

## VOLUNTEER NOTES

### Hail to the Chief

Marin County Fire Chief **Jason Weber** is California's 2023 Fire Chief of the Year, an honor announced in October. Among the many reasons for the selection is his leadership of FIRE Foundry, a training program preparing people from all backgrounds for fire-related careers. Program supporters include volunteers from the fire department who help connect recruits with engaging learning opportunities. As you read this newsletter each month, check the Who's New column for names of new FIRE Foundry interns.

### Where Are They Now?

A former Board of Supervisors Marintern is back in a new role. Last year **Josh Espulgar-Rowe** served in Supervisor **Dennis Rodoni's** District 4 office. Now he has a Department of Finance internship with Chief Deputy Public Administrator **Brett Rhodes**. Josh, a Marin native, said his county experiences have inspired him to pursue public service. He said he enjoys hands-on, local internships where "small teams make large impacts." Josh majors in political science at George Washington University.



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## Search and Rescue Volunteer and His Trained Dog Help Save Lives

By Boone Dickins

MarinShares volunteer **Gideon Bernstein** has made major program contributions to the Marin Search and Rescue (SAR) team since he began volunteering in 2018.

"I remember hearing about the excitement of going into the backcountry and helping to find lost people," said Gideon. "It sounded like something I really wanted to do. Once I got involved, these other opportunities like fundraising and canine handling presented themselves."

Gideon joined SAR with his daughter June, who was recruited by an existing member. The team operates under the aegis of the Marin County Sheriff's



PHOTO BY BRIAN WILK

Certified rescue dog Bruce and SAR member Gideon Bernstein

Office and has more than 100 members, including about 40 youths. Its motto is "any time, anywhere, any weather."

Gideon eventually became the team's fundraising manager and worked to

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## Registered Nurse's Goal: Reduce Fentanyl Deaths in Marin

By Max Gehm



PHOTO BY ANNE CARTA

Volunteer nurse **Laura Kandell** demonstrates how to use **NARCAN**®.

MarinShares volunteer **Laura Kandell** has been saving lives as a member of the Marin Medical Reserve Corps (MMRC) since April 2020. She is active with two Health and Human Services Department (HHS) programs: OD Free Marin and the Marin Lifesaving Skills training program.

Laura, a registered nurse, distributes **NARCAN**® (a drug used to reverse fentanyl overdoses) and vital information about fentanyl on the second Sunday of every month at the Marin Civic Center Farmers Market.

"People come back with their success stories," Laura said. "A vet told us a

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# Registered Nurse's Goal: Reduce Fentanyl Deaths in Marin

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patient came in with an animal who had been exposed to fentanyl. While they were treating the animal, the person who brought in the animal collapsed (from a fentanyl overdose). Luckily, the vet had picked up NARCAN® at the farmers market the day before and was able to revive the patient.”

Laura's help comes at a vital time. The leading cause of death for Marin residents below the age of 55 is overdose. There is about one fatal overdose a week in Marin County.

“We just want people to know that NARCAN® is really easy to use, and it really does work,” she said.

Laura was a nurse with MarinHealth for 22 years. At the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, she joined the MMRC team to administer test swabs and vaccinations.

Laura helped pilot the new curriculum for the Marin Lifesaving Skills Program, which teaches interested members of the community how to perform hands-only CPR, use an AED, stop-the-bleed, and use NARCAN®.

“It's really fun to watch her teach, as she sprinkles in real-life stories and a joke or two to keep the audience engaged,” said HHS Senior Program Coordinator **Anne Carta**, Laura's staff supervisor and coordinator of the MMRC's hundreds of volunteers. “Laura connects with people with ease and is a great support to fellow volunteers.”

Laura grew up in Roslyn, Long Island. She left New York to attend the University of Michigan, earning a bachelor's in education in 1989 and a master's in social work in 1991. Laura moved to Marin in the early '90s and found work at Hospice of Petaluma. Inspired by the selfless nurses there, Laura attended College of Marin as a single mother. She received her associate degree in nursing in 2001. Laura has been happily married since September 2002.

Laura's interest in helping others made expanding her service to the Medical Reserve Corps an easy choice. “I was a social worker before I was a nurse, so meeting people where they're at has always been really joyful for me,” she said. ■



PHOTO BY KATE KENNEDY

Volunteer Laura Kendall talks about NARCAN® with people visiting the Civic Center Farmers Market.

