

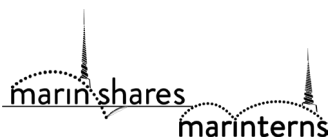
## VOLUNTEER NOTES

### Intern Fights Scams

Marintern **Evan Lichtblau** has received the North Bay Leadership Award for protecting Marin County senior citizens from online scammers. He was inspired to intern with the District Attorney's consumer protection team after his grandfather was affected by scammers. Evan's outreach to more than 100 retirement homes has helped stop other scams. He attends Tamalpais High School and will be a senior this fall. His internship supervisor is Deputy DA **Andy Perez**.

### Board Accepts Report

The [MarinShares & Marinterns 2022-2023 Impact Report](#) has been accepted by the Board of Supervisors and posted online. Across the county organization, 8,156 volunteers and unpaid interns served over 204,000 hours—a value equivalent of \$10.3 million. Meanwhile, 103 paid interns worked more than 10,900 hours. The county hired 21 interns and eight volunteers during the fiscal year. MarinShares volunteer **Eleanor Lau** designed the report, and MarinShares photographers contributed photos.



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## Two Interns of the Year Honored

By Tiyona Pariani

Marinterns **Sammy Lee** and **Christina Pathoumthong** have been named for 2024 Intern of the Year honors—Sammy for encouraging good mental health and

PHOTO COURTESY OF SAMMY LEE



Intern of the Year  
Sammy Lee

Christina for supporting justice. They were recognized during a special ceremony hosted by the Board of Supervisors on June 6.

Sammy interns with the Board of Supervisors District 2 office on projects that involve the Health and Human Services Department. He serves at least two hours a week with the Find Your



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRISTINA PATHOUMTHONG

Intern of the Year  
Christina Pathoumthong

Way program, a youth wellness campaign he founded and leads. He spends additional hours developing Find Your Way and its scholarship program.

Sammy noticed that many young people are unaware of mental health support resources, so he created a guide to help people obtain them.

“This resource guide is the first of its kind, bringing together organizations all across Marin County over a shared mission to destigmatize mental health

*Continued on page 3*

## Student Elections Ambassador Liaisons Named Top Intern Team

By Max Gehm

Marinterns **Caroline Foster, Alysha Lee, and Jordan Harrosh** comprise the Student Elections Ambassador Liaisons—Marin County's 2024 Intern Team of the Year.

Each liaison plans one outreach program per semester and attends monthly meetings with the Student Elections Ambassador Program (SEAP) steering committee, the League of Women Voters, and the Marin County Office of Education.

As interns with the Marin County Elections Office,

*Continued on page 2*



PHOTO BY BOB DELL

Alysha Lee speaks during a Youth Town Hall event at the Marin Civic Center. With her are fellow Intern Team of the Year honorees Jordan Harrosh and Caroline Foster.

# Student Elections Ambassador Liaisons Named Top Intern Team

Continued from page 1



PHOTO BY BOB DELL

Intern Team of the Year members Jordan Harrosh, Alysha Lee, and Caroline Foster pose in front of local agency panelists at a Youth Town Hall session at the Marin Civic Center this spring. The interns helped organize the event.

the team provides leadership and coordination for over 50 student ambassadors from 14 schools.

Their goal is to increase voting among young adults.

The trio was honored on June 6 during a ceremony hosted by the Marin County Board of Supervisors. Board President **Dennis Rodoni** presided, and Human Resources Director **Christina Cramer** emceed.

Over the past two years, Alysha, Caroline, and Jordan have overseen the addition of 75 peers to SEAP. The experience and dedication of each liaison was essential as they learned to lay the groundwork for the ambassador program's success.

"I opted for the extra responsibility of liaisonship so I could be a part of decision making," Jordan said. "I'm interested in government and the civic process and participating in a leadership role naturally called to me."

"The success and visibility of the Youth Town Hall Event has played a pivotal role in attracting new ambassadors," Alysha added.

