

# Miramonte graduates revisit their elementary schools

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The event was the brainchild of Robinson and her team and was truly a group effort between them, ONE, and the elementary school principals. Allen said it was lovely to work with the senior class parent advisors and, knowing how busy this time of year is for senior families, she would love to offer the opportunity for them all to enjoy the parade and let ONE do the leg work in the future.

“There was so much excitement in the air,” Allen said. “Elementary students were able to high-five the seniors as they paraded

through. There was cheering and shouts of ‘Happy Graduation Day!’” as the graduates visited each school. Allen observed Mrs. Okamitsu’s first-grade students at Wagner Ranch asking the visiting seniors for their autographs. Patsy Templeton, principal at Sleepy Hollow, said she overheard kindergarten students trying to determine how many years it would be until they would return to their school, wearing caps and gowns. Maple Lai, principal at Del Rey, said that the seniors were “genuine stars on campus.” And this was certainly felt by the seniors.

While the parade lasted

about 10-15 minutes, the graduates were on each campus for about 30-40 minutes as they lined up for the parade, took photographs, and visited their old teachers and chatted with the younger students. Retired teachers also came back to campus for this event. Each school held a formal parade with elementary students flanking the walkways, reaching out for high-fives, and calling out congratulations. Some students made signs for the seniors and held those high. Wagner Ranch provided maps of the campus with the teachers’ names and room numbers so seniors could go visit their old teachers.



Glorietta graduates

Photos provided



Del Rey graduates



Wagner Ranch graduates



Sleepy Hollow graduates

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

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“It was a wonderful thing to watch.”

Some of Needle’s co-conspirators or collaborators for the SWELL Center included Jennifer Wakeman from the City of Lafayette, Lynna McPhatter-Harris, manager of the Wellness program for the Acalanes Union High School District and Suzy Pak, a volunteer on the committee, who also happens to be on the Lafayette School District governing board. At the time there had been an uptick in suicide ideation and attempts and the need for positive outlets was undeniable. “We

knew that Wellness Centers in the schools provided an excellent resource for students but only when school was in session and that unfortunately it was during school breaks that suicide (ideation and attempts) increased,” Needle said.

Pak said that even as the program continues to evolve, it offers something great to those who engage. “The SWELL Center continues to evolve to meet the attendees where they are, as seen through repeated visits and lots of positive feedback. It also highlights many facets of our incredible Library and Learning Center, making it more accessible to our young residents and increasing fu-

ture visits,” Pak said. “Our attendees walk away with a great appreciation for the staff and services at our local library, while having a great time and meeting new friends.”

A rising ninth-grader shared her experience of engaging with the SWELL Center during a community forum in the LLLC last fall. “It was awesome to be able to connect with real friends, where you could be your real self and not have to worry about trying to impress fake friends,” she said. “You can truly be yourself there, as you try new activities, eat food and have a genuinely good time.”

# Pro bono vocal coach Rena Wilson helps Lamorinda Idol competitors

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In her experience, Wilson says that parents can be very hands-on, or not. Until the kids hit middle school it can go one way or the other, she noted. Some parents are not involved, but parents do tend to be much more involved with elementary students. Once

they hit middle school, the kids try to take control. Getting accepted into the finals includes all of the performances and coaching during the summer.

This year the Lamorinda community will have an opportunity to hear the finalists perform at three local concerts: Lafayette Plaza (June 23); Orinda Community Park (July

13); and Moraga Commons (Aug. 2). The final performances and announcement of winners will take place on Aug. 20 at the Orinda Theatre. Finalists were notified on June 1, and the complete list of finalists and runners-up can be found on the Lamorinda Arts Council website, at lamorindaarts.org.

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