

2017 CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

Nominee: Summer Ellis

Nominator: Vanessa Thomas



In the Nominator's words:

Summer Ellis is an artist, educator and “Girls on the Run” coach, and is using her diverse skill set and experiences as a military wife to make a positive impact in the lives around her. She calls herself “just a regular mom.”

I interviewed her because she is a local artist and I was astounded by the amount of work she has done in the community since she arrived here. I feel that she exemplifies the Dublin Pride characteristics. Her high energy, enthusiasm and outgoing nature is evident as she describes her daily activities and her drive to nurture and grow others with the work she does. A special education teacher by training, she thrives in environments where she is making a difference and enjoys drawing people in with her work.

I am mainly nominating her for her volunteer work as a running coach for the “Girls on the Run” program. She first became aware of the “Girls on the Run” program when based in Virginia, and her arrival in Dublin connected her with the “Month of the Military Child” activities in Camp Parks, which then led to the establishment of the first chapter of the program in the East Bay in the spring of 2017. Volunteers for the “Girls on the Run” program include female military personnel, as well as parent coaches, recruited by Summer, from the community. “Girls on the Run” inspires girls to take charge of their lives and define the future on their terms. The “Girls on the Run” group from Dublin joined others from all over the Bay Area for a communal run involving around 2,700 participants. The Dublin group of 16 girls were joined by their selected “buddies” (individuals chosen by each girl to support them) for the run. The wonderful energy, camaraderie and team spirit of the Dublin group was displayed as they led the larger group in team cheers before the run. Summer will coach another group next spring and is hoping that the next group will have even greater enrollment numbers, as the girls found the training so enjoyable and empowering.

It's not easy to determine precisely how many hours she has given to the project, but the training program for the girls involved 75-minute sessions, twice a week for a period of ten weeks. There were also two full days of training where girls were taken into San Francisco to train and bond.

In terms of obstacles that Summer faced, the two core challenges were: (1) the perception of running and overcoming the fear of participants being able to do it, and (2) promoting the program and making it more visible in the community.

In addition to the “Girls on the Run” program, Summer is also a volunteer soccer coach in Pleasanton, volunteers at the school her children attend, and is a substitute teacher. She has also volunteered for the Dublin Art Collective and arranged the second meeting of this community project to support local artists.