



# Round Valley Reader



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Past\* Present\* Future

March 8, 2024

## PRESENT: Much Beloved Round Valley Nurse Martha Philips Retires

Written by Michelle Peñaloza, Pictures Courtesy of Niquita Whitehurst

Martha Philips has been an RN at the Round Valley Indian Health Center for, as she says, “twenty-one years and four months.” The folks at the RVIHC hosted a retirement party for her on Feb 29th at the Legion Hall. I spoke with a few who wanted to express their congratulations, gratitude, and admiration for upon her retirement. Otis Brotherton, ED of RVIHC, said, “Martha is a tribal member who left and moved to back to be of service to the community—not a lot of people do that. We are really going to miss her.” Rosento Cordova, RVIHC’s HR Manager, said, “No one has her expertise from the beginning to the end of treatment, her patience with people, and her ability to explain things to patients.” Marilyn Horne, RVIHC Fiscal Manager, went to elementary, middle, and high school with Martha and said “Martha cares so deeply for others. She has a heart of gold.” Deputy Director Jan Scribner, who has known Martha her whole life, said that Martha’s retirement is bittersweet: “She will be immensely missed, and I am sad she is going but I am really happy for her.” March 1st, 2024, was Martha’s last day working at the Round Valley Indian Health Center and I had the pleasure of interviewing her on that day. Here are some excerpts:

**RVR:** How was your retirement party?

**Martha:** It was really nice. They got me my favorite food.

**RVR:** What's your favorite food?

**Martha:** Chinese food. Somebody asked me a few weeks ago, what kind of food do you eat? I didn't know they were planning on having that for me.

**RVR:** Oh, so the retirement party was a surprise?

**Martha:** It was kind of a surprise. I mean, I figured they're going to do something because we always do stuff for people. But the dentist is so funny. He came and he said, “I'm sorry, I'm going to miss your party.” And I'm thinking...

**RVR:** Oh, he gave it away!

**Martha:** And he wasn't even there!

**RVR:** Those darn dentists.

**Martha:** Yeah, so, I knew. I didn't know it was going to be that big of a deal, though. It was really nice.

**RVR:** That’s wonderful. What are your plans for retirement?

**Martha:** I don't have big plans. I have a small bucket list. I want to go to Egypt. I want to see the pyramids.

**RVR:** Oh wow, that’s great!

**Martha:** And I don't have too much more planned, but I'm going to clean out my closet.

**RVR:** I like the range there. Personal organization and the pyramids.

**Martha:** Maybe some other trip. But I've never not worked. I can't remember not working. I might not know how not to go to work!

**RVR:** So, you're going to have to learn how to rest! When did you decide you wanted to become a nurse?

**Martha:** Probably, when I was really young. My grandmother was a nurse. My aunt is a nurse. She retired about 20 years ago. I just admired the job all my life. I always knew I was going to be a nurse. I just knew it.

**RVR:** How many years have you been a nurse? And how many years have you been here at the Round Valley Indian Health Center?

**Martha:** I've been a nurse for, let's see, about 40 years. I went to school out in Humboldt County, and I was an LVN [Licensed Vocational Nurse] and I couldn't find work. I was working as a motel maid and other things. I went back to school and got my RN license. After that, I found all these people called me. “We have a job. We have a job.” So, I moved to Sacramento and worked at UC Davis for 16 years. And then I came back here. I've been here for 21 years and four months.

**RVR:** That's amazing. What do you think you will miss most about working at RVIHC?



**Martha:** The people. The people. It might be cliché to say, but I like to help people. And when you do something that helps, it feels nice. When I try to navigate the medical system [on my own], it's hard. So, I know for other people it's got to be frustrating. That part I really like to do, but I'm also kind of tired of it. Somebody else can do that. It'll get done. But I don't want to be the one responsible anymore. [Laughs] Don't know how to say it otherwise than that.

**RVR:** Well, I think that's very valid and very honest.

**Martha:** But the people that are going to be here still working—they're very good.

**RVR:** So, the Round Valley Indian Health Center is in good hands?

**Martha:** Yeah, I think so. Everybody keeps saying they will be sad when I am not around, but I said, I'm not dying, I'm just retiring! I will still be in Covelo and I'll be a patient at the clinic.

**RVR:** Is there anything you'd like the larger community to know or anything you want to say that you'd like in the paper?

**Martha:** I just want to thank everybody. I mean, people have been so good to me. It's nice to belong to a community. I'm kind of spoiled. If I don't have a ride somewhere or to work, somebody will pick me up. Somebody will take me there. I just thank everybody in the community.



Do you have archives from the past, present news, and/or imaginings for the future of Round Valley? Tell us in person at The Round Valley Farmers' Market, every Friday (where we will also have the latest issues of *The Round Valley Reader!*) Or email us at: [coveloarts@gmail.com](mailto:coveloarts@gmail.com)





**Present: SNAPSHOTS:** Round Valley Happenings Here are some pics from the exploration of our library's newspaper archives! Many thanks to all who came to check it out and to our wonderful library for partnering with us to put on this fun event!



**History buffs, amateur archivists, & curious citizens of Covelo!**

**SATURDAY 4/20**

**11am-Sunset**  
RAIN OR SHINE

FEATURING MUSIC BY  
**BLUE LUKE**  
**SOUL CIRCUS**  
**MARJO WILSON TRIO**

**2024 Earth Day Celebration**  
COVELO, CALIFORNIA

RESOURCE & EDUCATIONAL BOOTHS  
ARTS & CRAFTS  
CLOTHING SWAP  
SCAVENGER HUNT  
& MUCH MORE

LOCATION:  
**THE WALNUT GROVE**  
23925 HOWARD ST.

A FUNDRAISER FOR  
**friends of the ROUND VALLEY public library**

ARTWORK BY ALEJANDRA DAVILA

**lib** Round Valley - Mendocino County Library  
March 2 at 5:14 PM

The Seed Library will be at the Farmers Market this coming Friday, March 8th, between 1 and 3 PM. We'll have seeds to be planted now, including tomatoes (which need to be started inside and kept warm before they can be planted out in May). We'll also have potting soil, plastic six packs (please reuse them or wash them out and return them), and lots of information on gardening and seed saving. We will also have Seed Circle Seed Kits for those folks who want to support the Seed Library and our community by saving seeds for next season. Please stop by and say hello! ❤️

#localseeds #foodsecurity #seedlibraries

**Seed Library Planting Party**  
**1:00 - 3:00 PM**  
**Second Fridays**

Get a head start on your garden!  
We'll supply the seeds, you supply the love...

At the Farmers Market  
Behind the Round Valley Branch Library

FRI, MAR 8 AT 1 PM AND 4 MORE  
**Seed Library Planting Party**  
23925 Howard Street #620, Covelo, CA, United States, California 95428

Interested

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