

## 2022 Volunteer of the Year Nomination: Ann Marie Santana-Turina Submitted by: Marin Humane

### 1. Using examples from the past 12 months, describe how the nominee has shown dedication and commitment to the organization or its constituents.

Illustrating all that Ann Marie Santana-Turina is to Marin Humane is a tough task. Ann Marie serves in many roles, primarily in our Behavior and Training department. Her greatest role is working with the largest, most exuberant dogs at our shelter, which you might not guess based on her petite size. Ann Marie walks, plays with, and socializes dogs referred to as "large and in-charge," and are only handled by highly trained people. The most recent example of this is a dog named Shilo.

Shilo is a 75lb Belgian Malinois who arrived at Marin Humane as a stray. As his breed would predict, he's wary of new people but also highly excitable – and often hard to handle. An animal shelter with a bunch of new people combined with being in a kennel is extremely tough for this type of dog. Ann Marie was the first volunteer to earn Shilo's trust well enough to take him out for walks.

For several months, Shilo could only be walked by two staff members and Ann Marie, so she came to the shelter seven days a week to walk him. She took Shilo through Marin Humane's Family Dog 1 dog training series, and on offsite adventures. Every Wednesday, Ann Marie would rally a few friends to join her on Shilo's weekly outing for a hike and stop at a local coffee shop for a "puppuccino." This extra effort from Ann Marie was a lifesaver for Shilo. Getting out of the shelter helps all dogs decompress and provides extra enrichment, and this was certainly true for Shilo. These offsite outings allowed us to learn valuable information about Shilo – that he could easily make new human friends if he had a task to focus on and was out of the stressful shelter environment. We would never have known this if it weren't for Ann Marie giving him this opportunity.

Shilo is only the most recent example of Ann Marie going above and beyond for a dog. To list all the dogs Ann Marie has dedicated extra time to would monopolize this application.

Ann Marie personifies the quote: "Saving one dog will not change the world, but surely for that one dog, the world will change forever." This commitment and compassion matches the mission of Marin Humane. Ann Marie is critical to Marin Humane's philosophy of providing the best care and outcomes possible for all the animals entrusted to our care.

Ann Marie has shown amazing dedication to our canine residents looking for new homes. She has clocked 925 volunteer hours already in 2022 or an average of about 100 hours per month. In general, most of our dog volunteers give 8-10 hours per month.

### 2. Illustrate how the nominee made a significant, positive impact on the organization or the community it serves during the past 12 months.

Like many organizations, Marin Humane has been understaffed in both our staff and volunteer base. At the same time, the number of dogs coming into our shelter is returning to what we saw in early

2020, or before the pandemic hit. With limited staff, volunteers, and time to do all the daily tasks, each task gets prioritized. Our top priorities are making sure the shelter animals have the food and medical care they need and a clean space to stay. When short-handed, the most time-consuming or secondary activities sometimes take a backseat. Though very important, dog walking requires a great deal of time. And more challenging dogs, like Shilo, aren't suitable to be walked by most volunteers.

In June, Ann Marie was recognized for her dedication by our Animal Care team in an email to all staff that read:

*"We have all seen the spike in our large dog population. This increase comes at a time when our Animal Care department is short-staffed and extra busy. Unfortunately, getting all the dogs out for a long walk every day is a goal that is not always achievable in these conditions.*

*Enter Ann Marie! She comes in several evenings this week, on top of her multiple weekly morning shifts, to help Animal Care make sure all the dogs get out for their much-needed last walk of the evening.*

*The entire Animal Care department would like to thank Ann Marie for embodying two of our core principles: her Collaborative Spirit and Dedication to Animals - you lighten our workload and improve the lives of our animals; it is much appreciated!"*

In July, our Social Media & Marketing Specialist further lauded Ann Marie:

*"We all know that great pictures help dogs get adopted more quickly and Ann Marie has been crucial in helping us get amazing photos of our shelter dogs. When we take photos, it's useful to have a handler who knows the dogs well, and Ann Marie is always ready and willing to help us out. She frequently works above and beyond her regular volunteer shifts to shuttle dogs back and forth - and help us handle the rowdy ones! - while we get the shots we need. She really helps us capture their personalities and has enabled many dogs to find forever homes more quickly than they would have without their "glamour shots."*

*She also sends us updates when she takes dogs off campus for outings, complete with photos and thorough notes that help me write new social media posts, update bios, and more. I know she spends a lot of time getting this information to us and its invaluable content that we could never get on our own!*

Ann Marie often comes in every day, sometimes twice per day, working with behaviorally challenging dogs, making sure every dog gets exercise and a potty-break, AND assisting with getting cute photos of dogs for our website and social media.

On top of all that Ann Marie does for our Behavior and Training and Animal Care departments, she assists our veterinary staff in handling sensitive dogs. Ann Marie can manage these challenging dogs so they can receive their needed medical treatment. It also shows us that the dog will tolerate handling from a person they trust. In a home setting, this is important for those regular trips to the veterinarian.

Ann Marie is that special person who is in service to be the voice for those who cannot speak for themselves. And if the shelter dogs could talk, they would be grateful to Ann Marie for her understanding and for helping them become good canine citizens while they await their permanent homes!

As indicated above, Ann Marie has primarily focused on the most behaviorally challenging dogs in our care, getting them ready for their forever home. She transforms lives through her exceptional care of the dogs, mentoring other volunteers, and always saying “yes” whenever and wherever her help is needed!

### **3. Briefly state the organization’s mission and services offered. How long has the nominee volunteered for the organization, including the number of years served and type of service?**

The mission of Marin Humane is to transform lives through exceptional animal care, humane education, and advocacy. Every day, we inspire compassion and positive relationships between people and animals. We bring animals and humans together, forging a bond that impacts not just our homes, but makes our neighborhoods happier and healthier. And no one does more to make that happen than Marin Humane.

Some of our services include:

- Animal Adoptions
- Animal Services for Marin County (*enforcement of ordinances, dog licensing, cruelty investigations, wildlife rescue, and lost and found services*)
- Dog and cat training classes and seminars as well as consultations
- Youth programs
- Pet Care Assistance for pet guardians in need
- Volunteer Engagement
- Animal-Assisted programs, including therapy visitations and classroom and library visits
- Pen Pals program at San Quentin
- Animal responders in disasters and emergencies
- Safe harbor for animals in families impacted by domestic violence

Ann Marie joined the volunteer team in April 2018, and has made a tremendous impact every day she has set foot on our campus—volunteering over 4,000 hours in four years!