

SCHOOLS / STUDENTS



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Girl Scout Troop 32300 recently made and donated blankets to Project Linus.

Holden High School – Celebrating Graduates and Serving Others



DAVID DIERKS

Holden High School students Jonathan Van Vliet, Albert Glancy, Farah Dinga and Shane Aldridge cooked and served dinner to Winter Nights shelter guests at the Orinda Community Church on February 17.

“As a parent of a non-traditional child who does not learn well in the standard classroom lecture environment, I saw my child blossom and achieve at Holden High thanks to the individualized attention,” said Jan Raymond. The high school graduate’s father beamed as several of the 80 people gathered for the January graduation reached for tissue boxes at the end of their row. Five students graduated in January – Simone Raymond, Zie Anderson-Colson, Tempest Spivey, Manav Ram, and David Johnson.

The tissues have come in handy at Holden graduations over the years, for friends, family and staff, even for strangers. One year, two members of the Orinda Community Church, which has graciously housed Holden since 1970, came to graduation just to find out about the school and were moved to tears by stories of challenges overcome, academic and practical skills learned, and the personal accomplishments and future plans of the graduating class.

Holden High School, formerly Contra Costa Alternative School, has been educating, inspiring and changing the lives of teens for over 40 years, said Kristin Lamoureux, one of the six co-directors. “We are the only truly alternative and progressive high school in the Bay Area.

The school also believes in giving back and every year students help load and unload supplies when the Orinda Community Church hosts Winter Nights, a rotating homeless shelter for families. This year, two student council members, Jon Van Vliet and Farah Dinga, asked if they could make dinner one night for the families. Both students have worked in the food service industry and love cooking. Joel Weber, Co-Director and student council advisor, asked the Winter Nights organizers, and on February 17, the shelter guests were served coq au vin, salad, and red velvet cupcakes, all prepared and served by Holden High School students.

– Kristin Lamoureux

Girl Scouts Make Blankets for Needy

The 22 juniors of Girl Scout Troop 32300 (at Del Rey School in Orinda) recently made and donated two dozen fleece blankets to Project Linus, a national organization that accepts new handmade blankets for children who are in need.

“The girls were very moved by the fact that there are children their own age who are in the hospital, or living in a foster home, and who would be comforted by something as simple as a blanket,” said Sarah Lee, the parent who organized the project for the troop. “This was an extremely positive community service project for our troop,” said troop leader Mary Friese. “The girls were able to do it all themselves – including budgeting, shop-

ping, and actually creating the blankets. It was very rewarding for them!”

The girls voted to use some of their earnings from cookie sales to buy the material for the blankets, collectively deciding to forego the usual sales incentives in favor of having more money to spend on the project. They then selected the material, and each girl made her own blanket that was given to a Project Linus volunteer to be distributed to a child in need.

“That was the hard part,” laughed Lee. “Many of the girls did not want to let go of ‘their’ blanket when it was done!” But let go they did... and now the blankets are on their way to children in need.

– Mary Friese

One Boy Scout’s Experience

By WILL KNOX
Boy Scout /Orinda News
Volunteer

Troop 237 has been an amazing experience for me, from the exciting troop meetings, to the amazing trips. One trip I really enjoyed was the Russian River canoe trip. I was only there one out of two days but one day was enough to reach my excitement level! Camping and canoeing mixed together made the perfect Boy Scout trip.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Will Knox worked on his Citizenship in the Community merit badge by volunteering at the Orinda Association’s *The Orinda News*.

I started Boy Scouts when I finished the 5th grade. I worked my way to Scout rank and later to Tenderfoot rank in my first six months. I have worked on several fun merit badges, including Fire Safety, Golf, First Aid, and Winter Sports. I am also working on a merit badge called Citizenship in the Community. This is a very challenging merit badge that is usually for older scouts. But with the help of Wick Smith and the Orinda Association, I took on the challenge. I worked a hard eight hours at the Orinda Association organizing files and documenting data from recent editions of *The Orinda*

News. For me, it was a great way to catch up on Orinda history and recent events.

As I continue with Boy Scouts, I look forward to volunteering more time with the Orinda Association. Troop 237 is a boy-run troop. This means the scoutmaster watches us as we do the work and run the meeting. There is still a long run for me until Star, Life and Eagle Scout, but I will never stop looking forward to the day I will be an Eagle Scout – the day I will get my badge, the day I will be known in the newspapers as a new Eagle Scout.

I think any boy who has completed 5th grade should consider joining Orinda Troop 237 or the other Orinda Boy Scout Troops. It’s an amazing experience for me and should be the same for you.

Will Knox is currently a 6th Grader at Orinda Intermediate School.



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