

## VOLUNTEER NOTES

### Where Are They Now?

Former volunteer **Jen Fujimoto** is a new retiree. Jen “met” the County of Marin organization in 2015, volunteering here while working in San Francisco. When a Marin County Parks job was posted, she applied, competed, was hired, and spent the last years of her career as a Marin employee. “Jen played a key role in managing our permitting program and will always be a treasured member of the Marin County Parks family,” said Chief Ranger **Jason Olivotti**. Jen recalled, “I thoroughly enjoyed my work here from the very start with Volunteer Coordinators **Greg (Reza)** and **Kirk (Schroeder)**.”

Former Board of Supervisors intern **Emmalee Jordan** is working at a consulting firm in Washington, D.C. Emmalee served with the District 1 team in 2019 and 2020, learning to track housing legislation and attending community meetings with Supervisor **Damon Connolly**. A recent graduate of George Washington University with a degree in political science, she plans to pursue a master’s in public policy with a focus on affordable housing and homelessness prevention.

## Staff Supervisors Share Annual Honor

By Tiyona Pariani

For their deep commitment to senior peer counselor volunteers who directly serve older clients across Marin, Health and Human Services Department (HHS) staff

members **Pam Roman** and **Rachel Gila** are the 2021 Marin County Volunteer Supervisors of the Year.

Working collaboratively for years as supervisors of Senior Peer Counseling (SPC) volunteers, Pam, a mental health practitioner, and Rachel, a registered nurse, refined a comprehensive training program that sets up new senior peer counselors for success.

Rachel retired near the end of 2021, and Pam currently coordinates the senior peer counseling volunteer program solo.

PHOTO BY ALEX DANG



Pam Roman

PHOTO BY ANNE STARR



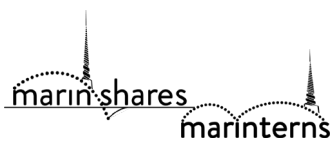
Rachel Gila

Until Rachel’s retirement, they jointly recruited volunteers by advertising the program and hosting informational sessions. They interviewed applicants, explained

the program and its expectations, and selected individuals who became part of a cohort. Once a new cohort is set, members take six weeks of training on topics such as boundary setting, confidentiality, and elements of a therapeutic relationship.

After volunteers pass training and are matched with clients, ongoing support from staff includes weekly small-group supervision meetings. Staff supervisors ensure that volunteer counselors feel supported, welcome, appreciated, and

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## First Staff Supervisor of Interns of the Year

By Tiyona Pariani

PHOTO BY ISAAC VERNON



Nancy Vernon

A county employee who embraces every opportunity to support youth is the first Marin County Staff Supervisor of Interns of the Year in a new

recognition category

for employees who work with interns. Internships must be supervised by a staff member, and Board of Supervisors District 2 Aide **Nancy Vernon** is the honoree for her dedication to students.

Nancy prepares for, welcomes, and mentors interns, including students

from the School-to-Career and Career Explorers programs who intern with the Board of Supervisors team. Though many employees prefer to work with college-age interns, she also invites high school students to participate.

She connects interns with projects aligned with their interests and meets their needs whenever possible. Nancy even hosts group meetings and check-ins outside traditional office hours to accommodate students’ schedules. She encourages interns to pursue their passions and ensures that they gain an understanding of how the County of Marin serves its communities.

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## Staff Supervisors Share Annual Honor

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acknowledged for their contributions. During the pandemic shutdown, meetings continued on Zoom.

The two honorees also have worked in the Helping Older People Excel (HOPE) program. “Pam and Rachel exemplify dedication not only to their work in the HOPE program but also to the older adult community,” said **Alex Dang**, unit supervisor of the HOPE and Senior Peer Counseling program.

From the volunteer perspective, Senior Peer Counselor **Larken Bradley** said that “Pam and Rachel are both utterly lovable. They make me laugh. They make me cry.”

Pam began working with Marin County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services in 2002. As a licensed mental health provider, she has worked with people of all ages and particularly enjoys working with older adults.

