

## Board Celebrates Outstanding Volunteers, Interns, and Staff

The Marin County Board of Supervisors will recognize the Volunteer of the Year, Intern of the Year and fellow honorees at 1:30 p.m. Thursday, June 6, in Board chambers at the Civic Center. Everyone is welcome to attend.

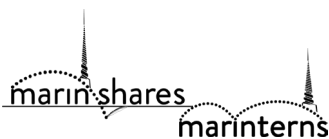
The 2023–2024 Volunteer of the Year, Intern of the Year, Volunteer Team of the Year, Intern Team of the Year, and outstanding staff supervisors of volunteers and interns will be announced.

Human Resources Director **Christina Cramer** will emcee, and Board President **Dennis Rodoni** will preside.

“Recognizing outstanding County of Marin volunteers and interns is a highlight of the year,” said Board President Rodoni. “I’m proud to sustain a tradition that has been unbroken since the Board founded the central volunteer program in 1979. My colleagues and I look forward to congratulating this year’s individual and team honorees—and, by extension, thanking all volunteers, interns, and their staff liaisons active in county departments.”

## Holiday

County offices will be closed for Juneteenth on Wednesday, June 19.



### STAFF

**Anne Starr**, Coordinator of Volunteers  
415-473-7167 • anne.starr@marincounty.gov  
**Joy Fossett**, Student Internships Coordinator  
415-473-7447 • joy.fossett@marincounty.gov

### VOLUNTEERS

Writers: **Natalie Dybeck, Max Gehm, Ellie Gilbert, Marjorie Grannan, Scott Harrop, Calla McBride, Tiyona Pariani, Alice Wolf** | Photographers: **Bob Dell, Bill Johnston Jr., Doug Kaye, Gregg Turner, Brian Wilk** | Copy Editor: **Pamela Ross** | Copy Editor Intern: **David Balderama** | Graphic Design: **Eleanor Lau** | Intern Writing Coach: **Ed Remitz** | Administrative Aides: **Deborah Fox, Deborah Gregor** | Cartoonist: **John Donaghue**

## Intern Learns Leadership Skills, Sets Sights on Fire Service Career

By Calla McBride

Marintern **Daisy Kessler** is a lead recruit in Marin County’s Fire Innovation, Recruitment, and Education (FIRE) Foundry program. She joined in December 2022 as a basic recruit and has since advanced to a leadership role helping new recruits on the fuels crew.

“It is such an honor to be trusted as a mentor and leader for people, and not one I take lightly,” she said. “A huge portion of the fire service is the cycle of mentoring and being mentored yourself, and as I had so many people to look up to, emulate, and help me as an entry-level recruit I know it’s important to pay that forward.”

Daisy applied for the role after a college counselor recommended it. She attends College of Marin 10 hours a week, taking Emergency Medical Responder, EMT, fire technology, and kinesiology classes.

She hopes now to become a firefighter for her full-time career. Daisy stressed



PHOTO BY LOUIS CHOY

Fire Capt. Darrell Galli, Daisy Kessler, and Fire Chief Jason Weber smile during the graduation ceremony last December for the most recent FIRE Foundry cohort.

the program provides her with vital career skills, and she found love for people she met while working.

*Continued on page 3*

## High School Students Make Positive Impacts on Local Environment

By Marjorie Grannan

Every year at Terra Linda High School in San Rafael, 32 incoming freshmen dedicate their high school years to the Marin School of Environmental Leadership (MSEL), an environmentally focused school within a school that emphasizes building leaders for a just and sustainable world.

For Marinterns **Lennon Brandt** and **Jackson Scollan**, applying for this program as eighth graders meant dedicating themselves to learning new skills to enhance their futures. Now seniors,

they chose to intern together with Marin County Parks.

Their internship supervisor is Principal Natural Resources Planner **Jon Campo**. “This has been our first year partnering with the MSEL program,” Jon said. “I mentioned to Jackson and Lennon at the beginning of the year that we needed to be flexible as we figured out how to create a meaningful internship for them. The internship has been great! Over the last eight months, Jackson and Lennon have learned about a variety of parks

*Continued on page 2*

## High School Students Make Positive Impacts on Local Environment

Continued from page 1

projects, including cataloging thousands of images off cameras for the Marin Wildlife Watch, removing invasive French broom plants on Ring Mountain, and monitoring western pond turtles.”

“French broom can develop into a fire hazard and is an invasive species that disturbs native species,” Lennon explained. “We removed them with our hands and with a special broom-pulling tool.”

That strenuous assignment completed, “our next job is to categorize and count the turtles,” Jackson said.

“What really impresses me about Jackson and Lennon is their ability to remain flexible no matter what type of project they are assigned, as well as their sense of curiosity about the natural world,” said Jon.

Students in MSEL’s junior year are required to practice entrepreneurship. Lennon and Jackson were intrigued by classmate **Collette Treewater’s** idea of making guitar picks out of used gift and

credit cards. Their business, EcoPlay, established Lennon as head of communications and marketing, Jackson as CFO, and Collette as CEO. Within three months, Jackson said, they made \$1,000. Lennon added, “We advertised the picks on social media and in person at events around Marin County. It was a great learning opportunity.”