"The Youth Town Hall is presented by student ambassadors to connect mayors and top elected officials in Marin with our county's youth," explained Elections Department Technician **Elizabeth Iwamiya**, staff supervisor to the student ambassador team. "Elected officials speak on paths to leadership and address concerns and questions of student ambassadors."

The three-liaison team has positively impacted SEAP's newfound visibility.

"Alysha, Caroline, and Jordan are conscientious, kind, responsible, and dedicated," Elizabeth said. "They model these qualities to the students they train and the adults they interact with."

"Counting all the registration applications, seeing the real impact of all the work we had done was overwhelming," said Jordan, a Tamalpais High School rising senior. One example: "I went to every Tam history class for juniors and seniors and preregistered around 300 students to vote."

Alysha is a three-year veteran of SEAP and was essential in the development of SEAP's Youth Town Hall. She attended

Novato High School and plans to pursue studies in public policy, mental health advocacy, or entrepreneurship at UCLA.

Alysha said the team benefitted from staff mentoring, complimenting Elizabeth's "fresh and enthusiastic approach" for fostering a vibrant culture among the three liaisons and across the ambassador program.

Caroline lives in Corte Madera and is a rising senior at Saint Ignatius College Preparatory School in San Francisco. She also serves with the Marin Youth Commission. For SEAP, she next plans to increase outreach to non-English speakers. For more about Caroline and the Student Elections Ambassador Program, see the lead article in the [March MarinfoNOW](#).

This summer, SEAP interns are creating an interactive course to provide new ambassadors with an asynchronous, self-paced means of training. With the national election on the horizon, life is busy for everyone on the Marin elections crew—including the Intern Team of the Year. ■

## Two Interns of the Year Honored

Continued from page 1

PHOTO BY DOUG KAYE



Intern of the Year Sammy Lee smiles with Supervisor Katie Rice, left, and Board of Supervisors President Dennis Rodoni at the ceremony celebrating annual honorees.

and empower youth to seek help when they need it,” Sammy said.

He also is a member of the Marin County Youth Commission and serves on its mental health subcommittee.

**Nancy Vernon**, a former aide to Supervisor **Katie Rice**, was Sammy’s staff liaison when he began interning and currently is his adviser for the [Marin 9 to 25](#) program, which Sammy serves as its youth chair.

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*“Making change in my community has no age requirement ...”*

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“Sammy is a true advocate for mental health and wellness for his peers and the community at large,” Nancy said. “He understands the importance of collaboration, teamwork, and connection among youth, organizations, and agencies to make a lasting impact. He is an extraordinary young person, and I can’t wait to see what he does in the future!”

Sammy recently graduated from Marin Academy, where he was student body president and leader of the Asian Student Organization and the Admissions Fellows team. He plans

to attend the University of Southern California in the fall to study philosophy, politics, and law.

He was born in San Francisco and lives in Tiburon. Outside school and interning, Sammy enjoys creating art, music, and ceramics.

“Making change in my community has no age requirement,” said Sammy. “Anyone passionate and dedicated enough absolutely can positively impact the communities they are a part of—get started as soon as you feel ready.”

Honoree Christina Pathoumthong experienced a year-long internship with the District Attorney’s office after earning dual bachelor’s degrees in history and political science at Dominican University of California.

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*“Interning is important because it allows people to apply their skills in the real world ...”*

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She began in the DA’s clerical unit and soon advanced to assisting trial attorneys. Christina researched, reviewed, analyzed, consulted on, and prepared legal materials. She was involved in two sensitive cases: a gang-related murder trial and a child sexual assault trial. She also learned to organize arguments and apply the law while working on closing arguments.

“Christina quickly identified herself as a very sharp, quick-to-learn, incredibly valuable resource in our offices,” said her internship supervisor, Deputy District Attorney **Thomas McCallister**. He complimented her ability to “serve the public and the interests of justice at a very high level.”

She later received a Fulbright Program grant and is in Laos, her parents’ homeland, teaching English at the University of Health Sciences, Faculty of Medicine, in the capital city, Vientiane. She expects to return to the Bay Area in August and apply to law school.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRISTINA PATHOUMTHONG

Intern of the Year Christina Pathoumthong relaxes on campus at Dominican University.

As a Marintern, “I acquired the ability to be flexible and patient with unexpected circumstances, which has proven helpful in my time here in Laos as I’ve adjusted to the new culture and language,” Christina said.

Her internship also propelled her passion for the law. Firsthand experiences helped her to understand the numerous roles and responsibilities of an attorney, and her county mentors offered unique perspectives for considering a career in law.

“Interning is important because it allows people to apply their skills in the real world,” she said. “While I did well in school, I did not understand my capabilities in the workforce until I interned. The experience also promoted self-growth and a better understanding of my career path.”

Christina grew up in Concord. When not teaching English or studying for the LSAT, she enjoys hiking, working out, and spending time with friends.

As the county’s two interns of the year, Sammy and Christina received individual awards and resolutions of commendation that were unanimously approved by the Board of Supervisors. ■

# Top Supervisor of Interns Champions the Next Generation of Legal Students

By Marjorie Grannan

PHOTO BY DOUG KAYE



Tamara York

**Tamara York**, a deputy public defender with the Marin County Public Defender's Office, has been awarded the Intern Supervisor of the Year title for her outstanding

mentoring of Marinterns students.

With 18 years of experience in Marin's criminal justice system to offer, Tamara devotes much of her time to guiding legal interns through the hands-on process of that system.

"Students come to this work from different backgrounds, and they bring passion and skill with them," Tamara said. "Marin County accepts interns and volunteers with a high level of inclusion, and they're treated respectfully."

In addition to serving as an internship supervisor, Tamara continues with her regular work as a public defender. "I have a full caseload, including a homicide. I also supervise two volunteer attorneys who are retired and want to give back

to the criminal defense system and the clients."

Tamara also works closely with UC College of the Law SF, where she assists the criminal practice clinic as an adjunct.

A graduate of Pomona College, she earned her law degree from the Georgetown University Law Center in Washington, D.C. In December 2004, she was admitted to the State Bar of California.

"Tamara has provided a meaningful and robust experience for college and law school interns," said Marin Public Defender **David Sutton**. "She provides her interns with hands-on experience ... while our clients navigate the Marin County criminal legal system. Specifically, law school interns actively litigate cases alongside attorneys and investigators, while college interns serve in paralegal and client support roles. She is mindful of the interns' limits and needs and always ensures that their work is meaningful."

As part of the learning experience, legal interns come to court and watch the proceedings. The certified law students—students who have taken the requisite

courses—can actually be part of the legal team.

"I really enjoy seeing them in their very first court appearance. It's exciting for them to be in court," Tamara said. "They get to be valued and be an important part of the team. They give a fresh look to the courtroom experience, and they feel empowered by that experience."

Tamara's busy schedule somehow leaves room for personal activities. She loves being outdoors hiking, jogging, swimming, playing tennis, and walking her family's new miniature pinscher. She's also studying several new languages, including Arabic and Hindi. Her mother is French, and her family lived in Belgium. She enjoys keeping up her French and practicing Spanish, also.

The Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a resolution of commendation for Tamara. Board President **Dennis Rodoni** presented her with the resolution and an award during a special celebration for annual honorees of the MarinShares and Marinterns programs on June 6. During the ceremony, David Sutton noted that Tamara champions interns and "makes sure they are woven into the fabric of the office." ■

