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SWELL Center opens at Lafayette Library

By Jennifer Wake

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.)

Reach the reporter at: jennifer@lamorindaweekly.com

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