

Soapbox



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GUEST OPINION By Gina Cousineau

How Our Village (by the Sea) Keeps Evan's Memory Alive

It is finally time to give out huge thanks to our San Clemente for supporting our family through Evan's illness, passing and now our family's amazing journey because of his short, vibrant life with us. Our community was there for us then and continues to embrace our efforts to "save lives in honor of Evan." When I tell Evan's story, it always begins with his seizure on April 30, 2007. The following day at CHOC we were told that our three-sport athlete had a



Photo by Jeremiah Klein

metabolic genetic disease called Adrenoleukodystrophy and there was no treatment, no cure and that he would be dead in six to twelve months. That is how we went to sleep on May 1. But the following day they came to us and suggested going to the

University of Minnesota, where they treat late-diagnosed ALD boys with bone marrow transplant, and from that moment on we had hope. When Evan died on November 2—the day before his and his twin sister Alaina's 10th birthday—in Minnesota from post-transplant complications, I wasn't sure how I was going to live this new life without Evan. Part of my very being had been ripped from my soul, and, although I knew I had no choice but to continue on because of my husband and three other children, I didn't want to. When I left for Minnesota, we were on the "Fight for Evan, Stop ALD" campaign, and when we returned without him, I knew we had to do something really important to honor Evan.

Remembering every family we met on the Pediatric BMT unit at the university, I knew that none of us had hope without donors. Then to talk about bone marrow and not to talk about cord blood and blood product donation was not an option. And then the pink dot came into the picture. Something I had on my driver's license from the moment I could have it at 18.

We met the Lawson family at the Ronald McDonald house in Minneapolis, where 2-year-old Dominik was waiting for a kidney. Because he rejected his mother's kidney last May, there was only 3 percent of the population that would be a match for Dom. Our 21-year-old daughter, Mary, was that match. And on May 21, Mary donated her kidney to Dom, giving him a new chance for life.

Join us in our efforts to educate and raise awareness as to how we can all "recycle our bodies" and "be a hero, by becoming a donor." Our goal is to host Blood/Marrow/Donate Life drives across the nation, starting right here in San Clemente. While we have already hosted more than a dozen drives in SC, with a population of almost 70,000, we have many more to go to spread the word. If your business, church, organization, club or school would like to get involved with hosting and/or funding a drive, we would love to work with you.

Contact Gina at ginacinsc@aol.com or call 949.842.9975. To follow Evan's journey visit caringbridge.org/visit/evancousineau.

PLEASE NOTE: The opinions offered here are solely those of the guest columnist and may or may not be shared by the *San Clemente Times* staff. We appreciate, however, their willingness to share their views, and we invite responses to be sent to letters@sanclementetimes.com.

Letters to the Editor

OUR OFFICERS ARE ON TOP OF IT!

—Adam and Kim Crawford, San Clemente

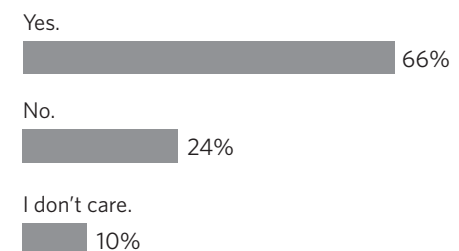
I would like to make a public "thank you" to the Orange County Sheriff's Department, San Clemente Police. Early Monday morning, July 21, we had an intruder in our home. After chasing him out of our house we called 9-1-1 and within minutes we had numerous police cars in the neighborhood. Our neighborhood has been experiencing a series of burglaries over the last couple of months and we are all on edge. Minutes after leaving our home the sheriff's officer called to say that they had found the individuals responsible and that they had found our belongings and various other items. It turns out that many

of the items stolen a month ago were found and returned to our neighbors. They did such an amazing job catching them so quickly on Monday, and we are all grateful for their efforts. Their dedication to the safety and welfare of our city and its citizens should never be taken for granted. Thank you to all members of the Orange County Sheriff's Department of San Clemente.

To submit a letter to the editor for possible inclusion in the paper, e-mail us at letters@sanclementetimes.com or send it to 34932 Calle del Sol, Suite B, Capistrano Beach, CA 92624. San Clemente Times reserves the right to edit reader-submitted letters for length.

SC Times Online Reader Poll

Do you want a Target in San Clemente?



Make sure to sound off each week on the "SC Times Poll of the Week" at www.sanclementetimes.com. Then go to our community Message Board and share your opinions. www.sanclementetimes.com. Bookmark it today!

The SC Times Online Reader Polls are not scientific and do not reflect the opinion of the SC Times.

THINKING OUT LOUD

Rebecca Nordquist

As I write our monthly business section (on page 6 this week), I see a lot of businesses come and go. WestEdge Gallery, Auntie Dee's Jerky Store, OC Dojo, San Clemente Cooking School: the list goes on. And each of the owners cites different reasons: retirement, a new opportunity, rent that's gone too high or not enough sales. With the direction that the economy's taking, I want to encourage you now more than ever to shop locally. A small sale can make a big difference for a mom-and-pop shop.

Many of our shops are owned by locals and are stocked with products made by locals. For instance, Terry Murphy creates the cement turtles and mermaids covered in shells that are sold at Villa Cucina; Tina Johnson, owner of Punk Rock Lullaby, designs a line of baby clothes also available at Villa Cucina, and Brenda Kinsman makes some of the aprons that California Cove sells. There are vacuum, shoe and clock repair shops in town that remain some of the longest standing.

The next time you head out to run errands, take a second and think about where in San Clemente you can check off those items. It's good for the local economy and good for the community overall.

Beachside Chat

Please join us the first Friday of every month for the *SC Times* Beachside Chat with Publisher Norb Garrett and Editor Rebecca Nordquist.