

Campo students trailblaze new pathways into nature



Submitted by
Laura Kindsvater

Save Mount Diablo is inventing new ways to connect young people to nature by keeping students safe as they get outdoors during the pandemic and learn together about the natural world. “Kids get it,” said Ted Clement, Executive Director of Save Mount Diablo. “They know how to adapt. So when we had to change the way we deliver our experiential Conservation Collaboration Agreement education program, they and their teachers took up the challenge and are making it work.”

Campolindo High School and Save Mount Diablo have successfully completed Conservation Collaboration Agreements (CCAs) before. In 2018 and 2019, Campolindo students took part in Save Mount Diablo’s traditional multi-day CCA program of classroom and outdoors learning experiences. Now, this year’s class of 150 AP Environmental Studies students is casting a new mold shaped to the demands of social distancing and, for now, shuttered classrooms.

They have a high standard to meet: Previous classes participating in the program seriously boosted their knowledge levels and intentions to spend more time outdoors. This is important because youth today “spend less time outside than prison inmates, with the average child playing freely outside for just four to seven minutes a day,” according to a 2017 report commissioned by REI Co-op, The Path Ahead. This report notes that the average American now spends about 95% of their life indoors. It further reports that we are becoming an “indoor species,” which comes with consequences: “Our health and well-being may suffer. And the less we value our outdoor spaces, the less likely we are to protect them.”

Each Conservation Collaboration Agreement has three basic parts, starting with an in-class presentation by SMD staff introducing students to

Mount Diablo land conservation. This year, to keep students safe, SMD gave a Zoom presentation instead.

For the second part of the agreement, students typically spend a full day outdoors. They go on an interpretive hike led by a trained naturalist and SMD staff, complete a nature service project such as planting native grasses, hear a local ecology lesson, and conclude with a solo writing exercise reflecting on their part in nature. But nature intervened with a surprise windstorm that made outdoor time on the planned day too dangerous.

Undaunted, everyone quickly pivoted to Plan B. Instead of the usual program, students were able to choose a project, do a contemplative solo, and complete both on their own in the outdoors near their homes. Save Mount Diablo provided guidelines and suggestions for projects.

Students’ projects ranged from gathering and planting acorns, to transforming trash into art, to cleaning out the gutters on a neighborhood street. The class described their solo experiences, and some shared their journal entries. One commented, “I went up on this hill behind my neighborhood. It was completely silent. It gave me a chance to think. ... My role in nature is to enjoy it but more importantly to protect it.”

Tren Kauzer, one of the participating Campolindo High School teachers, stated, “With distance learning, students have been spending countless hours in front of screens. By partnering with Save Mount Diablo, Campolindo AP Environmental Science students had the opportunity to experience a respite from screen time, a moment to quiet their minds and recharge in nature during these stressful times.”

In the final portion of the CCA program, designed to engage students in educational and participatory philanthropy, the class worked to raise funds to become members of SMD through SMD’s discounted youth membership program.

Giving during COVID-19 pandemic



Photo provided

From left: Lani Balinag, Sutter Armistead, Scott Linden, Amelia Asuncion

Submitted by **Bob Murtagh**

The Lamorinda Lions Club and the Campolindo High School Leo Club have teamed together to create Care Bags to help people in the community cope with the virus. Each Care Bag contains useful information on the many services offered in the county together with a message of encouragement and appreciation. Also in the

bag is a mask, sanitizer and treat. To date, over 500 Care Bags have been delivered to seniors, teachers, police officers and others on the front lines who are helping people deal with this deadly virus. Seventy Care Bags were presented to the 70 nurses and staff at Post Acute Care facility in Rheem on Oct. 27.

For more information about the Care Bag program, contact Lion Bob Murtagh at rmurtagh62@yahoo.com.

~ Season of Giving ~

Food pantry donations at MVPC

Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church (MVPC) is seeking non-perishable food donations for its local food pantry that serves the Lamorinda Community. Please deliver peanut butter, tuna fish, beans, rice, pasta, canned fruit and vegetables, cereal, mac-n-cheese, or granola bars to the church office location at 10 Moraga Valley Road, Rooms 201-202, on the lower courtyard. The pantry is open from 5 to 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday evenings. MVPC supports many local and international service organizations. Please visit the online market at: www.mvpcoday.org/mission-market/ to donate money or a gift in honor of a loved one. For more information, please contact: rbassett@mvpcoday.org

