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Child Safety Awareness Coordinator to Start Teaching in Lamorinda Schools

By Sophie Braccini



Carol Shenon Photo provided

Carol Shenon was recruited by the three Lamorinda school districts to serve as the Child Safety Awareness Coordinator for all the el-

ementary and middle schools in Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda. Employed by the Child Abuse Prevention Council of Contra Costa County, with funding from the districts, Shenon is a passionate child education advocate who's been working for years in East Bay school districts teaching children, staff and parents about respiratory conditions and allergies. With a focus on prevention, Shenon understands that to effect change, both parents and children need the same information, tools and vocabulary to discuss issues together. The same participatory approach is used with the child abuse prevention program "Speak Up-Be Safe," a program piloted in Florida that has benefited 270,000 children and is now expanding to other states.

In late August, Shenon will train staff in each district and hold parent meetings in the three communities. She plans to start teaching all first, third, fifth and sixth graders in September. "At the end of last year we started with all the first graders in Moraga and had very good feedback," says Shenon, who sent a parent letter after her meetings explaining what was taught along with talking points for parents to share with their children. She will teach in over 100 classes, interacting with each class twice a year, building students' knowledge over the years. For information about how to support the Child Abuse Prevention Council of Contra Costa County, visit www.capc-coco.org.

Position Available: Sports Reporter

Lamorinda Weekly is looking for a sports reporter to cover a variety of high school, college and club sports. A journalism background and understanding of AP Style is helpful, but not required. Please send your resume and writing sample to wendy@lamorindaweekly.com or call (925) 377-0977; \$50-\$75 per published article.



Local Young Artist to Attend Interlochen Arts Academy

Submitted by Petra Michel



At the end of this month, former Miramonte High School student Amrita Newton, 17, of Orinda will head to Michigan's Interlochen Arts Academy, the world's premier fine arts boarding high school, to study theater. Newton, the daughter of Petra Michel, is a three-time winner of Lamorinda Idol (formerly Orinda Idol), was a 2013 Young Arts Winner, and has performed on stage in leading roles during her school years in the Orinda public school system. An academically accomplished student, Newton decided to

apply to the prestigious academy to immerse herself in drama during her senior year. Interlochen Arts Academy attracts more than 500 young artists from 40 states and 15 countries. Together, students study music, theater, dance, visual arts, creative writing and motion picture arts in a college-like setting. While producing more than 250 artistic presentations in the school year, academy students also master rigorous college-preparatory academics that prepare them to take prominent roles in any professional endeavor.

Amrita Newton with her guitar

Photo Neris Newton

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TEEN SCENE

Transitioning from One School to Another

By Linda Lan Phung and Caie Kelley

Once July comes to an end and August begins, the start of school seems imminent. The prospect of being an older student can feel unreal – especially when memories of the previous year seem so vivid. Even more surreal is the change from being at the top level of the school to the bottom again.

Sophia Li has just completed middle school and will enter the world of high school. Unlike many incoming freshmen, Li has a little bit of experience with the academic rigor because she took a math class at Campolindo High School while still in the eighth grade.

Along with a new school, Li looks forward to having her sister in the same school since the last time that occurred was in the second grade. She jokes, adding, "Plus, I'll have a ride home from school!"

Once situated in school, the transition from one grade level to the next becomes easier because students have familiarized themselves with the system. For rising sophomore Jonathan Zhou, he welcomes the new school year with no fear of getting lost on campus again.

Thinking back, Zhou comments, "I procrastinated and didn't study very much, but knowing this, I can improve for my AP European History class next year."

It can be nerve-wracking, imagining oneself in a higher grade with more responsibilities. Summer is the perfect buffer of time, allowing for adjustment and amelioration for a smoother transition to our next educational challenge.

On the other end of the spectrum, recent Miramonte High School graduate Julia Ting nervously anticipates attending college. "It will be a huge change from high school: not only will the academics be much harder, but I will need to take care of myself and make new friends," she says.

During the summer Ting had time to reflect on her senior year and is determined to improve for college. Many seniors suffer from "senioritis," a condition in which students lose their drive to excel, especially during the second semester when college applications have already been sent and graduation is nearing.

Ting was no exception. Optimistic, she states, "I had a bad case of senioritis, but hopefully I'll reset by the end of the summer and recover my motivation once school starts in the fall."

Preparing for College

Like Ting, many of the graduated high school seniors from the Class of 2013 will soon enter college and life away from home. How have some of these students spent the summer months preparing for the transition?

Gina Nerone, who will be attending the University of Wisconsin in the fall, explained that she wanted to make the most of her time before she left for school. She says, "The week after graduation, my best friend and I went on a road trip through the Pacific North West to celebrate being finished with high school. We trav-

elled to Olympic National Park, added gum to the Gum Wall at Pike Place Market, and tasted the famous 'Voodoo Doughnuts' in Portland."

Several other groups of graduated seniors took trips this summer abroad and around the country as well. Nerone continues, "in terms of my packing list for college, I'm ordering stuff online and picking it up at the stores in Wisconsin. I always knew I wanted to go far away for school, but college has such a different climate and culture. I will miss my close friends and family, yet I also know I am going to have so much fun!"

Her mixture of excitement and nerves seem to be echoed by many of her peers. Zac Nan, who will also be studying out of state soon, says, "I'm really taking advantage of all the moments I have - I am coaching and swimming for my last year at Sleepy Hollow, I go out for frozen yogurt and impromptu day trips, and I went to Disneyland with my family recently - it's the little things." His packing list was also light, because shipping is expensive and the amount one can bring is limited on flights. Nan is lucky, because as he says, "My roommate is a sophomore so I don't have to bring any of the big stuff, which is a huge relief. I am looking forward to what is ahead."

So whether next year's destination is far away like Nan's and Nerone's or just over the hill, the upcoming transition to college - or to high school - is an exciting prospect in these young Lamorinda teen's lives. As a soon-to-be college freshman said, "I can't wait!"

Linda Lan Phung, a Miramonte High School senior who volunteers throughout the East Bay, is an officer with Club Be the Star You Are!®, and strives for 17-second miracles, inspired by author Jason Wright.

Caie Kelley is a junior at Miramonte High School and the Pop Culture reporter on the teen show, Express Yourself!™ In her free time, she teaches swimming and piano, and enjoys volunteering.

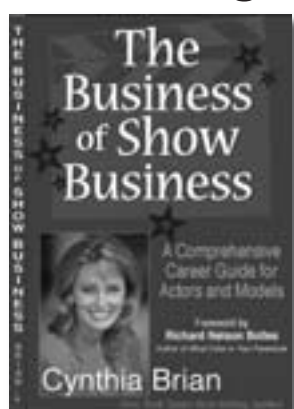


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