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Local nonprofits hit hard by shelter-in-place order



Photo Pippa Fisher

Former board member Kathy Merchant (left) hands over supplies to Las Trampas Day Program Supervisor Kate Hartline in front of a list of much needed donation requests. Items should be dropped off weekdays between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m.

By Pippa Fisher

Among many finding themselves in the completely uncharted waters of COVID-19 and the shelter-in-place order are the area's nonprofits serving some of the community's most vulnerable, for whom the consequences are potentially devastating.

Spring is a prime fundraising time of year with many organizations planning large galas and auctions – all now canceled. Las Trampas, Lafayette's day center serving adults with developmental disabilities, is particularly hard hit. The center had to

cancel its April Spring Benefit Dinner, upon which it relies for funding for its current fiscal year budget, ending in June.

"Even if we are able to postpone the event," explains Executive Director Daniel Hogue, "it will leave the organization with an estimated \$250,000 shortfall during our current fiscal year resulting in significant impacts on our programs and services."

Las Trampas Board Vice President Liz DeForest notes that this comes "on top of the challenge that the state budget this year once again underfunds the services we and other entities provide."

Hogue says the center's main focus as it navigates through these unprecedented events "is to ensure that our programs will be there on the other side, especially for future participants who will be aging out of the school system," adding, "To do that, we need financial support to get us through this storm."

DeForest says that the center is currently providing additional support staff from the day program to all residential programs and engaging individuals throughout the day in the home setting to minimize emotional and mental health issues.

"We are allocating nec-

essary supplies and personal protective equipment to residences, setting up grocery delivery services for participants to minimize community exposure," says DeForest, adding that they are also maintaining essential administrative staff who are working remotely and supporting staff needs to take time off for child care or personal care.

Las Trampas has issued a community appeal for desperately needed hygiene and basic food supplies. Items can be dropped off between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. at 3460 Lana Lane off Moraga Boulevard opposite Leigh Creekside Park. For hands-free pickup from home, email merchant70@aol.com. Las Trampas also welcomes donations through its website.

The organization is not alone in its struggle. Lafayette Partners in Education has had to cancel its main auction fundraiser. Instead it is urging support of its online bidding, with live items bidding ending at 5 p.m. April 3.

"The cancellation of our annual event/fundraiser has a huge financial impact on LPIE. From expecting this event to raise over \$350,000, we are now very concerned that we will fall far short of the \$4.5 million fundraising goal needed to meet our commitments to our districts and schools," explains LPIE Executive Director Myrna Kimmelman.

Kimmelman says she is heartened by the generosity of parents, businesses, and community members who have donated to the auction, and have been bidding and contributing to LPIE since. "Their support is not dimin-

ished by our cancellation, but instead gives us hope that as a community, we can work together to fund essential school programs for our students."

Nonprofit Lamorinda Village, a volunteer-dependent organization supporting seniors, also recognizes the good in the community.

"At our last Lamorinda Village board meeting in early March, we anticipated there would be a great need for senior support as that age range had been marked as the most vulnerable so we started sending out requests for volunteers," Lamorinda Village Operations Manager Kathryn Ishizu explains. "We managed to mobilize a large crew of volunteers overnight so when Connie from Diablo Foods asked if we could help them deliver groceries to their elderly shoppers, we were ready."

Ishizu says that since that partnership started it has added stores and pharmacies, over 80 community volunteers, and has served over 75 senior households with grocery shopping and pharmacy pickups. "And that number will climb as the news spreads. Lamorinda Village is here to help all at-risk seniors in our community stay safe during this time," says Ishizu.

Lamorinda Village Vice President Don Jenkins observes, "I believe that Lamorinda Village has helped the community see the strength that is derived when we all work together to help care for the people that need the most assistance in our community."

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How Will the Coronavirus Affect the Lamorinda Housing Market?



First, my group and I would like to express our concern with the current pandemic crisis. The health of our families, friends and loved ones worldwide is foremost in our minds. With everyone doing their part in the short term to flatten the curve through social distancing, we are optimistic that if we stick together our lives will return to some form of normalcy in the near future.

Due to the economic uncertainty and historic declines in the stock market, some buyers are retreating and some sellers are holding off from selling. These two groups will

lead to lower demand and lower supply, leaving our market with "real" buyers and sellers but at lower inventories.

Currently, real estate activities do not fall under Shelter in Place essential services so accessing listings will be done online. We are hopeful that this restriction will be lifted so we can get back to the business of helping people buy their dream homes. Being part of a community is more important than ever right now. If you have real estate questions, we are here for you and can set up a Q & A on the phone or through ZOOM.

For now be safe and take care of yourselves and your loved ones.

Sincerely,

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