



**SAN RAFAEL CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT**

**Department: City Manager**

**Prepared by: Lindsay Lara, City Clerk**

**City Manager Approval:** \_\_\_\_\_

**TOPIC: CITIZEN OF THE YEAR 2022**

**SUBJECT: RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION TO RECIPIENT OF THE RICHARD P. O'BRIEN AND MARY FERRARIO O'BRIEN CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARD - 2022**

**RECOMMENDATION:** Adopt Resolution of Appreciation

**BACKGROUND:** In March 2001, J. Michael Mahoney established an endowment in honor of former Planning Commissioner Richard O'Brien and his wife, Mary Ferrario O'Brien. The endowment funds an annual "Citizen of the Year" award. The purpose of this award is to recognize an individual in the San Rafael community who has made exceptional contributions to the City, making it a better place to live or work. In addition to public recognition, the endowment provides a cash award to the recipient.

In September 2001, the City Council adopted procedures for the "Citizen of the Year" award program and process. The procedures include the appointment of a Section Committee to review nominations from the public and recommend an award recipient to the City Council. The Selection Committee includes two City Council members, two Planning Commissioners, a member of the O'Brien family, a representative from the San Rafael Chamber of Commerce, and neighborhood community representatives (e.g., Federation of San Rafael Neighborhoods).

The call for nominations was initiated in November 2021. Once the current year nominations have been submitted, they are reviewed along with the nominations submitted over the past three years (in this case 2019, 2020 and 2021). Last year's Citizen of the Year recipient (Shirley Fischer – 2021) was eliminated from the pool of eligible candidates.

This year, a total of 16 candidates were considered. Of this total, nominations were submitted for 1 nominee this year and 15 were carried over from the past three years. On March 22, 2022, the Selection Committee met to review and consider the nominations. The Committee selected Samantha Ramirez as the twenty-second recipient of the award.

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**FOR CITY CLERK ONLY**

**Council Meeting:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Disposition:** \_\_\_\_\_

As summarized in the attached Resolution and nomination materials, Samantha Ramirez was selected as Citizen of the Year due to her impact on the youth community in the areas of civic participation, community engagement, her volunteer work with LatinX families in San Rafael, and her efforts to inspire youth Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) by running for Board of Education in 2020. Samantha serves on the Marin County Youth Commission and the Youth and Parent Council for Marin Promise Partnership. She built relationships with families of students who had a desire to participate in the rallies for Black Lives Matter and coordinated rides to get students to and from the rallies. She has made herself available to help families that don't speak English to maneuver through the legal system by assisting with filling out and submitting applications for housing. Samantha's efforts and accomplishments have bettered our community in many ways, which has earned her the receipt of the City of San Rafael's Citizen of the Year Award for 2022.

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH:** The call for nominations for Citizen of the Year was advertised in Snapshot (the City Manager's e-newsletter), the City website, NextDoor social media, and with neighborhood associations.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** As the Citizen of the Year Award program is privately funded, there is no financial impact to the City of San Rafael. However, the recipient of this award receives a check in the amount of \$2,500 from the Richard P. O'Brien and Mary Ferrario O'Brien Citizen of the Year Fund, which is administered by the Marin Community Foundation.

**OPTIONS:**

1. Adopt the Resolution of Appreciation conferring the 2022 Citizen of the Year Award to the Samantha Ramirez
2. Return the recommendation to the Selection Committee for reconsideration.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Adopt the Resolution of Appreciation.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Resolution of Appreciation
2. Nomination materials and letters of support for Samantha Ramirez



**City of San Rafael**  
**Richard P. O'Brien and Mary Ferrario O'Brien**  
**Citizen of the Year Award for 2022**  
Presented to  
**Samantha Ramirez**

WHEREAS, Samantha Ramirez is committed to uplifting the community in which she resides, both in her work and her extracurricular activities. As a bilingual and bicultural community member with family from El Salvador and Honduras, she has worked hard to be a powerful bridge between the LatinX communities in San Rafael and the bodies that govern San Rafael. She is a passionate advocate for students and creating a fairer and more equitable environment for inside and outside of the school system; and

WHEREAS, Samantha is a coordinator of the Marin County Youth Commission, a group of 23 young people that work with the Board of Supervisors, and she has worked to increase the number of students of color on the Commission and transformed the group to better represent Marin County. The Commission is proud to include a variety of races, cultures and experiences, which was a variety that did not exist previously; and

WHEREAS, In 2020, Samantha worked with students who had a desire to participate and attend rallies for Black Lives Matter, and built trust and relationships with their families to assign and coordinate pick-ups and drop-offs for students who desired to attend. The relationships she built with families, and difficult conversations she facilitated, were with the purpose of providing experiences to students that could make a difference and to help introduce them to advocacy; and

