

VOLUNTEER NOTES

Arts & Crafts Fair

Save the dates! The volunteer-supported Arts & Crafts Fair is Wednesday and Thursday, November 18 and 19, at the Marin Civic Center. The public is welcome.

MarinShares contributors include aide **Matt Ford**, supporting coordination, and artist **Annet Katan**, designing the fair poster. Now in its 26th year, the staff-founded fair showcases the creativity of county workers who participate on their own time. MarinShares volunteers have been involved in important behind-the-scenes roles since 2012. See photo, page 3.

Meals on Wheels Seeks Helpers

The Marin County Area Agency on Aging seeks volunteers to help Marin residents who receive home-delivered meals and attend congregate meals. Volunteers schedule and conduct assessments by phone and in person, facilitate enrollment, and assist in the office. For details, register for one of these informational meetings: either [Thursday, October 1](#), at 11:00 a.m., or [Tuesday, October 6](#), at 1:00 p.m. Questions? Contact [Cat Woods Williams](#) of the Health and Human Services Department, 415-473-3766.



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Former DA and Prosecutor Close Cold Cases

By Scott Harrop

It's hard to imagine a better pair to lead cold case investigations than former Marin County District Attorney **Paula Kamena** and former Marin County Deputy District Attorney **Linda Witong**.

Not content with decades-long careers in Bay Area law enforcement, the two attorneys came out of retirement in 2012 to volunteer their expertise at the request of then-Lieutenant **Jim Correa** of the San Rafael Police Department.



Paula Kamena and Linda Witong

PHOTO BY BOB DELL

"Jim asked if I'd be interested," said Linda, "I said yes, and then reached out to Paula and (fellow attorney) **Kit Mitchell** to see if they would be interested. They were." Their new office became known as Criminal Apprehension

Team for Cold Homicides, or CATCH. (Kit was part of the original team but branched out to specialize in parole hearings for the Marin DA's Office.)

Paula and Linda, both lifelong Bay Area residents, formed a bond working among the first generation of women district

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Horseback Volunteer Connects Parks Community

By Calla McBride

For MarinShares volunteer **Cara Gereau**, serving with the Marin County Parks Mounted Patrol is more than riding horseback. It's an opportunity to give back to the community she loves.

Cara has patrolled Marin since June 2025 as a friendly resource for visitors.

"It began with gratitude," Cara said. "I've spent so many hours on Marin's trails with my horses, and this open space has given me more than I can say."

Cara rides through County of Marin open space preserves greeting visitors, answering questions about rules, reporting trail hazards, and supporting safe interactions among hikers, cyclists, and equines.

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Cara Gereau

PHOTO BY MARSHALL GROSS

Horseback Volunteer Connects Parks Community

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“A lot of the job is simply being approachable,” she said. “When people break park rules, they often aren’t aware they’re doing so, or why the rule exists in the first place.”

Her staff supervisor, Open Space Park Ranger **Erica Frazier**, said Cara’s communication skills are exceptional. “Cara’s skilled approach talking with visitors on the preserve is key when she advises them of our county rules and regulations,” Erica said. “Her summaries of these reports are always kindhearted and professional.”

Erica also appreciates Cara’s sense of humor, recalling one patrol report where the volunteer joked with a mountain biker warning her to “watch out for those rangers” without remembering she was one.

“My favorite experience while volunteering is getting to know the diverse community of volunteers that the parks foster,” Cara said. “It’s a lovely, hopeful thing to be in the presence of such kindness and care.”

Originally from New York City, Cara relocated to San Francisco for her career before discovering the trails of the San Geronimo Valley through horseback riding. Drawn to the area’s beauty, she eventually made her home in West Marin.

Cara is a licensed marriage and family therapist who founded Equine Somatic Pathways, a program that trains professionals to incorporate horses into healing practices. She also teaches as an adjunct faculty member at the California Institute of Integral Studies.

In addition to her work and volunteering, Cara enjoys pottery, cooking with fresh ingredients from local farms, and spending time with her husband, two children, and their many animals.

She hopes to continue expanding her training program while volunteering on the trails.

