

**KIDS for  
the BAY**

**2022-2023 School Year  
ANNUAL REPORT**

**Everyone Is an Environmentalist!**

# A Message from Mandi Billinge

## Executive Director and Founder of KIDS for the BAY



**KIDS for the BAY has not only bounced back from the impacts of the pandemic, we have also sprung forward!** We navigated the pandemic and school shutdowns with creativity and flexibility, and quickly developed special outdoor and online options. We were one of the first Environmental Education

organizations to come back to in-person experiences both for our school-based programs and for our Summer Camp. We now incorporate even more outdoor activities into our watershed lessons on school campuses. We have also created more walking field trips in local school watersheds, and we offer more bus field trips to special creek, bay, delta and ocean habitats. We continue to develop our Summer Camp every year to make this experience more impactful for our camp community.



In fall 2023, as more pandemic restrictions were lifted, we saw a significant increase in the number of registered and waitlisted teachers, and **programs filling faster than ever before.** Our Summer Camp sessions have had long waitlists in recent years, and we are thrilled to add a new session and theme for summer 2024.

The current KIDS for the BAY staff team is **diverse, strong and growing.** We recently added a new Education and Outreach Manager position and a new Communications and

Grants Coordinator position. These new roles are helping to increase our capacity to provide support for our staff and deliver our high quality programs.

Our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion continues to be **at the core of our work.** Last school year we resumed fully in-person, in-house training workshops in Culturally Responsive Classroom Management, Teaching Environmental Justice, Supporting English Language Learners and more. We are committed to providing high quality professional development opportunities to our staff to continue to **develop new leaders** in the field of Environmental Education.

Exciting new partnerships with the Richmond Outdoors Coalition, the City of Richmond, Oakland Goes Outdoors and more are helping to increase the impact of our work. Read more about these partnerships in the following pages.

Last year, we celebrated our 30 Year Anniversary and **more than 100,000 students and 4,000 partner teachers** who have graduated from our programs. I am happy to report that we are in a strong position to continue to increase our impact over the next thirty years, to inspire many more empowered Environmentalists.

All of these successes are **made possible by your support.** Thank you so much to our students, our families, our partner teachers, our advisory board members, and our funders and donors, for your dedication to this work and your shared commitment to excellence in Environmental Education.

*Mandi J. Billinge*



### KIDS for the BAY Staff

Mandi Billinge  
*Executive Director/Founder*  
Corey Chan  
*Education and Outreach Manager*  
Amy Asmussen  
*Communications and Grants Coordinator*  
Yvette Diaz Samayoa  
*Program Manager/Environmental Educator*  
Sakshi Srivastava  
*Program Coordinator/Environmental Educator*  
Grace Bedecarre  
*Program Coordinator/Environmental Educator*

### KIDS for the BAY Advisory Board Members

Leilani Alo, *Advisory Board President*  
Kimberly Aguilar  
Kate Gallagher  
Shefali Shah  
Sheela Shankar  
Clifford Thompson D.Ed.

A Project of



(pictured) Top row: Sakshi Srivastava, Alix Martin, Grace Bedecarre, Yvette Diaz Samayoa. Bottom row: Shefali Shah, Corey Chan, Mandi Billinge

# Partnerships Increase Impact

**KIDS for the BAY (KftB) has partnered with many collaborators over the years.** Some examples include working together with city and county 'Clean Water Programs' to improve water quality through education and outreach. Our students and families have also participated in many restoration projects in partnership with 'Friends of Creeks' groups, East Bay Municipal Utility District and East Bay Regional Parks District. Our long-time partnership with California State University East Bay provides professional level academic credit units to our partner teachers for their participation in KftB programs. We have been working together with many of our funders for multiple years to ensure the long-term success of our Environmental Education and outreach efforts. Read more about our funding partners on page eight.



