

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.

Rotary Club of Moraga Gives Christmas Stockings to Children at County Juvenile Hall

Submitted by Gary Irwin



Moraga Rotarians, spouses and friends in the Christmas stocking stuffing line, foreground, from left: Frank May, Mary Caburi, Pam Reneau, Tony Schoemehl, Al Simonsen, Herb Wehmeyer, Ron Mucovich, Rich Render, Kevin Reneau, and president Roger Gregory. Photos Carol Irwin

On Christmas Eve, 170 gift-filled and decorated stockings prepared and contributed by Rotary Club of Moraga were distributed to children confined at the county juvenile hall. The stockings were filled with presents such as candy, a pair of socks, a deck of cards, puzzle books, soaps, shampoos and other cosmetics.

This is the 19th year that Moraga Rotary has provided these stockings, which were cut and sewn by Moraga Rotarians, spouses and friends, and girls at Juvenile Hall participated in the dec-

orating of the stockings with original designs in glitter glue. In previous years, Rotary provided about 280-300 stockings each year, but was pleased to find that fewer children are confined this year.

Rotary Club of Moraga is a local service club within Rotary International, one of about 33,000 Rotary Clubs in about 200 countries. Regular meetings are held on most Tuesdays at the Soda Center at Saint Mary's College. For information, call Frank May at (925) 376-8195, or check out moragarotary.org.



Moraga Rotarians, spouses and friends relax after stuffing gifts into the Christmas stockings to be given to children at the county juvenile hall.

Gifts Collected for Foster Children

Submitted by Steve Maita



Photo provided

The Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage Orinda office geared up for its annual "Adopt-an-Angel!" Sales Associate Gift Drive, benefitting Contra Costa County foster children.

The office collected gifts for over 70 local foster kids ranging in age from 6 to 18. Tracey Fordahl, marketing coordinator at the Orinda office, is pictured with the gifts.

Share Your Celebrations and Remembrances

If you would like to share an announcement about a special event or achievement, such as a wedding, engagement, scholarship or graduation of a local resident, or about a special person from Lamorinda who has passed, send a photo along with your text (up to 250 words) to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com, and include "Celebrations and Remembrances" in the subject line.

Garden Club Members Share the Spirit of the Season

Submitted by Karin Biasotti



Moraga Garden Club members, from left: Elaine Frazel, Jane Magnani, Linda Foley, president Ginny Ruble, Karen Chin and Ginger Thompson. Photo Ute Kelly

The holiday spirit was in the air at the Moraga Garden Club's annual holiday luncheon Dec. 17 at Diablo Country Club, where guests were treated to a flower arranging demonstration by Baylor Chapman, owner of Lila B Design of San Francisco and author of "The Plant Recipe Book," whose creations were raffled off to lucky winners. The luncheon tables were decorated with beautiful centerpieces, each unique and made by Garden Club members.



Jane Magnani, winner of one of Baylor Chapman's flower arrangements.

Orinda Academy Service Projects Benefit the Community

Submitted by Laura Turnbull



Smiles abounded following a successful Orinda Academy toy drive

Photos provided



Orinda Academy Environmental Science teacher Vicky Guarracino led students on a field trip Dec. 17 hosted by the East Bay Municipal Utility District to plant trees to help restore and rehabilitate the watershed.

the film "Girl Rising." Dylan explains, "To us a bottle is a piece of trash. To a girl in the developing world, money earned from recycling that single bottle can mean a step towards a brighter future."

The Orinda Academy Community Action Club conducted a shoe drive, collecting 108 pairs of shoes to benefit Soles4Souls (soles4souls.org), a global nonprofit that provides shoes for people in need in 127 countries. The club also collected 156 toys and \$160 in cash donations for the Central American Refugee Committee (CRECE). The toys will be distributed to children of refugee families from Central American countries living in Oakland.

On Dec. 17, Environmental Science teacher Vicky Guarracino led students on a field trip hosted by the East Bay Municipal Utility District where students planted buckeye and willow trees to help restore former pasturelands and rehabilitate the watershed along a creek. Freshman Emma summed up the experience: "It's so cool because we are actually helping to create a habitat and restoring it for animals that couldn't live there before." Freshman Alex added, "And we got to keep a cow skull that we found!"

On the last day of school before the holiday break, students and staff members created handmade holiday cards and baked and decorated cookies and delivered them to residents of the Orinda Rehabilitation and Convalescent Hospital, just down the street from the school. Students and staff visited with residents and had a great time delivering goodies. Sophomore Joseph enthused, "It was great! It just makes me feel so good. It really wasn't much, but sometimes the littlest things can really make someone's day."

"I'm so proud of our students, and in particular, (of) their initiative and hard work," said Ron Graydon, head of school. "All of this charitable work is organized and carried out by students. There is such a strong spirit of giving and caring about others among our students and their families here at Orinda Academy. Their energy and hard work is really impressive."

Students and staff of Orinda Academy have demonstrated the spirit of the holiday season by participating in several service projects and activities during the months of November and December.

In November, students and staff donated non-perishable food items and filled large bins with 395 pounds of food donations and \$210 in cash that will benefit families in need in Contra Costa County. The food will be distributed by the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano.

For a community service project to benefit The Malala Fund (www.malala.org), a nonprofit established by Nobel Laureate Malala Yousafzai, Orinda Academy senior Dylan created a bottle drive, Nickels4Knowledge (www.nickels4knowledge.org), which benefits organizations that provide educational opportunities for girls. Each bottle collected throughout the school year represents a nickel for the organization, and has netted \$80 to date. Dylan was inspired to create this project after watching