## Conversation Club Celebrates



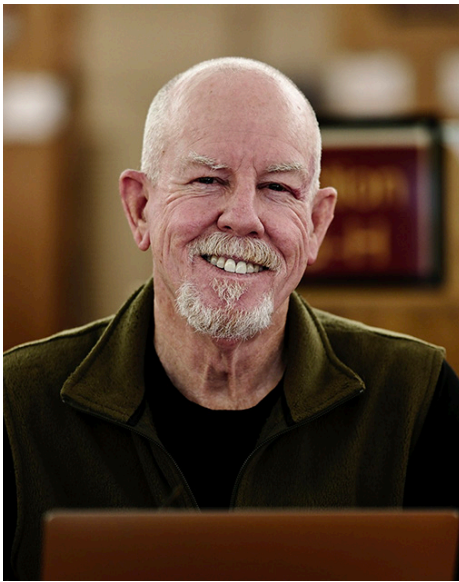
PHOTO BY MARIA LEE GOODRICH

An international group recently gathered for a summer celebration at the Novato branch of the Marin County Free Library. Current members of the English Conversation Club represent nine countries of origin: Guatemala, Ukraine, Iran, Peru, Mexico, Italy, Honduras, Colombia, and the US. MarinShares volunteers—a lead tutor and assistants—provide support as participants expand their English skills. Everyone is welcome at this free program at 10 a.m. on Mondays at the Novato Library. Staff member **Maria Lee Goodrich** describes the club as "a welcoming environment where everyone learns from each other."

# Inspired by Sacrifices, Volunteer Helps Fellow Veterans Gain Access to Their Benefits

By Scott Harrop

PHOTO BY BILL JOHNSTON JR.



Mark Seely

Having grown up in a military family, MarinShares volunteer **Mark Seely** believes strongly in the importance of service. In fact, he would like to see a national service requirement for 18- to 26-year-olds, to foster the mixing of people from different backgrounds in the military or nonmilitary national service organizations. And he has put his belief into practice in his own life. “I always knew when I retired I would do volunteer work,” he says.

Following in his father’s footsteps, he spent 40 years connected with the military, 17 as a military dependent and 23 in the Air Force. Now 68, he retired from the Air Force Reserve in 2003 at age 48. In 2014 he retired from his civilian job as a project manager with Bechtel Corporation.

Amid his military upbringing, his own service career, and his work with Bechtel, Mark had moved house 30 times by age 60. Now a Marin resident, he returned to the Bay Area in 2015, after having lived in the East Bay from 1984 to 1989, and in North Beach for most of the ’90s.

Mark saw his chance to volunteer in an ad for a Veterans Benefits Coach with the Vets at the Library program, which is funded by federal, state, and county

grants. His first volunteer posting was at the South Novato branch of the Marin County Free Library. (This branch is in Novato’s Hamilton area, formerly an Air Force base.)

He now mans a table the second Wednesday of each month from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the Marin Civic Center Library, where he meets with veterans. Adult Services Librarian **Ann Bertucci** is his staff supervisor. Describing the program, Ann explained that “libraries throughout the state provide for their local communities—specifically, sharing information and resources to veterans and their families about healthcare; disability compensation; vocational rehabilitation and employment; education and training; and VA life insurance.”

Mark’s role supplements the vital role played by Marin County’s busy veterans service officer, **Sean Stephens** of the Health and Human Services Department. Much of the work involves helping clients gain access to VA benefits for veterans and their spouses, widows, and children. A great deal of help is available, but the bureaucracy is complex and challenging to navigate, since the VA is the largest integrated health care system in the United States.

For example, acquiring a Service Connected Disability rating can open the door to financial assistance, similar to a pension. Also, through several GI Bill programs, veterans and their children can qualify for free tuition at California state schools. The challenge with most VA benefits programs is to work through enrollment. Several programs are means tested, such as Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC), a tax-free monthly benefit for qualified family members.

Another organization Mark assists with is the National Alliance on Mental Illness in Marin, which offers resources for those with mental illness and their families.

As Ann Bertucci puts it, “Because there are layers of bureaucracy that veterans may have to navigate in order to secure benefits they are entitled to, it’s great that Mark is here in person, and as a friendly face, to facilitate access to information and resources to help streamline the process.” She added, “Mark is very knowledgeable, personable, and approachable—just the perfect person for helping others.”

Mark’s motivation is simple: “I knew I wanted to help vets.” ■

## Sometimes Volunteering Is Personal

Volunteering as a veterans benefits coach means dealing with regulations and paperwork—and then there are the personal stories. MarinShares volunteer **Mark Seely** will always remember this connection:

“A Korean War veteran entitled to extensive Veteran’s benefits visited me, not only to access his own benefits but also for help obtaining recognition for his family’s service. His father was a WWII veteran who was killed in action and buried at Epinal American Cemetery in Dinoze, France. That makes his family eligible to be recognized as a Gold Star family. We were able to complete the paperwork and get Gold Star family status for his father; a small recognition for making the ultimate sacrifice.

