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Lamorinda summer music camp coming next month

By Diane Claytor

In just a matter of days, summer vacation begins for Lamorinda students. Kids, teachers and school employees will go off to enjoy the lazy, hazy days of summer. School buildings will go dark, campuses will go quiet -- but for one week in June, music will fill the air around Campolindo High School.

The Lamorinda Summer Music camp will bring fourth through eighth graders to Campolindo to have fun learning, enjoying and playing instrumental music.

Under the tutelage of Tana Barnett, Campolindo's director of instrumental music, a staff of professional musicians serving as teachers, and local high school band and orchestra students serving as counselors, this summer enrichment program is designed to offer young students the opportunity to learn new skills, make new friends, and grow a lasting love of music.

With a degree from the Conservatory of Music at the University of the Pacific in both saxophone performance and music education, Barnett has spent 25 years teaching music, the majority of those in the south bay. She has performed with Dave Brubeck, the California, San Francisco and San Jose Wind Orchestras, and pit orchestras around the bay area.

As she completes her first year at Campo, teaching wind ensemble, concert band, orchestra, and AP music theory, Barnett is enthusiastic about the school's "very strong music program," and is really looking forward to next year when the Campo orchestra and wind ensemble will perform at Carnegie Hall, competing in the New York International Music Festival. "This will be no small feat," Barnett notes, "traveling with about 90 students as well as all their instruments."

The idea of a summer music camp actually began with a group of Campo students last year, Barnett explains. "The kids started an informal camp for middle and elementary school students," she says. "The high school students organized small chamber groups and learning experiences. There was no adult director, just a group of really motivated kids who are super excited about music." The program attracted 20 local campers, and the evaluation from both the participants and their parents was overwhelmingly positive. Several months ago, some of Barnett's students approached her with the idea of organizing a similar program this summer. Barnett has run summer music camps before and wanted some time to develop the structure for this particular program.

She reviewed her ideas with the students and got their concurrence. Barnett reached out to local school music directors, who agreed the camp was a good idea and wanted to participate. Joining her at this June 24-28 program are Edwin Cordoba, director of Instrumental Music at Acalanes; Brittany Shankle, director of Instrumental and Choral Music at Las Lomas; John Speers, who teaches elementary band and strings for the Orinda Unified School District; and Kevin Stewart, currently director of Saxophone Studies at the college level.

The camp runs from 9 a.m to 3:30 p.m., offers both before and after care, and is open to all levels of instrumental musicians, from beginners to advanced. There will be general music courses, music games, music theory, and lots of music playing. There will also be outdoor activities and games, as well as team building. "It is, after all, summer camp," Barnett exclaims. "We want it to be fun."

She envisions an instrument-specific and band program where high school students are paired with younger students who play at approximately the same level. "We'll play, work, have a whole general music experience and then at the end of the week, have a performance to showcase all we've done," Barnett says. The whole idea, Barnett states, is for music students to "of course, make music for a week," have fun, and connect with their peers from other schools.

For more information and to register, go to <https://lamorindasm.org>.

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