

Published April 1st, 2020

Local nonprofits hit hard by shelter-in-place order

By Pippa Fisher



Former board member Kathy Merchant (left) hands over supplies to Las Trampas Day Program Supervisor Kate Hartline in front of a list of much needed donation requests. Items should be dropped off weekdays between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. Photo Pippa Fisher

and other entities provide."

Hogue says the center's main focus as it navigates through these unprecedented events "is to ensure that our programs will be there on the other side, especially for future participants who will be aging out of the school system," adding, "To do that, we need financial support to get us through this storm."

DeForest says that the center is currently providing additional support staff from the day program to all residential programs and engaging individuals throughout the day in the home setting to minimize emotional and mental health issues.

"We are allocating necessary supplies and personal protective equipment to residences, setting up grocery delivery services for participants to minimize community exposure," says DeForest, adding that they are also maintaining essential administrative staff who are working remotely and supporting staff needs to take time off for child care or personal care.

Las Trampas has issued a community appeal for desperately needed hygiene and basic food supplies. Items can be dropped off between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. at 3460 Lana Lane off Moraga Boulevard opposite Leigh Creekside Park. For hands-free pickup from home, email merchant70@aol.com. Las Trampas also welcomes donations through its website.

The organization is not alone in its struggle. Lafayette Partners in Education has had to cancel its main auction fundraiser. Instead it is urging support of its online bidding, with live items bidding ending at 5 p.m. April 3.

"The cancellation of our annual event/fundraiser has a huge financial impact on LPIE. From expecting this event to raise over \$350,000, we are now very concerned that we will fall far short of the \$4.5 million fundraising goal needed to meet our commitments to our districts and schools," explains LPIE Executive Director Myrna Kimmelman.

Kimmelman says she is heartened by the generosity of parents, businesses, and community members who have donated to the auction, and have been bidding and contributing to LPIE since. "Their support is not diminished by our cancellation, but instead gives us hope that as a community, we can work together to fund essential school programs for our students."

Nonprofit Lamorinda Village, a volunteer-dependent organization supporting seniors, also recognizes the good in the community.

"At our last Lamorinda Village board meeting in early March, we anticipated there would be a great need for senior support as that age range had been marked as the most vulnerable so we started sending out requests for volunteers," Lamorinda Village Operations Manager Kathryn Ishizu explains. "We managed to mobilize a large crew of volunteers overnight so when Connie from Diablo Foods asked if we could help them deliver groceries to their elderly shoppers, we were ready."

Among many finding themselves in the completely uncharted waters of COVID-19 and the shelter-in-place order are the area's nonprofits serving some of the community's most vulnerable, for whom the consequences are potentially devastating.

Spring is a prime fundraising time of year with many organizations planning large galas and auctions - all now canceled. Las Trampas, Lafayette's day center serving adults with developmental disabilities, is particularly hard hit. The center had to cancel its April Spring Benefit Dinner, upon which it relies for funding for its current fiscal year budget, ending in June.

"Even if we are able to postpone the event," explains Executive Director Daniel Hogue, "it will leave the organization with an estimated \$250,000 shortfall during our current fiscal year resulting in significant impacts on our programs and services."

Las Trampas Board Vice President Liz DeForest notes that this comes "on top of the challenge that the state budget this year once again underfunds the services we

Ishizu says that since that partnership started it has added stores and pharmacies, over 80 community volunteers, and has served over 75 senior households with grocery shopping and pharmacy pickups. "And that number will climb as the news spreads. Lamorinda Village is here to help all at-risk seniors in our community stay safe during this time," says Ishizu.

Lamorinda Village Vice President Don Jenkins observes, "I believe that Lamorinda Village has helped the community see the strength that is derived when we all work together to help care for the people that need the most assistance in our community."

Seniors requesting service or those interested in volunteering can either email info@lamorindavillage.org or call (925) 283-3500. Further information is available on the website.

Chief Development Officer Peter Dudley of the Cancer Support Community, which is planning a new Lafayette campus, says it has rescheduled the Annual Hope Walk for October. "We get over 1,000 registered walkers and raise a large part of our annual budget with this event, so it's a big deal to us and we're glad we could reschedule. Otherwise, we are suspending regular fundraising activity for the moment, reaching out to many of our donors to make sure they are doing okay and see if there is anything we can do to help them." The CSC is accepting donations on its website.

Dudley says that while staff is working from home, they are still offering support through virtual group meetings. He points out that as a cancer organization they are used to helping people navigate unexpected, dramatic crises.

CSC had its support groups and counseling moved to a secure, HIPAA-compliant online platform and many workshops and movement classes are now offered online as well.

Lafayette Community Foundation, which has helped hundreds of nonprofits over the years, voted on March 29 to extend its March 31 grant deadline through April and is launching a matching program. Its goal is to give out \$100,000 to local nonprofits. Information on how to donate or volunteer for these nonprofits can be found on the organizations' websites:

Las Trampas <https://lastrampas.org>

LPIE <https://www.lpie.org/>

Lamorinda Village <https://lamorindavillage.org/>

Cancer Support Community <https://cancersupport.net/>

LCF <https://lafayettelcf.org/>

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