

# Cam-O-Gram



Community Action Marin

CAM-O-GRAM, Volume 1, Issue 3

January 15, 2010

## Earn It! Keep It! Save It!

**A Happy, Prosperous and  
Healthy New Year to Everyone!!!**

Providing free tax preparation to low- to moderate-income individuals, families, and seniors

As they say, two things in life are certain, and one of those is taxes! Community Action Marin's Prosperity Partners is the lead agency for the Earn It! Keep It! Save It! Marin Coalition. Tax returns are prepared by trained volunteers through a partnership with AARP Tax-Aide, United Way of the Bay Area, IRS, and other local community organizations. Last year, local free tax sites completed over 2,900 tax returns that resulted in \$2.4 million in total refunds. This is money that was returned to the pockets of Marin residents and put

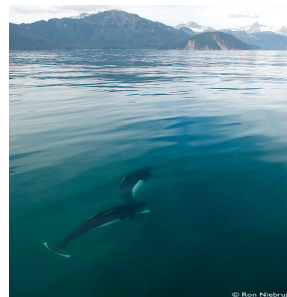
back into the local economy!

This year, there are 15 free tax sites throughout the county- including San Rafael, Fairfax, Mill Valley, Novato, Marin City, and right here at Community Action Marin (409 4<sup>th</sup> Street in San Rafael). Free tax sites are open to low-to-moderate income families (around \$52,000/year) and save families hundreds of dollars that would otherwise go to pay for tax preparation fees. The free tax sites are also an opportunity to connect families to other local services including financial counseling, banking services, and matched-savings accounts.

To learn more about the pro-

gram, order flyers for your community, or make an appointment, please call 415.526.7530. For information about other sites in the Bay Area, please call 2-1-1.

Happy New Year from Prosperity Partners – Jenna Churchman, Margot Fahey, and Reed Mayfield



### Program Notes:

- CAM'S RENOVATIONS OF THE DOWNSTAIRS SUITES ARE COMPLETED AND WE HAVE A NEW MINI-CONFERENCE ROOM THE SECOND FLOOR.
- CHECK OUT THE NEW ENTERPRISE RESOURCE CENTER WEBSITE AT [WWW.CAMENTALHEALTH.NET](http://WWW.CAMENTALHEALTH.NET)
- THE MARIN LEARNING CENTER ANNOUNCES THE APPOINTMENT OF A NEW ENVIRONMENTAL TEACHER, MARCOS DELGADO.

## Poetry Fundraiser on February 25th to Support CARE Team

The Enterprise Center is hosting a poetry fundraiser event featuring (among others) published poet and homeless advocate Michelle Baynes. All proceeds will go to the C.A.R.E. Team, our mobile outreach for homeless and disabled people in Marin.

When: Thursday, February 25, 2010 7pm-9pm

Where: 3270 Kerner Blvd. (Enterprise Resource Center-Marin Health & Wellness Campus), San Rafael, CA  
Cost: \$12 in advance or at the door

For tickets/donations and/or additional information, please contact Peri Olsson at (415) 454-2339, or [pols-son@camarin.org](mailto:pols-son@camarin.org)

## Help! Southern Marin Hot Meals Needs a Passenger Van!

Our old van has died and we are in a desperate search for a 15 passenger van suitable for transporting folks to and from our hot lunches on Tuesdays, Wednesday, Thursdays, or Sundays. If you have any ideas, leads, or know of any way we can get a replacement vehicle please contact Robin Sweeny at 415-3312-0774

OR e-mail: [mayflower06@comcast.net](mailto:mayflower06@comcast.net)



## CAM-O-GRAM

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### From the Editors

Our Executive Director, Gail Theller, has been honored as this year's recipient of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Humanitarian Award. Gail was recognized for her decades-long commitment to the disadvantaged and disenfranchised citizens of Marin County and her dedication to the pursuit of social equity and opportunity. She has overcome personal challenges which have sharpened her awareness of the burdens that many households face, and has been a courageous advocate for the most vulnerable among us.

## MLC News!

Before our winter break in December, we had a hot cider and homemade cookies gathering for all of our families and put on a Frog and Toad play. We have some new families and it was nice for them to see our whole community together and see the support we offer each other.

We're now helping parents of our children preparing to enter kindergarten in August with their applications. Mrs. Hardy and I realized last year that some of our families assumed our school automatically registered their children for them, so we started assisting families early by encouraging them to decide on a school and get all the paperwork turned in. Last year, many ended up on waiting lists due to registering too late.

