

VOLUNTEER NOTES

We Remember

Sandy Walker, who had two volunteer roles with the Marin County Sheriff's Office, passed away in June of cancer.

Sandy began volunteering as a pilot for the Sheriff's Civil Air Patrol and later doubled her contributions by becoming a Sheriff's chaplain. For over 10 years, Sandy was a fierce advocate for both units, constantly recruiting and striving to make them the best they could be. She responded at a moment's notice to complex death scenes and natural disasters.

Her calming influence and kind words were a welcome help to people in distress. "Sandy enjoyed being around the MCSO family and was an honored guest at the annual Christmas party," said Sheriff's Lt. **Sean McKrell**. "She is sorely missed by all she touched as a volunteer for the county."



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Nurse Joins Covid-19 Front Line

By Natalie Dybeck

In mid-March the world shut down, Covid-19 was declared a pandemic, and many were left feeling helpless and scared. **Valerie Aden-Lindsay** recognized the threat and extreme stress the healthcare system and many of her friends in healthcare were about to face.

She wanted to help, and with her background as a former UCSF operating room nurse, she quickly registered for the California Health Care Corps. Since May, Valerie has been volunteering up to two days a week with the Marin Medical Reserve Corps (MMRC) as a Covid-19 swabber/tester.

No stranger to volunteering, Valerie spent the last 20 years helping at her daughter's schools and with the PTA. She has served on medical mission trips with Operation Rainbow, which provides children and young adults in Mexico with orthopedic surgeries they desperately need. Recently she began volunteering at the North Marin Community Services food pantry in addition to her efforts with MMRC.

"Since May, Valerie has volunteered almost 200 hours over 60 shifts at Covid-19 testing sites throughout Marin," said MMRC Senior Program Coordinator **Anne Carta** of the Health



PHOTO COURTESY OF VALERIE ADEN-LINDSAY

Volunteer nurse Valerie Aden-Lindsay in PPE during a Covid-19 testing shift.

and Human Services Department (HHS). "Her contributions go above and beyond the call of duty. We are so grateful for volunteers like Valerie who support these critical response efforts!"

"Valerie's dedication, professionalism, and friendly nature are uplifting for all of us who work with her, as well as for the community we serve," added her staff supervisor, HHS Senior Department

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High School Intern Learns About Levees

By Clariss Ajanel

After a conversation with her mom, Terra Linda High School senior **Amy Muithya** decided to apply for an internship with the Marin County Department of Public Works' Flood Control Water Conservation District. (The district's mission is to reduce the risk of flooding for the protection of life and property.)

"My mom told me that when she bought her home, she realized our neighborhood was prone to flooding, and she had to pay for flood insurance," Amy said. "But she didn't know that the perimeter levees that protect us are deteriorating — until she read about this problem in the Santa Venetia newsletter. She learned that a

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Nurse Joins Covid-19 Front Line

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Analyst **Kristen Seatavakin**. “Long-term, reliable volunteers have enabled the county’s Covid-19 emergency response to be much stronger.”

Valerie’s shift starts with setting up tables and chairs outside, checking supplies, and donning her PPE. “When I first started, we used to have to encourage clients to come and get a test, and many times we would finish before 3:00 p.m.,” said Valerie. “Now the lines for testing are unbelievable, and at my last shift we didn’t end until 4:30 p.m.”

The most rewarding part of volunteering has been ‘making a connection, even if briefly, with the clients who come for a test.’

Long lines aren’t the only challenge. Testing is done outside and PPE’s plastic-like material does not breathe well, proving uncomfortable on hot days. In addition, Covid tests are not always

comfortable, especially for children. “Some kids are really amazing, better than some adults,” said Valerie, “but others are going to get upset and squirm. There are also a lot of people watching them, which raises the parents’ and kids’ anxieties.”

Despite the hurdles, Valerie has been instrumental in keeping Marin residents as safe as possible. She said the most rewarding part of volunteering has been “making a connection, even if briefly, with the clients who come for a test. And getting to know the MMRC team and my swabbing partners has been such a gift during what would be a very isolating time. I love coming to my shifts and feel like I’ve gained as much from this volunteer work as I’ve given.”

In addition to volunteering, she enjoys hiking with her husband of 27 years, Kent, and her daughter Megan, a recent Goucher College graduate with a bachelor’s degree in peace studies. Valerie



PHOTO BY VALERIE ADEN-LINDSKY

Valerie Aden-Lindsay, off duty.

also likes traveling, playing with her rescue dog Charlie, watching British television shows and movies, watching her husband cook, and reading mystery novels.

For details about medical corps MMRC volunteering, contact MMRC Coordinator **Anne Carta**, ACarta@marincounty.org.

