

## VOLUNTEER NOTES

### Where Are They Now?

Former Marintern **Julia Reinhard** is the newest member of Supervisor **Mary Sackett's** District 1 office team. Julia's two internships—first with Supervisor **Katie Rice** and the county's Public Information Office and then with former Supervisor **Damon Connolly**—gave her "tremendous knowledge from interacting with the community," she said. Julia added that she is thrilled to have been hired and honored to be serving District 1 residents.

Former Health & Human Services (HHS) Social Work Intern **Heather Johnson** is now a full-time mental health practitioner for the department. Social workers in mental health and child welfare are in demand, so Heather had many job opportunities. She chose Marin County HHS as a direct result of her positive internship experiences. She said internships are beneficial "not only in interns' immediate contributions to the county and to (their own) growth and education, but also to the development of the county's diverse workforce in the long term."

## Mountain Trekker Becomes Wildfire Lookout

By Marjorie Grannan

MarinShares volunteer **Sunita Ellenby** would be the perfect companion on a Muir Woods nature walk, a delectable Point Reyes picnic, or a grueling trek on Mount Everest. The Sausalito resident spent years volunteering with the Marin Medical Reserve Corps (MMRC) and the Marin Amateur Radio Service while working as a professional chef.

Now, she helps keep Marin safe as a Marin County Fire Department volunteer who staffs the Gardner Lookout Tower on Mt. Tamalpais's East Peak.

"In 2011 I was hiking on Mt. Tam and stopped at Gardner Lookout. I heard someone say, 'Hey, Sunita, nice to see you up here,'" she recalled. "It was a peer from MMRC. I was training for my trek to Everest Base Camp. He asked if I'd volunteer for the lookout, since I know Tam well. I said, 'Sure!'" Sunita joined in 2012—after completing her Everest trek.

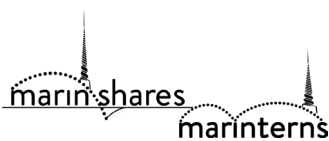


PHOTO BY HALLIE IGLEHART

*Sunita Ellenby keeps watch on Mt. Tam.*

Fire season typically starts in May. The department activates the lookout team (currently 43 members strong), and individual shifts are assigned. A lookout's day begins with radio calls to dispatch, announcing that the lookout

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## High School Senior Co-leads Marin Teen Girl Conference Team

By Calla McBride

Led by Marintern **Eva Lacy** and fellow teen ambassadors, the annual Marin Teen Girl Conference is scheduled to take place at Embassy Suites in San Rafael on Sunday, March 26.



PHOTO BY EVA LACY

*Eva Lacy*

The conference helps girls in grades 8 through 12 to empower their lives. In 2022 almost 200 attendees participated; organizers aim to serve more girls this year.

Eva, a senior at The Branson School, is one of four leads. Conference co-leaders are Marinterns **Mary Coleman, Jennie Liu, and Leyla Winton.**

"As a teen girl and an older sister, the experience of younger teen girls is very important to me," Eva said. "I wanted to help work on a conference that would teach them everything they would need to know about being a teenager in the real world and provide a space where girls can meet other people like themselves."

Eva leads ambassador meetings devoted to planning presentations and brainstorming. This year's ambassador group

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## High School Senior Co-leads Marin Teen Girl Conference Team

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is slightly smaller, with 23 girls instead of last year's team of 27, and that has advantages.

"A smaller group allows each person to take on more responsibility, and more people are sharing their ideas," said Eva, who was a regular ambassador intern in 2022. "The ambassadors this year have incredible ideas and many of them are opening our eyes to different ways to structure the conference."

Eva attributes her success to her communication skills. Her internship supervisor, Marin County Board of Supervisors Aide **Crystal Martinez**, agrees.

Crystal is the conference coordinator and a former commissioner for the Marin Women's Commission, which sponsors the conference.

She guides the teen ambassadors as they learn to organize events, contact vendors, recruit speakers, and more.

"Eva has proven herself to be a great communicator, both when facilitating a meeting with her peers and when discussing conference details with the adult coordinators," Crystal said.

Outside of being a lead ambassador, Eva loves playing for her high school's volleyball varsity team, which won D1 state championships this year. She has two younger sisters, and, as the oldest sister, mentors both. She also loves drawing, painting, listening to Taylor Swift music, and traveling. Eva has not selected a college yet, but she may study abroad.

