

Miramonte Baseball Players Support Grateful Gatherings

January 27, 2018, Orinda families, Local community members, and Mats baseball players donated over 285 items and over \$3000 to a program known as Grateful Gatherings. This program is dedicated to helping families, typically with two to three kids, in their transition out of homelessness or violent domestic situations. For the third year in a row, the Mats baseball team helped Grateful Gatherings furnish two apartment complexes for two single mothers and their respective children who have moved away from abusive situations and have settled down in Pleasant Hill.

With the help of free moving services provided by Chipman Relocation and Logistics, the baseball team moved objects such as TVs, couches, bed frames, silverware, rugs, appliances, and other essential housing items. "This year, we helped two families in one day, a big challenge for Mats Baseball, but we did it and it was great to make a tangible difference and see the amazing reactions when each family walked in the door," Co-organizer Campbell Hoskins said. Hoskins' mom, Lisa Hoskins, helped link up Grateful Gathering program with the Mats baseball program, so that upwards of 30 boys can contribute to their community in a meaningful way.

Before being helped by Grateful Gatherings, each of the two families were surviving off of a single shared air mattress, limited clothing items, and multiple part-time jobs. Both single mothers were in the process of moving away from abusive situations when Grateful Gatherings and the baseball team furnished their homes. "I've worked so hard, saved my money and was finally able to afford this apartment, but you turned this apartment into a home. I am so grateful," Susan said, the mother of young two daughters. These two families were referred to Grateful Gatherings through the SAVE program, a

shelter for abused women and children stationed in Oakland.

These two mothers can now focus on finding stable jobs and will not have to worry about providing a comfortable home environment for their kids. The baseball team looks to continue their work with Grateful Gatherings next year.

Mats Search and Rescue Gives Back

No one expects to be the victim of a disaster. However, when one occurs, it comes to a few, well-trained people to step in and save those worst affected. Some of these people aren't just firefighters and police officers, they're everyday citizens who dedicate their time and expertise to help their fellow community members. These brave volunteers aren't all just generous strangers, some are rather familiar faces. The local Search and Rescue team has members of many ages, some are even students at Miramonte.

Junior Peter Hillen is a member of the Contra Costa Search and Rescue team. He has been a member for over a year. His journey began as many do, at an informational meeting. He attended a meeting at the sheriff's office about what it takes to become a member of the team. This team has existed since 1974 and has over 200 members whose journeys all began at similar meetings. Many, after hearing the extensive training and time commitment it takes to become a member of the team, simply drop out of the program. Hillen did not. He decided that it was worth his time and effort to learn what he would need to know to be helpful in an emergency. "I really wanted to do it because I wanted to give back to my community. I live in a bubble and I

wanted to get outside of that bubble and help people that weren't as fortunate to live in that bubble," Hillen said.

His journey began by attending cadet training. Hillen and the other cadets learned how to operate in an high-stress environment, provide medical assistance, and respond to various hazardous situations. It took months. By the end of it, Hillen was a full member of the team. He can continue to train in various specialties like wilderness rescue, mountain rescue or canine rescue.

Also in Hillen's cadet class was another Miramonte junior, Liam Ferguson. Ferguson is certified in both Emergency Medical Response, similar training given to EMTs, and in wilderness rescue. Contra Costa Search and Rescue has allowed him to have a real positive impact on his community. "It's a great way to give back to your community in a meaningful way, because you're on call 24/7," Ferguson said. At any moment one of these students could be called out to an emergency to help their fellow citizens.

Once inducted onto the team, members can help their community in many ways. Search and Rescue team members can be called out for everything from helping a lost elderly person to assisting trained superiors in providing medical care following a mass casualty incident. Their extensive training allows young people to make a real impact on their communities.

Staff Spotlight: John Grigsby

He's neither the star Quarterback, nor the fastest swimmer. He does not run track, play baseball, or even golf. He does not play for any sport at Miramonte, yet he is the most important person to every team. John Grigsby, often referred to as John

the Trainer, is the Athletic Trainer, the Sports Medicine instructor, and the Human and Social Development teacher.

This will be Grigsby's 12th year at Miramonte and not a day has gone by where his presence hasn't been greatly appreciated. "He is a huge asset to all our programs," athletic director James Lathrop said. "He's huge for the safety of our student-athletes, always making sure they are staying healthy in addition to performing."

