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Family Spotlight

A LOS ALTOS TOWN CRIER PUBLICATION • WINTER 2024

magazine

IN THIS ISSUE

SMALL
CHEFS,
BIG
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PLUS: EMPOWERING YOUTH • NURTURING HEALTHY KIDS • EVENTS PREVIEW

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Los Altos Town Crier

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ON THE COVER:
PHOTO BY S.M. LIEU. A child attending a culinary summer camp program at Los Altos Lutheran Church displays ingredients for use during the day.

Small Chefs Big Flavors

Los Altos resident's culinary camp teaches teamwork

BY ADRIENNE MITCHEL
STAFF WRITER

Twelve-year-old Andy Saraci-Alonso said he always had an interest in cooking, but because of the COVID-19 pandemic, he didn't have the opportunity to attend a culinary camp. That is, until the summer of 2023 when his parents enrolled him in a weeklong culinary camp held at Los Altos Lutheran Church.

Andy loved the camp so much, he asked his parents to enroll him again in the following week's session. And Andy wasn't the only camper asking to re-enroll. Arya Wang, 10, attended both sessions as well. She said at first she was nervous because she didn't know any of her fellow campers, but now she's "mastered the skill of making cinnamon rolls."

Los Altos resident Jan Tuttle, a culinary instructor at Mills High School in Millbrae, has been running her culinary summer camp program for approximately 10 years. Prior to that, she was leading Master Chefs,

a summer camp sponsored by the Los Altos School District. When LASD stopped sponsoring summer camps, Tuttle decided to keep running a culinary camp independently, and she determined that her church, Los Altos Lutheran, had the perfect facilities to host it.

For Charis Dorn, 10, attending this culinary camp was a no-brainer. "My sister went before, and she liked it a lot," Charis said. "My sister said this was her favorite place."



PHOTO COURTESY OF S.M. LIEU. A participant at the week-long culinary camp held at the Los Altos Lutheran Church makes waffles on a waffle iron.

Charis said what makes Tuttle's culinary camp so special is how hands-on it is.

"Usually, the cooking things I go to, you're not allowed to basically do anything," Charis said. "Like the only thing you're allowed to do is mix the stuff, but here you actually get to do all the work."

According to Charis, her favorite recipe she made at the camp was the handmade pasta, "especially the flattening it out." In addition to pasta, campers made chicken pot pie, strawberry shortcake, Dutch babies and smoothies. Not only was making the recipes fun, but the cleanup was as well.

"It's fun to wash the dishes because (Arya) washes it and I dry it," Charis said. "It's also fun to wipe off the tables. We were doing this race where we were wiping down the tables. We run around as fast as we can to try to tag each other by going around the table, and we have to wipe the table as we do it." ➤

COLLABORATING IN THE KITCHEN

While the table-racing game is not a sanctioned summer camp activity, nor the best way to clean tables, Tuttle said, it does align with one of the camp’s goals: to teach teamwork.

“A lot of (the campers) want to do stuff by themselves, but because they have to work together in teams, we’re kind of forcing them to work together and share,” said Adrienne Lee, a camp counselor and senior at Mills High School in Millbrae. “They’re learning teamwork and learning collaborative skills, and it’s in a fun way.”

Lee was one of Tuttle’s culinary students at Mills High School, where Tuttle teaches full time. Lee was a camp counselor at the culinary camp both in 2022 and in 2023.

“(The campers) open up more at the end of the week, and they’re more comfortable around the stove and using knives and tools,” Lee said.

When asked if it’s scary to give a child a knife, Lee let out a laugh.

“Yes, it is, but we make sure to watch them,” she said.

Lee recalled one memory that stood out to her was from the 2022 summer camp session, where there were children “as young as 6 or 7.”



PHOTOS COURTESY OF S.M. LIEU. Los Altos resident Jan Tuttle, a culinary instructor at Mills High School in Millbrae, teaches culinary skills to kids during summer camps.

