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SWELL Center at LLLC offers respite for teens and tweens this summer



A welcoming, inclusive space for teens to gather, meet new friends, unwind, play games, and if they want, try new activities!

Image provided

By Sharon K. Sobotta

A little over a year ago, a cohort of caring community members co-imagined what it would be like to give tweens and teens in Lafayette a safe place to land, where they could connect with other youth, try their hand at an activity, have some nutritious food, and be free to just be. The radical idea blossomed into a program and a space within the Lafayette Library and Learning Center called the SWELL Center. The Center opened June 5 and offers an assortment of activities, snacks and authentic connection opportunities for rising sixth-12th graders throughout Lamorinda on a daily basis from 10:30 to 2:30 p.m. during weekdays leading up to July 28.

Beth Needle, the executive director of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center Foundation, said the collective that brought the SWELL Cen-

ter to fruition used an ‘if we build it, they will come’ approach and hoped for the best. “We hypothesized that if teens had a place to go when school was not in session, a place where all students were welcome, a place to gather, to explore and engage either individually or with friends, that they might feel that sense of community or belonging that we all need,” Needle said. “Unfortunately, in Lafayette there was not a place to go (before the SWELL Center formalized).

Thankfully, Needle said, the foundation board had a vacant space and some of the key elements of getting the project off the ground. “The Foundation board supported the concept, provided seed money and with an additional grant from the Community Foundation of Lafayette we opened our doors and the kids came,” Needle recalled.

... continued on Page A9

Lafayette’s Utility Box Art celebrates over 175 years of history



Photo Vera Kochan

Leisure Pastimes Utility Box Art

By Vera Kochan

Lafayette’s founder, Elam Brown, first arrived on Feb. 7, 1847 to check out the land grant that he and his wife, Margaret, had purchased. Originally called Rancho Acalanes, the 3,300 acres grew to become the bustling city that is today’s Lafayette.

This past February, the Lafayette Historical Society (LHS) in conjunction with the city’s Public Art Committee chose graphic designer

Danielle Gogo-Gallagher to create seven examples of photo-wrapped utility boxes depicting historical snapshots in time throughout Lafayette’s 175 years. Each box is located along Mt. Diablo Boulevard, at seven different intersections along an approximately 0.8-mile stretch of road (between First Street and Delores Drive). Once you know what you’re looking for, finding the boxes is not difficult.

A QR code is located on each box that can be scanned using a smartphone. This feature connects to a short LHS presentation that explains the historical relevance of each particular utility box’s images and includes more archival photos. For example, the “Saklan People” box takes viewers back in time when the Bay Miwok tribe first inhabited the area thousands of years ago. How they looked, what they wore, how they hunted, what they ate, and their homes are discussed.

An “Early Downtown” box helps to explain Lafayette’s first settlers and the businesses that were available during the late 1800s. ... continued on Page A5



Lafayette Public Meetings

City Council

Regular Meeting
Monday, June 12, 7 p.m.
Teleconference via City of Lafayette’s YouTube Channel:
<http://bit.ly/LoveLafayetteYouTube>

Planning Commission Meeting

Monday, June 19, 7 p.m.
Teleconference Meeting via Love Lafayette YouTube
<http://bit.ly/LoveLafayetteYouTube>

Design Review

Wednesday, June 12, 7 p.m.
Teleconference Meeting via Love Lafayette YouTube
<http://bit.ly/LoveLafayetteYouTube>

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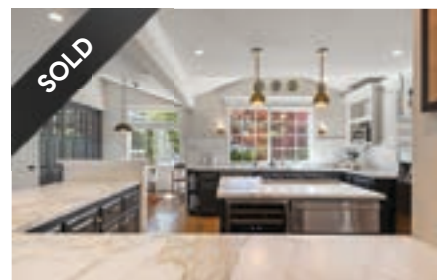


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