

LAMORINDA WEEKLY

[Home](#) | [Read Online](#) | [Archive](#) | [Links](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Contact](#)

[printer friendly](#)

[download pdf](#)

Published November 12th, 2008

Moraga as a College Town?

By Sophie Braccini



SMC's Neal McSherry with the Terzetto's banner by the gym on game day Photo Edy Schwartz

When she attended the last Moraga Chamber of Commerce meeting Roos Pal, owner of Terzetto Cuisine, heard music to her ears -- a way for her business to reach and attract the students that live on the nearby St Mary's College (SMC) campus. As Neal McSherry, SMC's Director of Ticket Sales, unfolded his plan to encourage student attendance at athletic games, the business community saw an opportunity to provide incentives alongside the campus for students to come and shop in town.

"We have set up a system of points that the students will earn as they come and cheer," explained McSherry. "The college has set in place a tracking system that allows us to automatically update the students' points. The points earn them prizes and benefits." McSherry thinks that the business community could be involved at two different levels: first by giving out coupons or merchandise to students who go and support campus sports and second, the businesses themselves could be part of the reward system. The St Mary's group has identified twenty one local businesses that could interest students.

"I think this is great," says Pal. "I had been looking at ways to reach the students and had tried to talk to different people but had not been very successful. The opportunity presented at the Chamber was exactly what I was looking for." Wasting no time, McSherry and Pal launched the first operation on Sunday November 9th. Terzetto offered 200 "2 for 1" lunch coupons to the first students to come to the women's basketball home game. Additionally, she gave out four \$25 gift cards for students reaching a certain level of points. Pal is planning to continue working with the campus to provide them with new and interesting things on an ongoing basis.

"The college expects about 1200 visitors for each basketball game this season," says Moraga Chamber President Edy Schwartz, "we can find opportunities for our Moraga businesses to provide services or package discount plans for those games."

Schwartz would like to see folks come for an early dinner at one of Moraga's local establishments, or stop by afterwards for a drink or dessert to top off the evening. To entice SMC students to Shop Moraga First and work toward the integration of the college and the Town of Moraga has always been a key element in her platform.

"I am very excited that the business community is getting involved," says McSherry, "we are looking forward to a great partnership." The idea for the program was born in the SMC Marketing department between McSherry, Mike Samuels and Stacy Hamaguchi. An alumni himself, McSherry knows that Moraga may not always be a prime destination for students. The group would like to see more support from the community for their games as well. "We are starting a grass root campaign," says the young Director, "when students see that businesses support them, they will come to town more. When residents get more information and are aware of the returns for their town, they will come more often to the campus and get that spirit going, it's truly a win-win dynamic."

Reach the reporter at: sophie@lamorindaweekly.com

[Home](#) | [Read Online](#) | [Archive](#) | [Links](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Contact](#)

[back to top](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA