

VOLUNTEER NOTES

Volunteers Boost Fair

The Marin County Fair's long tradition of volunteer support continued with the 2024 fair, which benefitted from the participation of 64 MarinShares volunteers. They served fairgoers and helped behind the scenes, contributing more than 450 hours during the fair's five-day run in July. Cultural Services Department staff member **Todd McQuade** coordinated the volunteers. He said they assisted "all departments of the fair, from the exhibits to the theaters and front office. The Marin County Fair is so grateful for the volunteer support."

Where Are They Now?

Former Marintern **Aarya Chowdhry** is a freshman at Davidson College in North Carolina. During her recent internship in the Human Resources Department, she learned about planning employee appreciation events. She said she also "learned a ton about the Civic Center, its history, and Marin County in general." Aarya, who graduated from San Domenico School in June, plans to major in political science and take pre-law courses.

Chit Chat Club Volunteer Has Fun While Guiding Language Learning

By Marjorie Grannan

Move over, Babel and Rosetta Stone: [El Chit Chat Club](#) sounds like a lot more fun!

El Chit Chat Club teaches conversational English to Spanish speakers and has been facilitated by MarinShares volunteer **Christina Fallone** since April. Sponsored by Marin Arts, this weekly program is taught from the South Novato Library and presented on Zoom.



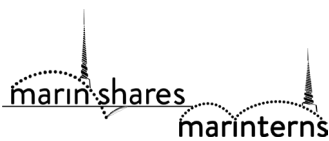
PHOTO BY DOUG KAYE

Community Library Specialist **Cris Criollo**, left, and MarinShares volunteer **Christina Fallone** at the South Novato Library.

"A family friend got interested in the program and knew I was looking for experience in this kind of thing," Christina said. "I was training to be a TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), and I wanted to stay local."

TESOL International Association, a worldwide community of over 10,000 English language professionals, advances expertise in the English language by

Continued on page 2



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Intern Strives to Improve Transportation Infrastructure in Marin

By Alice Wolf



PHOTO BY DOUG KAYE

Leo Bezard

with District 1, the portion of Marin that encompasses most of San Rafael and is represented by Supervisor **Mary Sackett**.

Through his internship with the Board of Supervisors, Marintern **Leo Bezard** has gained insight into local government. Since last September, Leo has interned

Leo's activities in this role have ranged from research to report writing as he follows various projects involving infrastructure throughout Marin. Examples include the Marin Transit Center and Safe Routes to School.

He brings personal experience to the topic of transportation. "I have traveled quite extensively around the world thanks to my parents, and I have been able to experience transit in many different countries," he said. "I have come to the conclusion that safe and effective mass transit is the future not just in Marin, but for the rest of the world."

Continued on page 2

Intern Strives to Improve Transportation Infrastructure in Marin

Continued from page 1

Leo graduated from Terra Linda High School in 2021 and attends College of Marin. He hopes to design layouts for cities through a career in urbanism. He is open to experimentation, however. "I'll choose something and then I'll see where it goes. If I don't like it, I'll change," Leo said.

Leo met Supervisor Sackett through their families' mutual enjoyment of kayaking. After meeting, Leo asked about internships and learned that he could apply for what he had been wanting: a role that lets him learn while serving on projects with potential to improve his community. "My thing was, I want to do something, I want to change things, I want to make Terra Linda and San Rafael, broadly speaking, better," he said.

Inspired by his father, Leo had been looking for a way to take action. "I had my dad saying that I should do

something about problems in society rather than just talk about them," Leo recalled.

Supervisor Sackett praised Leo's hard-working nature. "Leo's passion for digging into transit issues has provided a crucial youth perspective to various projects," she said. "His ability to pull together complex infrastructure details and ask questions is an incredible asset to me, and to furthering bicycle and pedestrian safety in our county.

Leo's internship supervisor is Board Aide **Julia Reinhard**, herself a former Marintern. Julia applauds his work ethic and attention to detail, adding, "He is a thoughtful writer and has provided many thorough meeting analyses for the District 1 Office."

Outside the office, Leo enjoys many hobbies, from playing strategy games to



PHOTO BY DOUG KAYE

Leo Bezard at the base of the Marin Civic Center spire.

reading historical novels. He also cares for three pet cats.

"My highly ambitious dream is just to make the world a better place," he says. ■

Chit Chat Club Volunteer Has Fun While Guiding Language Learning

Continued from page 1

PHOTO BY DOUG KAYE



Christina Fallone

teaching to speakers of other languages in multilingual contexts through learning, research, standards, and advocacy.

"My goal is to go to South Korea and teach English there. I like lots of things about South Korea, and I really want to travel."

The Marin County native grew up in Strawberry and graduated from Tam High in 2014. Then "I graduated with a master's in linguistics from the Victoria University in Wellington, New Zealand.

I just got back to the U.S. in January." Now gaining experience while volunteering as a TESOL, she works in a local coffee house and as a teaching aide in San Rafael.

Her greatest reward in facilitating El Chit Chat Club? "You can tell when people are getting more confident in speaking. It's always any sort of difference, small or big, that's the most rewarding thing," Christina said. "It's also good just meeting people."



PHOTO BY CRIS CRIOLLO

El Chit Chat Club participants meet on Zoom.

She prepares for meetings by selecting a topic and developing talking points and questions to be ready for members, who all are "eager to contribute." The club meets Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m. on Zoom.

Christina's staff supervisor, Community Library Specialist **Cris Criollo**, says, in two languages: "It's amazing to see how Christina guides people on their journey to learning a new language in an interactive and always fun way," and "*Es increíble ver como Christina guía a las personas en su camino hacia aprender un nuevo lenguaje de una manera interactiva y siempre divertida.*"

When she's not having fun teaching at El Chit Chat Club, Christina loves hiking on Mount Tam, journeying up the Mendocino coast, playing video games, and hanging out with friends.

El Chit Chat Club *suenas muy divertido* (sounds like fun)! ■

Intern Alerts Residents to Consumer Scams

By Arya Chowdhry



PHOTO BY DAVID LICHTBLAU

Evan Lichtblau

Marintern **Evan Lichtblau**, a senior at Tamalpais High School, helps protect people—especially elders—from scams.

As a consumer protection student writer, he crafts informative columns for the *Marin Independent Journal* under the guidance of his staff supervisor, Deputy District Attorney **Andy Perez**.

“I knew that I could help educate people because I saw how my parents and I talked to my grandpa and helped him learn about the scams.”

“Evan has impressed me from day one with his knowledge of, and passion for, consumer protection issues, especially as they affect the senior community,” said Andy. “Evan’s writing and analytical reasoning skills are beyond his years, as demonstrated in his published articles.”

Evan also learns from MarinShares volunteer **Ed Remitz**, a retired journalism professor who offers practical tips on writing and editing.

Evan spreads awareness about tech, investment, and FasTrak scams, plus more obscure cons—and his impact through the DA’s Consumer and Environmental Protection Division extends beyond consumer tips.

He is especially concerned about scams targeting senior citizens. After his grandfather lost considerable retirement money to a scam, Evan decided to help others like him.

“I knew that I could help educate people because I saw how my parents and I talked to my grandpa and helped him learn about the scams,” he said. He contacted the DA for support and was selected as a legal intern in the summer of 2023, then returned in November to focus on consumer protection.

Evan is deeply involved with Students Against Scammers, a school club he founded. He volunteers up to four hours per week in addition to his service with his school club.

This past summer, his internship expanded from the DA’s Office to include the Health and Human Services Department’s Public Guardian Office. There he learned about how the county manages the property, finances, and personal care needs of individuals unable to provide for themselves.

“Evan developed a newsletter to be distributed to nursing homes which outlines how to avoid prevalent scams,” said Public Guardian **Mark Vanderscoff**. “This will be of tremendous benefit to the community. Evan also helped publicize Aging and Adult Services’ STOP ELDER ABUSE campaign. During the past year, Evan has also worked in concert with Aging and Adults’ Financial Abuse Specialist Team (FAST) in presenting these topics to nursing homes in the Marin community.

His intergenerational approach to older adult financial abuse is truly appreciated.”

Evan also has been a fact-checker for MediaWise, a platform that helps people gain the skills to identify misinformation. “I used to make TikTok videos where I would fact-check things and check misinformation,” he said.

“I think volunteering is about what you want to do and what you can do to help.”

He plans to pursue his interests in history, economics, politics, and helping others. “I think volunteering is about what you want to do and what you can do to help,” he said. “I don’t think anybody is obligated to volunteer, but I think it’s a great thing to do, and it takes a lot less than people realize.”

Evan has been recognized in the community for helping seniors protect themselves against online scammers. He received a North Bay Leadership Council award this spring and was the keynote speaker at the 2024 Leaders of the North Bay awards luncheon in May. ■



Happy Anniversary

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

41 YEARS

Jim Freed (Sebastopol), Marin Search & Rescue Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office (MCSO)

40 YEARS

Karen Berke (Novato), Patrol Volunteer, Marin County Parks

26 YEARS

Jo-Ann Giunti (Novato), Marin Center Volunteer, Cultural Services

23 YEARS

Melanie Facen (San Rafael), Marin Center Volunteer, Cultural Services

22 YEARS

Madelon Van Lier (San Rafael), Marin Center Volunteer, Cultural Services

20 YEARS

Zerene Soans (Novato), **Connie Tellep** (San Rafael), Marin Center Volunteers, Cultural Services

19 YEARS

Craig Mirkin (Corte Madera), Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service/Auxiliary Communications Service (RACES/ACS) Volunteer, Marin County Fire

18 YEARS

David Mitchell (San Rafael), Air Patrol Volunteer, MCSO

16 YEARS

Jillian Robinson (Fairfax), **Mary Schmidt** (San Rafael), Marin Center Volunteers, Cultural Services

15 YEARS

Gayanne G. Enquist (Inverness), Library Aide, Inverness Library

Kathy Flynn (San Rafael), **Marge Jackson** (Novato), Marin Center Volunteers, Cultural Services

Martha Nelson (Novato), **Nancy Oliva** (Novato), Marin Medical Reserve Corps Volunteers, Health & Human Services (HHS)

14 YEARS

Paul Hinz (Novato), RACES/ACS Volunteer, Marin County Fire

13 YEARS

Steve O'Keefe (Novato), Patrol Volunteer, Marin County Parks

Alice Rivas (Novato), Marin Center Volunteer, Cultural Services

Michael Yuan (San Rafael), Marin Search & Rescue Volunteer, MCSO

12 YEARS

Nancy Chaffin (Petaluma), **Ruth-Louise Moran** (San Rafael), **Deborah Salisbury** (San Rafael), Marin Center Volunteers, Cultural Services

11 YEARS

Barbara Byers (Novato), Shelver, Novato Library
Ted Kreines (Tiburon), Marin Center Tour Docent, Cultural Services

Molly Williams (Mill Valley), Marin Search & Rescue Volunteer, MCSO

10 YEARS

Annemarie Ambuehl (Novato), **Sue Derana** (Novato), **Deborah Gregor** (Novato), **Mary O'Hara** (Novato), Marin Center Volunteers, Cultural Services

Patrick Murphy (Novato), Financial Abuse Specialist Team Volunteer, HHS

9 YEARS

MB Fribley (San Anselmo), **Mary Miller** (San Rafael), **Claire Taylor** (San Rafael), Marin Center Volunteers, Cultural Services

8 YEARS

Margaret Root (San Anselmo), Marin Medical Reserve Corps Volunteer, HHS

6 YEARS

Ruben Diaz Escobar (Novato), Spanish Tutor, Novato Library

Charles Viebrock (Novato), English Tutor, Novato Library

5 YEARS

Haven Allard (Berkeley), **Matthew Baldwin** (Nicasio), **Justin Buzon** (Novato), **Todd Law** (San Rafael), **Mikaila Levine** (San Rafael), **Scott Van Hooser** (Tiburon), **Erik Zech** (Larkspur), Marin Search & Rescue Volunteers, MCSO

Spencer Michels (San Anselmo), Marin Center Tour Docent, Cultural Services

3 YEARS

Adam Almedilla (San Anselmo), Student Service Intern, Fairfax Library

Kendra Messer (Richmond), Workplace Coach, Fairfax Library and HHS

Robert Neuhaus (San Rafael), Patrol Volunteer, Marin County Parks

Gregg Turner (Mill Valley), Newsletter Photographer, Human Resources

2 YEARS

Albion Bodle (Fairfax), **Alex Fooman** (Tiburon), **Caroline Foster** (Corte Madera), **Jack Gross** (San Anselmo), **Theo Mazziotta** (Tiburon), **William Simonton** (Mill Valley), **Emerson Swift** (Mill Valley), **Maty Thiane** (Sausalito), **Dylan Van Doren** (Mill Valley), **Lucille Wong Ryniejski** (Fairfax), Student Elections Ambassadors, Elections Department

Carol Bryan (Novato), **Ellen Domeny** (Kentfield), **Andrea Glass** (Inverness), **Ron Kirtley** (Fairfax), **Kathleen Mullen** (San Rafael), **Roger Peters** (Mill Valley), **Mary Santora** (Novato), **Diana Vine** (San Rafael), Senior Peer Counselors, HHS

Pat Carlone (San Geronimo), Patrol Volunteer, Marin County Parks

Jeffrey Deitchman (Point Reyes Station), Literacy Tutor/Reading Buddies Volunteer, Point Reyes Library

Courtney DiCarlo (Mill Valley), Friends of the Family Volunteer, HHS

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

John Sims (San Francisco), Fire Lookout, Marin County Fire

1 YEAR

Sam Adkins (Mill Valley), **Zohie Betts** (San Rafael), **Cassandra Blevins** (Elk Grove), **Rowan Case** (Corte Madera), **Nancy Deras** (San Rafael), **Neva Essex** (San Rafael), **Ashley Fenical** (San Rafael), **Jake Gotlieb** (Greenbrae), **Tessa Harrell** (Mill Valley), **Daphne Hulquist** (Mill Valley), **Aurelia Joy** (Sausalito), **Maya King** (Mill Valley), **Andrew Peng** (Belvedere), **Stuart Pratt** (San Anselmo), **Lucas Simonton** (Mill Valley), Student Elections Ambassadors, Elections Department

Leo Bezard (San Rafael), District 1 Intern, Board of Supervisors

Richard Llora (Novato), Fire Lookout, Marin County Fire

Amelia Lucey (Fairfax), Homework Helpers Intern, Fairfax Library

Jocelyn Rivera (San Rafael), **Debbie Snodgrass** (Larkspur), Friends of the Family Volunteers, HHS

Sophia Rubel (Greenbrae), **Alexandra Sumski** (Kentfield), Homework Helpers Interns, Civic Center Library

Lookouts Get Training, Stand Watch



PHOTO BY JEFF DAVIDSON

MarinShares volunteers on the Marin County Fire Department's lookout team pose with county staff during a break in training. Before the start of this fire season, the department welcomed new volunteers and provided continuing education for returning lookouts at a Saturday session. Professional staff made presentations, veteran volunteers contributed input, and there was plenty of time for Q&A. The group of 50 includes individuals from all walks of life. Their staff liaison and coordinator is Fire Engineer **Bjorn Anderson**, front row, kneeling, second from right. Lookouts serve at two towers with expansive views, one on Mt. Tamalpais and the other on Mt. Barnabe in West Marin. Volunteers watch for smoke, report sightings, and assist in pinpointing locations of fires. They have been on duty for weeks and will continue to serve until the 2024 fire season is declared over.