“There are big changes in life as one ages. There are losses, feelings of isolation, the desire to review one’s life, insights that bring healing, fears, health challenges, and new perspectives,” Pam said. “I have an abundance of appreciation and respect for the years of kindhearted and dedicated service of the senior peer counselors, and the journeys of each participant.”

Rachel, who joined the county in 2006, described supervising volunteers as a special experience. “As they have grown as people, I have become an adult experiencing the process of aging. I am grateful for this opportunity as it has deeply impacted my life,” said Rachel.

Asked about Rachel’s impact on volunteers, Senior Peer **Rita Wengler** said, “She created a nurturing,

supportive environment where our own emotions regarding our clients’ difficult and sometimes painful situations were acknowledged and embraced. Rachel’s capacity to care for others is an inspiration.”

The Board of Supervisors recognized Pam and Rachel during a hybrid ceremony on November 2 for outstanding staff supervisors, volunteers, and interns of the year. They received awards and formal resolutions of commendation at the event, which was emceed by Human Resources Director **Mary Hao**. Health and Human Services Director **Benita McLarin** spoke at the ceremony, describing the two HHS staff honorees as inclusive people who truly care about volunteers and have formed strong bonds with them. She said the pair are “good problem-solvers who provide volunteers what they need to do their jobs well. Congratulations, Rachel and Pam!”



Honoree Pam Roman, Health and Human Services Volunteer Coordinator Tara Clark, and honoree Rachel Gila pose outside board chambers.

PHOTO BY ANNE STARR



Senior Peer Counseling volunteers sit spaced apart and have masks ready to don as they begin a weekly meeting in the fall of 2021. Their staff supervisor, Rachel Gila, is at center back.

PHOTO BY STACEY PSALLIA

## Who’s New & Welcome!

**Maria Angelopulos** (Novato), Marin Center Usher, Cultural Services

**Khatuna Ashurova** (San Anselmo), Nursing Student, Health & Human Services (HHS)

**Jonathan Bernstein** (Corte Madera), Civic Center Tour Docent, Cultural Services

**Ken Brownfield** (Novato), Radio Communication Volunteer, Department of Public Works (Public Works)

**Theresa Campbell** (Novato), Marin Center Usher, Cultural Services

**Robert Cook** (San Rafael), Civic Center Tour Docent, Cultural Services

**Carol Cotton** (Bolinas), Shelver, Stinson Beach Library

**Ian Duncan** (Inverness), Covid-19 Mobile Testing Team Documentation Intern, HHS

**Jerry Foster** (Novato), Radio Communication Volunteer, Public Works

**Tess Lauricella** (San Francisco), Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Intern, HHS

**Jackelyn Mendieta** (Richmond), Literacy Tutor/Reading Buddies Intern, Marin City Library

**Iliana Milan** (Greenbrae), Friends of the Family Volunteer, HHS

**Ivonne Moreno** (Petaluma), Records Management Aide, Community Development Agency

**Emelie Pech** (San Rafael), Marin Teen Girl Conference Ambassador, Human Resources



# First Staff Supervisor of Interns of the Year

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PHOTO BY GUSTAVO GONCALVES



Nancy Vernon speaks to the Board of Supervisors at the November 2 recognition ceremony for outstanding volunteers, interns, and staff supervisors.

“Nancy is someone who puts her heart and soul into the work she does. She is an incredible supervisor to be working with, and an even better person,” said District 2 Intern **Eloise Weir**. “I knew that working with someone with such passion would be a great experience, and it really is. Nancy’s passion for helping her community has further empowered me to make a difference.”

Nancy supervises interns in the use of various platforms, including social media, public speaking, and video. She oversees Marin County’s Instagram account, assigning interns to help spread the word about the U.S. Census count, shelter in place orders, masking, vaccination and other County messaging, and

to collaborate with programs such as Rx Safe Marin, Marin 9-25, Crisis Text Line, suicide prevention, and more.

Nancy teaches project management and helps interns reach goals and manage a timeline. Her interns meet as a group, participate in County staff and project meetings, and work with outside community

partners providing a range of educational real-world experiences. Working closely with the county’s central internships program, Marinterns, she continually refines and often expands internships in the Board of Supervisors office.

