

TEEN CENTER TIMES

A PLACE WHERE YOUTH ARE EMBRACED BY COMMUNITY

Fall 2008

Volume 4, Issue 4

NIMBUS ARTS HONORS TEEN CENTER

June 1 marked a special day as Nimbus Arts and the Angwin Community Teen Center presented a most wonderful art experience for children of all ages in Lyman Park as Jamie Graff, Nikki Ballere, Julia Crane, Miles Metzger, and Edee Torossian presented art from a multitude of media, surrounded by music from the Amazing Harmonatras and the "Band of Bobs."



In the midst of the activities, Jamie Graff, Nimbus Arts Executive Director, awarded their first Halo Award. "We chose Tom Amato and the Mobile Art Project at the Teen Center to be the first recipient of this award because we love his passion and commitment to helping teens on their terms. The Mobile Art Project, which brings working artists and art activities to teens wherever they are, is an ex-



citing and innovative way of empowering teens and fostering self expression."

She continued, "The Nimbus Arts Halo Award is designed to recognize and support an artist or program in our community by providing them with unrestricted funds and other grants to enhance and accelerate their work. We aim to honor a person for self-initiated work which is already underway and making a significant and meaningful contribution to our community, and to do so in a way that expresses our faith and trust in the recipient."

Thank you so much Dana Johnson, Janet Pagano, and Jamie Graff. We are honored and appreciate you greatly.

**Visit our Website
angwinteencenter.org**

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Recent Events

- Health Fair - St. Helena High May 15
- Mobile Art Center Debut on Main Street May 22
- KVON interview with "Kellie in the Morning" May 30
- Art in the Park with Nimbus and Halo Award June 1
- Challenge Day Presentation at Grace Church June 19
- Challenge Day at Howell Mountain School July 9
- Mobile Art Center at Pioneer Park in Calistoga July 18
- Musical Picnics in Lyman Paark July 10
- Trip to Scandia July 28
- Kiwanis breakfast presentation August 13
- Overnighter at the Center August 14
- St. Helena Family Center Board at Teen Center Aug 26
- Interview with St. Helena Chamber CEO Nancy Levenberg -Today in Wine Country Sept 3

Upcoming Events

- Relay for Life with Mobile Art Center Sept 13
- Outdoor Education to Mono Lake Sept 26-28
- If Given A Chance—Chance Encounter Oct 19
- Mobile Art Center—Azteca Market Sept 23

Mondays – My favorite day of the week

By Dani Forsey

I never thought I would look forward to a Monday as much as I do now. Mondays is the day I volunteer at the Angwin Teen Center. One day I was reading the St. Helena Star and read Tom Amato's letter to the editor titled "Emotional Cardiology – The Care of the Broken Hearted". The letter spoke to me and I immediately picked up the phone. Tom and I met soon after and he told me more about the Teen Center and about the kids and their needs. I made the choice to become involved. All of us can do just about anything if we just put our minds and hearts into it. So, with a few life adjustments I was able to give a few hours a week to others. I have a great job at the St. Helena Chamber of Commerce, which has allowed me to flex my hours so that I can get off in time to be there when the doors open at the Center.

My hope was to help mentor, be there for the children of our community, and help provide a safe loving environment. Little did I know how much my own life would change from the moment I stepped through those doors? These children have a real need for love as well as a need to give love. The work and time that the staff and volunteers put in at the center is absolutely mind blowing. I have gained more from being with these kids the last few months than you could ever imagine. I strongly encourage others to get involved, and be there for our community and our children.

The Chamber is constantly trying to think of ways to gain involvement from our Community and when staff talked about having an art contest for the Musical Picnics in Lyman Park, I quickly raised my hand and offered to talk to the kids at the Teen Center. With the help of Supervisor Edee Torossian, we were able to get the children excited about the contest and especially the prizes. Devin was the first place winner of dinner for 4 donated by Pizzeria Tra Vigne, with his drawing of the Musical Picnic Cornucopia. Second place went to Meka for her drawing of her favorite band winning a gift certificate from volunteer Tom Brown for La Prima Pizza. Sara's Grapes of Music was a beautiful addition and Johnny's America Dream drawing was very symbolic as most of his artwork is. Johnny and Sara were awarded an ice cream outing at the Big Dipper with me as their prize. You can see drawings at www.sthelenacom.com/concerts.html.



The Musical Picnics in the Park were a blast as Teen Center kids enjoyed being with each other, eating, and listening to the great music. Thank you Nancy Levenberg and St. Helena Chamber!



LABELS

Edee Torossian

Ever since I was young, I have disliked labels. Whenever a teacher, parent, or friend tried to place a certain label on me, my first reaction was to shake it off before it had a chance to stick.

A baby is deemed innocent, lovable, precious, and perfect. A child is often seen as playful, uninhibited, carefree, teachable and cute.

Teenagers. Whoa. That word alone strikes fear in some people, maybe because when we hear this term, many of us tend to see a LABEL, which puts Teenagers in one generalized category.

Think back to your teen years. Did you ever feel alone, misunderstood, awkward, even like a misfit? Can you remember the fears you had? The confusion? Growing is a painful process, even good growth, and learning who you really are, takes patience and time.

In my own experience, being a teenager was one of the most difficult times of my life. It was extremely hard for me to trust adults, simply because, through no choice of my own, I wore the huge unwanted label of TEENAGER. Not until some caring adults took the risk to look under that label to, see beneath the fear, isolation and pain I was experiencing did life become worth living. Their listening hearts, friendly hugs, and gifts of their time just for me, made such a difference.