“One of them would wash his hands, and then while he was washing his hands, he would accidentally drip water on the floor, so then he’d wipe it up with a paper towel, and then he’d be like, ‘Oh, no! I have to wash my hands again,’” Lee said. “And it would be an endless cycle of him wiping the floor and washing his hands.”

The camp is now for children ages 8-14, and the recipes are the same recipes Tuttle teaches at Mills High School.

“Because I’m a culinary teacher at school, I do a lot of research, and I know types of things that work and that kids like,” Tuttle said. “I’ve had these recipes for a while, and I know that they work.” ➤



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Tuttle aims to teach campers a love of cooking, basic kitchen skills, how to make healthy foods from basic ingredients, teamwork and communication.

"It's nice seeing the older students help the younger students," she said. "(We teach) the soft skills of communication and being able to work together cooperatively as a team."

Tuttle attempts to keep camp sizes small, at a maximum of 20 campers per session, to ensure everyone gets hands-on experience. And because she has no hired staff, she only holds two weeks of camp per summer.

"I think that it's a fun, rewarding camp," Tuttle said. "Come join for a fun, hands-on learning experience." 🍷

Tuttle's summer culinary camp will be held at Los Altos Lutheran Church, 411 S. El Monte Ave. To register, email jtuttle165@aol.com or visit losaltoslutheran.org. Registration begins in April and will remain open until all spaces are filled.



“They’re learning teamwork and learning collaborative skills, and it’s in a fun way.”

ADRIENNE LEE, CAMP COUNSELOR



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NIMBLE launches young entrepreneurs

BY ADRIENNE MITCHEL
STAFF WRITER

Recent Bowdoin College graduate Pethuel Mutalenu was interested in attending a summer program run by the National Institute for Mentoring Business Leaders and Entrepreneurs (NIMBLE) in Mountain View, but he had one problem. He lived in Maine.

About a week before the program started, Mariette Wharton, tech founder, angel investor and founder and CEO of NIMBLE, invited him to stay with her at her house in Los Altos.

“When she said, ‘Well, you could stay at my house,’ I was like, ‘What?’” Mutalenu said. “I stayed with her for the entirety of the program.”

The program was a two-week startup session, where teenagers and young adults learned the art of the business pitch and teamed up to create their own startups, ultimately pitching their products to ➤

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PHOTO COURTESY OF ZOE SCHAUER, TOWN CRIER EDITORIAL INTERN. Participants at the National Institute for Mentoring Business Leaders and Entrepreneurs (NIMBLE) in Mountain View talk about startups and business.

real investors and venture capitalists. Along the way, students learned the skills needed to be successful in life, what Wharton calls the NIMBLE mindset.

“Really, the intention was to give a platform for this set of skills that are not typically being taught in school,” she said. “And I think entrepreneurship and innovation are two really crucial aspects of that because innovation is the engine of the economy.”

Wharton’s experience with her own kids’ education inspired the NIMBLE mindset. After selling her company, the first cloud conferencing platform, she spent a year traveling the world with her husband and 10- and 13-year-old sons.

“When we were traveling, I was thinking about all these skills they were picking up along the way that had nothing to do with academics,” Wharton said. “And I think that part of what informed my approach was seeing how much they learned from not being in a rigid school environment.”

NIMBLE aims to empower young people, teaching concepts like the ikigai, which is the intersection of what you’re good at, what you’re passionate about,

what the world needs and what you can get paid for.

“Our program helps people work through that because I felt like when I was that age, I didn’t know where I could use my talents or even what my own talents were,” Wharton said.

Experiential learning

For Mutalenu, an important strength of the summer startup program was having CEOs and venture capitalists give him feedback as he was developing his product: a pizza box that has the perfect combination of moisture release and heat retention to ensure fresh pizza delivery.

“That conversation with them was really powerful because he mentioned something that I think we hadn’t thought about enough,” Mutalenu said. “A lot of founders go into entrepreneurship thinking about really cool features and cool products that they want to bring to market and let those cool things really blind ➤



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them and not really deeply think about the problem that they're actually trying to solve. It's almost like they're coming up with these features and then trying to search for problems that correspond to those features. And that's the wrong way to go about it."

