

Assisteens show elementary kids how to make a difference

Submitted by Betty Miller



An Assisteens volunteer paints the face of a youngster at a recent Assisteens party. Photo provided Orinda, Emily Forkas.

Since 1977, Assisteens, an auxiliary of Assistance League of Diablo Valley, has encouraged teens to volunteer by raising funds that benefit children and seniors in Contra Costa County. Over the years, Assisteens has expanded its membership to include both girls and boys, as well as high school and middle school students. Meeting students from other local schools, these energetic game changers have developed skills in leadership, organization and community service while having fun.

Assisteens from Lafayette include Brooke Clark, Lisa Erenstein, Meher George, Shreekar Pandey, Shrida Pandey and Greg Stenger. Moraga Assisteens include Ana Bernardo, Grace Burnite, Elle D'Iorio, Janet Guo, Devon Lau, Ellen White. And from

At a recent regular meeting, Assisteens Auxiliary Liaison Linda Benetar specified that Assisteens activities include hosting two parties, one with gifts from Santa and a springtime event, corresponding with homebound seniors and delivering a gift basket to each of them in the spring, as well as supplying snack packs for receiving center emergency kits. Additionally, Assisteens commit to working at the Assistance League Way Side Inn Thrift Shop, the chapter's primary fundraiser located in Lafayette, and supporting chapter programs throughout the year.

To learn more about Assisteens, please visit this website: diablovalley.assistanceleague.org.

Orinda musicians share instruments with Cuban kids

Submitted by Leslie Darwin



Terry Miller with the Children of Clave Del Sol, a guitar orchestra in Havana.

Orinda residents Terry Miller and Leslie Darwin O'Brien recently returned from Cuba where they performed at The Havana Jazz Festival.

Miller is an internationally acclaimed bass player and producer. O'Brien is a singer who performs in San Francisco and is known for her kid caroling at various Lamorinda music camps. This is the third time for Miller to visit Cuba this year. He is the founder of Terry's Kids, a nonprofit foundation whose mission is "a better world through music."

"This trip we were able to take guitar strings to Clave del Sol, a children's guitar orchestra in one of the poorer sections of Havana," Miller explains. The strings were presented to the kids by Julio Reyes, a well-known classical guitarist and conductor at Holy Names

University in Oakland. Reyes and O'Brien serve on the board of Terry's Kids.

"I am so moved by what Terry does. It is incredible to see the kids in Cuba doing music with the players from the USA. It truly is a language without words," O'Brien says.

Miller also took nine suitcases of instruments, costumes and clothes to La Colmenita, a children's theatre troupe in Havana.

O'Brien explains, "The trips are magical. Terry is well-connected in the American music industry, so he hires top-notch musicians to accompany art patrons on the trips: There's music at every meal, mostly with American and Cuban musicians playing together."

If you want to learn more about Terry's Kids, visit tmkids.org.



From left, Terry Miller, founder of Terry's Kids, with Leslie Darwin O'Brien and Julio Reyes, Terry's Kids board members. Photos provided

In Memory

Robert (Bob) Campbell

December 2, 1928 – January 23, 2017

Resident of Rossmoor



Loving husband of Georgianna Campbell (deceased), beloved kindergarten teacher at Del Ray Elementary School in Orinda. Loving father of Heather Woodward (Sam), Matt Campbell (Amy), and Beth Fitzgerald (Kevin). Loving grandfather of Hadley Woodward, Colin Campbell, and Kilian and Rory Fitzgerald. Dear brother of Jack Campbell (deceased).

Bob was raised in San Francisco. He graduated from Lowell High ('46) and the University of California, Berkeley ('50), where he was a member of Sigma Chi fraternity. Received MA from San Francisco State University in Biological Science.

In the summer of 1952 Bob was the Director of the Student Section at the California Academy of Science. His first teaching

job was in 1952 at Anly Union High School in Sebastopol, where he taught Physics and General Science and coached tennis. From 1953 to 1956 he taught at James Denman Junior High School in San Francisco.

