

STAR VOLUNTEERS

10,000 Degrees - Marty Stein

Marty Stein is one of the kindest, most generous people you could ever meet. As a member of 10,000 Degrees Sonoma Advisory Board Marty, together with his wife Marlene, is a dedicated champion for students from low-income backgrounds who aspire to go to college. Their home at Yoffi Farm, sitting high on Sonoma Mountain, reflects Marty's and Marlene's lofty vision and generosity of spirit, as they share it with countless rescue animals, including alpaca, goats, and miniature donkeys; and they are always willing to open it to guests and host events that benefit the community.

10,000 Degrees - Steve Page

As a key member of 10,000 Degrees' Sonoma County Advisory Board with deep connections in Sonoma Valley, Steve works tirelessly to help us raise funds and connect us to the community so we can support more Sonoma Valley students from low-income backgrounds to enter and complete college. After retiring last fall from nearly three decades at the helm of Sonoma Raceway, Steve continues to engage in volunteer work on behalf of our youth, and we are so grateful.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Sonoma Valley - Selma Blanusa

Selma has served as the Chair of our Investment Committee since 2016. She volunteered to serve in this capacity, generously donating her time and talents to protect and develop our endowment. She leads quarterly reviews with advisors, actively questions investment allocations and is committed to helping ensure the financial sustainability of the Club. Selma has been a long-time donor and supporter of our programs. She is one of the Club's strongest advocates and cares deeply about the mission, the children served, and the staff. The BGC Board of Directors and staff are grateful for Selma's selfless leadership, her undeniable expertise in her field, and her years of dedication to the organization.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Sonoma Valley / Teen Services - Joelle Smith

A volunteer with Teen Services Sonoma since 2018, Joelle has helped teens find the clothing and confidence they need to secure their first jobs. Ready to Work helps local teens with the hard and soft skills they need to secure employment and just before the end of the program, Joelle graciously lends her experience and talent to help teens find the perfect clothing to pair with their newly polished resumes. Without a doubt, Joelle's gifts to the teens with whom she has worked will serve them for years to come as they advance further and further in their careers. Teen Services & Boys & Girls Clubs of Sonoma Valley is thrilled to celebrate Joelle Smith and honored to partner with her in service of Sonoma Valley teens.

CarePartners Initiative - Bill O'Neal

The Board of CarePartners Initiative is pleased to honor Mr. Bill O'Neal as the 2020 Volunteer of the Year with the 2020 STAR AWARD from the Sonoma Valley Fund. This award is in recognition of Bill's dedication to the goals of CarePartners Initiative, compassion for families living with memory loss, and for his marketing expertise that created an excellent website and effective communications materials.

Food For All / Comida Para Todos - Katherine Fonseca

Katherine is a recent Sonoma Valley High School graduate and this fall is attending the University of California, Davis. Kati was unanimously selected by the Food for All leadership as our Star Volunteer. She showed up one day at our FFA distribution and asked if she could help and has been there every time. She is an extraordinary young person who gives up her Saturday mornings to feed people. She has the energy and can do the work of five people. She is committed to her community and demonstrates that in all her actions. Kati is an exemplary human and we congratulate her excellence and are very excited to watch her future success.

Friends in Sonoma Helping (FISH) - Ligia Booker

FISH is an all-volunteer organization that since the pandemic has provided over 1,000 families rental assistance. Many of these requests came from people who were entirely Spanish-speaking. In April 2020, with new pandemic restrictions, FISH found itself without a Spanish-speaking volunteer. When our dilemma was shared with Ligia, she stepped in and responded to each and every Spanish-speaking applicant. She became a full-time volunteer contacting applicants, interpreting paperwork, receiving hundreds of documents texted to her personal phone, while providing comfort and assurance to those in crisis. Ligia has made it possible for our Spanish-speaking families and neighbors to receive the support needed to stay in their homes.

Friends in Sonoma Helping (FISH) - Sherry Michael

FISH provided over \$1,000,000 in services since the beginning of the pandemic. Sherry, Rental Assistance Coordinator, heads the rental assistance program that has received applications from over 1,000 Valley residents. As a new FISH volunteer, Sherry was undaunted by the demand on her time and her skills. Every day throughout the pandemic Sherry responded to each request, tracked paperwork, set up spreadsheets, called landlords, wrote checks, and assured anxious applicants that FISH was there to help and the check was in the mail. Through compassion and commitment, Sherry helped stem the tide of despair brought by loss of jobs and the inability to meet the monthly rent.

