

# ~ Life in LAMORINDA ~

## Local youth find inventive, productive ways to spend time while sheltering at home



Sabrina Kane, 15, shows off two of her amazing breads from Sweets by Sabrina.



Myra Gakhar, 11, hard at work on one of her resin products



Lamorinda Peer Tutoring co-founders Michael Wen (left) and Ryan Chan

or delivered locally. Kane donates 50% of her profits to charity.(sweetsbysabrina.

godaddysites.com) ... continued on Page B2



Dane Darby, Royal Chess Academy founder, helps one of his students



A squirrel dining table made by Finn Girdlestone  
By Diane Claytor

Discussing stocks with 17-year-old Sam Safahi feels like meeting a group of investment brokers. The fast talking, extremely knowledgeable Miramonte senior tosses out stock names and investment lingo as easily as counting to 10.

Safahi initially invested a small amount of money in cryptocurrency. He made a profit. "I kept spending money on useless stuff, like clothes I didn't wear," he admits. "I got tired of wasting it."

He was also tiring of Netflix and playing endless video games during the COVID-forced lockdown. Remembering how much fun it was to invest, Safahi spent almost every waking hour for several weeks learning everything he could about investing. He read, researched, watched YouTube videos and soon started buying and selling. It was a good market. He made money and lost some. He taught himself about futures and day trading, tech stocks, options and index funds. And after several months, the totally self-taught Safahi proudly says he earned a net profit exceeding \$100,000.

In spite of his incredible financial success, Safahi states unequivocally, "I'd trade all the money I made to have my pre-COVID life back. It was so much better going to school, playing lacrosse, hanging with friends. I miss it a lot."

Like Safahi, many young Lamorindans searched for ways to pass their time while sheltering in place. Albert Einstein once said, "The monotony and solitude of a quiet life stimulates the creative

mind." The imagination and creativity of our local youth exemplify this quote. New skills have been learned, talents perfected, businesses opened. While none were quite as profitable as Safahi's, they were all equally impressive.

### Tutors

At the beginning of the lockdown, Campolindo junior Michael Wen realized that, like him, many kids were struggling. He knew it was often difficult to find reasonably-priced tutors that were sincerely invested in helping students. Wanting to help the community, Wen and several friends formed Lamorinda Peer Tutoring (lamorindapeertutoring.com), a service offering free tutoring on a myriad of subjects, including English, Mandarin, cooking, and art. Their 30 tutors, predominantly high school-aged, have worked with more than 50 students.

Tutoring is one-on-one so "students are able to bond with their tutor," Wen says. "A lot of young kids are struggling with distance learning. They're not getting much interaction."

Co-founder Ryan Chan, a College Prep junior, states that the students are not the only beneficiaries of this tutoring program. "We foster leadership and communications among the staff," he explains. "I've personally gotten much better at communicating." Wen agrees. "The tutors are also learning organizational skills and time management."

### Teaching Games

Springhill Elementary fourth-grader Dane Darby is a chess champion after only two years of playing. "A lot of people couldn't leave their house once the lockdown started but chess was something that could be done inside," Darby notes. Guessing there were kids who might want to learn the game, Darby set up a website (theroyalchessacademy.com) which says he will teach "the strategies to become a great chess player."

Charging very reasonable rates, Darby has already taught more than 40 students, one from as far away as

Japan. Some take a one-time class, learning the basics, while others learn strategies in multiple lessons. He donates a portion of his fee to the Berkeley Chess School, which is where he learned to play.

Toby Barton, a Campolindo sophomore, decided to use his Minecraft skills to virtually teach the popular video game. "I was looking for a 2020 summer job," Barton explains, "and then the pandemic happened so I needed another way to make some money." He taught mostly elementary school students and organized different classes by skill and level. He's again hoping to find a summer job but if that doesn't work out, Minecraft camp will again be open.

### Selling Products

With a love of baking and time on her hands, Orinda's Sabrina Kane, 15, thought it would be fun to share her baked goods with the community. She makes cakes, cookies, cupcakes, cake pops and bread. Her specialty, she says, is chocolate cake. Custom orders are welcome and yummy baked goods may be picked up

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We know that there are no easy fixes, and that challenging conversations and work lie before all of us. Rotary's strength has long been our ability and commitment to bringing people together. We will tap into that strength now, as we stand with those who are working for peace and justice.

Rotary will do our part to listen, to learn and to take action to ensure that we continue to contribute to making positive change.

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