

# SWELL Center opens at Lafayette Library

This summer local teens will have a safe place to relax with friends and meet new people in an inclusive, comfortable, casual environment as part of a new pilot program – the Student Wellness Summer Program – which is being offered in partnership with the Lafayette Library and Learning Center Foundation and the city of Lafayette, in collaboration with the Lafayette Library.

The idea for SWELL (summer wellness) blossomed over breakfast with Jennifer Wakeman, Assistant Administrative Services Director for the city of Lafayette, Dr. Lynn McPhatter-Harris EdD, Director of Student Support, Equity & Inclusion for the Acalanes Union High School District, and Beth Needle, the Executive Director of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center Foundation.

“Over the years The Lafayette Library and Learning Center has become a hub

and a haven for teens beginning with their first walk here from Stanley. We love that our library is that place in the community where everyone feels comfortable and welcomed,” Needle said. “With the stress so many have been feeling and with the school wellness centers closed for the summer we wanted to provide a new free space for teens to relax, read, dabble if they choose in art, gardening, and of course connect with other kids in the community.”

The SWELL Center will be open at the library for teens aged 12 to 18 Monday through Friday, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. through July 29 and will offer a variety of active and self-guided activities such as board games, cards, journaling and crafts, as well as community engagement opportunities and access to support groups. (Please note that no adult supervision will be provided.)

– J. Wake

# Affordable housing and student enrollment

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We employed a full time nanny and we still didn't have enough time to cover work hours, let alone do things like grocery shopping and appointments,” Curtin says. “Even though we both had good jobs, our employer health insurance was incredibly expensive and with Conor's autoimmune disorders we ultimately decided that we needed access to more affordable health care (and in closer proximity to Conor's family).”

Access to more affordable childcare, healthcare, and, of course, housing are things Curtin says might've made staying a more viable option. Yet, Curtin knows her family's experience is not an anomaly. “Most of the families I met during my time in Lafayette were all very budget conscious and looking for a way to save money on everyday items (on everything from commuting to work to school clothes, groceries and baby gear,” Curtin recalls. “Those who stay are making great sacrifices to do so.”

For those who aren't able to find affordable housing within the Lafayette School District, Richard Whitmore, outgoing Lafayette School District Superintendent, says not to count on interdistrict transfers and not to assume this is the only district offering quality education. “Interdistrict transfers have to be approved first by the district of residence and then by the receiving district. Our policy and practice has been to accept these transfers only in very limited circumstances with qualifying requirements,” Whitmore says. “We have great confidence in our neighbors' ability to provide an excellent education to families who relocate.”

Whitmore reported that the Lafayette School District is down by some 54 kindergarteners for the upcoming academic year, but that the future looks bright for the district as a whole with 3,122 students already enrolled compared to the projected 3,033. The Lafayette School District worked with Davis Demographics to do an enrollment assessment and study. “Our last study was done seven years ago and the projections didn't seem to be playing out, so it was a good

time to revisit,” Whitmore says. “With the city's efforts to adopt a new housing element as part of their obligations, we wanted to better understand the impact new housing units might have on the district. The city has been anxiously awaiting the outcome of our study and we've shared it with them.”

The study correlated the dip in kindergarten enrollment to a declining birthrate. “The birth rate five years prior was 89.3 of the “base year” the study used, so that is evidence that we would expect a smaller incoming kindergarten cohort,” Whitmore says. However, it's unclear how or if statistical nuances for families like the Curtins who might move into the area with visions of someday being a part of the reputable school district and move back out when buying a home is not financially viable are reflected. Whitmore says the formal study projected additional students for the 376 new housing units, but the numbers are still inconclusive as it doesn't reflect units and projects in places like the Terraces not yet completed. Nevertheless, the new housing projects are not likely to have a huge impact on student enrollment numbers. “The new housing is only anticipated to add fewer than 60 students, as our experience so far is that multi-family housing or condominiums does not generate large numbers of students,” Whitmore says.

While the dense housing projects may provide more options for living in the community, it's important to note that just a handful of units are being made available at below market rate while the rest are selling in the \$1-\$2 million range and include homeowner association fees. This reality is what has families exploring alternative locations, and in the case of the Curtins, moving across the world in hopes of building a more sustainable future while clinging tightly to memories of Lafayette. “We loved our neighborhood and our neighbors, but over the years we could see a change in young families getting pushed out due to rents increasing. If we were able to get a home at a reasonable rate, we probably would've stayed,” Curtin says. “We miss our amazing Lafayette community.”



**Lafayette Public Meetings**

**City Council**

Regular Meeting  
Monday, June 13, 7 p.m.  
Teleconference via City of Lafayette's YouTube Channel:  
<http://bit.ly/LoveLafayetteYouTube>

**Planning Commission Meeting**

Monday, June 6, 7 p.m.  
Teleconference Meeting via Love Lafayette YouTube  
<http://bit.ly/LoveLafayetteYouTube>

**Design Review**

Wednesday, June 8, 7 p.m. Zoom  
Teleconference Meeting via Love Lafayette YouTube  
<http://bit.ly/LoveLafayetteYouTube>

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