High School Intern Learns About Levees

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\$6 million levee improvement project was mostly paid for by FEMA and the county, leaving \$1 million for residents to pay.” Amy’s internship started in June and focused on the Gallinas Levee Upgrade project proposed by the county to reconstruct the timber-reinforced berm (TRB), also known as flood walls, in Santa Venetia. The TRB is deteriorating, and without reinforcement a huge storm could flood the neighborhood, as happened in the 1900s.

Amy spent most of her internship as a liaison for Senior Program Coordinator **Gerhard Epke**, her internship supervisor.

“Amy’s internship has been unique in that she has been working on a variety of complex and intractable flood-control

issues within her own neighborhood,” said Gerhard. “I hope that this has given her a deeper understanding of public policy and useful professional experience as she embarks on college and a career path of her own.”

Outside the internship, Amy participates in social justice work, especially when it is something she is part of, like helping her Santa Venetia neighborhood. She also babysits a toddler and is participating in her second year at a regional occupation program civil engineering class, where she was learning to build sheds before quarantine. She hopes to use her education and extracurricular studies to guide her focus in college. “I hope to be a policy maker because I am upset about the corruption involved in many political decisions,” Amy said. “I would



PHOTO BY USA MUITHYA

Amy Muithya

strive to improve the circumstances for marginalized communities and move towards our sense of ‘fair’ and ‘justice.’”

To learn about internship opportunities, contact Marininterns Coordinator **Joy Fossett** at JFossett@marincounty.org.

Volunteer Brings Cheer to Her Peers

By Scott Harrop

Twenty years ago when she was “only” 69, **Genny Duffin**, who was living alone at the time, was urged by her daughter to “get out and do something,” so she interviewed for a volunteer opportunity with Civic Center Volunteers (now MarinShares: Marin County Volunteers).

Genny originally visited five elderly clients in a day, for about an hour each. She would take them out to shop or to appointments, but eventually that ended because of insurance concerns. From there, she moved on to become a Senior Peer Counselor with the Health and Human Services Department (HHS). Genny took a five-week training with HHS, graduated with a Senior Peer Counseling certificate, and has served in that role for over 10 years.

Clients are referred to the county by other agencies, assessed by program staff, and then assigned to volunteer counselors. Before Covid, Genny had weekly hourly visits with clients. At present, she makes phone calls to check in. She also attends a weekly group supervision for fellow counselors led by her supervisor, Mental Health Registered Nurse **Rachel Gila** of the HHS Helping Older People Excel (HOPE) and Senior Peer Counseling program. During the pandemic shutdown, team meetings are virtual.

As a peer counselor, Genny provides emotional support to clients in different settings: skilled nursing facilities, assisted living facilities, and people’s homes. Many of these seniors get very few visits from friends and relatives. “They’re

happy to see me,” Genny says simply. That goes for residential facility staff, too. “Everybody knows me there.” A current client just celebrated her 101st birthday; Genny brought her a birthday cake.

Many of her clients are confused and hesitant at first: “Why are you coming here?” they ask. She explains that she knows what it’s like to want someone in your household – someone to talk to. Genny is familiar with dementia. Her mother suffered from the disorder. Some of her clients can’t talk, or don’t even know there’s anybody around. Genny calls on them anyhow. “When I touch their hand they smile, they turn around and look at me. Then they know you’re there. They feel.” This makes the Covid lockdown particularly challenging, as she cannot currently visit face to face.

Born and raised in San Francisco, Genny moved to Marin to be with her daughter. She since has moved to Sonoma yet continues her volunteer role in Novato. Her roommate, **Sybil Janssen**, helps with transportation, and with her special project – “My village!” – consisting of Christmas decorations outside her mobile home. Genny adds one little house every year to join the merry-go-round, Ferris wheel, and blowups of Santa and reindeer.



PHOTO BY SYBIL JANSSEN

Genny Duffin at home with Bailey.

Her supervisor, Rachel, describes Genny as “a down-to-earth, positive-minded, independent person who is very giving, caring, and committed to her clients and the Senior Peer program,” adding, “She takes interest in other Senior Peer Counselors’ clients and gives feedback in the group.”

Genny’s volunteer service not only brings companionship to her clients but also gives her a sense of purpose. She would actually feel guilty if she did not get out and talk with them. “I enjoy it!” she says.

Interested in volunteering with a county department? Email MarinShares Coordinator **Anne Starr**, AStarr@marincounty.org.

Where Are They Now?

We recently heard from former Marinerns who are starting careers:

Former Board of Supervisors District 4 intern **Summer Cassel** began a new job this month as a district representative for California Senator **Mike McGuire**. She does constituent casework, including contacting state agencies on behalf of citizens. “This has been huge during

Covid-19, as many people are having problems with EDD (the Employment Development Department),” she said. “I also organize and sit in on meetings that the senator has with constituents and organizations in Marin, and do what I can to answer constituent questions.” She added that the state District 2 office “is happy to provide any resources that we can to constituents.”

