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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 can be sent to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com with the subject header In Service to the Community.

Springhill Elementary to Build New Track

Submitted by Jean Follmer



Lafayette Community Foundation awards \$5,000 grant to the Springhill Parent Faculty Club in support of the new Principal Bruce Wodhams Running Track. From left: Springhill Principal Heather Duncan, Student Council Sports Chair Lily O'Toole, Student Council Sports Chair Chris Rogers, Lafayette Community Foundation President Teresa Geringer, Springhill Parent Faculty Club President Amy Orear, Springhill Parent Faculty Club Legislative Representative and Facilities Champion Andi Rich, Springhill Grants Chair April Raffle. Photo provided

After nearly a decade of periodic discussions, the Lafayette School District Governing Board recently voted in favor of building a new track at Springhill Elementary School. The track is scheduled to be constructed this summer and will be named in honor of recently retired Principal Bruce Wodhams.

The Lafayette Community Foundation (LCF) recently awarded a \$5,000 grant to Springhill to help fund the cost of the new track. The Springhill Parent Faculty Club and proceeds from a Bruce Wodhams CD sale will fund

the balance. A ribbon cutting ceremony is anticipated at the start of the 2012/13 school year.

"LCF is excited to be a small part of helping the Springhill community build the Principal Bruce Wodhams Running Track," said Teresa Geringer, Lafayette Community Foundation president. "The project will benefit students for years to come and is a perfect fit for LCF's mission to enhance lives, culture and community. Thank you to the Springhill community for the opportunity to be a partner in this exciting project."

Lafayette Detective Awarded for Educating Youth about Alcohol and Drugs

Submitted by Carol Yates



Detective Berch Parker (center) smiles with Cathy Surges-Moscato, Community Service Officer (left) and Sergeant Howard Shiells (right) of the Lafayette Police Department. Photo Carol Yates

Once a year, the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors and the Alcohol and Other Drugs Advisory Board acknowledges both volunteers and non-volunteer individuals and groups. This year, Detective Berch Parker of the Lafayette Police Department won the 2012 People Who Make A Difference Award in the Non-Volunteer Individual category in Supervisor Gayle B. Uilkema's District II.

"Be aware, be present, and make your house a place where your kids and their friends will want to hang out, and model good behavior." This is the advice that Youth Diversion Officer Parker recommends to the parents of Lafayette.

Parker conducts presentations to classes, parents and local groups addressing the consequences of drugs and alcohol. He has guided students over the years, by helping them make better choices.

Last May, he presented to the Emergency Preparedness Commission regarding "Threat Assessment in Schools; Managing Threatening Situations & Creating a Safe

School Climate." He is both a role model and a teacher who has developed strong relationships with the students, parents, and the schools while making valuable contributions to the community.

Carol Ashford, an Acalanes High School administrator said, "If we had an award, we would give it to him. He's part of the school."

The mission of the Alcohol and Other Drugs Advisory Board is to assess family and community needs regarding treatment and prevention of alcohol and drug abuse problems. Findings and recommendations are reported to Contra Costa Health Services, the Board of Supervisors, and the communities served.

Three Local Schools Help Charity Give Much-Needed Garments to Teens

Clothing drives wrapped up at Bentley School, Acalanes and Miramonte High Schools recently, with more than 400 gently-used garments donated by students to the local homegrown charity, 1 Closet. Founder Laura Graham, 15, who started the charitable organization with her mom, Sue, in 2011 said the response from all the teenagers has been positive. What she has explained to the students involved in giving is how beneficial the donations have

been to teens in need. "Laura found out that having clothing that makes a teen feel good has a strong influence on them attending school," said Graham's mother, Sue. "They want to fit in." To date, Graham has collected, boxed and distributed more than 3,000 garments for low income teens in the East Bay to organizations including Boys and Girls Clubs in Oakland and Richmond, and to Alameda Foster Care. J. Wake