WHEREAS, Samantha makes herself available to families who don't speak English by meeting with them and helping them maneuver through more complicated processes. One example of this was her work with a family who desired to find housing but needed assistance with filling out and submitting applications in English. She met with this specific family on three occasions until they were able to acquire housing; and

WHEREAS, Samantha spends much of her free time volunteering by serving on the Youth and Parent Council for Marin Promise Partnership, attending community events, Board of Supervisors, City Council and School Board meetings; she supported the Marin Community Fridges Initiative and advocated to eliminate School Resource Officers from San Rafael schools; and

WHEREAS, Samantha ran for Office for the San Rafael Board of Education in 2020, and while unsuccessful, she wanted the School Board to represent the community they serve and to signal to young people that they can also run for office and that their voices would be heard. Her running for Office provoked discussions among the youth of San Rafael about the importance of representation, of having someone in leadership who represented a significant part of the community. Her candidacy demonstrated that the voice of the youth matter, and the voice of people of color in this community matter; and

WHEREAS, Samantha has made such an impact to the community that she received a total of nine nominations for Citizen of the Year. In the opinion of her nominators, she has gone above and beyond her official role to nurture and mentor kids in our community, particularly Latino kids who have had very few Latinos in leadership roles to whom they could look up to and relate. She has served as a bridge builder, which is a tremendous gift, and which she does without compensation, and she has proven to be an exemplary citizen of San Rafael.

NOW, THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED, that the San Rafael City Council expresses its appreciation to Samantha Ramirez on behalf of this community and hereby awards her the Richard O'Brien and the Mary Ferrario O'Brien Citizen of the Year Award for 2022 on Monday, May 2, 2022.

Mayor

## New submission from Citizen of the Year

Forms Admin <notify@proudcity.com>

Wed 12/9/2020 5:45 PM

To: Lindsay Lara <Lindsay.Lara@cityofsanrafael.org>

### Date

12/09/2020

### Nominee for Citizen of the Year

Samantha Ramirez

### Nominee's Home Address

[REDACTED]  
SAN RAFAEL, CA 94903

United States

[Map It](#)

### Does this nominee live within San Rafael City Limits?

- Yes

### Nominee's Phone

[REDACTED]

### Nominee's Email

[REDACTED]

### Your Name

Juliet Starrett

### Your Address

[REDACTED]  
SAN RAFAEL, CA 94903

United States

[Map It](#)

### Your Phone

[REDACTED]

### Your Email

[REDACTED]

### What contributions has this individual made to the community that are beyond the scope of normal civic responsibilities?

Samantha Ramirez is committed to uplifting the community from which she comes, both in her work and her extracurricular activities. She is bilingual and bicultural, with family from El Salvador and Honduras, and is working hard to be a powerful bridge between the LatinX communities in San Rafael and the bodies that govern San Rafael.

She is a passionate advocate for students and creating a fairer more equitable environment for both in and out of the school system.

She is the coordinator of the Marin County Youth Commission, a group of 23 young people from all over Marin county that work with the Board of Supervisors. In her spare time, she ran for the San Rafael School Board in order to make a difference with the students she works hard to support.

Outside of this work, Samantha led a herculean initiative in her campaign for Area 1 San Rafael School Board seat.

She's also served as site coordinator of the LEAP program at Venetia valley, where she engaged and served 80-90 students and their families. She brought the community together to provide quality enrichment to the students.

**What impact on the community did this individual's activities make? How has this person made a difference?**

Samantha is from the San Rafael community and choses to stay here and fight to make it better. She's had the same experiences as students and families which allows her to do her work from the heart and be successful.

Samantha galvanized the support of 2,700 San Rafael residents who cast a vote for her for School Board.

Since taking over as Marin County Youth Commission program coordinator, she's increased the number of students of color and transformed the group to better represent Marin County. MCYC is now proud to include a variety of races, cultures and experiences, a variety that did not exist prior. This ensures the commission can bring their real lived experiences of racial inequity and true passion for social justice to the Board of Supervisors to create real change.

Through LEAP, she held Parent education nights and events, and worked together with families to provide quality enrichment to students. She's gained a huge following of supportive students and grads because of her contributions.

**Discuss the time and energy this person has devoted to community projects or efforts.**

Samantha Ramirez's work is community projects and efforts, it's how she spends all of her time and intellectual and emotional energy. From running for School Board to become the first Millennial Latina elected to the Board.

