

Miramonte Baseball Gives Back Through Partnership With Grateful Gatherings

By Emily Dugdale



Miramonte baseball players spent a Saturday helping a family in need. Photo provided

When Jocelyn walked into her new two-bedroom apartment last Saturday afternoon, she was speechless. Her kitchen was fully stocked. Bunk beds were already set up for her young daughters. There was even laundry detergent, curtains on the windows, and fresh towels – all thanks to a partnership between a local nonprofit and the Miramonte baseball team.

Grateful Gatherings, an Oakland-based organization that provides donated goods to people transitioning out of homelessness, received help from the Mats players and their families last weekend in collecting furniture and setting up a new apartment for Jocelyn (who asked that her last name not be used) and her young family, who were transitioning out of a local shelter.

“I’m still in that phase where I’m full of joy,” Jocelyn said a few days after the big move. “After six months in the shelter, it’s like taking that final breath and saying ‘this is what I’ve been waiting for.’”

Grateful Gatherings was notified by Shelter Inc. that Jocelyn’s family needed help gathering household items for their new apartment. The family – Jocelyn, her husband, Rigo, and three young daughters - entered Shelter Inc.’s Emergency Family Shelter in Martinez last July, when they lost their affordable housing last year due to a family medical crisis.

Rigo recently received a small salary increase in his position as a janitor at Diablo Valley Community College, and Jocelyn’s family was eligible to move into Shelter’s transitional apartments in Antioch.

Partnering with Grateful Gatherings, the Mats sprung into action by sending out a list of household needs a few weeks before the family’s move-in date.

“The baseball team worked really hard this weekend,” Chris Flitter, Grateful Gatherings’ co-founder, said of the Mats. She detailed how the team picked up donated furniture on last Friday, and was up again for Saturday’s move-in to vacuum rugs, set up furniture, and meet and

greet the family as they tearfully entered their new home.

Sterling Kasslea, a 16-year-old sophomore second baseman on the Mats, described taking breaks during the day to play football and meet some of the neighborhood kids. “They were so energetic and they never stopped talking or moving around.”

Kassela especially loved the family’s overjoyed reaction to their new apartment, and hopes to return. “Grateful Gathering is a great idea and I was lucky to be able to help out,” he said. “We were all sad when we had to go. I really hope we get to go back soon.”

According to Miramonte parent Anna Tague, the service project was the first for the baseball team in recent years, and she hopes it will become a trend.

She also underscored the wider point that socioeconomic divisions in the area can make meetings like that witnessed on Saturday a rarity. “I really liked the crossover between boys of all grades as well as adults from families that otherwise would not have a chance to meet,” she said. “I haven’t stopped thinking about it since Saturday.”

“It’s a model for children to see that it doesn’t matter what society you’re from, you can still come together,” Jocelyn said.

Jocelyn’s story is all too common in the Bay Area, Flitter explained.

“It’s important to get local groups involved because sadly, there is a steady stream of people moving out of shelters with no personal belongings, a foster child aging of the system, [or] a family faced with an unbearable tragedy that they cannot work,” she said.

Inspired by their weekend of service, the Mats are actively looking for more local volunteer opportunities. “I think that this work is a great way to get a community together as well as help a family in need,” Kassela said. “I believe our team will get involved with more service activities, and I really hope we do.”

Super Bowl 50 A Homecoming for Miramonte Legend Dorsey



Ken Dorsey, left, poses with Moraga resident and 49ers’ beat reporter Matt Maiocco.

