



March/April 2019 | [sunflowerhill.org](http://sunflowerhill.org)

April 23, 2019

Please Join us for the Sunflower Run



Celebrate the coming of summer by participating in Sunflower Hill's first ever Sunflower Run, which will include a 5k/10k, as well as a 1 mile Sunshine Run for people under the age of 12 or anyone seeking a shorter run. Choose the race length suitable to your ability or challenge your training goals.

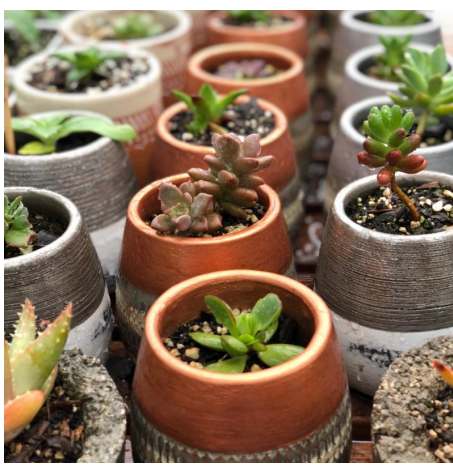
This is a race for athletes of all abilities. The race course starts in downtown Pleasanton, travels

through and around the Alameda County Pleasanton Fairgrounds, the beautiful Arroyo, and past historic homes, finishing back downtown.

Proceeds support the mission and vision of Sunflower Hill which is committed to developing affordable residential communities and vocational programs for adults with developmental disabilities.

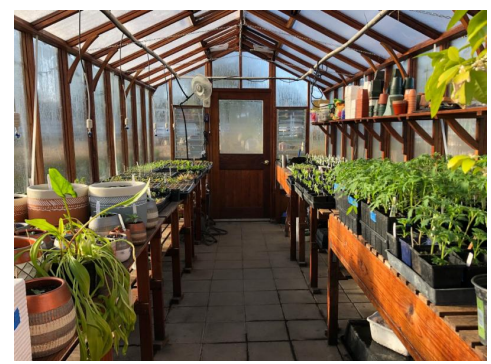
For run details, registration and sponsorship information, please go to our run [webpage](#).

Mother's Day Potted Plant Sale



Sunflower Hill's Garden Students have been working hard to plant sunflowers, succulents, and herbs in beautiful ceramic containers for our Mother's Day Potted Plant Sale.

[Preorder](#) your plant now and you can pick it up on Saturday, May 11, 2019 from 9-11:30 a.m. at the Sunflower Hill Gardens. Each ceramic pot will be a unique, living bouquet that will include a special note just for Mom. Available in 4", 6", 8", 10", and 12" sizes.

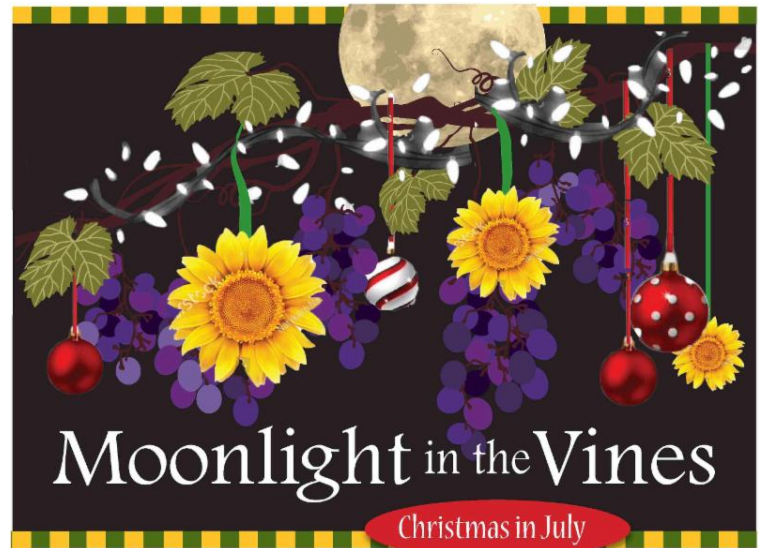


## Moonlight in the Vines - Christmas in July

Moonlight in the Vines~Christmas in July~our most important fundraiser of the year, will be a night filled with wonder and joy!