**Discuss the challenges met and overcome by this individual.**

Samantha Ramirez continues to fight and run despite the influence of racism at the polls and in daily life, even here in educated and progressive Marin. As a young Latina woman, she faces what Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez has called a "extremely hostile" environment for anyone that is different or progressive.

**To what extent has this individual's efforts been previously recognized by the community?**

Samantha has not been recognized by the community beyond articles in the Marin IJ around her activism locally.

Please show her our support and help restore her confidence after a hard-fought campaign, we need her for the students.

### New submission from Citizen of the Year

Forms Admin <notify@proudcity.com>

Wed 12/9/2020 7:33 PM

To: Lindsay Lara <Lindsay.Lara@cityofsanrafael.org>

**Date**

12/09/2020

**Nominee for Citizen of the Year**

Samantha Ramirez

**Nominee's Home Address**

[Redacted]

San Rafael, CA 94903

United States

[Map It](#)

**Does this nominee live within San Rafael City Limits?**

- Yes

**Nominee's Phone**

[Redacted]

**Nominee's Email**

[Redacted]

**Your Name**

Anastacia Maggioncalda

**Your Address**

[Redacted]

San Rafael, CA 94903

United States

[Map It](#)

**Your Phone**

[Redacted]

**Your Email**

[Redacted]

**What contributions has this individual made to the community that are beyond the scope of normal civic responsibilities?**

Samantha Ramirez is committed to uplifting the community from which she comes, both in her work and her extracurricular activities. She is bilingual and bicultural, with family from El Salvador and Honduras, and is working hard to be a powerful bridge between the LatinX communities in San Rafael and the bodies that govern San Rafael.

She is a passionate advocate for students and creating a fairer more equitable environment for both in and out of the school system. She is the coordinator of the Marin County Youth Commission, a group of 23 young people from all over Marin county that work with the Board of Supervisors. In her spare time, she ran for the San Rafael School Board in order to make a difference with the students she works hard to support. Outside of this work, Samantha led a herculean initiative in her campaign for Area 1 San Rafael School Board seat. She's also served as site coordinator of the LEAP program at Venetia valley, where she engaged and served 80-90 students and their families. She brought the community together to provide quality enrichment to the students.

**What impact on the community did this individual's activities make? How has this person made a difference?**

Samantha is from the San Rafael community and choses to stay here and fight to make it better. She's had the same experiences as students and families which allows her to do her work from the heart and be successful. Samantha galvanized the support of 2,700 San Rafael residents who cast a vote for her for School Board. Since taking over as Marin County Youth Commission program coordinator, she's increased the number of students of color and transformed the group to better represent Marin County. MCYC is now proud to include a variety of races, cultures and experiences, a variety that did not exist prior. This ensures the commission can bring their real lived experiences of racial inequity and true passion for social justice to the Board of Supervisors to create real change. Through LEAP, she held Parent education nights and events, and worked together with families to provide quality enrichment to students. She's gained a huge following of supportive students and grads because of her contributions.

**Discuss the time and energy this person has devoted to community projects or efforts.**

Samantha Ramirez's work is community projects and efforts, it's how she spends all of her time and intellectual and emotional energy. From running for School Board to become the first Millennial Latina elected to the Board.

**Discuss the challenges met and overcome by this individual.**

Samantha Ramirez continues to fight and run despite the influence of racism at the polls and in daily life, even here in educated and progressive Marin. As a young Latina woman, she faces what Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez has called a "extremely hostile" environment for anyone that is different or progressive.

**To what extent has this individual's efforts been previously recognized by the community?**

Samantha has not been recognized by the community beyond articles in the Marin IJ around her activism locally and by the many votes for her for school board! Please show her our support and help restore her confidence after a hard-fought campaign, we need her for the students.



### New submission from Citizen of the Year

Forms Admin <notify@proudcity.com>

Fri 12/11/2020 10:29 AM

To: Lindsay Lara <Lindsay.Lara@cityofsanrafael.org>

**Date**

12/11/2020

**Nominee for Citizen of the Year**

Samantha Ramirez

**Nominee's Home Address**

[Redacted]

San Rafael, CA 94903

United States

[Map It](#)

**Does this nominee live within San Rafael City Limits?**

- Yes

**Nominee's Phone**

[Redacted]

**Nominee's Email**

[Redacted]

**Your Name**

Alice Tacheny

**Your Address**

[Redacted]

San Rafael, CA 94903

United States

[Map It](#)

**Your Phone**

[Redacted]

**Your Email**

[Redacted]

**What contributions has this individual made to the community that are beyond the scope of normal civic responsibilities?**

Samantha Ramirez is committed to uplifting the community from which she comes, both in her work and her extracurricular activities. She is bilingual and bicultural, with family from El Salvador and Honduras, and is working hard to be a powerful bridge between the LatinX communities in San Rafael and the bodies that govern San Rafael.