Astronomy is big now for us, and we built and decorated 2 large boxes into space ships and it's great to see girls and boys wear the astronaut outfit and helmet. The pre-k's are studying money now and one boy even used his play money to purchase the outfit for the day! We'll be visiting the shops in the shopping center nearby, interviewing the workers, etc., and then the children will decide what kind of shop they'd like to have or service to provide. "Stores" has become a highlight of the year, when everyone (including the teachers and any parent who's able to participate) gets play money, and comes to spend it and have fun. Where else can you go where when you spend \$1.00 for a stuffed animal that costs \$5.00 and then get \$20.00 back! I can't wait to hear what kind of shops they decide to have this year. Last year one was a combination hamburger restaurant/carwash! Another sold dinosaur bones! (We were studying reptiles at the time.)

Our fundraising book writing project will begin at the end of this month, as I begin reading Charlotte's Web to the pre-k's in Room 2. This will begin a 5 month group effort and parents are already asking about when they will be ready! I enjoy so much being part of their process and pride at the end. Stay tuned for more information later.

All the children are practicing forming letters sensorially, by using cornmeal, play dough, wicki-sticks, large wooden pieces, etc., and they seem to be having fun. Of course, we continue with lots of coloring and they like the flip crayons as one of their choices. The children teach others as well, by having access to a large white dry erase board and colored markers. When we hear the "teacher" teach a student using some of the language they hear us use when we teach, it's really precious, and they all have become kind leaders.

We have outside spot lights now! Yippee!!!! We haven't had any vandalism since, and the teachers are so grateful not to be in the dark when locking up and walking to their cars. It sure makes our school look pretty at night!

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## More from the Learning Center...

We have new master gardener, Sarah, who's a lot like our dear Abby who worked at our school for 8 years. Our parents are helping as well, and as soon as we find a way to keep the deer out, we'll plant seeds. For now, we're weeding, trimming, composting and having a daily pick up of trash thrown inside and outside of our campus. Our grass sure loves the rain, and we have puddle walks when it's not raining too hard. We sure have a beautiful school setting here in Marin City.

On Jan. 13, the new principal of Bayside came over to introduce herself and meet us. She said she heard good things about us and was encouraged to stop by. We have begun a relationship now, and she's sending over the principal of the new Martin Luther King Academy(next door)as well. Mrs. Hardy and I are excited about collaborating more with the elementary schools and middle school.

We hope everyone is having a joyful beginning of 2010, and remember to take a breath at the end of the day and say, "I did the best I could, and it was good enough." Less stress for us all, and more joy!!!!

**HAIKU  
FOR  
TODAY**

**A giant firefly:  
that way, this way, that way, this -  
and it passes by.**

Issa

## **FROM LYNN WASLEY, UNITED FOR SAFE SCHOOLS NOVATO (USSN)**

Note: CAM is fiscal Agent for USSN

### **Save the Date! Novato Youth: Voices of Today- *A Forum promoting diverse youth experiences***

**What:** A panel presentation & dialogue between youths & adults

**When:** Wednesday, February 24th 4:30-7:30

**Where:** Novato Unified School District (NUSD) office, 1015 7th Street

**Who:** High school students\*, recent grads, parents/guardians, school staff/administrators, district staff/administrators, community members. *Public invited. \*Some NUSD teachers may offer extra credit for attending; check with your teacher.*

This purpose of the Forum is to encourage youth (high school students and recent grads) to share their school and social experiences related to their diversity and individual challenges and victories. It will include a panel presentation followed by breakout groups, co-led by the youth presenters and an adult. The groups will develop next steps that look to improve better communication and create more productive learning and social environments in our schools and city. Among other goals, the Forum will help promote acceptance & understanding of the many differences & commonalities that exist among our NUSD students and community & remind us of how we all share in the human experience.

We are looking for youth speakers and organizers! For more information, please contact Lynn Wasley at (415) 898-2557 or [ourhouse4@earthlink.net](mailto:ourhouse4@earthlink.net)

## **A New Look for the Cam-O-Gram!**

Please share this edition of the e-mail newsletter with your program community, friends, and the greater Marin community by forwarding this issue of CAM-O-GRAM to staff, friends, and supporters. For CAM program staff: please electronically distribute, and/or print/post this newsletter at your work site for everyone to see.

We are experimenting with a new format for the newsletter this month, with a PDF attachment for printing, made possible through the skill and patience of Human Needs Manager Dick McKee, who has assisted me by putting the edited content into this format. To make this new format work, however, we need your help. We need approximately one week (at least now!) between the monthly deadline date and the publish date. So please try to remember that announcements for events that take place less than one week from the "deadline" date may not make the next issue. If you have an important special event or announcement that occurs prior to the anticipated "publish" date, please send me an e-mail and I can always publish an "extra" edition in the "old" (e-mail with MS Word attachment) format.



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## **So...What is this?**

We have been toying with the idea of making the Cam-O-Gram a little more user friendly and visually attractive. (Not to take anything away from Don and his very capable role as Editor in Chief.) Please feel free to comment on this inaugural issue and make any suggestions you feel might improve the presentation. We would like this publication to be a unifying element in the organization and its success of course depends a great deal on your participation.