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Friends of Fair Trade

By Rebecca Eckland



From left: Will Watson of Lafayette, Corban Ricketts of Moraga, and Ryan McCormick of Orinda, with Fair Trade chocolate bars at the MVPC reSource Center where chocolate will continue to be available for sale. Photo provided by Siv Ricketts

Sixth-grader Corban Ricketts looks his age: he's spunky and he likes chocolate. Yet his mother, Siv Ricketts, was not surprised when Corban accepted \$100 in seed money from the Moraga Valley Presbyterian church to begin a campaign to better the world. According to Ricketts, Corban and his pastor researched the chocolate industry and found the source of nearly everyone's favorite indulgence is harvested by unpaid child laborers in West Africa.

"At the time, my youngest was selling See's Candies to raise money for the Moraga schools," Ricketts said, "and it was such a contradiction: chocolate products that had exploited children in Africa were going to better the lives of children here?"

To raise awareness, Corban used his \$100 to purchase Divine Chocolate bars; fair trade chocolate bars that do not use cocoa beans from unpaid, underage workers. The wrappers are deco-

rated in lovely gilded script and the "fair trade certified" symbol. He, along with peers from Lamorinda, sold bars. Combined they have sold over 250 bars to date. All proceeds from these sales will be sent to Not For Sale, a nationwide organization started by Bay Area resident David Batstone that is aimed at ending all varieties of child exploitation worldwide.

Corban's literature (included with each purchase) reports that, per annum, Americans spend \$13 billion on chocolate products; 70% of those come from West Africa where the cocoa harvesters are 12-16 years of age.

In addition to selling Divine Chocolate bars, Corban is also circulating a petition encouraging Hershey's to use fair trade beans. He has three pages of signatures so far.

Interested parties can purchase these Divine Chocolate bars from the Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church for \$4 on Sundays.

Volunteers Wanted for Trail Construction

By Cathy Tyson



Trailwork Image courtesy of Muir Heritage Land Trust

Acalanes Ridge Open Space needs your help. After coming to life via a unique collaboration of the Muir Heritage Land Trust (MHLT), the cities of Lafayette and Walnut Creek, and the East Bay Regional Park District, now MHLT and Volunteers for Outdoor California are hosting a trail building weekend. From Friday, May 20 through Sunday, May 22, volunteers are welcome to come for a day or spend the weekend providing the man and woman power to construct an environmentally friendly trail with amazing views on Lamorinda's newest gem. Tools, supervision, and gourmet meals provided, bring your own tent and sleeping bag, no experience necessary.

"It's an opportunity to gain a sense of accomplishment and a chance to give back to the community in a real concrete way," said Linus Eukel, Executive Director of MHLT. "We want to cultivate an inspirational experience of the property." He adds that this will be the one and only opportunity to camp at Acalanes Ridge - ever.

MHLT is extremely sensitive to the environment when designing trails, focusing on preserving habitat. In order to make a new trail usable for a wide range of abilities - they are creating a path with a 10% grade that gradually curls around the ridge. Some existing paths at the site are not the best - used perhaps by hikers taking a straight shot to the summit, those will also be addressed by volunteers.

"There will be something for everyone," said Cathy Moyer, Executive Director of Volunteers for Outdoor California. Because of the sharp tools - "everyone" does not include children under fourteen. She described a broad range of tasks from heavy duty to light - for example, moving earth, raking, thistle removal, help in the kitchen, and helping to register volunteers.

Moyer has two key phrases for volunteers: "Being tired is better than bored - there won't be any standing around - we use your time well," and, "Our volunteers never look at a trail the same way again." Helpers will learn about outslope, hydrologic invisibility, pulaskis and more.

"We take the logistical load off a land manager's plate," said Moyer. Volunteers for Outdoor California is responsible for all the food and hands-on leadership

to safely manage the project. Armed with a portable commercial kitchen to provide meals and snacks for everyone and a menu that can accommodate a variety of food issues, no one should go hungry.

Registration with Volunteers for Outdoor California is required, go to www.v-o-cal.org or call (650) 298-9774. Website has complete information on what to bring, what to wear and options for volunteer shifts.

RESCUE ONE FOUNDATION

The Board of Directors of Rescue One Foundation is seeking applicants to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of founding Board member Jerry Meyer.

The Rescue One Foundation functions as the support group for the paramedic program for the Moraga/Orinda Fire District. For over 30 years since Rescue One Foundation was established, over \$340,000 has been received in donations from the community to purchase emergency medical equipment and training materials for the District's paramedic program. The Foundation has been providing this valuable help through gifts of appreciation, memorials and annual donations.

Letters of interest must be received by May 31, 2011, and addressed to:

RESCUE ONE FOUNDATION
1280 Moraga Way
Moraga, CA 94556
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