"I am planning on majoring in public policy and eventually pursuing a career as a lawyer," she said. "I can't believe that I am a second-semester senior, but I'm really excited to see where the next chapter will take me.

"Being an ambassador is about highlighting other voices and creating an

inclusive environment," Eva added. "It is important for me to be an ambassador because I care about the community we create for Marin girls—both as a Marin girl and as someone who wants to leave a place better than I found it." ■



CARTOON BY JOHN DONAGHY

## Mountain Trekker Becomes Wildfire Lookout

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is in service and reporting temperature, humidity, wind direction, and wind speed. Heat waves, Sunita says, are exhausting. "Sometimes there are numerous small fires, and it's intense. We never know how a day will be."

The Mt. Tam tower is equipped with a stove, shower, and a bed for lookouts who opt to stay over. "Stormy nights and starry nights are wonderful experiences," Sunita explained. "But I remember when I spent a night there and a storm started up. The winds were probably 45 miles per hour. During strong winds the roof eerily lifts and drops, like it's going to collapse or fly off. The roof is designed to flex."

In August 2020, a storm rolled in at high speed, bringing dry lightning and ferocious winds. "I'd never seen anything like that," Sunita recalled. "I was scared



Sunita Ellenby

and excited. An explosive sound followed, and I knew lightning had struck somewhere. I scanned with my binoculars and saw smoke in the Point Reyes area. That was the start of the big fire at Limantour."

Sunita's staff supervisor, Fire Engineer Paramedic **Brett Hughes**, describes her as "one of the most dedicated and contributing lookouts on our roster. She's an inspiration to our newer volunteers and

always uses her own time to make the program better. Without Sunita, our program would not be where it is today."

"Thousands of locals and tourists annually make the pilgrimage to the indigenous Sleeping Lady—to the East Peak where the lookout tower is—to enjoy the panoramic views, epic sunsets, and take pictures," Sunita said. "When they see the lookout, they

smile with relief and gratitude. Some even say, "Thank you."

"Volunteering for the lookout gives me the opportunity to give back," Sunita added. "I love the camaraderie of talented veteran lookouts. Training on Mt. Tam for my trek to Everest Base Camp, I didn't realize I'd be under Tam's spell for years to come." ■

Interested in volunteering for the county? Contact MarinShares Coordinator [Anne Starr](#).

PHOTO BY JACK GALLAGHER

# Attorney Contributes at Public Defender's Office

By Tiyona Pariani

MarinShares volunteer **Miranda Kolbe**, a recently retired attorney, supports fellow attorneys at the Marin County Public Defender's office.

"Miranda is a huge asset to our office and has been volunteering her time generously over the past year," said **Tamara York**, a deputy public defender and Miranda's staff supervisor. "With her vast legal experience, Miranda has come in and drafted successful motions for misdemeanor diversion, conducted research, analyzed data on racial justice act issues, and filed records and discovery requests that have led to greater justice for our clients. Miranda seems very engaged in gaining legal knowledge in a completely new area of the law. We are lucky to have her!"

For 20 years, Miranda worked as a class action litigator with Schubert Jonckheer & Kolbe LLP, bringing cases on behalf of consumers, shareholders, employees, and small businesses against large corporations such as Google, Electronic Arts,

and AT&T. Today, she enjoys learning about criminal defense practice from skilled attorneys at the Marin Public Defender's Office.

Since she began volunteering at the Public Defender's office, Miranda has been struck by the heartfelt approach to work and how enjoyable it is to serve in an environment filled with idealism. In addition, "I have enjoyed the challenge of learning about an entirely new area of law among attorneys who have been supportive and willing to take the time to educate me," Miranda said. "I really enjoyed learning about defense strategy and hope that my utility to the office will continue to increase as I become more experienced with this aspect of the law."

Miranda earned a bachelor's degree in creative writing from Hamilton College in 1984. Following graduation, she worked for a small press, then as a reporter, and then in nonprofits providing low-income housing. After serving

as a nonprofit executive director for several years, she went to law school at the University of California, Berkeley. While there, Miranda served as a legal writing instructor, assisting Professor John Osborne, the author of "The Paper Chase."