It may be surprising to learn that Mutalenu's main takeaway from a business camp was empathy.

"The whole point of design thinking is to teach that you start with empathy and understanding the customers' needs rather than just designing a product because you think it's cool," Wharton said.

And some teams have even brought their product to fruition. Previously, a team pitched a solution to the lack of parking in downtown Mountain View. Local residents could rent out their empty driveways for those driving to downtown Mountain View. The business, called Park Daddy, ran up until the pandemic.

"Our program is very experiential," Wharton said. "When we bring in outside experts, they move around in the different teams and talk to them and challenge them and poke holes in what they're doing and make sure that they have thought through things. And often it elicits a pivot, a change in direction just because the people bring so much experience."

In addition to the startup program, NIMBLE offers design challenges, where students solve a problem that a company is facing. In the past, Wharton brought in an executive from Logitech, who challenged the students to



design a product that competed with AirPods, she said.

"(Logitech) ended up using a couple of the ideas," she said. "But more importantly, the students got the input on their designs from an executive and practiced design thinking."

Wharton's ultimate goal is to empower her students.

"What the program does is it transforms how people think of themselves, like they get to write their own story about themselves," she said. "They now know that they can do entrepreneurship or they can solve an innovative problem."

For Mutalenu, the program grew his confidence in his creativity. ➤

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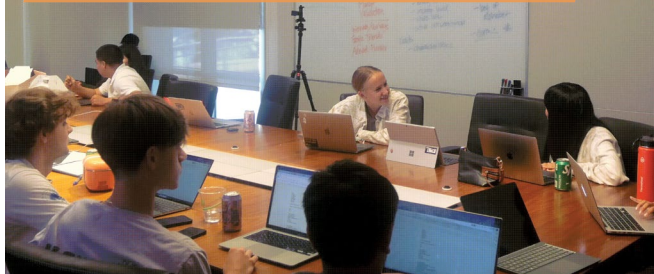
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“What the program does is it transforms how people think of themselves, like they get to write their own story about themselves.”

MARIETTE WHARTON, CEO OF NIMBLE



“I think that a lot of people assume that they weren’t born creative,” he said. “Creativity is a muscle. As you get to exercise, this muscle gets stronger and stronger, so everybody can be creative.”

Mutalenu eventually plans to attend business school and is grateful for the opportunity to attend the NIMBLE startup program.

“I’ve gotten so much value from this, and I really want to go back and put out value to the world, really share all the things that I’ve learned,” he said. ☘

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NURTURING HEALTHY MINDS AND BODIES:

A psychiatrist's perspective on adolescents' sleep and exercise habits

Unlocking potential through consistent routines for optimal well-being

BY DR. DANIELLE KAMIS
SPECIAL TO THE TOWN CRIER

In the fast-paced world of adolescence, where academic pressures, social dynamics and digital distractions abound, it's crucial for parents to prioritize two foundational pillars of well-being: a consistent sleep routine and regular exercise. In understanding the profound impact these habits have on the developing minds and bodies of teenagers, we explore the importance of these practices from a psychiatric perspective.

