

VOLUNTEER NOTES

Volunteer Sets Record

The Community Development Agency (CDA) is celebrating a length-of-service record achieved by MarinShares volunteer **Art Marthinsen**. A former county employee who became a CDA volunteer immediately after retiring, Art has been active with the County of Marin for 67 consecutive years. See page 5 for a photo of Art with his fans.

New Look

Marin County Human Resources Benefits Manager **Lisa Hatt** is singing the praises of two MarinShares volunteers, graphic designer **John Donaghue** and marketing expert **Lynda Pearson**. The two are consulting on branding and logos for HR efforts led by Lisa. "I feel so grateful for the opportunity to partner with industry professionals on divisional unit branding recognition," she said. The new logos are in use in countywide communications. They coordinate with each other—and with the MarinShares and Marinterns brands and logos created three years ago when Lynda and John volunteered to help the HR Volunteer/Intern division.



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Intern of the Year Starts Homework Club, Recognizes Community Volunteers

By Clariss Ajanel

Marintern **Sarani Puri** has been named Marin County Intern of the Year after making an impact on the community by volunteering her time in internships with the Marin County Free Library and the Board of Supervisors office.

Sarani, a Redwood High School junior, proposed a free Homework Helpers program for English learners and underserved children in Marin. Library staff accepted the idea and provided support



Sarani Puri

PHOTO BY BOB DELL

for an internship for Sarani. The program launched at the Corte Madera Library in early 2022. Since then, Sarani has helped to improve efficiency, recruit peers to volunteer in the program, and expand the program to the Fairfax and Civic Center library branches—all with the supervision of Librarian **Sarah Butts**.

"When I had the initial idea, I didn't see it going so far and reaching so many people, but once I found my core group of tutors in February of 2022, I felt it was such a capable and powerful

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Top Intern Team Focuses on History and Impacts of Housing Discrimination

By Calla McBride

For exceptional leadership and collaboration in the fight against discrimination, the Restrictive Covenant Project Team has earned the title of 2022–2023 Intern Team of the Year. The team's focus is educating Marin residents about historic government policies and programs that intentionally discriminated and helped to cultivate segregated communities here.

The Board of Supervisors recognized team leads **Shyla Lensing**, **Sienna Garsten**, **Tula Peltz** and **Jack Haubold** at a ceremony on May 2.

These Marinterns have researched the history of restrictive covenants on real estate deeds in Marin. They helped to update the county's Restrictive Covenant Project (RCP) [website](#), which

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PHOTO BY BILL JOHNSTON JR.

Intern Team of the Year members smile after receiving resolutions of commendation from Board of Supervisors President Stephanie Moulton-Peters. L-R: Shyla Lensing, Tula Peltz, Sienna Garsten, Jack Haubold, Supervisor Moulton-Peters.

Top Intern Team Focuses on History and Impacts of Housing Discrimination

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notes that while such covenants are illegal today, many still remain in property deeds across Marin.

Team members have also enhanced existing high school curricula on redlining and segregation, offering resources and project-based lessons that reflect local perspectives. They aim not only to inform ethnic studies and history courses, but also to extend information to other academic disciplines, including English and economics.

Team member and Redwood High School senior Shyla said the project's impact extends beyond her life.

"I love history deeply and its ability to explain the world we live in today, but I've found that the one-sided perspective I've been taught often ignores the history of marginalized groups," Shyla said. "With my work in RCP, I've brought my community, and its divisions, into a new light. More than that, I've found ways to bridge these divisions, using education and action to create more equity in Marin." As part of her internship, Shyla appeared in an informative [video](#) about the county project.

Sienna is also a Redwood High senior. She said the project has expanded her knowledge. "I learn every time our team gets together," she said. "I knew almost nothing about restrictive covenants and

the intricate details of housing discrimination that takes place in Marin. I am constantly learning and approaching each meeting with a growth mindset."

Tamalpais High School sophomore Tula said that she learns from fellow interns. "It has been really incredible to be surrounded by people like Shyla and Jack who are so genuinely interested in what we are trying to put together and who are so knowledgeable in the work we are doing."

Jack is a senior at Redwood High School. Speaking on behalf of the team at the Board of Supervisors ceremony, he told the audience that "although we joined the project with some understanding of housing discrimination nationally, our research profoundly opened our eyes to the local history of redlining and the lasting impact of racial exclusion in Marin." He said three seniors on the team now are interested in studying public policy in college.

"Obviously, the work to address the legacy of housing discrimination is far from over, but we are glad for the opportunity to at least make some difference," Jack added.

The team is supervised by County staff members **Nancy Vernon** and **Crystal Martinez**, aides to District 2 Supervisor **Katie Rice**. Nancy nominated the

students for the award. "This team is truly providing a service to the county that has stirred residents of all ages," Nancy said. "They have generated community awareness and education that will help future generations better steward Marin County's housing policies."

Crystal said the students are making a difference for "decades to come. They are all learning to work together as a team and building something special and lasting that will undoubtedly leave an indelible mark on the collective conscience of students who will one day become voting members of society with the power and knowledge to be change-makers." ■



CARTOON BY JOHN DONAGHY

Who's New & Welcome!

