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Newly renovated Las Trampas facility reopens

By Jennifer Wake



After over two long years of construction, Las Trampas, the developmental care facility in Lafayette set alongside the Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail was abuzz with excitement April 23 as dignitaries, donors, participants and their families returned for the campus' grand reopening.

The facility, which has served developmentally and intellectually disabled individuals since originally opening over 60 years ago, has been completely transformed, with caring attention to every detail, from automatic doors, handrails for the visually impaired, widened hallways for those with special ambulation needs to elevators, acoustic paneling, full-spectrum "tunable" lighting, and a digital communications system that can accommodate evolving technologies.

The newly renovated Las Trampas facility Photos courtesy Ian Craig

those with sensory issues, and handrails along the walls are formed to the human hand," Director of Philanthropy Katherine Koller said during a tour of the facility. Each room caters to specific needs of the Las Trampas community with high-tech features as well as wheel chair accessible and ADA compliant classrooms, a teaching kitchen, and raised outdoor garden beds. Natural light spills in from floor-to-ceiling windows with views of trees surrounding the property.

"Colors on the walls give subliminal cues, the lighting doesn't create shadows and never flickers, which helps

Amy Avilez, who has been a participant at Las Trampas since 1993, says she can't go back soon enough. "It's been rough with two days at Martinez (the temporary facility used during construction) and on Zoom three days (a week)," Amy explained between stopping to greet friends in the brightly lit hallway. Amy's mom, Patti, was surprised at how big the building was: "It's so clean and fresh."

The state-of-the-art facility is scheduled to reopen this month and is licensed to serve 120 participants, 50 of whom need assistance with ambulation, according to Executive Director Daniel Hogue. There is currently a waitlist of 32 people, 25 of whom want to start by June, Hogue said. Participants attend daytime classes offered Monday through Friday. They are considering opening the facility to the community on weekends, Koller said.

Michael Detrane, who is visually impaired, has been coming to Las Trampas for eight years and liked everything that has been done. "I like it a lot and how things are improving," he said, adding that he "can't wait to come back here and be fully on campus."

Michael's father, Joe, appreciated how thoughtful they've been with structural railings in the building as well as the lighting, which can be adjusted for brightness and color to create a more calming atmosphere for those with sensory issues.

Las Trampas board of directors president Michael Collier, who headed the capital campaign with his wife Connie, said the \$14-million project, which was delayed due to the pandemic and supply chain issues, has exceeded his expectations. "The facilities are amazing and what we're going to do for participants in the future . it tickles me," he said. "It's a beautiful site."

Former Lafayette mayor Don Tatzin was one of several dignitaries who attended the grand reopening, including former mayor Mike Anderson, current mayor Teresa Gerringer, council member Susan Candell, Contra Costa County Supervisor Candace Andersen, and many more. "This is a great addition to Lafayette and a wonderful facility for staff and participants," Tatzin said. "They redefined what a purpose-filled facility for adults can be. We're fortunate for this to be in Lafayette."



Large windows, special lighting and high-tech equipment grace the interior. Photos courtesy Ian Craig

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[back](#)

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