Miranda currently lives in San Rafael with her wife, and Norwich terrier, Iggy. She enjoys playing tennis, bicycle riding, and taking Iggy on adventures.

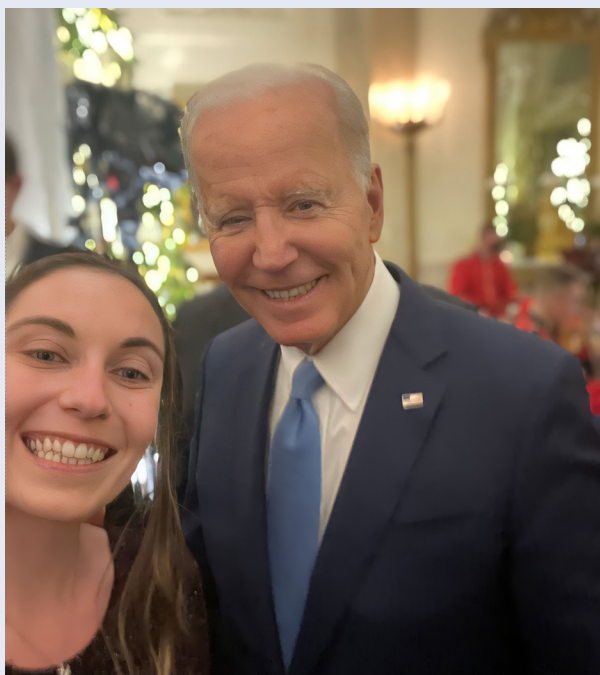
Miranda highly recommends that newly retired people find volunteer roles where they can learn while contributing. "It is a win-win," said Miranda. "The community benefits when people are involved in volunteering and the people that are volunteering benefit, too." ■



Miranda Kolbe

PHOTO BY WHITNEY HOLT

PHOTO COURTESY OF NATALIE DYBECK



## Law Student Meets the President

Marintern **Natalie Dybeck**'s first semester of law school wrapped up with a surprise trip to Washington, D.C. "I got an amazing opportunity a few days before my last final and booked a redeye flight for right after the test," she reported. "I flew to DC, landed, changed into a fancy dress, and got to go to the White House for their holiday reception and meet with **President Biden!**" Natalie chatted with the president about her studies and past work in government. (She was on Rep. **Jared Huffman**'s district office staff for over two years.) Amid academic demands, the visit "was an amazing reminder of what I am working towards and that there is more than just the law school classroom and stress." Natalie, a Human Resources Department intern, writes articles for MarinfoNOW.

