

The Volunteer View

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

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VOLUNTEER NOTES

Thankful for You

In this season of gratitude, the county's volunteer and intern programs celebrate the people who participate all year. Thanks to the community members who volunteer their skills, the students who serve as interns, and county staff who liaise with volunteers and mentor students, more services and programs are available to Marin residents.

Last year, 8,662 volunteers and unpaid interns served a grand total of 210,049 hours.

Board of Supervisors President **Kate Sears** said interns and volunteers "help raise spirits and infuse the county workforce with a renewed sense of mission and purpose. Thank you for sharing your energy and enthusiasm with us."

Holidays

County offices will be closed on Thursday, November 28, and on Friday, November 29, in observance of Thanksgiving.

Sandy Wargo Brings Public Information Officer Skills to Fire Team

By Shirley Trimble

For the past year, **Sandy Wargo** has been a team member and Public Information Officer (PIO) specialist with the North Bay Incident Management Team (NBAY-IMT), which trains under the command of the Marin County Fire Department. A recent retiree, she brings expertise from a fire department career.

NBAY-IMT is composed of several specialists who can respond quickly during an emergency that affects a large group of people—such as a fire, earthquake, or flood. The team

is called out by CAL FIRE and Marin County Fire responds.

"Sandy's experience from her previous role at the Novato Fire District brings a wealth of knowledge to the North Bay Incident Management Team. On top of her abilities, she also brings a positive attitude and tremendous enthusiasm," said her staff supervisor, Deputy Fire Chief **Mark Brown**.

As the PIO, Sandy is the go-to person in charge of keeping up-to-the-minute

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PHOTO COURTESY OF SANDY WARGO



Sandy Wargo and incident team members meet with the fire chief during the Kincaide Fire in October.

L to R: *Phil Johnson, Spencer Robert, Michael St. John, Jim Irving, Marin County Fire Chief Jason Weber, Sandy, and Jeff Davidson.*

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Recent Grad Tells Others' Stories

By Tiyona Pariani

A passion for human connections led **Natalie Dybeck** to intern with the Marin County Human Resources Department where she profiles fellow interns and volunteers for the *Volunteer View*.

Writing newsletter articles allows her to learn individuals' stories; she gets to see from their point of view and discover how their challenges, passions, and triumphs brought them to excel in their county volunteer roles and internships.

These interactions are among Natalie's favorite parts of her own efforts.

"Interviews are powerful," said Natalie. "While I am asking questions and learning their stories, they often realize and learn something about themselves."

Natalie recently returned to her childhood town of Novato after spending the last four years in Los Angeles where she attended UCLA. She studied political and

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Sandy Wargo

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incident information available to team members, the media, and the public.

"I need to know the area involved and connect with the Office of Emergency Services, local incident representatives, or CAL FIRE personnel assigned to me," she explained. "I ask a lot of questions about vegetation, where people need to go, when streets are closed and reopened, animal care, and vouchers. I research maps and location details, and then need to be prepared to talk with the media and

the public face-to-face. Information changes throughout the incident, so I need to remain prepared and alert."

Every year there are four team trainings, which are announced without warning to simulate a real emergency. "We are serving the public the best that we can," said Sandy.

Each Monday team members check in by text and email to notify the rest of the team of their availability. And all year long Sandy's gear (overnight items, laptop, printer, uniform, snacks, bottled water) is ready to go.

There are about 60 team members who are always ready for service. "We have a good understanding of team members' individual capabilities, which helps us all do a better job," claimed Sandy. "I love it and I love the team. I feel very lucky to be able to participate and keep my skills sharp."

The team was activated in October for the Kincade Fire, Sonoma

County's largest wildfire, and in July for the Sand Fire in Yolo County, a small incident with 12 team members responding. (The number of responders depends on the size of the incident.)

As a fire prevention specialist and PIO for the Novato Fire District for 18 years (retiring in 2018), Sandy gained experience interacting with the Incident Team.

For example, Novato was activated out-of-county for CAL FIRE during the North Bay wildfires for two weeks in October 2017. At that incident, Sandy was on camera and posted about the fire for social media.

