and how she coolly convinced Nazi soldiers that she was a simple German nurse looking for her lost love – all while ferrying key bits of information to Allied forces that helped them

break the Nazis' vaunted Siegfried Line and turn the tide of World War II in the Allies' favor.

For her heroism, the 94-year-old Cohn was awarded France's highest military honor – the Médaille Militaire. Now a Palos Verdes, Calif., resident and making her first Bay Area tour, Cohn will share several of her exploits presented in the book, "Behind Enemy Lines: The True Story of a French Jewish Spy in Nazi Germany" at the Orinda Theatre, beginning at 7 p.m. (Doors open at 6:30.)

Tickets are \$15 in advance or \$20 at the door, but are expected to go quickly for this very special event. For information, visit www.JewishContraCosta.com or call (925) 937-4101.

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 may be sent to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com with the subject header In Service to the Community.

Community Benefits from ONE Sunday Event

Submitted by Robin Freeburg



Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church members helped out at several community nonprofits during the ONE Sunday event on Feb. 22. Photos Larry Rickson

Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church held its eighth annual ONE Sunday, a day of service on Feb. 22. Over 400 people of all ages participated throughout Contra Costa County. The day of service included painting, cleaning, assembling toiletry kits for the homeless, deep cleaning a commercial kitchen, construction and much more. Fourteen non-profit agencies including ANKA, Bay Area Rescue Mission, CALICO, Contra Costa Food Bank, Creek

Kids, Foster A Dream, Habitat for Humanity, Las Trampas, Loaves and Fishes and Loved Twice, Monument Crisis Center, Primera Iglesia, Shelter Inc. and STAND were the recipients of the labor force that allowed them to accomplish things that might otherwise not have been addressed due to limited resources. For more information on how you can become involved in next year's event, contact robin@lopc.org.



Local Students Receive Good Citizen Award

Submitted by Nira Horeis



From left, back row: Barbara Snyder, chairman, Louise Diracles, chapter regent, Susan McGill, assistant chairman; front row: Caroline Newman (Acalanes High School), Brihgid Leach (Campolindo High School), Piper Kruggel (Las Lomas High School) and Vaneet Sandhu (Contra Costa Christian High School). Not pictured, Vanessa Tang, from Miramonte High School. Photo provided

Happy Heart Walk for Henry Raises Awareness of Rare Disorder

Submitted by Molly Devinger



Friends and family gathered for the third annual event.

Photos Provided

Approximately 275 people took to the pavement at Lafayette Reservoir Feb. 28 as part of the third annual Happy Heart Walk for Henry, established by Megan and John Branagh to support the Barth Syndrome Foundation and to help find a cure for their 2-and-a-half-year-old son Henry, who is fighting a lifelong battle with the rare genetic disorder.

Barth syndrome primarily affects males, with fewer than 500 cases reported worldwide; many more cases probably exist but are undiagnosed, according to the Foundation. The cardinal characteristics of this multi-system disorder include cardiomyopathy, neutropenia (low white blood cells that can make one prone to infection), muscle weakness, exercise intolerance, growth delay, and energy deficiency.

"Historically, boys died of heart failure or infection before three years of age," said Megan Branagh, "but today with improved diagnosis and management, hopefully Henry's survival rate will be much brighter. The Foundation has been extremely helpful to us since Henry's diagnosis. And since Barth syndrome is so rare, we feel that it is even more important that we do all that we can do to help the Foundation."

Last year's Happy Heart Walk helped to raise more than \$10,000 for the Foundation. This year's walk raised over \$15,000. Local sponsors included Whole Foods, Diablo Foods, Costco, Susie Cakes, Bakesale Betty, Peet's Coffee, Be Real Foods, Chow, Family Style Photography and Chickfila.

"The past two and a half years have been quite a journey, definitely the most trying time in our lives, but also a time of feeling very loved and supported by our family, friends, and community," said Branagh. "Without this support

group, I'm not sure how our family would be surviving! Community is very important to us, as is Henry, so putting together some kind of event bringing these two together has been heavy on my heart."

Branagh says Henry is doing well right now. He still takes several medications daily and has a couple hours of therapy per week. She says her family is excited to see what this year has coming with the research for treatment and eventually a cure for Barth syndrome. "This is something Henry will battle with daily for the rest of his life and to think that our community is directly affecting the advancements in Barth syndrome is quite a feeling."

For more information about Barth syndrome and the Barth Syndrome Foundation, visit www.barthsyndrome.org. For additional information, visit www.HappyHeartWalk.com.



Grady, John, Henry and Megan Branagh during the Happy Heart Walk for Henry at Lafayette Reservoir.

The Acalanes Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution recently announced the 2015 winners of the Good Citizen Award. These remarkable young women have distinguished themselves academically, through leadership, community service, sports and art.

Caroline Newman attends Acalanes High School where she served in student government, earned AP and CSF academic honors and participated in Mock Trial. She played Lacrosse year-round for four years and received both Silver and Gold Awards from Girl Scouts. Campolindo High School student Brihgid Leach was a four-year Varsity runner, winning the Division 3 State Cross Country Championship and named Bay Area Cross Country Runner of the Year. She has participated in choir, Model U.N. and Project Open Hands. Piper Kruggel attends Las Lomas High School where she received the Make Las Lomas a Better School award. Kruggel arrived in the U.S. about five years ago from China, knowing little English and, through

hard work, has achieved success in academics as well as serving her community as a volunteer. Vaneet Sabdhu attends Contra Costa Christian High School where she has served in student government, played varsity basketball and varsity volleyball. She is a life member of CSF and performed in two theater productions. Miramonte High School student Vanessa Tang is an AP scholar with distinction, played varsity volleyball for four years, was founder and president of Miramonte BuildOn and is an active community volunteer. She has done clinical research at the Alta Bates Radiology Department. Tang is also a second-degree black belt in Tae Kwon Do.

The winners and their families were honored at a luncheon hosted by the Acalanes Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution and given a scholarship check, a pin, a certificate and an American flag that was once flown over the U.S. Capitol.