

Lamorinda OUR HOMES

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Virtually Neighbors

By Cathy Dausman



The online application, Nextdoor, could help Moraga resident Chuck Murray (on right) share his bumper crop of “pluots” – a hybrid plant grown from a plum and an apricot – with more people than just his own next door neighbor David Fuhriman.

Photo Andy Scheck

More than 3,000 Lamorinda neighbors are learning who has extra fruits or vegetables to share or who has lost a pet without ever leaving their home in

everyday conversations with neighbors – only in this 21st century version, it’s carried out online. Conversations across the street or back fence have grown to include online social media conversa-



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tions. Neighbors, meet one virtual neighborhood organizer – Nextdoor (<https://nextdoor.com>).

Local residents are using the social media application to inquire about who felt a recent earthquake or who saw a coyote wandering the streets, to learn about street closures or paving and community gardening projects, or to alert neighbors about unwanted door to door solicitors or burglars. They get recommendations for travel agents, painters, cleaning services, general contractors, sitters or tutors at the click of a button. They know who wants recycled moving boxes or grocery coupons, or where to buy furniture or sell pianos, books, games or bikes – all virtual everyday conversations neighbors have with neighbors.

“I have loved Nextdoor,” said Moraga organizer Jan Russell. “Two-thirds of our homeowners are members, and it is really useful in terms of communicating. It has been great.”

Matt McLeod is active on Nextdoor in Moraga’s Corliss neighborhood. “I took the lead in an effort to help keep neighbors in the area stay informed about a new development off Camino Ricardo. I think it has been useful and a great tool to keep neighbors informed about crime and safety issues as well,” he said.

Cara Heilmann of Orinda said the primary reason she joined Nextdoor back in July 2012 was for her Neighborhood Watch Program. Her neighborhood has 64 members. “We have active block captains for almost every street in our neighborhood and we get together annually for a block party each summer,” she said. “We continue to send invitations to neighbors to join as we consider this to be our main way to stay connected for all activities.”

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