

# 'BeKind 21' campaign under way in Lafayette



Photo courtesy City of Lafayette

The Lafayette City Council issued a proclamation on July 12 announcing another BeKind 21 campaign between Sept. 1 through 21, in partnership with the Born This Way Foundation, an organization that "aims to improve the wellness of young people and create a kinder and braver world." According to the proclamation, the first BeKind 21 campaign was launched in September 2018, in which "schools, organizations, workplaces, and communities were invited to make kindness a habit by performing an act of kindness daily for 21 days."

A few examples of these acts include writing a thank you note to someone who makes your life better, spending 30 minutes picking up

trash in your neighborhood or at a local park, showing respect and compassion to everyone you meet, whether online or in person, and donating to a local nonprofit, such as the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce's BeKind 21 food drive. Food donation bins have been placed throughout Lafayette, including the Jennifer Perlmutter Gallery, Lamorinda Music, and the Lafayette Chamber for those who wish to donate to the Food Bank of Contra Costa County and Solano. Most needed items include natural peanut butter, whole grain cereals, beans and lentils, canned tuna and chicken in water, canned fruit in juice, brown rice and canned tomato products.

- J. Wake

For more information about the campaign, visit <https://bornthisway.foundation/bekind21/>

## Parents call for school safety

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On Thursday, Sept. 9, administrators, in addition to nearly a dozen crossing guards and police officers patrolled the streets around Stanley. Many parents and students say that is exactly what they want to see around the schools every day.

Olivia Bush is a sixth-grader at Stanley Middle School. Olivia watched the accident that involved a fellow middle schooler and Dias. "I had just gotten my bike when I saw a sixth grade kid I knew get pushed out of the way by the crossing guard," Olivia said. "The black SUV that hit him was going pretty fast - not super fast, but not slow. I don't think the driver saw any of them."

After school Olivia walked to Safeway to buy some flowers for Dias's memorial with her last four dollars, because she said she wanted to pay her respects. "It's really sad that he (Ashley Dias) had to lose his life, but he saved a kid's life and that's really cool of him to do."

"Every day when I drop off my kids, I think it's going to take someone dying for there to be safety around here," said Olivia's mother, Ashley Bush. "There are crosswalks without any cross guards, cars running stop lights. We've been nearly hit a few times just crossing at a stop light because people ran the lights."

While Bush appreciated the presence of officers on Thursday, she says she'd like to see police helping children cross every day. Bush lives on Moraga Road, where she says people drive too fast and there are no bike lanes and only very narrow sidewalks.

"Every day I feel like we put our lives at risk taking our kids to school," Bush said.

While it's clear that the traffic congestion of the growing city is here to stay, Bush hopes simple measures can be put into place. "All the crossing walks should have flashing lights that go off to signal to

drivers that people are walking across the street," she said. "The lights on the pedestrian way near my house are out, so we just have to cross and hope for the best."

Bush, who like many, is saddened by Dias's death and grateful for his heroism has one hope: "Let's not let Ashley Dias's death be in vain."

Like many parents who have children at both Lafayette Elementary School and Stanley Middle School, Paulina Lares rushes to the elementary school at 2:42 p.m. to pick up her fourth-grade daughter Sofia and waits for her sixth-grade daughter Zoe to walk from the middle school at 3 p.m. "I used to feel very secure with my daughter walking the two blocks to get here, but it's apparently not safe anymore."

While extra security was in place around Stanley the day after the accident, Lares pointed out gaps around the elementary school. On Moraga road, there was merely one parent volunteer who stepped in when she saw the vacant crossing by Brooke Street. There's no guard at the busy School Street and Moraga Road intersection in front of the Town Hall Theatre or at the Moraga Boulevard and Moraga Road intersection where a pedestrian was struck and killed in 2017. "We really have to come together and take some action so that this doesn't happen again."

Lares's 11-year-old daughter, Zoe, says she's having a hard time concentrating in school since it happened. "I read the memorial at school and it was really heartbreaking," Zoe said.

Community members are nurturing the growing memorial with offerings, messages, prayers and water for the flowers. The sentiment is best summarized in the message Zoe wrote. *Gracias por todo. Eres un héroe en nuestra comunidad. Te queremos.* "Thank you for everything," she wrote. "You are a hero in our community. We love you."



**Lafayette Public Meetings**

### City Council

Regular Meeting  
Monday, Sept. 27, 7 p.m.  
Teleconference via City of Lafayette's YouTube Channel:  
<http://bit.ly/LoveLafayetteYouTube>

### Planning Commission Meeting

Monday, Sept. 20, 7 p.m.  
Teleconference Meeting via Love Lafayette YouTube  
<http://bit.ly/LoveLafayetteYouTube>

### Design Review

Wednesday, Sept. 15, 7 p.m. Zoom  
Teleconference Meeting via Love Lafayette YouTube  
<http://bit.ly/LoveLafayetteYouTube>



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