## Happy Anniversary

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

### 29 YEARS

**Ray Peterson** (Petaluma), Air Patrol Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office (MCSO)

### 21 YEARS

**Gregory Felton** (Stateline, NV), Air Patrol Volunteer, MCSO

### 15 YEARS

**Diane Rudden** (Ross), Marin Medical Reserve Corps Volunteer, Health & Human Services (HHS)

### 11 YEARS

**Mary Bramblett** (Fairfax), Investigative Aide, District Attorney's Office

**Tim Graves** (Tomales), Volunteer Firefighter, Marin County Fire

### 10 YEARS

**Louise Berto** (San Anselmo), Patrol Volunteer, Marin County Parks

### 8 YEARS

**John Pierremont** (Santa Rosa), Event Aide, Human Resources

### 7 YEARS

**Michael Warner** (Petaluma), Marin Search & Rescue Volunteer, MCSO

### 5 YEARS

**Laurel Yrun** (San Rafael), Marin Medical Reserve Corps Volunteer, HHS

### 2 YEARS

**Adam Almedilla** (San Anselmo), Packet Assembly Student Service Intern, HHS

**Elizabeth Fernbacher** (Corte Madera), Financial Abuse Specialist Team Volunteer, HHS

**Helen Yates Alvarez** (Novato), Marin Medical Reserve Corps Volunteer, HHS

### 1 YEAR

**Daisy Kessler** (Fairfax), FIRE Foundry Intern, Marin County Fire

**Madison Herrero** (Belvedere Tiburon), District 2 Intern, Board of Supervisors

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

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

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



# Health Care Experts Help Marin Clients Qualify for Meals on Wheels Program

By Natalie Dybeck

MarinShares volunteers **Linda Garb**, **Sandra Wilkinson**, and **Bea Lott** keep meals coming to Meals on Wheels clients by conducting mandated assessments of their needs.

“Marin’s home-delivered meal program delivers over 100,000 nutritious meals each year to more than 650 homebound and frail older adults,” said Health and Human Services Department (HHS) Senior Program Coordinator **Amy Dietz**, who liaises with assessment team volunteers.

“This program is funded through the Older Americans Act, which requires that all participants receive quarterly assessments. Bea, Linda, and Sandra are integral to the program and the nutrition team by phoning participants and ascertaining if their needs have changed.”

All three volunteers are retired health care experts. Each contributes four hours a week with HHS.

Bea worked many years in assisted living and memory care before becoming a registered nurse. After retiring, she wanted to stay in the field. “I was attracted to the home visits of the Meals on Wheels program,” said Bea, “but when I started volunteering, Covid happened and the requalifying was done over the phone. I volunteer one afternoon a week, calling about 20 elders who receive Meals on Wheels regularly. My job is to requalify them for the program by asking questions about their ability to manage their daily life. I listen carefully to see if any new disabilities or needs prompt a referral to a social worker.”

The most rewarding part of her role is getting to know clients and seeing firsthand their strength and positivity. For many, “money has run out before the month is over, aches and pains are con-



*Linda Garb, Sandra Wilkinson, and Bea Lott assess the needs of Meals on Wheels clients.*

PHOTO BY BRIAN WILK

stant, family members are busy or live far away, partners have passed away and friends are fewer — but they don’t complain about their lives. They are thankful for a friendly neighbor who helps out, and ever so grateful for the amazing Meals on Wheels drivers who are often the only contact in their day,” said Bea.

Bea is an avid hiker and “passionate about preparing for becoming an elder myself,” she said.

Linda is a retired physician. “I was looking for something to do and I knew Meals on Wheels was a great program,” said Linda. While it can be difficult reaching people, “once they pick up the phone, they speak so highly about the program. They really love, and always talk about, their driver.”

Linda also volunteers at Coleman Elementary School through the 10,000 Degrees program, and she previously volunteered for the library’s literacy program. In her spare time, she enjoys gardening and hiking. This year, Linda looks forward to hiking the Grand Tetons and Yellowstone with her grandson as well as hiking around Ireland with her husband.

Before retiring, Sandra worked in home care, making assessments for home visits

in San Francisco and Marin. Sandra’s daughter works for the county and, upon learning about the Meals on Wheels volunteer opportunity, encouraged Sandra to get involved. “The most rewarding part of my time is when I am engaged with the client on the phone,” said Sandra. “They are often isolated. We can share stories and laugh, and I offer understanding of their situation.”

