

Resilient Neighborhoods

MAKING IT EASY TO BE GREEN

KERMIT THE FROG said, “It’s not easy being green.” But volunteer Tamra Peters *has* made it easy, given her incredible success in helping city residents take significant steps to live greener lifestyles.

As the leader of the Resilient Neighborhoods program (RN), Tamra has motivated hundreds of individuals to reduce their carbon emissions. A project of Sustainable Marin, RN helps San Rafael meet its Climate Change Action Plan goals.

RN takes a team approach, based on the insight that doing things together is easier and a lot more fun. With team names like “Clean Air Revival” and “Fettuccine Carbonadas,” participants can expect a lot of laughter and learning. Neighbors, coworkers or anyone who’s interested come together to form “Eco-Teams” that meet five times over a period of weeks to learn about strategies and resources to help households reduce their carbon “footprint.”

“It’s like weight-watchers,” she says. “Each household decides how many pounds of carbon they want to lose and then selects from a menu of actions like taking shorter showers, making their homes more energy efficient, shopping locally, walking and biking more, or even buying an electric car.” Tamra notes that it’s important to reach out to households since 60% of carbon emissions in San Rafael and Marin come from residents.

The countywide program also helps participants understand how climate change has already affected our communities, as well as giving them tools to prepare for greater climate impacts in the future by

building household and community resilience.

Tamra appreciates the partnership with San Rafael. “San Rafael created the first climate action plan in Marin, and reached out to support Resilient Neighborhoods.”

Tamra has racked up thousands of volunteer hours leading the program. She put in a staggering 60 hours a week to launch the program, and currently spends about half that. For her work with RN and other volunteer efforts, Tamra was recognized with a Resolution of Appreciation by the city council this year.

Environmental stewardship has been the cornerstone of Tamra’s professional life. She has spent her career working for organizations that protect the environment, including The Nature Conservancy and the Natural Resources Defense Council.

“Even when I was working in the environmental field, I was volunteering on different boards for environmental groups in my free hours. It feels good to put my energy into something I believe in.”

Tamra grew up in Arlington, VA, where she was inspired by the first Earth Day in 1970. Eventually she found her way to San Francisco and moved to San Anselmo in 1987. She’s



Photo courtesy Tamra Peters

Eco-Team “Clean Air Revival” celebrates the loss of 102,067 carbon pounds.

Photo courtesy Tamra Peters



Volunteer Tamra Peters leads the Resilient Neighborhoods program for Sustainable Marin.

lived in San Rafael for the last 13 years with her husband, Bill Carney, and two cats, Lucky and Buffy. Bill serves as president of the board for Sustainable San Rafael. “It’s wonderful to have a spouse who cares deeply about the same things,” she says.

She and Bill have had the privilege of traveling and seeing a lot of the world. In their home are images of wildlife they photographed while traveling in Africa. She is glad they traveled before becoming fully aware of the huge carbon emissions generated by plane travel. “It’s difficult making the decision to travel now.”

Tamra works hard to make it easy for others to be green; she isn’t the kind to sit back when so much is at risk with climate change. “Climate change is the most important issue of our time. To be able to say I helped over 425 households reduce 2.25 million pounds of carbon, that’s pretty cool.”

To learn more, contact Tamra at www.resilientneighborhoods.org.

