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Miramonte graduates revisit their elementary schools, inspire young students

By Sora O'Doherty



Miramonte seniors John Williams and Sebastian Rguem greet Glorietta students on May 23.
Photo Meredith Friedman

school campuses.

Robinson and her team coordinated senior class parents to be on hand at each of the school sites to gather the seniors together before beginning the parade. The event was the brainchild of Robinson and her team and was truly a group effort between them, ONE, and the elementary school principals. Allen said it was lovely to work with the senior class parent advisors and, knowing how busy this time of year is for senior families, she would love to offer the opportunity for them all to enjoy the parade and let ONE do the leg work in the future.

"There was so much excitement in the air," Allen said. "Elementary students were able to high-five the seniors as they paraded through. There was cheering and shouts of 'Happy Graduation Day!'" as the graduates visited each school. Allen observed Mrs. Okamitsu's first-grade students at Wagner Ranch asking the visiting seniors for their autographs. Patsy Templeton, principal at Sleepy Hollow, said she overheard kindergarten students trying to determine how many years it would be until they would return to their school, wearing caps and gowns. Maple Lai, principal at Del Rey, said that the seniors were "genuine stars on campus." And this was certainly felt by the seniors.

While the parade lasted about 10-15 minutes, the graduates were on each campus for about 30-40 minutes as they lined up for the parade, took photographs, and visited their old teachers and chatted with the younger students. Retired teachers also came back to campus for this event. Each school held a formal parade with elementary students flanking the walkways, reaching out for high-fives, and calling out congratulations. Some students made signs for the seniors and held those high. Wagner Ranch provided maps of the campus with the teachers' names and room numbers so seniors could go visit their old teachers.



Glorietta graduates Photos provided



Del Rey graduates

About 150 students graduating from Miramonte High School participated in a parade on May 23 during which they visited all four elementary schools in Orinda. This first occurrence of the "Cap and Gown Parade" was enthusiastically welcomed by the younger children, as well as by teachers and principals. Orinda Network for Education (ONE) executive director Emily Allen spoke to Lamorinda Weekly about the event, which she is offering to make an annual occurrence.

The parade was conceived by the Miramonte Class of 2023 Parent Advisors, Charlene Robinson, Jodi Kaelle, Ynez Wilson Hirst and Kathryn Ishizu. Allen became involved while wearing both her ONE hat and her mom-of-a-senior hat to facilitate outreach to the Orinda elementary school principals with whom she works closely at ONE. Once the principals agreed, it was necessary to find a mutually agreed-upon time that worked for the seniors' finals schedule and the busy nature of the last week of school on the elementary



Wagner Ranch graduates



Sleepy Hollow graduates

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