Pets In Need offers summer camp via mailbox

Town Crier Staff Report

The COVID-19 pandemic may have rendered Pets In Need’s annual summer camp impossible, but the non-profit has found a creative way to keep local children engaged while still raising money for the programs that further its rescue mission.

As of June 15 and throughout the year, the organization is offering Camp PIN Pal Buddy Boxes, curated collections of various pet-themed activities. A free version geared toward seniors is also available. The boxes may be purchased individually or through a subscription service.

“We are proud of our community programs at Pets In Need and are pleased to be able to offer an alternative, at-home experience for our summer campers and our seniors,” said Al Mollica, the organization’s executive director, in a press release. “Our Camp PIN Pal Buddy Boxes are kid-tested and senior-approved, and are a fun way to educate children and adults about animal welfare.”

PIN’s Buddy Boxes for children, which cost $65 each, are best suited for kids between the ages of 8 and 12, according to the press release. They include activities like learning how to design and operate an animal shelter. Buddy Boxes for seniors include trivia questions, a memory game, a word search, and more information, visit losaltoschamber.org or 2020SOC.eventbrite.com.

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New Los Altos group aims to revitalize downtown area through public art

Town Crier Report

After more than eight years on the Los Altos Public Arts Commission and “not getting much done with city government,” Maddy McBirney figured it was time for an alternative plan for public art in the city.

“It has been brought to our attention that we can do public art on private property with private funding without the need of municipal process,” she said.

So McBirney and friend and former Public Arts Commissioner Karen Zucker — among other local art aficionados — founded a non-profit, Arts Los Altos. Their goal, according to McBirney, is to “provide beautiful, outdoor art” for downtown Los Altos.

“Our downtown could use some artistic, heartfelt beauty to revitalize its spirit,” McBirney said. “Art created for public consumption can bring people together, whether residents or visitors.”

A year in the making, the group announced its formation last week, along with plans for its first public art installation. Arts Los Altos members plan to install “Dodi,” a sculpture from Oakland-based artists HYBYCOZO, is scheduled for installation Monday at the Assistance League headquarters downtown Los Altos.

“Dodi,” a lighted sculpture from the Oakland artist collaborative HYBYCOZO, is scheduled for installation Monday at the Assistance League headquarters downtown Los Altos.

State St. in downtown Los Altos. Members plan to host an unveiling party in early July.

In a letter to potential donors, Arts Los Altos organizers noted that the piece “will bring color and light to downtown. It is math, science, art and technology at its best.”

Group members hope to raise $60,000 for their first two or three art installations.

“Dodi” is a 6-foot-tall, 12-sided shape with repeating pentagons. It will be illuminated from within, with colored LED lights that produce intricate patterns on the ground surrounding the artwork.

“The sculpture was inspired by the geometry of the flower of life, a symbol found in almost every ancient culture in the world, in plant and flower growth, as well as in the growing embryo during cell division.” Arts Los Altos supporters said in a June 9 press release. “Composed of overlapping circles forming petal shapes, it represents the creation of beauty through unity, a sum greater than the parts.”

Other key members of Arts Los Altos include Sherry Scott, a downtown merchant who runs Sherry Scott Design; Laura Roberts, retired executive director of the MVLA High School Foundation; resident Mike Buntensky; and former Los Altos City Council members Penny Lave and Mary Prochnow.

For more information, visit artlosaltos.org.

Volunteer

Ann Coombs: Author of book on LA trees

Town Crier Report

Longtime Los Altos resident Ann Kleerup Coombs was the ultimate community volunteer. She was active in many organizations, conscientious and thorough in virtually every task she took on.

Mrs. Coombs, 86, died April 4 after a prolonged struggle with Parkinson’s disease.

Mrs. Coombs lived in Los Altos for 54 years, contributing in multiple ways. She used her background in chemistry to work on issues related to water resources and toxic waste materials. She was active in the League of Women Voters, the Girl Scouts, local schools, the city of Los Altos, Santa Clara County (including two terms – seven and a half years – as a county planning commissioner) and the state of California.

Former State Sen. Becky Morgan of Los Altos Hills nominated Mrs. Coombs to serve on the Planning Commission, where she did her homework, traveling to sites all over the county where plans were being proposed in an effort to offer better-informed decisions.

She also served on numerous committees, including the Santa See COOMBS, Page 10
Morning Forum of Los Altos cancels 2020-2021 season

Town Crier Report

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced organizers to cancel the upcoming season of the Morning Forum of Los Altos, unprecedented in the series’ 70 years of speakers.

The board of directors recently elected to scrub the 2020-2021 season in the wake of continued large-group restrictions. The group holds events Tuesday mornings at Los Altos United Methodist Church.

“I want you to know that this is not a decision we made quickly or easily,” board president Tim Farrell wrote in a June 12 letter to members. “We discussed the possibility of canceling only the fall/winter part of the season in the hope that restrictions on large-group gatherings would no longer be in place by February, but decided that, even without restrictions, the majority of our membership would still be reluctant to attend until a vaccine is widely available.”

Farrell added that the board considered holding virtual meetings.

“But this option removes a key element from the ‘formula’ that makes our program so special — an intelligent, receptive, and highly engaged audience that brings out the very best in our speakers,” he said.

Farrell indicated that Morning Forum would resume activity in 2021-2022, beginning its 71st year.

For more information, visit morningforum.org.

Give to the Los Altos Small Business Relief Fund – losaltoscf.org

CAMP
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and coloring activities. Both versions feature craft projects and PIN swag.

Proceeds from the sale of the children’s boxes will help PIN cover the cost of providing complimentary boxes to the Ronald McDonald House locations at Stanford and in Pasadena, as well as the Webster House in Palo Alto, a senior living community where PIN volunteers regularly brought dogs to bond with residents pre-COVID. Remaining funds will go toward PIN’s animal rescue efforts.

Pets In Need is headquartered in Redwood City, but the organization’s Palo Alto shelter serves Los Altos and Los Altos Hills residents. Last year, 223 children enrolled in summer camp at the two shelters, participating in activities such as learning about veterinary medicine, exploring the Baylands and making crafts like cat toys and bird houses.

For more information on Camp PIN Pal Buddy Boxes, visit petsinneed.org/buddybox.

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