She is a passionate advocate for students and creating a fairer more equitable environment for both in and out of the school system.

She is the coordinator of the Marin County Youth Commission, a group of 23 young people from all over Marin county that work with the Board of Supervisors. In her spare time, she ran for the San Rafael School Board in order to make a difference with the students she works hard to support.

Outside of this work, Samantha led a herculean initiative in her campaign for Area 1 San Rafael School Board seat.

She's also served as site coordinator of the LEAP program at Venetia valley, where she engaged and served 80-90 students and their families. She brought the community together to provide quality enrichment to the students.

**What impact on the community did this individual's activities make? How has this person made a difference?**

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Since taking over as Marin County Youth Commission program coordinator, she's increased the number of students of color and transformed the group to better represent Marin County. MCYC is now proud to include a variety of races, cultures and experiences, a variety that did not exist prior. This ensures the commission can bring their real lived experiences of racial inequity and true passion for social justice to the Board of Supervisors to create real change.

Through LEAP, she held Parent education nights and events, and worked together with families to provide quality enrichment to students. She's gained a huge following of supportive students and grads because of her contributions.

**Discuss the time and energy this person has devoted to community projects or efforts.**

Samantha Ramirez's work is community projects and efforts, it's how she spends all of her time and intellectual and emotional energy. From running for School Board to become the first Millennial Latina elected to the Board.

**Discuss the challenges met and overcome by this individual.**

Samantha Ramirez continues to fight and run despite the influence of racism at the polls and in daily life, even here in educated and progressive Marin. As a young Latina woman, she faces what Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez has called a "extremely hostile" environment for anyone that is different or progressive.

**To what extent has this individual's efforts been previously recognized by the community?**

Samantha has not been recognized by the community beyond articles in the Marin IJ around her activism locally.

Please show her our support and help restore her confidence after a hard-fought campaign, we need her for the students.

### New submission from Citizen of the Year

Forms Admin <notify@proudcity.com>

Wed 12/30/2020 7:44 PM

To: Lindsay Lara <Lindsay.Lara@cityofsanrafael.org>

**Date**

12/30/2020

**Nominee for Citizen of the Year**

Samantha Ramirez

**Nominee's Home Address**

[Redacted]

San Rafael, CA 94903-3117

United States

[Map It](#)

**Does this nominee live within San Rafael City Limits?**

- Yes

**Nominee's Phone**

[Redacted]

**Nominee's Email**

[Redacted]

**Your Name**

Arianne Schneider-Stocking

**Your Address**

[Redacted]

San Rafael, CA 94903-3117

United States

[Map It](#)

**Your Phone**

[Redacted]

**Your Email**

[Redacted]

**What contributions has this individual made to the community that are beyond the scope of normal civic responsibilities?**

Becoming a mentor to youth outside her professional role, for example for Black lives Matter protest Samantha asked what students wanted to attend the protest and who needed a ride. She asked their parents for permission and picked them up so they could attend the event. The youth really appreciate this. It takes time to build a relationship with their

families and earn trust but it makes all the difference. Especially in the Latinx culture when you are a youth your parents don't let you do anything not school related. Samantha takes the time to earn trust from families so youth are able to have new experiences.

She also makes herself available to Spanish speaking families that need help. One example is a freshman student of hers who lives in the Canal. Her family was sharing an apartment with another family and wanted to find an apartment just for them. Samantha met with the family and helped them fill out applications. They did this three times before they finally found an apartment. She was so overjoyed for them!

Young people need adults in their lives that they can trust, Samantha is blessed to have strong relationships with youth from all over Marin county. They ask her about opportunities or where they can volunteer. They know She will help them anyway She can.

**What impact on the community did this individual's activities make? How has this person made a difference?**

By being a strong outspoken leader Samantha has shown her youth and community that our voice matters. Growing up in Marin as a BIPOC woman has not been easy. Their experiences are not included and lack representation in all spaces!!

Students have written about her in their school essays! Students have been inspired by Samantha's campaign! Especially BIPOC youth now feel like they can run for office! This makes her cry tears of joy, while her path isn't always easy She is making a difference.

**Discuss the time and energy this person has devoted to community projects or efforts.**

Samantha spends much of her free time involved in community events and causes from 2-8 hours per week. She recently joined the youth and parent council for Marin Promise Partnership. She attends the Board of Supervisors zoom meetings as well as other local school board and city council zooms. She has supported the Marin community fridges initiative as well as eliminating SRO's from San Rafael schools. The data clearly shows that students of color are disproportionately affected by police on school campuses.