Consider reaching out to a teen. A friendly hi, learning their name, giving a sincere compliment, or a smile. The connection you make, however small it may seem to you, is felt far deeper than you know. The Teens I know long to be accepted . . . ABOVE ALL ELSE. Not only by their classmates and friends, but by "middle-aged adults." (In their eyes we are ALL middle-aged!)

Years have passed, yet I distinctly remember the names, faces and even voices of the adults that touched my life in kindness and love.

Why not be a friend who will leave such an imprint?

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COACHING FOR LIFE

MARK PACINI

I was recently reading a parenting book where the author looked at a few of the best coaches of all time, and what made them memorable aside from winning seasons? I began thinking of the coaches that I or my children have experienced over time, and like the author, began to compare coaching techniques to parenting techniques. As parents, what can we learn from the greatest coaches? Are we building winners in the game of life?

First, speaking of coaches Ray Utley and Hayden Fry: *"Both men knew their players - not their weight, their speed, or their latest bench press, but their hearts. They knew that all players aren't motivated the same way... Our team was small and under-talented, but we went to the games united and motivated because those two men cared."*

Speaking now of Bear Bryant (once touted as the "winningness" coach in football history): *"He was tough and intense, but he loved us from his heart (there is that word again!). The love we felt from him translated into victory after victory, because love brings out the best in people... Most coaches get the maximum out of some players, but Coach Bryant got the most out of all of them. You didn't want to disappoint this man who cared for you. It didn't take a superstar to win his care. If you were Joe Namath you felt it, and if you barely made the team you felt it. He'd handle you gently when you made a bad play. He never criticized a player publicly. And if you had a special need, you could depend on Coach Bryant to help you out."*

And now speaking of the great Tom Landry: *"When you got stomped, he'd find something good you did to comment on and build you up. When you did great and felt pretty confident, he'd bring you down to earth. During the first half of the 1970 Super Bowl I got beat up all over. I was broken and bruised worse than I had ever been. On the bench the trainer was working with my injuries. Coach Landry walked by and spoke to the trainer: "Can he play?" "I don't know," was the reply. "I hope so," Landry said. "We need him." I was back after halftime, and caught a touchdown pass to help us win. I would have played if my leg was cut off. Just to hear him say that word of encouragement was like a trumpet blast. When you have faith in a man, you'll run through walls for him."*

Lastly from the author himself: *"Coaches seldom go out on the playing field during game time. For a father too, there comes a time to stay on the sidelines while his child goes alone into the arena to face the game of life. Our influence now depends solely on the job we did before the game - teaching, training, encouraging, and preparing our son or daughter for this moment. That takes faith. The practice field is yours and mine but the playing field belongs to our kids."*

It is never too late to change our coaching techniques. Let's begin our new "season" today.

ANGWIN COMMUNITY TEEN CENTER

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DIRECTORS CORNER

What an experience! Over 50 young people and 50 adult mentors gathered together on July 9 at the Howell Mountain Elementary School for the Challenge Day experience of a life time. While Yvonne and Rich Dutra St. John guided, all participants listened intently as both explained their concepts of love and connection. The day then unfolded in a myriad of innovative games, activities, group discussions, and trust building activities where participants learned how to break down the walls of separation and create a new dimension of respect and communication - seeing through eyes of compassion.

Rich and Yvonne are the cofounders of Challenge Day, whose vision is that every child lives in a world where they feel safe, loved, and celebrated. They have successfully proved that dreams can come true as hundreds of thousands of people, young and older, have come together to share the depth of their heart and support one another.

The Angwin Community Teen Center and Challenge Day share a very powerful truth - "Acting out behaviors, such as drugs, alcohol, bullying and violence, are symptoms of a much greater problem." A problem that we believe stems from wounded and broken hearts.

Although it has been proven that the program reduces many high-risk behaviors, and absenteeism, the question lingers, "How long will it last?" It is our belief that the answer is directly related to the follow-through of support from teachers, family, and community members. Will a community stand beside their young people? Will mentors rise to the need? Will teachers prioritize that which is most important? Will businesses and service groups join the fight for the hearts of our kids?

Join Us At the Relay For Life—Sept 13, 14 Calistoga High School Sports Field

TOM AMATO

The answer in our larger Community is yes, without a shadow of a doubt. When 50+ adults take time out in the middle of summer, in the middle of the week, in the middle of extremely busy schedules, and devote an entire day to our kids, that makes a loud and clear statement. When parents, teachers, community members, business, organizations, and faith groups prioritize our kids and reach out to minister to them, that translates into love. **We truly are committed to a Community where our kids feel safe, loved, and celebrated.**

We join Rich and Yvonne whole heartedly in believing that is not a lack for money and resources that is holding us back from "Being the Change We Want to See in the World - Gandhi." It is fulfilling the continual need of individual one-on-one love, acceptance, and connection.

"What if . . . instead of asking "How do we raise test scores?" we asked, What would it take to create educational systems where every child feels safe, loved, and celebrated?" Dutra-St. John

"What if . . . our educational communities could become supportive learning environments that empower every child to thrive and grow at all levels?" Dutra-St. John

"What if separation, isolation, loneliness, depression and all forms of violence could be systematically eliminated from our children's experience?" Dutra-St. John

As we wage war for the hearts of our kids, our Community commitments are changing the "What if's" into realities. Together we will make the difference. Thank you so much for your partnership! Contact us: Tom Amato 963-1515 or amatomp@comcast.net