

## Rotary Clubs unite to present big payday for local food bank



Photo provided

One of two \$25,000 checks jointly presented to the Food Bank by two Rotary clubs – Lamorinda Sunrise and Clayton Valley Concord. From left: Joel Sjostrom, president and CEO of Food Bank Contra Costa and Solano Counties; Jovi Comfort, 5; Vicki Sexton, president of Clayton Valley Concord Rotary; Ellie Comfort, 9; and Michael Chapin, regional core account manager for Copart Auto Auctions. The auction house partners with the two Rotary clubs in processing vehicles for resale. The two girls are grandchildren of Sexton.

### Submitted by Thomas Black

Two Rotary clubs – Lamorinda Sunrise and Clayton Valley-Concord Sunrise – have stepped up to the plate by donating a total of \$50,000 to the Food Bank of Contra Costa Counties.

The money derived from a novel fundraising initiative in which the two clubs participate, called Cars2nd-Chance, recycles privately donated motor vehicles by reconditioning them and reselling them to the public. Begun in 2008, C2C has generated to date a remarkable \$1,203,924 in gross revenue, or approximately \$100,000 per year. (Although all proceeds are currently earmarked for the Food Bank, there are other beneficiaries.)

Dave Kemnitz, credited with launching the initiative 12 years ago, rehabs vehicles as needed at his auto repair shop, D&H Enterprises, in Concord.

The \$50,000 Rotary donation came in the form of two giant-sized checks of \$25,000 each. A show-and-tell photo op surrounded each presentation.

Cars2ndChance accepts for dona-

tion any motor vehicle – automobile, truck, RV, motorcycle, watercraft – that has a title. It need not be in running condition, although “more warmly welcomed,” said Kemnitz, if it is. “We plan to keep C2C running till the cows come home,” he added.

Vehicles may be donated via the website – [www.cars2ndchance.com](http://www.cars2ndchance.com) or by phoning (925) 326-5868. Donations are tax deductible as provided by law.

Because of the coronavirus and the consequent spike in unemployment, the Food Bank is experiencing unprecedented demand. According to Joel Sjostrom, president and CEO, the demand has increased by 65% in recent months. “A year ago we were feeding about 178,000 needy people in the two counties. Today it is up to 230,000 and counting,” he said.

Every dollar donated equates to two meals. The \$50,000 donated by the Rotary clubs will feed 100,000 mouths. In addition to dollar donations, the Food Bank is looking for volunteers. To volunteer, call (925) 676-7543 or visit [www.foodbankccs.org](http://www.foodbankccs.org). Measures are in place to ensure the safety of volunteers.

## Moraga Rotary completes ‘Peaceful Community Center’ in Sierra Leone, Africa



Photo provided

### Submitted by Gary Irwin

The “Peaceful Community Center” in Makeni, Sierra Leone, Africa, begun in 2018, has been successfully completed. Moraga Rotary Chairwoman and Past President Dianne Wilson states that the project, once conceived as an orphanage for children of Ebola victims, expanded into a two-building community center complex costing \$140,000. This center is managed by Jacob & Tess Conteh, prominent citizens of Makeni and operators of the private International School, which orphans attend. This center will provide the 2000-plus area residents increased learning and vocational opportunities. The opening of the center was attended by the Paramount Chief of the district, a Government Minister, and many NGO leaders.

The newly built Learning Center has programs which will include adult remedial education, science programs for girls, a women’s small business

project, and a facilities management apprentice program. An existing western-style home is also on the property with a full complement of furniture and furnishings. The home consists of a gathering room, three bathrooms, 11 beds, a kitchen and outdoor screened gazebo. The home will be used to house homeless children and families in transition. The property also has a garden, planted by students and staff, for agricultural science and to provide food for the home.

Moraga Rotary is a 53-year-old service club within Rotary International, one of the four clubs in Lamorinda, and one of about 33,000 Rotary Clubs in about 200 countries. Regular meetings are held at noon on most Tuesdays online via Zoom due to the pandemic. If you are interested in information about Rotary, or would like to donate to their worthy causes, please visit the website at [moragarotary.org](http://moragarotary.org), or call Brian South, president, at (925) 888-7052.

**Community Service:** We are pleased to make space available whenever possible for some of Lamorinda’s dedicated community service organizations to submit news and information about their activities. Submissions may be sent to [storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com) with the subject header In Service to the Community.

### Share Your Celebrations and Remembrances

If you would like to share an announcement about a special event or achievement, such as a wedding, engagement, scholarship or graduation of a local resident, or about a special person from Lamorinda who has passed, send a photo along with your text (up to 250 words) to [storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com), and include “Celebrations and Remembrances” in the subject line.