**"KIDS for the BAY contributes an incredibly meaningful component to the pathway of outdoor programming for the Richmond Outdoors Coalition. They fill an important niche in the collective impact model not only because of the content of their programming, but also in terms of their reach in standards-based curriculum and rich, meaningful engagement with school communities."**

**— Angela Myers,  
Richmond Outdoors Coalition Consultant,  
Inclusion Outdoors**

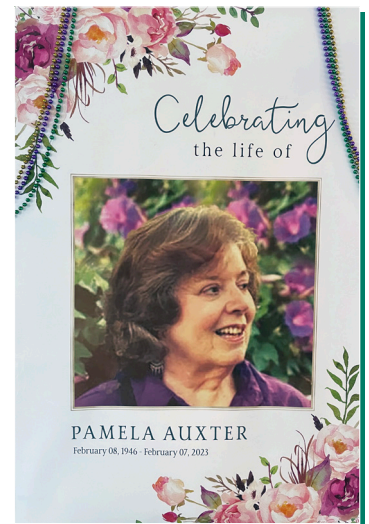
In the past few years we have entered some exciting new partnerships. Supported by the Clean California Grant, we are collaborating with the City of Richmond to partner with local elementary schools to help clean up and beautify local parks and greenspaces that the City is renovating. Read more on page five. We also recently began collaborating with Richmond Outdoors Coalition (ROC) and Oakland Goes Outdoors (OGO) to increase the impact of our work in Richmond and Oakland schools. ROC aims to expand equitable access to the outdoors for everyone who lives, works and learns in Richmond. OGO aims to provide Oakland youth with greater access to nature and the outdoors. Working together with the many partners involved in ROC and OGO, we can increase our collective impact for young Environmentalists and their communities. Look out for future stories in KftB communications about these new partnerships.

## Donor Spotlight: Pam Auxter, 1946 - 2023

**A big thank you to Pam, our wonderful partner teacher and friend, for her legacy gift to KIDS for the BAY!**

Pam Auxter, a third grade teacher at Dover Elementary School, was one of our very first partner teachers at KIDS for the BAY (KftB) in 1993, along with her friends and partner teachers Janice Mayoki and Anthony Ramirez. Pam was very passionate about Environmental Education. She and her students worked with KftB Executive Director Mandi Billinge when she first started KftB. Mandi really enjoyed teaching Pam's class and taking them on walking field trips to nearby Davis Park in San Pablo to explore Wildcat Creek. Pam was as excited as her students were to search the rocks for aquatic invertebrates, calculate the creek velocity and test creek water quality. When Pam's students noticed a lot of trash polluting their creek, they came up with the idea to do a creek cleanup. They reached out to the City of San Pablo for support with hauling away the trash, and invited their families to join the event. This is how the Wildcat Creek Cleanup in San Pablo, now an Annual Event in its 29th year, began.

Over the years, Mandi and Pam became good friends as well as colleagues. Pam was a strong supporter of KftB and an advocate for Environmental Education within her school. She inspired many Dover Elementary teachers to participate in KftB programs. Pam was a long-time donor and she encouraged her friends to become KftB donors as well. Over the years, Pam's health deteriorated due to Parkinson's disease, but she never lost her fun-loving, happy spirit and was always ready to enjoy a get together with Mandi and her family. She was especially excited to chat with Mandi's children and encourage them in their love of books and reading. Pam and Mandi shared a love of Christmas pudding and Mandi would always bring one back for Pam to enjoy whenever she visited her family in England. Pam will be very much missed by the KIDS for the BAY community, and we are so very thankful for her support as a partner teacher, supporter and special friend.



We will use Pam's legacy gift to provide the new **Pam's Watershed Rangers** program to a third - fifth grade level team of classes at Dover Elementary School each year.

# IN THE 2022-2023 SCHOOL YEAR, KIDS FOR THE BAY PARTNERED WITH 151 TEACHERS AND 4,199 STUDENTS!

## Turning Students onto Science

### Young Environmentalists Help Restore Lake Merritt

Lake Merritt is a short walk from Cleveland Elementary School in Oakland, and some lucky fourth graders had the unique opportunity to explore this local watershed habitat and participate in a special lakeside planting project as part of their KIDS for the BAY (KftB) Watershed Rangers Program. KftB Educators Yvette Diaz Samayoa and Corey Chan worked in partnership with the Rotary Nature Center (RNC), a nonprofit based at Lake Merritt that studies, protects and educates the public about the ecology and health of the lake wildlife sanctuary. Cleveland students were excited to help restore the lake by planting native plants to improve wildlife habitat.



