

Miramonte Students Build Houses in Tijuana, Mexico

On March 31, Miramonte students loaded onto buses to embark on a 9 hour drive from the scenic Orinda hills down to Tijuana, Mexico. The trip was organized by Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church, through Amor, a nonprofit organization that builds homes with a goal of keeping families together, averting trafficking, promoting health and education, battling extreme poverty, promoting dignity, and strengthening communities.

The Miramonte students roughed it in a campsite, sleeping in tents, with three other churches. There were about ten teams this year from MVPC. Each group consisted of one or two student leaders and adult leaders. The leaders were given the plans on how to build the house while the student volunteers went to a workshop to learn the basics. Amor assigns each group to a family and work site. The volunteers bring their own hand tools while Amor provides the main materials.

The 8am to 4pm work day is filled with hard labor from leveling the ground to pouring the foundation. The volunteers then built the house from the ground up. The process was anything but easy. "When we were leveling our site we had to rip out all the grass and then use a pickaxe to get a stump out before framing the 22 by 11 foot house," senior Frankie Veverka said. The teams have to get all the concrete finished by Monday.

Without a doubt, every year Miramonte volunteers have bonded over the common goal of alleviating poverty through each house built. "We connect with other people around the area because we are separated from society and all responsibilities. It's freeing to go to a different place and just connect to your team and people you are with," junior Cameron Nielson said. The children of the families even came out to try to help out

as they are appreciative of the work the students are doing. "All the people who were receiving the houses or around the community were just so happy even though they had so little. They were so appreciative and it shows how we take a lot of things for granted," Nielson said.

Though the language barrier made conversation difficult, the students managed to persevere and communicate with the locals. "The mom and her two younger kids were always there while we were building," freshman Sally Peterson said. The kids are not supposed to help at the worksite but they still try to hand the volunteers supplies and offer to hammer things. "On the last day we were so ahead we played soccer with the kids for three hours," Veverka said.

In order to go on the trip, the volunteers do not need to be part of the church, nor do they have to be religious. "Usually we have bible lessons during dinner and discuss questions at lunch such as: 'What's the hardest thing you've ever been through?'. You become very close with your team," Veverka said. The bus ride home is one of the highlights of the trip as the volunteers bond over their shared experiences. "It's really cool to see how other people live and what impact we can make on other people's lives," Neilson said.

4.4 Quake Shakes Students Awake

The New Year started off rumbling with a 4.4 earthquake on Thursday, January 4, at 2:40 a.m. Centered in Berkeley near the Claremont Hotel, the quake shook people awake as far away as Monterey and San Jose, covering a span of over 150 miles.

No damage or injuries have been reported. Earthquakes of this magnitude typically hit California several times a year.

The quake originated in the Hayward Fault, which produces a large earthquake approximately every 160 years. Since it has been 150 years since its last major earthquake according to a U.S. Geological Survey, Thursday's earthquake could be a precursor for a larger one, but fortunately, there is only a 5% chance of this.

USGS has estimated that there is a one in three chance of an earthquake with a magnitude of 6.7 or greater shaking the Bay Area within the next 30 years. An earthquake of this magnitude would do much more damage than simply disrupting sleep. In comparison, the San Francisco Earthquake of 1906 had a magnitude of 7.8 and destroyed around 28,000 buildings and caused around 3,000 deaths. It also left 225,000 people homeless out of San Francisco's total population of 400,000.

In order to minimize structural damage from earthquakes, the California government passed a law in 1972 prohibiting building on fault lines. However, structures built on the faults prior to this law remain in danger of earthquakes. Two million people live directly on top of the Hayward Fault, and enormous amounts of infrastructure, including gas and power lines, BART tracks, and water systems, cross it. If an earthquake were to erupt, it would cause millions of dollars of damage and leave many people without homes or power.

Fortunately, most modern structures have been built to survive earthquakes, and families are encouraged to prepare earthquake supplies in the event of disaster. The USGC's research has shown that the chances of a large earthquake that causes significant damage occurring are slim. Building regulations and earthquake drills prepare California citizens and will help prevent catastrophe in the case of a larger earthquake hitting the area.

Powderpuff Compromise Changes the Game

Every year during homecoming, the Miramonte classes battle in a competitive game of Powderpuff football for spirit cup points to see which class will come out on top. Powderpuff football is one of the highly anticipated lunchtime events of Miramonte students. Students gather around the quad, cheer on their class, and watch the classes battle on the quad. Powderpuff is a game of touch football open to girls, with every school having their own traditions of playing. Some schools put together their best team to play a rival high school or, like Miramonte, some schools have a tournament-style game where each grade battles.