“The gift for me was that, during our conversation, I was able to share with him the fact that my own father had died in the line of duty in Germany not far from Epinal—likely very close to where his father had been killed in action. It is very meaningful to me that families like ours exist, and it reinforces my belief in the importance of national service, whatever form it takes.”

## County Celebrates Volunteers, Interns, and Staff Liaisons



PHOTO BY DOUG KANE

Honorees, members of the Board of Supervisors, and county staff gather for a group photo after a recognition ceremony hosted by the board on June 6 at the Marin Civic Center. MarinShares and Marinterns participants were celebrated in six categories: Volunteer of the Year, Intern of the Year, Volunteer Team of the Year, Intern Team of the Year, Outstanding Staff Supervisor of Volunteers, and Outstanding Staff Supervisor of Interns. Leaders from each honoree's department spoke about their strengths and impacts. Board President **Dennis Rodoni** presented the awards and resolutions of commendation. Human Resources Director **Christina Cramer** emceed, and HR Assistant Director **Vicky Willard** presented slides highlighting county volunteers and interns. For details about honorees, see articles in this newsletter and upcoming issues of *MarinfoNOW*.

## Happy Anniversary

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

### 39 YEARS

**Jerry Foster** (Novato), Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service/Auxiliary Communications Service (RACES/ACS) Volunteer, Marin County Fire

### 27 YEARS

**Stuart Dake** (Novato), RACES/ACS Volunteer, Marin County Fire

### 26 YEARS

**Linda Comella** (San Rafael), Patrol Volunteer, Marin County Parks

### 22 YEARS

**Doug Kunst** (Danville), Fire Lookout, Marin County Fire

**Linda Novy** (Fairfax), Patrol Volunteer, Marin County Parks

### 16 YEARS

**John Newman** (San Rafael), Fire Lookout, Marin County Fire

### 14 YEARS

**Michael Fischer** (Mill Valley), RACES/ACS Volunteer, Marin County Fire

**Maria Gregoriev** (San Rafael), **Susan O'Brien** (Mill Valley), Financial Abuse Specialist Team Volunteers, Health & Human Services