Sandra added, “One client uses crutches to get around

because of neuropathy in both legs. He has managed to keep as much independence as he can without self-pity or anger. He thanks me for our meal deliveries and follow-up phone calls.”

Sandra enjoys spending time with her three children, relatives, and close friends as well as quilting, knit painting, and taking care of her 7-month-old grandson.

“Bea, Linda, and Sandy bring a wealth of knowledge and experience from their careers in the health field. All have a heart for this work and show great compassion when conducting their phone assessments,” said their staff supervisor, Social Service Unit Supervisor **Catherine Woods** of the HHS Adult Social Services division.

“They are all extremely dedicated and dependable, and we are full of gratitude that they have chosen to spend their valuable time helping us in this much needed work. Linda and Sandy have been volunteering with us for over a year and Bea has been with us for over two years. Their contribution to this vital program is indispensable.” ■

Interested in helping others? Contact MarinShares Coordinator [Anne Starr](#), 415-473-7167.

# Who's New & Welcome!

**Sam Adkins** (Mill Valley), Student Elections Ambassador, Elections/Registrar of Voters (Elections)

**Zohie Betts** (San Rafael), Student Elections Ambassador, Elections

**Cassandra Blevins** (Elk Grove), Student Elections Ambassador, Elections

**Albion Bodle** (Fairfax), Student Elections Ambassador, Elections

**Lucy Bodle** (Fairfax), Homework Helpers Intern, Fairfax Library

**Rowan Case** (Corte Madera), Student Elections Ambassador, Elections

**Nancy Deras** (San Rafael), Student Elections Ambassador, Elections

**Neva Essex** (San Rafael), Student Elections Ambassador, Elections

**Ashley Fenical** (San Rafael), Student Elections Ambassador, Elections

**Ellie Gilbert** (San Rafael), Newsletter Writer Intern, Human Resources

**Jake Gotlieb** (Greenbrae), Student Elections Ambassador, Elections

**Jack Gross** (San Anselmo), Student Elections Ambassador, Elections

**Robert Halenbeck** (San Rafael), Meals on Wheels In-Home Assessor, Health & Human Services (HHS)

**Tessa Harrell** (Mill Valley), Student Elections Ambassador, Elections

**Brooks Hueser** (Mill Valley), Student Elections Ambassador, Elections

**Daphne Hulquist** (Mill Valley), Student Elections Ambassador, Elections

**Alex Ihnatchenko** (Novato), In-Home Supportive Services Technology Assistant, HHS

**Sara Jordan** (Corte Madera), Homework Helper Intern and Crochet Corner Leader, Corte Madera Library

**Aurelia Joy** (Sausalito), Student Elections Ambassador, Elections

**Ella Kaminski** (San Rafael), Homework Helper Intern, Civic Center Library

**Candace Karren** (Rohnert Park), Intern, Probation Department

**Farhan Khaliq** (Mill Valley), Maker Space Scratch Coding Intern, Marin City Library

**Mark Klein** (Novato), Radio Communications Volunteer, Department of Public Works

**Greta LaFemina** (San Rafael), District 1 Intern, Board of Supervisors

**Alysha Lee** (San Rafael), Student Elections Ambassador, Elections

**Lucy Maher** (Mill Valley), Find Your Way Youth Visioning and Caring Cards Intern, Board of Supervisors

**Eli Mizock** (Berkeley), Legal Intern, Public Defender's Office

**Isabella Nash** (Fairfax), Homework Helper Intern, Fairfax Library

**Kathy Norwood** (Fairfax), Meals on Wheels Client Assessor, HHS

**Andrew Peng** (Belvedere), Student Elections Ambassador, Elections

**Jessica Paola Peñuela Basto** (San Francisco), Bilingual Intake Intern, Public Defender's Office

**Stuart Pratt** (San Anselmo), Student Elections Ambassador, Elections

**Richard Racich** (Tiburon), Fire Lookout, Marin County Fire

**Zachary Resneck** (San Rafael), Homework Helpers Intern, Civic Center Library

**Jocelyn Rivera** (San Rafael), Friends of the Family Volunteer, HHS

**Wayne Scott** (Ocala), Unmanned Aircraft Systems Pilot, Marin County Fire

**Annie Silverberg** (San Rafael), Office Aide, HHS

**Lucas Simonton** (Mill Valley), Student Elections Ambassador, Elections

**William Simonton** (Mill Valley), Student Elections Ambassador, Elections

**Emerson Swift** (Mill Valley), Student Elections Ambassador, Elections

**David Tamura** (Novato), Meals on Wheels