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# Lamorinda Schools

Lafayette Elementary • Los Perales • Miramonte • Orinda Academy • Orinda Intermediate • Saklan Valley School • Sleepy Hollow • Springhill • Stanley Middle • St. Perpetua School • Wagner Ranch

## What Do You Know About "The Luck of the Draw?"

By Jean Follmer



Luck of the Draw artwork on display at Fastframe

It all started five years ago when LASF was approached by Fastframe of Lafayette owner, Anthony Ruiz. Mr. Ruiz wanted to partner with LASF to display the artwork of elementary students throughout the Lafayette community. LASF agreed and "The Luck of the Draw" was born. Ruiz' distaste for judging artwork led to the random drawing of student names from each of the elementary schools. He believes that "all art is valid," including the art of children. He furthers this thought by saying "much of (the students') artwork is really pretty good. It's certainly better than Blue Canvas at MOMA."

Throughout the school year, LASF teachers work with



Emma Workman, 1st grade, Springhill Elementary Photo J. Follmer

students in each of the Lafayette schools. Gigi Voris, an LASF teacher at Happy Valley Elementary and owner of The Art Room in Lafayette, says the LASF teachers "try to schedule projects to coincide with what the students are studying in class." Toward the end of the academic year, each of the schools holds its annual art show. After the art show, student names are drawn for next year's Luck of the Draw and the winning artists are notified. At that point, the winning artwork is sent to Fastframe of Lafayette for framing. Ruiz donates his time, talent and materials to mat and frame each of the pieces. LASF Art Chair Sandra Pazos said, "Anthony should get a lot of credit for this. It takes a lot of his time." Ruiz loves his work and says, "You need to find something you really enjoy and that pleases you. If you're doing what you love to do, it's not always about the money." Ruiz also donates his leftover scraps and supplies to the LASF art teachers throughout the year.

Each fall, The Luck of Draw holds an opening night at the gallery in Fastframe of Lafayette. The artists, their families and members of the community are all invited to attend. This year was the biggest

turnout so far. Ruiz said the event has become so popular, "it's reached the point where kids and families are looking for it." After opening night, the artwork is displayed at Fastframe of Lafayette before rotating to the Town Hall Theatre, Chow, Papillion and then back to the schools. The framed artwork is ultimately returned to each artist.

One of the lucky artists this year is Springhill Elementary first grader, Emma Workman. Emma created her piece last year in her kindergarten LASF art class. Emma wants to be an artist or a rock star when she grows up. Emma brought her whole family to the Luck of the Draw opening night and really enjoyed it. Emma said, "Art is so fun and when you do it lots of times you'll be better and you can write a book with it." One of Emma's favorite books is "The Lion and the Little Red Bird" by Elisa Klevin because she loves the artwork in it. She had the chance to meet Elisa Klevin at the Lafayette Library. When asked what her favorite LASF project this year is, she said it's the desert one "where you tear the paper." In the spring, Emma's framed piece will be returned to her and she'll be able to enjoy the LASF

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Luck of the Draw for years to come.

Since Luck of the Draw has been so warmly received in Lafayette, Ruiz thinks it would be great to get something similar going in Moraga and Orinda too. The fact that each student has a chance of winning is the essential element of the program to Ruiz. It encourages them to find their inner artist and be confident about it. Ruiz strongly believes that anyone can be an artist and "children shouldn't be told not to draw". He says The Luck of the Draw "encourages personal well being. It's about kids feeling good."

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## Holiday Cheer for the Family

By Margie Ryerson

There's a reason that we watch the same videos year after year during the holiday season. "It's a Wonderful Life," "A Christmas Story," and "Miracle on 34th Street" are some of the most popular holiday films. They portray a simpler time when life was slower-paced, less consumer-oriented, and "stress" wasn't a well-known word.

These days, families often try to pack in lots of activities in an attempt to create holiday cheer and memories. We want to live life to the fullest, and sometimes this means living life to the most frenetic. If your calendar becomes too crowded and you are rushing from one activity to another, it is hard to savor the experiences you are having. Limiting your holiday socializing can prevent your schedule from becoming too hectic and can allow time for meaningful family activities.

Children usually long for traditions, and many can be quite simple. Asking your children what their favorite family activities are, before the holidays are upon us, allows you to

pick some that are easy to implement. One friend of Italian heritage has prepared homemade raviolis with her children each Christmas. This tradition was always her children's favorite, and still is, even though they are now in their 20's.

Gift-giving has changed radically from simpler times. Where each child may have received six or seven gifts for Christmas or one gift for each night of Chanukah, nowadays it can take hours to open all of the gifts. Children may not appreciate what they receive if they are inundated with presents.

As parents, you can agree upon how many gifts each child will receive, how expensive the total will be for each child, and what you will do together to create a memorable holiday season. You can decide to produce simple gifts for friends and relatives as a family, volunteer together for some of the many worthwhile charities in the Bay area, or even create a "do-it-yourself" volunteer project.

One family took the initiative and asked their local



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Safeway store if it would donate some of its unsold Christmas trees and decorations the day before Christmas. When they got the okay, they contacted a shelter in Oakland and arranged to deliver trees, ornaments, and gifts they purchased and wrapped. The parents said they enjoyed showing their children how even a simple volunteer effort could effectively bring joy to others.

Here's to a happy, healthy, and simple holiday season for all!



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