I use my social media to share local opportunities for my community and ways to get involved locally.

**Discuss the challenges met and overcome by this individual.**

Survivor of domestic abuse, Samantha left an abusive relationship in December 2016. It was very difficult at first but She rebuilt herself and created a life She is proud of. She went to therapy and stayed at the Center for domestic peace shelter for a little bit. There is too much stigma around Domestic violence yet it is the #1 reason police are called in Marin county. Because San Rafael is small, She has to run into his family sometimes but Samantha holds her head high because She is happy She fought for her life and left him when She did.

Being a poor/working class person in an affluent place is very challenging to one's mental health. Generational wealth is real, many of her peers graduated high school to a completely different reality that She did. Samantha has had to work multiple jobs just to be able to continue to live in Marin county. She loves her community but continuing to live here is a real financial challenge.

Being a first generation college student was a challenge She was able to overcome. She made mistakes like take a loan She didn't need and learned so much along the way. She has been able to share so much of what She learned with younger generations.

**To what extent has this individual's efforts been previously recognized by the community?**

The outpouring of support from the community to support my campaign for school board. Samantha's list of

1/4/2021

Mail - Lindsay Lara - Outlook

endorsements includes board members, community leaders, parents and students. We truly started a movement!!

### New submission from Citizen of the Year

Forms Admin <notify@proudcity.com>

Thu 12/31/2020 8:45 AM

To: Lindsay Lara <Lindsay.Lara@cityofsanrafael.org>

**Date**

12/31/2020

**Nominee for Citizen of the Year**

Samantha Ramirez

**Nominee's Home Address**

[Redacted]

San Rafael, CA 94903

United States

[Map It](#)

**Does this nominee live within San Rafael City Limits?**

- Yes

**Nominee's Phone**

[Redacted]

**Nominee's Email**

[Redacted]

**Your Name**

Debra Taube

**Your Address**

[Redacted]

San Rafael, CA 94903

United States

[Map It](#)

**Your Phone**

[Redacted]

**Your Email**

[Redacted]

**What contributions has this individual made to the community that are beyond the scope of normal civic responsibilities?**

Mentoring and supporting youth, for example offering rides to protests  
 Helping Spanish speaking families with filling out applications  
 Building deep and trusting relationships with Marin's Latinx community

**What impact on the community did this individual's activities make? How has this person made a difference?**

By having a strong and outspoken stance, Ms Ramirez has shown youth and community that their voices matter. She is an inspiration to youth, particularly BIPOC youth who now feel they can also run for office.

**Discuss the time and energy this person has devoted to community projects or efforts.**

Ms Ramirez spends about 6 hours/week involved in community events and causes. She is a member of the youth and parent council for Marin Promise Partnership, supported Marin Community fridges initiative, as well as given much support to the countywide campaign to remove SRO's from schools and replace them with community based counselors and wellness programs.

**Discuss the challenges met and overcome by this individual.**

Survivor of domestic abuse  
Navigating Marin as a working class person  
First generation college graduate

**To what extent has this individual's efforts been previously recognized by the community?**

Ms Ramirez won over 40% of the vote when she ran this year for school board. She's had an outpouring of support from board members, community leaders, parents and students.

### New submission from Citizen of the Year

Forms Admin <notify@proudcity.com>

Sat 1/2/2021 11:16 PM

To: Lindsay Lara <Lindsay.Lara@cityofsanrafael.org>

**Date**

01/02/2021

**Nominee for Citizen of the Year**

Samantha Ramirez

**Nominee's Home Address**



San Rafael, CA 94903

United States

[Map It](#)

**Does this nominee live within San Rafael City Limits?**

- Yes

**Nominee's Phone**



**Nominee's Email**



**Your Name**

Celine Schein Das

**Your Address**



San Rafael, CA 94903

United States

[Map It](#)

**Your Phone**



**Your Email**



**What contributions has this individual made to the community that are beyond the scope of normal civic responsibilities?**

Marin County is the most racially disparate county in the entire state of California. We see this play out on many levels, from the disproportionate infection rate of COVID-19, to schools underperforming in serving their Latino student base.

Samantha Ramirez is a leader who has emerged from our own Marin community and stepped forward to serve by



running for the San Rafael School Board in 2020. However, her leadership started long before she ran for that seat.

She is the Site Coordinator for the Venetia Valley's LEAP program. She is on the Youth and Parent Council for Marin Promise Partnership. She has gone above and beyond her official role to nurture and mentor kids in our community, particularly Latino kids who have had very few Latinos in leadership roles to whom they could look up to and relate. She has helped, for example, families who struggle with English and the bureaucracy, to apply for housing. Serving as a bridge builder is a tremendous gift that she does without compensation, and beyond her official titles. That is an exemplary citizen of San Rafael.

