2023 Youth Volunteer of the Year Nomination: Hiromi Lombardi
Submitted by: Marin Humane

1. Provide the school and grade of the nominee.

Hiromi Lombardi is a senior in the honors program at Marin Catholic and an active student volunteer at Marin Humane.

2. Briefly state the organization's mission and services offered. How long has the nominee volunteered for the organization, including the number of hours 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

Hiromi has been volunteering at Marin Humane since 2021. To date, she has volunteered a total of 323 hours as a Dog Training Assistant.

3. Using examples from 2023, illustrate how the nominee has made a significant, positive impact on the organization.

This year, Marin Humane piloted a program to create more student volunteer opportunities for high school students. One of the positions was volunteering in the Behavior & Training department as a Dog Training Assistant (DTA). Hiromi was one of the first students to volunteer as a DTA. She started once a week in Beginning Puppy and Family Dog 1 classes, some of the most challenging classes, and was a natural. After assisting with just one class, she stepped up to communicate beautifully with the dog guardians. Hiromi was enthusiastic and ready to assist and encourage the students and their dogs, and ready to learn alongside the class. When she showed an interest in the agility classes, two of the instructors asked if she could assist in those classes, too. This was something we hadn't included in the pilot but with their support and Hiromi's enthusiasm for agility, she started volunteering in those classes. This is where she found her passion; she quickly picked up agility work and assisted with Foundation Skills for Agility, Beginning Agility, and soon after, Intermediate Agility classes.

Hiromi's family dog didn't have the same enthusiasm she had for agility. So, the Agility Program Coordinator asked her if she wanted to work with her retired agility dog Savvy. Hiromi "jumped" (pun intended) at the chance and has worked with Savvy, bringing her out of retirement, to go on and win ribbons and trophies! Hiromi and Savvy have an amazing bond and they love working together. Her dedication to the student volunteer program has blazed the trail for other student volunteers. Hiromi came here to volunteer, and she won the hearts of two dog training instructors who encouraged her and became her mentors and coaches. She in turn became a mentor to other volunteers. She even recruited a young student in one of the agility classes to volunteer as a DTA for the Puppies in the Park class. Hiromi gave Marin Humane the gift of her time and passion while our program, staff, volunteers and our community of dog guardians benefitted from knowing her.

She went above and beyond the usual requested hours from DTA volunteers, both adult and student, volunteering for four classes a week instead of one a week in 2023. On Tuesdays, she would arrive after school at 4 pm and stay until 7:30 pm helping with classes. When there were special weekend events on campus, she would volunteer extra hours. Hiromi volunteered over 300 hours in 2023 not including many more hours doing her "homework:" winning agility competitions with Savvy.

4. Using examples from 2023, describe how the nominee has demonstrated dedication and commitment to the organization, its constituents and/or the community.

Hiromi embraced the volunteer position she was assigned to and took it even further than we had envisioned. The instructors she assisted described her as "reliable, responsible, cooperative, compassionate, enthusiastic, and knowledgeable." Hiromi was so enthusiastic about learning she quickly gained experience and knowledge so she can confidently and tactfully answer questions from students in the class. She never hesitates to help someone on campus, be it directing dog guardians, assisting another instructor, or mentoring new volunteers (both students and adults). Her presence is always positive and supportive, and her assistance is invaluable for our classes and the community members in our classes.

5. Based on what you know about the nominee, how have they contributed to promoting a culture of equity, belonging and fairness within the organization or community.

Hiromi's dedication to volunteering and exceptional work has opened the door to more students to volunteer. Her choice to take her volunteer work further gave her a huge sense of belonging and pride. Something we want available to all interested student volunteers. As a DTA, Hiromi is warm, welcoming, and inclusive of all students.