

# Lamorinda Schools

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

## Family Focus

### What Parents of Grown Children Would Do Differently

By Margie Ryerson, MFT

Just for fun I decided to conduct my own informal, nonscientific poll of Lamorinda friends, neighbors, and colleagues with grown children to find out what they would do differently as parents if they had a “do-over.” My hope is that these insights will help those who are currently engaged in the “front lines” of parenting. Parenting humbles us. It’s impossible to feel that we always know what we’re doing or are doing it well enough.

Here is a list, in no particular order, of these longtime parents’ wishes and regrets:

- We should have tried to instill more religious training. I always feel guilty that we didn't bring them up with more tradition.
- I'm sorry we were so lenient with our son when he was in high school. We didn't check enough on his plans or know all of his friends and what they were up to. He developed a drug habit that we knew nothing about until there was a near tragedy. Now he's independent, hard-working, and stable, but we had many difficult years that perhaps could have been avoided.
- I wish that we had required them to regularly do some defined community service or other volunteerism.
- I wish we had done more exploring on Saturdays and Sundays of the Bay area.
- I wish we had each had more individual dates with our boys.
- I wish that I had insisted on more dinner mealtimes at home with the kids with foods they had to eat. So important and they both were such picky eaters. A little more bonding and less finicky eating would have been a good idea!
- I wish I hadn't tried so hard to control my daughter's weight when she was in her early teens. I nagged her too much and it took her a long time to trust that I think she's beautiful.
- One thing I do regret is not insisting on using sun block regularly and realizing the importance of keeping young skin covered in the sunshine. I would be more vigilant at the pool and outside events to protect their skin.
- I wish I hadn't worried so much about where they would go to college. Now I realize that getting into a certain college isn't an automatic recipe for success at all. Many of my friends' kids have been highly successful despite starting in community college or going to colleges that weren't prestige schools.
- I regret not making my children follow through with piano. We let them off too easy, one after just one year of lessons, instead of insisting they stick with it.
- We wish we had given them a regular allowance instead of money when they wanted it so that they would have gleaned an inkling into the value of money and how hard it is to earn.
- I regret doing too much of their school

work for them, such as contributing too much to their papers and doing too much work on their projects. I tried to make everything perfect for them instead of letting them make their own mistakes.

- One thing I wish I had done differently would be insisting that my children write thank you notes to their grandmothers.
  - I wish we had demanded that our children consistently do chores around the house, such as cleaning their rooms, doing dishes, and helping with laundry and the yard.
  - I regret not making more effort to go to their games.
  - I wish I had taught my kids the difference between praise and achievement. I see our children as struggling with the real world because I think we have erred in teaching them that it's ok to come in last. When we praise them too easily they don't always learn the most important lesson that the real world insists on teaching all of us... It's tough out there and we don't get jobs, and life isn't handed to us without trying really hard!
  - I would be sure to have tighter curfews and more consistent punishment -- especially grounding -- when they screwed up.
  - We wish we had been less busy and had spent more time just relaxing with our children. (Several people expressed this wish. Some wish they had done more simple activities together, such as camping, playing games, cooking, or leisurely bike rides. They would have liked a slower-paced life with their children).
- So there we have it, some wisdom from experienced parents who know well the challenging, often emotionally and physically exhausting, yet life-enhancing task of raising children.



**Margie Ryerson, MFT,** is a marriage and family therapist in Orinda and Walnut Creek. Contact her at 925-376-9323 or margierye@yahoo.com. Her new book, *Treat Your Partner Like a Dog: How to Breed a Better Relationship* is available on www.amazon.com and at Orinda Books.

### Back to School Via the Highway



Cole Martin and Jake Tyson

Photo Cathy Tyson

After enjoying all the cultural highlights of Lamorinda this summer, college kids Cole Martin and Jake Tyson loaded up their respective cars, said goodbye to parents and pals from high school hit the road for their two-day drive back to Boulder, Colorado. Gas card – check; pre-paid season tickets to CU football and basketball games, a shiny new backpack – check; and most importantly, a hunger to absorb all the knowledge that this institution of higher learning has to offer – check. *C. Tyson*



### Shakespeare for Kids

Submitted by Carol Upshaw



Photo provided

Shakespeare for Kids has become a favorite summer camp staple. 11-year old Windy Margerum has been attending for the past seven years. “It is the best camp in the world,” she states firmly.

During the first week of camp, participants get to know Shakespeare, learning his history and his plays, in ways that include making pup-

pets and masks, and going on treasure hunts.

The second week of the camp is spent in rehearsal. Each participant is given a part in a production and they spend the week preparing for the camp's grand finale, the performance.

“Everyone will have such a good time. Kids' families come and see them perform,” Margerum says. “It will be the night of your life.”

### Jazz Workshop Inspires Music Students

By Cathy Tyson



Mary Fettig, legendary Bay Area saxophonist and the first woman to play with the Stan Kenton Orchestra leads students in Big Band music at the Lafayette Summer Music Jazz Workshop.

Photo Cathy Tyson

“The saxophones were the largest instrument group at the Lafayette Summer Music Workshop,” said Stanley Music Director Bob Athayde, describing the photo above. “Forty altos and eighteen tenors - with players who had never played jazz, all the way to pros who have graduated from USC. Top that off with Artist in Residence, Tom Scott, and you have magic!”

The Lafayette Summer Music Jazz Workshop, now in its thirteenth year, is directed by

Athayde with jazz curriculum director Frank Summears. It's the highlight of the summer for many of these young, and not so young, students.

The week long program culminates in a concert featuring the entire student body and their teachers. Moms, dads, grandparents, siblings and neighbors packed the auditorium at Stanley Middle School to hear them play. The Workshop is proudly sponsored by the Generations in Jazz Foundation.

### SCHOOL CALENDAR

**Acalanes Union**  
High School District  
Board Room AUHSD Office  
1212 Pleasant Hill Rd, Lafayette  
Wednesday, August 17, 7:30pm  
Wednesday, September 7, 7:30pm

**Moraga School District**  
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate  
School Auditorium  
1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga  
Tuesday, August 23, 7:30pm

**Lafayette School District**  
LAFSD Office  
3477 School Street, Lafayette  
Thursday, August 18, 7pm

**Orinda Union School District**  
OUSD Office  
8 Altarinda Road, Orinda  
Monday, September 12, 6pm



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