“Our students will be able to come back here over time with their families, look for their plant name flag and say that they planted that plant right there!” teacher Luke Rosenberger exclaimed. During an exploration of the tidal marsh, fourth grader Faud observed, “The soil looks wet and damp, especially where it is darker.” RNC Volunteer Katie Noonan explained that the soil’s dark coloration indicated a low oxygen level, and led a discussion about the adaptations marsh plants need to survive in these conditions.

KftB’s Watershed Rangers engaged in community science by contributing to the lake’s daily water quality testing records. They learned how to test the temperature, pH, turbidity and color of the lake water. Ollie determined,



“The water color today is basque green. I bet it hasn’t been blue in a long time.” The Cleveland Environmentalists also learned how to assess the lake’s biodiversity by collecting and studying plankton samples. This was an impactful lesson for those who witnessed the massive fish kill event that occurred last year due to an algal bloom. The opportunity to participate in monitoring the lake and keeping it healthy inspired KftB students to continue to protect their local watershed.

The lake visit culminated in an encounter with the notorious white pelican, Hank, who became a permanent resident of Lake Merritt after a powerline injury. Our young Environmentalists promised, “We will make sure to come back and visit Hank, and see how our plants are doing!”

## Inspiring Environmental Action

In the 2022-2023 school year, KIDS for the BAY Environmentalists accomplished the following projects:

- **4,199 student leaders** created and shared informational posters, videos and environmental pledges at special presentation events to teach their families and school communities about the importance of protecting the local watershed and the San Francisco Bay to keep these environments clean and healthy. They also made and distributed green pesticides for school gardens, and led safe bay fish cooking presentations to teach their families how to reduce intake of toxins and protect their health. In addition, student leaders completed creek restoration activities including planting projects and invasive ivy removal.
- KftB student rangers **cleaned up 3,665 gallons of trash from their local watershed environments**, including school campuses, local parks, creek, bay, delta and ocean habitats.
- KftB student Environmentalists **completed 6,937 environmental stewardship hours**, cleaning up and protecting the environment we all share, and educating others about protecting the environment.

## Richmond Students Beautify Local Parks and Green Spaces

**Art is an important educational tool** that helps students develop lifelong skills. KftB recently launched the Richmond Parks and Watershed Rangers Program in partnership with the City of Richmond to give students from three schools in the Iron Triangle neighborhood opportunities to adopt, explore, clean up and beautify local parks and greenspaces, and engage with their communities.

Peres K-8 School students designed stone pavers to beautify San Francisco Bay Trail. Grant Elementary students’

*continued on page 5*

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tiles and pavers adorn the ball wall and playground at Lucas Park, while Lincoln students' colorful tiles cover the gazebo at Heart of Richmond Park. Richmond Main Street was a key partner in this project, working together with KftB and Lincoln Elementary.

KftB Educator, Yvette Diaz Samayoa, demonstrated how to use paint, brushes and palettes, and how to mix primary colors to create more color options. This was helpful for

Peres students Shiloh and Micaela, who mixed paints until they created the exact sand color they needed.



The young artists designed tiles and pavers depicting landscapes, plants and animals. Some students chose to display what they learned about their local watershed in their KftB lessons.

**"Students had lots of fun bringing out their creativity to design their art pieces with KIDS for the BAY."**

**— Mx. Encarnacion, Fifth Grade Teacher, Grant Elementary School, Richmond**

The art installation projects encouraged Richmond students to employ their newfound artistic skills to inspire deeper connections with greenspaces in their communities. "The students were able to express what they learned through art," shared teacher Ms. Jaimes, from Peres K-8 School. "I want my tile to show

one of the Five Rs. Maybe I will focus on Reusing," said Daniel. Christian shared, "Our tiles all fit together to show fish swimming in the ocean. This tile shows pollution and how it hurts the fish and other animals."