Friends of the Sonoma Valley Library - Susan Shinomoto

Susan is the recently retired Treasurer extraordinaire. She revamped our accounting system online, with readouts understandable to us lay folks. A math head with a degree from UC Berkeley, she calmly helped demystify formulae for our Friends liability insurance and any other math obstacles we ran into. Also, for several years she sorted books more than once a week for our Book Sales, and her help with cashiering and accounting was invaluable. Her calm and competent presence infused everyone around her and everyone who worked with her.

Homeless Action Sonoma - Shayla Finato

Homeless Action Sonoma, Inc. has a remarkable young lady to honor. Shayla Finato is remarkable because a year ago she was homeless and is now a spokesperson for our organization and does more volunteer work than anyone else. She was befriended and in a short period of time has gone from needing to helping. She does most of the cooking for our Sunday BBQs, is a fabulous spokesperson for HAS, and has befriended others. We are so pleased to have this opportunity to publicly praise her.

Impact100 Sonoma - Sarah Carroll

Impact100 Sonoma is a women's collective grant-making organization. Sarah joined in 2017 as a NextGen member (sponsored younger women). Besides serving on grant review committees, she has been serving on the board of directors as co-membership chair, has filled in for the board member heading up the NextGen program and has been a key member of the DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) Committee. Sara balances all of this with a full-time job and a full family life including the activities of her school-age daughter.

Jack London State Historic Park - JoAnn Augustine

JoAnn has volunteered for 9 years with 2,700 lifetime hours, and as many as 500 hours in some years. JoAnn provides invaluable service to the park, conducting tours, as a docent in the cottage and the Museum Bookshop, as an attendant in the entry kiosk, and assisting with special events. Notably, JoAnn helped to implement and manages the Park's Green Team recycling program, collaborating with Sweetwater Spectrum to provide volunteer opportunities to autistic Adults. JoAnn has been a leader amongst the volunteers as a member of the Volunteer Council, providing valuable input to guide and improve the volunteer program. JoAnn's involvement has been instrumental in the success in operating the Park and serving our visitors.

Kid Scoop News - Elena Toscano

Elena has been working with Vicki Whiting and the Kid Scoop News team for more than 20 years. She started out by being a parent volunteer in Vicki's classroom back in their teaching days. These days, Elena brings more than her teaching experience to Kid Scoop News. As a retired Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, she provides expert guidance in the development of curriculum aligned content that uses best practices in *Awakening the Magic of Reading in Children*.

KSVY SonomaTV - Pat Carlin

Pat has been volunteering at KSVY since 2013. Not only being a prolific radio host, but he has been more than willing to jump in to help out at our events and side projects. Many times, he has been available to fill in for our engineers or to cover shows when others were not available. Pat is the go-to guy for people advice and connections, and he's always willing to reach out to the community and share KSVY.

La Luz Center - Elisa Huerta

During the pandemic many of our in-person volunteer opportunities diminished, but the opportunity to connect and engage with our community didn't. With the volunteer work of Elisa, an active parent participant at our El Verano Family Resource Center, we were able to have weekly Spanish virtual cooking lessons for our families. With a smile on her face, Elisa shared her cooking skills and recipes with the virtual world weekly. Elisa's enthusiasm and passion for cooking was always apparent when you watched her videos. Without her we wouldn't have been able to bring a new yummy recipe and some much-needed joy into the homes of our Sonoma Valley Community.

Sebastiani Theatre Foundation - Jocelyn Vick

Jocelyn's relationship with the Rhotens and the Sebastiani Theatre began in 1996 when her daughter participated in the Theatre's youth programs. During those years Jocelyn was a mentor, art teacher, music editor, and even a make-up artist for countless Sonoma youth. In 2008 Roger Rhoten asked her to be on the newly formed Foundation Board. She has served as Secretary, Vice President, and for the last 5 years as President. Through Jocelyn's commitment, dedication, and talents that include, leadership, team building, negotiation, and fund-raising, the Sebastiani Theatre is a symbol of community now and will be into the future.

