## Local residents rally in response to North Bay fires

By Cathy Dausman



www.lamorindaweekly.com

Brooke Penfold collects items for refugees at the Moraga Country Club

North Bay wildfires, the needs for those who had already been Shelter. Clothing.

ping up to help.

Last week, four students from Burton Valley Elementary School – fifth-graders Sam Bishop, Hannah Burks, Mollie Scholfield and TK student Malcolm Bellias – planned (on their own) a bake sale for Oct. 13 to raise money for the Sonoma County Resilience Fund in support of the victims of the North Bay Council Member Cam Burks.

the school, putting posters up and spreading the word," said Burks, whose daughter Hannah was one of the group. "And ... baking cupcakes, cookies, Rice Krispie treats, etcetera."

they quickly set up a table on Merriewood (just outside of the school where everyone exits, Burks said), and started the sale. "Within 30 parents swarming the area, enjoy- at all the centers was astounding," ing the treats and making very generous donations.

this special community. These kids dismal. It's harder, but also much

Thile evacuations continued did this all on their own," Burks more rewarding, to send hope as and ashes began to cool in said. "I've never seen a group of devastated areas of the ferocious kids so energized and committed over the past few days."

Others within Lamorinda found displaced were immediate. Food. ways to help, reaching out informally to their neighbors and local Lamorindans have been step- organizations or working through established nonprofits.

Zahra Hasanian, who is the disaster relief chair for the nonprofit Be the Star You Are, drove to Napa and Solano counties Oct. 12 with volunteer Chelsea Pelchat and Executive Director Cynthia Brian, who is from the Napa County area and whose family and friends have been devastated by the fire, to defires, according to Lafayette City liver boxes of books to evacuation centers housing people who fled "They spent the last few days their homes after recent North Bay relentlessly campaigning around fires. "Those affected by the fire have been squatting in these centers for days without any source of entertainment," Hasanian said. "We figured that anyone, young or old, can always enjoy a good book."

Hasanian said she often thinks As school let out on Friday, of herself as helpless against things as arbitrary and ruthless as natural disasters, but her attitude changed with every smile and thank you they received as they handed books minutes, they sold out and raised to people in person. "We went to \$655. It was literally a mob scene several different evacuation cenwith dozens of students and their ters, and the kindness of the people she said. "When disaster strikes, it's easy to send prayers, watch the "It was unbelievable to witness news, or complain about how our and made me so proud to be part of world is becoming more and more



Burton Valley students raise money for fire victims

Photo provided



Chelsea Pelchat and Zahra Hasanian bring boxes of books to an evacuation center Oct. 12. Photo Cynthia Brian

Photo Gary Irwin

well as concrete help. Hope heals."

If you'd like to donate items through Be the Star You Are, contact Hasanain at (925) 899-4634 or visit http://www.BetheStarYouAre. org. They need the following items: masks, diapers, feminine hygiene products, tissues, wipes, sanitizer, towels, books, art supplies, and

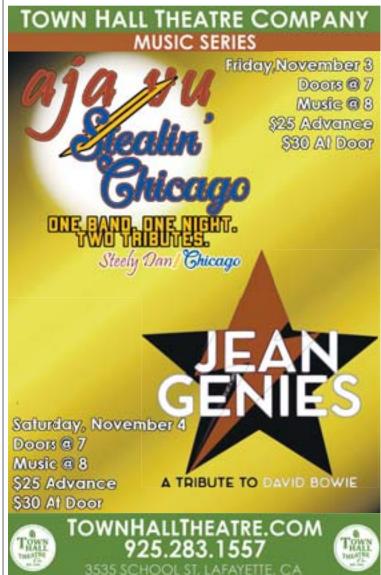
Realtor Paddy Kehoe is brokering needs for fire evacuees one family at a time. Working with Orinda's Church of Santa Maria and the Catholic fraternal service Knights of Columbus in Santa Rosa, he hopes to see Lamorinda families adopt stricken Santa Rosa families, especially those living "paycheck to paycheck" to offer relief and meet their basic needs.

"Right now we're hearing the families are just shell shocked," Kehoe said, so plans have not yet been finalized, but he wants to see that donations are family-specific rather than simply sending "truckcan meet the needs of a now-homeless Santa Rosa family, call Kehoe at (925) 878-5869 or email him at paddyrealtor@gmail.com.

Moraga Country Club swim coach Brooke Penfold said many of her friends have "lost their work, home, or both." Penfold said her family and Rohnert Park home are shelters," she said. safe, but Sonoma County "is currently in crisis." She is currently

loads of jackets" to the north. If you collecting supplies for Hidden Valley Satellite School and other Santa Rosa elementary schools. "All donations will go first to the families of students whose school or home was burned down and the schools receiving displaced students; anything that goes above and beyond that will be brought to evacuation

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