After retiring, Sandy enjoyed her first cruise with friends to the Mexican Riviera. She is on the 40th reunion planning committee for Vintage High School in Napa. She is also remodeling her American Canyon home and volunteering for a special event for the American Canyon Parks Foundation.

PHOTO BY RAY DWELLY



Sandy Wargo

Recent Grad

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interpersonal communications and graduated in June.

A desire to give back to Marin led Natalie to begin interning with the county's wellness program in the Human Resources Department. That's where she met **Anne Starr**, coordinator of volunteers, who serves as Natalie's supervisor for the newsletter role.

"Natalie is a patient listener and an outstanding storyteller," said Anne. "She brings excellent communications skills. It's great to have her on the newsletter's editorial team."

Meanwhile, Natalie began a temporary job in August with the Marin County Fire Department to work on a wildfire prevention parcel tax measure for the March 2020 ballot.

In October, she was hired as United States Congressman Jared Huffman's district scheduler. "I'm really enjoying that position," said Natalie. "It's a perfect mix of communications, event planning, and politics and it allows me to stay in Marin and find more ways to give back to my community. Plus I can continue to write for Anne and Joy (**Joy Fossett**, student internships coordinator)."

Besides school and work, Natalie enjoys baking treats, creating edible art for friends and neighbors, hiking, playing soccer, and watching movies.

Natalie's biggest gain from interning is hearing all the personal stories and getting to shine light on people's hard work. One article that has particularly stuck with her was about some of the county's volunteer chaplains. "Their

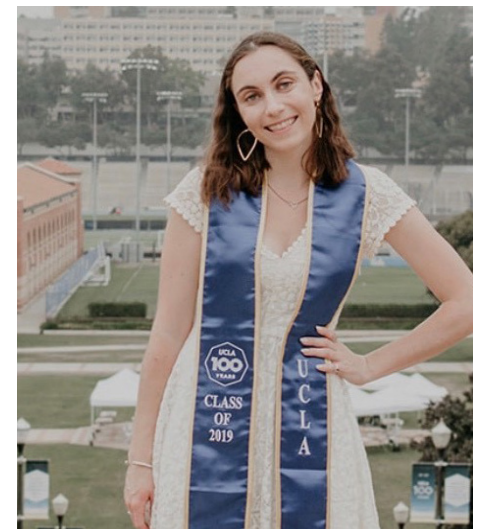


PHOTO BY FATIMA ELREDA

Natalie Dybeck at UCLA

work is not easy—it's hard and can be sad and yet here they are volunteering and spreading love and support to so many in Marin," says Natalie. "It was lovely getting to show them just a bit of thanks by featuring them."

Outreach Intern Helps People at Risk for HIV

By Pilar Goodman

Vicente Garcia helps people in Marin find the resources they need to live well despite being HIV-positive. He has been a Latino Outreach Assistant intern with the Health and Human Services Department in the HIV/AIDS program for eight months. HIV strains don't discriminate by skin color, nationality, or sexual orientation. More than 36.7 million people are HIV-positive. It can be monitored and controlled, and people have lived symptom-free for decades.

The program looks for at-risk people and helps them access resources such as the medication PrEP, a treatment that can prevent HIV. HIV-positive clients are given therapy, help with food and housing, and referral to additional organizations, including immigration attorneys.

Vicente is motivated to help and educate people at risk.

"Vicente is a person who always has a positive attitude, always says, 'Let's

do it,' and always has a client-centered approach," said **Adrian Acosta**, a program manager at the Health and Human Service Department and Vicente's internship supervisor.

"I enjoy helping my Latino community like I enjoy helping the LGBTQ+ community in the County of Marin," Vicente said.

Vicente is also a coordinator for an LGBTQ organization in Marin called GALA, which provides a safe space where anyone can discuss their worries with complete trust.

Vicente enjoys traveling, dancing, and hanging out with friends during his time off.

"One of the greatest challenges I've faced is coming to this country and having to learn a whole new language (English) and a new culture that was completely different from my own," he said. Born and raised near Mexico City, he is a high school graduate and

has formal training as a laboratory technician. He is working toward a certificate in phlebotomy and plans further study in public health.