### 12 YEARS

**Armory Willis** (Sausalito), Patrol Volunteer, Marin County Parks

**Paula Kamena** (San Rafael), Investigator, Marin County Sheriff's Office

### 10 YEARS

**Judy Greenwald** (San Anselmo), Marin Medical Reserve Corps (MMRC) Volunteer, Health & Human Services

### 9 YEARS

**Marie Fitzgerald** (Mill Valley), Event Aide, Human Resources

### 8 YEARS

**Pamela Ross** (Greenbrae), Newsletter Copy Editor, Human Resources

### 7 YEARS

**Elizabeth McKee** (Mill Valley), Volunteer Archivist and CalTrans Historian, Civic Center Library

### 6 YEARS

**Milton Hyams** (San Rafael), RACES/ACS Volunteer, Marin County Fire

### 4 YEARS

**Deborah Gregor** (Novato), Administrative Aide, Human Resources

**Janet Hecht** (Greenbrae), MMRC Volunteer, Health & Human Services

### 3 YEARS

**Ken Adams** (Woodacre), **Ken Brownfield** (Novato), **Brian Cooley** (Corte Madera), **Jerry**

**Foster** (Novato), Radio Communications Volunteers, Department of Public Works

**David Balderama** (San Rafael), Copy Editor Intern, Human Resources

**Jonathan Bernstein** (Corte Madera) Civic Center Tour Docent, Cultural Services

**Karen Dozer** (Mill Valley), Friends of the Family Volunteer, Health & Human Services

**Michael Fischer** (Mill Valley), Patrol Volunteer, Marin County Parks

**Frederick Schultz** (Marshall), Volunteer Firefighter, Marin County Fire

### 2 YEARS

**Sandra Bushmaker** (Sausalito), Ombudsman Volunteer, Health & Human Services

**Linda Garb** (San Rafael), Meals on Wheels Client Assessment Volunteer, Health & Human Services

### 1 YEAR

**Jordan Harrosh** (Mill Valley), Student Elections Ambassador Intern, Elections Department

**Jack McLean** (San Francisco), Law School Intern, District Attorney's Office

**Priyanka Thatipamala** (San Jose), California Department of Public Health Preventative Medicine Resident, Health & Human Services

# Who's New & Welcome!

**Oldhina Alatraste** (Novato), Marin Center Volunteer, Cultural Services

**Giov Alipio** (Novato), FIRE Foundry Intern, Marin County Fire

**Sheila Alvarez** (Windsor), Adult Probation Intern, Probation Department

**Sydney Antonoff-Wertheimer** (Kentfield), Summer Law Clerk, Public Defender's Office

**Karen Arnold** (San Rafael), Marin Center Volunteer, Cultural Services

**Gabrielle Beyer** (Mill Valley), Student Elections Ambassador Intern, Elections Department

**Rosemary Bruckner** (San Rafael), Marin Center Volunteer, Cultural Services

**Michael Burke** (Napa), Certified Law Student, District Attorney's Office

**Ernie Castiaux** (Castro Valley), Fire Lookout, Marin County Fire

**Rylee Cheney** (Petaluma), Pre-Law Intern, District Attorney's Office

**Elinor Clark** (Mill Valley), Elections Intern, Elections Department

**Kyan Easton** (San Rafael), Student Elections Ambassador Intern, Elections Department

**Colin Eilerman** (Novato), Pre-Law Intern, County Counsel's Office

**Anna Evans** (Albany), Summer Law Clerk, County Counsel's Office

**Cesar Evina** (Napa), FIRE Foundry Intern, Marin County Fire

**Hannah Fishbein** (Kensington), OD Free Marin AmeriCorps VISTA Volunteer, Health & Human Services

**Len Gaskell** (Novato), Marin Center Volunteer, Cultural Services

**Narda Gaskell** (Novato), Marin Center Volunteer, Cultural Services

**Dana Gross** (Santa Rosa), Marin Center Volunteer, Cultural Services

**David Hochman** (Mill Valley), Fire Lookout, Marin County Fire

**Karen Iacobucci** (Greenbrae), Marin Center Volunteer, Cultural Services

**Michael Kelly** (Alameda), Fire Lookout, Marin County Fire

**Max Kohn** (San Francisco), Summer Law Clerk, Public Defender's Office

**Carol LaBranche** (San Rafael), Marin Center Volunteer, Cultural Services

**Carrie Lange** (San Anselmo), Pre-Law Intern, District Attorney's Office

**Vicky Marquez** (Novato), Marin Center Volunteer, Cultural Services

**Daniel Martin** (Sebastopol), FIRE Foundry Intern, Marin County Fire

**Fiona Morford** (San Francisco), Certified Law Clerk, Public Defender's Office

**Xareni Ortega Sanchez** (Vallejo), Pre-Law Intern, Public Defender's Office

**Robert Rieders** (Belvedere), Civic Center Tour Docent, Cultural Services

**Siena Rossi** (San Francisco), Pre-Law Intern, District Attorney's Office

**Derek Rusher** (San Francisco), Law School Intern, Public Defender's Office

**Carley Saelinger** (Mill Valley), Fire Lookout, Marin County Fire

**Dabney Smith** (Novato), Fire Lookout, Marin County Fire

**Akshara Subramanian** (Novato), Legal Process Intern, District Attorney's Office

**Sarah Weber** (Novato), Marin Center Volunteer, Cultural Services

**Shari Weiss** (Novato), Marin Center Volunteer, Cultural Services

**Faye Zou** (Emeryville), Summer Law Clerk, County Counsel's Office



CARTOON BY JOHN DONAGHUE