KIDS for the BAY can't wait for all our young artists and their families to visit their art installations and witness firsthand how their artwork has improved their community, and inspired others to protect and care for their local environment!

## Connecting Students with Nature

In the 2022-2023 school year, KIDS for the BAY students went on park, greenspace, creek, San Francisco Bay, delta and ocean field trips to:

- Barbara and Jay Vincent Park, Richmond
- Berkeley Marina
- Big Break Regional Shoreline, Oakley
- Booker T. Anderson Park, Richmond
- Boorman Park, Richmond
- Cerrito Creek, El Cerrito
- Civic Park, Walnut Creek

- Crab Cove, Alameda
- Dimond Park/Sausal Creek, Oakland
- Heart of Richmond Park
- Keller Beach, Richmond
- Lake Merritt, Oakland
- Martinez Marina
- Mira Vista Field, Richmond

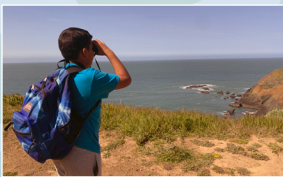
- Robert W. Crown Memorial Beach, Alameda
- Rodeo Beach, Marin County
- San Francisco Bay Trail, Richmond
- Strawberry Creek, Berkeley
- Sunol Regional Wilderness, Sunol
- Wildcat Creek, San Pablo

## Leading a Lifetime of Ocean Stewardship

With the support of the Whale Tail Grants Program, KIDS for the BAY has empowered hundreds of Richmond students and families to lead a lifetime of watershed and ocean stewardship. Michelle Obama, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (King), Montalvin and Ford elementary school students learned about our oceans, what the ocean provides for people and wildlife, and the importance of caring for the marine ecosystems we all depend on.

An exploration of the Rodeo Beach shoreline opened students' eyes and minds to the wonders of the coastal environment.

"Look at this huge crab claw I found! I wonder where the rest of the crab is," said Malachi. Breno hypothesized, "Maybe



a predator got to it and then different animals broke it apart." "I know this is a blue mussel, and I think it has two other types of animals growing on it," said Kayla, fascinated by the commensal relationships thriving on the mussel shell. "This is so cool!"

The young scientists also invited their families to return with them to Rodeo Beach for a student-led field trip and beach cleanup with KftB. Audrey shared: "Rodeo Lagoon is a special body of water because there are endangered frogs and salamanders that call this place home."

Explaining the population decline, Italy said, "More and more people are coming here since these buildings were built,



making the habitat smaller." Miranie added, "The storm drains and cars are also bringing more pollution to this area, making the water less healthy."

Students led their caregivers in a beach cleanup and educated them about plastic pollution, the threats it poses to marine life, and the methods by which trash can travel through neighborhood storm drains and waterways to the open ocean. Environmental stewards and families from Montalvin Elementary collected a total of 126 pieces of trash.

The KftB Watershed Action - Ocean Stewards program offered many first-time experiences for students and parents alike. Parents loved investigating new habitats with their young leaders, and students grew confident in their ability to educate others about the importance of caring for our local watersheds and the ocean.

# KIDS for the BAY Guardian Award 2023

KIDS for the BAY Guardian Awards are bestowed on teachers and principals who show their commitment to one or more of our programs and continue to teach our programs year after year.



## Misuk Nam Ohlone Elementary School, Hercules

KIDS for the BAY is excited to present this year's Guardian Award to Ohlone Elementary School teacher Misuk Nam. When Misuk first learned about the garbage patches swirling in our oceans and the plastic pollution crisis, she

knew she had to act. She decided that one way she could help make an impact is by teaching her students about important

"KIDS for the BAY lessons are great and so accessible. I can tweak them as needed to make everything work for me and my students. There are plenty of resources in the curriculum guide with all of the information I need."

— Misuk Nam,  
Second Grade Teacher, Ohlone  
Elementary School, Hercules

environmental issues.

"As a teacher, I have to do something. It's my responsibility. We have to start somewhere and find solutions that work." For Misuk, KIDS for the BAY (KftB) programs were a great place to start!

