

VOLUNTEER NOTES

Where Are They Now?

Former Marintern **Katie Bianchi** joined the Marin County Health and Human Services Department (HHS) in June as a full-time child welfare worker. She had completed a nine-month internship with HHS that was vital to her development and caused her interest in social work to blossom, she said, adding that she's excited to "support and advocate for the families, children, and community of Marin." A San Francisco State graduate with a master's degree in social work, she was an undergrad at Dominican University in San Rafael, "so it is nice to be back in a familiar community that helped transform me into the woman I am today." Katie's background includes volunteering with the Center for Domestic Peace and local school districts, working at a residential treatment center for youth, and gaining experience at the Polly Klaas Foundation in Sonoma County.

Holiday

County offices will be closed Monday, September 7, for Labor Day.



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Parks Steward Smooths the Way for Visitors of All Abilities

By Diana Jones

MarinShares volunteer **Jayne Goodale** of San Anselmo finds purpose contributing as an environmental steward with Marin County Parks. Her service has spanned multiple parks and open spaces throughout the county.

She volunteers several times a week at her local park, [Roy's Redwoods Preserve](#) in West Marin, clearing the ADA pathway and standard walkways to ensure accessibility to one of her favorite spots.

After learning four years ago that invasive yellow star thistle was out-competing native plants in Marin's preserves, Jayme began pulling up the invaders at Ridgewood Fire Road in San Rafael.

"Once I discovered I could make a difference as a volunteer, I was committed

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Jayne Goodale

PHOTO BY STEVE ZIMAN

Environmental Advocate Boosts Plastic-Free Effort and Climate Solutions

By Diana Jones



Greta LaFemina

PHOTO BY DOUG KAYE

Marintern **Greta LaFemina**, a high school senior, began her internship journey with the Board of Supervisors District 1 office in November 2023.

Her interest in District 1 was inspired from her enrollment in Redwood City's Stanford Online High School, a university affiliate for academically advanced students. (District 1, represented by Supervisor **Mary Sackett**, consists of downtown San Rafael and unincorporated areas including Terra Linda, Lucas Valley, Marinwood, and Santa Venetia.)

Greta's assignments included researching a plastic-free July program and affordable housing. She aims to make Marin a place where its youth can stay.

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Environmental Advocate Boosts Plastic-Free Effort and Climate Solutions

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"Greta wrote the Plastic Free July resolution that the Board of Supervisors adopted in July 2025," said District 1 Board Aide **Julia Reinhard**, herself a former Marin intern. "As an environmental advocate, Greta thoroughly and thoughtfully researched the origination of the Plastic Free July concept and created both the resolution and slide-show presentation to the board for their consideration."

She made a presentation to fellow students during a summer jobs program about affordable housing—how it is defined and projects such as the Marinwood Apartments. She also learned to review draft materials for community meetings and distill the complex topics of housing law and fire science into digestible language.

"Greta's participation at community meetings has been invaluable; she has helped residents find the information they are seeking at open house meetings and assisted with meeting set-up," Julia said. "Her positive attitude, curiosity, and attention to detail stand out. She has excellent communication skills and a desire to support whatever the team needs with her strong work ethic."

Greta was awarded the National German Exam Scholarship in March. The scholarship is for U.S. high school students who exemplify academic excellence and interest in German language and culture. It included a three-week summer trip to Germany. "I see learning languages as a tool for communication," she said. "I'm considering majoring in comparative literature to hone my

communication skills, incorporating my experiences with German and Mandarin."

Her parents, **Anne Marie** and **Mike**, and brothers **Gus**, **Atticus**, and **Oscar** live in Terra Linda. She enjoys rock climbing in Marin and walking her German shepherd Sasha.

"I was inspired to become an intern for District 1 because I wanted to better understand issues related to affordable housing and climate change in Marin County," Greta said. "I hope I can take all that I've learned—especially values of thoughtful communication, strong teamwork, and the power of local government—and apply it in a future career related to climate solutions." ■

Who's New & Welcome!

Susan Barbour (Mill Valley), Friends of the Family Volunteer, Health & Human Services (HHS)

Elliot Briggs (Inverness), Search & Rescue Youth Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

Dillon Bryan (Mill Valley), Search & Rescue Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

Celine Buehl (San Francisco), Search & Rescue Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

Max Chan (Kentfield), Search & Rescue Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

Lilia Crain (San Rafael), Search & Rescue Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

Leo DeNunzio (Woodacre), Search & Rescue Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

Hind Eliyan (Pinole), California Epidemiologic Investigations Service Fellow, HHS

Nick Fletcher (Ross), Search & Rescue Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

Matt Ford (San Rafael), Employee Arts & Crafts Fair Aide, Human Resources

Jude Fuchs (Ross), Search & Rescue Youth Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

Megan Greene (San Rafael), Search & Rescue Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

Bruce Griffith (San Rafael), Search & Rescue Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

Ann Ivan (Greenbrae), Radio Communications Volunteer, Department of Public Works

William Javandel (Albany), Traffic Intern, Department of Public Works

Linda Meier (Corte Madera), Student Elections Ambassador Program Advisor, Elections Department

