

Business

Who Wants To Play?

ScreenDoor app helps busy parents line up playdates

By Sophie Braccini



Gary Hill using his app, ScreenDoor.

Photo Sophie Braccini

A few years back, Moraga father Gary Hill developed a website called Uwithus to allow parents to schedule kids activities, coordinating with their friends. He's been at it again, drawing on his experience as a father, this time creating a free phone app that lets parents coordinate spontaneous playdates. Totally immersed in the culture of immediacy, the app is extremely easy to set up

and activates with the touch of a button. "What I realized with Uwithus, is that the process was too complicated for busy parents," says Hill, "and I found out for myself that on a daily basis, my problem was more to just get kids with other kids for impromptu play. So much is organized and scheduled, we forgot that kids just need to get outside and be able to play," he adds.

Growing up in southeast Washington D.C., Hill says his childhood playtime was unplanned. "When I wanted to play, I would go out my front door and would look down the street. And if I could see someone's screen door, that meant that the main door was open and that the kid was free to play," remembers Hill. "That is why he called the app ScreenDoor."

A big admirer of Uber's simplicity – you press a button and a car shows up – Hill wanted something as easy to use for busy parents of young kids who are asking, what is my kid going to be able to do today and who is available to play? "When I grew up we played in our neighborhood, and we had these visual cues," he explains. "Now, people are spread out."

Now when one of Hill's two sons comes home and wants to have a playdate, he does not have to send texts, wait for responses, find another person if the first was not available, and so on. He opens the app and presses one button to send a message to his private circle. "The parents in the circle get a message on their phone: 'Charlie is free to play,'" explains Hill. On the app screen, kids that are available are indicated and parents have the option to text, call or email each other from that screen to coordinate. The availability of the kids can be turned off manually; otherwise, it resets automatically at 9 p.m.

Hill tells the story of one Sunday afternoon when he made his son available on the app. "A half hour later, one of his friend's moms texted that they would be at the Cinco de Mayo celebration at 3:30," he remembers. The boys had a great time, and the mom was so thrilled that the app made it happen.

Hill may add other bells and whistles to his app, but right now the free app is as simple as opening the front door to signal availability. He says that his targets are parents of kids from preschool to elementary school; older kids do the work themselves. Hill thinks that parents are underserved in the app development world because most of the developers are 18- to 35-year-old young professionals developing for 18- to 35-year-old young professionals. He is also thinking about other potential users of the app, such as seniors or pet owners.

"It's not about using the technology; it's about creating real face-to-face interaction," says Hill.

Hill developed ScreenDoor with his friends David Forrest and Thomas Jones. The app can be found online at yourscreendoor.com or on iTunes.

Lamorinda Weekly business articles are intended to inform the community about local business activities, not to endorse a particular company, product or service.

business briefs

Sheryl Kline Teaches Mental Toughness
21C Orinda Way, Suite #114, Orinda
(925) 285-0526, Sheryl@SherylKline.com, www.sherylkline.com

Sheryl Kline M.A. says that she specializes in teaching athletes, business people and students mental toughness skills so their minds can help them achieve to the best of their ability. Graduating with a master's degree from USC in sport psychology, she researched and worked with many different sports teams and individuals. Since then, she's worked with high level and elite athletes across many different sports. She teaches skills such as emotional control, high-resolution imagery training, resiliency, and focus control. She is clear about not being a licensed clinician. "The focus of my practice is taking people from good to great," she says. "I do not diagnose and treat any type of psychological disorders. I only address performance-related issues such as competition-related anxiety and performance-related emotional control." Kline has transferred the athlete curriculum and designed custom programs for individuals and groups for weight loss, academics and any level fitness goals. She works either one on one, in small groups, or in a larger group seminar format. "I am passionate about teaching athletes and students how to achieve mental toughness, so they can perform their best when it matters most," says Kline.



Sheryl Kline Photo provided

Brokerage sales associates worldwide. Since Fitzpatrick joined Coldwell Banker in 2007 she has been a top agent in the Lamorinda area. She lives in Moraga, where she is actively involved in her children's schools and athletic programs. This year Fitzpatrick is a premier sponsor of the following school and community organizations: Moraga Education Foundation, Moraga Juniors, the Moraga Baseball Association and the Moraga Ranch. Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage's Orinda office is located at 5 Moraga Way. Fitzpatrick may be reached directly at (925) 872-4660 or at lana.fitzpatrick@camoves.com.

News from the Three Chambers of Commerce Lafayette

The Entrepreneur's Club will be taking a "Road Trip" for its monthly meeting at 8:30 a.m. Thursday, June 18 at Merrill Gardens, 1010 Second Street. Parking is available in the underground garage in the retail parking spaces. This month's speaker is Grant Stubblefield of Neighborhood Computers. He will provide an open lecture and discussion about the best IT practices for your home or office computer regarding security, backup, and syncing.

Rock the Plaza continues on Friday, June 19 with The Accents at Lafayette's Plaza Park. The free show starts at 6:30 p.m. with food and beverages available courtesy of the Lafayette Rotary Club, or you can pack a picnic. Sponsors of Rock the Plaza include Red House Studios, Minuteman Press, Walnut Creek Magazine, the City of Lafayette and the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce. The Lamorinda Teen Idol Finalists will perform June 26.

June Mixer at Bonehead's Texas BBQ starting at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, June 24, at 3422 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Moraga

Chamber mixer starting at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, June 23 in the lobby of the Moraga Executive Plaza located at 346 Rheem Blvd., Moraga. Non-members interested in joining the Chamber are welcome.

Orinda

Breakfast mixer and brief annual report presentation from 8:30 to 10 a.m. Tuesday, June 23 at Shelby's, 2 Orinda Theatre Square. Current and potential members and residents are welcome. Cost: \$10. For reservations for the continental breakfast, visit www.orindachamber.org or call (925) 254-3909.

If you have a business brief to share, please contact **Sophie Braccini** at sophie@lamorindaweekly.com

Fitzpatrick Earns President's Circle Status

Lana Fitzpatrick of Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage's Orinda office has earned status in the Coldwell Banker International President's Circle, a prestigious honor bestowed upon the top Coldwell Banker Residential



Lana Fitzpatrick Photo provided

Orinda

Orr Appointed Orinda's New Mayor

Council seeks applications to fill midterm vacancy



Dean Orr Photo Ohlen Alexander

The Orinda City Council at its June 2 meeting appointed Dean Orr as mayor to fill the vacancy created when Steve Glazer resigned from his council seat May 28 in order to be sworn in to his first term with the California Senate. Orr was elected to a four-year term in November 2010, and was re-elected in 2014 to serve a second term on the city council. He will serve as mayor through December 2015.

The council also decided to seek applications to fill the

midterm vacancy created by Glazer's departure, instead of holding a special election. The appointee needs to be a resident of the city of Orinda who is at least 18 years old, and the application requires the filing of a Statement of Economic Interest Form (form 700) for calendar year 2014. Applications and supplemental materials will be made public after the application deadline. For more information, see "Applications for City Council Vacancy Available" on page A6. *J. Wake*

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