

# Team Laura roots for a Moraga mother fighting for life

By Sophie Braccini



Team Laura gathers at Moraga Commons in support of Laura Cryan Zellmer's fight against cystic fibrosis.

Photo Sophie Braccini

Laura Cryan Zellmer has not had it easy. The almost 45-year-old Moraga mom has a whole team of family and friends rooting for her and supporting her years-long fight against cystic fibrosis. Lamorinda Weekly wrote about the movie she made in 2014 to tell her story to her son Everett, who was then 6. The paper also featured a story about the 2016 lung transplant that had given Cyran Zellmer a new lease on life. Now, as Cryan Zellmer awaits a new transplant at UCSF because her transplant lungs were rejected by her body, an entire community is rallying around her to bring her love, hope and to raise money for a foundation the Zellmers started to support those not as fortunate as themselves.

When Jamie Rubin, a friend and part of Team Laura, talks about Cryan Zellmer, the first thing she mentions is her smile and her infectious laugh. Rubin describes a warm and engaging woman, appreciating the beauty in life, taking time for others, and who never has anything negative to say. Rubin was raised in Moraga, as was Cryan Zellmer, and they became friends when their children found themselves in the same class. She says that she is part of an 11-person group that along with the family that also lives locally has been taking turns visiting Cryan Zellmer in the hospital and starting the Team Laura campaign, which became viral.

Cryan Zellmer had two good

years with her new lungs but last summer doctors found that her lung function was decreasing rapidly. By Labor Day she had to be on oxygen 24/7. It was diagnosed that the cause was Chronic Rejection, which means that the lungs are failing and there is no other cure than a new transplant. According to her husband's posts, the decline has been very fast and she is now in the hospital and everyday everything is much harder. He noted, "Our relief will come at someone else's loss."

The Zellmers started a non-profit to support families affected by cystic fibrosis who are additionally impacted by a lack of financial means that make it difficult to get adequate treatment. For example, the Zellmers will have to live for three months in San Francisco close to UCSF after the operation for Cryan Zellmer to get the follow-up care she will need. Cryan Zellmer feels that she is fortunate enough to have the needed support, but that it is not the case for everyone.

Team Laura designed a T-shirt with the help of Teddy Yuen (a Moraga man himself) made by Spoken Cloth that was sold out within a month, allowing the team to raise \$10,476. The team also launched a GoFundMe account to continue to raise money for this foundation. The Los Perales Elementary class where Cryan Zellmer's son, Everett, goes to school started to spread the word. Friends talked

to friends, and supporters from all over the country started posting pictures of themselves wearing the shirt on Team Laura's Facebook page, and sharing touching posts such as, "Please, join me in finding the time and space to pray for our dear sweet Laura Cryan Zellmer. That her body will stay strong and focused on healing, as she waits for the miracle of a second lung transplant."

On Sunday, Oct. 14 the Moraga supporters gathered at the Moraga Commons Park for a group photo. Rubin says that the purpose was to show to Cryan Zellmer the breadth of her local support and to give her strength.

The gathering was impressive. Tens, if not hundreds of Cryan Zellmer's friends of all ages came to the park flooded with warm fall sunlight, in their grey or blue T-shirts showing a pair of lungs, emblazoned with the letter L for Laura. Rubin shared news of Cryan Zellmer who she had seen the day before in the hospital; a friend brought a drone that took a video of the gathering for her.

The other objective of the group was to entice people to sign up to become organ donors themselves. That can be done online at <https://registerme.org/campaign/teamlaura>. Rubin adds that those who want to support Cryan Zellmer can post on the Team Laura's Facebook page as she often goes there to read the posts.

# Annual Art of Mixology benefits LAC



Photo Jennifer Wake

Hundreds of thirsty pleasure seekers attended the Lamorinda Arts Council's fifth annual Art of Mixology fundraiser Oct. 13 at Orinda's Theatre Square, which featured approximately 20 well-known and upcoming East Bay mixologists who came together to offer unique cocktails and vie for the coveted Mixologist of the Year award.

Portia Battistini of Lafayette's The Cooperage American Grille was named Mixologist of the Year for 2017 with her unique beer and bourbon creation entitled "Hops N Apricots," which is now her No. 1 selling drink on her menu. Battistini returned this year to assist her co-worker Patrick Dwyer for the title. "Nothing can beat last year's highlight and how special it was to win while my mom and grandma

happened to be visiting from England. My mom was my barback and my grandma was taking pictures and they got to meet everyone I work with. I just love this event and the community; everyone is so nice and it is local!"

This year's event was made possible thanks to generous donations by Lamorinda Theatres, Republic Services, Alain Pinel Realtors, Diablo Magazine, Orinda Theatre Square, Lafayette Park Hotel, The Fourth Bore, La Piazza, Taverna Pellegrini, Land Home Financial, Edward D. Jang DDS and Associates, Picolli Napoli, Meredith Peterson Homes, Sucherman - Insalaco LLP, Safeway, Spirit-Works, and Compari Brands: Aperol Spitz and SKYY Vodka.

- J. Wake

# Art Moves Project set to present latest artistic work in Lafayette, Oct. 19

Submitted by Christy Mack



Art Moves Project brings new forms of public art to Lafayette by commissioning California artists and choreographers from varying disciplines and backgrounds using exploratory and socially relevant themes. "Encased: Presented" will be installed at Lafayette Plaza Park, at the corner of Golden Gate Way and Mt. Diablo Boulevard in downtown Lafayette.

"Encased: Presented" reflects the collaboration among choreographer Yukie Fujimoto with No Strings Attached Dance Company, musician Marquise Moore and architect Lara Dutto. Their work delves into "What Surrounds You?" The public art installation with dance will be held Friday, Oct. 19 at Lafayette Plaza Park, featuring two free performances at 4:30 and 6:30 p.m.

"We experience the Lafayette Plaza Park with its adjacent traffic intersections and streets as part of the daily routine of living here. This Project provides an intervention into the ordinary with an artistic installation of bold colors, unexpected forms and movement," explained Lara Dutto. "With AMP,

we are creating a shared community experience that can prompt a shift in perception. I'm interested in what this can reveal about our sense of place, ourselves and our surroundings."

Adults and children alike will have the chance to witness the result of this unique Oct. 19 Art Moves Project-led collaboration and will be invited to share their thoughts on "Encased: Presented" by writing on an interactive installation.

"We are thrilled to support AMP through a Kiwanis Club of

Moraga Valley Foundation grant," said Ibis Schlesinger of the foundation. "We are especially intrigued by this project because it brings free outdoor dance performances with art installations to our community, making art here visible and accessible and helping instigate dialogue across all ages."

Art Moves Project is a public art initiative founded by Lafayette residents Yukie Fujimoto, Christy Mack and Lissa Resnick. AMP merges different artistic forms and brings art out of traditional indoor venues to outdoor spaces. AMP is supported by the Lamorinda Arts Council, local foundations and businesses, and many generous private donors. For more information, visit @artmovesproject on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter and [www.lamorindaarts.org/artsin-cubator](http://www.lamorindaarts.org/artsin-cubator).



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