HIV Outreach has helped him become more compassionate. "I've been very happy and feel very fortunate to have been able to learn many new things that I didn't think I'd be able to do," he said.



PHOTO BY ANDREA TERRONES

Vicente Garcia

En Español

Escrito por Pilar Goodman

Vicente Garcia está ayudando a la población de Marín encontrar los recursos que necesitan a pesar de ser VIH-positivo. Él ha sido un Latino Outreach Assistant intern con el departamento de Salud and Servicios Humanitarios en el programa de VIH/CIDA por ocho meses. El virus del VIH no discrimina ni por el color de piel de uno, nacionalidad, o orientación sexual. Mas de 36.7 millón de personas son VIH positivo. Puede ser monitoreado y controlado, personas han vivido décadas sin síntomas.

El programa busca a personas en riesgo y los ayuda a encontrar recursos como le medicina PREP, un tratamiento que ayuda a prevenir el VIH. Personas con VIH reciben terapia, ayuda con comida y vivienda, y recomendaciones a otras organizaciones incluyendo abogados de inmigración.

Vicente está motivado a ayudar y educar a personas en riesgo. "Vicente es una persona que siempre tiene una actitud positive.

Siempre dice, "Vamos a hacerlo," y siempre tiene un enfoque centrado en el cliente," dijo **Adrian Acosta**, el director del programa en un departamento de Salud y Servicios Humanitarios y el supervisor de Vicente.

"Yo disfruto ayudar a mi comunidad Latina y la comunidad LGBTQ+ del condado de Marín," Vicente dijo.

Vicente también es el coordinador de una organización LGBTQ+ en Marín llamada GALA, cual provee un hogar seguro para que cual quier persona pueda hablar sobre sus problemas/preocupaciones con confianza.

A Vicente disfruta viajar, bailar, y salir con sus amistades en su tiempo libre.

"Unos de los grandes desafíos que he enfrentado al venir a este país es tener que aprender un idioma nuevo (ingles) y una cultura completamente diferente a la mía," él dijo. Nacido y crecido un la Ciudad de Méjico, él es un graduado de secundaria, y tiene entrenamiento como técnico de laboratorio. Él está tratando de obtener su certificado en flebotomía y planea continuar sus estudios en salud pública.

HIV Outreach lo ha ayudado a tener más compasión. "Me siento muy feliz y muy afortunado de poder aprender nuevas cosas que yo no pensé que pudiera ser," él dijo.

Translation by interns **Michael Tellechea** and **Andrea Terrones**

Happy Anniversary!

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

23 YEARS

Drusilla Miller (Novato), Lifelong Learning Reader, Novato Library

20 YEARS

Phyllis Fitzpatrick (Stinson Beach), Aide, Stinson Beach Library

12 YEARS

Sue Mayerchak (Novato), Senior Peer Counselor, Health & Human Services (HHS)

11 YEARS

Richard Sievers (Healdsburg), Air Patrol Volunteer, Sheriff's Office

10 YEARS

James Campbell (Belvedere), Steward, Parks;
Jay Hubert (San Rafael), Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services/Auxiliary Communications Service (RACES/ACS) Volunteer, Sheriff's Office

9 YEARS

Charles Campbell (Corte Madera), Chaplain, Sheriff's Office; **Susan Hewlett** (Bolinas), Senior Peer Counselor, HHS; **Jerry Riessen** (Tiburon), Steward, Parks; **Montserrat Sthymmel** (San Rafael), Aide, Civic Center Library

8 YEARS

Katharine Darlington (San Anselmo),
Lucio Gonzalez (San Rafael), Stewards, Parks

7 YEARS

Dennis Conway (San Rafael), Marin Civic Center Tour Docent, Cultural Services

6 YEARS

David Jeffries (Rohnert Park), Incident Management Team Volunteer, Fire Department

5 YEARS

James Irving (Fairfax), Incident Management Team Volunteer, Fire Department

4 YEARS

Brian Crawford (San Anselmo), Researcher and Writer, Civic Center Library; **Lindsey Going** (San Rafael), Steward, Parks; **Daniel White Sr.** (Larkspur), Chaplain, Sheriff's Office

3 YEARS

Lawrence Enos (Inverness), **Sally Hutchinson** (Inverness), English as a Second Language (ESL) Tutors, Point Reyes Library; **Michael Simon** (Tomales), Volunteer Firefighter, Fire Department

2 YEARS

Whitney Hoyt (San Rafael), Education Consultant, Public Defender's Office

1 YEAR

Vicente Garcia (San Rafael), HIV Outreach Assistant Intern, HHS; **Pilar Goodman** (Ross), Newsletter Writing Intern, Human Resources; **Kathleen Safford** (Mill Valley), Ombudsman, HHS

Who's New & Welcome!

