

VOLUNTEER NOTES

Where Are They Now?

Former Marintern **Colyn Heimerman** is now a full-time program coordinator for the Marin County Health and Human Services Department (HHS) focusing on youth health. Part of a “mighty team of three,” his role includes working with partner organizations, making presentations about drug overdose prevention, and more.

Colyn said his time as an HHS graduate student intern with OD Free Marin helped him get involved in the community, gain experience, and demonstrate growth. As he built working relationships, “I was able to step into increasing levels of responsibility and show that I could support the program and our team,” he said. “The internship helped me understand the expectations, pace, and accountability of county work, which made the transition to a program coordinator role feel very organic.”

Colyn enjoys hiking with his two dogs, especially on Mt. Tam.

Holiday

County offices will be closed Monday, January 19, for Martin Luther King Jr. Day.



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International Volunteer Helps Library and MarinfoNOW

By *Natalie Dybeck*

MarinShares volunteer **Noemi Suárez** may live in Ecuador, but she serves five hours a week as a graphic designer for the South Novato Library and a layout design aide for *MarinfoNOW*.

Noemi began serving remotely in 2024 after relatives who live in Marin told her the county library engaged volunteers.

“I was a student at the time and thought it would be a great opportunity to gain experience and contribute,” she said. “I was studying in Argentina, so I asked if it would be possible to complete the hours remotely. They agreed, which was perfect, as it also gave me the chance to practice and improve my English.”

She has since graduated from college and works on a social media marketing



PHOTO BY DOUG KAYE

Noemi Suárez with one of her posters.

team in Ecuador. On weekends, she works for her family’s business, a restaurant

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Shelver Finds Feeling of Community

By *Marjorie Grannan*

It’s business as usual, **Martha ‘Marty’ Frankel** style, when she volunteers at the Inverness branch of the Marin County Free Library. Marty wanted to help with book shelving and found herself stepping in to fill a variety of roles.



PHOTO BY CAROLINE BRABBE

Marty Frankel

“We’ve had a wonderful woman shelver, and I decided I wanted to do that, too,” Marty said. Then she started to wash dishes, set up chairs, and make coffee for the library’s educational programs.

“My favorite thing about volunteering in the library is hearing patrons talk about books and recommend books to each other,” she said. “There’s a community feeling of people who love books.”

Marty is a registered nurse, a family nursing practitioner, a licensed marriage and family therapist, and she doesn’t rest when she senses she’s needed.

The Inverness resident began her nursing education at Santa Barbara City College, earning her associate degree. She then enrolled at Sonoma State University, earning a Family Nurse Practitioner certificate and a bachelor’s degree in nursing, all while working at Marin General Hospital’s coronary care unit.

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Shelver Finds Feeling of Community

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She was one of six medical professionals who founded the Point Reyes Community Clinic with Dr. **Michael Witte**. The clinic opened in 1981 and is now the Coastal Health Alliance.

Just some of the organizations Marty's been active in are the Community Land Trust of West Marin, Marin Community Clinic, West Marin Climate Action, Tomales Bay Library Association, and the Marin Medical Reserve Corps (MMRC).

"My favorite past volunteer work was with the MMRC under the leadership of the amazing Dr. **Lisa Santora**, then the deputy public health officer for Marin County," she said. "Lisa initiated a program that trained us to become very effective volunteers" while "supporting disaster first aid training for neighborhood groups; disaster health and mental-health response during the wildfires, including the huge shelter we ran for fire refugees at the Marin Civic Center; helping with Covid response through contact tracing; connecting

