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TEACHER GRANTS

AUGUST 2023
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AN ENCHANTED BALL:

A MAGICAL NIGHT TO REMEMBER

Students enjoyed a magical night filled with music, dancing, happiness and friendship at “An Enchanted Ball” on April 28. Planned by the National Honor Society student organization at Newbury Park High School and attended by LEAP (Learning Essentials Academic Program) participants from three local schools—Newbury Park High School, Thousand Oaks High School and Westlake High School—the dance was hosted and supported by The Mizel Family Foundation, along with the schools’ administrative and educational teams and students’ families.

“I was really impressed by the student planning committee,” says The Mizel Family Foundation Event Manager Stephanie Young. “They were passionate about creating a dazzling event for their fellow students.”

“We had an absolute blast at the event, continuously saying that it was even more enjoyable than our own prom,” notes National Honor Society President Soniya Patel, who headed the Enchanted Ball planning committee. “The event was truly remarkable to witness, with an abundance of smiles, laughter and enjoyment. It not only fostered a greater sense of community, but also provided a unique opportunity for some of the students who experience special needs to dress up and experience their own prom night!”

Upon arrival, the LEAP students were greeted by local high school students and donned with corsages and boutonnières by their partners for the evening. The dance partners entered the Enchanted Ball on a flower-strewn red carpet atop a bridge. They mingled with friends in Mizel’s gorgeous garden, bathed by the warm glow of lanterns, and enjoyed snacks and mocktails.

As the evening progressed, the students danced to a DJ playing songs from a playlist created by their peers. Spontaneous karaoke broke out, as did other singing throughout the evening. Spirited games were played on the lawn, including an impromptu session of “Duck, Duck, Goose.”

“We are a kind, inclusive school,” notes NPHS teacher Anne Alvarez. “You can see the joy everywhere.”

The students took time out to sit together at linen-covered tables and sofas alight with candles to enjoy wood-fired pizzas and treats from the dessert bar. Friends took selfies in front of a photo backdrop as keepsakes of the evening. The memories of fun, laughter and friendship will last a lifetime.

“A special evening like this means so much to the community of parents to the uniquely abled, where they can feel safe dropping off their kids and know that they are having a fun time,” reflects The Mizel Family Foundation Chief Executive Officer Zelene Fowler.

THE MIZEL FAMILY FOUNDATION

The Mizel Family Foundation creates genuine educational and career opportunities for people with unique abilities. A percentage of all Mizel Estate Wine proceeds is donated to The Mizel Family Foundation. Individuals with unique abilities can participate in agricultural, athletic and cultural activities at Mizel Estate and additional prominent venues. Their goal is to employ and mentor uniquely abled adults to facilitate the growth of Mizel Estate.

All are invited to attend the inclusive Mizel Family Foundation Pumpkin Patch Harvest event, Saturday, October 21, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Pick your own pumpkin, planted on the estate by a team of Pumpkin



Patch Professionals with unique abilities. Take a Spooky Vineyard tour, listen to live music, shop for one-of-a-kind gifts and more. Pumpkin Patch Professionals are working with participating local businesses to gain valuable job skills. For reservations, please email info@mizelestate.com. Advanced reservations are required to enter the event.

For more information on The Mizel Family Foundation, email info@mizelestate.com or visit MizelEstate.com.

LEARNING ESSENTIALS ACADEMIC PROGRAM

LEAP is a comprehensive academic program for students that present with significant learning, adaptive and language needs. It uses an alternative curriculum that is aligned with common core standards. Through this program there are opportunities to engage with typically developing students across a variety of social activities, providing growth opportunities, creating friendships and enriching the lives of all students.

There is no shortage of ways for parents and students to become involved with their school's LEAP program. Typically developing students and those who experience special needs participate together as lunch buddies and in activities, such as cheerleading, basketball, ballet and larger events, like An Enchanted Ball and the Special Olympics.

To learn more, contact Anne Alvarez (annealvarez@conejovalley.org) or Dawn Thomas (dthomas@conejovalley.org).