Samantha Ramirez stepping forward to run for the San Rafael School Board was a major step in Marin County politics and leadership. Though she did not win, not only did she get a significant percentage of the vote (42%) her candidacy significantly changed the conversation in the county.

I had many conversations with Latinx residents of Marin who expressed to me how bad the racism has been in this county. Seeing Samantha Ramirez run and gain traction gave them hope.

We have a choice as a community here in Marin: will we keep its largely all-white leadership and maintain the status quo, which is having profoundly negative impacts on communities of color in this county? Or will we move forward to celebrate new leadership that is putting in their own time to push for change that has been such a long time coming.

**What impact on the community did this individual's activities make? How has this person made a difference?**

Samantha's work at the various student programs and her candidacy inspired a whole new generation of youth in Marin to get involved. Youth were making TikTok videos for her candidacy, getting out and holding signs for her.

I sit on the Home and School Club Committee at Vallecito Elementary and her candidacy provoked discussions about the importance of representation, of having someone in leadership who represented a significant part of our community. She demonstrated by her candidacy that the voice of youth matter, the voice of people of color in this county matter. The importance of her volunteering to run for seat on the school board as daughter of two immigrants who was the first to graduate from college cannot be overstated. She does not have significant funds that enables her to just devote herself to running for office—she had to do this over and above her work and family commitments. That is both a huge sacrifice and a commitment to serve this community.

**Discuss the time and energy this person has devoted to community projects or efforts.**

Samantha committed literally hundreds of hours to her candidacy. And her vision was exceptional. I hosted 5 separate zoom calls with her. She ran an elevated campaign that both challenged the inequities in Marin, but also was one of respect and recognition for her opponent. In fact, she committed, win or lose, that she will work with her opponent in order to serve the youth of Marin. Her powerful vision was why the Marin Democratic Party endorsed her, as did many others.

She also has put in significant time engaging with the Board of Supervisors on their meetings as well as working to eliminate SRO's from San Rafael schools, who statistically, disproportionately have negative impact on students of color. Samantha is basically volunteering her time to make San Rafael a more equitable and just place to live. What a gift.

She maintains a large network of youth, keeping them informed of opportunities and mentoring them as needed.

**Discuss the challenges met and overcome by this individual.**

Samantha Ramirez is very open about the challenges she has faced. This requires bravery and a vision to see how she can use her own challenges to educate others about how these same struggles are impacting so many others in

our San Rafael community. She openly talks about how she is a survivor of domestic abuse. We know that domestic violence knows no boundaries and EQUALLY affects women of every ethnicity and socio-economic status. By putting herself on the line by being open about her experience, she helps to remove the stigma associated with being a survivor of domestic violence, and in doing so, is likely saving lives. Domestic violence is the #1 reason police are called in Marin County. Her ability to educate people with her personal story serves as a powerful tool for making positive change for San Rafael.

She is also open about the fact that she is a working class person who has faced poverty, which is challenging when one lives in an exceptionally affluent county like Marin. The daughter of immigrants, she does not come from generational wealth and has had to work multiple jobs in order to stay in Marin County. Recognizing that San Rafael values all its citizens, regardless of race or socio-economic status, would be very meaningful.

Instead of being defeated by her struggles, she has used them as a training ground for the young people she mentors and supports in order to help them overcome their own struggles. That is true service to our San Rafael community

**To what extent has this individual's efforts been previously recognized by the community?**

The recognition has not been anything the level that it should be, which is why this award would be so powerful and signal that San Rafael is committed to diversity and inclusion. However, she did gain quite a bit of recognition in the course of her candidacy, including the prestigious endorsement from the Marin Democratic Party. Here are some additional selected endorsements:

California Democratic Party, California Young Democrats, Marin Democratic Party, Marin Young Democrats, Marin Green Party, Association of Latino Marin Attorneys (ALMA), Latinas In Power, Latinas Lead, Marin Professional Firefighters, San Rafael City Schools District Board President Maika Llorens Gulati, San Rafael City Schools District Trustees Greg Knell and Linda Jackson, Jonathan Frieman, Board president of Youth Transforming Justice (Marin Youth Court)\*, Cesar Lagleva, former chair of Marin County Human Rights Commission\*, Kerry Peirson, former chair of Marin County Human Rights Commission\*, Erika Rosales-Shelfo, President of Marin Young Democrats, Matt White, chair of Marin County Human Rights Commission\*

I am a mother of two young children here in Marin. It would mean so much to me to see that the City of San Rafael is truly committed to honoring diversity and to recognizing voices who have been shut out of leadership for so long. I have seen that San Rafael is making many positive changes, and awarding Samantha Ramirez as Citizen of the Year would demonstrate to my daughters that even if they face challenges, if they are committed to serving their community and work hard, San Rafael is a place for them to always call home, where they will be valued and respected. Thank you for your time and consideration.

