Equestrian Club Has Lamorinda Roots

Club hosts summer veterinary camp Aug. 16-20

By Clare Varellas



Taylor Lai with one of her horses

welve-year-old Taylor Lai knows her way around a horse. Like many Bay Area tweens, she has attended horseback riding summer camps, and having lived with them her whole life in the Mount Diablo foothills, she has grown to love the animals. But one thing Taylor knows about that not many other middle school horse lovers do is what lies beneath a horse's shiny, smooth fur coat: the horse's anatomy.

to do with horses, and I like the idea energy. of being a vet because you get to be I love animals so much," said Taylor.

club for young horse lovers with her mother Shanna Gage Lai two years ago, has worked to organize a fiveday summer camp for Bay Area fourth through 12th graders to focus specifically on the veterinary field, among other horse-related sciences.

Taylor's mother, who grew up in Moraga and has been involved in caring for horses her entire life – she was president of the Moraga Juniors Horsemen's Association as a teen, and grew up riding at Henson's Arabian Center in Lafayette – used her friendships and connections to get high caliber instructors involved in the camp, such as world-renowned UC Davis veterinarian Dr. Jamie Textor, DVM, thropically by allowing underprivi-Ph.D. Textor will teach campers leged youth to interact with horses about the horse's anatomical system "from head to tail," showing them her contributing to equine-themed music work first-hand with two of the club's therapy compilations, and offering its rescue horses under her care.

about science, not just medicine, but Unlike regular riding teams, the BAE science in general, and that's going to transcend even their interest in horses, because they won't all grow up to be horse owners or veterinarians," said Textor. "But hopefully it will impact them and get them excited about biology and science in general."

of instruction, the Aug. 16-20 camp features a packed schedule of handson activities – even including practicing a form of yoga created Equestrian Club Veterinary Medicine specifically for horseback riders. Campers will also visit various ranches and UC Davis laboratories, and learn about science and technol-

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Photo Clare Varellas ogy as well as stables and tack. Seven Hills science teacher Matt Shargel will help campers build equine robots and camera-equipped helium balloons that the group will send into space, and campers will also have the opportunity to engage their architectural creativity by drawing their dream barn or stable complex with the help of architect and author Cathy Remick, and to learn about the environmentally friendly process of con-"I really want to have my career verting horse manure into clean

Taylor originally established the around the horses or the animals, and Bay Area Equestrian (BAE) Club in 2012 because she wanted to find other For this reason, the Seven Hills local kids who loved horses just as School student, who founded her own much as she does. The club currently includes 20 members in elementary, middle, and high school from Lamorinda, Walnut Creek, and surrounding towns who regularly meet to spend time with and learn more about the unique animals. Noteworthy meetings have featured visits to various stables, meet-and-greets with the Cal and Stanford equestrian teams, and even horse-themed movie nights. Shanna Lai serves on the Bay Area Equestrian Club board of directors, along with Amara Morrison of Orinda, Tiffany S. Gage of Moraga, and Emily Breach of Lafayette.

In addition to caring for rescue horses, the club contributes philanthrough its Equine Access Program, facilities to the Make-A-Wish foun-"The camp is teaching them dation for any horse-loving patients. Club celebrates any and all aspects of caring for horses. It is the love of horses in general, a love Taylor and her mom have had for as long as they can remember, that fuels the club.

"I love that when you're around horses, you have to be in the mo-In addition to the three full days ment," Taylor's mom said. "It frees your mind so that you can just focus in on the animal."

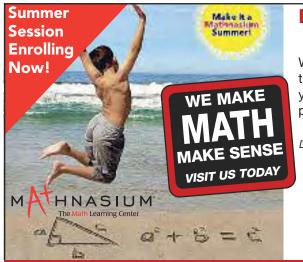
To reserve a spot in the Bay Area Camp, contact Shanna Gage Lai at (925)922-2908 baeclub@aol.com, or visit www.baeclub.org.

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or the second year running, 14year-old fishing phenom Jed Wood of Lafayette "Biggest Bass" at a recent Pro-Am Bass Tournament on Bethel Island in the delta. Coming in at 7.39 pounds, his bass beat out 70 other kids from around the state along with fishing professionals in the 17th annual Pro-Teen Classic held July 20. C. Tyson

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