

Intergenerational crowd warmly welcomes back Concert at the Res after two-year pandemic hiatus



Photo Sharon K. Sobotta

One of several performances at May 14 Concert at the Res.

By Sharon K. Sobotta

Four-year-old Leila smiled ear-to-ear, while pointing toward the stage at the Lafayette reservoir. Why? “Because my brother plays jazz.”

Leila and her mom Meera Sreenivasan were among the few hundred people who gathered May 14 for the annual Concert at the Res, hosted by the Lafayette Rotary Club, after undergoing a two-year pandemic hiatus.

“My son is a percussionist and it’s great to be out here on this beautiful, sunny day,” Sreenivasan says. “I love hearing him play with his teacher Bob Athayde, who’s retiring, be-

cause he brings so many people from different generations together.”

Throughout the day, students from the local schools cycled across the stage playing music, beating conga drums and singing for a happy intergenerational crowd, thrilled to be back together again.

Katie Penn showed up at the concert to listen to her seventh-grade son play, but she leaves with an even deeper appreciation for the community of Lafayette than when she arrived. “When the kids were playing online, it wasn’t quite the same. There’s something about the collectiveness of music,” Penn says. “It’s nice to cele-

brate their teacher and it’s fun to come together and bring our kids and watch them be influenced by music.”

Monica Phillips doesn’t have a student in the band, but the concerts have been on her online calendar for a long time. “I came back from a work conference and ‘Concert at Res’ popped up on my calendar,” says Phillips, who knew when she experienced the reservoir concert a few years ago, that she’d be back. “I love outdoor concerts. I’ve missed the art and wine festival and I’m so excited that concerts (in the plaza are resuming). Music is such a great connection and a great way to bring the community together.”

Stanley Middle School Music Director and Director of the Lafayette Summer Music Workshop Bob Athayde, the man that so many parents and community members gushed about, may have directed his final concert at the reservoir, but promises he’ll be back. “I can’t wait to come to this concert again next year and sit back in a chair and enjoy the music as my former student Todd Minson directs,” Athayde says. “It’s so important to hear live music. If you hear these parents and these kids, that’s all you need, to know what music does for people.”

Longtime teacher known for changing hearts and minds, bids LES farewell



Photo Sharon K. Sobotta

Sofia Lares, Emi Perez and Espi Estrada-Sobotta with LES teacher, Dr. Dana Fry.

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Dana Fry has much more than math, writing and reading on her agenda when she walks into her fourth-grade classroom every morning. “I want all my students to know that I like and respect them just the way they are,” Fry says. “(Being yourself) is hard these days. I hope my students look back and say that my classroom was a place where they felt safe to be themselves.”

With 30 years as an educator under her belt, Fry – who is retiring this year after 14 years at LES – has purpose behind all she does. “My students call me Dr. Fry because I have a doctorate of educational leadership (for social justice).” Fry doesn’t share that to be boastful, but rather as a testament to her passion for lifelong learning (as she got her doctorate in 2014) and her intention to show her students that anything is possible. “People come from backgrounds where education wasn’t accessible. Some people might come to school hungry or in pain because they have a cavity or sad because they’re dealing with something big at home,” Fry says. “(My goal is) to reach kids exactly where they are, accept them and then move forward from there.”

While Fry is committed to reaching children across the gender spectrum, she’s particularly proud of giving the girls she teaches a glimpse at a larger world with more possibilities than they may have imagined for themselves. “I bring engineering projects to the classrooms to show girls that they are good at math. They do have spatial recognition skills that they can do things that are seen as male jobs,” Fry says. “I want to get my students out of a single track mindset.”

Neither Fry nor her students will dispute her reputation as a strict teacher. “Children need boundaries. It’s im-

portant for them to learn I can go up to this point, but not beyond that one,” Fry says. “It makes them feel safe.”

Tait Foster says he was a little worried about Fry being a strict teacher, but quickly changed his mind. “I learned (from Dr. Fry) never to judge a book by its cover,” Tait says. “She’s really funny and she makes learning a breeze.” Tait’s not alone in his views. There’s a seemingly unanimous sentiment of love for learning among Fry’s students that has them more sad about parting ways with their teacher and less eager about starting summer break.

