

Orinda/Moraga Girl Scout Camporee a screaming success

Submitted by Yuka Akera

Ambassador Girl Scout Troop 30072 from Campolindo High School in Moraga planned an amazing event last May filled not only with songs, but also hikes, knots, necklaces, friendship bracelets, games, sit-upons, skits and s'mores around the campfire at Twin Canyons Girl Scout camp in Lafayette, where 150 Girl Scouts gathered for the 2017 Camporee. The event included girls from kindergarten through 12th grade. Senior Troop 31361 from Moraga and Cadette Troop 31339 from Orinda helped execute the event.

Co-leader of Troop 30072, Lori Sherman, said, "It was heartwarming to see girls of all ages come together – learning and playing. The goal of our event was to inspire and teach younger girls encouraging them to continue through Girl Scouts even when other activities yearn to consume

more of their time. We were very proud of our event. I'm humbled by my amazing nine girls who planned the Camporee

which is their legacy to our community as they leave and head off to the next chapter of their lives – college!"



2017 Girl Scout Camporee

Photo provided

Peter Pan Foundation donates \$15K to UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland

Submitted by Lisa Rodriguez



Front row, from left: Matthew Shieh, Kisakye Naiga, PPF Founder and Director Leslie Noel, Sadie Poole, Dr. Joe Torkildson, Michelle Hannigan, Lisa Rodriguez; back row: Svend Ryge, Devon Ashburn, Juliette Benazra, Evan Mirabella, Bailey Barnard, Nadya Jatoft, Lizzy Obrand, Veronica Van Avermaete, Jordan Ben-Shmuel, Hannah Hoffman, Megan Burgess, Garrett Hannigan, Josh Christian, Maddie Cortright, Maggie Kennedy, Izzy Annunciation, Zoe Papadopoulos

Photo David VanAvermaete

The Lafayette-based Peter Pan Foundation, an inspiring nonprofit helping others through music and theater, donated \$15,000 Aug. 14 to UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland during a performance at the hospital. The donation will help fund a vibrant waiting room remodel, Child Life Services programs, the Artfelt Memories bereavement support group, stress relief coloring book pages, and ongoing pediatric HIV/AIDS psychosocial support.

"Helping young hearts to fly is so much more than just our slogan at the Peter Pan Foundation. It represents our mission to provide the young – and the young at heart – an enthusiastic environment in which participants are inspired to discover and develop their creative talents, while also teaching

them important lessons about their responsibility to take care of themselves and others," said Leslie Noel, founder and director of the Peter Pan Foundation. "This donation was made possible by the love, laughter, talent, and hard work of our performers, and we couldn't be more pleased to be helping our friends at UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital."

The Peter Pan Foundation exists to inspire children of all ages to reach their full potential by encouraging confidence, character, and creativity through music and theater, while instilling the value and benefits of community outreach. For more information about the foundation, visit www.peterpan-foundation.org.

Children's Health Guild gala a huge success

Submitted by Libby Dafferner



Photo provided

The Children's Health Guild, a nonprofit comprised of approximately 50 talented and passionate women almost exclusively from Lamorinda, and dedicated to improving the quality of and access to pediatric medical care in the East Bay raised over \$410,000 for its beneficiaries, UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland and George Mark Children's House at its recent June gala, "A Guilded Evening of Giving," at the Diablo Valley Country Club. Event Chairs, Kristina Barnes and Michelle Berolzheimer (pictured), did an outstanding job creating a beautiful, memorable and successful event. The money raised will help the guild's beneficiary organizations provide the full circle of medical care for children and their families, including emergency and ongoing treatment as well as transitional, respite and palliative care.

Cookie and lemonade profits go to two good causes

Submitted by Suzanne Jones



Photo provided

Seventh-grade Moragans Alessandro Paolieri (left) and Dean Elia (right), and fifth-grader MarcAnthony Paolieri (center), held their third biennial lemonade-and-cookie fundraiser Aug. 17 on Bollinger Canyon Road. This time they chose to work on the problem of homelessness, and are supporting Dreamcatcher Youth Services, one of very few East Bay homeless shelters that focus specifically on helping homeless adolescents, and the East Bay SPCA, which finds homes and provides veterinary care to thousands of homeless animals each year. Once again, their homemade lemonade and cookies were a success, raising \$132 to be divided between the two charities.

