

Lafayette's Way Side Inn Hosts Operation School Bell Celebration

By Cathy Tyson



Veronica Grant, President of Assistance League of Diablo Valley and a volunteer outside of the Wayside Inn Thrift Shop. Photos Cathy Tyson

What started in 1994 by providing 67 students with clothing in the Walnut Creek School District has blossomed, and has served an astonishing 50,000 students over the past 49 years, all through the hard work and dedication of the many volunteers of the Assistance League of Diablo Valley through their signature Operation School Bell program.

OSB is epic recycling at its finest: Donated items don't end up in landfills, but are resold for cash which goes toward clothing needy children in Contra Costa County.

Celebrating this milestone at a recent event in front of the Lafayette's Way Side Inn Thrift Shop, President Veronica Grant explained that money raised to support OSB and their other philanthropic efforts is due to the "undeniable shopping skills, generous donors and countless volunteers" that give their time and resources to the cause.

Ground zero for donations and sales, the historical Way Side Inn, adjacent to the Park Theater, was originally a grist mill constructed in 1853. It later morphed into a hotel and tavern, and was ultimately purchased by the Assistance League in 1978 for \$120,000.

The Assistance League of

Diablo Valley is just one of 120 chapters of the Assistance League, a national nonprofit organization that puts caring and commitment into action. The local Diablo Valley chapter serves 49 schools in five school districts through OSB.

Christina Bowman, principal of El Monte Elementary School in Concord, spoke about what OSB means from a recipient's perspective. With just under 500 kids, her school has 65 percent of its students eligible for free and reduced price lunches and 40 percent of the kids speak Spanish at home.

In the surrounding neighborhoods, "parents are struggling just to pay rent, buy gasoline to get to work and to put food on the table. That doesn't leave a lot for clothing" said Bowman.

School uniforms have made a huge difference, said the principal, explaining that since the uniform policy has started, the entire student body's scores have improved along with conduct.

She recently met with a new family with three kids that was registering for school and could see the look of panic when the mom heard about the uniform requirement. OSB came to the rescue, the students were fit with uniforms on the spot, some other necessi-

ties and even given a gift card for shoes. "The mom left with a smile on her face," Bowman said.

Assemblywoman Susan Bonilla also addressed the gathering, praising the kindness of volunteers who care for children in a practical, meaningful way, creating a ripple effect of giving.

Perched near the apple juice and brownies were two of the hardest working puppets in town: Melody James and Renaldo Rodriguez, along with their wrangler and voice, vice president of public relations Linda Patton.

The trio visit kindergarten through third grade classrooms eight times per month to talk about things that may be bothering the students. The current topic of discussion is bullying. Puppets are provided through the "Kids on the Block" program to the Assistance League.

In addition to OSB, other efforts funded by the Way Side Inn shop include college scholarships for young adults, food donations, baby bags for infants at risk, emergency clothing to survivors of assault, and more. To learn more about the Assistance League of Diablo Valley and the popular Way Side Inn Thrift Shop, visit their website at diablovalley.assistance-league.org.

Summer @ Saklan Your passport to the world!



LEARNING • LANGUAGE • LAUGHTER
Culture, Language, and Summer Fun! AGES 3-11 SAKLAN.ORG

The Writing Studio A Camp for Young Writers

June 13-July 1
July 5-August 5

Join **CAMP YOUNG WRITERS** this summer as your children enter a world of **CREATIVE NARRATIVE** and **ABSORBING ESSAY-BASED WRITING PROJECTS**. Through grade appropriate classes and one-on-one sessions, students learn proper sentence structure, the elements of well-written essays, creative use of descriptive words, correct grammar, usage, and so much more.

CAMP YOUNG WRITERS is open to students in grades 3-12 who strive to improve their writing skills. Projects consist of first person narratives, historical biographies and literature analyses. Our camps will take place **June 13-July 1** and **July 5-August 5**; sessions will be held three days per week, 2-5 pm.

For further information, please call **925-385-0211** or visit us at www.lafayettewritingstudio.com.



THE WRITING STUDIO
Where Words Come to Life

3455 Golden Gate Way, Suite A, Lafayette (925) 385-0211

GET AHEAD IN MATH THIS YEAR



WHEN MATH MAKES SENSE, YOU SUCCEED!

MATHNASIUM
The Math Learning Center

GRADES K-12

Pre-Algebra • Algebra 1 & 2 • Geometry
Pre-Calculus & Calculus
SAT/ACT Preparatory
Individualized Instruction

HOMEWORK HELP FOR ALL LEVELS

Flat Monthly Fee

Drop-in any time, no scheduling needed!

1 WEEK FREE TUTORING & HOMEWORK HELP

Must present coupon. New students only.

3435 Mt. Diablo Boulevard, Lafayette
(Golden Gate Way at Mt. Diablo Blvd.)
(925) 283-4200 www.mathnasium.com

Do Students Need a Business Education in College for a Career in Business?

By Elizabeth LaScala PhD

Each year thousands of college-bound high school seniors apply to college with an interest in pursuing careers in business. However, there is no "standard preparation" for a business career. Whether the student is interested in consulting, finance, human resource management, marketing or one of the many other areas of the business enterprise, a liberal arts education will often do nicely, provided that students choose their classes wisely to develop competency in accounting, economics, statistics, communications and leadership.

Skidmore College in New York is an excellent liberal arts college which allows students to combine a business major with a second liberal arts major, including economics, government or one of three foreign languages (French, German or Spanish). Skidmore also offers a business minor. With 2,600 undergraduates, Skidmore is neither too small nor too large to offer personalized attention, and has an 83 percent four-year graduation rate, about the same as more selective institutions. Skidmore is also a member of the Liberal Arts Career Network (<http://liberalartscareers.org/about-us/consortium-member-schools/>) a consortium of 37 selective liberal arts colleges that share job and internship postings, including many positions in business.

Bucknell University in Pennsylvania is a larger liberal arts college with around 3,600 under-

graduates that also offers an excellent business program. Bucknell grants traditional as well unique bachelor's degrees in business, including a major in markets, innovation and design and a five-year program in management and engineering. Nearly 90 percent of Bucknell students who enter as freshmen graduate on time. The university also has very loyal alumni. More than 30 percent contribute to the school each year.

Babson College in Massachusetts is a smaller school (around 2,000 undergraduates) with a focus on entrepreneurial thinking within all of the business disciplines, and also offers half of the education curriculum in the liberal arts, making it an especially well-balance college for students who wish to major in business but not let go of a liberal arts component. Babson's curriculum is a blend of traditional classes combined with problem-solving exercises in how to launch a small business (profits going to charity) and consult on projects with clients. Internships begin as early as the freshman year. Money Magazine rated Babson the second-best college in the country in its most recent college rankings. Over 80 percent of the students who enter Babson as freshmen graduate within four years, and nearly 10 percent of the graduates in the Class of 2015 had started their own firms before or shortly after they had completed their degrees.

... continued on page B8

Is this too young to go to Cal?



Actually, it's just the right age to get an eye exam at the University of California Eye Center. And again at three years. And regularly after that. (We developed ways to test kids' eyes while they play!) We're part of the UC School of Optometry, and offer you LASIK surgery, contact lenses, and an Eyewear Center with a vast collection of designer frames, too. We take most insurance plans, and major credit cards. It's time for your whole family to go Cal!



Open to the Public 7 Days a Week • www.caleyecare.com
510.642.2020