### New submission from Citizen of the Year

Forms Admin <notify@proudcity.com>

Mon 1/4/2021 10:26 AM

To: Lindsay Lara <Lindsay.Lara@cityofsanrafael.org>

**Date**

01/04/2021

**Nominee for Citizen of the Year**

Samantha Ramirez

**Nominee's Home Address**

[Redacted]

San Rafael, CA 94903

United States

[Map It](#)

**Does this nominee live within San Rafael City Limits?**

- Yes

**Nominee's Phone**

[Redacted]

**Nominee's Email**

[Redacted]

**Your Name**

Cynthia Vergara

**Your Address**

[Redacted]

San Rafael, CA 94903

United States

[Map It](#)

**Your Phone**

[Redacted]

**Your Email**

[Redacted]

**What contributions has this individual made to the community that are beyond the scope of normal civic responsibilities?**

Samantha ran for a school board seat this year and did not get elected, but got around 42% of the vote. For a young woman of color running for the first time for office, this was an accomplishment in that Samantha has dedicated an enormous amount of time and her own money to run in a district that is over 50% Latinx in order to help serve her

community. While she did not get elected she showed great perseverance and dedication, as she always has to working for students of color and towards issues of equity and inclusion.

**What impact on the community did this individual's activities make? How has this person made a difference?**

Samatha running for office has signaled to young people in the community that they may also run for office and that their voices will be heard. Samantha has always been a hard worker and incredibly dedicated. Her success in her campaign shows that San Rafael is working towards (though not quite there) trying to have more representation on the school board of people of color that more accurately reflect the community they serve.

**Discuss the time and energy this person has devoted to community projects or efforts.**

I have worked with Samantha previously at Huckleberry Youth Programs. A youth development agency in which Samantha worked (as a teen) as a health educator and mentor for other teens. She has worked tirelessly since high school in many positions such as this one, running an after school program at Venetia Valley school for instance. Samantha has dedicated many years of work to community agencies and directly worked with families often receiving little compensation in return.

**Discuss the challenges met and overcome by this individual.**

Samantha is a first generation college student. Her parents are immigrants to the US and she has dealt with the challenges of being first generation in the family to attend college. Many students who are first generation do not have the same access to resources that other students have and she has overcome this and succeeded in earning a college degree. Samatha has also been through personal struggles that she has shared publicly such as being a survivor of domestic violence and understanding the needs of other survivors as a result. In addition, Marin county is extremely wealthy, but has communities who are also working class and struggle to get by. Many young people like Samantha have had to work multiple jobs to even get by in this county and survive.

**To what extent has this individual's efforts been previously recognized by the community?**

Samantha's efforts have not been previously recognized by the community. Aside from her public run for office she has not received the recognition that she most certainly deserves. Samantha is a positive example to young people in this community who can succeed despite the odds being stacked against them. I wholeheartedly support her being awarded citizen of the year as she has shown outstanding resilience and a strong passion for equity and justice for youth in this county who are underrepresented.

### New submission from Citizen of the Year

Forms Admin <notify@proudcity.com>

Mon 1/4/2021 8:42 PM

To: Lindsay Lara <Lindsay.Lara@cityofsanrafael.org>

**Date**

01/04/2020

**Nominee for Citizen of the Year**

Samantha Ramirez

**Nominee's Home Address**

[Redacted]

San Rafael, CA 94903

United States

[Map It](#)

**Does this nominee live within San Rafael City Limits?**

- Yes

**Nominee's Phone**

[Redacted]

**Nominee's Email**

[Redacted]

**Your Name**

Ericka Erickson

**Your Address**

[Redacted]

Novato, CA 94947

United States

[Map It](#)

**Your Phone**

[Redacted]

**Your Email**

[Redacted]

**What contributions has this individual made to the community that are beyond the scope of normal civic responsibilities?**

Samantha was a candidate for San Rafael School Board and became a mentor to youth outside her professional role. For example, for Black lives Matter protests, she would ask which students wanted to attend the protest and who needed a ride. She would ask their parents for permission and pick them up so they could attend the event. The youth

really appreciate this. It takes time to build relationships with their families and earn trust, but it makes all the difference. Especially in the Latinx culture: when you are a youth, your parents don't let you do anything not school-related. She took the time to earn trust from families so the youth are able to have new experiences.

