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Orinda kicks off the festive season with crafts, lights, music and gingerbread winners

By Sora O'Doherty



Ben Zarrin welcomes visitors to the Orinda Village Holiday Market. Photo Sora O'Doherty

It was a packed day in Orinda Village on Dec. 2. The usual farmers' market filled Orinda Way, and starting at 11 a.m. in the old Bank of America building - now under development as a venue for three restaurants downstairs and offices above - Ben Zarrin of Paymun Real Estate Design & Development hosted a holiday market, with music provided by DJ Erik Rumors.

□ In the parking lot, there was a giant slide and a large bouncy house to entertain the children. In addition, there were a couple of food trucks on hand, as well as food service at the nearby farmers' market. Just outside the building, there was a colorful balloon arch for photographs, and volunteers made balloon animals or painted the children's faces.

□ Inside, the building, which is currently one large undivided hall, featured dozens of vendors of crafts and gifts. Most of the vendors were local, or were local representatives of larger companies. Offerings ranged from cosmetics and jewelry, home décor, rugs, woodwork, clothing and accessories to photography and house plants. The event attracted a large crowd of attendees, but everything went smoothly.

□ At 4:30 p.m., in the parking lot, the annual Hospice Tree of Lights was lit in remembrance of friends and loved ones who have died. For 37 years, Hospice of the East Bay has held Tree of Lights ceremonies. There are trees in Orinda, Lafayette and Moraga, locally. Donations to Hospice directly support end-of-life patient care.

□ At 6 p.m. the community gathered for Winterfest, presented by the city of Orinda Parks and Rec Department and sponsored by the Orinda Community Foundation and the Orinda Parks and Recreation Foundation. The event included the second annual lighting of the Orinda tree in Community Park. Inside the Community Center, the winners of the second annual Gingerbread House contest, hosted by the Orinda Tabor Sister City Foundation were announced. Winning the 6- to 10-year-old category, brother and sister Anderson and Coraline Compton recreated Orinda's historic Joaquin Moraga Adobe in gingerbread, creating everything from scratch by hand.

□ There were also refreshments, a concert by the choir of Orinda Intermediate School led by Choir Director Christina Holling, the Orinda PD "Stuff a Cruiser" Toy Drive, a craft for children led by the Orinda Teen Advisory Council, as well as a seasonal-themed photo opportunity for families who brought their own camera/phone.



The second annual lighting of the tree in Orinda Community Park on Dec. 2. Photo Sora O'Doherty



Children enjoyed the large bouncy house and the fun slide at the Orinda Village Holiday Market on Dec. 2.
Photo Sora O'Doherty



Brother and sister Coraline Compton (10) and Anderson Compton (6) worked together to create a gingerbread model of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe, including representations of crops raised on the rancho.
Photo Sora O'Doherty

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