



# The Volunteer View

The Monthly Newsletter for Marin County Civic Center Volunteers and Student Interns

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## DA's Intern Aspires to Advocate for Others

By Scott Harrop

**Maddie Thomas** is one of those rare people who knew, from an early age, what she wanted to do. "Since I was little I was always an advocate for people having a hard time, who didn't have as loud of a voice." The UC Davis senior, who is president of the UCD Pre-Law Association, hopes to attend law school in the Bay Area. She had already done "lots of internships," including district attorney experience in Yolo County, before she applied to the Marin County District Attorney's Office.

Her staff supervisor, Deputy District Attorney **Otis Bruce Jr.**, waxed enthusiastic. "I'm proud that I selected Maddie as a student intern. She impressed me in her interview as a college student with innate leadership, people, and organization skills." She served in the office multiple days a week over the summer, and continues for one or two days each week during the current term. Otis

singled out Maddie's character traits: "She's also a student with high moral and professional values dedicated to serving others."

These lofty ideals and achievements are accompanied by humility. Maddie said her duties include case preparation and taking notes in court. "The justice system is so overwhelmed in general. I just want to alleviate the work burden in some small way." She also feels a strong sense of community, having grown up in nearby Petaluma. Maddie's wish is to remain in the Bay Area. Otis commented on the "positive values that she's learned from her parents who are also professional community people in Marin."

For her part, Maddie speaks of the welcoming atmosphere and of a culture of community in the DA's Office. For his part, Otis summed it up this way: "She's a positive role model for future student volunteers."



PHOTO COURTESY OF MADDIE THOMAS

*Maddie Thomas*

It will be exciting to follow the career of this dedicated intern as she continues with her legal education and beyond. Maddie herself is quite sure where she wants to end up. "I want to be a judge," she says simply.

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## VOLUNTEER NOTES

### Resolved to Get Involved?

Do your resolutions for 2019 include giving back to your community, connecting with others, or helping the environment? We'd love to talk with you! Across the County of Marin's 23 departments, volunteers and interns have myriad roles. Possibilities include patrolling open-space trails, conducting forensic accounting investigations, processing legal case files, providing clerical help, consulting on projects, leading tours of the Marin Civic Center, tutoring students at Juvenile Hall, and more. Sometimes we can design a new role to match a candidate's experience and interests. For details and [to apply](#), visit the Civic Center Volunteers [website](#) or call 415-473-7407.

### Happy 40th, Civic Center Volunteers!

This year marks the big 4-0 for Civic Center Volunteers, one of the first centralized county volunteer programs in the United States. The program will be recognized during the year. Watch for updates in the *Volunteer View*.

# Student Lauds 'Incredible Opportunity' at Public Defender's Office

By Krishna Menon

*Krishna Menon of Florida interned at the Marin County Public Defender's Office last summer. He applied after hearing about the program from his aunt, who works in the county's Information Services and Technology Department. Now a freshman at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, NC, Krishna reflects here on his internship experience.*

Last summer I had an incredible opportunity to intern at the Marin County Public Defender's Office as one of their high school interns. The goal of this internship program is to give students a basic understanding of what the work of a criminal defense attorney entails. The 50-hour, on-your-own-time internship teaches critical legal thinking. The office also offers internship programs for college students, law school students, and post-law school interns.

Some of the benefits at the Public Defender's Office included watching real court cases as they proceeded, and being able to work with Chief Public Defender **Jose Varela**, my internship supervisor.

I learned to understand and deconstruct some of the complex legal concepts and vocabulary that we had seen in the courtroom.

In my time at the Public Defender's, I also learned a new legal concept every day, ranging from issues

rooted in constitutional law to more everyday issues, such as the term "hearsay" and understanding the components of a plea bargain.

Mr. Varela is one of the nicest people I have ever had the pleasure to meet, and one of the most intelligent to boot.



PUBLIC DEFENDER FILE PHOTO

*Krishna Menon*

On our first day, Mr. Varela gave me a legal pad with more than 100 blank pages. By the time I left the internship, every single one of those pages was filled with notes from debriefs and lectures, some of the legal work we had the opportunity to complete, and notes taken while observing cases in the Marin Superior Court.