The combination of Grigsby's experience on the field and his reputation of sincere kindness has helped make Sports Medicine one of the most popular classes on campus. Over the course of his career at Miramonte, Grigsby turned a class that began with 25 kids into the highly acclaimed and respected program with 90 students. When Grigsby isn't teaching about the anatomical structures of the human body or taping ankles, he is out patrolling various sports practices.

When senior varsity football player Ethan Fischler injured his foot after running a route over the middle, he knew exactly who to see. "He's been super helpful with recovery process such as icing it, in addition to the other resources he has in his training room," Fischler said. When asked what he would do if Grigsby was unavailable, he replied, "the recovery process would take a lot longer, because I wouldn't know what to do for my foot or who to see."

Grigsby doesn't just specialize in land sports. He has been vital to the recent NCS successes of both the girls and boys water polo teams. "John is crucial to our team, not only because he provides us with help when we are injured, but rather his spirit for sports and his encouragement to all his Sports Med students to go to our games," senior water polo player Katrina Drake said.

Grigsby doesn't limit his patients to students; he has been known to be a first responder for many teacher injuries as

well. Geometry teacher Brian Henderson injured his heel a year ago during a staff and student volleyball game. "When you are an old man and you tear your achilles playing volleyball at lunch against the students, it can be tough to get up and help yourself out. John was immediately on the scene and knew exactly what was going on," Henderson said. The incident of the torn achilles is one of many examples in which John was there for an injured faculty member.

Whether you need an ankle taped, a back checked out, or even a dislocated shoulder to be popped back in place, don't hesitate to swing by John's office. No matter what he's working on, one thing is for sure: without John, Miramonte athletes would not be nearly as successful as they are today.

BYOD Program Brings New Risks

For the past few years the Acalanes Union High School District has been enforcing the "BYOD" program. Although some teachers are struggling to use new the modern educational technique effectively, all students attending Miramonte High School are asked to bring their own devices to classes in order to enhance their learning capabilities. The "devices" range from older generation iPads, to Chromebooks, to the newest Mac Air. However, due to past issues regarding robbery on campus, some students are nervous about bringing their expensive technology to school.

In past few years at Miramonte, there have been incidents, mostly taking place in the boy's locker room of theft on campus believed to be committed by other students. During the school year of 2015-2016, freshman Ricky Waters had his MacBook computer stolen out of his backpack while he was

running the mile for his physical education class. Waters left his backpack unattended, sitting on the bench of the boy's locker room. In another more recent incident, a few seniors had their debit cards stolen from their personal belongings while at football practice.

To prevent incidents like this, teachers and administration encourage students to put their valuables into their lockers. Although many students chose to ignore this solution, it is viewed as a safer option. However, in many instances students have to distance their backpacks from their person, leaving their valuable devices vulnerable to the public. "It makes complete sense to put our computers in our lockers during P.E.," junior Gracie Guidotti said. "But I worry about leaving my backpack outside while in a school rally, bathroom, or simply at my lunch table while I go talk to a teacher." Guidotti expressed a common concern between Miramonte students of all grades.

Although Miramonte is known for its safe environment, there is a risk in bringing such expensive devices to school. Junior Zachary Barker acknowledges the risk, but believes that the benefit the technology brings is worth the gamble. "Being able to start my essay during Academy, join Kahoots, and take notes during a lecture on my own iPad helps me stay engaged and up to date in class". Many students are more than willing to risk the losing their device in order to take advantage of the benefits technology brings to the classroom.

Average Joe of the Week- Luke

Phillips

Senior Luke Phillips wakes up in the morning and does not eat breakfast—he simply does not have the time. His morning routine is simple: “I wake up, brush my teeth, wet my hair, and then go to school,” Phillips said. Once he gets to school, he finds his squad: “Dem boiz.” Dem boiz is a group that has been together throughout all four years of high school, consisting of other seniors Atahan Kiliccote, Zac Weiner, and Ryan Riahi, to name a few.

But Phillips is more than a member of “dem boiz.” He is also an integral part of Miramonte’s performing arts.