**What impact on the community did this individual's activities make? How has this person made a difference?**

By being a strong outspoken leader and a young candidate for public office, she has shown youth and community that our voice matters. As a BIPOC woman, by leading by example, she has been inspiring others to take leadership positions.

Students have written about her in their school essays! Students have been inspired by her campaign! Especially BIPOC youth now feel like they can run for office!

**Discuss the time and energy this person has devoted to community projects or efforts.**

She spends much of her free time involved in community events and causes. She recently joined the youth and parent council for Marin Promise Partnership. She attends the Board of Supervisors meetings as well as other local school board and city council zooms. She has supported the Marin community fridges initiative as well as eliminating SRO's from San Rafael schools.

**Discuss the challenges met and overcome by this individual.**

Survivor of domestic abuse, she left an abusive relationship in December 2016. She rebuilt herself and created a life she is proud of. She went to therapy and stayed at the Center for domestic peace shelter.

Many of her peers graduated high school to a completely different reality than she has. She had to work multiple jobs just to be able to continue to live in Marin County. Being a first-generation college student was a challenge she was able to overcome. Now, she has been able to share what she learned from these challenges with younger generations.

**To what extent has this individual's efforts been previously recognized by the community?**

Samantha is an "invisible" grassroots shero. Her hard work in the community became more visible because of her campaign for School Board member. Her list of endorsements for the campaign included board members, community leaders, parents, and students - which shows the respect community members have for her work.

### New submission from Citizen of the Year

Forms Admin <notify@proudcity.com>

Wed 12/9/2020 4:53 PM

To: Lindsay Lara <Lindsay.Lara@cityofsanrafael.org>

**Date**

12/09/2020

**Nominee for Citizen of the Year**

Samantha Ramirez

**Nominee's Home Address**

[Redacted]

San Rafael, CA 94903

United States

[Map It](#)

**Does this nominee live within San Rafael City Limits?**

- Yes

**Nominee's Phone**

[Redacted]

**Nominee's Email**

[Redacted]

**Your Name**

Kelli Robertson

**Your Address**

[Redacted]

San Rafael, CA 94903

United States

[Map It](#)

**Your Phone**

[Redacted]

**Your Email**

[Redacted]

**What contributions has this individual made to the community that are beyond the scope of normal civic responsibilities?**

Samantha Ramirez is committed to uplifting the community from which she comes, both in her work and her extracurricular activities. She is bilingual and bicultural, with family from El Salvador and Honduras, and is working hard to be a powerful bridge between the LatinX communities in San Rafael and the bodies that govern San Rafael.



She is a passionate advocate for students and creating a fairer more equitable environment for both in and out of the school system.

She is the coordinator of the Marin County Youth Commission, a group of 23 young people from all over Marin county that work with the Board of Supervisors. In her spare time, she ran for the San Rafael School Board in order to make a difference with the students she works hard to support.

Outside of this work, Samantha led a herculean initiative in her campaign for Area 1 San Rafael School Board seat.

She's also served as site coordinator of the LEAP program at Venetia valley, where she engaged and served 80-90 students and their families. She brought the community together to provide quality enrichment to the students.

**What impact on the community did this individual's activities make? How has this person made a difference?**

Samantha is from the San Rafael community and chooses to stay here and fight to make it better. She's had the same experiences as students and families which allows her to do her work from the heart and be successful.

Samantha galvanized the support of 2,700 San Rafael residents who cast a vote for her for School Board.

Since taking over as Marin County Youth Commission program coordinator, she's increased the number of students of color and transformed the group to better represent Marin County. MCYC is now proud to include a variety of races, cultures and experiences, a variety that did not exist prior. This ensures the commission can bring their real lived experiences of racial inequity and true passion for social justice to the Board of Supervisors to create real change.

Through LEAP, she held Parent education nights and events, and worked together with families to provide quality enrichment to students. She's gained a huge following of supportive students and grads because of her contributions.

**Discuss the time and energy this person has devoted to community projects or efforts.**

Samantha Ramirez's work is community projects and efforts, it's how she spends all of her time and intellectual and emotional energy. From running for School Board to become the first Millennial Latina elected to the Board.

**Discuss the challenges met and overcome by this individual.**

Samantha Ramirez continues to fight and run despite the influence of racism at the polls and in daily life, even here in educated and progressive Marin. As a young Latina woman, she faces what Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez has called a "extremely hostile" environment for anyone that is different or progressive.

**To what extent has this individual's efforts been previously recognized by the community?**

Samantha has not been recognized by the community beyond articles in the Marin IJ around her activism locally.

Please show her our support and help restore her confidence after a hard-fought campaign, we need her for the students.