

## VOLUNTEER NOTES

### Where Are They Now?

Former Marintern **Ashlyn Winje** completed her coroner internship with the Marin County Sheriff's Office last July and moved to El Dorado Hills. Since February, Ashlyn has worked with the Sacramento Police Department as a police records specialist and is thrilled to be active in her chosen field. Ashlyn also volunteers at Snowline Hospice with her cousin and aunt, a role she greatly enjoys.

**Kim Barnard**, who had two internships—one with the Board of Supervisors District 1 office and one with the Marin Housing Authority—later earned a master's degree in the Middle East. (She is fluent in Arabic.) Kim then returned to the North Bay. Since June 2019 she has worked in procurement for Golden Gate Transit. Promoted last December to the position of senior buyer, district division, she says that her intern experience "provided me a chance to show my skill set and was absolutely a vital stepping-stone to define my career path."

## Volunteer of the Year Helps Save Lives

By Tiyona Pariani

PHOTO BY SCOTT MCDANIEL



Michael Synyard

For his dedication to helping the lost and injured in Marin and around California, MarinShares Volunteer **Michael Synyard** is Marin

County's Volunteer of the Year. He has been a member of the Marin County Sheriff's Search & Rescue (SAR) team since 2017 and its boot camp manager since 2018.

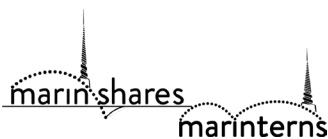
"In 2021 alone, Michael committed over 600 hours to the team," said Sheriff's Lieutenant **Pierre Ahuncain**, one of his staff supervisors. "Many of those hours were dedicated to organizing and teaching 27 new members, the largest boot

camp class SAR has ever seen. Michael's ability to teach and mentor new members is a large part of why the team is so successful." In addition to warmly welcoming new team members, Michael has refined written materials and added trainings on new technologies used in the field to keep the team up to date.

Michael is on call 24/7 for the SAR team. It is a mountain rescue team accredited by the Mountain Rescue Association, and handles some of the most difficult missions possible, including technical rope rescues, winter missions, and extended backcountry assignments.

Several years ago, Michael and his teammates treated two severely hypothermic people in Alpine County. Caught in a storm, they had sheltered in a snow cave for two nights without food. Michael and his teammates arrived on the third day and began medical assessment with

*Continued on page 2*



### STAFF

**Anne Starr**, Coordinator of Volunteers  
415-473-7167 • AStarr@marincounty.org

**Joy Fossett**, Student Internships Coordinator  
415-473-7447 • JFossett@marincounty.org

### VOLUNTEERS

Writers: **Clariss Ajanel**, **Maddie Dabbah**, **Natalie Dybeck**, **Marjorie Grannan**, **Scott Harrop**, **Tiyona Pariani** | Photographer: **Gregg Turner** | Copy Editor: **Pamela Ross** | Copy Editor Intern: **David Balderama** | Graphic Design: **Eleanor Lau** | Graphic Design Aide: **Afsaneh Bohlouli** | Intern Writing Coach: **Ed Remitz** | Administrative Aides: **Deborah Gregor**, **Deborah Fox**, **Veronica Morino** | Cartoonist: **John Donaghue**

## Intern of the Year Committed to Public Health

By Tiyona Pariani

Marin County's 2021–2022 Intern of the Year is Marintern **Marise Thadani**, an outstanding post-graduate student with the Health and Human Services Department's (HHS) epidemiology team. Marise served remotely starting in the fall of 2021, analyzing data related to the impact of Covid-19 in California.

"My internship provided very real experience in what it's like to be an epidemiologist," Marise said. "I've been learning all the epidemiological concepts in class and this internship allowed me to apply them to real data."

She completed two data analysis projects. The first was on substance use and

the second on mental health. For both projects, she analyzed data-sets and wrote manuscripts of her findings.

Back in 2012, Marise had a positive summer internship with the HHS Prevention Hub, so she decided to pursue more experience with the department while earning her master's degree in public health.