Jalynne Allen (San Rafael), Seeds of Hope Volunteer, Health & Human Services (HHS)

Hannah Brown (San Anselmo), Sustainability Intern, Community Development Agency

Aarya Chowdhry (San Anselmo), Event Aide Intern, Human Resources

Bob Dell (Tiburon), Volunteer Photographer, Human Resources

Paulette Duysen (San Anselmo), Marin Civic Center Tour Docent, Cultural Services

Kyle Fennessy (San Francisco), Public Health Preparedness Intern, HHS

Sophia Gougoumis (San Rafael), Fire Foundry Intern, Marin County Fire

Elsa Jimenez-Bassignani (Roseville), Acute Communicable Disease Investigation Intern, HHS

Jamie Johnson (Brentwood), Tuberculosis Prevention Intern, HHS

Bill Johnston Jr. (Richmond), Volunteer Photographer, Human Resources

Doug Kaye (Kentfield), Volunteer Photographer, Human Resources

Kate Kennedy (Larkspur), OD Free Marin Intern, HHS

Tristyn Lai (Novato), Digital & Land Use Team Intern, Information Services & Technology

Joseph Moore (Ross), Certified Legal Intern, Public Defender's Office

Catherine Murray (San Rafael), Client Wellness Volunteer, HHS

Annika Parmar (Inverness), High School Intern, Board of Supervisors

Savannah Porteus (Mill Valley), Pre-Law Intern, District Attorney's Office

Patricia Prorok (Novato), Marin Center Usher, Cultural Services

Ila Shimabuku (San Francisco), Intern for COVID Response Outbreak Prevention & Infection Control (OPIC) Team, HHS

Isabella Stephens (San Francisco), Summer Law Clerk, County Counsel's Office

Esperanza Tene (Concord), Fire Foundry Intern, Marin County Fire

Elliott Thurlow (Novato), Fire Foundry Intern, Marin County Fire

Outstanding Mentor of Interns and Youth Volunteers Honored

By Max Gehm

PHOTO BY JOANNA LANGENHAN



Aaron Fong

Library Assistant **Aaron Fong** began work at the Marin County Free Library (MCFL) in 2014. Aaron's outstanding mentoring of Marinterns students and youth volunteers at the Fairfax Library branch now has earned him 2022–2023 Intern Supervisor of the Year honors.

As a staff supervisor of Mainterns students, Aaron introduces them to library practices, helps with technology, answers questions, supervises, sets schedules, and conducts check-ins.

Most youth participants at the Fairfax branch come from Archie Williams High School and Oak Hill School. Archie Williams is a public high school, and Oak Hill is for students ages 6–22 living with autism and other developmental issues.

Aaron develops warm working relationships with youth volunteers. He attended a former intern's graduation from Oak Hill School, notes volunteers' birthdays, and more.

Aaron is beloved by coworkers, patrons, and especially volunteers, according to his supervisor, **Anthony Puga**, a library desk supervisor. "When Aaron accepted

the Library Assistant II position at Fairfax, he brought his can-do spirit and took over the supervision of the Oak Hill School volunteers," Anthony said.

During Aaron's first few years at the Fairfax branch, a team of Oak Hill students won the county's first Youth Team of the Year award.

Aaron grew up in Novato and majored in city and regional planning at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, until 2002. He spent the next 12 years in the Central Valley before returning to Marin in 2014.

Aaron was hired by MCFL's technical division in a behind-the-scenes job. He had "no interest at all" in working all day with patrons. But when temp work came up at a library branch, he took the opportunity to earn a little more—and was surprised.

"Once I started working in the South Novato Library, helping the public, I got hooked," Aaron said. "It's a great job." After serving several years as a branch aide at South Novato, he worked a year

at the Stinson Beach Library, then transferred to Fairfax.

"I'm honored, y'know, it's nice to be recognized," Aaron said, adding, "I don't work at the library for awards or anything like that." Aaron said he wouldn't have won without his amazing coworkers and interns.

In his free time, he enjoys hiking, reading, and listening to all kinds of music.

The Board of Supervisors honored Aaron as the Intern Supervisor of the Year on May 2.

Ceremony speakers included Library Director **Lana Adlawan**, who described him as "welcoming, patient, knowledgeable, and kind, providing a thoughtful and fulfilling intern experience."

In his remarks, Aaron said interns bring positive energy and enthusiasm. "I am proud to work for an organization which gives young people the space to get workplace experience," he said, adding that it is greatly satisfying "to see our volunteers gain confidence through their roles in their internships." ■



PHOTO BY JOANNA LANGENHAN

Fairfax Library Assistant Aaron Fong discusses Dewey Decimal Classification labels with Marintern Stella Vazquez.

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group of people, that I'm so happy to work with and be around," Sarani said. "Then in June of 2022 when I started interning with [Board of Supervisors Aide] **Nancy Vernon** ... the connections and insight she provided really made the [Homework Helpers] expansion possible."