He is a crucial part of Advanced Drama, Musical Theater Workshop, and Chamber Singers, “which is pretty cool,” according to Phillips. Last year, he played Gomez Addams, a lead role in Musical Theater’s production of the Addams Family.

When Phillips isn’t busy hogging the spotlight, he spends his time thinking about his favorite animal: the mantis shrimp. “For its size it is one of the strongest creatures in the sea and it has claws that shoot out super fast. It is faster than a bullet and can break glass,” Phillips said.

Walking across the quad, investigative journalists Reagan Tierney and Kiki Immel spotted a group of leadership girls. The journalists called across the lawn, “Describe Luke Philips!” They were met with an array of positive comments, “Luke Philips is the funniest kid in our school,” senior Olivia Goodman said. “He is the best,” senior Elise Ziem added.

Well, there you have it. *The Mirador*’s first Average Joe of the year, and the best part is: he’s single!

Mats Rock Out at Bottlerock

As sophomore Sarika Renjen entered the Bottlerock venue alongside junior Aleah Pagan and freshman Kate Blanchard, the bass and beat of multiple artists rang through her ears. A tough decision had to be made—did they want to watch Maroon 5 or Modest Mouse? Bottlerock offers so many options that it proves to be hard to pick an artist to listen to when the time comes.

Many students from Miramonte attended the 2017 Bottlerock music festival in Napa that took place on May 26 through May 28. The festival hosts a variety of performers including uprising stars and well-known ones. People of different ages from all over attend for a memorable experience.

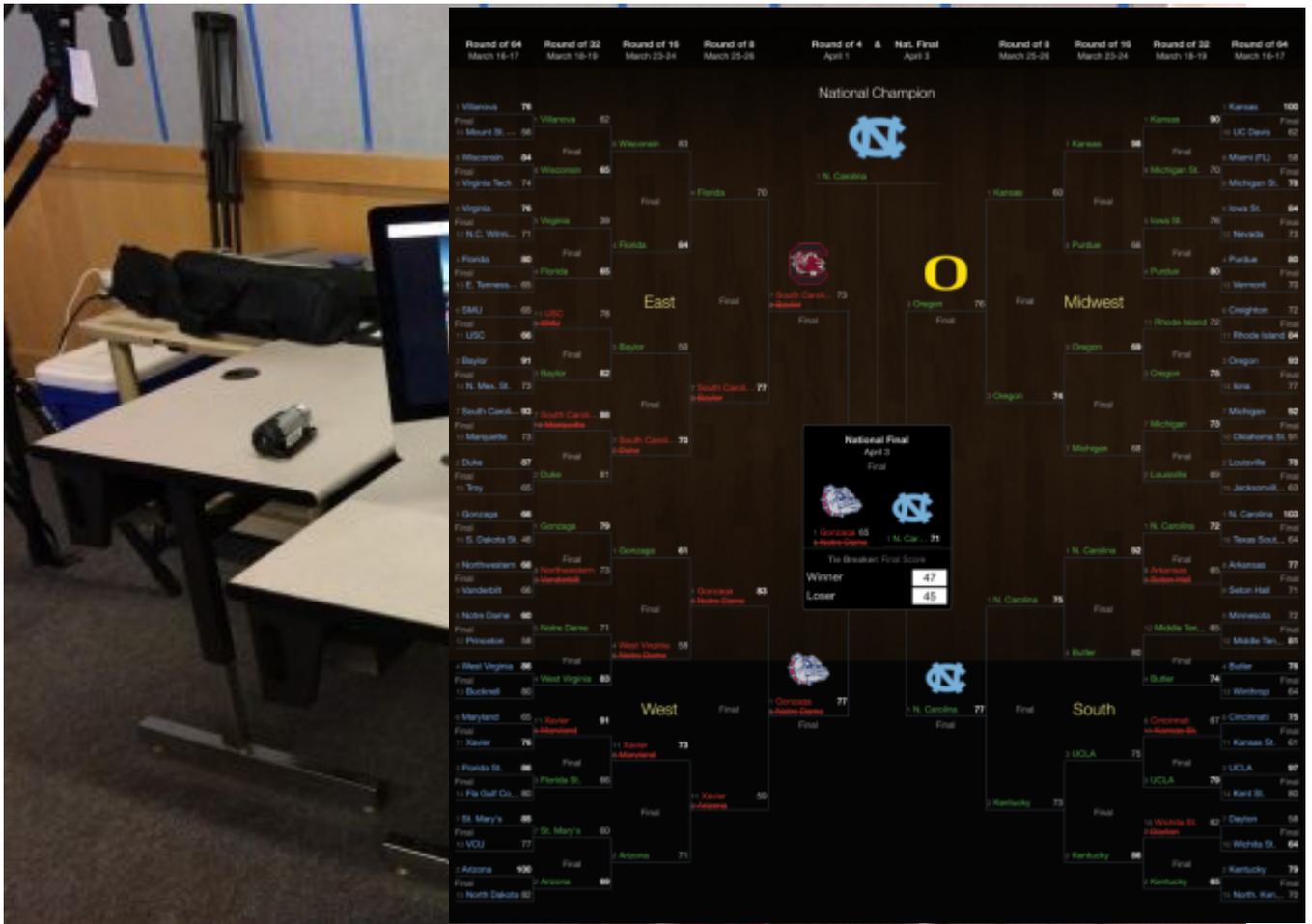
On Friday, Renjen, Blanchard, and Pagan attended Bottlerock for the day. When they arrived, they immediately went to where Saint Motel was performing. “I’m really into their music right now. They play rock music but in a unique and interesting way,” Blanchard said. Along with the live performances, there was a lot of food and games. “The food was amazing. Literally every type you could imagine. Lots of free food was given away too,” Pagan said. Fitz and the Tantrums also played their music which included some of their popular songs such as *Handclap* and *Roll Up*, which attracted a large crowd. Three out of the numerous Miramonte students who attended on Friday explained to *The Mirador* their experience at Bottlerock: “Overall I had a very entertaining time and I definitely recommend others to go one day,” Rejen said.