In 1956 Bob moved to Moraga to teach at Miramonte High School in Orinda, where he was the first Biology and Chemistry teacher and the Science Department Chair. Subsequent roles over the next twenty-six years included counselor, assistant principal, Leadership (Student Government) teacher, and tennis, swimming, and cross-country coach. Bob raised his family in Moraga, and his children all attended Miramonte. In 1982 he transferred to Las Lomas High School in Walnut Creek where he taught Biology, Chemistry, and Leadership for nine more years.

Bob's professional accomplishments include his role as one of nine high school chemistry teachers in the United States chosen to contribute to CHEM STUDY, a new approach to teaching high school chemistry that revolutionized traditional pedagogy. In 1980 he received the California Coaches Association High School Girls' Cross-Country Coach of the Year award. The American Chemical Society named Bob the Outstanding East Bay High School Chemistry Teacher in 1991, the same year he retired from teaching. Los Lomas dedicated their 1991 Yearbook to Bob.

In addition to his passion for teaching and coaching, Bob loved Natural History. In the summer of 1954 he was a State Park Ranger Naturalist at Big Basin State Park and in 1961 a Planetarium Lecturer at Diablo Valley College. In the summer of 1967 he led a field trip "Natural History of the Sierra Nevada" for St. Mary's College Extension. During school breaks Bob led backpack trips for teenagers in the Sierra Nevada, Grand Canyon, and Death Valley. He had a deep and abiding love for John Muir, and his fondest memories included introducing groups of up to twenty teenagers to "inner resources they never realized they had" on the John Muir Trail. He made this 216-mile trip from Yosemite to Mr. Whitney twelve times.

A devoted runner, Bob co-founded the Orinda Road Runners Club. His marathons included the 1974 Boston Marathon, which he ran in 3:15. He was a longtime member of Forma Gym (the former Walnut Creek Sports and Fitness Club).

Bob was a strong supporter of the charitable organization FACE (Family Aid to Catholic Education) and dedicated to St. Monica's Muffin Man Program, delivering food to Oakland dispensaries.

A funeral mass will be held at St. Monica's Catholic Church, 1001 Camino Pablo in Moraga on Friday, February 10, at 10:30 am. A reception will immediately follow in the Peace Room at St. Monica's. Interment will be at 2:30 pm at Queen of Heaven Cemetery, 1965 Reliez Valley Rd, Lafayette. In place of flowers the family ask that donations be made to FACE online at <http://www.oakdiocese.org/giving>.

In Memory

Warren L. Engstrom

April 22, 1925 - January 23, 2017

Warren Engstrom a longtime resident of Moraga passed away peacefully on Jan. 23 in Redding, California. A native of Oakland, he was a World War II combat veteran and a graduate of UC Berkeley. A former financial planner, he was active in the Lake Merritt Breakfast Club, Moraga SIRS, the OrindaHiking Club and was past president of the Moraga Historical Society and the Veterans Hospital Christmas Committee. Warren also constructed dozens of bluebird houses around the Moraga area and fledged over two thousand bluebirds.

He was the loving husband of Shirley, who preceded him in death in 2012. He is survived by two sons, a daughter, and two grandchildren. Any donations may be made to a charity of choice.

In Memory

Renee Zeidan



Renee Zeidan, co-owner of Nerd4Rent/Lamorinda Technology, and longtime Lafayette resident, passed away Dec. 31, 2016.

Renee was the beloved wife of Edward Zeidan, mother of three children and grandmother of three.

Renee was a gentle, loving person, who lived for her family, and loved to care for and support them in every way. Renee was a volunteer at the schools, and at St. Perpetua Church, in Lafayette.

There will be a celebration of life from 3-5 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 25, at the Lafayette Veterans Memorial, 3780 Mt Diablo Blvd, Lafayette. If you're planning to attend, please RSVP to edward@lamorindatechnology.com

In lieu of flowers, anyone who wishes, is encouraged to donate, in memory of Renee Zeidan, to The American Cancer Society, or John Muir Medical Center Oncology Department in Walnut Creek, California, 94598.