“She uses funny voices while reading,” Emi Perez says. “When something is confusing, she teaches us to use common sense to solve our problems.”

“Common sense can’t be taught and it can’t be given to you,” Fry explains. “We talk through how to solve a problem even if it’s for something very simple like not having a pencil. We can go ask somebody. Use our words. Eleanor Roosevelt said ‘do something everyday that frightens you’ and I try to teach that.”

A slightly shy fourth-grade girl lit up while describing being granted a gigantic piece of land by Dr. Fry during the California land project. For the assignment, Dr. Fry acted as the governor of California and the children had to request the number of acres they wanted and share their plan for using the land. “Most students requested five or 10 acres, but one requested over a thousand acres and I granted it to her,” Fry explains with a smile. Dr. Fry hopes she planted seeds for a larger life lesson with that particular unit. “Don’t be afraid to ask for what you want or need. Don’t be afraid of the word ‘no,’” Fry says. “You may be told ‘no’ a lot, but you might also get a yes.”

Retirement has been on

Fry’s mind for a few years, but she wanted her final year to be one in which she worked alongside the students inside a classroom, not through a screen. “The best part about in-person learning is being able to reach each student (where they are) to support them and motivate them,” Fry says. “I’ll leave with a warm feeling toward my career.”

While Fry imagines making her way back to a community college classroom at some point, in her next chapter she’ll be more accessible to parents than children as she embarks on a new gig as a wine ambassador at Fenestra Winery in Livermore. “I don’t know much about wine (yet); I’ll need to refine my palette,” Fry says. “I’ve got more to learn. I’m a lifelong learner.”

Help Wanted for the Lamorinda Spirit Van Program



- Part time paid driver for the Lafayette Shopping Shuttle from 10 am to 2 pm on Tuesdays or Wednesdays, eventually two+ half days a week. If wanted, this position can also include part time dispatching and/or driving older adults to appointments and errands. Position requires a good driving record, cheerful communication skills, agility to occasionally tie down a wheelchair.
- Part time paid dispatcher to take ride reservations, schedule the route, communicate with passengers and drivers, and prepare reports. Position requires good communication skills and knowledge of Excel.
- Volunteer drivers for a 4-hour weekly or bi-weekly morning or afternoon shift to take older adults to appointments, errands and shopping.



For more information, please email Mary at mbruns@lovelafayette.org or call 925-284-5546.



The Lafayette City Council is soliciting applicants to fill several volunteer positions.

One vacancy on the Planning Commission. The seven-member body is responsible for matters relating to land use and development in the City. The Commission serves as an advisory agency to the City Council for administering the laws and ordinances governing the approval of general and specific plans, zoning text amendments and rezonings. The Commission also hears and decides on applications for subdivisions, variances and land use permits.

Members of the Planning Commission are required to be qualified electors of the City of Lafayette, and are selected on the basis of training, education, occupation and expertise. The Commission reviews technical reports and construction plans. Individuals interested in this key volunteer position may obtain an application from the City’s website at www.lovelafayette.org/city-hall/commissions-committees or by calling the City Clerk’s office at (925) 284-1968. Completed applications must be received by 5:00pm on June 17, 2022.

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Miramonte High School:

GIRLS: Ellie Hawkins, Elena Gant, Julia Hunt, Sophia Swenson, Caitlin Jenkins, Peyton Mays, Anna Crinks

BOYS: Ronnie Hollis, Max Metzgen, Mark Cheng, Anchul Schmidt, Ethan Berndt, Christian Gee, Liam Williams, Chris Morrison, Aidan San Gabriel



Campolindo High School:

GIRLS: Annie Cimperman, Laurel Hunter, Georgia Hudson, Kendall Keely, Maddie Krozek

BOYS: Tyler Kivelson, Grayer Leenhouts, David Colachico, Julien Welch, Griffin Brown



Acalanes High School:

GIRLS: Grace Hagel, Avery Bahl, Elise Flagg, Ella Morris, Ellie Ives, Lucy Milnes, Maya Stelzer, Jojo Bishop, Samantha Louie, Brooke Palma, Sammy Hess, Michelle Goll

BOYS: Jake Henderson, Mitchell Sweeney, AJ Keohane

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