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Lamorinda Schools

Teresa Gerringer Flies Through Life With Purpose

By Jean Follmer



Teresa Gerringer

Photo provided

If you've been to Lafayette, chances are you've seen Teresa Gerringer. When she's not with her family, Teresa can be found serving in a number of volunteer positions. Some of her regular positions include Lafayette School Board member (since 2000), California School Boards Association Region 7 Delegate, CSBA Legislation Committee Member, Lafayette Library & Learning Center Foundation Trustee, Lafayette Community Foundation Board member and a Sunday school teacher at Lafayette United Methodist Church. Some of her past volunteer activities and accomplishments include Co-Chairing the "Yes On J" Parcel Tax Campaign Committee, Lafayette Chamber of Commerce Advisor, Founder of the Las Trampas Creek Council PTA Legislative Network Email Alert System, various PTA and PFC leadership roles as well as "a variety of Lafayette Arts & Science Foundation, school site, classroom, and Girl Scout roles." The list is by no means complete.

Teresa was raised in Sheridan, Indiana, and her parents separated when she was a young girl. Teresa and her four younger siblings were raised by her grandparents. Teresa credits the generosity of her grandparents with the fact that she is "drawn to kids who are underserved. I care so much about getting as much for our kids as we can. Probably my grandmother taking us on was the ultimate call to give back and to get things done." Teresa received her undergraduate degree in Public Administration from Indiana University. At the time, she planned to go on to law school and focus on juvenile law; but she changed her mind. She said it was an "interesting twist of things, coming back full circle," that her undergraduate degree is so applicable to her current

activities.

After college, Teresa moved to Southern California to live with her mother. She ended up working for Security Pacific Venture Capital. She started as the assistant to the President and rose through the ranks to Chief Information Officer. She completed her MBA at Pepperdine University while working for Security Pacific. It was during an MBA accounting course at Pepperdine that she met her husband to be, Bay Area native Michael Gerringer. Teresa said she and Michael "spent a lot of time together on a group project" but they didn't start dating for awhile. At the time, Michael was working at Hughes Aeronautics. He later went to work for Security Pacific Venture Capital too. After dating for four years, Teresa said they were married in 1986 at a friend's home in Rancho Palos Verdes overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Their first daughter, Mackenzie, was born in 1990 and Teresa left work to be home with her.

Security Pacific went through a period of downsizing and Michael was offered a position with Bank of America in St. Louis. They moved to St. Louis for two years before returning to Southern California with the bank. In 1995, Michael was transferred to San Francisco and the Gerringers settled in Lafayette. They have since welcomed their second daughter, Madison, to the family. Both girls have attended public schools in Lafayette. When they first attended Springhill Elementary, "I helped all the time in the classroom the first year," said Gerringer. She increased her involvement at Springhill by handling the weekly newsletter and chairing the science fair. Teresa became close with then current PFC President, Kate Davis. Teresa said Kate told her "I see you're into everything. I'd

love for you to be my Vice President next year." Teresa accepted the Vice President position and became the PFC President the following year. Teresa was PFC President during the ribbon cutting ceremony of the new Springhill Elementary School building.

"After being PFC President, Shane Silva and others (on the Lafayette School District Governing Board) were getting ready for the 1999 Parcel Tax," said Gerringer. Gerringer had been attending Governing Board meetings because "I felt it was important to be there and to know what was going on," said Gerringer. Shane (still a current Governing Board member) encouraged Teresa to become involved and Teresa ended up co-chairing the Parcel Tax effort with Janet Tittiger and Maudie Silverman. During that time, Teresa worked a lot with the Parcel Tax consultant and "became really aware of the budget and where it comes from," said Gerringer. This insight motivated her to become further involved in school-related efforts. In 2000, "a seat became open on the board," said Gerringer. Teresa was one of three applicants. After a public interview, it was moved and seconded that Teresa be appointed to the Governing Board.

Due to her active schedule, Teresa has experienced periods in which she's taken on too much. "I admire people who can set boundaries. I'm now able to say 'no,'" said Gerringer. "It's really easy to want to do things in Lafayette because of the volunteer spirit. It's why we want to live here," continued Gerringer. Her family has been very involved in her volunteer pursuits. She said "My kids sacrifice for it...they've made calls with me and their lives have changed." It would seem Mackenzie and Madison are following in their mom's footsteps. Madison is currently the President of Opportunity Knocks volunteering program at Stanley Middle School and both girls have run for many school positions throughout the years. Mackenzie graduated from high school last spring and is now attending Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington. When asked how she is doing with the separation, Teresa said "We have really long phone conversations. I'm doing fine because she's doing fine." When asked about future aspirations, she hasn't ruled out political ones. However, her personal priorities dictate that she would wait until Madison leaves home for college. "I am first and foremost a mom," said Teresa.

