

Acalanes High School • Bentley School • Burton Valley • Camino Pablo Campolindo • Contra Costa Jewish Day School • Del Rey Donald L. Rheem • Glorietta • Happy Valley • Joaquin Moraga

Lamorinda Schools

Lafayette Elementary • Los Perales • Miramonte • Orinda Academy Orinda Intermediate • Saklan Valley School • Sleepy Hollow Springhill • Stanley Middle • St. Perpetua School • Wagner Ranch

Moraga Education Foundation Surpasses Fundraising Goal

By Andrea A. Firth



Photo Andrea A. Firth

Following a year marked by significant cuts to the State funding of public schools, parents of students who attend Moraga public schools have a little something to smile about, albeit if only briefly. The Moraga Education Foundation (MEF)—a non-profit, volunteer-run organization that raises funds to fill State-created budget gaps—surpassed its 2007-2008 goal to raise a total of \$1,245,000. MEF's fundraising success was in part due to a May letter campaign that raised \$119,000 in just 31 days.

"The Moraga parent community has consistently stepped up to the plate to support their children's education," stated Moraga School District Superintendent Rick Schafer, however even he was surprised by the magnitude of the support garnered so quickly through the May campaign.

More than 14% of contributors to the May campaign were giving for the second time and 18% of contributors were first time MEF donors. "We have had an unprecedented year," stated MEF President Shari Simon. "To preserve the type

and range of programs that we have had in our schools, we had to raise more. The number of new donors was very exciting," she added.

According to Schafer, MEF's contributions will enable Moraga School District to reinstate programs that were to be eliminated due to the State funding cuts. Libraries across the District will be restored to full-time function, added classes at Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School will keep the average class size from encroaching on 30 students per class, and popular grade-level enrichment programs will not be forgone. In addition, MEF will give a total of \$420,000 to Campolindo High School, which will help fund counseling programs, class size reduction, library services, and classroom technology—programs that would have been cut secondary to the State budget crunch.

"Unfortunately we are going into a bleak period and State funding may get even worse over the next three years," noted Simon. Superintendent Schafer concurred. "We are very concerned about the next three budget years... The State has shifted providing adequate school funding to the individual communities. Our community has been able to meet the challenge, but I question how long they will be able to continue," stated Schafer.

Although the money raised by MEF does not begin to approximate the State funding shortfall for the District, Simon remained hopeful. "I'm very optimistic about the commitment of our parents and the greater community. Education is valued and a priority here. I believe that the community will rise to the challenge."

What's For Dinner?

By Jill McTaggart

Since the 1970's when women joined the workforce in droves the "What's for dinner?" question has confounded them. The conundrum is in part logistical – finding the time and energy to plan, shop, and cook meals. But, for me, as a parent I knew deep down, emotionally, there were some other more intuitive reasons why I wanted a shared family meal (and not because my own amazingly efficient working mother always managed it).

Through research, what I found was that many recent studies have quantified my gut feeling about the importance of dinnertime. Here are my top 5 reasons to eat meals together at home as a family culled from recent academic studies.

1. Health. The Archive of Family Medicine study in 2000 showed that eating family dinner was associated with healthful dietary intake, including more fruits and vegetables and less fried food and soda.
2. Children will be better spoken and better read. A Harvard study found that complex and rich dinner conversations were more important than play, story time and other family events in the development of language and reading skills.
3. Averts risky teen behavior. A Columbia University study cites that teens are 42% less likely to drink, 59% less likely to smoke

tobacco and 66% less likely to try marijuana.

4. Adolescent girls will have less eating disorders according to a 2004 University of Minnesota study.

5. Working parents are happier. Published in July 2008, Brigham Young University found that among both mothers and fathers who made it home regularly for dinner, they felt more personal success and felt "more kindly" about their workplace.

While researching this article I stumbled upon a link for a website called bringbackdinner.com. Cool, I thought, a motivated mom is providing information that will help. As I opened the link it was immediately apparent that this was not a mom's site, it is sponsored by the KFC Corporation, yes Colonel Sanders et al. This internet misfire was serendipitous in that it brought me to a study proclaiming that family dinners will cause adults to be less obese. This 2007 study in Public Health Nutrition found that families who ate fast food for dinner more than three times a week ate more junk food, less fruits and vegetables than families who ate fast food less than three times a week. Adults tended to be more obese and have a higher BMI than non fast food eating adults. "Fast food can be a convenient alternative to cooking for busy families," said Kerri Boutelle, Ph.D., lead author and as-

sistant professor of pediatrics at the University of Minnesota Medical School. "But, frequently making fast food a family meal can negatively affect food choices in the house and the overall health of the family."

