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Head coach Paul Thomas with Ayla Zawadski after she signed her letter, with parents Mark and Reigen watching from the table.

Photo provided

## 8-year-old signs letter of intent with SMC women's basketball team

By Jon Kingdon

Whether it's to replace an injured player or add a player to try and improve the team, as a rule, it's only professional teams that can bring on a new player during the season. Once again, the Saint Mary's Gaels have pushed the envelope, in this case with the women's basketball team.

On Feb. 4, at the University Credit Union Pavilion, witnessed by family, friends and the entire women's basketball team, head coach Paul Thomas signed 8-year-old Ayla Zawadski to her official letter

of intent, which also required the signatures of Ayla's parents, Mark and Reigen. Ayla was then presented with her own Gael jersey No. 3 with Ayla on the back. This was all brought together by Team IMPACT, Saint Mary's and the basketball team. Team IMPACT's goal is find children with chronic or life-threatening illnesses and connect them with college athletic teams and the local campus community. Team IMPACT has matched over 2,000 children with more than 700 colleges nationally and 300 throughout California.

Ayla was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes four

years ago, along with celiac disease. According to her father, Mark, it has not slowed Ayla down: "Even with all of this other stuff going on, these devices that she has to put on her body and the things she has to do because of her condition, she still has the goals that she sets for herself that are typical and even above typical. This past year, when she was 7 years old, she had a goal of running four miles ('I did it and I was faster than Daddy and my next goal is six miles,' Ayla interjected).

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Village Associates Welcomes

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**EIK**

## Appellate Court upholds Lafayette's 2016 approval of cabana project

By Pippa Fisher

The city announced a victory in the case heard by the Court of Appeals, filed by a small group of Lafayette residents challenging the approval by the city of a neighbor's cabana construction.

The group alleged that the city had used a biased process in reaching the land-use decision in 2016 by improperly considering the application in closed session, in violation of the Brown Act – an open meeting law designed to ensure transparency in local government – and that they were deprived of a fair hearing due to a potential conflict of interest at the design review and planning commission level.

The California First Appellate District Court upheld the trial court's December 2018 ruling against the plaintiffs. The court did however agree that the city violated the Brown Act but con-

cluded there was no prejudice.

"We are very pleased that the Court of Appeal has affirmed the city of Lafayette's trial court victory in this matter," said Lafayette Mayor Mike Anderson in a Feb. 11 statement. "The city will continue to keep our focus on important issues facing Lafayette."

The litigation stems from the application for a now-completed tennis cabana, which went before the planning commission at four meetings between December 2015 and May 2016. Following the planning commission approval the neighbors appealed to the city council, which considered it at four further meetings. While approval was pending, the applicants' attorney threatened to sue the city if denied. The city attorney notified the council of the litigation threat orally during a July 25, 2016, closed session meeting. Record of this litigation threat was not made pub-

lic, although notes were kept and could be viewed at the planning department if the public knew to ask for them. The court determined, "This availability is illusory if an interested person would not know the question to ask," the court report states.

The plaintiffs were not aware of the threat of litigation until after the project was approved.

The court found that no prejudice resulted from the violation and that it had no impact on the city council's decision. The report reads, "Here, where there is no basis to conclude the closed sessions were themselves improper, where the merits and demerits of the project were exhaustively debated in multiple city council meetings, and where there is no indication of how the plaintiffs would have proceeded differently if they had known of the threat,

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### Dear Lamorinda Weekly reader,

The Lamorinda Weekly website at [www.lamorindaweekly.com](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com) is back with its full function and content. We apologize for any inconvenience it may have caused while we moved our content to a new hosting company. The website had reached a volume that required a different way of hosting.

We also moved our email hosting server which may have interrupted email receiving on our or your end. If you feel as if we have not responded to an email please make sure you have checked your spam folder and please reach out to us with any concerns.

Thank you for understanding.  
Lamorinda Weekly



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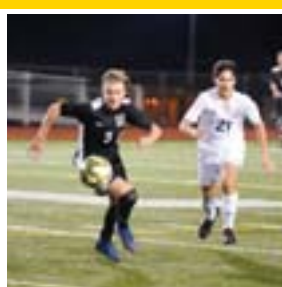
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