



## CEO MESSAGE

The summer is a time I associate with having fun in the sun with my kids, and attending local family-friendly events. At Marin Community Clinics, the summer is known to be a time to celebrate our accomplishments – specifically at our annual Summer Solstice Celebration, where there will be much to celebrate this year.

Not only will we get to connect in-person (as safely as possible, outdoors), but we'll be celebrating **50 Years of Touching Lives Through Health**. We're honoring our past, how far we've come in advancing equitable health care, and everyone that helped get us here. I look forward to seeing you on June 22.

This summer, we're looking ahead as well. Our newest location, the West San Rafael Clinic, is opening next month. The clinic will feature telehealth-forward technology, and will allow us to pilot innovative new programs while expanding access to care. The new clinic is an integral part of our multifaceted *Campaign for the Next Decade*. To learn more about the campaign or how to contribute, visit: [www.marinclinics.org/campaign](http://www.marinclinics.org/campaign).

To our staff, volunteers, and supporters (past and present): I am thankful for all that you have given to this organization. Together, we have exponentially increased access to care in our community.

Here's to continuing to answer the need – *cheers!*



Mitesh Popat, MD, MPH, CEO

## MEET THE HONOREES: 2022 Community Health Champions

Each year we take the opportunity to honor extraordinary individuals in the community who have contributed to the health and well-being of Marin County's residents.



**Erik Schten, MD**, has provided excellent primary care at Marin Community Clinics for more than 20 years. He has also led our Novato Clinic medical teams, fostering collaboration and shepherding specialty care such

as dermatology and gerontology into the clinics.

*"Dr. Schten epitomizes what Marin Community Clinics is all about,"* said Mitesh Popat, MD, MPH, Chief Executive Officer. *"He is a superb clinician, actively encourages patients to take responsibility for their health, and focuses on healthy lifestyles as the key to maintaining and regaining health."*



**Marian Huntington**, Founder and Executive Director of NovatoSpirit, has made it possible for hundreds of low-income children to improve their physical and mental health. As an author and former news reporter, Marian

uses her experience and platform to support, empower, and inspire at-risk youth.

*"I have seen the many ways that children's lives are enriched by the opportunities that Marian has made possible for them,"* said Tracey Hessel, MD, Assoc. Medical Director, Pediatrics. *"In addition to health and self-esteem benefits, these experiences provide mentorship and community."*



## CULTIVATING COMMUNITY: Clinics Volunteers – Bettering Themselves and Marin

There are many reasons why people volunteer. One reason why is consistent: people are fulfilled by helping others. The sentiment is key to Marin Community Clinics' legacy and success. After all, our organization was founded by a group of volunteer physicians and nurses in 1972. They gave their time and talent because they wanted to make a positive impact in the lives of others.

Today, our expert doctors and nurses are paid employees who have devoted themselves and their careers to caring for the most vulnerable in our community. Our current volunteers lift up the community in other ways.

### The Health Hubs – A Unique Beacon of Community

Part walk-up/drive-up food pantry; part community safe space and trusted information center where the Clinics raise awareness about important public health and safety initiatives – the Health Hubs are entirely unique. Over the past two years, the Hubs have added COVID-19 related services, such as hosting vaccine and testing clinics, distributing free masks and at-home rapid test kits.

***"The Health Hubs are more than a food assistance program; it's a place where individuals come together to give back to our community. Our participants and patients feel safe coming to the Hubs for guidance."***

– Health Hubs Supervisor Rosalinda Camacho

At the Hubs, **Supervisor Rosalinda Comacho** and her team educate the community about Clinics services, as well as a multitude of available social services. *"The Hubs are where we bridge the relationship between our community and partner organizations,"* Camacho says. *"The volunteers come because they see the need and the work that we're doing – connecting people to resources. They want to be a part of that."*

The events happen twice a week (at our San Rafael Clinic on Wednesdays and Novato Clinic on Thursdays). Each Hub averages about 300 to 400 attendees, and significantly more community members have shown up during peak COVID surges.

About 25-30 volunteers are needed at each Hub to help with set-up, distribution, and break-down. They greet people, prepare bags of food, hand out supplies, and safely direct traffic. The positive energy at the Hubs is palpable, and the volunteers have fun.



Volunteer Susan Clark (L) is all smiles with Health Hub Supervisor Rosalinda Camacho at the San Rafael Health Hub.

**Karla Valdez** has volunteered at the Health Hubs for 6 years. She's inspired by the people and the face-to-face social interactions. *"I meet so many families from different races and backgrounds,"* says Valdez, *"from young children to seniors – they all appreciate what we do – it's uplifting."*

Other volunteers, including **Susan Clark**, have taken notice of how welcoming the events are. *"The Health Hubs show how much the Clinics embrace the community they serve,"* explains Clark. *"It's a place where meaningful conversations about health happen. By volunteering I see first-hand the positivity and the possibilities that emerge."*

### The Book Angels

While volunteers are encouraged to get involved with the Health Hubs by signing up online (*see link below*), years ago, **Judie Shaw** (aka "the book lady") took a different approach.

