

Girls Makers Market showcases young entrepreneurs

By Sora O'Doherty



Photos Sora O'Doherty

About 60 girls from Lamorinda turned up at a Girls Makers Market at the Quarry House at Wilder on May 6 where a wide variety of handcrafted products, from baked goods to cosmetics, origami to fashion, jewelry to hair acces-

sories were offered. Inspired by shops like Lush, Aria Fomey and Hayley O'Brien, 12, were selling beeswax cosmetics. The girls obtain the beeswax from neighbors in Pleasant Hill who are beekeepers, so their ingredients are mainly locally sourced and organic. They obtain their scents online, and were mentored by Aria's aunt, who used to make lotions. They've been making their products for a couple of months and sell them at I 'Heart' Art in Pleasant Hill.

Nura Mohiuddin, 9, Betty Chesnut and Manhattan Liu, both 8, were among the bakers offering sweet treats. June Vermut-Young, 11, started sewing clothes in the third grade, after taking classes at Sewnow in Lafayette. The young designer, who reads Teen Vogue, still has time for bok fu do, volleyball and yoga. Arah Zarrin was selling reusable shopping bags that she made. The proceeds will be donated to the Orinda Library, with a matching donation from her parents.

When Roxanne Christophe's daughters had so much origami made that they started selling it to friends, she never imagined that she would preside over a burgeoning congregation of girls who are actively involved in producing goods for sale, but that is what happened. At their first sale, the Christophe girls sold \$150 of origami at the Montclair Farmers' Market. Christophe posted to the Lamorinda Families Facebook group, wondering if there were other young females who were selling their goods and got an overwhelming response. Some girls sell on Etsy, some on Instagram or other online forums, so Christophe organized a session on marketing and publicity strategies at the Lafayette War Memorial for girls 5 to 13 and discovered that there is tremendous interest.

"The girls were so excited" about making the products for the makers market, she said. "They were very self driven



to do it on their own." Christophe said that she was in part motivated by the "Me Too" movement to ask, "What do girls need to better equip themselves?" For her, the answer is "Girls need to be aware that they can be the owner of the means of production." She wants girls to be empowered, to have a goal and see it happen.