Lafayette Girl Scout Volunteers, Leaders Honored

Submitted by Chrissa Harley Ventrelle



Photo provided

Lafayette Girl Scout volunteers and leaders were honored for dedicating themselves to building girls of courage, confidence and character during Girl Scout Volunteer Week April 16-22, which includes Leader Appreciation Day April 22. Each volunteer and leader gives selflessly of her or his time to make Girl Scouting a meaningful and fun learning experience for

girls. Thanks to the 2012 Outstanding Leader Awards recipients, from left: Suzy Pak, Lisa Sangninet, Nancy Wallace, Jennifer Donat, Trina Audley, Jenn Stedman, Molly Wendt and Susie DeCarlo (not pictured) and to the 2012 Outstanding Volunteer Awards recipients (not pictured): Michelle Carmon, Janene Goodman and Marguerite Brackett.

AAUW Awards Scholarships to 10 Outstanding Local Young Women

Submitted by Sandy Fox-Sohner



Top row, scholarship winners and keynote speaker, from left: Carlyn Wright, Annie Ye, Dr. Margaret Race, Samya Faiq, Elizabeth Sandoval-Torres; front row, Tech Trek winners: Anna Fields, Caroline Sernett, Audrey Concepcion, Maya Ramesh, Morgan Rogers, Cara Wolfe Photo provided

It is the mission of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) to break down barriers for women and girls by promoting education and supporting their personal and professional growth. On April 22, the Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette (OML) branch of AAUW gathered with members, parents, and friends to award 10 remarkable young women from Lamorinda schools with Tech Trek camp scholarships or college scholarships.

Tech Trek is a week-long summer camp where girls are inspired to consider careers in science, technology, engineering, or math: the STEM fields. Tech Trek's specific mission is to break down the barriers that prevent women from entering STEM professions. A recent study conducted by AAUW, "Why So Few," documents the much smaller percentage of women in science and math careers as compared to men.

The OML AAUW branch has provided a total of 47 scholarships to Tech Trek camp for local seventh-grade girls in the past 15 years. This year, six Lamorinda girls will be attending the Grace Hopper Tech Trek camp at Stanford University. Each Tech Trek scholarship winner was presented with a certificate, a book highlighting ingenious inventions by women, and an AAUW journal to take to camp to record their experience.

The Tech Trek scholarship winners for 2012 are Anna Fields and Caroline Sernett (Orinda Intermediate School), Audrey Concepcion and Maya Ramesh (Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School), and Morgan Rogers and Cara Wolfe (Stanley Intermediate School). These girls are outstanding students with a passion for science and math. Each girl read their application essay at the ceremony, indicating their wide range of career goals, including neurology, medicine, marine biology, rain forest protection, coral reef

research and protection, astronomy, math, architecture, computer animation, and engineering design.

The four college scholarship winners for 2012 are Carlyn Wright (Miramonte High School), Annie Ye (Campolindo High School), Samya Faiq (Acalanes High School), and Elizabeth Sandoval-Torres from Saint Mary's College. All of the scholarship winners were awarded with certificates and flowers, and each gave a presentation regarding their incredible community service and career goals.

Margaret Race, Ph.D., gave the keynote presentation for the awards ceremony, entitled "From Mudflats to Mars: A Personal Odyssey." Race is an ecologist who works with NASA and the SETI institute, where she focuses on astrobiology, searches for extraterrestrial life, and science policy issues. She chose this presentation topic, she says, "Because my career path has taken many turns. The career I am in now did not exist when I finished my degree. It has been a true odyssey, from marine biology to the solar system."

Race specializes in planetary protection—how to plan robotic and human missions in ways that ensure environmental protection of both the Earth and locations in outer space.

Knowing that microbes can survive the harsh environment of space, the ecologist stresses the importance of planetary protection, asking what precautions we need to take for future missions to other planets—and how to prepare for missions that will return to Earth with samples from other worlds. Race has offered to work with the OMLAAUW Tech Trek committee in the coming year.

Anyone interested in supporting the AAUW-OML Tech Trek and scholarship programs, or joining AAUW, may obtain more information by visiting www.aauwoml.org.