



January/February 2019 | [sunflowerhill.org](http://sunflowerhill.org)

February 25, 2019

## A Note from Susan Houghton, Founder of Sunflower Hill

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has..."*  
Margaret Mead

In 2012, when we started Sunflower Hill, this quote by Margaret Mead was our mantra. As parents and concerned community leaders, we knew we were embarking on a bold idea - to create affordable residential communities and vocational programs for individuals with developmental delays, akin to senior living. Call us crazy, but thanks to passionate and committed board members and talented advisors who believed in our ideas, I believe we've had a very positive effect on at least part of that paradigm and world of those with special needs.



I'm grateful to all who've been on this journey with us - including past and present board members, many of whom devoted long hours as unpaid, 'working members' of our organization, despite their real day jobs! I'm grateful for our connected community leaders and advisors who used their expertise to assist in various projects as well as the local government officials, vendors and partners who said 'yes...we believe in your vision!' All of these individuals are the reason we've been able to create opportunities that are effectively resonating with our families, ranchers and volunteers. I also believe it was this collective commitment that led the honorable Catharine Baker to select us as the 2017 Nonprofit of the Year for the 16th Assembly District - after five years in existence, no less!

Just last year, we took one of our boldest steps - hiring a full-time Executive Director, Edie Nehls, to help us transition from a 'working board of directors' to more of a governing entity, with directors remaining focused on the big picture and the strategy and policy necessary for long-term success. That decision was absolutely the right one to make. Thanks to Edie's strong nonprofit management expertise, she's already actively and expertly transforming our organization - with creative programs, fresh ideas and fabulous new staff members.

We also begin 2019 with fresh new faces on our board of directors, Amy Bona, Anne Roby and Dan Foster, and new officers - including Kathy Layman, who is succeeding me as board president. Kathy has been the Vice President of Sunflower Hill for the past year. An expert in project management, with a strong corporate background, Kathy is absolutely the right person to begin this new era for our organization.

While I'll remain involved with Sunflower Hill as Founder and Advisor, Sunflower Hill will now transition into 2019 with the board of directors providing governing assistance to Edie and staff as they take over the day-to-day operations. All of us will continue to work collectively to ensure that our vision - to become "a model for special needs living and vocational options in the Bay Area, ensuring quality of life, and individual choices" remains paramount.

It takes a village for any true initiative to gain traction. Sunflower Hill would not be successful without all of you. Your continued belief in and support of our mission and vision is inspirational. We are grateful to our families, community members and corporate employees who volunteer at our garden, have breakfast at Stable Cafe as well as those who attend our events and city meetings, support our fundraisers and philanthropic needs or even follow us on social media- sharing in our stories and dreams.

Sunflower Hill is a place where individuals with special needs can thrive. And for that, we can all be very proud. Thank you and here's to a great 2019!

Sunflower Hill Had A Busy 2018!





Instagram Followers **309** 

Google Map Picture Hits **12,000** 

Moonlight in the vines supporting our mission and vision!

 Moonlight Vines

**Sunflower Hill**  
A Sustainable Special Needs Community

Please Help Us Welcome Stefanie to our Sunflower Hill Gardens Team!



Sunflower Hill is pleased to welcome Stefanie Landman to the Sunflower Hill Gardens team as the Garden and Teaching Assistant. Stefanie grew up in the mountains of New York and has spent most of her life outside. She earned a bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies and Sociology from Alfred University and is currently pursuing her Master's degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling through San Francisco State University. Stefanie has worked as an outdoor educator, naturalist and equine educator throughout her career sharing her passion for the outdoors with students of all ages. Her passions include camping, hiking, sharing her love of nature with others, spending time with her horse, Sid, and watching people and plants grow. Please be sure to say hello to her the next time you are at the garden!

Sunflower Hill Gardens 2019 Family Workdays and Volunteer Opportunities

We hope you will join us this year at our Special Needs Family Workdays! Activities include planting, harvesting, weeding, and more. Additionally, we always have some fun games to play and snacks too! Dates for this year's events are below.

The Sunflower Hill Gardens is located at 455 Olivina Avenue in Livermore. You can find more information [here](#) as well as our online volunteer form that must be filled out if this is your first time coming to the gardens.

### **2019 Saturday Family Work Days**

- April 13th-Spring in the Garden
- July 27th-Summer Harvest
- October 26th-Pumpkin Fest

### **Sunflower Hill Gardens Volunteer Opportunities**

We are looking for volunteers that would like to work in our garden 1-3 times per week in the following roles:

Our Garden Programs Volunteer position is open to individuals interested in volunteering in the garden on a regular basis, working directly with our programs (Special Needs High School, Transition, and Adult Day classes). These volunteers will work closely with Sunflower Hill's Garden Teacher and Farmer assisting small groups of Ranchers in the field to complete important garden tasks. We welcome volunteers who are new to working in a garden setting and with neuro-diverse populations. A desire to help others, kindness and patience, as well as an interest in learning, are valuable attributes of a Garden Program Volunteer.

Our General Field Garden Volunteer position is open to individuals that are interested in commitment to volunteering in the garden on a regular basis. These volunteers will work closely with Sunflower Hill's Farmer to complete important garden tasks. We welcome volunteers that are new to working in a garden setting and interested in learning.

If you are interested, please send an email to [info@sunflowerhill.org](mailto:info@sunflowerhill.org). Thank you!



## **Pictures 4 People Artist Auctioning off Art and Donating to Local Nonprofits**



Blake Muller, Sunflower Hill Stable Cafe Volunteer and Sunflower Hill Gardens Rancher, was chosen by Pictures 4 People artist Trent Thompson as the subject of one of his works. The inaugural art show and auction is scheduled for Tuesday, March 12th at [Range Life](#) in Livermore. Proceeds from the sale of the art works will be donated to local non-profits. Sunflower Hill is grateful to have been chosen as one of the recipients! Watch this [video](#) for more information about Pictures for People. If you are interested in attending the event, tickets can be purchased [here](#).

We LOVE this picture of Blake!!

## **Upcoming Events**

Sunday, March 17: Second Anniversary of Sunflower Hill at the [Stable Cafe!](#)

Saturday, April 13: Spring Planting [Family Workday](#)

Sunday, June 9: The Sunflower Run

Friday, July 12, 2019: Moonlight in the Vines



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