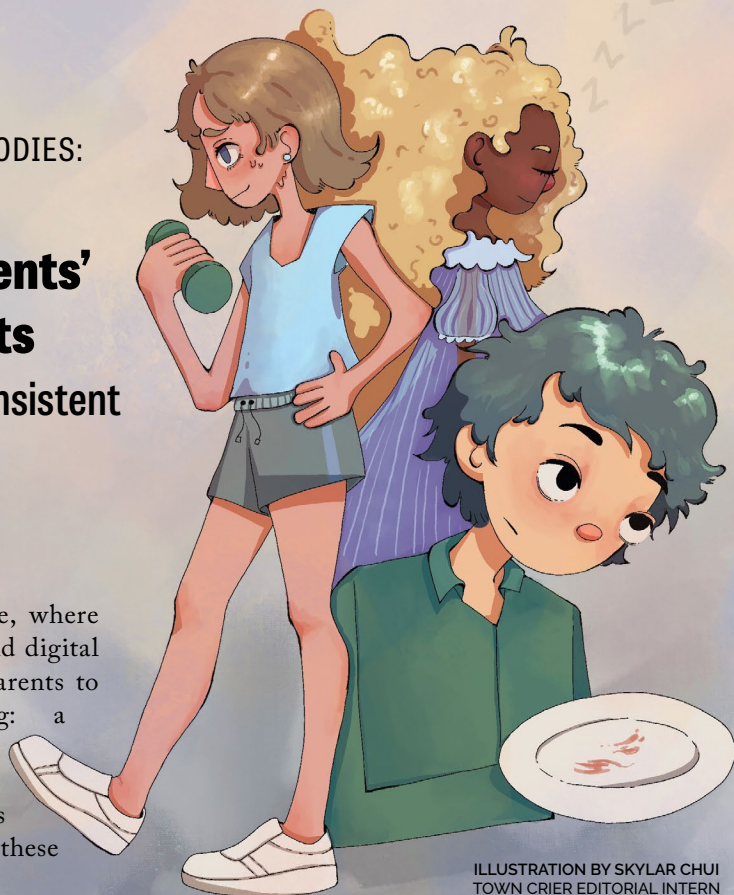


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1. THE POWER OF QUALITY SLEEP:

Quality sleep is a cornerstone of mental and physical health during adolescence. Establishing a consistent sleep routine helps regulate the body’s internal clock, contributing to improved mood, attention and academic performance. Parents are encouraged to work with their adolescents to set a realistic and age-appropriate sleep schedule, incorporating calming activities before bedtime, limiting evening screen time and creating a comfortable sleep environment.

2. EXERCISE AS A MENTAL HEALTH BOOSTER:

Physical activity plays a crucial role in supporting mental health. Regular exercise releases neurotransmitters like endorphins, acting as natural mood lifters and stress relievers. It also enhances cognitive function and fosters a positive body image. Parents should facilitate opportunities for their adolescents to engage in physical activities they enjoy, promoting at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise five days a week.


3. ESTABLISHING HEALTHY HABITS:

Creating a routine that incorporates sufficient sleep and regular exercise can contribute to improved mental resilience and overall happiness in adolescents. ➤

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Parents are encouraged to be role models by prioritizing their own well-being and fostering an open dialogue about the importance of sleep and exercise within the family. Consistency is key when establishing these habits, setting the stage for a lifetime of good mental and physical health for adolescents.

In conclusion, as parents navigate the challenges of raising adolescents, recognizing the profound impact of consistent sleep routines and regular exercise on their well-being is crucial. By incorporating these habits into family life, parents empower their adolescents to navigate the complexities of adolescence with resilience and vigor. ☺



PHOTO COURTESY OF DR. DANIELLE KAMIS. Kamis recommends that students get plenty of sleep and exercise to form healthy habits early in life that will provide benefits to well-being.

Dr. Kamis is a sports psychiatrist in downtown Los Altos. For more information on her practice, visit kamismd.com.



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Events Preview

EVENTS

First Friday, production of ‘Puffs’ among family-friendly happenings on horizon



TOWN CRIER STAFF REPORT

As cold winter nights turn to vibrant spring afternoons, many local events and shows are on the horizon. Keep an eye out for these upcoming events and activities listed below.