To anyone considering volunteering with Marin County Parks, Cara offers simple advice: “Do it! You don’t need to be an expert at anything. You need to care about these lands and the people



PHOTO BY KATY LANGLOIS

Cara Gereau with her horse Sienna

who use them. Whatever you give, the parks give back more.” ■

To learn about volunteering in Marin’s open spaces, contact [Marin County Parks](#) Volunteer Coordinator [Greg Reza](#).

Fire Lookouts Tour Emergency Command Center

PHOTO BY JEFF DAVIDSON



Marin County Fire Dispatcher **Kaitlyn Teasley**, left, shares information with volunteer fire lookouts **Sean Seeley**, **James Harris**, and **John Perry** during a recent tour of the county’s emergency management center. Throughout fire season, lookouts on Mt. Tam and Mt. Barnabe interact daily via radio with dispatchers in San Rafael. During the tour, lookouts and staff connected faces to names. The MarinShares volunteers also observed the volume of behind-the-scenes activity at the dispatch center and learned more about what dispatchers do with the information volunteers provide during their shifts. As lookout **Jeff Davidson** observed about the efforts to support community safety, “We are better together!”

Volunteering Is Family Affair with Community Impact

By Diana Jones

For **Barry Crotty** of Santa Venetia, volunteering at the Marin Center is a family affair with community impact.

The experience “has been an education in community service,” the MarinShares volunteer said. “I didn’t realize what it takes for the Marin Center to produce the number of shows, events, and performances it does on an annual basis.”

“Barry brings a high level of enthusiasm for both the artists and the community supported by the Marin Center,” said his staff supervisor, Front of House Manager **Todd McQuade** of the Cultural Services Department. “He consistently arrives with excellent energy and a welcoming, composed demeanor that sets a positive tone for our guests.”

Barry, a Bay Area native, volunteers with his wife **Kay Crotty**. They have been ushers for three years.

“Another reason we joined was because Kay’s mom, **Cathy Pharis**, had been a volunteer prior to passing in 2012 for over 10 years,” Barry said.

Kay added: “I initially joined as it was a family tradition and soon discovered why my mom had volunteered as well, that is the simple enjoyment of meeting and volunteering with my neighbors with a similar spirit. We get to support



Barry and Kay Crotty

the county’s varied cultural events, appreciating the larger diverse group of individuals that make Marin so special.”

Barry has been a real estate broker for almost 40 years following his father, **Charles Crotty**. The couple have two sons, **Brendan** and **Ben**. Barry is a graduate of the University of Oregon and an avid rower with the Marin Rowing Association.

The Marin Center hosts various events throughout the year at its facilities

including the Showcase Theater, Exhibit Hall, fairgrounds, and the Veterans Memorial Auditorium. (The auditorium is closed for repairs and scheduled to reopen in January 2027.) Barry’s favorite event so far has been the Festival Independencia Salvadoreña.

“As a volunteer, versus being a spectator, I’m behind the scenes, arriving before an event begins,” Barry said. “Being a part of something special and making a contribution to that effort is a rewarding and enriching experience.”

“Barry adapts seamlessly to changing scenarios and unique event setups,” said Todd. “He handles troubleshooting gracefully under pressure and brings a supportive, calming presence to the team.”

“It’s always been about the people who volunteer, the paid staff, the performers, and the people in attendance who come to experience the events at the Marin Center Campus and because we live close,” Barry added. “I walk to and from the events which helps to stretch my legs.” ■

Interested in applying to usher at the Marin Center? Contact [Todd McQuade](#) of Cultural Services.

Volunteers Energize Arts & Crafts Fair

MarinShares volunteer **Matt Ford** smiles as he prepares for the Employee Arts & Crafts Fair coming up in mid-November. Matt applies his organizational skills behind the scenes as he confirms vendor reservations and tackles the event task list. Also supporting the 2026 pop-up fair is MarinShares volunteer **Annet Katan**, designer of the fair poster. The two-day fair is scheduled for Wednesday, November 18, and Thursday, November 19, at the Marin Civic Center cafeteria. The event is open to the public and features live music, one-of-a-kind gifts, and original art from 11:00 to 4:00 each day. Baked goods are sold Wednesday only—including the HR & Friends charity bake sale and custom cookies by a staff member who’s also a Food Network contest winner. The fair was founded by a small group of county workers in 2000. Now part of the county’s Employee Appreciation Program, the event highlights staff members’ hidden talents. Crafters, artists, and musicians take part on their own time. Save the dates and see you at the fair!