Marise Thadani

PHOTO BY EMILY HELEN PHOTOGRAPHY

*Continued on page 3*

# College Intern Promotes Crisis Text Line for People in Need

By Natalie Dybeck

When the Covid-19 pandemic hit, everyone had to adjust quickly to working remotely or spending in-person hours in potentially terrifying conditions. **Ryan Vilefort Barbosa**, a Board of Supervisors intern and a member of the Suicide Prevention Collaboration Youth Action Team, understood these challenges and jumped into action.

He is now lead intern for the Crisis Text Line, which offers free, confidential crisis counseling via text for anyone experiencing anxiety, depression, substance use, and/or suicidal thoughts. “I have led the creation of a grassroots campaign that involves engaging with schools in order to raise awareness regarding our Crisis Text Line,” said Ryan.

While available 24/7 to everyone, the Crisis Text Line mostly attracts those most comfortable texting for support—teens age 17 and under.

Ryan began his internship during summer 2020 and continues in a semi-remote capacity with extracurricular leadership roles. He now is class president in his first year at St. Mary’s College.

“My ideal career plan is to be a politician—hopefully governor of California one day!” says Ryan, a political science major. “Ideally after college I hope to get a job in the Marin County government.”

Last August, Ryan and his teammates met with staff from the Marin County Office of Education (MCOE) to promote their Crisis Text Line. “To me that was the most memorable and important meeting because the success of our grassroots campaign within our pilot schools relied on the support that we were attempting to get from MCOE,” he said. “In the end, they were amazed with our project, and we have been receiving their full support.”

Success came with challenges. When encountering problems, Ryan relies on his supervisor, **Nancy Vernon**, aide to Supervisor **Katie Rice**. “Nancy has been an amazing mentor,” Ryan said. “She is always showing excitement and is my go-to for any trouble I encounter.”

“Ryan has made an incredible contribution to the county’s efforts to create awareness of the Crisis Text Line,” said Nancy. “He worked through last summer developing and implementing a plan to

create awareness among students, presenting to MCOE, the School Law Enforcement Partnership, and more. Ryan’s dedication to this project, his leadership among his peers, his excellent presentation skills, and his incredible responsiveness have all made him a true pleasure to work with.”

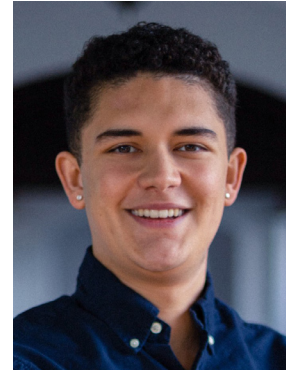


PHOTO BY DARIAN MINOUEI

Ryan Vilefort Barbosa

To Ryan, the biggest reward is knowing the work is getting done. “I am beyond thankful for this project because there is nothing better than knowing that what I do as intern lead for Crisis Text Line is actually having a huge positive impact in our county,” he says.

To find the Crisis Text Line, text MARIN to 741741 or visit the Health and Human Services Department’s [Behavioral Health and Recovery Services webpage](#).

## Volunteer of the Year Helps Save Lives

Continued from page 1

paramedics. Both subjects survived without major issues.

“It was amazing to see our training pay off so successfully in saving two lives,” said Michael. “My pride in the team was affirmed by the paramedics who had never worked with an SAR team. They were surprised by the professionalism, level of care administered by my team, and astounded that we had teens perform much of the lifesaving care.” (The SAR team has adult and youth volunteer roles.)

Michael grew up in several small towns in the rural South and spent most of his childhood in Mobile, Alabama. There, he graduated from Murphy High School in 1986. Before moving to San Rafael,

he lived in the East Bay for 15 years and volunteered with an SAR team there.

In his free time, Michael enjoys hiking, mountain biking, and spending time with his wife of 18 years and 8-year-old son.

Before Covid-19 halted his job, Michael worked in healthcare IT helping to optimize clinical workflows and implementing virtual workspaces and cloud printing. But he wanted to do more for others. The open schedule let him devote more time to SAR.

“In our county we have a high rate of resolution for missing persons and it’s great to see families reunited,” Michael said. “Occasionally we have a negative

outcome, but it’s just as important to bring closure to the affected family and friends.”

