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Orinda Woman's Club assists students and former foster children

By Sora O'Doherty

The Orinda Woman's Club on May 29 awarded education grants of \$1,250 each to Miramonte students Janet Lee and Sienna Marley. The club has awarded a number of additional scholarships to assist former foster children and students, including \$7,500, composing six grants of \$1,250, to the Independent Living Skills Program under VESTIA (Volunteer and Emergency Services Team in Action), an organization that supports former foster students as they pursue further education. They try to keep these young persons nourished both physically and emotionally, according to OWC representative Betty Brotherton.

VESTIA was established in 1985 as a nonprofit organization devoted to serving individuals and families receiving benefits from Contra Costa County's Employment and Human Services Department. VESTIA is committed to helping graduating high school students in Contra Costa County realize their dreams of college by providing scholarships through its Foster Youth Scholarships Program. VESTIA offers numerous scholarships each year totaling \$15,000-\$20,000 to foster youth graduating through the ILSP.

OWC has made two additional grants this year to two organizations that each received \$12,000 from the club: Pillars of Hope, with a goal to stop human trafficking, and Berkeley Hope Scholars, which helps former foster children and emancipated minors with meals, dental care and other such needs.

OWC is a nonprofit, community-based organization founded in 1953 that provides service both locally and worldwide and encourages the development of friendship and leadership. Membership is not limited to Orinda residents but includes residents of the San Francisco East Bay area, including Lamorinda, Walnut Creek and Oakland.

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