On October 20, 1945 the first documented powderpuff game was played at Eastern State Teachers College in South Dakota. As a result of World War II, there were only three men enrolled in the high school. However, this did not deter the girls from starting their own football team. The tradition has continued to flourish as high schools across the country participate in their own versions of the game.

At Campolindo High School, each grade squares off in a tournament structure. Seniors play sophomores, juniors play freshman and then the finalists compete. All of the games take place on the football field and they adhere to the established rules and regulations of touch football.

Rooted in tradition, Powderpuff has been a staple of Miramonte for years. Similarly to Campolindo, each grade plays each other in a tournament structure—seniors v. freshmen, juniors v. sophomores, and the winners square off for the final game.

However, instead of playing on the football field, the event used to take place on the quad during lunch. The shorter field made it easier to score points as the players did not have to drive down a hundred yard field. Hosting this event on the quad also allowed students to view the spectacle easily during lunch.

However after much controversy, Miramonte will be moving the game to the football field. There have been concerns over the game being sexist and violent due to the name and nature of the game. However, the origin of the game begs to differ. Miramonte's traditional Powderpuff rules will be altered to adhere to the new standards requested by administration. The girls will play on the full hundred yard field and adhere to the established rules of flag football. "For blocking you must hold your hands behind your back and use your body. You also must use flags and can not touch [each other] at all," senior Claire Tarkoff said.

"Changes were made this year to make the game inclusive and [encourage] community building. There had been some things that happened last year from words between girls to actual physical injuries." Principal Julie Park said. Last year one girl broke a finger last year. In any sport, however, the players run the risk of injuring themselves.

California Fires Bring Danger and Despair

October 8, at around 10:00 p.m., the first of many fires began to spread in the Santa Rosa area. There are active fires in Napa, Sonoma, and Solano counties which have burned roughly

190,000 acres. There are no known causes, but over 300 firefighters are putting their lives on the line to stop them.

One of the three most treacherous fires is in Santa Rosa, and is known as the Tubbs Fire. So far it has burned approximately 36,000 acres and is 91% contained. The Atlas Fire, near the city of Napa, has burned up to 51,000 acres and is 83% contained, that is, according to the California Statewide Fire Map. However, the largest of them all is the Nuns Fire which is 80% contained as of October 18 and has burned almost 55,000 acres. There have been 41 deaths and, as of October 20, there are around 52 missing people. In Sonoma County, 5,700 structures have been burned down including houses and businesses.

The fires have been traveling fast, with facilitation from the wind, sending smoke as far as San Francisco and preventing access to escape routes. According to *Fox News*, the fire has left across roads and winds of 60 miles per hour have knocked trees down, making roads inaccessible. As well as the fire being hazardous, there are immense amounts of smoke in the air. "When I started loading stuff into the car it was a hell-storm of smoke and ash," Napa Valley visitor Chris Thomas told the *San Francisco Chronicle*. As a result, schools have been closed and have encouraged people to stay in their homes for refuge.

Many students at Miramonte have been affected by the smoke in the air. Some believe that attending school poses a risk to their own health. "I feel that the poor air quality is majorly affecting my asthma and my education, as it is all I am able to think about throughout the day," junior Tony Caselle said. On Wednesday, October 11, a freshman student fainted during lunch while sitting outdoors. As a result of the smoke, some students can't even attend school. "I had to stay home because the air quality was so bad and I was concerned for my health," junior Meaghan Hohman said.

All sports, both indoor and outdoor, were forced to cancel practices from Tuesday, October 10 to Friday, October 14 after the air quality reached a potentially dangerous level of 150 Air Quality Index. Many teams had to postpone and even cancel games. The Miramonte football team played Campolindo on Monday, October 16 instead of that previous Friday night. Also, the golf team was unable to compete in their last tournament of the season on Wednesday, October 11. Not only were sports affected by the smoke, but extracurricular activities such as powderpuff were also cancelled for the entire week.

HBO Themed Homecoming Week Premieres at Miramonte

On Monday, October 16, Miramonte students started off Homecoming week by dressing up as Madagascar characters. Miramonte leadership has planned a homecoming Home Box Office (HBO) spirit week. The week includes dress up days and lunchtime activities. On the final day of the week the rally will occur and the homecoming football game against Las Lomas. Finally, the Saturday Night Fever homecoming dance will occur on Saturday, October 21.