Dana Bagis (San Jose), Literacy Tutor-Reading Buddies Intern, Marin City Library

Katya Crawford (Kentfield), Marin Teen Girl Ambassador, Human Resources (HR)

Sierra Cusick (Woodacre), Marin Teen Girl Ambassador, HR

Rory Daly (Larkspur), Marin Teen Girl Ambassador, HR

Catherine Farhner (San Rafael), Marin Teen Girl Ambassador, HR

Leah Fullerton (Mill Valley), Marin Teen Girl Ambassador, HR

Abbie Gould (San Rafael), Literacy Tutor-Reading Buddies Intern, Marin City Library

Zianah Griffin (San Anselmo), Restitution Intern, Probation

Rachel Hay (Rohnert Park), Adult Probation Intern, Probation

Erin Heckelman (San Rafael), Literacy Tutor-Reading Buddies Intern, Marin City Library

Leon Hunting (Sausalito), Financial Abuse Specialist Team Volunteer, Health & Human Services (HHS)

Ali Iqbal (Novato), Literacy Tutor-Reading Buddies Volunteer, South Novato Library

Amanda Isaacs (Folsom), Archivist Intern, California Room, Civic Center Library

Dina Johnson (San Rafael), Marin Teen Girl Ambassador, HR

Theo Jones (Novato), English Tutor, Novato Library

Pamela Juckas (Novato), Friends of the Family Volunteer, HHS

Camille Krejdosky (Novato), Marin Teen Girl Ambassador, HR

Jenny Le (San Jose), Literacy Tutor-Reading Buddies Intern, Marin City Library

Rosa Leguria (San Rafael), Literacy Tutor-Reading Buddies Intern, Marin City Library

Rebecca Mansergh (San Rafael), Teen Shelver, Novato Library

Bianca Martinez (San Francisco), Certified Ambulatory Perianesthesia (CAPA) Nursing Student, HHS

Carys Matthews (Corte Madera), Marin Teen Girl Ambassador, HR

Devika Menon (San Rafael), Marin Teen Girl Ambassador, HR

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

Amelia Minchin (Mill Valley), Marin Teen Girl Ambassador, HR

Jessica Onick (Novato), Library Beyond Walls Liaison, Marin County Free Library

Jose Oropeza (San Francisco), Literacy Tutor-Reading Buddies Intern, South Novato Library

Ashley Pan (Moraga), Literacy Tutor-Reading Buddies Intern, South Novato Library

Katie Rasmussen (San Geronimo), Literacy Tutor-Reading Buddies Volunteer, Point Reyes Library

Hannah Reiter (San Rafael), Marin Teen Girl Ambassador, HR

Bryanna Ribeiro Mesquita (Novato), Literacy Tutor-Reading Buddies Intern, South Novato Library

Sabrina Robinson (San Francisco), Literacy Tutor-Reading Buddies Intern, Marin City Library

Sophia Rocha (Greenbrae), Marin Teen Girl Ambassador, HR

Molly Rowe (San Rafael), Literacy Tutor-Reading Buddies Intern, Marin City Library

Zelina Roxas (Novato), Literacy Tutor-Reading Buddies Intern, South Novato Library

Xander Santos (San Rafael), Friends of the Family Volunteer, HHS

Chris Solorzano (Novato), Teen Shelver, Novato Library

Alexandra Souza (San Rafael), Marin Teen Girl Ambassador, HR

Elijah Tolentino Medios (Daly City), Literacy Tutor-Reading Buddies Intern, South Novato Library

Sophie Zlatunich (Corte Madera), Marin Teen Girl Ambassador, HR