Volunteer Voice

NEWS FROM THE SAN RAFAEL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM • August 2014 • Vol. 8, No. 3

Save the date! CALIFORNIA COASTAL CLEANUP DAY, Sept. 20, 2014

Learn more at SanRafaelVolunteers.org

“Volunteering as a site captain for California Coastal Cleanup Day is just one way for me to help make Marin the beautiful place we all love to live.

I enjoy being outdoors and meeting new people while taking care of Mother Earth.

I hope that by volunteering I can show others that this world is worth taking care of and that every little bit helps.”

-Joan Slate

Volunteers Joan Slate and Kate Powers
Photo: Carla Koop

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Volunteers Help City Win Award
FOR CLIMATE CHANGE LEADERSHIP

Volunteers for the city’s Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) and other community partners played a large role in helping the City of San Rafael win the 2013 Beacon Award, which honors local governments’ voluntary efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, save energy, and promote sustainability. Check out the July 2014 issue of Western Cities, which features an exciting article about the city’s award. The CCAP was adopted in 2009, with input from 14 volunteers on a Green Ribbon Committee and other experts on transportation, waste reduction, land use, green building, energy conservation and adaptation. Plan goals include a 25% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2020, and an 80% reduction by 2050.

Council member Damon Connolly accepts the Beacon Award. Photo: Yvonne Hunter

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BRING IT SAN RAFAEL!
COUNTDOWN TO REUSABLE BAGS!

Plastic bags no longer allowed at checkout
September 15, 2014
Volunteer Spotlight
SAN RAFAEL THROUGH AND THROUGH: CAROL BRANDT

CAROL BRANDT has only been a city volunteer for just over a year, but she has already made significant contributions to the San Rafael Fire Department where she assists with projects for six to ten hours each week.

She was instrumental in developing a fall prevention program and online resource center that educates seniors about tripping hazards in their homes. Through the program’s website seniors can request a home visit to assess safety issues and reduce trip hazards. Carol spent about three months researching programs and resources for seniors in both the city and county for the project. She has also helped prepare annual reports for the department.

A third-generation San Rafael resident, Carol was drawn to volunteering for a local organization, as her mother and father both volunteered with the County of Marin and Marin General Hospital. Carol was especially keen to volunteer with the San Rafael Fire Department because her uncle, William Bottini Jr., was a San Rafael firefighter at Station 51. He bravely served the city, and was unfortunately one of the first two firefighters to die in the line of duty during a fire on Fourth Street in 1950.

A business manager for an engineering consulting firm, Carol currently works part-time from home, which allows her time to volunteer. Carol is a lifelong San Rafael resident and attended San Domenico, Marin Catholic, and U.C. Berkeley, where she was a member of the first Cal women’s rowing team.

Besides being a native of San Rafael, Carol has an interesting family connection to the city. "My mom’s family was from Lonate Pozzolo, Italy, which is the sister city to San Rafael." That’s San Rafael through and through.

Cont’d on p. 4

Volunteer at the Falkirk Greenhouse!

Join the Marin Master Gardeners at the Falkirk greenhouse, the hub of operations for this volunteer program. Volunteers are needed to help propagate plants and restore this beautiful historic structure. Projects include heating, cooling, plumbing, drip irrigation, carpentry, and painting. For more information or to volunteer, contact Phil Hinderberger, phinder@pacbell.net.

Trashy Tales

Members of Clean Mill Valley joined San Rafael Clean stalwart Libby McQuiston to pick up trash in the parking lot by Highway 101 on June 28th. It was a busy day for volunteers including members of San Rafael Rotary and Chamber of Commerce who cleaned and gardened at other city sites.

Photo courtesy Carol Brandt
AN AIR OF EXCITEMENT pervades the classroom, as children chatter and cluster around several rectangular tables at the Albert J. Boro Community Center. This is a typical scene at Kids Club, a popular after-school program run by Catholic Charities.

The goal of the after-school program, which serves about 45 students during the school year, is to promote academic achievement. To help keep the kids sharp with their studies, the program continues through the summer, with an enrollment of about 85 youth. “We provide that academic support to catch students up and to build an educational foundation that they can take with them,” according to Lauren Muszynski, Program Manager of Canal Family Support since 2006.