Shaw walked into the Novato Clinic when it first opened and asked to help out in any way possible. She was introduced to **Tracey Hessel, MD** (current Associate Medical Director of Pediatrics). Dr. Hessel thought it would be great if her young patients could each receive an age-appropriate book to help encourage reading and a healthy family dynamic. Shaw was excited about the idea and soon launched a "book nook" within the clinic.

*"The first day I was handing out books at the clinic, a little girl asked if it was hers to keep,"* says Shaw, *"she was so excited to have a book of her own!"* Shaw was inspired and leaned into the program, recruiting a number of volunteers over the years to help contribute to the program (including current volunteers **Barbara Roddie** and **Susan Hamstra**). She estimates that with the help of her fellow "book angels," about 1,000 books a year are gifted to young patients!

**GET INVOLVED:** Sign-up to volunteer at [www.marinclinics.org/health-hubs](http://www.marinclinics.org/health-hubs)

# From PATIENT to STAFF: **HOMEGROWN LEADERS**

Marin Community Clinics is successful when our patients feel welcome, understood, and are engaged with our staff. Our employees are the backbone of our organization and with almost 600 people, we are a major employer in Marin County. The Clinics makes a concerted effort to employ from the community that we serve – and once on board, advancement opportunities, training, and educational support are available at every level of the organization. Our goal is to have staff who feel appreciated, are engaged and dedicated to their work, and enjoy being an integral part of the work we do every day.

While all Marin Community Clinics staff understand the importance of providing access to health care services to our community, some are able to relate on a deeper level: **they themselves were once Clinics patients.** It's no coincidence that they chose to launch their careers right here. Meet two staff members who started their journey as patients and became leaders – proudly giving back to the community they are from.



## **GEIDY GUTIERREZ, RDA** | DENTAL CLINIC MANAGER

Geidy began her career at the Clinics 13 years ago.

### **Connections: What type of Clinics services did you or your family benefit from?**

*I received care from the Clinics from 1998 to 2008. My family benefited from various medical and dental services – some of them still do! My parents could not have afforded care from a private office. My dad worked construction and my mom worked at a car wash.*

*The Clinics offered us excellent care at a low cost. I was able to get all my required vaccines for school. It was such a relief for my parents to know we had a place to go if we got sick.*

### **How has the fact that you've been a patient inspired your work today?**

*I always wanted a career that involved helping others. The staff I came across when I was young were helpful, caring, compassionate, and understanding. I saw the Clinics as an opportunity to give back to my community, and help others receive the care I once received.*

*I am an advocate for our patients. My goal is to treat and care for patients the same way I was treated and provide the resources and care they need, especially during this uncertain time.*

## **SAIDA PERDOMO** | NOVATO CLINIC MANAGER

Saida has been with the Clinics for 11 years.

### **Connections: Why was it important for you and your family to have an option like Marin Community Clinics for a health care home?**

*One of the reasons my parents decided to leave their countries (Mexico and El Salvador) was due to the lack of health care and resources for low income families, which was us.*

*Unfortunately my parents lost my younger brother (who was only 4 months when he passed away) due to the lack of money and health care resources in Mexico. Having Marin Community Clinics as an option – even as we were uninsured at that time meant everything to my parents – their children now had access to health care services regardless of where they came from.*

### **Why do you feel it's important for the Clinics to provide those in this community that may be looking for job opportunities with a chance to begin a career?**

*It is important that the patients we serve see themselves in us. We serve the community and that includes offering career opportunities as well. I started at the Clinics as a Medical Assistant extern. That means I was given the opportunity to do my training hours in-clinic. I took full advantage of that.*

*I was supported, encouraged, and most importantly, mentored here. Now I'm the Clinic Manager. I love that Marin Community Clinics fosters the next generation and truly promotes and supports growing from within.*



Looking to join our mission-driven team? Scan the QR code to explore career opportunities today.



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## Our Mission:

*We promote health and wellness through excellent, compassionate care for all.*

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# Connections

## May Newsletter



## 50th Anniversary Summer Solstice Celebration

The wait is nearly over and we're eager to connect with you. This **June 22**, we'll be sharing a toast together (*in-person*), celebrating past and recent victories, and enjoying the gorgeous outdoor garden setting at **Inn Marin, Novato**. We've earned it. It's time to celebrate!

This year's event is special: It's Marin Community Clinics' golden anniversary, which means we're celebrating *50 Years of Touching Lives Through Health*.

At the event we'll recognize our 2022 Community Health Champions – **Erik Schten, MD**, and **Marian Huntington**. We're also honoring our history and those that helped make this journey possible. Join us for delicious bites, live music, summer elixirs, and so much more!

**When:** June 22, 2022 – 5:00pm-7:30pm

**Where:** Inn Marin, Novato

Purchase tickets by June 6, 2022 to attend:

[www.marinclinics.org/solstice-2022](http://www.marinclinics.org/solstice-2022)

Sponsorship opportunities available!