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By Sophie Braccini



The arts and crafts table was busy as families picnicked on the lawn at Orinda Community Park, with singers in the gazebo. Photo Sophie Braccini

The Lamorinda Arts Council made it a complete family treat at the Orinda Community Park recently, offering craft and art activities for kids, family picnics on the lawn provided, if desired, by a food truck, while on stage, finalists and runner-ups among the 130-plus Lamorinda Idols 2016 participants serenaded the crowd.

"This is our 11th year (of the Lamorinda Idol)," said Lamorinda Arts Council's Jenny Staelin. "For the past three years we have added art for the kids so even more artistic expressions can be experienced."

The art tables' volunteers started engaging young participants even before the young singers took the stage. They made spinwheels with colorful papers, buttons and crayons, had their face painted, or did collage.

Sue Farmer, a past president of the Lamorinda Arts Council (formerly the Orinda Arts Council) and music teacher said that their aim was to do art and sing. She noted with great delight that more young families were joining the event and participating, a testimony to a bright future for the arts in Lamorinda, she said.

Steve Harwood, chairman of the Lamorinda Idol program, had set up his equipment. "We have more than 30 people now involved in the (Idol) committee," he said. The popularity of the singing competition is ongoing with over 130 participants this year from grades K to 12 competing either solo or in group.

"The finals will be on Sept. 4 at the Orinda Theater," said Harwood, a local businessman who volunteers his time to the organization. "It will be an all-day long event where the audience will give its feedback and professional judges will select the winners."

On the night of July 20, the singers were just there to showcase their talent and practice for the big day. Some amazing voices were heard, with all styles of music including rock and country music. The 2016 Lamorinda Idol will be a vintage one. More information at www.lamorindaarts.org.

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back

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