Bobby Panknin (San Rafael), Search & Rescue Youth Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

Linda Parmelee (Rohnert Park), Marin Center Volunteer, Cultural Services

Lesley Peters (San Francisco), Search & Rescue Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

Nature Pickard (Novato), Search & Rescue Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

Harrison Pollak (Oakland), Search & Rescue Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

Mia Pope (Novato), Search & Rescue Youth Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

John Seratt (San Rafael), Search & Rescue Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

Kelly Sloan (Berkeley), Search & Rescue Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

Kim Stephens (Novato), Pre-Law Intern, District Attorney's Office

Will Sumits (Fairfax), Volunteer Photographer, Human Resources

Calvin Tenney (Tiburon), Search & Rescue Youth Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

Madison Troy (San Rafael), Student Elections Ambassador, Elections Department

Alberto Vides Leon (San Rafael), Search & Rescue Youth Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

Dorothy Weaver (Kentfield), Volunteer Photographer, Human Resources

Noel Weir (Corte Madera), Search & Rescue Youth Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

Basil Willis (San Anselmo), Search & Rescue Youth Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

Volunteer Shares Love of Learning in One-on-One Tutoring Classes

By Diana Jones

Inspired by her father, Marin-Shares volunteer **Xania Bytof** of San Rafael has been an English tutor at the South Novato Library since February.

"I had been volunteering as an English tutor, teacher's assistant, etc., since my freshman year of college, but for a long time I didn't consider it as a potential career," Xania said. "After graduating from college, I was working in a job where I wasn't happy and didn't feel fulfilled. I was still volunteering as an ESL teaching aide at the time.

"When I thought about the things I truly enjoyed and looked forward to doing, volunteering in ESL classes was the first thing that came to mind," she continued. "I decided to enroll in an MATESOL (Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) program and pivot to teaching as my career."

Her volunteering stems from her father **Cory Bytof**, the City of San Rafael's sustainability program manager and a volunteer coordinator. While she was growing up he provided many opportunities to serve the community, inspiring her in 2013 to join the County of



Xania Bytof tutors a student at the South Novato Library.

Marin's Teen Girl Ambassador program. Today, Xania volunteers weekly with adults to help develop their English skills.

"We are so fortunate to have Xania tutoring in our One-on-One English Learners program," said her staff supervisor, Community Library Specialist **Cris Criollo** of the Marin County Free Library's South Novato branch. "She leads her classes with immense empathy and professionalism, bringing a lot of

joy and support to her students. Xania goes beyond our standard textbook by incorporating creative materials and relevant topics that help students feel seen, valued, and connected to the community."

Xania grew up in Marin with her father Cory and mother **Margaret Wallace**. She earned a bachelor's degree in international development studies from UCLA and master's from The School of International Training in Brattleboro, Vermont, where she got TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) education.

In her free time, she enjoys hiking throughout Marin, Cuban salsa dancing, and baking for friends and family.

"Since I serve with the same students one-on-one every week, we've really built up a good rapport," Xania said.

"Getting to know the English learners and seeing their confidence grow is by far the most rewarding part of volunteering at the library," she added. "It makes me happy to see students feel proud of their progress and put into practice all that we've learned together." ■



Parks Steward Smooths the Way for Visitors of All Abilities

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to doing as much as possible,” she said. “It’s a way to express my gratitude for access to the treasures open space provides and promote local biodiversity.”

Two years ago, after attending Redwoods Restoration, an event during which native ferns were planted in Roy’s Redwoods Preserve, Jayme offered to expand her efforts. Marin County Parks Volunteer Coordinator **Greg Reza** invited her to start raking the paths used by Roy’s Redwoods visitors of all ages and abilities.

“Helping out at Roy’s, in both restoring understory plants and raking, is immediately satisfying,” she said. “Both of these volunteer pursuits provide me with tremendous pleasure.”

She especially enjoyed planting native vegetation as part of the major restoration project completed in 2024 at Roy’s, which is located on Nicasio Valley Road in San Geronimo. The team effort “was extraordinary—magical, really,” she said. “Those plants were native understory plants curated for the area, and they will be there for years to come.”

Meanwhile, “Jayme rakes the new ADA pathway at Roy’s Redwoods twice a week, so people in wheelchairs and limited mobility have smooth access through the redwoods,” said Greg.

“She also removes invasive yellow star thistle at Terra Linda/Sleepy Hollow Preserve. Last year she removed 70 big bags full. She does this from late spring through fall, mostly in the heat

of summer when star thistle is in full bloom.

“Jayme is a team player,” Greg added. “She is in constant contact with fellow Roy’s Redwoods Preserve volunteer **Pat Carlone** and me to let us know what is happening on the preserve in real time.”

Jayme is a part-time professor of mathematics at College of Marin and also volunteers for the San Francisco–Marin Food Bank. An avid hiker, she averages eight miles daily with her rescue dogs Kit and Udo.

