Top Supervisor Welcomes Volunteers
By Tiyona Pariani

For over 30 years, Community Library Specialist Kerry Livingston has worked at the Marin County Free Library Stinson Beach branch, connecting kids to new books, helping patrons, maintaining the free flow of information, and coordinating library volunteers.

For her dedication to volunteers, Kerry is the Marin County Supervisor of Volunteers of the Year. She welcomes people of all ages, providing orientation, assignments that match their interests, and recognition. Many contribute for years in roles that vary from shelving books to helping in the library’s garden.

“The success of the volunteer program at the Stinson Beach Library branch is due to Kerry’s ingenuity, positive energy, and sustained dedication to making the library a place where everyone in the community has a role,” said Madeline Bryant, senior librarian and Kerry’s supervisor. “As a supervisor of volunteers, Kerry is organized, detail oriented, and incredibly thoughtful. I’ve often heard her say ‘matter-of-factly, ‘How can I help?’ to an individual or a group. That is so appreciated!”

Kerry began working for the county in 1984 as a substitute librarian in West Marin.

“I knew I would enjoy working with people and books, but little did I know I would be a stand-up comedian, psychiatrist, Xerox mechanic, computer whiz, homework helper, community events scheduler, book reviewer, bouncer, and volunteer supervisor!” said Kerry. “I have

Outstanding Mentor of Interns Honored
By Tiyona Pariani

Regardless of her own busy schedule, Nursing Services Manager Marsha Grant always made time to mentor nursing student interns in the Health and Human Services Department (HHS). For her effective mentoring, Marsha is the 2021–2022 Marin County Supervisor of Interns of the Year.

Marsha, who recently retired from her career in public health, regularly incorporated students into real-life projects, including communicable disease work, preparedness work, flu-shot clinics, and Covid-19 response. She also developed a training program for infection control and intervention during the pandemic.

She provided clinical oversight to nursing interns, created valuable learning opportunities, and expanded opportunities by inviting her HHS colleagues to host interns, too.

She connected students with the Marin community and taught historical perspective on public health nursing programs.

“Marsha Grant has advanced the field of public health in Marin County by creating positive, meaningful learning environments for student nurses,” said

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Veteran Taps Life Experience, Helps Fellow Vets

By Marjorie Grannan

MarinShares volunteer Matt Ford grew up in Long Beach and after high school began to study at Long Beach City College for a degree in technical theater. But he “wasn’t satisfied with where I was going and wanted to serve and to better myself.” He enlisted in the Marine Corps.

His stint driving trucks in Light Armored Vehicle units included training in Europe’s Eastern Bloc Georgia, and six months in Iraq at the beginning of the Iraq War in 2003.

Trauma during his years as a Marine, from his best friend’s death — which “really messed me up for a long time” — to his substance abuse led to more trauma. He became homeless, his life a roller coaster of friends’ couches, shelters, tent cities, and sleeping bags.

Now clean, sober, and stable, Matt gives back to the recovery community and to fellow military veterans.

His MarinShares volunteer title is Veterans Office Administrative Support Aide. He serves with the Marin Veterans Services Office in the Health and Human Services Department. Matt’s weekly role is ad hoc and includes getting assistance for those in legal trouble by placing them with the recently established Veterans Court, and locating legal aid, housing, treatment programs, and other resources to help each veteran. He is converting office documents and files for computer storage, and also greets visitors.

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“Matt describes the county staff members at the Veterans Services Office as “fantastic — they give their all.”

“Matt is a combat veteran and has been an outstanding volunteer in many, many ways,” said his staff supervisor, Veterans Service Officer Sean Stephens. “He’s been a volunteer here since 2012. He helps with whatever issues I have. He’s digitized our records and brought us into the 21st century. He is amazing. He does everything to move this office forward.”

He’s happily housed in a subsidized San Rafael apartment and loves his part-time job with a boutique florist, Marin Floral Studios.

Matt is back in community college. He loves knowledge and is taking a different approach to higher education this time, studying basic education at Santa Rosa Junior College before moving on toward a psychology degree.
been in charge of the Stinson Beach branch since 1991, and it has been wonderful to work in such a nurturing environment.”

Kerry grew up at a boys’ boarding school in the Santa Ynez Valley near Santa Barbara. Her father was headmaster and her mother the librarian. Kerry worked in school libraries as a youth. Today, she lives in Inverness with her husband, a historian. She has three adult children and two grandchildren. Her grandchildren, Lupine and Cirrus, keep her busy while her daughter is attending library school.

Kerry is an artist and will exhibit her work in January at the Stinson Beach Library. She reads weekly on local radio stations KWMR 90.5 Pt. Reyes, 89.9 Bolinas, and 92.3 The Valley, and supports the local affordable housing group, Community Land Trust of West Marin (CLAM).

She also is involved with Friends of the Bolinas Stinson Beach Libraries, an all-volunteer organization supporting library collections and programs.

