

VOLUNTEER NOTES

You're Invited: Arts & Crafts!

Have fun while enjoying original art, live music, and handcrafted gifts at the Marin County Employee Arts & Crafts Fair on Wednesday and Thursday, November 20 and 21.

The public is welcome. Hours are 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. both days at the Marin Civic Center cafeteria, Room 237.

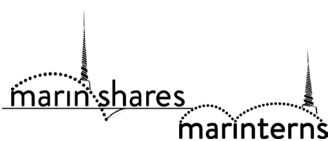
Crafts include jewelry, greeting cards, candles, knitted and crocheted accessories, T-shirts, woodcut prints, cement art, potted mini-gardens, photographs, etchings, ornaments, decorative magnets, sewn items, suncatchers, watercolors, handmade soaps, herbal body products, and more. Baked goods will be sold on Wednesday only.

MarinShares volunteers support the fair: **Annet Katan** designed the flyer; **Maureen Caslavka** created the event schedule; **Lynda Pearson** advised on marketing; and event aides will assist on fair days. Marintern **Jeo Monzon** provides admin support.

Staff founded the fair in 2000, and employees participate on their own time.

Holidays

County offices will be closed Veterans Day, Monday, November 11, Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, November 28, and the day after Thanksgiving, Friday, November 29.



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VOLUNTEERS

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Marin Native Offers Connection and Support to Area Veterans

By Calla McBride

Sophie Shehi, a Marin native and lifetime resident, serves as an office aide with the Health and Human Services Department's (HHS) Veterans Service Office.

The Veterans Service Office (VSO) helps Marin military veterans, their spouses, and their children obtain benefits, and provides a variety of support services.

Sophie's husband is a disabled veteran, and the support he received led her to seek involvement and find her place in the program.

"I wanted to give back," said the MarinShares volunteer. "I love knowing that I'm helping veterans in need and love the camaraderie in the office. Everyone helps everyone, all with the same goal in mind."

The strong team connection and her upbeat outlook help things run smoothly.



PHOTO BY MARIBEL ARZOLA

Sophie Shehi

"I feel as if I'm a productive member of the office," Sophie said. "We all work together to support veterans who come into the office for assistance. Having a can-do, positive attitude and a quirky

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Volunteer Puts Eldercare Residents First

By Natalie Dybeck



PHOTO COURTESY OF SANDRA BUSHMAKER

Sandra Bushmaker

MarinShares volunteer **Sandra Bushmaker**, a long-term care ombudsman for the Marin County Health and Human Services Department (HHS), describes herself as a resident advocate who assists with day-to-day care, health, and safety issues.

Sandra engages directly with residents or their responsible parties at assisted living and skilled nursing facilities. She has been an ombudsman volunteer for two years.

The goal of the ombudsman's office is simple and powerful: "We are working

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Volunteer Puts Eldercare Residents First

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toward resident-centered care rather than cookie-cutter institutional care,” said Sandra. “It’s important to put the residents at the center of care in our eldercare facilities.”

Sandra’s professional background as an attorney, mediator, and former health-care provider makes her an excellent fit in the ombudsman role.

“I have always been interested in the care our licensed facilities give to their elderly residents,” said Sandra. “The residents often need an advocate. Some have no responsible party or family to advocate for them.”

“It’s important to put the residents at the center of care in our eldercare facilities.”

Sandra investigates and helps resolve complaints. While every case is different, the process generally begins the same. Sandra is assigned a complaint, reviews it for clarity, and asks follow-up questions. She goes over issues with the resident and seeks to understand their preferred resolution. “I often give what

we call ‘information and assistance’ to residents, their responsible parties, and sometimes facility staff to help resolve issues,” she explained.

“It is challenging to get to the bottom of the complaint and develop a plan that works for the resident,” reflected Sandra. “Limited financial resources are difficult issues, as are abuse cases.” While Sandra does not function as an attorney in her volunteer role, her professional experience gives her an appreciation of the legal structure of assisted living facilities and an ingrained advocacy philosophy. Her skill as a mediator helps her resolve issues and disputes.

Sandra and her fellow trained ombudsman volunteers also make unannounced visits to their assigned facilities.

When the role does get challenging, her staff liaison, HHS Social Service Unit Supervisor **Dan Steckline**, is a resource. “Dan is always there for us,” said Sandra. “He has extensive experience in this area of service and geriatrics which is a great help to us. He is very helpful in talking through complaints and making a plan to resolve the issues.”

Sandra finds it rewarding to resolve complaints for residents and improve their lives in care facilities.

“We are working toward resident-centered care rather than cookie-cutter institutional care.”

“Sandra is a valuable member of our ombudsman program team,” said Dan. “She brings an abundance of energy and enthusiasm to team meetings, trainings, and all aspects of her role. Sandra is a pleasure to work with because of her willingness to learn and her desire to provide exemplary ombudsman services to residents of her assigned facilities and their family members.”

In her free time, Sandra enjoys sailing her boat in San Francisco Bay, gardening, tending her dog, and staying active in local politics. ■

Are you interested in advocating for the dignity and safety of elders? The Marin County Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program welcomes applicants. Contact HHS staff member [Dan Steckline](#) or Coordinator of Volunteers [Anne Starr](#). Have a complaint? Contact [Aging & Adult Services](#).

Who’s New & Welcome!

Katie Blasingame (Novato), Homework Helpers Intern, Novato Library

Nancy Deras (San Rafael), Student Elections Ambassador Liaison, Elections Department

Shanti Dhruva (Corte Madera), Homework Helpers Intern, Corte Madera Library

Richard Donick (Tiburon), Friends of the Family Volunteer, Health & Human Services (HHS)

Ellie Gilbert (San Rafael), Student Elections Ambassador, Elections Department

Lila Hawks (San Anselmo), Homework Helpers Intern, Fairfax Library

Tom Lai (Novato), Marin Civic Center Tour Docent, Cultural Services

William Molineaux (San Anselmo), Student Elections Ambassador Program Intern, Elections Department

Gavin Mutzman (San Rafael), Teen Volunteer, Civic Center Library

Erica Neal (Fairfax), Friends of the Family Volunteer, HHS

Kelly Pieczonka (Novato), Friends of the Family Volunteer, HHS

John Prince (Sausalito), Marin Center Usher, Cultural Services

Katherine Ransom (San Rafael), Friends of the Family Volunteer, HHS

Jenna Rempel (Point Reyes Station), Volunteer Tutor, Point Reyes Library

Keily Rojas (San Anselmo), Homework Helpers Intern, Fairfax Library

Lexie Schmidt (Tiburon), Homework Helpers Intern, Corte Madera Library

Sachiko Suhara (Sausalito), Marin Center Usher, Cultural Services

Samuel Sung (San Rafael), Student Elections Ambassador, Elections Department

Sophia Tiet (Novato), Homework Helpers Intern, Novato Library

Sasha Weinmann (San Rafael), Marin Center Usher, Cultural Services

Ash Weir (Corte Madera), Homework Helpers Intern, Corte Madera Library

