

Community Cup fundraiser helps COVID-19 affected businesses



Photo provided

Lindsey Lonergan, Community Cup originator

By Vera Kochan

Almost one month into the shelter-in-place mandate Moraga Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Kathe Nelson was contacted by Lindsey Lonergan, a junior at San Ramon Valley High School, who originated a fundraising idea dubbed Community Cup.

"My daily routine changed drastically overnight," said Lonergan. "One of the things I realized that was different was that I wasn't going to buy coffee. During the school week, I'd get a cup at least three times a week, and I realized that I wasn't spending this money anymore, because I was staying at home."

Lonergan heard that many businesses in her hometown of Danville were struggling, and other members of the community wanted to do something to help. "Community Cup gave people a platform so they could donate their 'cup of coffee' to these businesses,"

Lonergan said. "I partnered with our chamber of commerce, because I figured they had a better idea of who was most in need. I came up with the name because the fundraiser involved my community and the price of a cup of coffee. When put together, I thought Community Cup had a nice ring to it."

According to Nelson, "After presentation to the board, the Chamber felt that this was a good way to offer at least a little financial assistance to our local businesses, as the Town of Moraga has no economic development funds or silos of money that could offer financial aid." Nelson added, "Danville and Pleasanton Chambers were already on board with the program and doing well."

Lonergan's Danville Community Cup to date has raised \$6,745 (far surpassing her initial goal of \$1,500). Seeing the success of her pilot program, along with others in the Bay Area, she hopes to see her fundraiser idea spread nationwide.

"Small businesses have been greatly affected by COVID-19," stated Nelson. "Our local shops and services have been there to assist us. Now it's our time to help them by participating in Community Cup. All money raised will go directly to the Moraga Chamber of Commerce which, through a grant format, will aid our local shops with on-site improvements."

Each business must fill out an application in addition to providing a one-page background of the establishment with information regarding the direct impact of COVID-19 on the company and how the grant funds will be used. The maximum allocation of funds per business is \$500. All receipts will be audited by the chamber board. The application form and GoFundMe donation page are both located on the chamber's website: www.moragachamber.org.

Pending application approval, the Moraga Chamber expects to begin fund distributions on Aug. 1 and continue to the end of the year or as long as people donate. Nelson notes that 100% of the donated funds will go directly to businesses in need.

Already two local small businesses have turned in applications to Community Cup. Rheem Valley Pet Shoppe hopes to replace the lights in the store, which are old and dim making it more difficult to see the range of products for sale on the shelves. Amabile School of Music, a recently established business in town, is paying rent for a space they are not yet allowed to reopen. When they do, they would like to

use the funds to purchase masks, protection shields and UV lights.

"Overall, I am so grateful and impressed by, not just my community, but everyone who has contributed," praised Lonergan. "In a time

where we need to keep our distance, community is what connects us together. Every person who has donated, spread the word, or reached out has made such an impact in the lives of others."

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