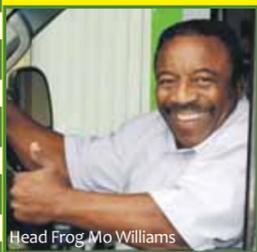


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Moraga businesswoman's venture focuses on mixing things up

By Sophie Braccini



Amy Schofield enjoys Moraga with her family.

Photo provided

Little suburbs populated by educated people have the striking ability to foster female entrepreneurs who draw from their previous professional experience, finding outlets for their creative energy at different stages of their lives by starting new businesses. Some wait for their children to be out of school, others like Amy Schofield invent something that they can manage while raising young children. Schofield's business, Mixify Beauty, offers a range of online kits to create beauty products: nail polish, lip-gloss and perfume. The mother of two daughters, ages 2 and 6, also created a blog in her spare time to help people discover her new hometown: Moraga.

Schofield was born in one continent, Australia, her husband in another, the Indian sub-continent, and they met in a third, Europe. How they ended up in Moraga is a long story, where jobs and schools had something to do with the final decision. The European encounter happened in London, where the

future couple attended the same business school. Schofield's career developed in communication and procurement, until she centered her life around her two daughters. But her entrepreneurial spirit kept pushing her toward more business adventures.

The first was bridesmaids' dress rentals. She quickly tired of the business where she says some never return the dresses they were supposed to just rent and most of the work was about collecting money. But from that first endeavor came the idea of creating nail polish colors that would match the dresses. She played with the idea, and came out with Mixify's first product: a nail polish kit.

Schofield says that she was not a girly-girl growing up, but that for her, this kit is a way to express creativity, and have fun, by yourself or with a group of girlfriends. The kit contains eight colors: five basics – red, blue, yellow, white, black – and three “passion” colors based on individual selection, to be mixed to create any color

imaginable. The kit includes five, 10 or 20 uncolored nail polish bottles with base either shiny regular or matte, a mixing tray, funnel, spoons and stirrers, mixing balls and instructions.

According to Schofield, the kits are popular for bachelorette parties, birthday parties and any girls' night out-type activity. She adds that her clients can be in elementary school – though needing supervision – up to any age.

The second product she started with the same artisan-make-it-yourself concept is a lip gloss, and the most recent is perfume. The new perfume kits were presented at the GBK's pre-Oscar celebrity lounge, and her website features celebrities' with the personified fragrance they created. The kit includes three options for the “head” note, three for the “heart” note, and three different bases. Schofield says that she does not consider herself a “nose,” but that making perfume opens a new door to olfactory senses as well as an understanding of what makes the uniqueness of a fragrance.

Schofield did not forget to add a philanthropic side to her business. She donates to Near and Dear Fundraising, a group that serves California schools, and she also wants to be involved locally.

The proud mom adds that entrepreneurship is something that can be modeled. She did not start being an entrepreneur until her 30s, but her oldest daughter came to her last Christmas because she wanted to create her own line of products: Christmas lights that she assembles and now sells on Etsy. For more information, visit www.mixifybeauty.com.

Building interest for Moraga through a blog

As a relatively new resident of Moraga, and part of Viva Moraga, a group that wants to see more economic development downtown, Schofield wrote a blog called “10+ unique things to do in hidden Moraga, the San Francisco East Bay town that you've never heard of ... and it's closer than you think.” The postings are on-line on playbuzz.com, just enter “Moraga” in the search at the top of the page. The 10+ things include Saint Mary's NCAA's basketball team, the Moraga Art Gallery, Natasha Grasso's jewelry business, the ultimate disc golf parcours, Captains' Vineyard, and much more. She welcomes feedback and suggestions.

Views against marijuana

It is anticipated that no commercial cannabis uses would be authorized by Contra Costa County until such time as a cannabis tax ballot measure has been approved by county voters. A county cannabis tax initiative could be considered by voters at the next general election in November, so regulations permitting commercial cannabis uses are not expected to become effective until that time at the earliest.

Debbie Barnett spoke on behalf of ADAPT, the Alcohol Drug Abuse Prevention Team, at the March 20 council meeting and suggested a buffer of one mile from incorporated lands. According to the draft report prepared by the Contra Costa County Department of Conservation and Development for the County Board of Supervisors current state law requires a buffer of 600 feet between any cannabis business licensed by the state and any K-12 school, day care center or youth center. A county ordinance may increase this buffer distance and may also establish buffers between cannabis businesses and other sensitive uses, such as parks.

Gracie Chen, who is a student at Orinda Intermediate School, stated she feels that more legalization of marijuana will promote teen use, citing higher use by teens in states where marijuana is legal. Other speakers brought up concerns

about how they might be exposed to marijuana grows while running on trails outside city limits, or the potential use of pesticides and poisons in outdoor grows, water use concerns during drought years, how there is already an excess of marijuana in California.

City Council Member Darlene Gee generally agreed with the speakers' points of view. Gee doesn't think that the benefits outweigh the costs of commercial marijuana regulation. She prefers consistency with the regulatory approach of the city. Mayor Amy Worth agreed with speakers who talked about runners being exposed to marijuana grows when their trails take them outside the city limits.

Vice Mayor Inga Miller agreed about areas near schools and trails, but acknowledged that 60 percent of voters in the area voted in favor of legalizing marijuana, so she thought that perhaps remote areas of the county would be acceptable. Council Member and runner Eve Phillips said that Contra Costa is not an agricultural county and so doesn't seem like the county for growing marijuana.

While several other meeting attendees expressed their concerns about marijuana cultivation and use, resident Harlan Van Wye said that “prohibition of marijuana is just plain stupid.” He said there is a

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lot of misinformation being distributed, but that the voters approved recreational use of marijuana.

“The people have spoken,” he added, “and they want marijuana reasonably available and reasonably regulated.”

Orinda has already adopted laws governing marijuana within city limits. Although the city is not permitted to ban indoor grows completely, the council did limit indoor grows to six plants and banned all outdoor personal or commercial grows, as well as prohibiting all commercial land uses and sales within the city.

The council chose not to ban deliveries to local residents from outside the city, finding that the activity would be too difficult to police. Currently within the unincorporated areas of the county the commercial cultivation, distribution, storage, manufacturing, processing and sale of marijuana and the outdoor cultivation of cannabis for personal use are prohibited and will remain so unless new regulations are adopted by the Board of Supervisors.

More information about the county's marijuana regulations can be found at www.cccounty.us/cannabis, or by contacting Ruben Hernandez, Current Planning Principal Planner, at Ruben.Hernandez@dcd.cccounty.us.

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