It is important to note that shared meals are not only about the food, but about the few moments that families take to sit face to face away from media, cell phones and other modern distraction. In a recent NPR segment on the family dinner, a noted researcher wondered aloud if the social and emotional benefits of dinner were a result of the actual meal or if they were caused by the functionality of a family who can coordinate and provide frequently shared meals. This notion coincides with my intuition that it is not only the healthful food but a time to build relationships and show one another that you truly care about them and what happened in the course of the day.

If this interaction is new to you and even a little awkward, an ice breaker that I like to use with my kids is the question: What was the best thing and what was the worst thing that happened today? This is a way to explore all the good that happens as well as the not so good that happens throughout the day. Hey, at this point any question is better than "What's for dinner?"—right?

"I'm never too busy for your referrals!"



Holly Henkel
J. Rockcliff Realtors
89 Davis Rd, Ste 100
Orinda
925 253-7005(office); 360-2390(cell)
holly@hollyhenkel.com



Holly Henkel, your trusted advisor

AUHSD to Place Bond on Next Ballot

By Andrea A. Firth

The Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD) Board unanimously passed a resolution to place a bond measure on the November ballot asking voters to fund improvements to aging and obsolete facilities throughout the District along with establishing a ten-year technology fund.

"All of our facilities are aging and we need to plan for the next 20 years. The bond will provide the funding to do so," notes AUHSD Superintendent Jim Negri. "Additionally, the Classroom Technology Fund will allow the district to provide classroom technology and life cycle replacement to

provide students and staff with up-to-date technology to support learning and teaching," he adds.

The measure, if passed, will issue \$93 million in bonds without increasing current residential tax rates but extending

the current tax rate for several years. Other projects to be funded by the bond measure include the replacement of aging roofs, conversion of older facilities into classroom space, and upgrading energy management systems.

Now offering healing hot stone massage

Make the right choices for the environment and your world

<p>Plant and mineral-based natural cleaning products</p> <p>2.49 Your choice Green Works Cleaners 32-oz. all-purpose or glass & surface; 24-oz. toilet bowl or bathroom; or 28-oz. dilutable. W 850 224, 253, 232, 265, 246 812</p>	<p>Uses less energy, lasts longer</p> <p>2.99 Your choice Mini Compact Fluorescent Spiral Bulb 13W, 20W or 26W. E 777 225, 178 152, 179 200 83</p>
<p>All-natural, organic ingredients</p> <p>3.49 8-Qt. Organic Choice Potting Mix L 690 485 86</p>	<p>Adjusts to stop water flow after 15 to 120 minutes</p> <p>8.99 Mechanical Water Timer L 583 684 86</p>

Greener Options
Good for you. Good for the planet too!

Orinda Hardware & Rental
Just down from the Orinda Theater
56 Moraga Way Orinda CA 94563
925-254-5429
Screen Repairs - 48 hr service

True Value
START RIGHT. START HERE.
Sale ends 08/17/08
© 2008 True Value Company. All rights reserved.

MUSIC LESSONS

www.musicandart.org

Lamorinda Academy of Music and Art

Private and group lessons
Piano, string instruments, voice
Competitions, Tests, Fun

All Ages & All Levels
925-299-1240

Orinda Academy

Parents, Students and Teachers Working Together

Celebrating 26 Years 1982-2008

LIMITED Openings for Fall 2008

- College Preparatory Curriculum
- Grades 7-12
- Average Class Size 10 Students
- Challenging & Engaging Curriculum
- Integrated Advisory Program
- Personalized College Counseling
- Friendly & Nurturing Academic Environment
- Sports, Arts and Academic Clubs
- Educational Adventures Program
- WASC Accredited

ORINDA ACADEMY • 19 ALTARINDA ROAD • ORINDA, CA 94563
For information please call our Admissions Office:
925-254-7553, admission@orindaacademy.org
www.orindaacademy.org