In her separate internship with the Board of Supervisors, Sarani and fellow Board of Supervisors interns helped the county's Instagram account build to its current 3,700 followers. Sarani initiated "Community Recognition Mondays," a series that accepts nominations and every other Monday posts a new photo and description of a community volunteer.

"Sarani has demonstrated leadership and a strong commitment to supporting the underserved and unrecognized," said Nancy Vernon, one of Sarani's staff supervisors. "She has shown the ability

to work collaboratively with a diverse group of both youth and adults and a strong initiative to push projects forward. She has strong communication skills and has made multiple presentations to organizations such as Marin County Office of Education and Marin 9 to 25," a collective of Marin youth and adults.

Sarani said she appreciates the opportunities to make an impact in her community while interning. "The [Intern of the Year] award means a lot to me because I am passionate about equal education access for all. Leaving the library each week knowing some students will feel more confident and capable at school is so rewarding and fulfilling," Sarani said about the Homework Helpers program. "This recognition is inspiring and motivating for the team and me to keep moving forward and helping more students in our county."



PHOTO BY BOB DELL

Marinterns **Andie King**, left, and **Sarani Puri**, both active in the after-school Homework Helpers program, talk about supporting students in grades 3 through 10.

The Board of Supervisors recognized Sarani with a resolution of commendation and award on May 2. During the ceremony, Library Director **Lana Adlawan** and Board Aide Nancy Vernon spoke about the positive impacts of Sarani's leadership and growth in her two internships. ■

Happy Anniversary

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

44 YEARS

Michael St. John (Fairfax), Marin Search & Rescue Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office (MCSO)

29 YEARS

Robert Eichstaedt (Larkspur), Environmental Steward, Marin County Parks

27 YEARS

Kevin Parkhurst (Rohnert Park), Stafford Park Disc Golf Steward, Marin County Parks

24 YEARS

Eric Zeller (Rohnert Park), Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service/Auxiliary Communications Service (RACES/ACS) Volunteer, MCSO

20 YEARS

John Polman (Corte Madera), Volunteer Driver, Marin County Fire

13 YEARS

Sean Seeley (San Anselmo), Fire Lookout, Marin County Fire

Jeff Young (Dillon Beach), RACES/ACS Volunteer, MCSO

11 YEARS

David Atkin (San Anselmo), **Sunita Ellenby** (Sausalito), Fire Lookouts, Marin County Fire

10 YEARS

Frank Woolard (Greenbrae), Air Patrol Volunteer, MCSO

9 YEARS

Rusty Howson (Mill Valley), Stafford Park Disc Golf Steward, Marin County Parks

8 YEARS

Stan Green (Greenbrae), Financial Abuse Specialist Team (FAST) Volunteer, Health & Human Services (HHS)

5 YEARS

Deborah Fox (Corte Madera), Administrative Aide and Event Aide, Human Resources

Rika Gopinath (San Rafael), Environmental Steward, Marin County Parks

Lynn Merlo (San Rafael), Preservationist, Corte Madera Library

Ann Shores (Corte Madera), RACES/ACS Volunteer, MCSO

4 YEARS

Natalie Dybeck (Novato), Newsletter Writer, Human Resources

3 YEARS

Bryan Hendon (Fairfax), **Michael Pechner** (Fairfield), **Steve Quarles** (Mill Valley), **Robert Rowlands** (Mill Valley), Fire Lookouts, Marin County Fire

Ken Huang (Tiburon), **Gary Stabile** (San Rafael), Stewards, Marin County Parks

2 YEARS

Bruce Bartel (Novato), **Charles Benet** (Tiburon), **Dirk Brinkerhoff** (San Rafael), Radio Communications Volunteers, Department of Public Works

Scarlett Goh (Mill Valley), Summer Project Intern, Board of Supervisors

1 YEAR

Michelle Funez (Novato), Friends of the Family Volunteer, HHS

Julia Gibson (Novato), High School Intern, Board of Supervisors

Lee Notowich (Ross), FAST Volunteer, HHS

Tula Peltz (Mill Valley), School-to-Career Intern, Board of Supervisors

Volunteer's Loyal Service Celebrated



The Marin County Community Development Agency (CDA) is celebrating a length-of-service record set by current volunteer and former employee **Art Marthinsen**, who marks 30 years as a CDA volunteer consultant this month. Before volunteering, Art had a 37-year county career, for 67 total years of service—so far. The photo above was taken at the Marin Civic Center during a May 10 gathering. Amid staff and guests, Art stands front and center. County Administrator **Matthew Hymel** (in gray tie) spoke at the gathering. Pictured between them, back row, is CDA Administrative Services Associate **Joanne O’Grady**, who helped organize the reception. Representing the family are Art’s son **Steve Marthinsen**, holding the banner at left, and grandson **Michael Marthinsen** (in plaid shirt). Also attending were Art’s former and current staff supervisors: retired CDA Deputy Director of Environmental Health **Rebecca Ng**, second from right (head tilted), and, at far left, CDA Deputy Director of Environmental Health **Gregory Pirie**.