

## Community Service

We are pleased to make space available whenever possible for some of Lamorinda's dedicated community service organizations to submit news and information about their activities. Submissions can be sent to [storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com) with the subject header In Service to the Community.

### Moraga Charity and Teens Plant Hope in Tornado Torn Joplin

Submitted by Kyla Christie



Teens Gaby Gryko, Vivien Lee, Steven Zhou sort, log, and pack books

When recent tornadoes destroyed 262 classrooms and 16 schools leaving 13,000 students without supplies or books in Joplin, Missouri, Be the Star You Are!® charity spearheaded Operation Disaster Relief. Teen volunteers Courtney Cheng and Katherine Kim identified the sources that needed resources. Founder/Executive Director of the literacy charity, Cynthia Brian, who is producer and host of the radio show, Starstyle®-Be the Star You Are!® invited guest authors to participate.

"I let authors who've interviewed know they could make a difference for the kids in Joplin by donating through our Be the Star You Are!® Operation Disaster Relief. My goal was to get books to the district before school starts in September," Brian remarked. Brooks Olbrys, author of *Blue Ocean Bob*, and Diana Zimmerman, author of *Kandide* were first to donate.

Teen volunteers Steven Zhou, Gaby Gryko, and Vivien Lee sorted,

mented an ecstatic Kristen Dudolski of the Joplin School District.

When the Joplin Access Family Clinic asked for books for their patients, Be the Star You Are!® acted. Cases of new books from the BTSYA library were shipped including books written by Brian, *Be the Star You Are!® 99 Gifts* and *Be the Star You Are!® for TEENS*.

"Your gifts are greatly appreciated. We are now just learning how widespread the devastating effects of the tornado reached. At our community health center, we are presenting each child with a book as they enter the exam room, putting them at ease," wrote Dr. Debra Davidson, Chief Operations Officer for Access Family Care in Joplin.

Authors John Woods, Maggie Mei Lewis, Jeff Bennett, Allen Klein contributed. Friends of the Lafayette Library donated seven boxes of children's books and a local philanthropist paid the postage.

Over \$45,000 of books, cards, and games shipped. "Thank you so much to Be the Star You Are and the authors. You have been amazing!" responded Joplin recipients.

"A book is like a garden in your pocket. We are planting the seeds of hope and growing joy," Brian exclaimed.

For more information, go to [www.bethestaryouare.org](http://www.bethestaryouare.org) or [www.btsya.com](http://www.btsya.com).



Moraga Country Club Station Postman Mark Fahmy stamps cases of books for Joplin from Be the Star You Are!® volunteers Gaby Gryko and Cynthia Brian  
Photo provided

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

### Moraga School District Reinstates Positions

At a special meeting on Monday, August 11, the Moraga School District governing board unanimously voted to accept donations from the Moraga Education Foundation and the Parent-Teacher Association to reinstate programs that were to be discontinued due to the budget shortfall.

Specifically, two Physical Education positions and the Reading Tutor program have been restored to

the three elementary schools; a student support provider and the Math Intervention program has been restored to all four district schools; and the library technician position at both Camino Pablo and Rheem has been restored.

Kindergarten through fifth grade classes will have weekly physical education and the school libraries will remain open four days a week. *C. Graveson*

### Bidding Goodbye to Summer

By Diana LaScala-Gruenewald and Lee Borrowman

"Whatcha up to?"  
"Nothin'. Whattabout you?"  
"Nothin'."  
"Wanna do somethin'?"

"I guess."  
"Whattaya wanna do?"  
"I dunno, Whatta you wanna do?"

This conversation, echoed thousands of times in the mouths of thousands of American children, embodies a kind of summer that some fear may be long lost in Lamorinda. Writer Jim Shahin recorded it many years ago – in all its mind-numbing glory – in his article "Searching for Summer," published by *American Way* magazine. Shahin's lost summer is not fun or busy. It is not full of people studying or working or playing on the beach. It is full of people aestivating – a verb the author defines as "spending the summer in a state of torpor."

For many of us, Shahin's summer is that of our own childhoods. Lately, though, it seems that rather than drifting by slowly, summers just slam into home plate.

The next school year presents itself alarmingly. At swim meets and summer camp parking lots, conversation between bored children has been replaced with conversation between exhausted parents. "I can't believe school is starting in just a few

weeks," they say, shaking their heads. "Where did the summer go?"

So where did it go? The answer is different for every family. For some, it simply whirled by as much of life does. For others, it wouldn't be summer in Lamorinda without swim team and the countless hours of practice, volunteering, and the camaraderie born from shared experience.

Perhaps acknowledging and reflecting on summer would achieve some of the slowness that full, busy summers tend to lack. Being busy is not inherently bad, but it may be worth pausing the last week or two of vacation before plunging into the next school year.

With that goal in mind, we took an unscientific poll of a few Lamorinda locals who volunteered to contribute memorable moments from the summer that is currently drawing to a close. We didn't hear much about exotic vacations – almost everyone, from the youngest to the oldest, talked about things closer to home.

Many of the young teens, particularly girls, told us they had plenty of time to spend with friends and family this summer and enjoyed it – Sara from Lafayette, and Serena, Mel, Ariel and Ali from Moraga all said that hanging with friends and/or family was their favorite thing. Alison, an Orinda mom, agreed and said that she enjoyed "a nice, long visit with our extended family."

Miranda, an older teen from Orinda, shared a story: "One of my friends wanted to have at least one last get together with our entire group before everyone heads off to college. We headed down to Pier 39 to look at all the shops there. One store, Krazy Kaps, was particularly fun. All of us tried on the craziest hats we could find and took pictures of each other, laughing at how ridiculous we looked. I really enjoyed that day...I got to have fun and relax with my friends without being stressed out."

Then there was Cameron, a young teen whose favorite thing was a little different and probably didn't go over very well – "When the cat's tail (mysteriously) turned pink!" she smiled (oddly enough, the tail in question then matched her own hair). Jordyn recalled the last day of school as being the best day of summer because, "We had a really fun Silly String fight!"

The teenage boys preferred a bit more excitement. Joshua, from Moraga, told us, "I had a chance to spend some time at the lake with friends – my favorite thing was riding in a raft pulled by a motor boat." And Roman was delighted to embark on a jet ski adventure.

"The day I earned three golds at one swim meet!" – "Good times spent at the pool, just being carefree." – "Going to the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk with friends." – "Going to Great America in a limousine!" – and "Church camp" were among the things other local teens enjoyed.

Lee, a Moraga parent, recalled, "We were at a beach, just south of Santa Cruz, at night and I decided to try to build my first bonfire – I had no idea what I was doing, so it took a while – we managed to roast a few marshmallows (on real sticks) before the tide came in...I had picked a spot too close to the water."

Catherine, from Lafayette, said, "I finally put the boat back in the water and went sailing for the first time since becoming a mom two years ago." While Cathy, of Moraga, was jazzed about, "Getting a complimentary retro poster from the Moonalice front man and business tycoon at the Moraga Commons while enjoying the concert with my significant other."

We also ran into a couple of little ones at the park. Ian (age 3) said his favorite things about summer were riding the Little Train in Tilden Park, going to Children's Fairyland, swimming in his aunt's pool, and riding his tricycle – everywhere (look out, Lance Armstrong); and Erik (age 2) enjoyed hanging out with his cousins and playing with trains...and more trains.

We wish you an enjoyable end to summer!

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