One of the greatest parts of the internship was being able to interact with all the incredible people who volunteer, intern, and work in the Public Defender's Office and to feel their enthusiasm as they threw themselves into their work each and every day.

The high school internship program is centered on developing critical legal thinking skills to better prepare us for our studies in college and law school. One of the things I enjoyed most was that Mr. Varela did not give us the answers but focused on our ability to reach our own conclusions based on the facts. He put us in situations where we had to form answers on our own. This developed our critical thinking skills and moved the abstract into the practical.

My fellow high school interns and I soon formed a close bond, and coming into the office each day was guaranteed to be fun. Our time as interns taught us a variety of valuable skills that will no doubt be put to good use by those of us lucky enough to serve the Marin County Public Defender's Office.

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Internships are available in legal departments (the offices of the County Counsel, the District Attorney, the Public Defender, and at the Marin County Law Library). Students interested in the law may contact Civic Center Volunteers Student Internships Coordinator **Joy Fossett** at [JFossett@marincounty.org](mailto:JFossett@marincounty.org).

## Who's New & Welcome!

**Gabriellah Agar** (Novato), Rx Safe Marin Program Social Media Intern, Health & Human Services (HHS)

**Mary Lou Dibbern** (Mill Valley), Marin Center Usher, Cultural Services

**Peggy Hodel** (San Rafael), Marin Center Usher, Cultural Services

**Colleen Horowitz** (Mill Valley), Maternal Child Health Program Intern, HHS

**Denise Kovacik** (Sausalito), Public Defender Law Library Aide, Public Defender's Office

**Sandra Alicia Levin** (San Rafael), Marin Center Usher, Cultural Services

**Alondra Martin** (Petaluma), Legal Support Intern, District Attorney's Office

**Vicki Pennington** (Novato), Marin Center Usher, Cultural Services

**Michelle Perryman** (Cotati), Occupational Therapy Student Intern, HHS

**Sarina Silva** (Hayward), Adult Probation Intern, Probation Department

# County Volunteers Celebrated at Community Event

Civic Center Volunteers program participants were at the heart of Marin's largest gathering of nonprofits on January 10. The 26th annual Heart of Marin awards event was organized by the Center for Volunteer and Nonprofit Leadership (CVNL).

Civic Center Volunteers (CCV), which serves all County of Marin departments, is a member of CVNL.

This year, CCV nominated volunteer **Steve O'Keefe** and student intern **Nicole Fuches** for Heart of Marin Volunteer of the Year and Youth Volunteer of the Year honors in recognition of their exemplary service in county departments during 2018.

Steve is a Marin County Fire Department volunteer lookout who spotted the Irving Fire as it began on September 10, 2018, allowing firefighters to find the source quickly and probably averting a disaster. Steve is also a Marin County Parks patrol volunteer.

Nicole was an outstanding Board of Supervisors District 2 intern in 2018, applying her social media and outreach talents to a pesticide-reduction

campaign. She's also a Marin Teen Girl Ambassador with the Human Resources Department and a former summer reading advocate for the Marin County Free Library.

Meanwhile, the Marin County Sheriff's Office nominated two of its own for honors: Office of Emergency Services Auxiliary Volunteer **Frank Cox**, who's given over 7,500 hours in support of emergency preparedness, and intern **Quincy Webster**, a member of the Sheriff's Search and Rescue team.

As the Heart of Marin judges' decisions were announced, additional County of Marin connections came to light.

The overall CVNL Volunteer of the Year honor was won by **Jim Cleaves** for his extraordinary work at the Halleck Creek Ranch nonprofit. Meanwhile, Jim also happens to be a current CCV with the English Conversation Club at the Novato branch of the county library. And there's another county connection: Jim is retired from a career with Marin County Parks.

Every year at Heart of Marin, five youth winners are chosen. This year, one of the five was

**Adriana Golden** for her pro-literacy efforts with the Knowledge Is Power nonprofit. Like Jim, Adriana also has County of Marin links. She had one internship last year with the Public Guardian's Office in Health and Human Services, and another in 2017 with the Marin County Public Defender's Office.

