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Local woman hired as executive director of ONE Orinda



Photo Sora O'Doherty

Emily Allen, Executive Director of ONE Orinda

By Sora O'Doherty

In mid-July, the Orinda Network for Education (ONE Orinda) hired Emily Allen as executive director. Allen, who is a resident of Orinda, is close to the education community. Her husband is the head coach for Orinda Park Pool and has a math tutoring business working with Lamorinda students. She has two daughters at Miramonte High School, which is also the alma mater of her husband and his siblings. "Community is so important to me and my family," Allen says.

Allen worked for the De Young and Legion of Honor museums in San Francisco for almost 10 years, after

graduating with an art history degree from UC Santa Barbara. She's also done a lot of fundraising, including for Children's Hospital. Allen, a native of Walnut Creek, says that she grew up watching her father give back to the community.

ONE brings all the parents clubs together into one organization, Allen explains. The parents' clubs are still "boots on the ground," but ONE helps them share strategies and so on. Money raised at each school goes back to that school but ONE holds onto the funds and invests them together to create an endowment.

Allen is now working with the parents' clubs, the

school superintendent and the principals of the Orinda elementary and middle schools. "Things are going really well," Allen says. "The board did a great job creating the organization, which grew so much that they thought it was time to have an executive director."

Allen would like to have a community event for school families and the wider community in the spring. She is also active in the effort to form an alumni club. She knows that part of outreach to the community is a little bit of reeducation, reminding people that OUSD is the lowest funded district, what bridging the gap actually means, and how it really does benefit the community.

As an example of these benefits, Allen cites the wellness centers funded by ONE. She believes that the pandemic had a profound impact on the mental and emotional health of students of all ages. She is excited about the wellness center at Miramonte, where kids can leave classes to go to the wellness center for a break. "Do they want to just have a quiet moment, or spend time with a counselor? It can differ every time the student goes in," Allen gushed. "I could talk all day about the wellness center and programs such as bringing on campus therapy dogs during finals week."

According to Allen, Miramonte is truly lucky to have a wellness center, as well as a college and careers center, run by a very small staff and Stephanie Brady, which is also funded by ONE. The college and career center works with every student during their college and career process. Right now, Allen says, Miramonte has a career week, but she would like to turn it into a career month. In addition, she would like to connect with students.

Orinda School Board welcomes new members, reflects on pandemic

... continued from Page A6

Looking forward, Daoust added, "I'm leaving the board to five smart, independent, strong women and Aida, and I can't ask for anything more than that. I promise I will continue to serve this district and this community."

Kaune mentioned that he felt that the high point of those meetings was the way Daoust started each meeting. "The difference we have been able to make, I am so proud. I couldn't be more proud and grateful for this group of people, who have been completely respectful of each other; it was a tremendous experience to be a part of this," he said, adding, "Like Liz, I'll be around," and thanked everyone with whom he's shared this in-

credible journey.

Brown said, "I am so proud of the three new board members; I'm really confident that you will carry on the way we've been able to work together, disagreeing without being disagreeable." She noted that this gave her, "in the words of that song, a peaceful easy feeling." Brown said that after working in the publishing industry, then working to help foster children, she is "really retiring now." She concluded, "Without doubt, this is the best work I've ever done," and proceeded to thank the staff individually.

A representative of Assemblymember Rebecca Baurer-Kahan, who had a scheduling conflict, presented Assembly certificates of recognition to the outgoing

board members, which was followed by a brief reception.

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