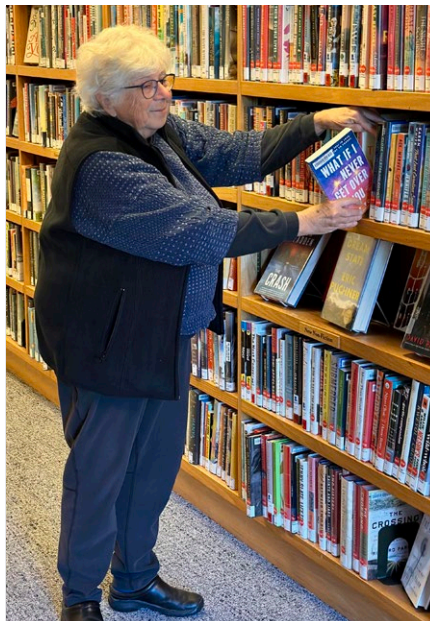


PHOTO BY CAROLINE BRABBE

Marty Frankel shelves books at the Inverness Library.

people with food and shelter resources when they were in quarantine; and giving Covid vaccinations."

Marty loves to be in nature. "I feel blessed living in Inverness." The wilderness is

close by. Her son's family lives in Point Reyes Station. For company at home, there's her housemate of 28 years, a blue-fronted Amazon green parrot named Squeaky, who's partial to almonds.

She also loves libraries. She credits her second-grade teacher in Evanston, IL, for noticing that she'd read through the small school library and advising her mother to get her a public library card. Marty has patronized libraries ever since.

Her staff supervisor is Community Library Specialist **Caroline Brabbee**. "Marty doesn't shy away from any task," said Caroline. "She helps with shelving, shelf reading, our programming, and doing the dishes, to sum up a few. Volunteer extraordinaire. Marty does it all!"

Appreciation is mutual: "I love volunteering with Caroline," Marty said. "She is a delight to work with—friendly and enthusiastic to everyone at the Inverness branch and a fabulous storyteller to the children." ■

Conversation Club Celebrates Holidays at Novato Library

There were smiles all around as Spanish Conversation Club volunteers celebrated the holidays last month at the Novato branch of the Marin County Free Library. These volunteer tutors meet weekly with library patrons to support and expand language skills. Within the group, "we have quite a few musicians, and the two who brought their instruments were **Blanca Solano**, who plays the mandolin, and **Janeen Castner**, who plays the guitar," said their staff liaison, Library Assistant **Maria Lee Goodrich**. Volunteers sang Spanish carols, shared delicious treats, and held a white elephant exchange—all ways of "enjoying the season together," said Maria Lee. "We meet every Tuesday at 4 p.m. at the Novato library," she added. Everyone interested in practicing conversational Spanish is welcome. No registration is required; participants can just show up.



PHOTO BY MARIA LEE GOODRICH

International Volunteer Helps Library and *MarinfoNOW*

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that also offers cooking classes and educational talks. Noemi is a chef there and describes the business as “closely connected to traditional food, preserving native plants, and maintaining ancient culinary traditions. We are both a cultural center and a restaurant.”

Amid her busy schedule, Noemi continues to volunteer, communicating with county staff via email and Zoom to discuss tasks, which range from illustrations and posters to social media posts and layout of *MarinfoNOW*—including this issue.

For the Marin County Free Library, Noemi usually creates a few sketches and then develops the final design using Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator.

“The most challenging part is understanding the initial idea of what they need and translating that concept into an illustration or poster,” she said. “The design has to communicate a clear message and help people understand the purpose behind it, so finding the right balance between creativity and clarity is always important.”

Noemi creates engaging and informative posts and finds meaning in the



PHOTO BY DOUG KANE

Noemi Suárez shares her art on display at the South Novato Library.

community she has built. “Much of my work is done in both English and Spanish to support the Latino community, creating visual materials that they can relate to, understand easily, and that help guide them to specific information,” she said.

She was recently visiting family in Marin and stopped by the South Novato Library. “That was an important moment for me,” she reflected. “The team has been very supportive and created a safe and welcoming space. I felt very comfortable and grateful to be part of such a kind community.”

“Noemi has always demonstrated a positive attitude and great professionalism,”

said her staff liaison, Community Library Specialist **Cris Criollo**. “She is very creative and has showcased her talent and passion for illustration by producing beautiful communication materials for the library.”

