

# Lamorinda Chinese-Americans deliver lunches to frontline health workers during Chinese New Year



Photo provided

Young artists in the community produced artwork and cards for project.

Submitted by **Jamiel Liu and Laura Liu**

For many Chinese-Americans in the Lamorinda area, finding ways to support the frontline workers in the battle against COVID-19 has been their mission during this unprecedented pandemic.

With the vaccines recently becoming available to the public, the admin for the Lamorinda Neighbors WeChat Group, Ye Liu and Alice Zhang, learned that all the vaccination sites are always so busy with high demands that a decent lunch break is rare. Zhang proposed that they use the leftover funds from an earlier PPP outreach effort last March to order lunch boxes for the health workers at the vaccine sites in Contra Costa County as a way to express their gratitude and support.

As Chinese New Year was quickly approaching, Zhang also suggested adding elements from Chinese culture, such as red envelopes, to the lunchboxes. Ye relayed this idea to the fund's volunteer accountant, Hongyu Wang, and the director of a local afterschool program, Aqi Feng. She received enthusiastic responses from both women – Wang confirmed they had enough funds for over 200 lunch boxes and Feng volunteered to call for young artists in the community to produce decorations and artwork for this project.

After outreach to secure approval from the site coordinators, six vaccine

sites were identified as the lunchbox recipients: Tice Valley Community Gym in Walnut Creek, DVC in Concord, Nick Rodriguez Community Center in Antioch, Pittsburg Health Center, West Contra Costa County Regional Hospital in San Pablo, and Miller Wellness Center in Martinez. Zhang designed the main decoration using red envelopes. On Feb. 7, Feng coordinated a group of young artists who gathered at Commons Park and decorated enough red envelopes. The children enjoyed the project so much that they even painted many beautiful pictures for the health workers to say “Thank you!”

After Alice ordered 250 or so lunchboxes from Oakland Bloom, 14 volunteers were recruited through WeChat and the action date was set for the Chinese New Year. The delivery group was known as the “Blessed Lunchbox Action Team,” as each lunchbox had a sticker of the Chinese character meaning “blessing” on top, besides the red envelope with a golden-foil wrapped chocolate inside. All the volunteers showed up on Feb. 12, the first day of the Lunar New Year, in their elegant traditional Chinese outfits, some also with their children and family, joyfully distributing the decorated lunch boxes to the vaccine sites.

For all, the appreciation they received from the health workers was overwhelming and rewarding, and all the volunteers also expressed how very meaningful this Chinese New Year was for them.

# Lafayette Rotary Club reaches matching goal



Photo provided

From left: Denise Brown, Mike Collier, Matt Pease and Connie Collier

Submitted by **Matt Pease**

The Lafayette Rotary Club and Lafayette Rotary Foundation raised \$22,000 for the Las Trampas school with great support from club members and from far exceeded expectations from contributors outside the club. This money will be matched by another foundation to \$44,000.

Club members Matt Pease and Denise Brown handed the check to Mike and Connie Collier, co-chairs of the Las Trampas Capital Campaign Committee. “We had tremendous support from Betty Stokes, our longtime member Ed Stokes’ wife, for a sizable donation that really boosted our efforts,” Pease said.

# Volunteer effort to engage girls in STEM bears fruit

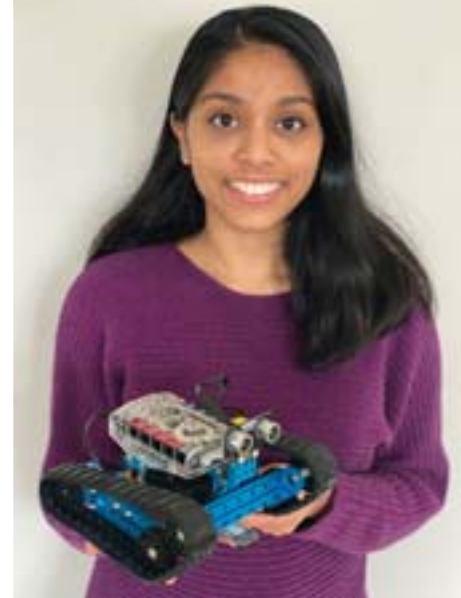


Amber Thompson Photos provided

Online enrollment is free to local Girl Scouts of America Service Unit 327 (comprising 60-plus troops and over 550 Girl Scouts) on a first come, first serve basis.

