

# Let the Children Live! Gala Will Aid Efforts to Help Colombian Youth

By Sophie Braccini



Let the Children Live! founder Father Peter Walters with two of the hundreds of children he and his group serve. Photo provided

There are defining moments in life, when chance meets destiny and forever alters someone's future.

In 1982 Peter Walters was traveling on the cheap like many students. At some point he found himself in Colombia, completely out of money for the two weeks he had to wait until his return flight to his native England. Street children who were begging for bread understood his situation and "adopted" him until he left. The young man, who was to be ordained an Anglican priest, was forever changed by these two weeks, and has since devoted his life to the welfare of Colombian children.

Father Peter, as he is now known, has a family in Lamorinda, a brother, sister-in-law and nieces. With friends, they have organized a gala around the time Father Peter will be with them for Thanksgiving. The community is invited to hear to stories and participate in good deeds.

Margaret Walters from Orinda and her friend Margaret Scheving from Lafayette are the two driving forces of the Let The Children Live! Gala that will take place from 7 to 10 p.m. on Nov. 19 at the Hacienda de las Flores in Moraga. Walters describes the mission of Let the Children Live! (Viven Los Niños) 501C-3 organization as helping to protect and educate the children most at risk in Medellin, Colombia. A house that was purchased there in 1994 is a day center for the children when they are not in school. In Colombia, some kids go to school in the morning, others in the afternoon. In the center they are kept away from the streets, the drug dealing and the gangs, they are fed, they get homework help, English instruction, participation in a very successful choir, and other activities. The foundation's second building is a residential home for children who have no other option.

"The foundation also pro-

vides support to special education children and to teenage moms," adds Walters. She explains that the education provided at the foundation is not religious, but may have Catholic undertones, as Father Peter was ordained a Roman Catholic priest after a few years in the country.

"He is absolutely not dogmatic," adds Walters. "He and his group do what has to be done in a pragmatic way." Over the years many children have been given a better future.

The gala will be a free event to come, listen to the music by the Bentley choir, to enjoy dancing — swing dancing instruction will be offered — to sip Captain's Vineyards wine, to taste the food offered by Lamorinda Catering (Roos Pal), and hopefully to contribute to the cause of the Columbian children.

"There will be many different ways to donate for the cause," says Walters. "People can buy a \$15 card that will feed a child in the day program for a week, they can purchase a \$12 back-to-school kit, or contribute to the uniforms and shoes the children need to go to school." She adds that the list of needs is very long, such as the construction of an elevator for the special-ed children or the acquisition of a piano for the music program.

During the evening of Nov. 19, Father Peter will make a presentation about his program and will respond to questions. More information about the foundation can be found online at <http://letthechildrenlive.us/>. People can R.S.V.P. at [mscheving@yahoo.com](mailto:mscheving@yahoo.com).

## College Bound

# What's Your Major? Be Ready to Answer

By Elizabeth LaScala

Thousands of high school seniors cruise through college applications, completing basic contact information, high school coursework and grades, test scores and activities without a hitch. But these same students often cringe when asked "Indicate Your Major."

Although some students know exactly what they want to study in college, many, even most, 17-year-olds are uncertain. For the adults reading this article, I ask you, did you know exactly what you wanted to do in life when you were 17?

For many students, the easiest and often the first choice that appeals to them on the list of college major options is "undeclared." There are at least two major reasons why that is often not the best selection to make.

Limited Availability. Students may not realize that "undeclared" is considered a major, and as such there is a limited number of seats to offer an incoming class. In addition, if a student weighs in as "undecided," some colleges may use one of their most rigorous majors to assess the strength of a student's application.

College Essays. For many students the question of what major to select arises when they are writing essays for colleges. Many colleges ask students questions like "Why did you select the major you did and why do you want to study that subject at our college?" One popular east coast college asks applicants the following questions: "What academic areas seem to fit your interests or goals most comfortably? Why do these areas appeal to you?" You can list up to three subjects and you have 100 words to respond. A cinch, right? Not if you do not have a well-thought-out response.

Many of my clients are uncertain about what major they wish to pursue in college. Since

I know these types of essay questions come up when students apply to colleges, we prepare well before the application cycle begins by exploring areas of interest. But what should the many seniors do who are grappling with the question and have not prepared for it? For them, I recommend two fairly straight-forward strategies:

1.) Take a different approach to thinking about a major. Is there a class you would really like to take as you explore the freshman curriculum at a college? There are many introductory courses to choose from—Romantic Poetry through the Ages (English department); Bringing Out Your Inner Picasso! (art department), Making Important Business Decisions (business department) and The Physics of Sports (physics department). Read the course descriptions and choose one that really appeals to you. Then choose that department as your major. This approach allows you to test an academic direction early enough in your college career to change course, and also gives you some foundation upon which to answer those pesky essay questions. At the overwhelming majority of colleges, changing your major is as easy as completing a simple form and 80 percent of students change their major at least once in their college careers.

2.) Explore the many resources available to think about what major you would like to pursue in college. For example, "The Book of Majors 2017" ([www.amazon.com/Book-Majors-2017-College-Board/dp/145730774X](http://www.amazon.com/Book-Majors-2017-College-Board/dp/145730774X) edition) can help you answer questions like: What's the major for me? Where can I study it? What can I do with it after graduation?

"The Book of Majors" is revised every year, and is the most comprehensive guide to college

majors that I have found on the market. It offers in-depth descriptions of 200 of the most popular majors, and the 2017 edition covers every college major identified by the U.S. Department of Education — over 1,200 majors in all. This guide also shows what degree levels each college offers in a major: a certificate, associate degree, bachelor's, master's or doctorate. The guide also features insights from the professors themselves on how each major is taught, what preparation students will need for a particular major, and other majors to consider that share some commonalities. There is updated information on career options and employment prospects.

Applying to college includes careful planning, organization, research and lots of self-assessment. The process from start to finish involves many challenges that can and should be viewed as opportunities to mature, thus laying the foundation for success in college and beyond.



Elizabeth LaScala, PhD, brings decades of admissions expertise to personally guide each student through applying to well-matched colleges, making each step more manageable and less stressful. She has placed hundreds of students in the most prestigious colleges and universities in the U.S. Reach her at (925) 385-0562 (office) or (925) 330-8801 (mobile), or online at [www.doingcollege.com](http://www.doingcollege.com) or [Elizabeth@doingcollege.com](mailto:Elizabeth@doingcollege.com).

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