The dress up days for Homecoming were announced on Wednesday, October 11 to all fourth period classes by the Miramonte leadership class. Themes for dress up days include Madagascar Monday, Toy Story Tuesday, Mean Girls Wednesday, and Grease movie Thursday. The final day of the week, each class is assigned a different theme according to their grade number and Hunger Games district for the Hunger Games themed rally. Freshmen dress as fishermen, sophomores as farmers, juniors as

nerds, and seniors as miners. Although the leadership class keeps upcoming rally information confidential, sophomore Class President Sally Fellner believes that this rally is going to be a thrilling one. "This Homecoming rally is going to be bigger and better, like no one at Miramonte has seen before. I'm really excited for the school's reaction," Fellner said.

Sophomore Nick Watson shared that he personally loves Miramonte's dances and is excited for Saturday Night Fever themed dance. "The dances at Miramonte are always fun because I get to spend time with all my friends while having a good time," Watson said. Leadership has asked all students to come in their disco gear and show off their grooviest moves on the dance floor in the gym. "We went along with the Saturday Night Fever theme because it was a way where people could dress up easily in tie dye or any disco gear. Also with this theme we are going to play a variety of different music besides the usual pop and rap genres. " senior and ASB secretary Isabel Roth said.

Students are excited for yet another fun homecoming, and can't wait to see the Matadors show up with their school spirit!

The Mirador Broadcast- Volume One

Miramonte (Equi) Teams Up to Combat Hate

The intercom system crackled and chemistry teacher Jennifer Moore told her students to listen up. Students sat in a stunned silence as principal Julie Parks announced that a hate crime had been committed on campus the week before.

During the week of May 28, a Miramonte student wrote the n-word inside an African American student's PE locker. In a public statement, Parks explained that it had been done to intentionally make the student feel threatened and unwelcome, deeming the incident a hate crime. Parks also offered an award for any information about the incident.

Students murmured in bewilderment after Parks' announcement. Moments before, the majority of students were unaware of the incident. In disbelief that such a thing could happen at what most consider to be a very liberal, privileged school in the Bay Area, the announcement of the crime shocked the student body. "Miramonte prides itself on being an accepting community, but with a predominantly white student population, there's no doubt that racism often rears its ugly head. We like to idealize the Bay Area as a mini utopia where prejudice is nonexistent, but when something like this disrupts our vision, we're quickly reminded that hate isn't confined to certain states, borders, or areas," junior and EquiTeam president Zahra Hasanain said in a Facebook post. The incident has shaken Miramonte and provoked a response by the students, lead primarily by EquiTeam.

On Tuesday, June 6, students arrived at school to find the hallway lockers lined with colorful post-it notes and the ground covered with messages written in chalk. The quotes conveyed messages about lack of tolerance for racism and hate. Scripted in chalk on the concrete of the hallway ground,

phrases such as “choose love, not hate”, “diversity is cool, hate is not”, and other positive messages encouraging inclusiveness, pride, and respect for one another guide the students forward.

In the wake of the crime, Miramonte EquiTeam and the student body has come together to support one another and “make the victim of the hate crime feel a little more welcome and accepted for who they are,” Hasanain said. Hasanain explained that by decorating the school with positive messages in chalk and on post-its, EquiTeam hopes to “promote love and celebrate our differences.” The club has since developed and publicized #NotMyLockerRoomTalk to continue the response.

While the rain may wash away the chalk on the ground and the wind may blow away the post-its on the lockers, the message will remain strong: racism, hate, and bullying are not tolerated in the Miramonte community.

Matadors Celebrate Women in Leadership Day

On Tuesday, May 23, Miramonte’s Orinda Juniores Club hosted their annual Women in Leadership Day. Led and organized by presidents Leila Minowada and Lara Sanli, the Juniores celebrated with a lunchtime activity and a panel of women in leadership positions after school.

After weeks of preparation, the Orinda Juniores Club, or OJC, treated Miramonte with a day to celebrate and recognize women in society as well as their achievements. Prior to Women in Leadership Day, posters were hung around school with quotes from well-known women in the world that touched on feminist

issues.

