

Vallejo is grateful for...

Francesca Demgen



Place of birth: Connecticut

Year arrived in Vallejo: 1976

Occupation: I began my wetland biology career in Martinez, operating the first wastewater wetland on the west coast. I then owned my own biological consulting firm and worked for a number of large engineering firms. I am most proud of leading the team that restored wetlands on 1,460 acres of former salt crystallizer beds in American Canyon.

Language: English and tourist-level Spanish.

What is your most important contribution to Vallejo?

I helped lead the movement to keep Cullinan Ranch from becoming 3000 homes and

1500 condos. I also helped get the land protected as part of San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge and then founded the Friends of the Refuge. I was also a founding member of VALCORE Recycling Center.

What have you done during the pandemic to help others? Bring nature to the homebound. I've worked with Friends of the Refuge and Island Energy to live stream activity of an osprey nest located on Mare Island.

What is one pandemic silver lining? It has given people a new appreciation of what it takes to be a good teacher—the preparation, the juggling, the knowledge, the ability to work with different personalities.

What is your special talent? My neighbor Elaine used to say, "You use both the right and left sides of your brain." I combine my science and art interests with active participation in the community in order to bring about positive change.

What do you appreciate about your Vallejo neighborhood? I live in the Rose Garden-Grant Mahoney Park area. I appreciate the street trees! The willingness of neighbors to help and listen to each other. Being able to ride my bike to the store, bank and post office.

What is a favorite place to hang out in Vallejo? The waterfront because water is life, adventure and opportunity.

What is your favorite Vallejo community event? In the '80s it was the whaleboat races. In the '90s it was the July 4th parade, symphony pops concert and fireworks; then came Visions of the Wild Festival.

What do you hope for yourself in the next 10 years? I hope to be able to smell spring flowers, listen to the birds and walk on the waterfront.

What do you hope for Vallejo in the next 10 years? I hope that all Vallejoans' basic needs are met with healthy food, a safe place to live, healthcare, and jobs. That we all practice tolerance and empathy. That we raise children with critical thinking skills who care about the environment. That good people participate in local government.

What organization in Vallejo do you really appreciate? The philanthropic organization Chapter ON of Vallejo. It's an organization made up of good women who have raised and distributed more than \$100K in college scholarships for local girls in need.