Each day of Bottlerock offered a different experience. On Saturday, juniors Annie Heckler, Allison Burkhalter, and Skylar Barnes treated themselves with a full day at

Bottlerock. Although they all wanted to see different favorite artists, there was a chance to watch all of them. Some highlights included seeing Michael Franti & Spearhead, Tom Petty, and the Heartbreakers. “[Michael Franti & Spearhead] was super energetic and came out into the crowd,” Heckler said. Not only did the Miramonte students enjoy the music, but the decorations were also unique. “The decor was rustic but vibrant—there were lights strung around the trees, and the rainbow Bottlerock logo was placed everywhere around the stages,” Heckler said. This created the festival vibe and made the overall experience much more enjoyable. Generally, people dress up or wear fun accessories to events like these. “It wouldn’t be a festival without a bunch of girls wearing cutoffs,” Burkhalter said.

The last day of the festival did not disappoint. Sophomores Ava Killbourn, Emma Hamilton, Emily Becker, and junior Sebass Varela headed up to Napa for the day. Some of the groups that performed were Gavin Degraw, Foo Fighters, Cobi, A R I Z O N A, and The Helms. The Helms is a band consisting of three twelve-year-olds and a thirteen-year-old. “It’s impressive that young kids are able to create such good music,” Varela said. The most popular band on Sunday, the Foo Fighters, played from 9 p.m. to 11 p.m. on the main stage. “My favorite artist was Gavin Degraw because I think he’s an amazing performer,” Hamilton said. Another popular attraction was the silent disco. This allows people to listen to music with a unique twist to it. All participants wear a set of headphones and listen to a DJ of their choice. This is a unique way to listen to a particular music genre and dance with friends. “Overall, I had a great time! I would definitely recommend attending,” Hamilton said.

Ryan Little's Ridiculous Bracket



March Madness is over, the chaos of the tournament has passed and the North Carolina Tar Heels are champions for the sixth time in history. Other teams proved to be the Cinderellas of the tournament, devastating some, surprising everyone, and stealing the hearts of most. Most everyone has moved on with their lives, mourning their tragically blighted brackets. However, some bracket participants were unbridled with joy from their successes.