Kids Club was originally started in the mid-90s by the City of San Rafael because “youth were hanging out in the park and kind of using it as a babysitter,” said Lauren. The city was losing funding for Kids Club and approached the non-profit. “That’s when Catholic Charities decided they would step in to run the program and doing that would be a good way to connect with the families of the Canal.”

“What makes the program special is the relationships. Our kids will start in first grade and we’ll have them all the way through fifth grade. Current students have had older siblings in the program, so there is a strong sense of community and belonging.”

Lauren’s role is to “create curriculum, design literacy intervention, supervise staff and volunteers, and work with partners.”

She says having the city as a partner in the program is invaluable. “We wouldn’t be able to run our after-school and summer programs without the City of San Rafael. The fact that we can use the Albert J. Boro Community Center is a huge plus because it’s in the hub of the community.”

The kids in the program are Lauren’s favorite thing. What “keeps me here is the relationship with the kids and seeing them grow and stay connected to the program. Being able to be a consistent role model motivates me.”

About four years ago, Ysabel Eyman started volunteering with Catholic Charities Kids Club during Lent (the months of March and April), and she has been a regular volunteer ever since. She is hooked on the program and the kids in it.

Ysabel is one of about 60 adult and youth volunteers who contribute more than 3,400 hours annually to Kids Club, a major volunteer program within the city.

Born in San Francisco and a resident of Larkspur for the last 30 years, Ysabel spends two hours a week as a program volunteer at the Albert J. Boro Community Center. She enjoys helping one child at a time with math, spelling, and reading.

“It’s fun to watch them try to learn things and get them to the point of finally understanding something.”

One child, an extremely shy girl who joined the program in 2nd grade, is especially memorable to Ysabel. The girl found it difficult to communicate and had few friends. Every week as the two worked together on homework and reading, Ysabel would ask about the girl’s life, play games with her, and make her feel special. Little by little, the girl opened up, began to feel more confident, and became more engaged in the program and relationships with other students.

Cont’d on p. 4
WHY I VOLUNTEER

Dennis Papendick, Concierge Volunteer

“I like having a place to go a couple of times a week, the opportunity to meet city staff and visitors to city hall, and the chance to research a new problem and help someone figure out what to do next. One of my projects is to help reduce the junk mail received by city staff. I send notices to organizations that mail catalogs and other advertisements to the city, asking them to remove the addressee from their mailing lists.”

“Catholic Charities,” from p. 3

Ysabel retired seven years ago as a compensation analyst with AAA and Fireman’s fund. “Math has always been one of my friends, but on a spreadsheet,” she laughs.

When not volunteering she likes to garden, go to the theater and ballet, and hike. An avid cook, Ysabel is well-known at the community center for her delicious snicker doodle cookies.

She has one son and three grandsons. Her son lives in Long Beach and is a high school football and track coach.

Supervisor Lauren Muzynski says of Ysabel, “It’s been incredible to have Ysabel here for all these years. She brings so much support to our students and she’s formed really strong and special relationships with the kids that I feel has helped their academic achievement. She is a part of our Kids Club family, and I am incredibly grateful that she has been here consistently for many years.”

—Rem O’Donnelley

“San Rafael Through and Through,” from p. 2

Having family from Italy influenced Carol’s love of cooking. She makes her grandmother's Italian ravioli and special sauce recipes.

“My grandma Carrie Bottini would make huge casseroles of ravioli and bring them to the firefighters at Station 51, back in the day!”

Other hobbies include tennis, gardening, photography, and watercolor painting.

Carol and her husband Gregg live in Glenwood and share their home with a yellow Lab named Leah and a cat, Camille.

—Rem O’Donnelley

THANK YOU!

Rem O’Donnelley — Carol Brandt
Ysabel Eyman — Lauren Muzynski
Dennis Papendick — Joan Slate

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OUR MISSION IS TO CREATE A BRIDGE BETWEEN THE CITY, THE COMMUNITY, AND VOLUNTEERS IN ORDER TO ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN SAN RAFAEL.

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