

Community Service

Girl Scout Troop 31300 Earns Bronze Award

Submitted by Carrie Binney



Back row, from left: Erin Koziel, Jasmine Lloyd, Mathilde Gourlin and Lily Jensen; middle row: Isabelle Bennette, Amy Blei, Lauren Healy, Madison Sutherland and Haley Rasilla; front row: Paige Binney, Halley Campo and Rosalyn Chow
Photo Carrie Binney

Twelve girls from the fifth-grade Girl Scout Junior troop at Camino Pablo Elementary School earned their Bronze Award on April 10 by sewing dresses out of pillowcases for underprivileged children around the world. This is the highest honor a Girl Scout Junior can achieve. Each girl spent 20 hours sewing dresses, which will benefit the organization "Dress a Girl Around the World." The girls

began their project in June of 2014 and accomplished their goal over a 10-month period. Some girls did not know how to sew at all, while others were more familiar with the process. They shared ideas, swapped stories and helped each other along. The troop provided 58 dresses, which will be sent to girls in Afghanistan, Costa Rica, Congo, El Salvador, Haiti, Mexico, Indonesia, Ukraine, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

E-Waste Recycling Service Supports Adults with Developmental Disabilities

Submitted by Jennie Dobies

Futures Explored, Inc., a nonprofit corporation that provides community opportunities, life skills and work-related training to adults with developmental disabilities, has collected and recycled more than 154 tons of e-waste since introducing its Nifty E-Waste Recycling Program in April 2012. Located next to Nifty Thrift Shops in Lafayette, Livermore and Antioch, the drop-off centers offer the community free and responsible recycling of unwanted electronics.

"Because people are replacing their electronic devices and appliances on an increasingly regular basis, e-waste has become the fastest growing waste stream in the world," said Will Sanford, executive director of Futures Explored, Inc. "Now more than ever, we want to make the community aware that our free service offers a safe and responsible way to recycle electronics year-round."

The EPA estimates that only 27 percent of electronics are recycled while the stream of e-waste is growing two to three times faster than

any other sources of waste.

"Earth Day is a great reason to celebrate our progress and renew our commitment to diverting significant amounts of e-waste from landfill each year. We're grateful to offer a service that benefits the environment, our community, and Futures Explored, Inc. participants," said Sanford.

Nifty E-Waste Recycling Centers accept televisions, VCRs, DVDs, computers, monitors, printers, keyboards, inkjet/toner cartridges, laptops, video game consoles, Internet/music devices, cameras, cell phones, telephone equipment, and more. Customers who drop off accepted electronics at Nifty E-Waste locations receive a tax deduction receipt.

The Lafayette Nifty E-Waste Recycling Center at 3467 Golden Gate Way is open Mondays from noon to 4 p.m., and Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information about Nifty E-Waste, call (925) 294-9086 or email ewaste@futures-explored.org.

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.

AMR Donates 10 Life-Saving Devices to the Lafayette School District

Submitted by Alicia Moore

American Medical Response, the 911 emergency ambulance provider for Contra Costa County, recently donated 10 automated external defibrillators (AEDs) to the Lafayette School District. An AED is a portable electronic device used to restore a heart rhythm during a sudden cardiac arrest (SCA). When a cardiac emergency strikes, using this life saving device partnered with CPR is crucial for reviving a victim. These devices were strategically placed in the Lafayette elementary and middle schools to fulfill the company's ongoing effort to improve survival rates for victims of sudden cardiac arrest.

"When AEDs are used, lives are saved. It is great to see more AEDs being placed in public

locations. This shortens the time to first shock, which is the single most important factor determining survival," said Dr. Joseph Barger, Contra Costa County EMS medical director.

The Lum family witnessed the importance of an AED during the rescue of their 14-year-old son during the basketball game at the Jewish Community Center in Walnut Creek. "Having seen first hand the critical role AEDs and CPR play in surviving SCA, we are so very grateful for this donation," said the Lum family. "It is our hope that an incident never occurs, but knowing our schools are now equipped and prepared to give our children, teachers and parents a better chance of survival during cardiac arrest is very reassuring."

Performers for Progress Show Benefits National Foundation for Suicide Prevention

Submitted by Samuel Shain



Photo provided

Miramonte High School last weekend hosted its 14th show of Performers for Progress, a cabaret night benefitting the charity, National Foundation for Suicide Prevention. Performers for Progress is a non-

profit, student-run organization that puts on biannual talent shows. The proceeds from ticket sales and concessions go straight to the charity they choose to support for that semester.

Getting the Most Out of Your Summer Experiences

By Elizabeth LaScala, PhD

There are many rewards for high school students who put energy into finding a summer internship or landing a job. Aside from the obvious benefits of gaining some work experience before going to college and adding to college resumes, some positions can be very exciting and help you to explore possible career paths. Some positions are rather bland, but even when the tasks seem mundane, your experience doesn't have to be! Be a sponge. Learn as much as you can about the organization's structure and function. Watch and listen carefully to full-time paid staff. If you find work in a business environment, observe those who are in sales and responsible for generating revenue – you will learn some things about what it takes to make a business run efficiently and turn a profit. By osmosis and networking, you can learn quite a bit from employees in different departments about sales, financial reporting, legal and tax requirements, and management. If you find work in a manufacturing environment, you may be around individuals who are responsible for an end product. Seek to acquire an understanding about the steps and manufacturing processes involved in getting a product ready for market. If you work in a lab, your tasks may include sterilizing glass slides for culture. Watch out for unusual occurrences. What do the lab technicians do when a specimen is handled improperly or becomes contaminated? Stretch your experience and make it count.

Last summer, one of my students landed a position in a political representative's office – mostly she performed day-to-day word-processing, handled phone calls and responded to constituent inquiries in pretty standard ways. But she also learned how politicians communicate with and represent their constituents, and obtained a deepened understanding of certain fundamentals that you would never learn in the classroom – like the fact that the office of the representative has to research and understand all the policies and programs that affect his constituents and represent all their interests, even when those policies and programs are not ones the representative himself may have supported.

Another one of my students took a job that included the somewhat mundane task of geographic data entry and compilation, keying numbers into a computer to identify and map the locations of motor vehicle crashes where the driver was driving under the influence (DUI). Since he was doing this work, he took it upon

himself to learn the GIS (Geographic Information Systems) software he was using and consider how the data might be analyzed. His work was managed by project personnel and he became acquainted with the research goals of the scientists involved. In addition to his more mundane everyday tasks, he learned to work as part of a team, interact with management, see how projects are financed and managed, and, of course, picked up some software skills. As in any research position, if you have the chance to learn a computer program, see some part of the analyses or read a report with an interpretation of data you have helped to compile, it can be immensely rewarding as well as instructive. Fully engaged in his work environment, this student wound up helping to write up the study's findings on the effects of alcohol availability on DUI crashes – a paper now being peer reviewed for publication and he is named as a contributor.

Other tips that can help to maximize the value of your summer activities include keeping a journal of your experiences to help you recall interesting details that will give a boost to your college application essays, and updating and expanding your contact list to increase your networking potential. Whatever you do this summer, make the fullest use of each and every opportunity that comes your way.



Elizabeth LaScala, Ph.D., guides families through the complex world of college admission. She helps students identify college majors and career paths, develops good fit college lists, and provides essay coaching and application support to help students tackle each step of the admission process with confidence and success. Each cycle, 90 percent of Elizabeth's students get into one or more of their top choice colleges. Elizabeth also helps families maximize opportunities for scholarships and financial aid awards. Visit www.doingcollege.com, call (925) 385-0562 or email at elizabeth@doingcollege.com.

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