A few weeks earlier, the annual bracket returned. The college basketball tournament of 64 teams comes with an abundance of excitement. During the waning weeks of March, everyone becomes a college basketball aficionado. The tournament is single elimination or one and done. In order to advance to the finals, a team would have to go through six rounds. With so many teams and so much variation, it makes the tournament

captivating and addictive. Nationwide everyone fills out brackets either with their "expertise" or completely without knowledge of the teams participating. At Miramonte, a plethora of students completed their own brackets. Senior bracketologist Sam Foster proclaims the key to success is to "trust your gut, have some background knowledge of the teams involved, and be absurdly lucky." Students without knowledge of college basketball normally elect teams of a high seed, which correlate with their higher caliber and skill level. However, many know that there are countless upsets during the tournament. An upset is when a lower seed defeats and knocks out a higher seed. Predicting the whole tournament is virtually impossible, which makes filling the bracket so fun.

Each year senior Jimmy Ricksen hosts a pool since eighth grade, where students can pay a ten dollar fee to enter. The one with the most accurate bracket gets the money. This year a total of almost 60 students entered Ricksen's pool and one came out victorious. Although Senior Ryan Little stands at a mere 5 feet 6 inches, his bracket stood tall. He has the foresight of a psychic. Little attributes his success to "using March Madness strategy over basketball strategy." He went on to say "I had no idea the caliber of the teams, but I knew their history and the usual tendency of March Madness." Little's midwest section was completely perfect, meaning he predicted every single game in the section. The upsets hurt Little's bracket, but fortunately ruined majority of the contestants brackets too. Little prevailed even with people rooting against him. Senior Alex Meyers posted a picture of the final four on his snapchat: "For those watching with no one to root for, Ryan Little misses out on \$400 if the Ducks can pull off the W." Little explains in order to win, "don't listen to the haters." He plans to spend the money on spoiling his girlfriend. Little has a lucky girl, but an even luckier bracket.

Sophomore's Card Tricks Go Viral

He starts with three blue cards. He snaps, and the king of hearts appears at the top. He places the king at the bottom, snaps, and the king of hearts is back at the top. One by one, he then reveals that the cards he is using are all blank.

Sophomore Nathan Rantala's YouTube channel, "A Million Card Tricks," has recently risen to prominence. "It's a channel where I show you a card trick, then I teach it to you," Rantala said. "You can learn card tricks of any skill level, ranging from beginner to advanced level card tricks."

Rantala has amassed over 50,000 subscribers on YouTube, most of which have come during the past two months. Rantala is unsure of the exact reason for his rise in popularity, though he does have an idea. "I honestly don't know the actual cause of the growth," Rantala said. "It must have been a chain reaction, but there are a lot of pro card trick YouTubers that I'm subscribed to, and they actually gave me some shoutouts."

Rantala said that while his family has encouraged him, they did not realize he would attain the level of success that he has. "My family is actually really supportive of it. At first they thought I probably wouldn't get much [revenue], but now since I've been getting a lot, they've actually been kind of surprised."

Rantala's channel has over four million video views, and his most popular video is nearing two million views. With this level of popularity he realized that he could start making money from his account. "A lot of my friends said that I should monetize my videos to get ad revenue on them. Once I

started doing that, I realized that I could have a mini job from this and get actual money," he said.

Rantala is ambitious about the future of his channel. "I think 100,000 subscribers would be kind of insane," he said. He believes that he could achieve this in the next year. He also wants to simply continue to grow his channel. "Hopefully, I'll just keep getting more and more subscribers in the future. I honestly just want to see how far I can go," Rantala said. "Right now, there's still one card trick YouTuber who's the best: Mismag822. He has almost a million subscribers. He was kind of one of my sources of inspiration."

The sophomore believes that he is in a rare group. "I would actually consider myself one of the most popular card trick teachers on YouTube." And he seems to be right. When searching "card trick" on YouTube, the first channel on the list is "Mismag822." The second channel is "A Million Card Tricks."

The AMIGOS Experience

Tears rolled down the cheeks of every person in the crowd. Waving goodbye for the last time, they watched as the bus rolled away. Heading home, junior William Shain was leaving the very people he had come to know as family.

Six weeks of cultural integration with Amigos de las Américas, an organization dedicated to the cultural and linguistic immersion of high school and college students had completely transformed Shain.

"One word that describes your experience?" I asked.

"Life-changing," he responded, spinning a blue string bracelet

from his host community of Madriz around his wrist.