Los Altos First Friday

6-9 p.m., March 1 & April 5
Downtown Los Altos

Los Altos First Fridays are community-building events held during the evenings of the first Friday of the month in downtown Los Altos. They are an opportunity to shop, dine and explore what downtown has to offer, while enjoying live music on the street. It is organized by Los Altos Forward, a group of residents dedicated to promoting vibrancy in downtown. To sign up to perform and for more information, visit losaltosfirstfriday.fun. Admission is free. >



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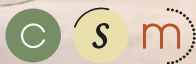
Upcoming Events:

- Hello From Japan! Exhibit Opens - February 17 through June 9 Presented by **CEFCU**
- Nowruz Celebration - March 2
- Children of the Dragon Vietnamese Heritage Celebration - April 20
- Proud of My Family (LGBTQIA Pride Event) - June 1
- Jineteenth Celebration - June 15

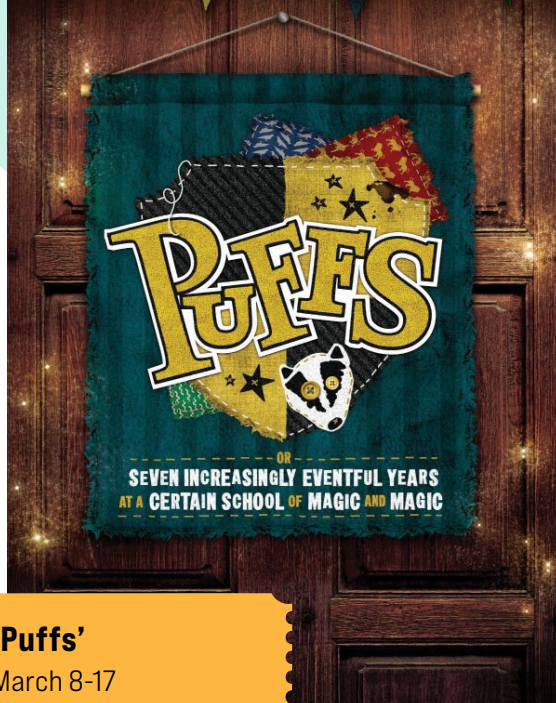
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'Puffs'

March 8-17

Los Altos Youth Theater

Los Altos Youth Theater stages its production of "Puffs" at Bus Barn Theater. The play by Matt Cox is a parody of Harry Potter. The characters have many adventures, learn the value of friendship and share their joy of magic. For times, tickets and more information, visit losaltosstage.org.

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Family Fun Days

10 A.M. to 1 P.M. April 13
Los Altos Community Center,
97 Hillview Ave.

Join the Los Altos Parks & Recreation Department and the Los Altos Library Saturday, April 13, to celebrate a day of themed family fun. Admission is free, and events will include games, crafts, movies and more for the entire family. The theme is space exploration. For more information, visit losaltosca.gov. >



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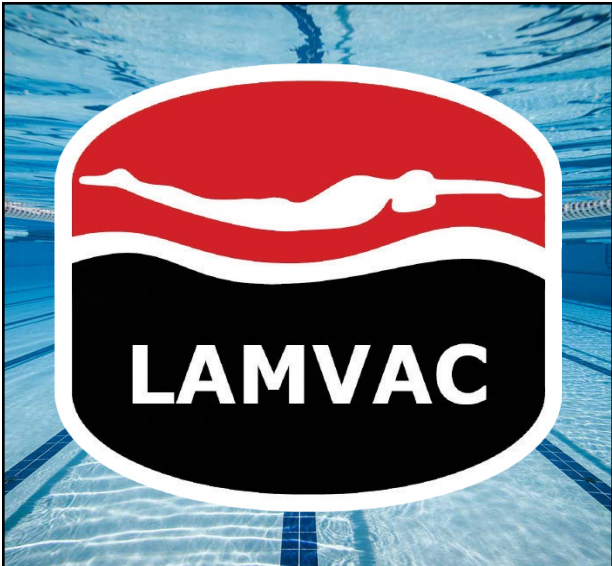
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'Seussical'

March 9-17

Mountain View Center
for the Performing Arts,
MainStage

Presented by Peninsula Youth Theatre, the musical comes from Lynn Ahrens and Michael Flaherty. Travel to the Jungle of Nool to see fun and imaginative spectacles. Appropriate for the entire family, this performance runs 2 1/2 hours, with one 15-minute intermission. Tickets are \$25. For tickets and more information, visit pytnet.org. 🎵

- Compiled by Prisha Mohapatra/Town Crier Editorial Intern -

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