Cycle Recycle donations accepted through November

For the 23rd year, Bobbie and Tom Preston will be holding the Cycle Recycle, collecting repairable bikes to be refurbished and given to charitable groups. To date, over 3,600 bikes have been collected. This year the recipient organizations include Oakland International High School’s Earn-A-Bike program, The Bike Charity Institute of Alamo, Keeping our Promise (supports Afghan immigrants that served the U.S. government in Afghanistan), Waterside Workshops (provides bikes, bike mechanic training and outdoor recreation for over 250 youth low income and disconnected youth from across the East Bay), and the Lake Merritt Community Cabins (transitional housing for previously homeless adults while permanent housing is arranged). Deliver new or used working or repairable bikes and useable bike parts to the side driveway of 1307 Larch Avenue in Moraga through the month of November only. No skateboards, trike, or plastic bikes please. No need to call but for more information, call (925) 376-8474

Help Lamorinda Village help older neighbors in the community

Your older neighbors are still stuck at home with no end in sight as we wait for a vaccine. Lamorinda Village supports these neighbors who do not have family nearby and work to be independent. Grocery and medication deliveries, Zoom events, meditation and yoga classes prevent this endless isolation. Lamorinda Village held informative election classes with the League of Women Voters to discuss Propositions and delivered mail-in ballots to ballot boxes. Buddies have been assigned to make check-in calls during the wind and power outages, ensuring everyone is safe in recent heat waves. In the event of an evacuation, we identified who may need help and matched them with a CERT volunteer. It’s not over! Your older neighbors continue to need your help as we move into 2021, still sheltering in place because of COVID-19. Your financial donations ensure our cherished friends stay engaged with connections to each other and our exceptional volunteers, preventing debilitating isolation and compounded health issues. Our commitment to our community is what makes it so vibrant and caring. Your gift directly benefits your neighbors and can be mailed to Lamorinda Village. P.O. Box 57 Lafayette CA 94549.

Help save the Joaquin Moraga Adobe – donate to the Moraga Historical Society

This is a now-or-never opportunity. By acting now, the historic Moraga Adobe will be preserved as a Museum and Learning Center for the enjoyment of current and future Lamorinda residents. Built in 1841, the Adobe is the oldest surviving structure in Contra Costa County.

The need is urgent. A developer has acquired the Adobe property and is building on the surrounding land. The developer is required to restore the Adobe. If an additional \$250,000 is raised between now and Sept. 21 of next year, the developer has agreed to sell the restored Adobe and the two-acre site on which it sits to Friends of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe (FJMA) for future public use. If that goal isn’t reached, the Adobe will be permanently closed to public access and use.

The Moraga Historical Society has launched a \$100,000 public campaign to support FJMA’s acquisition of the Adobe. Nearly one-half of our \$100,000 goal has been raised. We need your help to reach the finish line!

Please make checks payable to “Moraga Historical Society”, indicate your donation is for the “Moraga Adobe Campaign” and mail to: Moraga Historical Society, P. O. Box 103, Moraga, CA 94556.

Hope Solutions’ Spirit of Giving program

Hope Solutions, formerly Contra Costa Interfaith Housing, is committed to healing the effects of homelessness by providing permanent housing solutions and vital support services to highly vulnerable families and individuals. This work would not be possible without the support of individuals like you. With COVID-19 cases expected to rise, helping and supporting each other through these times is more critical than ever.

Hope Solutions’ Spirit of Giving program helps alleviate the financial stress of the holidays by matching supporters with clients to purchase gifts for the families and individuals we serve. However, Spirit of Giving is not the only way to get involved! We are also in need of new bedding donations, such as mattresses, pillows, blankets and sheets, as we believe that a warm bed to sleep in is a comfort that every person deserves.

If you would like to help by donating new bedding items, or by providing holiday gifts for a family or individual through our Spirit of Giving program, please contact Mariel McMIndes at mmcmindes@hopesolutions.org. Your support means the world to us, and we wish you the happiest of holidays!

See’s Candies online holiday program

Moraga Kiwanis Club relies on our annual pop-up store and See’s candy fundraiser that generates funds that we give to local charities. For safety considerations, this year we’re only participating in the See’s Candies online holiday program. It still enables us to safely purchase See’s Candies at the same price as See’s factory stores and still help support the worthy charities our club supports. Our charities need help more than ever during COVID. Please support this online fundraiser and visit the Kiwanis Club of Moraga Valley web site <https://moragavalleykiwanis.org/>! Thank you Lamorinda, for your ongoing support!