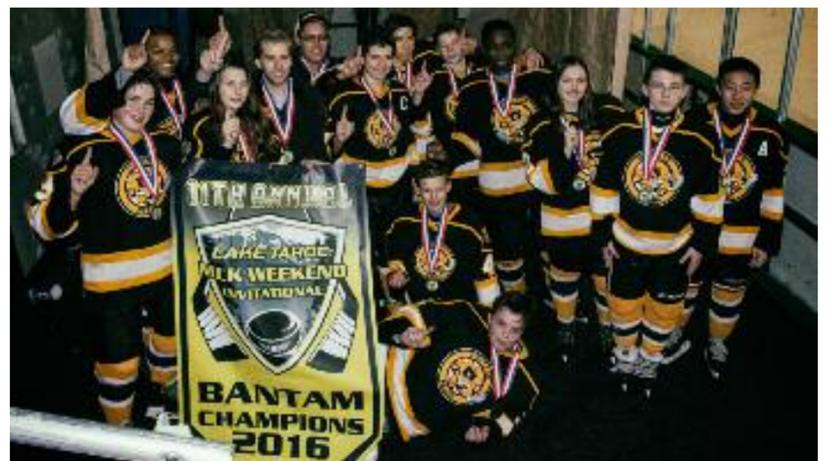
Photo Tod Fierner

Ken Dorsey, the former All-American quarterback for Miramonte, who led the Mats to consecutive NCS Championship games in 1997 and 1998, was at Super Bowl 50 in a professional capacity on Sunday. The Orinda native, who became famous for his 38-2 run as a

starter at the University of Miami (Fla.) and winning the NCAA national championship, now works as the quarterbacks coach for the Carolina Panthers – the 2015-2016 NFC Champions. The Panthers lost to the Denver Broncos 24-10. - S. Silva

Bantam Bears Capture Unlikely Overtime Victory

Submitted by Jennifer Koziel



Nolan Koziel, second from right

Photo Andrew Sohn

The Oakland Bears Bantam division ice hockey team won the Lake Tahoe Tournament over Martin Luther King Jr. weekend, despite having half as many players as a typical team. They sealed the championship by coming back from a 0-3

deficit, beating a team from San Diego 6-5 in the last two seconds of overtime. The Bears include players from Oakland and East Bay communities. Nolan Koziel is a freshman at Campolindo High School.

Cal Magic U11 Girls Runners Up

Submitted by Jon Zuber



Photo provided

The Cal Magic U11 East Girls team was the runner-up in the State Cup Red Division Seeds 1-8. The team battled through eight tough games in the State Cup Tournament before dropping the final to Mustangs.

The girls’ fast-paced, possession-style soccer was on display throughout tournament. Their hustle and determination was seen and admired by all teams.

Santa Maria 3rd Grade CYO Team Wins Diocese Championship

Submitted by Stephanie Barmmer



From left: Jessica Smith, Julia Q, Franny G, Sophie C, Katie B, Jocelyn G, Jossie S, Ava O, Charlie S, Kimya K, Maren T, Brian Chinn

Photo provided

Santa Maria’s third grade CYO Warriers finished an undefeated (12-0) season by winning the Diocese Champi-

onship, beating a tough Christ the King basketball team. Coaches Brian Chinn and Jessica Smith led the team effort courtside.

Hunt for DFAL Title ... continued from page C1

“Austin Clarke is primarily our number one scorer and he’s a guy that can really get things going,” Smith said. “And when we have a balanced scoring attack, it usually follows up with both Will Hicks and Sterling Strothers. When those three guys are filling it up, it’s pretty tough for teams to compete against us.”

Acalanes will be competing with Campo on Feb. 11 when they travel to Moraga to clash with the Cougars. As Dons head coach Dave Goldman explained, the team will be looking to put to rest an unfortunate streak.

Goldman admitted that Acalanes rarely beats Campolindo. “To my knowledge, neither the football nor basketball team has won a game in over six years.”

Goldman pointed to his team’s encouraging showing in their 63-51 loss to Campo on Jan. 21 as a reason for optimism.

“We played them last time very close,” Goldman said. “So, we hope we can pull off an upset at their gym.”

Edging the Cougars will be a necessity for the Dons if the team is going to accomplish the first of its two remaining goals.

“We’d like to be a .500 team,” Goldman said. “We’d have to win out the last four games to do that.”

The second objective for the sixth-place Dons (2-6 in DFAL and 9-13 overall) is to sneak into the NCS Division II postseason bracket.

“We are actually 2-2 against Division II schools, which does qualify us potentially for the playoffs,” Goldman said. “So, we’ve really just been focused in practice on getting better every day and raising the level of intensity to a game level so that the boys are improving at that game speed.”

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