Former DA and Prosecutor Solve Cold Cases

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attorneys. They met in 1982, when Linda cross-examined then-Marin County Probation Officer Paula on a case.

Today, while doing pro bono cold cases, they continue to attend a homicide symposium given by the California District Attorney's Office on investigating and prosecuting homicides, as well as conferences put forth by Homeland Security, the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, the FBI, and the U.S. Department of Justice.

They were fortunate that local law enforcement agencies retained evidence of unsolved homicides going back to the 1950s. Starting with the oldest, the two MarinShares volunteers have now investigated more than 30 cases.

"The main change over the years has been the development of DNA analysis," Linda said. It is now possible to reveal a person's ancestral geographic origins, often linked to race or biogeographical ancestry, sex, eye color, and more. "It's improving all the time."

Paula modestly added, "We've actually had some success, with some cases already settled."

In one case from 1973, DNA evidence led to identifying an adult relative of the perpetrator, who was tracked down and recently convicted of first-degree murder. He is now serving time in prison. In another, a suspected murder was shown to be the result of an overdose; people at the party where the victim died dumped her remains on the beach to avoid being connected to drugs and death.

As former DA's Office staff members, Linda and Paula are expert in legal procedures. They read voluminous case files—including prior interviews and evidence—and recommend next steps. A particularly informative source has



Paula Kamena and Linda Witong

turned out to be retired detectives, who can shed insight beyond the written record.

Seeking resolution for victims' families is a natural follow up. "Our passion is to speak up for the victims," said Linda. Both were involved in the early days of advocating for victims' rights.

"It is now possible to reveal a person's ancestral geographic origins, often linked to race or biogeographical ancestry, sex, eye color, and more."

After studying criminology at Berkeley, Paula became a Marin probation officer following a year as a Marin Juvenile Hall counselor. She began law school at age 32, attending classes four nights a week while working full time. She went on to be a successful Marin County prosecutor, stressing a new emphasis on prevention and protection and co-founding innovative programs including Adult and Juvenile Drug Court, Mental Health Court, and the Sexual Assault Response Team.

Although she had never imagined politics in her future, in 1998 she was elected the first female district attorney in the Bay Area. "While it was great to be able to lead the office in a new and positive direction, working on cold cases gets us

back to what we really love," she said of her current involvement.

Linda's commitment traces back to her years as a law clerk, before formal victims' rights existed. Watching families of homicide victims cling to one another and sob in a courthouse hallway left a lasting mark. "Someone has to speak up for the victims," she remembers thinking.

Linda earned her degree in criminology at UC Berkeley and then attended law school as a night student while working at the U.S. Attorney's Office in San Francisco. At the Marin DA's Office, she served as an "expediter," specializing in which felony charges to file and calculating the resulting sentencing exposure.

Linda maintains an extraordinarily active professional life. She serves on the board of Soroptimist International of Novato and has held multiple roles at the United Nations, including advocacy adviser to the president of Soroptimist International and delegate for Soroptimist International to the Commission on the Status of Women in both New York and Geneva. She has been a speaker and moderator at UN conferences since 2013, contributed to reports assessing 30 years of progress on the Beijing Platform for Action at the UN in Geneva, and currently co-chairs the Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at the UN in Vienna.

Linda and Paula's volunteer efforts are widely appreciated in the Marin law enforcement community. "Their legal and investigative experience is vital to creating innovative ways to approach complex cold cases," according to Lt. **Brennan Collins** of the Sheriff's Office Specialized Investigative Unit. "Their passion is infectious and sets a standard of motivation for all of us to aspire to." ■

Who's New & Welcome!