You and your guests will be treated to a night of tantalizing cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, a delicious holiday feast, music, a silent auction, and more. Kick off your pointy elf shoes after dinner, and dance the night away; it's certain to be a night you will not soon forget!

Information on tickets and sponsorships can be found [here](#).



Meet our Sunflower Hill Garden Team!





If you have visited the Sunflower Hill Gardens lately, you've likely noticed some new faces and exciting programming. Meet our incredibly talented Garden team, and be sure to stop by to say hello! The Sunflower Hill Gardens are located at 455 Olivina Avenue in Livermore. Please visit our [website](#) to learn more about the amazing programming at the Gardens.



**Lina Valenzuela**  
**Lead Farmer**

Lina earned her bachelor's degree in Plant Science from CSU Fresno and is a graduate of the Center for Land-Based Learning, California Farm Academy. She has worked in the horticultural industry for over a decade in many different roles - landscape designer, watershed coordinator, project manager for community-based habitat restoration projects, and owner/operator of Two Lands Farm. At Sunflower Hill, Lina is responsible for overall garden maintenance, training staff and volunteers in farming practices, garden projects, and planning volunteer work days at the garden.



**Rebecca Langstaff**  
**SFH Garden Teacher**

Rebecca attended the University of Illinois where she received her BA in Early Childhood Education with a SpEd Approval. She holds a Professional Clear California Multi-Subject Teaching Credential, and previous to joining the SFH team, she taught for 6 years in the Livermore and Pleasanton School Districts. As the Garden Teacher, Rebecca is responsible for program scheduling, planning Saturday Family Days, developing curriculum, and leading program visits to the garden. She also works directly with our Program Volunteers who help with our weekly classes leading garden tasks.





**Allison Arons, MFT**  
**Vocational Coach**

Allison is a licensed marriage and family therapist with 10 years of experience in the autism field. Allison graduated from Argosy University with a Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology. Allison has worked in schools with special needs individuals both in the classroom as well as in the therapy setting. Most recently, Allison worked as a Marriage and Family Therapist at the Oak Hill School in San Anselmo, which offers comprehensive and individualized academic programs for students with autism. She has also worked as a private therapist and individual skills developer for clients on the spectrum, working on social and life skills.



**Vlad Fernandez**  
**Garden Technician**

Vlad has been working at Sunflower Hill for 3 years. He really enjoys everyone he works with and the support he receives. He is also taking an advanced horticulture course at Las Positas College, which he enjoys. Vlad enjoys learning about healthy foods and where food comes from and working on future job skills. When he's not at Sunflower Hill, Vlad enjoys watching Netflix and gardening at his home.



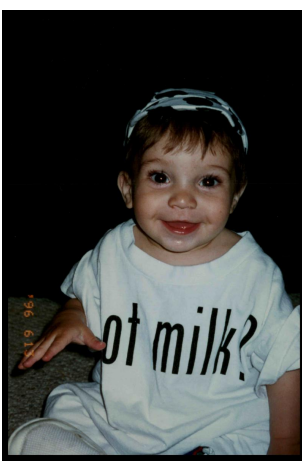
**Stefanie Landman**  
**Garden and Teaching Assistant**

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.



**Abby Lourenco**  
**Farmer Assistant**

Abby is a Tri-Valley native and a graduate of UC Davis, where she studied International Agricultural Development and interned abroad in Uganda and Ecuador. You can find her out in the garden on Saturdays working with our wonderful volunteers as Sunflower Hill's farmer assistant. Currently, Abby is serving as a FoodCorps Americorps service member in Oakland Unified School District, where she teaches gardening, nutrition, and cooking classes to elementary school students. Abby loves photography, backpacking, cooking, reading, spending time with friends and family, and (of course), gardening.



Our next installment in our Stories column is written by Amy Tessler about her son, Scott. Amy is a regular volunteer at the Sunflower Hill Gardens and you have probably seen Scott working in our vocational program at the Stable Cafe. You can read Scott's story [here](#).