Throughout her partnership with KftB, Misuk has built on

the curriculum and transformed her classroom and school into a watershed-friendly, zero-waste community. As a pioneer of trash cleanup and prevention efforts, Misuk ensures each classroom has a recycling and compost bin. With tongs and reusable bags provided by KftB, she continues to perform regular trash cleanup projects with her students throughout the year. Misuk's students sort and compare the waste they collect in different areas of the school and discuss location-specific solutions to reducing trash on campus. In letters detailing their cleanup experience, her students urge community leaders to follow suit and take action to protect the local watershed. Misuk's commitment to environmental stewardship has inspired several other teachers at her school to participate in KftB programs. Misuk continues to go above and beyond to empower her students and coworkers to take action for the environment.

"I am so happy that more teachers from Ohlone are doing KIDS for the BAY this year. We have Classroom Workshops, Field Trips, the Watershed Action Program and Blue Watershed Classrooms all on this campus!"

— Misuk Nam, Second Grade Teacher,  
Ohlone Elementary School, Hercules

## KIDS for the BAY Past Staff Highlights

### Keturah Kornbluth Francis Mendoza Kristina Yoshida Brenda Salgado

KIDS for the BAY has been thrilled to once again have in-person visits with some past staff in the past few months!

**Keturah Kornbluth** and her daughter Naomi joined us for California Coastal Cleanup Day. Formerly a KftB Program Coordinator/Environmental Educator from 2003 - 2006, Ket is now the Garden Coordinator at Cragmont Elementary School in Berkeley.



**Francis Mendoza** and his daughter Kira also joined us for Coastal Cleanup Day. Also formerly a KftB Program Coordinator/Environmental Educator from 2004 - 2007, Francis is now the Manager of Community Development at Children & Nature Network. It was wonderful to visit with Francis, Ket and their children, and work together to help clean up the bay shoreline at Point Pinole.



City of San Pablo and Dover Elementary School at Davis Park in San Pablo. As a KftB Program Director/Environmental

**Kristina Yoshida** and her son Javi joined KftB Program Manager, Yvette Diaz Samayoa, at this year's Wildcat Creek Cleanup event with the

Educator from 2003 - 2008, Kristina also used to manage this event! She is now an Environmental Scientist with the San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board.

We were so happy to see **Brenda Salgado**, formerly the KftB Program/Development Coordinator from 2001 - 2003, when she stopped by the office to say hi this past summer. Brenda is now doing amazing work in Emergent Strategy, Racial/Ancestral/Land Healing for Collective Liberation with the Racial Healing Initiative.



**Thank you so much for staying in touch, past KftB staff, and for the wonderful work you are doing!**

# Summer Camp 2023 Highlights



“Being at this camp makes me feel like a scientist. I love using a magnifying lens because it shows me everything!”

— Leyla, Camper



“The camp was well run, with qualified counselors. I like the focus on environmental learning and being out in nature. It’s exactly the kind of summer experience I want my kids to have.”

— Kristin Hathaway, Camp Parent

## KIDS for the BAY campers, staff and youth leaders spent a fun-filled summer enjoying the outdoors!

Campers were delighted to make discoveries at creek, pond, forest, meadow, bay and ocean habitats around the San Francisco Bay Area. We investigated unique ecosystems, played games and performed experiments, and even helped clean up and restore vital habitats. Our favorite moments included:

- Playing listening games to identify bird calls
- Discovering crabs, pipefish, a variety of egrets, and a gray smooth hound shark at Berkeley Marina
- Swimming and making solar s’mores at Lake Anza
- Field trips to the Oakland Zoo, Cal Academy of Sciences, Lawrence Hall of Science, Blake Gardens and Rodeo Beach
- Learning about ocean acidification and how it impacts the shells of crabs and other aquatic life
- Monitoring the biodiversity of Wildcat Creek by studying macroinvertebrates
- Investigating the vast root systems of redwood trees and learning how redwoods alter the acidity of the soil around them
- Building density chambers and bay models and simulating the types of water flowing in the bay estuary
- Creating volcanoes and dinosaur eggs, dissecting owl pellets, and investigating animal paw prints
- Removing invasive ivy from Strawberry Creek on the UC Berkeley campus
- Having fun learning about animal adaptations by playing ‘Adaptation Auction’ and ‘Adaptation Tag’
- Observing plankton with field microscopes at Crab Cove and discovering a hidden world of microorganisms in a tiny water sample
- Cleaning up creek, bay, and ocean habitats and reducing plastic pollution by practicing the Five Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rot and Refuse).