Who's New & Welcome!

Anna Agnoli (San Francisco), Student Service Volunteer, Stinson Beach Library

Nicole Collman (Mill Valley), Wildflower Docent, Marin County Parks

Kristy Connolly (Mill Valley), Wildflower Docent, Marin County Parks

Theo Dowd (Richmond), California Room Survey Map Annex Intern, Civic Center Library

Richard Drechsler (San Francisco), Wildflower Docent, Marin County Parks

Naomi Feger (Piedmont), Wildflower Docent, Marin County Parks

Simone Feinblum (New York, NY), Pre-Law Intern, District Attorney's Office

Chelsy Grande (San Francisco), Nursing Student, Health & Human Services (HHS)

David Guzman (Fairfax), FIRE Foundry Intern, Marin County Fire

Ibrahim Hammoud (San Rafael), Student Service Volunteer, Civic Center Library

Lujain Hammoud (San Rafael), Student Service Volunteer, Civic Center Library

Helen Hempel (Mill Valley), Senior Peer Counselor, HHS

Juliet Hickey (Mill Valley), Wildflower Docent, Marin County Parks

Jessica Ho (Sacramento), Dental Health Education Nursing Student, HHS

Martha Jarocki (Greenbrae), Wildflower Docent, Marin County Parks

Adam Lichtblau (Mill Valley), Digital Solutions Intern, Information Services & Technology

Carrie Machleder (Mill Valley), Wildflower Docent, Marin County Parks

Kavita Maheshwari (Novato), Quality Assurance & Control Volunteer, Information Services & Technology

Kaley McIntyre (Novato), Pre-law Intern, County Counsel's Office

Kevin Nava (San Rafael), FIRE Foundry Intern, Marin County Fire

Nisha Neelakandan (Concord), Dental Health Education Nursing Student, HHS

Naomi Patel (Larkspur), Marin Center Volunteer, Cultural Services

Rachel Post (Larkspur), Wildflower Docent, Marin County Parks

Janice Sargiotto (San Rafael), Marin Center Volunteer, Cultural Services

Edward Thelen (Novato), Pre-Law Intern, County Counsel's Office

Carlisle Tilton (Novato), Marin Center Volunteer, Cultural Services

Ellie Underwood (Sausalito), Makerspace Youth Volunteer, Marin City Library

Stephen Ziman (San Rafael), Volunteer Photographer, Human Resources

Career Explorers Program Sets Record



PHOTOS BY BILL JOHNSTON JR.

The 2024 Marin County Career Explorers class poses with members of the Board of Supervisors, county department directors, and staff mentors during a concluding celebration. Now in its ninth year, the program set a record with 75 paid interns at 34 sites, including local nonprofits and county departments. The county engaged more than half the cohort. "It is always exciting when new host sites join the Career Explorer program," said **Joy Fossett**, who coordinates the county's central Marinterns program. "This summer several more divisions in the Health and Human Services Department wanted to get in on the action. We appreciate that, as it gives explorers a broader view of public service careers." The Probation Department leads the program, which is open to youth ages 15 to 22 from a range of backgrounds. At the end-of-program celebration, Chief Probation Officer **Marlon Washington** talked about aspirations and challenges, observing that failure can be seen as "an opportunity to learn." Quoting author Brian Herbert, Marlon added, "The capacity to learn is a gift; the ability to learn is a skill; the willingness to learn is a choice."



Probation Department Program Coordinator **Fatima Roldan**—who with Probation Supervisor **Elizabeth Carranza** organized the 2024 Career Explorer curriculum—speaks at the end-of-program ceremony. More than 150 people were in the audience. Standing, from left: Supervisor **Mary Sackett**, Board of Supervisors President **Dennis Rodoni**, Chief Probation Officer **Marlon Washington**.