

## Xena, warrior guide dog



Children gather around during Story Time to meet Xena, a puppy training to become a guide dog for the blind.

Xena, a guide dog “puppy in training” made a visit to Bank of Books with her trainer Kimberley Varonin during a special Story Time on Saturday morning. Children were captivated as Xena rested at Varonin’s side as she explained what goes into being a guide dog for the blind. A guide dog must be “perfect to lead the blind” Varonin said.

“Xena knows a different set of manners when the service jacket is on,” Varonin said. Her advice: when you see a guide dog, let the dog and their companion continue on their path.

Their training can also be utilized in caring for diabetic, search and rescue, and other service programs.



Above: Bank of Books was packed, as locals and visitors learned all about guide dog training.



Sisters Dana Maria and Cheyanne Lauer spend a little time with Xena after Story Time.



Xena learns how to be a guide dog for the blind with trainer companion Kimberly Varonin.



Left: Xena gives Michelle Myers a quick kiss during Story Time at Bank of Books on Saturday.

## Thorne

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Above: Tiffany Murray, a neighbor of the Thorne family, fills her basket with fresh fruits and veggies for the Fourth of July holiday weekend.

Right: Stacey Feinberg frequents the Thorne Family Farm for fresh produce.



He attributes long hours, hard work and support from friends and family as secrets to the farm’s success. He also brags that not a single tractor on the farm is less than 50 years old.

His brother, Albert Thorne Jr., handles the mechanics, and close friend Don Rady has helped keep old family farm equipment in good condition.

“They brought the equipment back to life again. Rady literally made the parts that are no longer available for sale out of steel in his garage for us,” said Larry. “It would have cost us over \$100,000 to buy [new] equipment needed to do the work I am doing today on the farm.”

Thorne’s products help keep

other Malibu businesses working, too, including local markets and restaurants.

“Larry delivers the food himself, so we know him well,” said Mike Groton, produce manager of PC Greens. “...Their strawberries and blueberries are the best.”

And many customers request Thorne produce, Groton said.

“We feature a ‘Larry Thorne Chard Salad’ right now,” said Helene Henderson, chef and owner of the Malibu Farm Cafe. “We can’t wait for his tomatoes to come back into season at the end of July.”

“Whatever he grows, we want,” she added.

Thorne sells and delivers to a number of local businesses, but resi-

dents are also encouraged to visit the farm on Saturdays to pick their own produce from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

“My neighbors walk down here from their house and buy fresh vegetables every day,” he said.

Mary Carbonniere, who works as community relations manager at Vintage Grocers, said the market relies on local growers like Thorne because larger produce companies tend to sell products that have been genetically modified.

“[By buying locally,] you get the freshest food available. A fresh vegetable or fruit has the most nutrients when it is freshly picked and eaten. There is no experimentation with food, it is organic,” she said.

## Summer camps

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old up through teenagers.

“It’s a great opportunity for non-Malibu people to know and appreciate Malibu,” said surf instructor Taylor Nelson, herself a native of Thousand Oaks, as she paused from packing up wetsuits into a van after Monday’s lesson.

Other instructors agree. According to fellow instructor Julia Domenech, a teacher from Ventura, they come to learn surfing, but what they get is an appreciation for Malibu’s stretch of sea.

“They are learning how to be at an ocean,” said Domenech, who added, “once you love the ocean, you want to take care of it.”

She went on to say that the young campers learn safety as a first priority.

“They’re the ones teaching ocean safety to their friends, what to do in a rip tide, how to call for help,” said Domenech.

Chloe Respondek, a student at Point Dume Marine Science School, is back this summer for her fifth season with Malibu Makos.

“It’s just so much fun for me to go in waves, it feels like a roller coaster in water and I really like that,” said Respondek, who began attending camp at only five years old.

She said she feels much more confident about being safe in the

ocean since she started attending surf camp.

“I’ve learned how to swim parallel when a current is there and picking you up, and not to panic,” said Respondek.

The Malibu Makos Surf Camp is one of over a dozen camps offered throughout Malibu this week alone, and one of two surf camps — the other, hosted by the City of Malibu, is at Surfrider Beach and also runs through the season.

This summer, Malibu’s youngest citizens have a chance to pursue a wide range of interests at a whole slew of city-sponsored summer camps. Youngsters interested in flag football, jedi sword fighting or science experiments were in luck this week, with the City of Malibu hosting camps for kids of all skill levels.

Next week, kids interested in basketball, baseball, tennis or soccer can try their hand during a city-sponsored camp. There will also be opportunities for the creative child to make movie magic at lego animation camp.

Most of these camps are intended for kids up to 12 years old, but Malibu teens this week are not left out. Many are honing skills in performing arts at one of six camps on Pepperdine’s

campus, including instruction on acting, dancing and film production. The camps at Pepperdine this week are hosted by US Performing Arts Camps.

For young families that want to spend more time together this summer, registration is open for Pepperdine Family Camps, which run in two sessions through late July and August. More information can be found at [www.pepperdine.edu](http://www.pepperdine.edu).

Registration is still open for most City of Malibu Summer Camps, all of which run a week long. Dates, rates and details are available for those camps at [www.malibucity.org](http://www.malibucity.org).

No matter the age or skill level, it seems that there’s something for every kid in Malibu this summer. And according to those gathered at Zuma for Makos Surf Camp, these childhood memories often translate into adulthood passions.

“That happens so often, that a kid grows up in the camp, spends so many years, and ends up an instructor in the summer,” said Domenech.

Chloe Respondek seems to be a prime example.

“I’m going to do it as many years as I can and hopefully become a counselor,” she said.



Above: Wetsuits dry in the sun behind a Zuma Beach Lifeguard Tower.

Right: Makos campers Payton Bechetsky of San Diego and Emma Franzblan of Simi Valley take a break from surfing.



Photos by Emily Sawicki / TMT