Chloe Alizadeh (San Anselmo), Student Elections Ambassador, Elections Department

Angelyn Armistead (Martinez), Post-Bar Law Clerk, Public Defender's Office

Sharva Banker (Novato), Student Elections Ambassador, Elections Department

Giancarlo Boccasile (Castro Valley), Pre-Law Intern, District Attorney's Office

Grecia Castro (North Richmond), Clinical Intern, Health & Human Services (HHS)

Mark Crawford (San Pablo), Pre-Law Intern, Public Defender's Office

Diana Fitzpatrick (Larkspur), Volunteer Attorney, Public Defender's Office

Michelle Gantos (Tiburon), Volunteer *MarinfoNOW* Writer, Human Resources

Lilah Harrington (San Rafael), District 1 Intern, Board of Supervisors

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

Tobias Hochstetler (Tiburon), Search & Rescue Youth Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

Sophia Homs (Daly City), Pre-Law Intern, Public Defender's Office

Tyler Hummel (San Rafael), Clinical Intern, HHS

Ross Johnson (San Francisco), Search & Rescue Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

Tianu Koss (Mill Valley), Search & Rescue Youth Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

Sophia Lewis (Oakland), Social Work Intern, Public Defender's Office

Crystal Li (San Francisco), Child Welfare Intern, HHS

Sydney Lin (San Rafael), Student Elections Ambassador, Elections Department

Roxana Lucar Vidalon (Novato), Spanish Tutor, Novato Library

Imani McAfee (Pittsburg), Child Welfare Intern, HHS

Aislin Murphy (Belvedere Tiburon), Post-Bar Law Clerk, Public Defender's Office

Sarah Niederholzer (San Francisco), Social Work Intern, Public Defender's Office

Karen Orocio (Antioch), Post-Bar Law Clerk, Public Defender's Office

Martha Pina (Santa Rosa), Law School Intern, Public Defender's Office

Mikki Routheau (Santa Rosa), Masters in Social Work Intern, HHS

Derek Rusher (San Francisco), Post-Bar Law Clerk, Public Defender's Office

Solomon Schar (Mill Valley), Search & Rescue Youth Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

Madison 'Maddy' Silber (Corte Madera), Student Elections Ambassador, Elections Department

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

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

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

Roberto Walton (Novato), Search & Rescue Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

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

Sarah Weller Leipsic (San Rafael), Senior Peer Counselor, HHS

Stephanie Young (Mill Valley), OD Free Marin Volunteer, HHS

County Lauds Career Explorer Interns



PHOTO BY OCTAVIA RACY

Career Explorer interns, their guests, and staff from across the county organization celebrated a successful summer with a ceremony led by the Probation Department, which manages the explorer program. The 44 interns who completed the 2026 session heard tributes to the late Probation Chief **Marlon Washington**, who died suddenly in July. Chief Washington's sincere support of explorers and his dedication to service, justice, and faith were remembered. Former explorer **Carolina Zaragosa**, now a College of Marin staff member, gave the keynote address, which included heartfelt thanks to Probation staff and others who helped her change direction as a youth. "You are allowed to start again. Real strength is asking for support," she told current explorers. Intern **Myrna Escamilla Calderon** won the Dan Daniels Spirit of Service Award. Intern **Tyrell Smith** was the first recipient of a new award named for Chief Washington. Tyrell was honored for living up to the department's EPIC (excellence, professionalism, integrity, and community) principles. Referring to EPIC, Interim Chief Probation Officer **Edward Randle** told listeners that the C for community is essential, but C can also stand for courage. Feeling "self-doubt, fear, frustration is normal," he said, "but don't get stuck there. Step forward. Always have the courage to know you can do it." Probation staff members **Fatima Roldan**, **Candace Karren**, and intern **Thu Ta** helped plan and support the event.