Reflecting on her experiences, Kerry said, “If you are faced with difficulties, perhaps something that seems overwhelming, the best thing to do is take it one step at a time, reach out and be honest and things will work out. People appreciate it when you are yourself, not trying to be someone else. It gives them the self-confidence we all are looking for.”

The Marin County Board of Supervisors honored her with a resolution of commendation on April 26. During the ceremony, Library Director Lana Adlawan told how Kerry encourages and thanks volunteers. “She cares about them,” Lana said. “Thank you, Kerry, for making the Stinson Beach Library seem like a second home for residents, volunteers, and library staff. Your dedication to county service and your love of working with people and valuing them is clear. Thank you for all you bring to the Marin County Free Library team.”

County employees interested in creating opportunities for volunteers may contact MarinShares: Marin County Volunteers Coordinator Anne Starr.

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Dr. Lisa Santora, the county’s deputy public health officer and Marsha’s former supervisor. “She is one of the hearts of Public Health and the CAPA program. She has energetically shared her passion for serving our most vulnerable residents with future generations of public health nurses.”

Marsha’s effectiveness was enhanced by support from department leaders. “The leadership and guidance of Benita McLarin, Dr. Matt Willis, and Dr. Lisa Santora has been such a joy and tremendous learning experience,” Marsha said. “I know a lot of my peers and colleagues have endured incredible stress and met many challenges we could not have anticipated in Marin. But look what we have accomplished! A safer, stronger community where the public truly comes first. I have serious respect.”

The Marin County Board of Supervisors honored Marsha as the 2021–2022 Supervisor of Interns of the Year at an April 26 ceremony emceed by Angela Nicholson, the then-Acting Human Resources Director. The resolution of commendation signed by Board President Katie Rice noted that Marsha possesses “commitment and initiative in equal measure, warmly encouraging the next generation of public health professionals and supporting the health and well-being of all people in Marin.”

Initially working for the County of Marin as an extra-hire detention registered nurse in 1998, Marsha eventually became nursing services manager and moved from the jail to public health preparedness.

Marsha grew up in Massachusetts. She graduated nursing school in Boston at 20 and worked in teaching hospitals until moving to California.

She had planned to retire in 2020, but “then came Covid-19, and suddenly, everything I had drilled, exercised, and trained for culminated for this moment,” said Marsha. “So I stayed a few extra years, in part to utilize the skills and training gained through my career of 45 years as a nurse, but also because I had to watch this unfold and I had to be part of it. I know it’s still ongoing, but I really needed a life change. It is not easy to leave the work you love, really a lifetime career that is so rewarding.”

These days, swimming is Marsha’s passion. She has been training as a water safety instructor since retiring in March. She also loves painting and creating dioramas, and plans to start a business and get her work into galleries. She also is ready to travel and spend more time with family and friends. Marsha is the “mom” of three cat fur babies.

County employees interested in creating student internships may contact Marinterns Coordinator Joy Fossett.
Who's New & Welcome!

Sofia Aronovsky (San Rafael), Administrative Support Intern, Health & Human Services (HHS)
Landy Chi-Chable (San Rafael), Pre-Law Intern, Public Defender’s Office
Colin Eilerman (Novato), High School Intern, District Attorney’s Office
Devin Guinney (Mill Valley), Pre-Law Intern, District Attorney’s Office
Regina Stella de Castro Hecht Chamma (San Francisco), Law School Intern, District Attorney’s Office
Amanda Hogin (San Rafael), Pre-Law Intern, District Attorney’s Office
Stanton Klose (San Rafael), California Room Aide, Civic Center Library
Shyla Lensing (Corte Madera), Restrictive Covenant Project Intern, Board of Supervisors
Benjamin Lidsky (Davis), Summer Law Clerk, County Counsel’s Office
Daniel Marsh (Mill Valley), Fire Lookout, Marin County Fire
Calla McBride (Corte Madera), Newsletter Writer Intern, Human Resources
Melody Mitchell (Larkspur), Marin County Fair Volunteer, Cultural Services
Joseph Moore (Ross), Law School Intern, Public Defender’s Office
Xareni Ortega Sanchez (Vallejo), Pre-Law Intern, Public Defender’s Office
Julia Pelletier (San Anselmo), Pre-Law Intern, Public Defender’s Office
Savannah Porteus (Mill Valley), High School Intern, District Attorney’s Office
Ava Puppo (Novato), Records Management Intern, Community Development Agency
Elena Redoni (Point Reyes Station), Teen Aide, Point Reyes Library

Jonah Rongstad (Corte Madera), Teen Programming Class Presenter, Corte Madera Library
Stanislav Sarber (San Rafael), Native App Ally Tester, Information Services & Technology Department
Shannon Scott (Mill Valley), Friends of the Family Volunteer, HHS
Rebecca Sherry (Tiburon), High School Intern, District Attorney’s Office
Gianna Taormina (San Francisco), Law School Intern, Public Defender’s Office
Daniela Torres (Rohnert Park), Suicide Prevention Youth Action Team Intern, Board of Supervisors
Francisco Vilela (San Rafael), Law School Intern, Public Defender’s Office
Rachel Weir (Corte Madera), Summer Law Clerk, County Counsel’s Office