During lunch, students were encouraged to write on a slip of paper the name of a woman in their life who is their role model or inspiration. With over 150 participants, the entire poster hung on the side of the gym was covered with shout-outs slips from students who wanted to commemorate someone special in their life. "I shouted out Hillary Clinton because she is strong and inspirational," sophomore Dara Kazmierowski said. The Juniores were pleased with the turnout and success of the activity: "It was a huge success," said Minowada. "It was so fun to read the shout outs to women in leadership that Miramonte students appreciate."

Later that day, students were invited to a discussion with a panel of leaders in our community, ranging from the mayor of Orinda to a local Rabbi to a research scientist. Speakers on the panel included mayor of Orinda Eve Phillips, Orinda Union School District board member Julie Rossiter, Rabbi Nicki Greninger from Temple Isaiah, pharmaceutical research manager Min Li, and attorney Latika Malkani. With about 80 students present, the panelists had an interactive discussion with the audience about their jobs and how they got there, as well as their successes and any obstacles they experienced, regarding gender in particular. "It was really interesting to hear about the biases, successes, and general life stories of all the women who participated in the Women in Leadership panel," Minowada said. Audience members heard about what it is like to be a working woman in addition to having a leadership role, and received advice as to how they should live their lives and continue the feminist movement combating sexism in the workplace. "Speak up and take it on," Malkani said. "You have to challenge people's beliefs. That's how society changes, when people call other people out." When talking about her experiences as a young, female Rabbi, Rabbi Greninger described encounters where she felt underestimated or intimidated: "When I tell people I'm a Rabbi, some people

can't believe it. We can't assume that women aren't capable of doing things, especially the same things as men. We just have to keep trucking along and opening these opportunities to everyone." Students were encouraged by the panelists to speak up, advocate for themselves, be proactive, and follow their passions when moving into the future. "I think the panel was successful in showcasing a wide variety of inspiring women who gave some great advice regarding the challenges they face in their field of work," junior Sienna Marley said.

"There was a great turnout to both the lunchtime activity and the panel," Minowada said. The Juniores finished off their year and said goodbye to their presidents and other senior members with a win for feminism, and hope for the same, if not better, outcome next spring.

Administration Cracks Down on Substance Abuse in Bathrooms

Students taking daily excursions to the bathroom has been a common theme this entire year in Miramonte life. Recently, Miramonte Administration has been cracking down on vaping and smoking in bathrooms around campus.

The last couple of months, teachers, as well as on campus security guards, have been notified to keep track of students who consistently leave during their period. This has all been a measure to prevent students from vaping and smoking in school bathrooms in the middle of the school day. "Obviously we are trying to stop substance use at school," Assistant Principal Jan Carlson said, "so we have asked teachers to monitor students who are leaving, especially those who ask

every day and are consistently gone for 7-10 minutes.”

The school’s security guards, who constantly comb the campus, are also looking for these ‘red flags’ of students who aimlessly wander. “We are not only concerned about substance use, but also about the safety of the students,” Carlson said. “We are responsible for all students, and when they are gone for more than 10 minutes, we begin to worry about where they are and if they are safe.”

Spring Fling Dance was a Hit

There is no better way to celebrate the blossoming flowers and the intermittent rain showers than the annual Miramonte Spring Fling dance. On Friday, April 38th, Miramonte students from all grades attended the “Under the Big Top” circus-themed dance from 7:00 to 10:00 pm at Miramonte.

Many students from the leadership class helped prepare and set up the dance. The party planner company, Events to the T, was an essential part of the preparation. Both underclassmen and upperclassmen wholeheartedly supported the decision: “The decorations were really unique and cool,” sophomore Allie Hughs said. Unlike previous dances, students filled the gym as well as the entire quad. Inside the gym, there was a DJ and lots of room for dancing. Outside, many carnival games scattered the quad, including a hike striker, ski ball, and a ring toss. Cotton candy was a popular option amongst students too. Along with the games, there was a woman on stilts walking around and a magician that fascinated all who watched: “The magician was actually magical,” sophomore Sophia Pinto said.

Although this seemed like a hit for the majority of those who attended, some students felt that the dance didn’t meet their

expectations. "The idea of the dance was fun and clever, but everything was spread out too much and the DJ played old music which wasn't that fun to dance to," sophomore Justin Alvarado said. Some students weren't a fan of the dance's theme either: "It was confusing to dress up for and some of the entertainment was creepy," Pinto explained.

Despite there being positive and negative opinions on the dance, many people attended. Those who did come participated in the various activities offered and danced to the music."Our goal is to make next year's dances fun and and different than previous dances," sophomore leadership student Amanda Glynn said.