## Strength in numbers, a town effort



Photo provided

From left: Jim O’Bryent, President Moraga Kiwanis, and John Haffner, Coordinator for Kiwanis project

### Submitted by Linda U Foley

Never has it been more evident that there is strength in numbers as when the Moraga Garden Club, the town of Moraga and the Kiwanis of Moraga Valley came together to transform the pie-shaped island intersection of Rheem Boulevard and Moraga Road, commonly referred to as the Triangle.

The Moraga Garden Club – celebrating its 50th year amidst the throws of a debilitating virus – is stronger and working harder than ever.

Darlene Haffner and Jessica Fleming combined their ideas to plan a long overdue facelift to the Triangle. While this area had been tended over the years by various Garden Club members, it began to lack a cohesive look, appearing overgrown and tangled.

Haffner approached the town with their brainchild and was rewarded not only with the necessary funds from the Moraga Parks and Recreation Foundation but also with physical labor to clear, remove and ultimately fill three dump trucks with vegetation debris. Haffner says, “The work of Kyle Salvin and Ruben Ochoa of the Public Works Department was simply invaluable. The earth was hard as rock.”

Fleming, a master gardener, put her expertise to work to come up with a viable plan for plantings that would not only be resilient but provide color throughout the seasons. Ever helpful Kenny Murakami, owner of the Moraga Garden Center, provided assistance and

stored the plants until the Triangle was properly prepared.

It took two full days of many hands to complete the plantings which could not have been carried out without the additional strength of several husbands including John Haffner, who motivated and coordinated fellow Kiwanians to participate.

Once plants become established, everyone will be able to enjoy the fruits of collaborative volunteerism.

In addition, the Garden Club has worked diligently to rejuvenate the four historic Country Club Drive urns (built in 1915), maintain a fifth urn in front of the Library and parts of the Commons, and develop a perennial garden at the Hacienda. Kudos to Julie Stagg, Carolyn Westhoff, Connie Coutts and Rena Munson – the respective chairs for each project. Ochoa and Salvin of the Public Works Department supplied much needed support for each.

Be sure to drive by and enjoy the solar lighting which encircle and enhance the CC Drive urns.

The volunteer collaboration will continue into next month when the Moraga Garden Club will again join forces with Kiwanis on Dec. 5 to plant additional daffodil bulbs for all residents to enjoy in the spring.

The Moraga Garden Club has continued to be active during these restrictive times. Nonetheless, we welcome new members. For more information, visit: [www.moragagardenclub.com](http://www.moragagardenclub.com)

## Veterans honored in Moraga Nov. 11



Photo Melinda Davis

Honor guard presenting the colors: Andrew, Elizabeth, and James Davis under command of LTC Karl Davis, USA.

### Submitted by Michael Metcalf

The morning on Nov. 11 was chilly and overcast. The air at the Moraga Commons at the Veterans Memorial was inviting for the small gathering of Moraga veterans and several others who assembled to honor our nation’s veterans. This was not the customary Veterans Day ceremony; public safety concerns arising due to the coronavirus pandemic necessitated changes to the proceedings. Karl Davis, retired Lt. Colonel, US Army Corps of Engineers and John Haffner, retired Captain, US Navy Supply Corps, and Michael Metcalf, former Lieutenant, US Navy Seabees, planned for an event of approximately 30 persons, spread out before the Veteran’s Memorial rock, which had been designed and constructed by Boy Scout Tony Knox as his Eagle Scout project in 2010. In the event, 40 persons participated, all wearing appropriate face masks and maintaining suitable distances from one another.

The brief ceremony began promptly at 1100 hours, with a call from LTC Davis for the bugler, Quinn Ricketts, to sound Assembly. The colors were trooped to the memorial by an honor guard comprising Elizabeth, Andrew, and James Davis. The Invocation was delivered by Capt. Tom

Marnane, retired US Navy. Capt. Haffner then recited important points of history of Veterans Day: Established as a national holiday in 1938, it was then known as Armistice Day. On that day, the Allied armies, including the United States, met with their German and Austrian foes and agreed to an armistice calling for peace and an end to the Great War (World War I). That was at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918. The day was subsequently nominated “Veterans Day” by the Eisenhower administration in the 1950s, in order to cover World War II and the Korean War, and now the wars in Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, and in other parts of the world.

Capt. Haffner then introduced Michael Metcalf who delivered remarks entitled “The Power of Their Service,” in which he explained how the men and women of the armed forces – Navy, Marines, Army, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Merchant Marine – all serve their communities by applying themselves for the maintenance of our freedom through application of their talents and their efforts, and their sacrifices. It is to honor all the veterans that this ceremony was being conducted.

A closing prayer was offered by Chaplain David Peery, VFW Post 8063, followed by the bugler sounding “Taps.” With this the ceremony was closed.