Jayme hopes volunteer efforts will continue to benefit future generations. Open spaces “will be more accessible to all users, as the paths will be clear, so people won’t have to worry about tripping while looking at the majestic redwoods,” she said. ■

Spanish Conversation Club Welcomes New Amigos

MarinShares volunteers who help with the Novato Library’s Spanish Conversation Club are meeting at the outdoor seating area of a nearby café while the library is being remodeled. Gathered at the Creekside Bakery patio are, from left, staff coordinator **Maria Lee Goodrich** with club members **Audry Van Hoven**, **Ron Bound**, and **Susan Machtinger**. The club is scheduled to move back to the refreshed Novato branch on September 1, and new participants are warmly welcome. Interested people are invited to drop in on Tuesdays from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. ¡Hasta pronto!



PHOTO BY MARIA LEE GOODRICH



PHOTO BY ANNE STARR

Event Helpers Contribute

MarinShares event aides **Marie Fitzgerald**, left, **Ruth-Louise Moran**, and **Veronica Morino**, and Marintern **Thu Ta** pose for a moment during a busy end-of-session celebration for students in the Career Explorers program. The quartet greeted explorers, guests, and county officials and distributed programs at the August 7 ceremony in Board of Supervisors chambers at the Marin Civic Center. They also helped set up the reception area, kept buffet tables neat, and assisted with clean-up. The three volunteers serve with Human Resources. Thu is an intern with the Probation Department, which manages the Career Explorer program. This summer, 44 students completed the practical and educational session. Host sites included 14 county departments and several local nonprofits.

Happy Anniversary

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

42 YEARS

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

25 YEARS

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

24 YEARS

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

22 YEARS

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

21 YEARS

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

20 YEARS

David Mitchell (San Rafael), Air Patrol Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

18 YEARS

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

17 YEARS

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

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

16 YEARS

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

15 YEARS

Michael Yuan (San Rafael), Search & Rescue Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

14 YEARS

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

13 YEARS

Barbara Byers (Novato), Shelver, Novato Library

Sandy Schering (San Rafael), Marin Center Usher, Cultural Services

Molly Williams (Mill Valley), Search & Rescue Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

12 YEARS

Annemarie Ambuehl (Novato), **Mary O'Hara** (Novato), Marin Center Ushers, Cultural Services

11 YEARS

MB Fribley (San Anselmo), **Claire Taylor** (San Rafael), Marin Center Ushers, Cultural Services

8 YEARS

Charles Viebrock (Novato), English Tutor, Novato Library

7 YEARS

Haven Allard (Berkeley), **Justin Buzon** (Novato), **Todd Law** (San Rafael), **Scott Van Hooser** (Tiburon), Search & Rescue Volunteers, Marin County Sheriff's Office

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

5 YEARS

Kendra Messer (Richmond), Workplace Coach, Health & Human Services

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

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

4 YEARS

Carol Bryan (Novato), **Ellen Domeny** (Kentfield), **Andrea Glass** (Inverness), **Kathleen Mullen** (San Rafael), **Roger Peters** (Mill Valley), **Mary Santora** (Novato), Senior Peer Counselors, Health & Human Services

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

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

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

3 YEARS

Sam Adkins (Mill Valley), **Nancy Deras** (San Rafael), **Stuart Pratt** (San Anselmo), Student Elections Ambassadors, Elections Department

Robert 'Bob' Dell (Tiburon), **Doug Kaye** (Kentfield), Public Information Office Photographers, Office of the County Executive

Vida Harband (Tiburon), Advisor, Student Elections Ambassador Program, Elections Department

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

2 YEARS

Sasha Acevedo (Novato), **Blooma Goldberg** (Mill Valley), **Alex MacKay** (San Rafael), Student Elections Ambassadors, Elections Department

J.R. Begg (Kentfield), **Elizabeth Grabowski** (Tiburon), **John Prince** (Sausalito), **Sasha Weinmann** (San Rafael), Marin Center Ushers, Cultural Services

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

1 YEAR

Reem Chaya (San Rafael), **Kira Costa** (Sausalito), **Zoe Hahn** (San Francisco), **Emerson Howard** (Tiburon), **Eloise Lenahan** (Mill Valley), **Saylor Macallister** (Novato), **Cece Sharp** (Mill Valley), **Elias Winton** (San Rafael), Student Elections Ambassadors, Elections Department

Pamela Cook (San Rafael), Student Elections Ambassador Program Advisor, Elections Department

Shanti Dhruva (Corte Madera), **Andrew Kousharian** (Corte Madera), **Benjamin Zimmet** (Mill Valley), Homework Helpers Interns, Corte Madera Library

Mario Esparza (Dixon), Air Patrol Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

Danelle French (San Anselmo), **Doug Frazer** (Lagunitas), Marin Center Volunteers, Cultural Services

Gracie Nauman (San Anselmo), Homework Helpers Interns, Fairfax Library

Christian Pantoja (Rohnert Park), Homework Helpers Intern, Civic Center Library

Danielle Peinado (Santa Rosa), Coroner Intern, Marin County Sheriff's Office

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

Paola Tziu Aban (Novato), Homework Helpers Intern, South Novato Library