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Boys Team Charity Orinda Chapter Graduates its First Founding Class

Submitted by Michelle Bea



From left: Gio Bottene, Jake Disston, Ryan Gardner, Charlie Burke, Kyle Odmark, John Williams, Carson Beury, Rome Jiannalone, Kellen Baker, Nico Grinold, Alexander Fordyce, Bennett Destino, and Ethan Conley. Not pictured: Logan Haines, Colin Fraser, Matthew Hawkins, Hayden Westover Photo Ann Murphy This spring, boys team charity, Orinda chapter, will celebrate the graduation of its first founding class, the class of 2023. This dedicated group of 17 seniors has been committed to philanthropic work since founding the chapter in 2016, when they were in the seventh grade.

Over the course of their time with boys team charity, the class will have collectively logged over 1,900 volunteer hours over the past six years, working on philanthropic projects for groups including 10,000 Lunches, Aegis Moraga, Contra Costa County Food Bank, Glide Memorial,? Grateful Gatherings, Loaves & Fishes, Makea-Wish, Monument Crisis Center, Orinda Fourth of July Parade, Orinda Classic Car Show, Orinda Rotary, Special Olympics Northern California, White Pony Express, and Wagner Ranch Nature Area.

One of the philanthropies that the group supports, Grateful Gatherings?(www.gratefulgatherings.org), helps families who are transitioning from homelessness/shelters to government subsidized housing furnish their homes and create a true "home." Charlie Burke, graduating senior, describes his favorite and most memorable volunteer opportunity working with

Grateful Gatherings: "We first organized a drive to collect donated furniture and household items and delivered it all to a new home where the team and I then moved the furniture into the house and stocked and organized the bathrooms and kitchens. Once we were done, the family came back for the big reveal and we showed them around their new home. It was really moving to see their reactions and helped me realize how less than a day of our work can make an immediate and lasting impact on a family's life. Until my volunteer work with Grateful Gatherings, I did not realize the hurdles a family faces when transitioning from homelessness/shelter into a more permanent apartment.? It is not the end of their challenges, but our help - providing basic household items such as beds, a dining table, desks for children, linens, dishes and cleaning supplies - makes the transition easier."

Each year, classes organize a large capstone project. The Class of 2023 focused their efforts to support St. Mary's Center. St. Mary's Center is a community of hope, healing and justice dedicated to improving the well-being of seniors and preschool families in West Oakland by meeting basic needs for food, housing, and social connection. The team organized the collection and delivery of food and toiletries to donate to the organization.

Not only are these graduates dedicated to supporting philanthropy in our communities, they are involved in school leadership, committed students, athletes (representing just about every sport you can imagine), and so much more. We look forward to hearing about how these young men continue to dedicate themselves to their community as they go on in their post-graduation pursuits!

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