

## Boys Team Charity celebrates six-year commitment



Photo provided

From left: Jack Bender, Max Duff, Drew Isola, Jonathan Fuentes Executive Director of POL, Peter Caprio, Ben Burleigh, Tucker Gannon, Owen Wardy, Drew Davidson

### Submitted by Anouschka Wardy

Several of Boys Team Charity (BTC) Class of 2021 TeamMates ended their six-year commitment on April 18 with an in-person final volunteer shift at Points of Light in Oakland. Over the years, they volunteered for many of the 40 philanthropies BTC works with – POL being a favorite for many.

Every Friday night and Saturday morning, Oakland youth and children escape for a couple of hours a week to a safe environment surrounded by supportive leaders and volunteers at Sequoyah Church and its playground.

BTC TeamMates have helped serve breakfast, play games with the kids every Saturday, and helped with Easter and Christmas events.

For their senior project, the class purchased and built a new picnic table, ordered a custom sandbox cover, weeded the yard, and replaced the sandbox sand. Diamond K donated the sand and delivered it for free.

On May 16, during the end-of-year General Meeting (Zoom event), BTC TeamMates and coaches will watch a video highlighting the senior boys' time together volunteering for many local philanthropic institutions.

## Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary makes vital donations to Putnam Clubhouse



Photo provided

Putnam Clubhouse member Nkrumah Lewis demonstrates use of newly acquired smartboard.

### Submitted by Thomas Black

Raise your hand if you know what a “blackboard” is. Those who know went to school ages ago. They also know what chalk is. What they may not know, however, is what an “interactive whiteboard” is. Also known as an “electronic smartboard,” not only is it white in color, it also incorporates technology that enables its use as a remote learning tool. How so? By allowing images from a computer screen to be displayed onto a classroom board from a digital projector. And, because it can make the learning experience more fun, it is being rapidly adopted in

instructional venues everywhere.

Thanks to the generosity of Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary, Putnam Clubhouse in Concord now has a 55-inch, 4K smartboard of its own. In addition to the smartboard, Lamorinda Sunrise donated a new commercial-grade refrigerator and a new freezer. The combined value is close to \$6,000.

Since its founding in 2008, Putnam has offered mental health services to adults seeking to rebuild their lives. It is operated by Contra Costa County Clubhouses, itself a nonprofit. Putnam is the first such program to be accredited by Clubhouse International. All services are offered at no cost to participants, known as members.

## Saint Mary’s offers spring musical film on-demand



When a group of young strangers join a new online meeting space during a once-in-a-lifetime mystical event and a once-in-a-century pandemic, will they find the connection they seek, and will they unravel the mysteries of love, life and adulthood before the stars appear to collide? With a soaring score and intimate stories, “gather ‘round” – presented by the Saint Mary’s Performing Arts Department and written and composed by guest artist Karen Ann Daniels (American Theatre Magazine’s “People To Watch,” April 2020), in collaboration with the student com-

pany – is a musical film for this most singular of times.

“The Saint Mary’s community – through this short film – reminds us that we can dance, cry, laugh, sing and hold our fellow travelers close, no matter the distance,” said Artistic Director Maog.

The ensemble includes Sejal Bahl, Rynne Biernat, Hannah Chylinski, Trent Cox, Emily England, Collin Fisher (Sev), Naomi Kalter, Alex Mendiola, Zoe Prior, Raelaine San Buenaventura (Rae Lane), Sarah Shaughnessy, Will Thompson, and Gabriella Thomas. Instrumentalists include Eden Llodra, cello; Melanie Moyer, violin; Sarah Mameesh, flute; James Vaughan, saxophone; and Ryan Ford, guitar, Benjamin Harte, trombone. Crew members include Sophia Courtemarche (Stage Manager), Brenna Bortner, Rylee Cagle, Skyelar Clouse, Maya Dahlbacka, Audrey Edmondo, Nadine Mhedbi, and Torren Valera.

Performances will be available on demand through Sunday, May 23. There will also be a “gather ‘round” Talkback/Q&A at 5 p.m. Friday, May 14, which will feature members of the cast, crew and creative team to answer questions about the production.

E-tickets: \$8 SMC students; \$12 SMC faculty and staff, non-SMC students; \$15 general. Purchase online [www.stmarys-ca.edu/gatherround](http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/gatherround)

For more information, call (925) 631-4670. – J. Wake

## Miramonte students bring community together with gift of song



Six singers from Miramonte High School perform a Songram. Photo provided

### Submitted by Kathy Merchant

After sheltering-in-place for six months and taking classes online due to the pandemic, Miramonte student Stef Moore knew she wanted to create something that helped keep people connected, especially during the isolating times of the pandemic.

That desire, combined with her love for singing, made Moore think of the first version of Songrams: high school students delivering a singing telegram (a Songram) in their neighborhoods to foster a sense of community and caring.

“I envisioned people in my small town sending each other songrams (for \$20 per song) and the money being donated to the Bay Area Rescue Mission, a local nonprofit organization providing shelter for the homeless,” Moore said. “I thought this would be a brilliant way for singers to share their talent to help uplift others.”

Moore pitched the idea to her choir teacher, Mr. Roberts, and he liked it so much he encouraged her to use his class time to recruit singers. “Having an idea is one thing, but having to ‘sell’ the idea to upperclassmen, to me, was a pretty daunting task. But after my presentations, I was thrilled that 13 singers had signed up to be part of Songrams!”

Two weeks later, they got their first “gig” to do a virtual Christmas performance for the Lafayette Happy Valley Garden Club. After a couple of hiccups, and a few of the singers dropping out, Moore came to realize the remaining singers were not only talented but also very committed and a couple of weeks later, people in their neighborhood started requesting songs. But just as they were about to go deliver their first in-person Songram, California went into

another lockdown.

“I felt really bad for everyone who had already been feeling isolated and I thought of my elderly neighbor who had not left her home for eight months,” Moore said. “That is when I came up with the idea of transitioning into e-cards.” With e-cards, people could connect with friends and family living anywhere in the world without the uncertainty of COVID-19, but Moore didn’t know if an e-card would have the same effect as delivering an in-person song. “It wasn’t until we created an e-card that felt homemade and personal, that I knew we made the right choice.”

Once their e-cards and website were ready to go, Moore reached out to Rainforest Trust. “We wanted to use Songrams as a platform to raise awareness to a cause important to us singers,” Moore said. “As young adults, we are very concerned about climate change and the future of our planet. We decided to link Songrams with the Rainforest Trust because it buys land and works with local organizations to protect our rainforests.”

While Moore says she isn’t sure if Songrams will really take off and people will send each other e-cards, she says one thing is certain: “I have discovered the gratuitous generosity and kindness of people like Mr. Roberts, the Happy Valley Garden Club, the staff at Rainforest Trust, Songrams’ members, our audio and video editor Miguel, and so many others.”

“I think people support Songrams because they also believe in the importance of caring for each other and the environment,” Moore added, “and lucky for us, that means affirming a handful of high school singers.”

For more information or to order a Songram, go to [www.songrams.com](http://www.songrams.com). To learn more about the Rainforest Trust, visit [www.rainforesttrust.org](http://www.rainforesttrust.org).

**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 may be sent to [storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com) with the subject header In Service to the Community.

### Share Your Celebrations and Remembrances

If you would like to share an announcement about a special event or achievement, such as a wedding, engagement, scholarship or graduation of a local resident, or about a special person from Lamorinda who has passed, send a photo along with your text (up to 250 words) to [storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com), and include “Celebrations and Remembrances” in the subject line.

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