



Photo Sora O'Doherty

MidMod is a new concept in shopping in Theatre Square

By Sora O'Doherty

Owner Janell Lamela recounts how she would watch passersby check out her new shop, but not come in, thinking it was an expensive boutique. Then she put a sign up proclaiming that nothing inside cost more than \$40, and suddenly passersby became droppers-in. Lamela, who is also the owner of Doll Face Permanent Cosmetics, had her eye on the vacant premises next door for a while be-

fore launching the new shop, which she calls an "exchange shop." It isn't a consignment store but rather an upmarket thrift shop, selling "quality new and gently used items," including home goods, at reasonable prices, according to Lamela.

Lamela and her husband, a San Francisco police officer, have five children and the oldest, a 23-year-old daughter, is an artist who also works at MidMod three days a week. Two of her children are in

college and her 14-year-old twins are in middle school. The family lives in Danville.

One thing that Lamela is quite excited about is offering a full range of sizes in the shop, from size 0 through size 22. She accepts donations during business hours and by appointment and also shops for bargains to offer in the store. MidMod is open 11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. from Tuesday to Saturday. Appointments can be made by calling (510) 206-0233.

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



Photo provided

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"We are very proud of her for attacking the conditions that she has and for staying strong for who she is and also for just being a child so we give her a lot of credit to that," her father added. "Ayla still has the ability to impact people in a lot of different ways. Team IMPACT has been a very positive influence to us and our family. Through them, we were introduced to the Saint Mary's women's basketball team which has been far and above the best experience we've had as a family and an extended community."

Thomas made it clear how happy he is with the program that brought Ayla to his team and what he is looking forward to from Ayla: "We want to say thank you to Team IMPACT for making something like this happen and working with Saint Mary's College. It's extremely important that both communities work together and to make positive influences on all of our young people. We

like people with positive attitudes, people that like to smile, people that are fun to be around, people that wake up and like to have a good breakfast and whether it's after a tough loss or an exciting win, they're always happy people. Ayla, you really fit that bill and we want to make sure that you continue to do that."

Ayla, who attends Rheem Elementary School and whose favorite basketball players are Stephen Curry and Klay Thompson, likes to play other sports like soccer and swimming and readily accepted the "standards" set by Coach Thomas: "I am happy to be here. I want to thank my coaches and my team. I am glad that I joined this team. It gives me a great opportunity to make new friends."

Ayla's mom, Reigen, was appreciative of everyone that connected Ayla with the team: "We're so grateful for this opportunity. The people that we interacted with through this program have been amazing. The team that we have gotten to know, (assistant coach

Allyson (Fashnicht) and coach Thomas have been great to work with and the team that we hope to continue to get to know. It's been so much fun to go to the practices and the games and most importantly to see the joy and happiness it brings to Ayla. She's my inspiration with what she deals with on a day-to-day basis. Ayla's a very strong individual and this opportunity is only going to make her that much stronger."

Ayla has been very much welcomed, said sophomore forward Sam Simons: "She has brought a lot of energy, heart and toughness to our team and I think it's good to have her as a part of our team to show we're really lucky people and we're able to impact a young person in a great way. She comes to practices and into the locker room before our games. A couple of the girls have gone over to her house for lunch. We have yet to work on her game but that will be upcoming."

Team IMPACT stays involved with the players and the teams, says Pamela Sulli-

van, the West Coast Regional Director for Team IMPACT: "Ayla is going to bring a lot of strength and courage to the team. There is lots of caretaking with a case worker who will track the progress of the young person and they will constantly check with the parents to see how things are going, along with constantly staying in contact with the coach."

Shari Coskey, a board member with Team IMPACT, has a son who has been a match with the University of California men's water polo

team and personally speaks to the benefits of the program: "It's a two-year match, which is the amazing feature of this program. The point of this program is to create life-long relationships. It's been phenomenal for the kids whose confidence grows with this program."

Ayla's influence was quick in coming. Just four days after her official signing, in front of the home crowd, the Gaels defeated the 11th ranked Gonzaga Bulldogs 70-60.

T J Maxx thieves apprehended thanks to teamwork by witnesses

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MPD Det. Kevin Mooney explained that these types of thefts often go to a fence (a buyer of stolen goods) who purchases the merchandise at reduced prices and in turn resells it for a profit, oftentimes

at swap meets or flea markets.

Mooney gratefully acknowledged the witnesses, without whose efforts the suspects would have gotten away. He encourages residents to be vigilant and report anything suspicious to the authorities, but stresses that safety precautions be taken and not to phys-

ically engage with suspects -- leave that to the police. "Be a good witness," Mooney advised. "It helps quite a bit."

MPD asks anyone having any information about this case to please contact Det. Mooney at mooney@moraga.ca.us.

The tent behind Safeway

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Additionally, "The structure will be protected against exterior and interior noise, vibrations and other factors which may tend to make the environment less desirable; the exterior design and appearance of the structure is not of inferior quality as to cause the nature of the neighborhood to materially depreciate in appearance and value; and the structure is in harmony with proposed developments on land in the general area."

According to the staff's analysis report, "As a temporary tent structure, it is not consistent with the quality or character of nearby commercial buildings comprising the remainder of the Moraga Center, and the visible characteristics of its temporary nature (such as the curtain-like walls, exposed metal framing and the generator trailer that provides its lighting) detract from the appearance of the surrounding commercial and residential development in the area."

"Additionally, as it is made

out of vinyl wrapped around a metal frame, the tent will likely not be able to effectively prevent noise from emanating from or entering into the structure and the sound of baseballs and softballs being struck by bats could resonate from within the tent to the surrounding outside.

"Finally, the temporary tent structure is inconsistent with the land use designations and development standards prescribed by the Land Use Element of the Moraga Center Specific Plan as they relate to the mixed-use/residential characteristics of the site and its surrounding area, specifically for commercial uses as prescribed in the Mixed Retail/Residential designation since the subject area is in the town's designated Priority Development Area and slated to house the town's future downtown core featuring a mix of commercial and residential and civic uses in permanent buildings and facilities.

"While staff finds that the tent does not meet the town's design guidelines and therefore should be denied, the request

for temporary placement of the tent through April 30, 2020 creates the possibility to reconsider this request within the current context of the site."

The analysis report also states, "One could argue that since the structure will only be in place through April 30, 2020, it does not materially detract from the quality of the surroundings, most of which are comprised of vacant land, the back sides of some commercial buildings, and an open vehicle storage yard."

Additional points made acknowledge that an otherwise underutilized portion of land could be put to good use by serving as a temporary facility for the area's youth during the winter months providing that the tent's "visual quality will not be allowed to degrade from neglect or exposure to inclement weather during the period that the tent is installed."

This issue of Lamorinda Weekly went to press before a decision by the Planning Commission was made at its Feb. 18 meeting.

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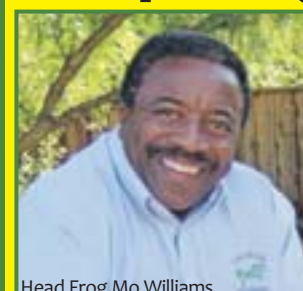
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