For information about these organizations, visit www.alamedafs.org/dreamcatcher or www.eastbayspca.org.

Moraga Rotary kicks off a community endeavor to help orphans in Sierra Leone

By Kara Navolio



Dianne Wilson of Moraga Rotary receives a \$121,000 check from Dave Kemnitz of Clunkers4Charity to jumpstart the club's fundraising to build an orphanage in Sierra Leone.

Photo Kara Navolio

During Sierra Leone's civil war, when he was 15 years old, rebels attacked Bambay Sawaneh's small West African village and demanded money and information; they rounded up all the young men and cut off their hands if they refused or remained silent. Sawaneh was the only young man to survive that day, losing both hands to rebels, but instead of turning to anger and revenge, he made it his life's work to help others; he now cares for 24 children orphaned by the 2014 Ebola crisis.

Approximately 50 people filled a meeting room at Saint Mary's College Aug. 8 to hear the story about this man and to learn about the Moraga Rotary Club's goal to build an orphanage in Sierra Leone for the many children orphaned during the Ebola crisis.

The Moraga Rotary has brought together many organizations, all working to help each other make building this orphanage a reality.

FC Seattle Sierra Leone, a nonprofit whose original mission was to provide soccer balls to the children of Sierra Leone, increased its presence and the scope of its mission after the Ebola crisis and has partnered with Sawaneh to help him care for the most vulnerable of the orphans, the ones without any distant relatives to take them in. FC Seattle Sierra Leone director Becky Baker presented a slide show of the orphans and told Sawaneh's story at the Aug. 8 meeting.

Dave Kemnitz with Clunkers4Charity who is also a member of the Clayton Valley Concord Sunrise Rotary Club presented a \$121,000 check at the event. An anonymous donor gave the organization a used motor home that Kemnitz reconditioned and sold with all the proceeds going toward the Moraga club's orphanage project.

Also in attendance was Michael Mendonça, a member of the Pleasant Hill Rotary Club and co-founder of the Ellen Meadows Prosthetic Hand Foundation. The nonprofit's mission is providing prosthetic hands to people all over the world, mostly in developing countries without access to quality healthcare. Mendonça is the previous co-owner of a plastic injection molding company who was commissioned by Ernie Meadows to help make the grips on the fingers of the plastic hands he invented. Meadows, an engineer, was inspired to make the hands after losing his daughter in a car accident. Mendonça had the technology for the grips and together with Meadows the first prosthesis was created by the partnership.

Mendonça eventually took over production and made improvements to the design. He now runs the 501c3 and thus far has provided over 31,000 hands to people in 79 countries completely free of charge. His biggest challenge is finding the individuals in need of the hands and dispensing outlets in those countries. The hands are so easy to use that a person who has been an amputee for years can learn to write again in 15 minutes.

To top off the evening meeting, Mendonça presented a set of prosthetic hands to Baker to give to Sawaneh on her next trip to Sierra Leone.

The club's fundraising efforts for the new orphanage and to help FC Seattle Sierra Leone send additional children from surrounding villages to school are ongoing. "Our goal is \$275,000 and they plan to break ground this time next year," said Moraga Rotary member Dianne Wilson.

To learn more, visit www.LN-4.org, www.fcseattlesierraleone.com, www.clunkers4charity.org, or www.moragarotary.com.

Troop 234 honors four new Eagle Scouts

Submitted by Julie Carlson



From left: Matthew LoPresti, Nathan Carlson, Bryce Henderson and Andrew Holloway

Photo provided

Boy Scout Troop 234 of Moraga on June 3 honored four Scouts who achieved the rank of Eagle Scout at a national Eagle Court of Honor held at St. Monica Catholic Church.

Nathan Carlson, Bryce Henderson, Andrew Holloway, and Matthew LoPresti, completed projects that benefitted a number of schools in Moraga.

Carlson replaced grass with drought-resistant plants and other low-water land-

scaping at Los Perales Elementary School; Henderson painted colorful and developmentally appropriate shapes and games on the blacktop at Camino Pablo Elementary School; Holloway constructed a new long jump course in the volleyball court at Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School; and LoPresti constructed two string bass racks for the Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School music department.