Meanwhile, Noemi’s newsletter role is with the Human Resources Department, at the heart of the county’s central MarinShares and Marinterns programs. She assists—and

occasionally fills in for—*MarinfoNOW* layout design volunteer **Eleanor Lau**. Noemi’s newsletter liaison is MarinShares Coordinator of Volunteers **Anne Starr**. “Marinterns Coordinator **Joy Fossett** and I admire Noemi’s can-do spirit and willingness to serve whether she’s visiting Marin or at home in South America,” said Anne.

Noemi chooses to volunteer for the county “because it’s the place where part of my family lives, so I thought, ‘Why not give back something to the community that has welcomed them here in the U.S.?’”

When not working or volunteering, Noemi enjoys painting and cooking. ■

County Lauds Long-time Volunteer

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT



For 36 years of outstanding dedication as a volunteer emergency radio operator, **Marilyn Bagshaw**, left, received a certificate of appreciation signed by the president of the Marin County Board of Supervisors. Her staff liaison is Emergency Management Coordinator **Elaine Wilkinson**, right, of the Marin County Fire Department’s Office of Emergency Services. Elaine made the presentation and praised Marilyn’s exemplary service. Marilyn is the third-longest-serving person on the team of 22 volunteers. (Only **Rich Carbine** and **Jerry Foster** have served longer as radio operators.) Elaine also gave Marilyn a behind-the-scenes tour of the updated Office of Emergency Services facilities, which are operated by the Fire Department.

Happy Anniversary

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

44 YEARS

Rich Carbine (San Rafael), Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service/Auxiliary Communications Service (RACES/ACS) Volunteer, Marin County Fire

32 YEARS

Steven Post (San Francisco), Fire Lookout, Marin County Fire

23 YEARS

Faith Brown (Tiburon), Steward, Marin County Parks

20 YEARS

Sudy Schneider (Tiburon), Steward, Marin County Parks

19 YEARS

David Barker (Tiburon), **Mick Seaman** (Belvedere), Stewards, Marin County Parks

16 YEARS

Galen Leeds (Tombales), Volunteer Firefighter, Marin County Fire

15 YEARS

Geoffrey Dugmore (Petaluma), Chaplain, Marin County Sheriff's Office

Kathryn Mitchell-Ball (San Rafael), Patrol Volunteer, Marin County Parks

13 YEARS

Diana Johnson (Fairfax), Volunteer Aide, Fairfax Library

12 YEARS

Kurt Ellison (San Rafael), Steward, Marin County Parks

Zach Hamill (Gridley), Air Patrol Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

11 YEARS

Ray De Leon (Greenbrae), Ombudsman, Health & Human Services (HHS)

Robert Ireson (Greenbrae), RACES/ACS Volunteer, Marin County Fire

Ruth Nash (Larkspur), Environmental Steward, Marin County Parks

10 YEARS

Donna Lew (Henderson, NV), **Robert Simon** (Henderson, NV), Wildlife Picture Index Volunteers, Marin County Parks

Mark Seely (Sausalito), Veterans Benefits Coach, Civic Center Library

9 YEARS

Veronica Morino (San Rafael), Event Aide, Human Resources

7 YEARS

Beverly Birnbaum (Novato), **Mark Birnbaum** (Novato), Stewards, Marin County Parks

Charles Fracchia (San Francisco), Financial Abuse Specialist Team Volunteer, HHS

4 YEARS

Beryl Bourke (Novato), **Marion Hickman** (Novato), Marin Center Ushers, Cultural Services

Curtiss Kim (San Anselmo), Radio Communications Volunteer, Department of Public Works

Blanca Solano (Novato), Spanish Tutor, Novato Library

3 YEARS

Diana Lopez (San Rafael), Congregate Meal Volunteer, HHS

Sophie Shehi (San Rafael), Veterans Office Administrative Support Aide, HHS

2 YEARS

Brian Burke (Santa Rosa), Air Patrol Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

Sibao 'Sylvia' Chen (Novato), Homework Helpers Intern, Novato Library

Ivan Kondrashov (San Rafael), Website and Language Collection Aide, Marin City Library

