

The foundation's foundation

By Cathy Dausman

Ellen Long has devoted a lifetime to serving her family and community. She's been a preschool teacher and teacher's aide, but she devoted heart and soul – and 34 years of her life – to Rescue One Foundation.

Rescue One Foundation (established 1977) is a non-profit philanthropic organization supporting the Moraga-Orinda Fire District through its purchases of advanced life-saving equipment and supplies not otherwise available through the district's regular budget. Past foundation donations include automated external defibrillators for fire, police and community, CPR training equipment and a Lucas chest compression system, a Stryker power load ambulance cot and an unmanned

aerial vehicle for search and rescue.

Long admits she is “embarrassed about the fuss” her stepping down has caused; she reluctantly agreed to an interview only after realizing it might focus attention anew on Rescue One.

Rescue One President Gordon Nathan calls Long “quiet and unassuming,” but her service years as vice president, secretary, treasurer and current historian tell a different story. Nathan first met Long when his children attended Mulberry Tree Nursery School, where Long taught. “She is a tireless worker and selfless person who loves her community,” he said.

Long counters she is simply one of 11 board members whose numbers include businessmen and women, a doctor and a judge. Although its

members may hold different opinions, Long says the group can always reach a consensus.

Long's story may sound familiar to many Lamorindans. She was raised in San Francisco, attended UC Berkeley, met her husband when he was in law school and started a family. After nine years in Castro Valley the family moved to Moraga. The town was “not booming yet” when the Longs bought their home in 1969. Long joined the Moraga Service League in 1970 and learned about the half hour ambulance wait a member's badly injured husband endured. This precipitated fundraising \$10,000 for a rescue vehicle destined for what was then the Moraga Fire Protection District. Long recalls volunteers, herself included, from many service organizations going door to door to solicit one dollar.

MOFD retired Division Chief Darrell Lee was a young firefighter/paramedic during the 1980s when he met the iconic “Miss Ellie,” Lee says

Long baked apple pies for all three station shifts. “I don't remember how long she did this, but it was at least 15 years,” he said. “She made me one of her pies when I was a captain at Station 41. I assisted their family off-duty and she asked how she could return the favor. I asked, ‘How about the famous baked apple pie?’ She didn't hesitate,” he said. “She was like a mom to the crews always asking about their families,” Lee added.

When it came time for business and Lee was requesting equipment, “Ellen would usu-



Ellen Long

Photo Cathy Dausman

ally look me in the eye and ask if this was something we really needed.”

With a “yes” from Lee, Long promised “you have my vote.” Long's favorite foundation event has always been the semiannual foundation-sponsored MOFD Open House held in Moraga in the spring and Orinda in the fall, and the abundance of and enthusiasm of children attendees.

“They're so excited, and so willing to get involved,” she said.

Long says she feels bad about retiring, but insists the foundation needs “some

young blood.” Asked to create a job description for her replacement, Long lists someone who is enthusiastic, interested in the fire service, willing to commit to a worthwhile cause, has computer literacy and is able to attend evening meetings.

“When Ellen joined the Rescue One board in 1985, we knew we had another community loving, active member,” Nathan said. “The entire board is sad to see her leave, but we all offer our best wishes for a well-deserved retirement.”

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Value by Design: Meeting the interests of the artistic student

By Elizabeth LaScala, PhD

A big obstacle for a student who wishes to study the arts is the widely held belief that a degree in the visual and performing arts will not lead to “real” employment. In fact, just the opposite is true. One need only witness the emergence of iPods, “green fashion,” sustainability design, iPhones and Nintendo Switch Systems to see that proponents of the “Creative Economy” have made some pretty accurate predictions. The look, feel and eco-friendliness of a product, as well as its social and cultural adaptability, are often as important to consumers as what it does. And, as has been the case throughout history, art is a shared experience and thriving cultural centers mean thriving communities.

To produce such products, teamwork between individuals with different backgrounds, such as engineering and graphic design, contributes to what makes an arts-based degree marketable. For the committed student an arts-based education is often quite rewarding, both in terms of employment as well as job satisfaction.

The VPA niche in college

admissions is an area that few students, parents and high school counselors know how to navigate. Artistic-minded students and their families must learn how to research and select the right college fit and prepare for the rigors of completing an arts-based college application. Here are some critical guidelines:

1) Art and design schools offer majors in the visual arts (painting, sculpture, photography, among others) and also design (architecture, graphics design, fashion design, product design) film and animation and combinations with computer science (game design, virtual reality, user-experience design); many schools offer interesting combinations, like creative writing and business or graphics design and environmental sciences.

2) Art and design schools require college-prep academics and weak grades sink applications as they would at any other college. Many schools, including Art Center College of Design (Calif.), Parsons-The New School for Design (N.Y.) and Ringling College of Art and Design (Fla.) are test optional. Some require applicants to choose a major and others, like Savannah College of Art and Design (Ga.), allow students to wait until their sophomore year.

3) Many VPA schools require a portfolio that students submit to showcase their talents. A portfolio is a “visual interview” and pieces are viewed on a computer screen through SlideRoom, a package used by applicants and reviewers. Presentation is as important as the work itself. Poor presentations hurt applicants like grammar and spelling errors do on admissions essays. Students who want to get early, personalized feedback from an admissions rep should Google and make it a point to attend a National Portfolio Day, held several times each year from September through January in major U.S. cities.

4) More selective schools often require or recommend an artist's statement to explain and support the portfolio; this admissions compo-

nent should be taken quite seriously. Two schools, Parsons-The New School for Design (N.Y.) and Rhode Island School of Design, have other requirements, such as asking the applicant to apply an idea or concept to several assigned pieces, often with a supporting essay.

5) The student who seeks an art degree must pay great attention to extracurricular activities. By the end of sophomore year, a student should be involved in institutes, weekend classes, online courses, camps, workshops, performances and festivals, internships and part-time jobs in an arts environment like a museum, if possible. These experiences reveal possible career paths and play an essential role in portfolio preparation or audition.

An excellent way for students and parents to get to know VPA colleges is attending the National Association of College Admission Counselors' VPA college fair, held each year in October (visit www.nacacnet.org).



Elizabeth LaScala, PhD personally guides each student through each step of selecting and applying to well-matched schools for undergraduate and graduate school study. Over the past two decades, Elizabeth has placed hundreds of students in some of the most prestigious colleges and universities in the U.S. The number of clients taken is limited to ensure each applicant has personalized attention. Contact Elizabeth early in the process to make a difference in your outcomes. Write elizabeth@doingcollege.com; Visit www.doingcollege.com; or Call: 925.385.0562.

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Elizabeth LaScala, PhD has over a decade of graduate and professional school admissions expertise. She guides qualified individuals to apply successfully to the most prestigious schools in the US and abroad. Dr. LaScala personally guides each applicant through all writing components, including a strong statement of purpose, activity descriptions, secondaries and supplements. Elizabeth networks with a team of professional consultants in the sciences, engineering, humanities, medicine, business, and law to ensure each applicant has the most up to date information on trends in their field of interest.

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