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Lamorinda Schools

Lafayette's Teacher of the Year By Cathy Tyson



Erin Caldwell, Lafayette's Teacher of the Year Photo Cathy Tyson

Erin Caldwell, an energetic Special Education teacher at Springhill Elementary School is the Lafayette School District's Teacher of the Year nominee. She was nominated by school administrators, but had to prepare all of the required paperwork to be included in the county-wide competition. This included answering several essay questions and getting letters of recommendation from members of the community.

One of those letters summarized especially well just what Caldwell does for her students. Jocelyn Schneider Dunbar writes, "Under the wise and humble tutelage of Erin Caldwell, our son learned to love to read, do math, adore history, spell phonetically, study in groups and make friends again. It is in 'Downtown' (her classroom) under the kind and loving guidance of Erin Caldwell where he learned that having spe-

cial needs wasn't 'special' at all. He learned to be independent, respect others, cooperate on the playground and grew to understand what it means to be truly loved and adored by a teacher. She is a woman who inspires our special children to do extraordinary things."

Caldwell graduated from UC Berkeley and went right to San Francisco State to get her Teaching Credential. "I was a psychology major, so I got this interview (and ultimately a job) working at a day treatment center, with therapists, psychologists and social workers. I thought this is right up my alley and I get to teach at the same time! I was completely unqualified, but they ended up paying for me to go back and get my Special Ed Credential."

It's been a whirlwind for her ever since: "I finished my cre-

dential, got married in August and began teaching that fall." Two years later she had her first son, two years after that second son was born, both births were in the fall and she came back at Christmas break. A few years later, a daughter joined the family.

After spending the first five years of her career at a private school, the next seven at a public school in the Mt. Diablo school district, a position became available at Springhill. Coincidentally her youngest was starting kindergarten there that year. "It was the first time all my kids were in the same school and I was with them. That was nine years ago."

"I love my class. Each child brings something different and unique to the group. We laugh a lot. I truly believe that learning should be fun, even if it isn't easy for you to learn. I like to make up games to help the children learn the curriculum. When they master a concept, it is such a source of joy for me," Caldwell says reflecting on the best part of her job. She teaches kids who are chronologically in the 4th and 5th grades, but not cognitively in the 4th and 5th grades.

Caldwell would like to thank her Principal, Bruce Wodhams, "He's been so supportive, letting me do whatever I feel is necessary and in the best interest of my class. We are our own world in 'Downtown,' and he understands and supports us. There is a level of mutual respect and trust between the administration and me."

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Going, Going, Gone

By Cathy Tyson



Gary Radnich will entertain at the Campolindo Auction

Campolindo parents will soon be attempting to outbid each other for the highly coveted, close to classrooms, assigned parking spot, just one of a number of unique auction items that sports teams and the school has donated to raise money at the upcoming Sports Booster Auction.

On Saturday, April 12 a sell-out crowd of Campolindo parents will gather at the Lafayette Community Center, where special guest Gary Radnich, KRON-TV Sports Director and KNBR radio host will entertain, and Mike Zampa, columnist for the Contra Costa Times will be the master of ceremonies. Items up for auction

include a Pixar Animation Studios tour, a tour of the under-construction Bay Bridge, four passes to the A T & T Pro-Am at Pebble Beach, themed baskets from all of the sports teams, fine wine, jewelry, and lots of baseball tickets.

Last year the event raised approximately \$25,000. Payments made for auction items are tax deductible, so parent purchasers are able to support the school's sports programs while getting something in return.

"The majority of the money raised goes to pay for the Athletic Trainer, who works

with all the teams. In addition, some of the money goes toward multi-year, multi-use items, for example the new scoreboard in the gym which can be used for basketball and volleyball," said President of the Sports Boosters, Craig Isaacs. He continues, "Bring your checkbook!"

The parking spot, located in the senior-only parking area, "is pretty cool, especially for a junior," said Cole Martin, whose generous parents bought the spot last year. Sleeping just a little bit later, and not having to walk so far, priceless.

Wheel Day Rolls Back to LOPC

By Bobbie Dodson



A boy enjoys a truck at last year's Wheel Day

Photo provided by LOPC

What kid wouldn't love to sit on a real motorcycle or climb inside a fire truck, ambulance or garbage truck? Bring your children to the twelfth annual Wheel Day, Saturday April 26, from 9:30 a.m. to 12 noon, at the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church (LOPC) where they'll have the opportunity to get up close, to view, honk or clamber on many kinds of wheeled vehicles. The event, free and open to the entire community, is sponsored by Seedlings Pre-

school, which meets at LOPC. This year there's an added element that can make it a meaningful time for youngsters. The Mission in Society (MIS) team at LOPC joins in the event with Kids Helping Kids, to raise awareness of how much the children of our community have compared to children living in poverty who might reside in a community near us, or in far away country like Zimbabwe.

Families can enjoy a pancake breakfast hosted by the

Monument Crisis Center team and learn more about the realities and needs in Concord. Following the breakfast, kids and parents will assemble care kits with items such as toothbrushes, soap, and nutrition bars for the Mother of Peace Orphanage in Zimbabwe that a group of the LOPC MIS team visited recently. Members of the LOPC Youth Group will help younger children with the activities, including art projects to accompany the care kits.

For this part of the day,

the suggested donation will be \$10 per person or \$25 per family. Every dollar received will go directly to the Monument Crisis Center and Mother of Peace Orphanage.

The Mission in Society team has another goal, that of including families from beyond the existing LOPC church community. "It's an opportunity for us to come together to help those who are needy. Actions speak louder than words. Packing the care kits is a real hands-on experience for our children," says John Weems, associate pastor at LOPC. "They'll see pictures of the Zimbabwe orphans, learn about their living conditions, and then have a way of showing they care. I think this is an important addition to the fun that Wheel Day has provided our children for many years."

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