What’s next?

Lennon plans to attend UC Santa Barbara, while Jackson is considering business colleges to major in business and environmental policy. Jackson has been captain of the Terra Linda High lacrosse team for three years and that, along with football, is a desired component of his continuing education.

Both students are intent on applying their experience and knowledge, Lennon says, to create a positive change in the ecology and future of Marin County and beyond.

“Len and I are contributing to the movement for environmental change in



PHOTO COURTESY OF JACKSON SCOLLAN

Marinterns Jackson Scollan and Lennon Brandt, pictured at Ring Mountain, are first in a new Marin County Parks internship for Terra Linda High students.

Marin,” Jackson added. As a Marintern serving with county parks staff, “I’ve met some great people and am really in awe of the work they do.” ■

## Ambassadors Encourage Peers to Vote

PHOTO BY BOB DELL



Marinterns **Nancy Deras** and **Owen Hubbard** chat with a fellow teen about the benefits of pre-registering to vote during the Bon Air Community Spring Fair in Greenbrae on May 18. While Marin County elections traditionally have excellent turnout, participation by Marin’s youngest voters—those aged 18 to 24—lags behind other age groups. To address the gap, Nancy, Owen, and more than 40 of their peers are active on the Marin County Registrar of Voters Student Elections Ambassadors team. They make presentations and hold friendly conversations on campuses and at community events. Nancy, a San Rafael High student, and Owen, who attends Marin Catholic, shared a table with the League of Women Voters at the spring fair.

# Intern Learns Leadership Skills, Sets Sights on Fire Service Career

Continued from page 1

“My favorite part of being a **FIRE Foundry** recruit has got to be the friendships I made through this program—meeting people who became family over my first year,” she said. “It is truly what makes this program so special.”

The foundry includes features such as an optional earn-as-you-learn program to learn chainsaw skills and other fuel-reduction management techniques.

Program Coordinator **Mimi Choudhury** oversees Daisy’s role and the entire FIRE Foundry program.

Daisy’s skills shine, Mimi said. “Daisy consistently models leadership skills, great communications, and work ethic. She has an amazing ability to help foster a team amongst her peers. She is welcoming to new recruits and encourages everyone to do their best.”

Daisy grew up in Baltimore, Maryland, with her grandparents, and moved to Fairfax at age four. She attended Archie Williams High School. When not

working, Daisy enjoys traveling, hiking, running, camping, or lying in the sun with friends. She has high hopes for her career and the FIRE Foundry program’s future.

“Something I want to see in the years to come is many more different people and perspectives in the fire service,” she said. “I hope this program continues to grow and more are created throughout California and beyond—once people see that not only does this program work, but it also is so important and can help guide so many people beyond Marin County.”

The FIRE Foundry is a workforce development program designed to support recruits through career exploration in fire services while strengthening their competitiveness for future employment as firefighters—or in related careers in medicine, public safety, and environmental conservation. Marin County launched the foundry in 2020 to use



PHOTO BY MIMI CHOUDHURY

FIRE Foundry recruits Daisy Kessler, left, and Berlynn Vargas attend a Wildland Academy training.

new technology to reduce wildfires and provide skill development for populations often underrepresented in the fire services sector. ■

## Happy Anniversary

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

### 45 YEARS

**Michael St. John** (Fairfax), Search & Rescue Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff’s Office (MCSO)

### 30 YEARS

**Robert Eichstaedt** (Larkspur), Environmental Steward, Marin County Parks

### 25 YEARS

**Eric Zeller** (Rohnert Park), Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service/Auxiliary Communications Service (RACES/ACS) Volunteer, Marin County Fire

### 21 YEARS

**John Polman** (Corte Madera), Volunteer Driver, Marin County Fire

### 14 YEARS

**Sean Seeley** (San Anselmo), Fire Lookout, Marin County Fire

### 12 YEARS

**David Atkin** (San Anselmo), Fire Lookout, Marin County Fire

### 11 YEARS

**Frank Woolard** (Greenbrae), Air Patrol Volunteer, MCSO

### 9 YEARS

**Stan Green** (Greenbrae), Financial Abuse Specialist Team (FAST) Volunteer, Health & Human Services (HHS)

### 6 YEARS

**Deborah Fox** (Corte Madera), Event Aide and Administrative Aide, Human Resources

**Lynn Merlo** (San Rafael), Preservationist, Corte Madera Library

**Ann Shores** (Corte Madera), RACES/ACS Volunteer, Marin County Fire

### 4 YEARS

**Bryan Hendon** (Fairfax), **Michael Pechner** (Fairfield), **Steve Quarles** (Mill Valley), **Robert Rowlands** (Mill Valley), Fire Lookouts, Marin County Fire

### 3 YEARS

**Bruce Bartel** (Novato), **Charles Benet** (Tiburon), **Dirck Brinkerhoff** (San Rafael), Radio Communications Volunteers, Department of Public Works