In-Home Assessor, HHS

**Emily Tenorio** (San Anselmo), Student Elections Ambassador, Elections

**Maty Thiane** (Sausalito), Student Elections Ambassador, Elections

**Sinai Utrera Jimenez** (Napa), Nursing Student in Communicable Disease Program, HHS

**Dylan Van Doren** (Mill Valley), Student Elections Ambassador, Elections

**Steve Waskow** (Fairfax), Meals on Wheels In-Home Assessor, HHS

**Jacqueline 'Jackie' Whelan** (Corte Madera), Consumer Mediator, District Attorney's Office

**Lucille Wong Ryniejski** (Fairfax), Student Elections Ambassador, Elections

**Eshal Zubair** (Novato), Homework Helpers Intern, Novato Library





## Master Gardeners Cheer Outstanding Volunteers



PHOTOS BY LORI DANG

The UC Marin Master Gardeners program celebrated volunteers at their annual fall business meeting. Gold Badge recipients with 1,000 hours of service (pictured above) are, L-R: **Roxanne Ansolabehere**, **Margaret Hart Lewis**, **Karen Holleran**, **Julie McMillan**, **Pam Polite Fisco**. Not pictured: **Gary Bartl**. (The local Master Gardeners program operates under the aegis of the county.)

Special recognition included the Jean Sugiyama award, presented to volunteer **Kathy Hunting** (pictured below, left, with UC Cooperative Extension Marin Director **David Lewis**). This award, UC Marin Master Gardeners' highest honor for outstanding service, is only given when a volunteer has had an extraordinary impact over time. Among her many contributions, Kathy has led new members in an 18-week horticulture training and skill-building course, served as co-president of the 300-plus member club, and developed the Growing Leaders program to provide members with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to step into organizational leadership.

Additional recognition included the Co-Presidents' award for helpdesk leadership to **Arline Rowe** and **Kathryn Parkinson** (pictured below, right) and Platinum Badges for 2,500 hours of service to volunteers Arline Rowe, **Bob Mauceli**, and **Bonnie Marks**. In addition, Silver Trowel awards for significant contributions were given to **Yvonne Roja**, Roxanne Ansolabehere, **Jean Von Berg**, **Karen McDaniel**, and **Margaret Chu**.



## Search and Rescue Volunteer and His Trained Dog Help Save Lives

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get his dog Bruce K9 certified with the California Rescue Dog Association.

As fundraising manager, Gideon solicits donations for gear, vehicles, and trainings.

Fellow SAR volunteer **Kevin Lundquist**, the team's K9 manager, supported Gideon in the K9 certification process, which took three years. Gideon is "very professional and very proficient," said Kevin. "Getting his dog Bruce certified showed how dedicated he is to the team. Beyond that, he's always ready to go on searches."

As a SAR member, Gideon is on call 24/7 and is expected to respond whenever available. SAR callouts come

roughly once a week, and locations can be anywhere in California. Gideon has been on a "find team" three times.

The team's staff supervisor is **Lt. Pierre Ahuncain**, an officer of the Marin County Sheriff's Department.

"Gideon shows incredible dedication," said Pierre. "He's managed to put in hundreds and hundreds of service hours, and he's just an all-around great person and valued team member."

The team's finance manager is SAR volunteer **Rich Shelton**, who said Gideon is "fabulous" at fundraising. "What really impresses me is the time he's committed to Search and Rescue while also getting his K9 independently certified for the

role. Being that active on our team and chasing a lengthy certification on the side is very impressive."

Gideon graduated from the University of Virginia and works at JP Morgan Chase bank. In his free time, he enjoys outdoor activities and exercise, and caring for Bruce and his other dog, Siberia.

"Being part of Marin Search and Rescue literally changed my life," said Gideon. "It's given me a central purpose that combines all the things I care about—being outdoors, helping others, learning new skills, and challenging myself. I hope to be involved in the team for many, many years to come." ■

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For more about Marin Search and Rescue, click [here](#).