“I don’t think there has been a person, young or old, who isn’t wowed by Nancy,” says Supervisor **Katie Rice**. “She gives her whole self and more to everything she does, and adds an extra dose working with interns!”

“I’ve learned so much at the county about paving, planning, permitting, resolutions, ordinances, politics, how to get things done, and how to help folks,”

Nancy said. “But my biggest takeaway is the intangible — that all our residents are human, are equal, and should be treated as such. We should all have access to resources, a home to live in, food to eat, a good school for our kids, and that’s what we all must strive for here at the county.”

Nancy received an award and a formal resolution of commendation extolling her service during a hybrid ceremony held in board chambers and on Zoom on November 2.



PHOTO BY GREGG TURNER

Nancy Vernon.



CARTOON BY JOHN DONDACHIE

# Happy Anniversary

We congratulate these volunteers who celebrate their anniversaries this month and thank them for their ongoing involvement.

## 40 YEARS

**Rich Carbine** (San Rafael), Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service/Auxiliary Communications Service (RACES/ACS) Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office (MCSO)

## 28 YEARS

**Steven Post** (San Francisco), Fire Lookout, Marin County Fire

## 19 YEARS

**Faith Brown** (Tiburon), Steward, Marin County Parks (Parks)

## 16 YEARS

**David Albert** (Tiburon), **Sudy Schneider** (Tiburon), Stewards, Parks

## 15 YEARS

**David Barker** (Tiburon), **Mick Seaman** (Belvedere), Stewards, Parks

## 12 YEARS

**Galen Leeds** (Tomas), Volunteer Tomas Firefighter, Marin County Fire

## 11 YEARS

**Geoffrey Dugmore** (Petaluma), Sheriff's Chaplain, MCSO

**Kathryn Mitchell-Ball** (San Rafael), Patrol Volunteer, Parks

## 9 YEARS

**Diana Johnson** (Fairfax), Aide, Fairfax Library

## 8 YEARS

**Kurt Ellison** (San Rafael), **Richard McGrath** (San Rafael), Stewards, Parks

## 7 YEARS

**Jeff Davidson** (Novato), Incident Management Team Volunteer, Marin County Fire

**Ray De Leon** (Greenbrae), Ombudsman Volunteer, Health & Human Services (HHS)

**Helen Imrie** (San Rafael), Administrative Support Aide, HHS

**Robert Ireson** (Greenbrae), RACES/ACS Volunteer, MCSO

**Ruth Nash** (Larkspur), Environmental Steward, Parks

## 6 YEARS

**Donna Lew** (Henderson, NV), **Robert Simon** (Henderson, NV), Wildlife Picture Index Project Volunteers, Parks

**Jody Berman** (Novato), Spanish Tutor, Novato Library

**Tamayo Sato** (San Rafael), Spanish Conversation Club Volunteer Leader, Novato Library

## 5 YEARS

**Veronica Morino** (San Rafael), Event Aide, Human Resources

## 3 YEARS

**Mark Birnbaum** (Novato), Steward, Parks

**Charles Fracchia** (San Francisco), Financial Abuse Specialist Team Volunteer, HHS

**Judith Hanks** (Mill Valley), Post-Conviction Relief Volunteer Attorney, Public Defender's Office

**Nancy Mackle** (San Anselmo), Friends of the Family Volunteer, HHS

## 2 YEARS

**Beverly Birnbaum** (Novato), Steward, Parks

**Lea Del Pomo** (San Rafael), Whole Person Care Volunteer, HHS

**Gail Lynn** (Novato), Ombudsman Volunteer, HHS

**Susana Schoenstein** (San Anselmo), **Terri Smith** (Kentfield), Friends of the Family Volunteers, HHS

**Debra Ziegler** (Corte Madera), Literacy Corner Volunteer Storyteller & Stocker, Corte Madera Library

## 1 YEAR

**Rebecca Woodbury** (Sausalito), Digital Marin Co-chair, Information Services Technology