Seeds of Learning - Cathy Sowa

Cathy has volunteered with Seeds of Learning for many years. She has traveled to Nicaragua to work on three different schools, and she's tirelessly helped to raise funds. She has been a member of the Annual Event fundraising committee and has done everything from organizing and planning, coordinating, asking for and picking up donations, to putting together flowers. Cathy has played a tremendously valuable role in helping us raise funds to continue working and always with an attitude of kindness and patience. She also volunteers with a Seeds of Learning group monthly at the Redwood Empire Food Bank.

Sonoma Arts Live Theatre Company - Sue Martin

We are delighted to honor Sue, who has been with our organization since 2009 in one form or another! She is currently Board President, but wears MANY hats, including doing all of our graphics voluntarily, working tirelessly with patrons on the phone who have trouble with their tickets, jumping in to paints sets, or sew costumes. She's truly a theater person who is devoted to Sonoma Arts Live. And we are grateful and devoted to HER!! During Covid she helped promote our Zoom and live streaming events to our patrons, learning new technology with amazing skill and good humor.

Sonoma Botanical Garden - Susan Peterson and Ray St. Francis

Susan and Ray have been extraordinarily helpful over the past 18 months on advising a broad swath of repairs and improvements to Garden facilities, and have actually prepared design drawings for many things, especially enhancements intended to make our site more accessible to people with mobility challenges.

Sonoma Community Center – Nancy Barrett

Nancy has been a star volunteer at SCC for almost 6 years. She landed in Sonoma after retiring from a banking career in Chicago, and became obsessed with ceramics at the SCC. Over the years, "Nancy B" has volunteered as a lead Ceramics Monitor, and event and volunteer support for Chili Bowl Express, Trashion Fashion, and the Winter Art Market. She was the key organizer for getting the ceramics studio ready and operational during the curbside days of the Covid pandemic. Nancy is committed to helping solve problems and listens to others to validate individual opinions. She is generous and makes sure everyone has what they need to do their job well, and to feel welcomed at the Center. Nancy is a fearless volunteer who is incredibly generous and one of our most well-rounded volunteers by being able to jump into ceramics, tech, administration and leadership. We couldn't do what we do without Nancy B!

Sonoma Ecology Center - Rebecca Chekouras

Sonoma Garden Park, operated by Sonoma Ecology Center, is often considered “the secret gem” on the east side of Sonoma. Rebecca has made it a personal project, working tirelessly on social media to elevate its amazing features and programs. She's promoted water-wise demonstration gardens, the Saturday harvest market, workshops and fellow volunteers, and the learning landscape serving hundreds of Sonoma youth each year. Rebecca also helped introduce a new generation of artists to the garden and their art to the community. Thank you, Rebecca!

Sonoma Immigrant Services - Rocio Caballero

Rocio has been living in Sonoma Valley for at least 20 years. She is very dedicated and believes in giving back to the community. She volunteers her time to help teach and coordinate the Spanish Citizenship Education Program at Sonoma Immigrant Services. She also teaches Spanish lessons. She is a great role model to her 3 children. We are very grateful for her continuous support and the impact she has had on our Latinx community.

Sonoma International Film Festival - Dana Grantham & Alison Miller

Two amazing SIFF volunteers are Dana Grantham & Alison Miller. Both of them have for 20 years been the venue managers of Andrews Hall screening venue. They work in tandem, and we can't honor one without the other!

Sonoma Overlook Trail - Roy Tennant

Roy is a deeply devoted member of the Sonoma Overlook Trail Stewards. For over 10 years, he has spent thousands of hours fervently tending the Overlook Trail, the Montini Open Space Preserve, and recently, Sugarloaf Regional Park. His work includes trail craft and repair, eradicating invasive species, educating visitors, and participating in the overall management of the Overlook Trail. Roy dedicates himself to all endeavors benefitting Sonoma Valley's open spaces.

Sonoma Overnight Support - Pat Collins

Pat started volunteering in March 2020, when we first shut down, and he soon became a key part of our operations. He volunteered 5 days a week, helping SOS transition from The Haven to Burlingame Hall to Sonoma Springs Community Hall. Without Pat's exemplary organizational skills and logistic-focused mind, SOS would almost certainly not be able to serve the 230 daily meals to the homeless and the food deprived in Sonoma Valley.