Thank you for sharing Scott's story with us, Amy!



## Thank You to the Pleasanton Chamber!

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the [Pleasanton California Chamber of Commerce](#) for the recognition and honor of receiving the Excellence in Service award at this year's Community Service Awards!!

Accepting our award was Susan Houghton, Founder of Sunflower Hill. Susan is pictured here with Herb Ritter, Chairman of the Board for the Chamber.

It was truly a wonderful evening!



## A Memorable 4-Year Anniversary and Family Workday in the Gardens!



Thank you to all who joined us for our Spring in the Garden event on April 13th. It was a fun and an incredibly productive day! By the end of the day, volunteers were able to get 250 plants in the ground! Families were also able to do a craft, play games, and get their faces painted. You can view all the great photos from the Spring in the Garden event on our [flickr page](#).

Don't miss our [Summer Harvest](#) event in the garden on Saturday, July 27th!

## Sunflower Hill at the Stable Cafe Celebrates Two Years!

Sunflower Hill at the [Stable Cafe](#) celebrated our second anniversary last month. Congratulations to Blake Muller, Josh Layman, Jake Elfin, and Bruce Louwaert who have been faithfully working at the Stable Cafe for the past two years!

Thank you to the Stable Cafe Program founder, Dave Muller and

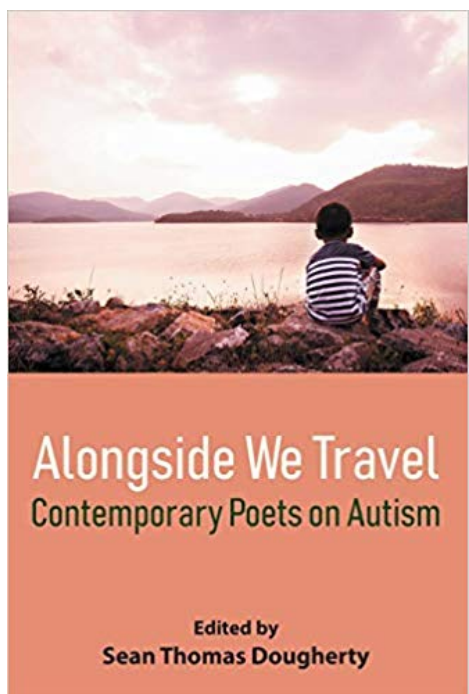


cafe owner, Esther Hall, for expertly guiding our volunteers each month. Be sure to stop by for breakfast on [May 19](#) and enjoy the best pancakes in the Bay Area!



Cafe worker, Bruce Louwaert & SFH Executive Director, Edie Nehls

## Alongside We Travel



Alongside We Travel is the first literary anthology to gather over two dozen poets from Canada, the United States, the UK and Israel whose lives are intertwined or affected by the autism spectrum. Included in this anthology are poems from tutors and teachers, aunts and grandmothers, friends and siblings, and from poets with autism themselves. Most of the work here is by highly accomplished poet-parents of autistic children written in a variety of traditional and experimental forms. But be warned. Much of the work articulates the despair, guilt, anger, as well as the joy that arises from engagement with such a complicated and diverse disability. As the editor Sean Thomas Dougherty writes, "I can only hope the range of these poems teaches you, the reader, what they have taught me, the editor, about my own autistic daughter, about art, and how we can be brought together through language towards love."

All contributor royalties earned on sales will be donated to Sharing the Weight, a small nonprofit out of Iowa doing a simple amazing thing: gathering people together to hand sew

and make weighted blankets for autistic children. More information and where to purchase can be found [here](#).

## Upcoming Events

Saturday, May 11: [Mother's Day Plant Sale](#)  
Sunday, May 19: Sunflower Hill at the [Stable Cafe](#)  
Sunday, June 9: The [Sunflower Run](#)  
No Stable Cafe in June due to the Fair  
Friday, July 12: [Moonlight in the Vines](#)  
Sunday, July 21: Sunflower Hill at the [Stable Cafe](#)  
Saturday, July 27: Summer Harvest [Family Workday](#)





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