The Board of Supervisors honored Michael with a resolution of commendation during a recognition ceremony on April 26, citing his “excellence in volunteerism through dedicated service.” The resolution notes his efforts in “tackling more than 50 missions in 2021 alone... helping with evidence searches, seeking missing dementia patients in Marin County, a missing child in El Dorado County, a missing runner in Alameda, and a missing hunter in Mendocino... displaying a spirit of compassion and diligence, and serving as an inspiring role model.”

## Intern of the Year Committed to Public Health

Continued from page 1

As an epidemiology intern, Marise most enjoyed analyzing the changes in substance use before and during the pandemic.

“We were constantly impressed with her knowledge and zeal to learn,” said Epidemiologist **Ou Suk “Andrew” Kwon**, one of her supervisors. “Marise is extremely curious to learn new things and that is what has always been her greatest asset.”

Marise’s other supervisor was Covid-19 Response Epidemiologist **Pooja Mhatre**. “Through this internship, Marise learned how to analyze and interpret real-world data to help the county understand the Covid-19 pandemic’s influence on important health outcomes,” Pooja said. “These are skills she will be able to utilize as an epidemiologist investigating any disease or health outcome.”

Marise completed her undergraduate degree at UC Santa Barbara in June 2013. She double majored in anthropology—physical emphasis and Spanish. She is pursuing her MPH in epidemiology

through the University of South Florida online and expects to graduate this fall.

Marise also works full time with the California Department of Public Health’s Infant Botulism Treatment and Prevention Program. The program is responsible for shipping medication nationwide and occasionally internationally. Her work involves collaboration with interprofessional teams of physicians, pharmacists, epidemiologists, laboratorians, and regulatory professionals.

In her free time, Marise enjoys running, reading, watching TV, hiking, and sleeping.

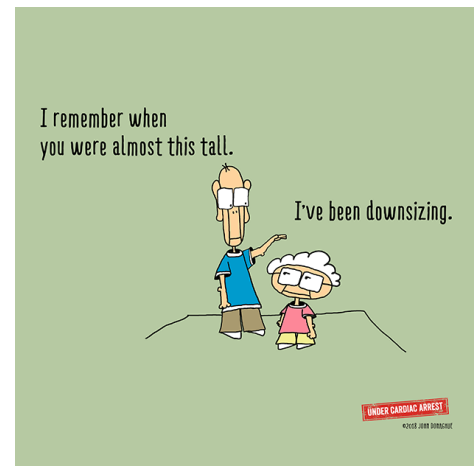
She was born and raised in San Francisco. She graduated from St. Ignatius College Preparatory in San Francisco in 2009. Currently a Larkspur resident, she has been living in Marin on and off for about 13 years.

“This internship provided invaluable practical experience,” Marise said. After earning her MPH degree, she hopes to secure a position as an

epidemiologist for the county or state health department.

The Marin County Board of Supervisors recognized Marise as the Intern of the Year during a ceremony on April 26. Board members commended her support for healthy communities, willingness to share the results of scientific research, and deep commitment to dealing with the incidence, distribution, and control of health issues in a population.

• • •



CARTOON BY JOHN DOMAGALA

## Who's New & Welcome!

**Patricia Bailey** (Novato), Marin Center Usher, Cultural Services

**Ashley Bear** (Corte Madera), District 2 Intern, Board of Supervisors

**Judy Canham** (Sausalito), Marin Center Usher, Cultural Services

**Kathryn Gonda** (Point Reyes Station), Nursing Student in Communicable Disease, Health & Human Services (HHS)

**Aurelie Gougat** (Novato), Nursing Student in Communicable Disease, HHS

**John Haubold** (Larkspur), Restrictive Covenant Project Intern, Board of Supervisors

**Sheryl Hoy** (San Rafael), Marin Center Usher, Cultural Services

**Joanne Lang** (Novato), Marin Center Usher, Cultural Services

**Isabel Lin** (Saratoga), Nursing Student in Oral Health, HHS

**Bethany Lopez Rojas** (Santa Cruz), Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) Liaison Intern, Public Defender’s Office

