

Published August 21st, 2019

Campolindo Tech Club receives grant from Kiwanis for new equipment

By Vera Kochan



From left: Mark Roberts, Ross Wilson, Alexia Tzortzis, Emily Marston and Ferenc Kovac. Photo Vera Kochan

Many people dream of becoming famous on stage or in front of a camera, but there are those who prefer to remain behind the scenes on the technical side of a production. Such is the case for the Campolindo students enrolled in the Tech Club, an after school volunteer program that began in 2011.

Facility manager of the Campolindo Performing Arts Center, Ross Wilson, first approached Campo's Director of Choral Activities Mark Roberts, who also oversees use of the school's theater, about forming a club that would combine the specialties of audio and video as a learning experience. What began as a program with two students has blossomed into a class size of 25 participants.

"The Tech Club teaches teamwork," Wilson stated. "The older students teach the younger ones, and eventually the main goal is to have experience on the sound board," a piece of equipment that is the heartbeat of any production.

According to Kiwanis member and technical aspect advisor, Ferenc Kovac, who recognized the Tech Club's needs, "Most of the camera equipment, including video cameras, microphones and audio recording equipment are borrowed by Ross from the community and a local college, on a time-available basis."

At their Aug. 15 meeting, Moraga Valley's Kiwanis donated \$3,200 for the club to purchase an industry standard video camera and tripod. On hand for the presentation were Wilson, Roberts and students, junior Alexia Tzortzis and senior Emily Marston.

Both students joined the club because it sounded like it could be a lot of fun and are enthusiastic about everything they've learned. As the older students, they enjoy teaching their skills to the less experienced while taking on the role of mentor.

Marston wants to pursue this in college, while Tzortzis didn't originally, "but the more I do it, the more I want to pursue it."

"As the students become more proficient in their filming skills, there will be more opportunities for our students to go out into the community and help create stories and memories," Kovac explained. "Also, these skills transfer once our students leave the area to make their mark on the world.

"Sam Crossley is a great example of that," he added. "He was one of our very first students to participate in Tech Club. He went on to college where he majored in film. He was on the film team for the movie 'Free Solo,' which won an Academy Award for Best Documentary this year."

"It's a really great program that builds a strong club community for everyone to hang out and laugh," Wilson said, "but when the curtain goes up, it's all business."

Having the capability for a multicamera shoot of events is crucial to the Tech Club, which is available for private events within the community. Ideally, two more cameras are needed for an optimum teaching experience. For more information or to make a donation contact Mark Roberts at: mroberts@auhsdschools.org

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[back](#)

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