

Temple Isaiah hosts JCRC 'Here I Am' initiative to unite against antisemitism

Submitted by Rebecca Norton



Photo provided

Numerous officials gather on Aug. 25 at Temple Isaiah in Lafayette for JCRC initiative.

Following a growing trend nationwide of antisemitism at-

tacks by swatting, hate speech, and hate crimes to members

within this marginalized community, Temple Isaiah on Aug. 25 hosted the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) "Here I Am: Communities United Against Antisemitism" initiative to unite against antisemitism. The conference included numerous Contra Costa County and California elected officials, including U.S. Representative Mark DeSaulnier, State Senator Steve Glazer, Assembly member Rebecca Bauer-Kahan, Assembly member Tim Grayson, Walnut Creek Council member Kevin Wilk, El Cerrito Mayor Pro Tem Tessa Rudnick, Hercules Mayor Alex Walker-Griffin, and Contra Costa County District Attor-

ney Diana Becton.

Community leaders, including Temple Isaiah's Senior Rabbi Jill Perlman, Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church Rev. Jaime Polson, and JCRC Bay Area CEO Tyler Gregory spoke in response to the growing antisemitic hate crimes in California, and highlighted that all members of the convening were providing a demonstration of solidarity and support of the Jewish community.

"Today's gathering is all about us proclaiming 'Here I

am" as we acknowledge the deep pain of antisemitism in our midst," Perlman said. "We are bound together; each one of us, as human beings, to create the world that we all deserve. A world where folks of all heritages, all ethnicities, all religions, can show up exactly as who we are without fear of bias and discrimination. We stand here today with one foot in the world as it is and one in the world as it should be. Bridging the gap with our witness, accountability, and love."

For more information about JCRC's "Here I Am: Communities United Against Antisemitism" please visit their website at [JCRC.org/blog/here-i-am](https://www.jcrc.org/blog/here-i-am) To watch the conference through the recorded livestream, visit: <https://youtube.com/live/iyXKb5DFk24?feature=share>

Lafayette elementary students spend 2 weeks studying in the Czech Republic

Submitted by Martina Heithoff



Lukas (left) and Adam (right) pose with books signed by their classmates during their last day of school.

Photo provided

Lukas (9) and Adam (7) from Lafayette Elementary School spent two weeks in June studying alongside Czech students in their respective grades in the small wine-making village of Brumovice in the south east corner of the Czech Republic, which is where their mom was born and raised and where their grandparents still live. Being half Czech and speaking Czech made it easier for them to adapt and understand the subject; nevertheless, it takes a lot of courage and

bravery to enter new classrooms that have already been meeting since September. Their family was proud of them for wanting to take two weeks out of their summer vacations to go back to school in a new environment where they did not know anyone. They were also very appreciative of the school director and all of the school staff for enabling this opportunity, particularly for them taking on an additional two students during the busy end of the school year period.

Lamorinda community donates over 1,500 pairs of shoes

By Cynthia Brian



Photo provided

From left: Campo Key Club Officers Suraya Mathai-Jackson, Claire Damiano, Chloe Cheung, Nina Damiano, and Zarah Thomas.

Moraga nonprofit Be the Star You Are, in partnership with 5A Rent-A-Space and Mark Hoog's State Farm Insurance, want to thank all the supporters who donated to its shoe drive to support micro-entrepreneurs, mostly women, in developing countries to help them build self-sufficiency, and to benefit their local communities by supplying much-needed affordable shoes.

With the help of the community, BTSYA was able to collect 1,575 pairs of shoes which will be shipped to countries in poverty. Teen chairperson, Ella Kalpakjian, who spearheaded collecting

shoes from local schools commented, "Although we didn't reach our goal of 2,000 pairs, the amount we collected is insanely impressive!"

George Burnz, manager of 5A was pleased as he believes that this effort epitomizes the meaning of "community caring," and Mark Hoogs stated, "Thanks to the generosity of so many people in our community in Lamorinda, 1,575 people will have shoes that may not have otherwise had them - allowing them to work and go about their daily life activities more safely - something we're fortunate to be able to take for granted."

Kiwanis announces Campolindo Key Club Service Award winners

Submitted by Steve Woehleke

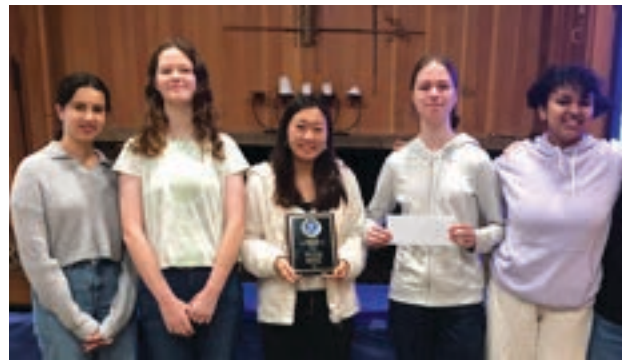


Photo provided

From left: Campo Key Club Officers Suraya Mathai-Jackson, Claire Damiano, Chloe Cheung, Nina Damiano, and Zarah Thomas.

