

# A Tiny Pursuit: Fostering Hummingbirds

By Cathy Dausman

Imagine a bird's nest small as a hockey puck. It is made from feathers, lichen, fibers and spider webbing, which allows the nest to "grow" with its occupants. Imagine baby birds the size of kidney beans. Now imagine keeping those tiny, fragile beings alive by feeding them every 20 minutes, dawn to dusk, from a syringe with a needle smaller than angel hair pasta.

That is the challenge one Lamorinda area volunteer has faced the past 24 years while raising Anna's hummingbirds from home. The hummingbird foster mom, who asked not to be named, says it is a "very big privilege" raising these spry little hyperactive birds, even with all the work it entails. It is something "anyone can do as long as they learn how to do it," she says. Fostering baby birds has opened up a new knowledge and awareness for her. But she warns that while adult hummingbirds may

be a garden novelty and are certainly fascinating to watch, and the babies may look cute and sweet, they are not pets.

Keeping native wildlife is against the law without a Department of Fish and Game permit. Lindsay Wildlife Museum keeps

the permit; its animal foster parents do the work. Each bird is numbered and dated upon receipt, and each has a different personality. The tiniest babies nest on a heating pad. Feeding them sometimes involves crushing fruit flies and doling out specialized food

and medicine. Slightly older birds, or fledges, are placed inside a bird cage draped with window screen mesh to prevent their fragile wings from being damaged when they brush the cage bars. Older, stronger birds are transferred to a standard 4 x 4 x 8 outdoor aviary.

After a week in the cage, flying ever faster and more furiously, they are finally released. For us Lamorindans, that means

Anna's hummingbirds will be found in our gardens. If you happen upon a grounded bird, don't play with it, feed it or give it water. And leave it alone if it's not in obvious danger.

To learn how to become a Lindsay Wildlife Museum volunteer, attend the next free orientation August 11 from 3 to 4:30 p.m. at 1931 First Avenue, Walnut Creek or visit [wildlifemuseum.org/get-involved/](http://wildlifemuseum.org/get-involved/).



Hummingbird in outdoor aviary



Photos Cathy Dausman

Two baby hummingbirds keep each other company

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## Moraga Ranch Swim-A-Thon a Huge Success



Swim-A-Thon coordinators and coaches, from left: Darlene Bennett, Swim-A-Thon Coordinator, Adam Streeter, MRSC Senior Assistant Coach, Dave Brown, MRSC Head Coach, John Schonder, Richmond Sailfish Head Coach, Gabriela Campo, Swim-A-Thon Coordinator  
 Photos provided

More than 145 swimmers ages 5 to 15 participated in this year's Moraga Ranch Swim Club Swim-A-Thon July 20, raising more than \$13,000 to benefit the Richmond Sailfish – a non-profit USA swim team that works out at the Richmond Plunge. Moraga Ranch Swim Club Senior Assistant Coach Adam Streeter suggested helping the fellow swim team members in Richmond, who were in need of swim equipment including starting blocks, bumpers, pace clocks and kickboards. The Swim-A-Thon also raised money to support swimmers by offering grants to help offset swim team registration fees and other costs.

"In Moraga, kids have goggles, swim suits, and can afford the cost of swim team," said Swim-A-Thon Coordinator Darlene Bennett. "Adam thought this was a good cause because it's good all around for the kids' self-esteem, personal health, and can even help support the Learn-to-Swim program [in Richmond], offering a way for kids to learn how to swim. He thought it was a fantastic way to get involved and help them."

Participants, including several swimmers from the Richmond Sailfish team, swam laps and collected pledges. Several swimmers also manned lemonade stands at Safeway and Loard's Ice Cream to raise additional money. - J. Wake



## New Delhi Worth a Visit



Roos Pal (Terzetto Cuisine) reports that she and husband PJ, who makes a very nice naan (flatbread), were up for 48 hours preparing for the grand opening of New Delhi Bistro. The tables filled quickly at lunch time on opening day.  
 Photo Andy Scheck

Roos Pal opened New Delhi Bistro to a crowd last week. If you've ever noshed on delicately spiced Samosas or creamy Chicken Tikka Masala while wandering through the Moraga Farmers' Market, you've tasted Pal's food and you'll find many of the menu items familiar.

New Delhi Bistro is light and welcoming. Don't be fooled by the lunch meat that fills the first half of the display case—although you can certainly get a decent sandwich if that's what you're looking for, the real treas-

ures lie just beyond.

The menu features traditional Indian dishes such as Chana Daal (lentils), Aloo Gobi (potatoes and cauliflower), and Chicken Korma (cooked in yoghurt sauce). There are only about a dozen items available right now, but Pal plans to expand her offerings over the next few weeks to include tandoori plates, vegetable pakoras, and a selection of desserts.

Don't miss the home-style Baigan Bhurta (often spelled baingan bharta), a delightful, robust dish made with smoky,

roasted eggplant. Lamb Kofta Saag, dense lamb meatballs in a bright, flavorful spinach sauce is also quite tasty; you can get a similar dish with chicken—it's the spinach that will have you wiping your plate with a piece of fragrant naan.

Heat-seekers may not be satisfied – much of the food lacks the fire that some lovers of Indian cuisine look for; spice is applied with a deft but light hand. There's an upside to that: my kids polished off the Chicken Tikka Masala in short order and clamored for more.

The question asked at my house when we try a new restaurant's food or a new recipe is always, "Do we want to eat this again?" Since we are looking forward to sampling the full menu at New Delhi Bistro, the answer is definitely "yes!" L. Borrowman

**New Delhi Bistro**  
 484 Center Street (in the Rheem Valley Shopping Center)  
 Moraga  
 (925) 376-3839  
 (The website, [www.Newdelhibistro.com](http://www.Newdelhibistro.com), is still under construction)