

Saklan student featured in Plastic Free Living Magazine



Ryan Lo

Photo courtesy Sandy Lo

Submitted by Emily Williamson

Ryan Lo, a seventh grader at The Saklan School, was recently featured in Plastic Free Living Magazine. It was Ryan's podcast, "A Change is a Chance," that interested the magazine's editor.

In his podcast, Ryan aims to help young listeners understand some of the environmental challenges we face today. The magazine specifically high-

lighted the episode on Ryan's podcast about Plastic Free July, in which he interviews Ms. Rebecca Prince-Ruiz, the founder of the Plastic Free July Foundation, to better understand what it's like to be plastic free and how everyone can take small steps to reduce plastic usage.

When asked about Ryan's podcast, Saklan's Head of School David O'Connell noted, "What I like about the podcast is that it emphasizes what real-world learning is. Ryan describes how discovering one thing led to a more profound interest in other topics and a thirst to know more. That curiosity led him to develop deep probing questions that he could not answer without the help of outside experts."

Ryan has attended The Saklan School since kindergarten. He has fully embraced the school's mission to challenge students to think creatively, act compassionately and live courageously. Ryan's podcast and his message of making small changes to help the environment has inspired his classmates and teachers to join him in his journey to think creatively and act compassionately in regards to the environment and ways to reduce plastic use.

To learn more about small changes you can make to help the environment, check out Ryan's podcast, "A Change is a Chance," online at <https://anchor.fm/Ryan-lo>.

Campo freshman's nonprofit focuses on tutoring students



Aditya Kapur, founder of Developing Young Minds

Photo provided

Submitted by Aditya Kapur

A nonprofit club started by Campolindo freshman Aditya Kapur, called Developing Young Minds, is offering its services to elementary school children in the community.

Developing Young Minds is offering to teach elementary students a range of subjects, from academic ones – math, English, science, history, computer science – to sports, to even the arts.

Aditya's club charges a small fee of \$5 for 30-minute classes (due to the pandemic, currently performed in a virtual format over Zoom) and distributes 100% of the proceeds to the Oakland Public Education Fund, supporting children in impoverished communities and providing them with a better education. His club has raised over \$300 to date for this cause in its short two-month existence and is

looking to broaden its efforts by bringing more children on board.

Classes are typically one-on-one, with a max of two children per class and teachers can tutor students, strengthen their understanding of the subject, or even assist them in getting ahead. The six current high school instructors of Developing Young Minds are eager to share their passion, knowledge, and foster learning in a variety of subjects as well as supporting the noble cause of providing funding for education of children in underserved communities. Parents of pupils have been complimentary about their children's experiences with the program. For those who are interested in being a part of Developing Young Minds and its efforts in fostering education, community and diversity in society, please reach out to Aditya Kapur via email at aditya.kapur24@auhsdschools.org.

In Memory

Carolyn Louise Knoll

August 29, 1947 – November 26, 2020



Eldest daughter of William J. and Bette Lou Knoll, brother David J. Knoll and survived by sister Diana Lorenz, Carolyn Louise Knoll graduated from St. Genevieve's High School in 1965 and attended San Diego State College. At an early age, civil rights for all developed in her heart being part of the freedom walks virtually of the '60s and '70s; never losing that heart and broaden to making a difference in her community and world.

Started her career of professional excellence in title and escrow at TransAmerica Title Company and working at various companies having found at her career with North American Title Company as Operations Manager as her happiest place. Lived mostly in Oakland and the surrounding areas but also in Philadelphia, Heber City Utah, and Oahu, Hawaii. While on Oahu she was a park ranger at the USS

Arizona Memorial. Her heart's desire as a teen to join the Peace Corps was granted in 2006 where is served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Ukraine for two years. To be able to volunteer for the Peace Corps, she needed to graduate college, so she did thru California State University, East Bay with a BA. Moving back to Orinda, California in 2015 from Oahu, she retired and volunteered at Lindsay Wildlife Experience, Reading Partners, helping children to read – honorable mention that she also volunteered in an Alameda program for inmates, helping inmates to read. She is highly intelligent and spiritual; when she walked into a room, all noticed a confident woman.

No celebration of life planned; suggest because of her heart please donate in her behalf to your favorite animal or civil rights nonprofit.

In Memory

Julie Rapalje Helms

August 29, 1933 – November 21, 2020



Julie Rapalje Helms (née Caulkins) passed away peacefully in Walnut Creek, Calif. on Nov. 21. She was born in New York on Aug. 29, 1933, a 12th generation descendant of Sarah Rapalje, the first European child born in the colony that would become New York State. Julie grew up on Long Island, graduated from Allegheny College, and later attended the Graduate School of Social Work at the University of Michigan.

Julie married John "Jack" Forsyth Helms on Sept. 21, 1963. They moved to Moraga, Calif., in 1973, where they raised two children, David and Laurie. Julie and Jack shared a love of the outdoors, which they passed onto their children through hiking, camping, backpacking, fishing, and skiing.

Julie worked as a social worker in the fields of mental health, foster care, and adoption, and was later employed as the Assistant to the Artistic Director of a local theatre. Her love of acting and the theatre led to her performance in plays at all of the local theatres, in addition to appearing in numerous commercials and films.

She volunteered countless hours through her children's schools, her church, Girl Scouts, and local theatre. Her greatest joy was her family, and she was a dedicated homemaker and a loving wife, mother, and grandmother.

Julie was a member of St. Mark's United Methodist Church, and most recently the Lafayette United Methodist Church.

Julie is survived by her beloved husband Jack, her children David (Cheryl) Helms of Walnut Creek, Laurie (Peter) Maxwell of Santa Barbara, and five grandchildren: Kiersten, John, Holly, Michelle, and Sarah. She was predeceased by her older brother Thomas Vassar Caulkins.

The family will gather privately to celebrate her life. In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be sent to Yosemite Conservancy.

Miller closes in on a million



Photos provided

David Miller is about to hit a million! Yards, that is. Since Jan. 1, and even with COVID restrictions and AQI shutdowns, Miller has completed swimming more than 940,000 yards at Soda Aquatic Center on the Campolindo Highschool campus. And he's raised over \$20,000 for the Cancer Research Institute.

Learn more about his quest at www.swimamillion.org

- J. Wake

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 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, and include "Celebrations and Remembrances" in the subject line.