The Kiwanis Club of Moraga Valley is proud to announce this year's Campolindo Key Club Service Award to Chloe Cheung ('24), their Key Club Fundraising Coordinator, who was chosen by the Campo Key Club Officers Suraya Mathai-Jackson, Claire Damiano, Nina Damiano, and Zarah Thomas.

In the words of these impressive officers: "We chose Chloe to receive the Key Club Community Service Award because she has gone above and beyond her role as Fundraising Coordinator, taking initiative in planning events and showing up to every Key Club meeting with enthusiasm and new ideas. She was incredibly helpful in our

garage sale fundraiser, organizing supplies, transporting donations, and leading volunteers, and the success of the garage sale was in large part, because of her dedicated time and effort. Chloe has been a very supportive officer, always ready to contribute her time or her ideas, and it has been an honor to work with her this year!"

The Kiwanis Club of Moraga Valley sponsors Key Clubs at each of the Lamorinda high schools and coordinates with these clubs on various service projects and leadership efforts as they offer great service to our extended communities in Contra Costa and Alameda counties.

Students raise money for Red Cross with Leis for Lahaina fundraiser

Submitted by MSD Superintendent Julie Parks



Photo provided

In the Moraga School District, a commitment to service learning is a priority. Community service helps to build empathy and connectedness for our students - and hopefully a lifelong commitment to giving back and supporting a healthy community! As students came back to school after a tragic disaster in Maui, it was an obvious next step to mobilize into action. Under the fantastic direction of Clare Fallon, Camino Pablo fifth-grade teacher, the vision for Leis for Lahaina emerged. Ms. Fallon collaborated with her fellow leadership teach-

ers throughout the district, Brett Lorie (JM), Jessica Labasco (LP), and Kelly Cavellero (Rheem) to develop a plan for leadership students to make leis in support of the victims of the Maui wildfire. The leis were made by students for students to purchase and wear on Sept. 1. All proceeds from the Leis will be donated to the American Red Cross. We are so proud of our Moraga students for supporting this effort and working so hard to ensure that Moraga can be part of the support for victims of this terrible tragedy.

In Memory

Ruth Caroline Dyer

July 13, 1921 - March 22, 2022

Covid-delayed services will be held 11 a.m. Saturday, 23 Sept. 2023, at St Anselm's Episcopal Church for Ruth Dyer, a resident of Lafayette for over 70 years.

Born in Oakland July 13, 1921, she grew up in Tulare County where her father grew oranges and olives. She died at home March 22, 2022.

The holder of B.A. and M.A. Degrees in History and a Teaching Credential, all from U.C Berkeley, Ruth taught at Acalanes High School for 30 years.

After her 1951 move to Lafayette, Ruth immersed herself in the community. At various times, she served on the St. Anselm's Vestry, the Lafayette and Contra Costa County Historical Societies, the Lafayette Sign Commission, the Lafayette Design Project, and the Alamo-Lafayette Cemetery District.

Ruth was predeceased by her parents Ephraim and Zoe Dyer, brothers Ephraim and Peter Dyer and their wives, and niece Carolyn Dyer.

She is survived by nephews Stephen, Peter, and John Dyer, and nieces Susanne Dyer and Jane Dyer Cook and their families.

Ruth's ashes will be interred beside those of her parents in the Old Pioneer Cemetery section of Hayward's Chapel of the Chimes Cemetery.

The family suggests memorial gifts to the Save the Redwoods League, Attn Alder Creek Grove Restoration Project, 114 Sansome St, San Francisco, CA 94104.

In Memory

Avonia "Vonie" Marsh Dondero

Feb. 12, 1929 - Aug. 30, 2023



Avonia "Vonie" Marsh Dondero passed away on Aug. 30, 2023 at the age of 94. She was born in Berkeley, California, on Feb. 12, 1929. She attended Berkeley High School, fall class of 1946; University of California, class of 1951, and married Raymond Stevenson

Dondero on Dec. 20, 1952. She was an Orinda resident from 1955 to 1997 and a Rossmoor resident since.

Vonie was a devoted mother, Chi Omega Sorority leader, accomplished ice skater, judge, and accountant, enthusiastic traveler, skilled weaver and seamstress, golfer, gardener, family genealogist and member of Daughters of the American Revolution.

Vonie was predeceased by her husband, Raymond Stevenson Dondero and her son, Steven Battaglia Dondero.

She is survived by her sister, Marilyn Marsh Wilson, daughter, Denise Dondero Schaffer, and son, David Edward Dondero, three grandsons, and five great-grandchildren, the most recent born just seven days before in a lovely reminder of the endless circle of life.

A private interment ceremony will be held at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Orinda at a future date.

In memory of Vonie, contributions may be made to the "UC Davis Foundation," directed to the George Marsh Scholarship Fund (Department of Food Science and Technology) at: UC Davis Gift Administrator, 202 Cousteau Place, Suite 185, Davis, CA 95618.

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 200 words) to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com, and include "Celebrations or Remembrances" in the subject line.

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.