Mason Koonce (Novato), Air Patrol Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

1 YEAR

Sharie Camren (Berkeley), **Lynette Koffinow** (Novato), **Lynn Simon** (Corte Madera), Marin Center Ushers, Cultural Services

Sophie Ikeda (San Rafael), Homework Helpers Intern, Novato Library

MarinfoNOW Writer Starts Law Career—and Keeps Writing

MarinShares volunteer **Natalie Dybeck** passed the California Bar and was sworn in by Judge **Charles R. Breyer** of the Northern District of California in December. The oath confirms a new attorney's commitment to uphold the law and serve with integrity. As a former Marintern with this newsletter, Natalie learned about clear writing—a useful skill for lawyers—from MarinShares volunteer writing coach **Ed Remitz**. Beginning as a summer intern in 2017, she kept on writing for *MarinfoNOW* while earning top grades at UCLA, helping with the successful Measure C, working for Congressman **Jared Huffman**, and attending UC Law San Francisco (formerly UC Hastings). During law school, she externed with Recology, student-clerked for Judge Breyer, and served as an executive editor of the UC Law Environmental Journal. She now practices labor and employment law in San Francisco—and continues to enjoy interviewing county volunteers and interns and writing about them for this newsletter. (See page 1 for her article about fellow volunteer **Noemi Suárez**.)

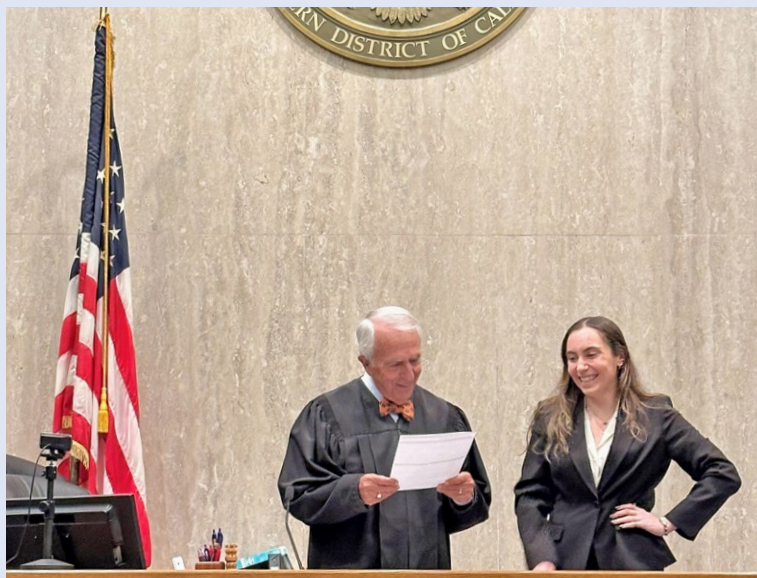


PHOTO BY MICHAEL DYBECK

Who's New & Welcome!

Nance Becker (Corte Madera), Senior Peer Counselor, Health & Human Services (HHS)

Katie Bianchi (Windsor), Children and Family Services Title IV-E Intern, HHS

Shannon Chloe Cheng (Rocklin), Nursing Student with In-Home Supportive Services, HHS

Saya Eguchi (San Rafael), Homework Helpers Intern, Civic Center Library

Renee Hamilton (Novato), Fire Lookout, Marin County Fire

Scott Hershman (Lagunitas), Fire Lookout, Marin County Fire

Nicholas Lundin (Novato), Homework Helpers Intern, Novato Library

Nikki Merkle-Raymond (San Francisco), Crisis Aftercare Team Clinical Intern, HHS

Jillian Perri (Novato), Teen Volunteer, Novato Library

Ielyzaveta Petukhova (San Rafael), Homework Helpers Intern, Civic Center Library

Richard Scott (Mill Valley), Senior Peer Counselor, HHS

Dorothy Situ (Novato), Homework Helpers Intern, Novato Library