Shefali Goel, a current sophomore at Cal and Girl Scout Gold Award recipient, has played a key role in developing and now teaching the curriculum, and says, “As technological knowledge is becoming ever-important, I am passionate about sharing my love and introducing younger scouts to the fields of STEM, to equip them with the resources to be co-creators in society.”

Craig Kovac, an electronic and computer engineer (Campolindo and Troop 212 alumnus) has also been contributing to the effort, primarily focusing on six additional badges dealing with robotics and programming. He will very soon be starting a new job on the East Coast, and Moraga Kiwanis is looking for more volunteers to work with the team to finish the development and implementation. Amber Thompson, an active leader with Orinda Moraga Girl Scouts says: “Community-building through robot-building? It’s fantastic! We are thrilled to see Kiwanis’ support for girls in STEM and excited to put these kits into the hands of Girl Scouts. The selection of this robotics platform will support skill-development and career exploration across multiple scouting levels.”



Shefali Goel with a robot.

Submitted by **Ferenc Kovac**

Over the past year, with initial efforts by the Moraga Valley Kiwanis Club, a volunteer effort to engage girls in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) activities is bearing fruit.

With input from Moraga and Orinda school administration and technical staff, and volunteer efforts by Kiwanis, Girl Scouts, NASA Ames, and UC Berkeley College of Engineering faculty, staff, alumni, and students, three online events on the relevant topics of Cybersecurity Basics, Safeguards, and related Research and Applications are being offered.

As programs are developed and successfully completed by the first round of more senior Scouts, one of the goals is to provide them with the tools to step into the leadership role, and teach the younger Girl Scouts those same skills, thus keeping the cycle self-sustaining. Adult volunteers will stay involved to provide supervision, logistics support, and any needed updating of content.

Moraga Kiwanis is currently also hoping to expand its impact by inserting the “A” for Arts in the heart of STEM, and gaining “STEAM” by partnering with community artists and Saint Mary’s College.

For more information on participating, either as a volunteer or member, please contact: moraga.kiwanis@gmail.com or su327@scoutsnorcal.org.

## In Memory

### Charlie Kezerian

June 24, 1926 – Feb. 21, 2021



Charlie Kezerian passed away on Sunday, Feb. 21, at the age of 94, with his family by his side. He was the loving husband of Dorris Kezerian and devoted father to Patti (Peter), Bob (Gail) and Sandi (John). He was the proud grandfather of five grandchildren; Alysia, Courtney, Trent, Alex and Marty.

Charlie was born on June 24, 1926, in Charleston, Massachusetts. The family soon moved to Medford where he spent his childhood. At 17, he joined the U.S. Navy during WW II and spent four years serving in the Construction Battalion throughout the South Pacific. Upon his discharge he resettled in Los Angeles. He attended the University of Southern California and graduated with a degree in chemistry.

In 1958 he met Dorris Soghomonian, the love of his life, whom he married in 1959. They resettled to Orinda where they raised their three children and lived there through their 63 years of marriage. Charlie was a brilliant chemist with 25 patents to his name. He managed a research facility at Stauffer Chemical Company in Richmond, California where he spent a successful 40-year career. He was a devoted and active member of St. Vartan Armenian Apostolic Church in Oakland where he enjoyed a rich social life and was adored by all who knew him.

Throughout his life, Charlie had many unique interests. He was a constant student. He was a beekeeper, much to the dismay of his family and surrounding neighbors. He studied masonry, which resulted in beautiful brickwork in front of the family home. He was an avid gardener, known for his abundant crops of tomatoes. He enjoyed attending Sons in Retirement lunch lectures and even taught several on computers and digital photo editing. Though he and Dorris loved traveling the world, he was happiest in his own home watching a USC football game with Dorris by his side.

Charlie was blessed with many lifelong friends that enriched his life. He was a kind, accomplished, yet humble, man whose company everyone enjoyed. His greatest reward in life was his family who will miss him dearly.

Services will be private. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to St. Vartan Armenian Church (650 Spruce St., Oakland, CA 94610) in memory of Charles Kezerian or Craig Hospital Foundation (3425 So. Clarkson St., Englewood, CO 80113) in memory of Charles Kezerian.

**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.

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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.