

# Community gathers to cheer Special Olympics student-athletes

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Acalanes senior Alex Feller has been a great supporter of this event and she brought a personal understanding as to what this event means: "I was in leadership and I volunteered for it as a freshman and volunteered for it every year since then. I have a cousin with Down syndrome. She never got to compete in anything like this and it's great to watch kids be able to compete in these events. My favorite part is the opening ceremony when the athletes walk out there with their teammates and the signs for their schools. They are so excited just to compete whether they win or not."

Ethan Slovick, a student at Stanley Middle School, participated in several events and spoke with great joy about the event: "I had a lot of fun. I did some training with running and throwing the softball and javelin and I got to meet new people." His favorite part of the day? "Running to the finish line."

Carter Tuckerman, also from Stanley, enjoyed the day: "The best part was running super-fast. I met new people and threw the softball and javelin. I had five of my friends here and I like the fans rooting for me."

Gio Garrett, another Stanley student, had a lot of fun participating in the events: "I enjoyed running the races and the long jump. I don't like other sports. I did train a lot. I worked on my jumping on the trampoline. I made a lot of friends and it's just been a great day for me."

Tony Ohlson, the life skills teacher and coach for the Miramonte High School team, brought 12 athletes to Acalanes: "The kids really look forward to the event. We also participate in soccer in the fall, basketball in the winter and this event. The kids love it and in participating, they have a connection with the other athletes."

One of his students, Fox Gerungan, spoke of what it meant: "I am excited about the event. I run track and just love any sport and get to meet other athletes."

Ember Bailey whose sons Tobin (Stanley Middle School) and Jonah (Acalanes) have participated in these meets for years said: "They are confidence boosters for them. They are around their typical peers and their classroom peers and have a lot of fun with it. They talk about it for weeks before it happens. It's a family event for us and it's a very grounding event for the parents. It's just awesome to see the support that the community and the

school brings. They cheer each other on and they make friends from the other schools. It's like a family reunion for the parents as well."

Robyn Dobruck, whose son Sam has Down syndrome and is a first-grader at Burton Valley, very much appreciates the support he gets from his school: "I'm thrilled to see Sam's first grade class here along with his fourth-grade buddies who help the first-graders read and helped train Sam. Sam is just running and responding to the energy here."

It's not just the parents and students that volunteered for this event. Members of the police departments from Lafayette, Pinole, Danville and San Ramon were on hand and gave out the ribbons to all of the athletes.

Acalanes trainer Chris Clark put in a yeoman's effort, spending the entire day over a grill, wearing an apron with the title "The Meat Team" at the Acalanes snack shack, preparing sandwiches for sale to the public: "I've been doing the barbecuing for the last 12 years at this and various other events at Acalanes. I have had different volunteers each year - it's like the passing of the spatula. All of our profits go back into the Special Olympics."

Dick Callahan, who has been the Oakland A's public address announcer for the past 16 years, has been voluntarily serving as the announcer at events like this one for the past 20 years. In explaining so eloquently and emotionally why Special Olympics means so much to him and everyone else who was in attendance in person or in spirit should strike home for everyone: "My answer is, What is not special about Special Olympics? I love what the kids do and how they compete and how the parents take care of them and get them out in the community. It's an amazing thing to watch. People may have restrictions in their lives but you can't tell that when they're competing. They have a heart, a will and a desire and wouldn't it be nice if we all had that. It's been a wonderful experience for me and I love being here."

Roberti spoke highly of how well things were run: "Working with Katherine Walton, who was fantastic, everything ran very smoothly. The kids were hot, but happy. The event gets better and better each year. We are looking forward to returning to Acalanes next year. It's a huge undertaking but it always ends up being a great event with lots of kids and we very much appreciate Acalanes hosting this event."

# Wilder things

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Extensive signage is being planned to clarify the parking situation, and the city agreed to provide robust parking enforcement, as Wilder residents complained about safety and convenience issues surrounding the play fields. Orinda plans to hire four new parking enforcement officers, who will focus largely on the play fields and Wilder Road, especially during evenings and weekends when parking in downtown Orinda is not restricted and the play fields are actively in use. The officers will have the authority to issue citations. In addition, according to city staff, bad behavior by teams who use the play fields can be addressed by better communication of the rules to the teams. Repeated infractions may lead to loss of privileges, according to Director of Parks and Recreation Todd Trimble.

The city council also finalized the extension of the subdivision improvement agreement for Wilder to Dec. 31, 2020. The main reason for the extension is to allow for

the installation of sidewalks. The developer wishes to install the sidewalks as each home is finished, thereby avoiding damage to sidewalks during construction, and the city found that sufficient security exists to cover the installation of the sidewalks should the developer default.

In addition, there are several Wilder-related items on the new draft capital improvement plan for fiscal years 2019-23. These projects include a fix for the acoustic problem at the Art and Garden Center, estimated at about \$70,000, to be funded by the Wilder community maintenance endowment fund, park dedication fund and/or facility preservation fund. Another project to be funded by the Wilder community maintenance endowment fund is the replacement of the grass turf at Wilder field number three. The current fescue grass will be replaced with harder Bermuda grass. An additional parking lot for the Art and Garden Center is added as an unfunded project. The project is not fully planned at this stage.

# Citizen of the Year — Fred Weil

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Cathy Cutler and George Escutiar, representing Assembly Member Rebecca Bauer-Kahan and State Sen. Steve Glazer respectively, likened Weil to "the female lead from 'Oklahoma' - I'm just a girl who can't say no!"

Speeches from friends followed with Dick Olsen commenting, "He is so incredibly and uniquely deserving of this award. Things were not always easy during the times he served on various boards. Doing the

right thing during tough times is a mark of good public service. He was always extremely courteous and treated everyone with respect. He makes us proud to be Moragans." Another longtime friend, Stan Holcenberg, acknowledged, "Fred's greatest accomplishment are his three children. His values and integrity are what makes him special."

Weil's wife said, "I'm very pleased and proud of him. It's great to celebrate good things!" Weil's children and grandchildren prepared a humorously

scripted slideshow spanning over 50 years of his life ending with, "We know we always have your support." Amidst tearful hugs and kisses, Weil approached the podium to say a few words to end the evening.

"I didn't get here on my own. My successes were group successes." Stating that his experiences were priceless, Weil ended with, "Each of us, through volunteering work, can make a difference. Good night and be safe."

## A Stroll Down Restaurant Row

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Diablo Foods featuring itty bitty bakeshoppe*	Philz Coffee	
izzyA's Frozen Custard	Pizza Antica	
	Rancho Cantina	

\* For this event, tastes will be served at JPG@TheBank

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**Info & Tickets: LafayetteChamber.org/Taste**

**Saturday May 11 11am - 3pm**



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**Entertainment Schedule**

11am **Saint Mary's College Band**

12:30pm **The Mundaze**

2pm **School of Rock from San Ramon**  
(Runner up in Teenage Battle of the Bands competition)

**Ongoing Activities**

Classic Cars	<b>Kid Zone</b> (\$5 Unlimited All-Day)
Lamorinda Wines & Cold Beer	Pony Rides
Local Merchants (with Swag)	Jump House, Maze,
Art, Crafts, Jewelry	Basketball Hoops
Assorted Food Trucks	Bay Area Ball Players
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	Face Painting

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