**Roshni Mathew** (Manteca), Nursing Student in Oral Health, HHS

**Lisa McKeogh** (San Rafael), Marin Center Usher, Cultural Services

**Lori Miller** (Pinole), Marin Center Usher, Cultural Services

**Jocelyn Moss** (San Rafael), California Room Docent, Civic Center Library

**Augustus Muse** (San Rafael), DMV Liaison Intern, Public Defender’s Office

**Meena Neelakandan** (Concord), Nursing Student in Oral Health, HHS

**Martha Nelson** (Novato), Marin Center Usher, Cultural Services

**Joanne Nguyen** (San Jose), Literacy Tutor/Reading Buddies Intern, South Novato Library

**Brody Niksa** (Rohnert Park), Youth Working for Change Intern, Probation Department

**Conor Orton** (Petaluma), Restrictive Covenant Volunteer, Board of Supervisors

**Sarani Puri** (Kentfield), Board of Supervisors District 2 Intern, Board of Supervisors

**Sandy Raffi-Rashed** (San Rafael), Marin Center Usher, Cultural Services

**Mostafa Rashed** (San Rafael), Marin Center Usher, Cultural Services

**Camille Joy Rayo** (San Leandro), Nursing Student in Oral Health, HHS

**Blanca Solano** (Novato), Spanish Tutor, Novato Library

**Lee Spiegel** (Corte Madera), Shelver, Corte Madera Library

**Suzette Stephens** (Rohnert Park), Nursing Student in Communicable Disease, HHS

**Ronald Stolowitz** (Larkspur), Marin Center Usher, Cultural Services

# Happy Anniversary

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

## 25 YEARS

**Richard Fay** (Novato), Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service/Auxiliary Communications Service (RACES/ACS) Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office (MCSO)

## 24 YEARS

**Eric Cutler** (Tomas), Volunteer Tomas Firefighter, Marin County Fire (Fire)

## 23 YEARS

**Noel Ryan** (Novato), Civic Center Tour Docent, Cultural Services

## 21 YEARS

**Alice Wallace** (Novato), Patrol Volunteer, Marin County Parks

## 17 YEARS

**Janice Hitchcock** (Novato), Senior Peer Counselor, Health & Human Services (HHS)

## 13 YEARS

**Pat Williams** (Corte Madera), Fire Lookout, Fire

## 12 YEARS

**Hans Adler** (Mill Valley), **Diane Cokely** (San Anselmo), **Oak Dowling** (San Rafael), **Kathleen Forte** (Tiburon), **Irwin Gubman** (Mill Valley), **Roberta Robinson** (San Anselmo), **Paul Roye** (Greenbrae), **Sylvia Roye** (Greenbrae), Financial Abuse Specialist Team Volunteers, HHS

## 9 YEARS

**Linda Blackwood** (Forest Knolls), **Martin Grant** (Greenbrae), **Kathleen Kopp** (Santa Rosa), **James Okumura** (Point Reyes Station), **Bob Stein** (San Anselmo), **Michael Warner** (Petaluma), Fire Lookouts, Fire

## 8 YEARS

**Scott Mathewson** (Novato), Steward, Marin County Parks

## 6 YEARS

**Jim Freed** (Sebastopol), Marin Search & Rescue Volunteer, MCSO

**Rory Hewitt** (San Francisco), **Steve Johnson** (Pacifica), **Steve O'Keefe** (Novato), **Peter Van der Nailen** (Oakland), Fire Lookouts, Fire

**Audrey Van Hoven** (Novato), Spanish Tutor, Novato Library

## 5 YEARS

**Eliza Warde** (Forest Knolls), Senior Peer Counselor, HHS

## 3 YEARS

**Ken Adams** (Woodacre), **Owen Clapp** (Woodacre), **John Gazzoli** (San Anselmo), **David Puglisi** (Lagunitas), **Amy Valens** (Forest Knolls), **Tom Valens** (Forest Knolls), Fire Lookouts, Fire

**David Moshal** (Mill Valley), Digital Literacy Aide, Marin City Library

## 1 YEAR

**Chris Gould** (San Rafael), **Tyler Phelps** (Oakland), Fire Lookouts, Fire

**James Saltzgeber** (Fairfax), **Jeff Young** (Dillon Beach), Radio Communications Volunteers, Department of Public Works