Happy Anniversary

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

37 YEARS

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

19 YEARS

Rich Riechel (Mill Valley), Search & Rescue Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

14 YEARS

Linda Witong (San Rafael), Cold Case Investigator, Marin County Sheriff's Office

9 YEARS

Carlene McCart (San Rafael), **Kim Ruchamkin** (San Rafael), **Alison Steiger** (Novato), Marin Center Ushers, Cultural Services

William Timpson (Greenbrae), Search & Rescue Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

8 YEARS

Maureen Carlin (San Rafael), **Mary Lou Dibbern** (Mill Valley), **Stan Green** (Greenbrae), **Barbara Parkman** (Novato), **Patricia Prorok** (Novato), **Everil Robertson** (San Rafael), **Robert 'Bob' Robertson** (San Rafael), Marin Center Ushers, Cultural Services

Cassiopeia Kelly (Mill Valley), **Sal Munoz** (San Rafael), **John Van Hooser** (Tiburon), Search & Rescue Volunteers, Marin County Sheriff's Office

7 YEARS

Belle Guelden (Tiburon), **Jill Knowlton** (Novato), **Walter Lemmermann** (Sausalito), Patrol Volunteers, Marin County Parks

6 YEARS

Anthony Fedanzo (Corte Madera), **Milton Hyams** (San Rafael), **Robert Ireson** (Greenbrae), **Tom Jordan** (Corte Madera), **Adriana Rabkin** (Corte Madera), Radio Communications Volunteer Planning Team Members, Marin County Public Works (Public Works)

5 YEARS

Michael Cann (Mill Valley), **Ciara Cox** (Point Reyes), **Zadie Foskett** (Mill Valley), **David Grover** (Petaluma), **Dennis Hughes** (San Francisco), **Andromeda Kelly** (Mill Valley), **Nicole McConneloug** (Fairfax), **Amanda Mueller** (Larkspur), **Nick Slanec** (San Rafael), **Shea Sorchner** (Mill Valley), **Zoe Stephens** (San Anselmo), **Kelly Weidner** (San Rafael), Search & Rescue Volunteers, Marin County Sheriff's Office

4 YEARS

Daniel Greely (Novato), **Andrew Musselman** (Corte Madera), Radio Communications Volunteers, Public Works

Shannon Scutt (Mill Valley), **Leslie Weber** (Novato), Friends of the Family Volunteers, Health & Human Services (HHS)

3 YEARS

William Anton (San Rafael), Steward, Marin County Parks

Kathy Norwood (Fairfax), Meals on Wheels Client Assessor, HHS

Steve Waskow (Fairfax), Meals on Wheels In-Home Assessor, HHS

2 YEARS

Martha Frankel (Point Reyes Station), Volunteer Shelves, Inverness Library

Sharon Jones (Point Reyes Station), ESL Tutor, Point Reyes Library

Lexie Schmidt (Tiburon), **Ash Weir** (Corte Madera), Homework Helpers Interns, Corte Madera Library

Douglas Sides (San Rafael), Friends of the Family Volunteer, HHS

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

1 YEAR

Zoli Bassoff (San Rafael), Patrol Volunteer, Marin County Parks

Geneva Elias-Warren (San Francisco), **Amy Faulkner** (Mill Valley), **Theresa Gibbens** (San Rafael), **Lynn Hoerle** (Inverness), **Parker Kellman** (Mill Valley), **John Lang** (San Francisco), **Robert Lutolf** (Sonoma), **Ann Maddox** (Fairfax), **Mary Nicolini** (Novato), **Erin O'Brien** (San Rafael), **Dean Powell** (Mill Valley), **Robert Simon** (Henderson), **Ronald Theisen** (Novato), Marin Wildlife Watch Volunteers, Marin County Parks

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

Jane Gitschier (San Francisco), **Matt Herrmann** (San Rafael), Marin Civic Center Tour Docent, Cultural Services

Emeli Gonzalez (Novato), Homework Helpers Intern, Novato Library

Diana Jones (Novato), Newsletter Writer Intern, Human Resources

Joshua Lam (San Anselmo), **Edmund 'Neddy' Murray** (San Anselmo), **Wonjin Shin** (San Anselmo), Packet Assembly Interns, HHS

Rosie McAllister (Larkspur), **June McKeon** (Fairfax), **Nohemi Mena** (San Rafael), **Sienna Yang** (Tiburon), Student Elections Ambassadors, Elections Department

Derick Morgan (Oakland), Certified Law Clerk, Public Defender's Office

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

Emilie Strunsky (San Rafael), Homework Helpers Intern, Corte Madera Library