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Stanley School Keeps Dollars in Town

By Trina Audley



Book Fair at Stanley Middle School

Photo provided

All school sales capitalize on the community's desire to benefit schools while making holiday purchases. But what if that "bang for your buck" could go even further? At one Stanley Middle School event, it does.

"The only thing better than supporting a local school in this economy," says Elena Toohey, parent committee chair of the Stanley Book Fair, "may be supporting a local school and a local business at the same time!" Each year in October, for the past fifteen years, Stanley Middle School and local Lafayette Book Store have teamed up to run the successful Stanley Book Fair.

Unlike many school book fairs that are run through large publishing houses, the Stanley Book Fair keeps income and employment in town. In addition, "there isn't all the shipping to keep the books moving around the state," adds Angie Cozad of Lafayette Book Store, "so we can be a little more green." Cozad, who coordinates book fairs for the store, also proudly points out that "you won't see toys or plastics for sale either. We handpick books

tailored to each school's interests."

With budgets tight and an eye on the environment, choosing a local bookstore to host school book fairs seems to be catching on. "We've had to turn some schools away this year," says Lafayette Book Store owner Dave Simpson. And he feels he knows why. For Stanley School, for instance, Simpson donates a high percentage (20%) of sales while also offering special orders on any book in print. He sells custom gift certificates, and makes his entire bookstore part of the book fair by inviting anyone "to

mention the Stanley Book Fair at the store the week of the book fair or the week after and Stanley will receive 20% of your purchase, same as if you bought the book at the book fair."

As for the planning of the fair, Stanley Librarian Barbara Stevens is glad for the personal relationship with Lafayette Book Store. "We work closely together and that goes beyond book selections," says Stevens. On one night of the fair each year, store and school co-host an author night featuring a panel of local and celebrity authors. It is an open forum where the public can approach an author to ask direct questions. Authors will sign books and/or illustrators will demonstrate their techniques for interested students. Stevens notes, "The evening can really personalize literature for the kids and the community."

The Stanley Book Fair runs Monday, October 27th in the Stanley School Library and through Thursday, October 30th 8am-4pm. The author night is Tuesday, Oct 29th from 6-8pm.



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Moraga School District and Town Council Meet

Sports Fields are the Hot Topic

By Andrea A. Firth

Members of the Moraga School District Governing Board and Town Council recently held a joint meeting to discuss issues that impact both the schools and the town. "The meeting will serve as a better means of communication to the public on common issues," stated Dennis Kelleher, President of the MSD Governing Board. However, he noted that the meeting would serve as a forum for discussion and was not intended to produce specific action. "This meeting and future joint meetings will serve as important steps toward moving forward on these issues," added Mayor Lynda Deschambault.

The first item on the agenda—community use of the MSD facilities—led to a long discussion and focused primarily on the use of the School District's many athletic fields. MSD Superintendent Rick Schafer provided some history on the issue explaining that the Town of Moraga has contributed \$45,000 a year for the maintenance of the schools' facilities based on a verbal agreement that was established in the early 1990's.

"Community use of our facilities far exceeds student

use," stated Schafer. "There is a quantifiable difference in the revenues that we can bring in as compared to the expenses associated with maintaining these facilities," he added. Schafer estimates that the District is down about \$91,000 annually secondary to facility maintenance. The Town suggested some adjustments to the District calculations and estimated the excess maintenance cost need at closer to \$52,000. However, Town Manager Jay Tashiro noted, "The problem is that there is no written agreement between the Town and the School District."

Councilmember Mike Metcalf recalled that four years ago the Town Council was prepared to reassess their contribution to the District for facility use and that a draft agreement had circulated between the two governing bodies. "What happened to the agreement that we worked on four years ago," asked Metcalf. Some speculated that the document had died in the hands of the lawyers, others felt the stumbling block to moving forward was the dollar amount to be inserted, in any case, the two groups agreed to revive the draft agreement and renew negotiations.

A third party to these renewed discussions will be the facility users including the Moraga Sports Alliance, which represents several sports groups across town, and club programs such as the Lamorinda Rugby Club. "We would be happy to participate," stated Joe Rosenbaum, the current leader of the Sports Alliance. Although these user groups may be faced with increased facility usage fees to help close the Districts revenue deficiency, they were committed to the process.

The condition of the sports fields was also reviewed at length. "I'm concerned about throwing money down the hole by maintaining bad fields," stated Councilmember Rochelle Bird. Schafer explained that a study of the fields had been recently completed that identified several problems and maintenance issues. "We over-subscribe our fields. The fields need to be rotated and rested," stated Schafer. A discussion of the potential for installing one or more turf fields at school sites to curb maintenance costs followed and generated questions about safety, security, and funding. The two groups agreed to further study of the topic.

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