For six weeks, Shain and 54 other students from all over the United States worked in communities throughout Northern Nicaragua, separating into teams dedicated to differing service projects. From construction projects to educational seminars, there wasn't a moment to waste. Using knowledge gained in an eight month training program, Shain educated youth about important issues such as hygiene, education and contraception.

Though Amigos' primary objective is to create catalysts for change among both Latin American and American youth, Shain's experience wasn't all about service. It was also about getting to know the locals, and the other students in the program.

"The community members were some of the happiest people I have ever met; they don't need commercial value to be happy," said Shain. "[I really learned] to appreciate everything [I] have." Showering in a bucket, lacking basic supplies, students learn to adapt to a whole new way of life.

Shain, however, had a particular barrier to overcome upon his arrival in Nicaragua. A few weeks into the trip, Shane contracted the Zika Virus. Zika, known to cause birth defects such as Microcephaly, and runs rampant throughout South America. In yet another stroke of bad luck, Shain was recently diagnosed with a dormant form of Dengue Fever. Thankfully, Shain returned to the U.S. safely and is not a threat to those around him. Today, he is void of any and all symptoms, and will be void of the blood-spread illness in a few months.

Junior Helen Radoff was also able to share in the Amigos experience, though in a different community. "It's so important to view cultures and ideas that are different from our own," said Radoff. "This past summer was a catalyst for change in my life."

The inspiration behind Shain and Radoff's summer experience,

Senior Griffin Ansel participated in Amigos in the summer of 2015. Ansel spent his six weeks in the same community as Shain-Madriz. After two years of involvement, Ansel has successfully passed on the legacy of the Amigos' long standing activity at Miramonte. Now acting as a member of the Amigos' training staff, Ansel has the opportunity to help younger students get involved.

"I was able to watch the new participants as they found out why Amigos is so unique and valuable, and work to do the best job that they could," Ansel said. "I hope more students from Miramonte participate in Amigos, and get the life-changing experiences that it has to offer."

However, Amigos' history at Miramonte didn't begin with Ansel. Miramonte students can trace Amigos back past Kristen Plant, Miramonte's own public speaking teacher. Plant traveled to Michoacan, Mexico, after her sophomore year, and to Honduras after her junior year. "What people don't know is that you get out of it just as much as you give. People are so welcoming, opening their homes to you. It's really powerful," she said. "If I had to describe it in one word, it would be empowering."

Dino Eating Dash

July 4th is known to most as the national holiday celebrating the United States's independence. On this date, the biggest competitive eating contest and the most patriotic holiday surprisingly coincide. The Nathan's Hot Dog Eating contest is the most highly anticipated competitive eating showdown. Matt Stonie, an American competitive eater ranked second in the nation, devotes countless hours preparing for this event. Stonie does cardio and weights, improves nutrition, and he

fasts for this competition. During the contest, competitive eaters gorge on hot dogs for ten minutes straight. This is the single most important showdown of the competitive eating calendar.

August 25th, Miramonte held its very first Dino Nugget eating contest on the quad. Students and staff devoured nuggets at a rapid pace while bystanders circled around the lunch table like ants to a leftover candy bar. Some students were disqualified in a matter of seconds as they used their hands to eat the nuggets. Other more determined competitors duked it out for the top three spots hoping to receive one of the coveted gift cards. Driven by their prize, the amateur eaters continued to stretch their stomach's limits.

Miramonte discovered its own Matt Stonie in freshman JP Nelson. He rose to stardom in the opening moments of the face-off. JP was determined to be the Cinderella story of this year's event and broke out of the gates as fast as Lightning McQueen vying for the Piston Cup. However, JP began to feel like he was "giving birth through his throat" and dropped the bowl of nuggets and dashed to the nearest trash bin. He stood, hunched over the garbage can, vomiting, as his friend patted his back. Nelson now regrets his lack of preparations for the event and recommends to anyone who wishes to be a competitive eater that they prepare for their competitions. Also, JP advocates that "only people that are good at speed eating" should take part in the dangerous sport of competitive eating. Although he planned to make his name at Miramonte, this was not at all what he anticipated. Much like Jefferson and his fellow patriots on the 4th of July, the Dinos declared their independence from JP in emphatic fashion.