### 2 YEARS

**Jalynne Allen** (San Rafael), Seeds of Hope Volunteer, HHS

**Lea Del Pomo** (San Rafael), Seeds of Hope Photographer, HHS

**Michelle Funez** (Novato), Friends of the Family Volunteer, HHS

**Melody Mitchell** (Larkspur), Marin County Fair Volunteer, Cultural Services

**Lee Notowich** (Ross), FAST Volunteer, HHS

**Tula Peltz** (Mill Valley), School to Career Intern, Board of Supervisors

**Jonathan Posner** (San Rafael), Marin Center Volunteer, Cultural Services

### 1 YEAR

**Olivia Arens** (San Rafael), Teen Leadership Crew, Novato Library

**Caroline Foster** (Corte Madera), High School Intern, Registrar of Voters

**Judy Sauté** (Novato), Event Aide, Human Resources

**Amelia Smith** (Novato), Teen Shelves, Novato Library

**Terri Tired** (Novato), Marin Center Volunteer, Cultural Services

# Public Defender Intern Learns Nuances of California Law

By Alice Wolf

PHOTO BY DOUG KAYE



Jessica Peñuela poses near a Lady Justice poster in the Public Defender's Office.

From her native country of Colombia to Marin County, Marintern **Jessica Peñuela** has used her passion for law to help families and individuals in need.

Active as a bilingual intake intern with the Marin County Public Defender's Office since last November, Jessica is learning to guide clients through the immigration process.

Her motivation to work in law came from living in Colombia and seeing how women who needed legal help often went unheard.

"The women don't usually have the opportunity to say, 'This is wrong' or 'I need help'—or when they need help,

there is no one to help," Jessica said. She was inspired to use her love of helping others to study law and then work in public defender offices in Colombia. She has aided women, children, and victims of abuse. "My role is to start with them, understand their problems, and try to come to a conclusion on what I can do to help," Jessica said.

While learning about legal processes in Marin, Jessica's life experience equips her to guide people.

"She has helped our attorneys and clients tremendously," said Deputy Public Defender **Rachael Keast**, her staff supervisor. "The Public Defender's Office is very lucky to have Jessica's trained legal mind, her tenacity, and her bilingual skills as a volunteer in our office."

Jessica has been involved with some 15 clients in Marin so far.

Jessica received her Juris Doctor degree in Colombia and a master's in family law. A year ago, she moved to San Francisco, due to her husband's parents residing there. She is enrolled at the American Academy of English while interning and pursuing programs that will further her law career in the U.S.

When not helping clients and honing her skills through academics, Jessica enjoys pastimes such as hiking and biking.

Jessica hopes to attend a Master of Laws (LLM, which stands for Legum Magister) program in San Francisco. The LLM is an advanced degree that would enable her to practice international law. Her role as a Marintern is a helpful step toward achieving this. "My goal is to be able to do my double degree and become a lawyer in the United States," Jessica said. ■

• • •



CARTOON BY JOHN DONAGHUE

## Who's New & Welcome!

**Sheila Alvarez** (Windsor), Adult Probation Intern, Probation Department

**Sydney Antonoff-Wertheimer** (Kentfield), Law Clerk, Public Defender's Office

**Lucy Bakowski** (Fairfax), Homework Helper, Fairfax Library

**Gabrielle Beyer** (Mill Valley), Student Elections Ambassador Intern, Registrar of Voters

**Michael Burke** (Napa), Certified Law Student, District Attorney's Office

**Rylee Cheney** (Petaluma), Pre-Law Intern, District Attorney's Office

**Elinor Clark** (Mill Valley), Elections Intern, Registrar of Voters

**Kyan Easton** (San Rafael), Student Elections Ambassador Intern, Registrar of Voters

**Christina Fallone** (Mill Valley), Volunteer English Conversations Facilitator, South Novato Library

**Emily Oliver Ferron** (Petaluma), FIRE Foundry Intern, Marin County Fire,

**Camilo Ibarra** (Greenbrae), Juvenile Probation Intern, Probation Department

**Maya King** (Mill Valley), Student Elections Ambassador Intern, Registrar of Voters

**Ruby Kosek** (Mill Valley), Student Elections Ambassador Intern, Registrar of Voters

**Joel Kurtzman** (Corte Madera), Student Elections Ambassador Intern, Registrar of Voters

**Mila Martinez** (Corte Madera), Student Elections Ambassador Intern, Registrar of Voters

**Marlene Montalvo** (Novato), English Learning Facilitator, South Novato Library

**Victoria Morales-O'Connor** (Sacramento), Certified Law Clerk, Public Defender's Office

**Matthew Pomajevich** (San Francisco), AmeriCorps VISTA Intern, Health & Human Services

**Delwin Rodas** (Novato), Student Service Volunteer, South Novato Library

**Sabrina Sandoval** (Larkspur), Student Elections Ambassador Intern, Registrar of Voters

**Alexia Schwaegler** (Corte Madera), Homework Helper, Corte Madera Library

**Lincoln Tithof** (Fairfax), Clean Fairfax Intern, Department of Public Works

**Malik Wilson** (Pleasanton), FIRE Foundry Intern, Marin County Fire