# Who's New & Welcome!

**Brianna Barnett** (San Luis Obispo), Fire Foundry Intern, Marin County Fire Department (Marin County Fire)

**Mariia Berezinskaia** (Larkspur), Pre-Law Intern, District Attorney's Office

**Carol Bryan** (Novato), Volunteer Senior Peer Counselor, Health & Human Services (HHS)

**Omar Bueno Arroyo** (Santa Rosa), Fire Foundry Intern, Marin County Fire

**Jesus Chavez** (San Pablo), Fire Foundry Intern, Marin County Fire

**Chela Davila** (San Francisco), Certified Legal Intern, Public Defender's Office

**John Dooley** (Petaluma), Fire Foundry Intern, Marin County Fire

**Jesus Flores** (San Rafael), Fire Foundry Intern, Marin County Fire

**Ruben Gillaspy** (San Anselmo), Packet Assembly Intern, HHS, and Student Service Intern, Fairfax Library

**Michelle Giuliani** (Sausalito), Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Intern, HHS

**Andrea Glass** (Inverness), Volunteer Senior Peer Counselor, HHS

**Madison Herrero** (Belvedere Tiburon), Intern, Board of Supervisors

**Juan Jimenez** (Santa Rosa), Fire Foundry Intern, Marin County Fire

**Nancy Mackle** (San Anselmo), Marin Center Volunteer Usher, Cultural Services

**Kathleen Mullen** (San Rafael), Volunteer Senior Peer Counselor, HHS

**Esther Nichol** (Point Reyes Station), Volunteer Senior Peer Counselor, HHS

**Sean Peisert** (San Rafael), Radio Communications Volunteer, Department of Public Works

**Roger Peters** (Mill Valley), Volunteer Senior Peer Counselor, HHS

**Thomas Riggle-Watson** (San Anselmo), Packet Assembly Intern, HHS

**Ryan Robinett** (Marshall), Volunteer Firefighter, Marin County Fire

**Sway Sanchez** (Rohnert Park), Fire Foundry Intern, Marin County Fire

**Mary Santora** (Novato), Volunteer Senior Peer Counselor, HHS

**Diana Vine** (San Rafael), Volunteer Senior Peer Counselor, HHS

## Happy Anniversary

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

### 44 YEARS

**Bill Bastida** (San Rafael), Air Patrol Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

### 26 YEARS

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

### 21 YEARS

**Gary Sello** (Novato), RACES/ACS Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

### 16 YEARS

**Larry Lewis** (Mill Valley), RACES/ACS Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

### 14 YEARS

**Peter Otis** (Novato), RACES/ACS Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

**Carol Selig** (Mill Valley), **Rand Selig** (Mill Valley), Volunteer Stewards, Marin County Parks

### 11 YEARS

**Michael Landram** (Novato), Patrol Volunteer, Marin County Parks

### 7 YEARS

**Maryjane 'Mick' Wets** (San Rafael), Volunteer Senior Peer Counselor, Health & Human Services Department (HHS)

### 6 YEARS

**Alexandra Cheney** (Novato), **Cynthia Youngless** (San Rafael), Marin Center Volunteer Ushers, Cultural Services Department (Cultural Services)

**Lynda Pearson** (Mill Valley), Volunteer Consultant, Human Resources, and Volunteer Civic Center Tour Docent, Cultural Services

**Brad Rippe** (San Anselmo), Volunteer Photographer, Researcher & Cataloguer, Civic Center Library

### 5 YEARS

**Stanton Klose** (San Rafael), Building Patrol, Department of Public Works (Public Works)

**Elizabeth Purcell** (San Rafael), Volunteer Teacher Aide, Probation Department

### 4 YEARS

**Mark Brumwell** (San Rafael), Volunteer Steward, Marin County Parks

**John Donaghue** (San Francisco), Volunteer Design Consultant, Human Resources

**James Cook** (Rohnert Park), Volunteer Veterans Remains Officer, HHS

**Rob Hayden** (Point Reyes Station), **Janet McRoberts** (San Rafael), **Kathleen Pear** (San Anselmo), **Rita Wengler** (Novato), Volunteer Senior Peer Counselors, HHS

### 3 YEARS

**Cynthia Bellows** (Mill Valley), **Peter Nielsen** (San Rafael), Marin Center Volunteer Ushers, Cultural Services

**Jackie Herzog** (San Rafael), Friends of the Family Volunteer, HHS

### 2 YEARS

**Anthony Fedanzo** (Corte Madera), **Adriana Rabkin** (Corte Madera), **Ann Shores** (Corte Madera), Radio Communications Volunteers, Public Works

**Andrew LeBlanc** (San Francisco), Radio Communications Volunteer Planning Team Member, Public Works

**Donna Eng** (San Rafael), **Priscilla Hopkins** (San Rafael), **Blair Ogden** (San Rafael), Volunteer Senior Peer Counselors, HHS

**Carol Hodges** (Novato), **Peter Joseph** (San Anselmo), **Meghen Kurtzig** (San Rafael), **Georgia Pung** (Mill Valley), **Lisa Rago** (Novato), **Lori Selleck** (Greenbrae), Marin Medical Reserve Corps Volunteers, HHS

**Stella Vazquez** (Fairfax), Teen Leadership Intern, Marin County Free Library

**Michael Rubin** (Novato), Volunteer English Tutor, Novato Library

### 1 YEAR

**Sarani Puri** (Kentfield), Homework Helpers Intern, Corte Madera Library

**Joy Leighton** (San Anselmo), Volunteer Workplace Coach, Community Development Agency

**Robert Rowlands** (Mill Valley), **Michael Fischer** (Mill Valley), Radio Communications Volunteers, Public Works

**Bea Goop-Lott** (San Rafael), Client Assessments Volunteer, HHS

**Patty Zevallos** (Sausalito), Spanish Interpreter Intern, Public Defender's Office