Docent-Led Tours Are Back

On the fourth floor of the Marin Civic Center, volunteer docent Spencer Michels, below right, shows a model of the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed campus to the first tour takers since the pandemic shutdown. Spencer led the public tour on June 3 for Kensi Lewis and Randy Lewis, who enjoyed hearing all about the architecturally significant Civic Center, a historic landmark. MarinShares docent-in-training Toni Lobsenz, left, shadowed. For details about Friday morning walking tours, see the Cultural Services Department website. Learn how you, too, can get eye level with the building’s blue roof, see Wright-designed furniture built by San Quentin inmates, enjoy views, and hear the complicated and scandalous history of the building’s creation. Are you interested in leading tours? Contact MarinShares Coordinator of Volunteers Anne Starr, 415-473-7167.

Volunteers Boost Health

Sara Delgado and Ava Lawrence are among the volunteers who supported the recent Fruit and Veggie Fest sponsored by the Health and Human Services Department (HHS). They helped at the kids’ area and the smoothie bike station (a stationary bike with an attached blender operated by pedal power). Festival goers learned tips for healthy eating and active living while sampling healthy treats at the Health and Wellness Campus on Kerner Boulevard in San Rafael. Interested in helping at HHS events? Contact HHS Volunteer Coordinator Tara Clark, 415-473-3515.
Happy Anniversary

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

37 YEARS
Jerry Foster (Novato), Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service/Auxiliary Communications Service (RACES/ACS) Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff’s Office (MCSO)

25 YEARS
Stuart Dake (Novato), RACES/ACS Volunteer, MCSO

24 YEARS
Linda Comella (San Rafael), Patrol Volunteer, Marin County Parks

20 YEARS
Doug Kunst (Danville), Fire Lookout, Marin County Fire
Linda Novy (Fairfax), Patrol Volunteer, Marin County Parks

14 YEARS
John Newman (San Rafael), Fire Lookout, Marin County Fire

12 YEARS
Michael Fischer (Mill Valley), RACES/ACS Volunteer, MCSO
Maria Gregoriev (San Rafael), Susan O’Brien (Mill Valley), Financial Abuse Specialist Team (FAST) Volunteers, Health & Human Services (HHS)

10 YEARS
Paula Kamena (San Rafael), Volunteer Cold Case Investigator, MCSO
Amory Willis (Sausalito), Patrol Volunteer, Marin County Parks

7 YEARS
Marie Fitzgerald (Mill Valley), Event Aide, Human Resources

6 YEARS
Pamela Ross (Greenbrae), Newsletter Copy Editor, Human Resources

5 YEARS
Elizabeth McKee (Mill Valley), Volunteer Archivist and Caltrans Historian, Civic Center Library

4 YEARS
Milton Hyams (San Rafael), RACES/ACS Volunteer, MCSO
Sandy Wargo (American Canyon), Public Information Officer Volunteer, Marin County Fire

2 YEARS
Clariss Ajanel (Greenbrae), Newsletter Writer Intern, Human Resources

Sofia Casano (Novato), Harita Kalvai (San Rafael), Kate Lane (Kentfield), Teen Leadership Crew, Marin County Free Library
Deborah Gregor (Novato), Administrative Aide, Human Resources
Rebecca Hurwitz (San Rafael), Nutrition Wellness Data Management Project Intern, HHS
Scott Smith (San Rafael), Steward, Marin County Parks

1 YEAR
David Balderama (San Rafael), Copy Editor Intern, Human Resources
Jonathan Bernstein (Corte Madera), Civic Center Tour Docent, Cultural Services
Ken Brownfield (Novato), Jerry Foster (Novato), Radio Communications Volunteers, Department of Public Works
Michael Fischer (Mill Valley), Patrol Volunteer, Marin County Parks
Maura Nakahata (San Francisco), Epidemiology Fellow, HHS
Frederick Schultz (Marshall), Volunteer Tomales Firefighter, Marin County Fire

Lookout Spots Structure Fire

A Mill Valley house fire was extinguished quickly, thanks in great part to a MarinShares volunteer on duty atop Mt. Tam on June 1. “I was finishing my eight-hour shift at Marin County Fire’s Mt. Tamalpais Fire Lookout when I saw a dark column of smoke coming from a house fire near Camino Alto in Mill Valley,” said Lookout Volunteer David Atkin. He radioed details to Marin County Fire’s Woodacre headquarters. “At the same time, I heard Mill Valley units start to get dispatched for a possible vegetation fire in the same area. This is likely because citizen 911 callers saw smoke in the hills and didn’t understand that thick black smoke is typical for a structure fire with lots of chemicals and oil, whereas a vegetation fire tends to have lighter colored smoke.” David, a retired fire captain who has volunteered as a lookout with Marin County Fire since 2012, was “impressed at how fast Mill Valley Fire and other local agencies were able to mitigate the fire hazard and protect surrounding homes and hillsides.”