Some 650 people gathered for the Heart of Marin awards event. Among them was District 2 Supervisor **Katie Rice**, Nicole's internship mentor. Sheriff's nominees Frank and Quincy were cheered on by Sheriff **Robert Doyle**, Lt. **Pierre Ahuncain**, and Emergency Services Coordinator **Tom Jordan**. Also attending in support of county honorees were Student Internships Coordinator **Joy Fossett** and Coordinator of Volunteers **Anne Starr**, both of Human Resources/CCV.

Congratulations, all!



PHOTOS BY ANNE STARR

*Civic Center Volunteers shone at the annual Heart of Marin awards event at the Marin Center Exhibit Hall. Pictured at top right: Volunteer of the Year Jim Cleaves and Youth Volunteer of the Year Adriana Golden. At left: Nicole Fuches, Steve O'Keefe, Adriana Golden, Frank Cox, and Quincy Webster -- all with connections to County of Marin programs and departments.*

# Happy Anniversary!

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

39 YEARS

**Connie Berto** (San Anselmo), Patrol Volunteer, Marin County Parks

37 YEARS

**Rich Carbine** (San Rafael), Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service/Auxiliary Communications Service (RACES/ACS) Volunteer, Sheriff's Office

25 YEARS

**Steven Post** (San Francisco), Lookout, Fire Department

22 YEARS

**BK Cooper** (Novato), Rigging Manager, Department of Public Works

16 YEARS

**Faith Brown** (Tiburon), Steward, Parks

13 YEARS

**David Albert** (Tiburon) and **Sudy Schneider** (Tiburon), Stewards, Parks

12 YEARS

**Jean Walker** (San Rafael), Library Beyond Walls Liaison, Marin County Free Library

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

9 YEARS

**John Teasley** (Corte Madera), Tutor, Corte Madera Library

**Galen Leeds** (Tomasles) and **Ben Sampietro** (Tomasles), Volunteer Firefighters, Fire

8 YEARS

**Geoffrey Dugmore** (Petaluma), Sheriff's Chaplain, Sheriff's Office

**Kathryn Mitchell-Ball** (San Rafael), Patrol, Parks

6 YEARS

**Diana Johnson** (Fairfax), Aide, Fairfax Library

5 YEARS

**Kurt Ellison** (San Rafael) and **Richard McGrath** (San Rafael) Stewards, Parks

4 YEARS

**Ruth Nash** (Larkspur), Environmental Steward, Parks

**Ray De Leon** (Greenbrae), Ombudsman, HHS

**Robert Ireson** (Greenbrae), RACES/ACS Volunteer, Sheriff's Office

**Jeff Davidson** (Novato), Incident Management Team Volunteer, Fire Department

**Helen Imrie** (San Rafael), Administrative Support Aide, Behavioral Health and Recovery Services, HHS

3 YEARS

**Donna Lew** (Henderson, NV) and **Robert Simon** (Henderson, NV), Wildlife Picture Index Project, Parks

**Tamayo Sato** (San Rafael), Spanish Conversation Club

Leader, Novato Library

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

2 YEARS

**Willow Taraja** (Boyes Hot Springs), Library Beyond Walls Liaison, Marin County Free Library

**Roy Fidler** (San Rafael), Tour Docent, Cultural Services

**Judith Santos** (San Rafael), Teen Program Intern, Civic Center Library

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

**Rebecca Wilson** (Fairfax), English Tutor, Novato Library

**Loretta Farley** (Point Reyes), Library Program Assistant, Point Reyes Library

1 YEAR

**Meredith Burrell** (Novato), **Joan Clemmons** (San Rafael), **Arlene Heitner** (Mill Valley), and **Kenneth Sharpe** (San Anselmo), Ombudsman Volunteers, HHS

**Sharon Clark** (Novato), California Room Writer and Researcher, Civic Center Library

**Satvik Namburu** (San Rafael), Teen Volunteer, South Novato Library