Sonoma Plein Air Foundation - Gerry Brinton

Gerry Brinton is a founding and current member of Sonoma Plein Air Foundation's all-volunteer board. She served as the Treasurer for much of her time on the board, tirelessly and effectively handling financial matters. Over the years at the annual Plein Air Festival, she could be found on a ladder with hammer and nails hanging paintings at the Charles Creek tasting room or processing sales at the Art Show on the Plaza. During her time as a volunteer, our Foundation has granted over \$1.6M to youth art programs in Sonoma Valley. Gerry is still the “Yoda” on the board, supplying sage wisdom and advice; we are so grateful to her for her contributions.

Sonoma Springs Community Hall - Ariel Osborne-Peterson

Ariel has been an instrumental force in the Sonoma Valley community. Her many contributions include organizing the pop-up and Holiday markets at the Hall, gleaning and distributing local produce through the farmers friend campaign, inspiring community improvement projects, and her current role in managing the Larson Park community garden as a place of health and healing in the Springs. She is truly a local all-star that will help Sonoma recover and grow into a bright future.

Sonoma Valley Collaborative - Ann Colichidas

As a local leader in a state-wide mobile home association, Ann has educated the Sonoma Valley Collaborative about how important mobile homes are in providing affordable housing to Sonoma Valley, and also how fragile many mobile home parks and residents are. Because of data she consistently shared, our strategy paper called Homes for a Sustainable Sonoma Valley properly highlights the need to protect and retain mobile homes in the Valley. Ann understands what it means to work as a coalition: she makes her case but also listens to seek common ground. She's modeled that approach for other members of the Collaborative. She hosted and led a number of work groups at Pueblo Serena, the mobile home community where she lives. She's always cheerful, curious, and forward-looking... a joy to work with!

Sonoma Valley Community Health Center - Jan & Joe Celio

Jan and Joe have been part of our pop-up vaccination clinics since the very beginning. Their willingness to accommodate changes and challenges has been unmeasurable, not only for our staff, but for the members of the community as well. Looking at them, we understand what volunteering is all about. Jan and Joe care so deeply about our community that they step up to support the things they believe in regardless of the personal cost. Summer heat, storms, new pop-up locations, even wearing extra protective equipment in a 100-degree weather, none of that or any other obstacle has stopped them. For all that and many more reasons we want to thank them for being an inspiration to us all.

Sonoma Valley Fund - Simon Blattner

Simon became SVF's board president in 2018 and since then has worked together with the board and Community Foundation Sonoma County furthering SVF's effectiveness, including the launch of Sonoma Valley Catalyst Fund. In 2019 Simon spearheaded the SVF's first entry in Sonoma's 4th of July parade. He drove his truck pulling a wagon of 20 past STAR Volunteers – all in support and celebration of Volunteering. Simon, a volunteer for many Sonoma Valley nonprofits for decades, is a huge supporter of the STAR Volunteer awards and was eager for the moment when we could resume the event. Simon is not only an advocate for volunteering, he is a role model, and we thank him for all his hard work!

Sonoma Valley Hospital - Mrs. Alice Friesen

Alice has been a volunteer at SVH for 42 years! That's a contribution and an accomplishment all rolled into one. Alice has missed her volunteer shifts for only two reasons, illness or a vacation. She is always there because she knows that we need her and depend on her. Alice has worn many hats as a volunteer, from Auxiliary President, Auxiliary Treasurer, Escort and Clerical Assistant, and she's “owned” the positions as if she were getting paid. Words to describe Alice: loyal friend, humanitarian, lifelong learner, independent spirit and CAT LOVER extraordinaire!

Sonoma Valley Mentoring Alliance - Marie Bradley

Marie has served on our board of directors for almost 4 years, first as secretary and currently as vice president. In 2 years, she will take the reins as president. Marie finds time in her busy schedule as Daniel Casabonne's Director of Operations to chair our development committee. As Mentor to Travis who is entering 6th grade, Marie goes above and beyond in her support of him and his family. She serves the Mentoring Alliance with passion, and her dedication to Travis epitomizes her commitment to volunteerism.