Rachel Hay, who was an intern for six months with the Probation Department’s Adult Division, joined the San Diego Sheriff’s Department in June. Currently attending the San Diego Regional Academy, she said her internship had



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Where Are They Now?

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an influence. As a Marintern, she talked with staff and went on ride-alongs. She said the strong female role models “inspired me to get out of my comfort zone and apply for the San Diego Sheriff’s Department.” She encourages others to intern with the Probation Department because “there are so many officers you can learn from, and a non-sworn side with amazing people that also have great careers.”

Former intern **Noah Marty**’s 2016 internship in Supervisor **Katie Rice**’s office sparked his interest in government and politics. “I got my first hands-on experience with policy and learned so much about how government offices function,” he said. A high school senior at the time, he conducted research on issue areas and policy decisions. Now attending Sacramento State University, he serves as student body president!

He especially appreciated the support of his staff mentor, Board Aide **Nancy Vernon**.

“No matter what questions I had, Nancy was available to answer them, and she was dedicated to making sure the intern experience was a good one.”



Who’s New & Welcome!

Langdon Alvord (Forest Knolls), Fire Lookout, Marin County Fire

Genevieve Cantin (Sausalito), Marin Teen Girl Ambassador, Human Resources

Katherine Chuang (Corte Madera), Tobacco Education & Prevention Intern, Health and Human Services (HHS)

Annika Danne (Mill Valley), Tobacco Education & Prevention Intern, HHS

Emerson Erving (Mill Valley), Marin Teen Girl Ambassador, Human Resources

Christianna Gatti (San Rafael), Teen Leadership Crew, Fairfax Library

Kimberly Gonzalez Nicacio (San Rafael), Marin Teen Girl Ambassador, Human Resources

Mira Greathouse (Mill Valley), Marin Teen Girl Ambassador, Human Resources

Phoebe Greathouse (Mill Valley), Marin Teen Girl Ambassador, Human Resources

Jackie Halberstadt (Belvedere Tiburon), Marin Teen Girl Ambassador, Human Resources

Jackie Herzog (San Rafael), Friends of the Family Volunteer, HHS

Ramy Mounika Karuturi (San Ramon), Data Analytics Intern, HHS

Naedy Mendoza Rodriguez (San Rafael), Marin Teen Girl Ambassador, Human Resources

Isabelle Nicandri (San Rafael), Marin Teen Girl Ambassador, Human Resources

Solena Ornelas (Colorado Springs), Literacy Tutor/Reading Buddies Intern, Point Reyes Library

Fanny Peregrina-Abel (San Anselmo), Nursing Student Intern, HHS

Rich Petovello (Ross), Veterans Outreach Aide, HHS

Olivia Pezullo (San Rafael), Marin Teen Girl Ambassador, Human Resources

Amelia Putnam (Citrus Heights), Nursing Student Intern, HHS

Happy Anniversary!

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

25 YEARS

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

16 YEARS

Steve Wilson (Mill Valley), Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service/Auxiliary Communications Service (RACES/ACES) Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff’s Office (MCSO)

14 YEARS

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

13 YEARS

Richard Sievers (Healdsburg), Air Patrol Volunteer, MCSO

12 YEARS

Jay Hubert (San Rafael), RACES/ACES Volunteer, MCSO

James Campbell (Belvedere), Steward, Marin County Parks (Parks)

11 YEARS

Susan Hewlett (Bolinas), Senior Peer Counselor, HHS

Charles Campbell (Corte Madera), Sheriff’s Chaplain, MCSO

Jerry Riessen (Tiburon), Steward, Parks

9 YEARS

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

8 YEARS

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

7 YEARS

James Irving (Fairfax), Incident Management Team Volunteer, Marin County Fire

6 YEARS

Brian Crawford (San Anselmo), California Room Researcher and Writer, Civic Center Library

Daniel White Sr. (Larkspur), Sheriff’s Chaplain, MCSO

Lindsey Going (San Rafael), Environmental Steward, Parks

5 YEARS

Sally Hutchinson (Inverness), English as a Second Language Tutor, HHS

Michael Simon (Tomales), Tomales Station Volunteer Firefighter, Marin County Fire

3 YEARS

Kathleen Safford (Mill Valley), Ombudsman Volunteer, HHS

2 YEARS

Leon Hunting (Sausalito), Financial Abuse Specialist Team Volunteer, HHS

Xander Santos (San Rafael), **Pamela Jukas** (Novato), **Carolyn Rebuffel Flannery** (San Rafael), Friends of the Family Volunteers, HHS

1 YEAR

Emily Gallegos (Corte Madera), **Sophia Pillitteri** (Fairfax) School to Career Tobacco Prevention & Education Interns, HHS

Tanaya Alford-McEwen (San Rafael), **Nineveh Winton** (San Rafael), Tobacco Prevention & Education Interns, HHS

Jhazmy Ball (Rohnert Park), Youth Working for Change Intern, Probation Department