“I can’t believe I got to pet a snake. That was so empowering! We need to protect the snake’s habitat.”

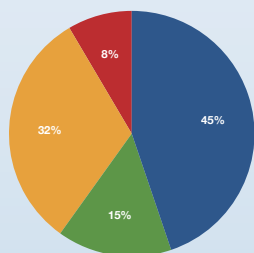
— Henry, Camper

“Amazing! KftB made hands-on learning fun, and the counselors were wonderful and helpful. Keep being you! It is obvious that KftB is dedicated to hands-on learning for both campers and school students. Thank you!”

— Jacquie Murray, Camp Parent



## Statement of Financials | July 2022 – June 2023



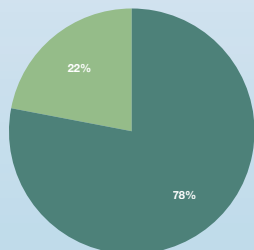
### SUPPORT AND REVENUE

**Total Support and Revenue ..... \$565,577**

■ Government Contracts .....	\$253,331 (45%)
■ Foundation and Corporate Grants ...	\$85,425 (15%)
■ Service Revenue.....	\$178,808 (32%)
■ Donations .....	\$48,013 (8%)

### Financial Position as of June, 2023

<b>Assets .....</b>	<b>\$747,164</b>
<b>Liabilities .....</b>	<b>\$72,287</b>
<b>Net Assets .....</b>	<b>\$674,877</b>



### EXPENSES

**Total Expenses: ..... \$533,944**

■ Program .....	\$416,476 (78%)
■ Administration, Development and Fundraising .....	\$117,468 (22%)

# Thank you to our generous funders and donors for the 2022-2023 School Year!

## Foundations, Corporations, Public Agencies, and Other Funders

Alameda Countywide Clean Water  
Program

Alameda County Fish and Game  
Commission

Altamont Education Advisory Board

Angora Ridge Foundation

Anonymous Foundation Funder

Avila and Associates Consulting  
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Bay Area Sea Kayaker

Berkeley Garden Club Conservation  
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California Coastal Commission

- Whale Tail Grants Program

Cestra Butner Family Foundation

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City of Antioch

City of El Cerrito

City of Hercules

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Fiddlehead Donor Advised Fund

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- Youth Access to Nature Fund

San Francisco Public Utilities Commission

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- Noble and Lorraine Hancock Family Fund
- Tundra Glacier Fund

Stege Sanitary District

Strong Foundation for Environmental  
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The Bernard Osher Foundation

Tides Foundation

- J. Vance Huckins Fund

Zip Code East Bay

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Joshua Rai

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Lani Alo\*

Mandi Billinge and James Kliegel

Michelle Calavita

Shefali Shah\*

Sheela Shankar\*

Tiffany Grandstaff

### CREEK STEWARDS (\$250+)

Alison and Virgil Rhodius

Bharat Mody

Cynthia DeLeon

Jessica Nusbaum and Chris Jannusch

Ken Mannshardt

Kristi Kenney (Fiddlehead Donor Advised  
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Marlene Nusbaum

Maureen Jaspersen

Michael and Suzanne Mannshardt

Michelle Calavita

Patty Clark

### ENVIRONMENTAL VISIONARIES (\$10,000+)

Pamela C. Auxter

### WATERSHED ACTIVISTS (\$5,000+)

Ricardo Torres & Nat Damon

Zac and Amy Weinberg

### ESTUARY GUARDIANS (\$2,500)

Gail, Charles & Nate Entrekin

Kuppe & Shaku Shankar

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Sheela Shankar\*

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\* Advisory Board Member