Sonoma Valley Museum of Art - Mimi Makowsky

Mimi has been a Volunteer Museum Guide at SVMA for 8 years. From her earliest days, Mimi has over-delivered in every way. She is one of SVMA's Art Rewards the Student (A.R.T.S.) program's star guides. She always finds a way to make the exhibitions accessible and exciting for young people, even in last year's exceptionally challenging school year. Mimi was one of just four Guides who volunteered to spend her pandemic time at home learning the multiple skills necessary to discuss art with students, entirely over Zoom. She served on the Volunteer Council Board and helped her fellow volunteers stay connected when SVMA could not welcome the community through its doors. SVMA is so grateful for her outstanding service and dedication, and most of all for doing it while never losing her diamond wit and terrific sense of humor.

Special Olympics Sonoma Valley - Maureen Fuentes

Maureen has been our chief administrative officer since the founding of Special Olympics Sonoma Valley 10 years ago. Her son, Roland, has been a star athlete and proudly wears one of his many Gold Medals. Maureen's excellent organizational skills keep the required medical and participation records and more importantly, is the cheerleader for our parent volunteers who make this inspirational program a reality.

Sugarloaf Ridge State Park - Susie Albrecht

Sugarloaf Ridge State Park is a nearly 5000-acre park at the headwaters of Sonoma Creek. It takes a lot of support to operate the park. When the pandemic came many of our regular volunteers quarantined. Susie stepped up. She ran our Visitor Center, meeting and serving hundreds of people. She created and updates our popular Wildlife Sightings board, where visitors learn about life in the park. (Yes, we have bears!) She cleans, organizes, trains, knows how everything works, does foot patrol, sweeps hikes, helps with whatever administrative task comes up, and even lead us through our fire evacuation drill. Susie's led our team with a smile, a solution, and a spring in her step. Thank you, Susie!

Sweetwater Spectrum - Ken Cheitlin

Ken has served as a key member of Sweetwater Spectrum's Board of Directors for the past 5+ years, including roles on the organizations' Audit, Governance, Replication and Building Committees. Under Ken's leadership as Fund Development Committee Chair, Sweetwater has exceeded its annual target each year. Ken's legal background, overall acumen and creative ideas, along with his team-oriented style have greatly contributed to a smooth-running Board and exceptional collaboration with the Sweetwater Executive Director.

Transcendence Theater Company - Lorraine Reuther

Lorraine is a long-standing volunteer with Transcendence, alongside her husband Bob Reuther. She is a Volunteer Captain and has hardly missed a show in her many years with us. We count on Lorraine nightly to run our cashiering department, selling wine and drink tickets during some of our busiest moments, and always with a smile. She's made 2021 feel much more seamless with her consistency and knowledge.

Valley of the Moon Music Festival - Bonnie Walner

Bonnie is a great support to the Valley of the Moon Music Festival at the ticket office and as an audience greeter. With her deep appreciation and understanding of chamber music, she has proved to be an invaluable asset to the festival and to keeping music alive in Sonoma. We are very grateful to her and are honored to have her on our team.

Valley of the Moon Observatory Association - Loren Cooper

The coronavirus pandemic originally required the Robert Ferguson Observatory in Sugarloaf Ridge State Park to cancel all events. Then Loren volunteered to lead COVID-safe events outside of the observatory. Loren trained other volunteers and was our lead laser-pointing and story-telling Star Tour Guide for Night Sky Trails and was also an active volunteer for Bring Your Own Binoculars. These events allowed us to safely continue our mission of science and astronomy education in 2020 when we couldn't operate inside the observatory.

Verity - Heather Johnson

Heather has been a volunteer on Verity's (Sonoma County's Rape Crisis Center) hotline for over two and a half years. During this time, she has provided empathetic counseling to countless survivors of sexual abuse, helping them process the traumatic events they have experienced, and providing resources and emotional support. Heather has made a huge impact in the lives of sexual assault survivors, and we celebrate her achievements.

Vintage House - Irene Pelmear

Irene is the consummate volunteer. Pre-pandemic, she worked as a myRide driver for Vintage House. Known for her kindness and caring, Irene is also lots of fun, and inspires us all to be better people. When COVID forced the shutdown of our free ride program, Irene found new and creative ways to volunteer with our food program. She helped with packaging and delivering meals, and donated and baked literally thousands of homemade cookies week-in and week-out! From chocolate chip to snickerdoodle to peanut butter – Irene's cookies provided cheer to isolated seniors every Friday!