



Scenic Pacifica
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CITY OF PACIFICA

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PRESS RELEASE

March 15, 2023

Pacifica Welcomes Police Chief Sarasua

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (Pacifica, CA) – The City of Pacifica is pleased to announce the selection of Maria Sarasua as Pacifica's next Police Chief. Chief Sarasua will be Pacifica's 11th Chief of Police and the first female Police Chief in the department's history. Sarasua was selected from a talented and competitive pool of candidates following a national search to replace former Chief Daniel Steidle, who retired last year. Sarasua will begin work on April 24, 2023. The date and location for a public swearing-in ceremony will be announced in the near future.

"Chief Sarasua is a proven leader and brings a breadth and depth of experience and values to Pacifica that will be an exceptional fit for the organization and the community. I am confident that with her extensive knowledge and collaborative leadership style, she will continue to enhance the high level of public safety services, transparency, and trust the Pacifica community expects and deserves," said City Manager Kevin Woodhouse. "I would also like to thank all the community members, City Council members, and City staff who participated in the outreach survey as part of this recruitment process that led to the selection of Chief Sarasua."

Sarasua is a Bay Area native and began her law enforcement career as a police explorer and community service officer before becoming a deputy sheriff in Contra Costa County in 1995. In 2003, Sarasua became a police officer with the City of Pleasanton. During her 20-year tenure there, Sarasua rose to the rank of lieutenant, charged with increasing levels of responsibility, serving in diverse and challenging assignments. She is known as an innovator with a track record of building significant partnerships and working closely with the communities she serves. Sarasua has a passion for mentoring and coaching others and looks forward to providing her approachable and accessible leadership style as she takes the helm of the Pacifica Police Department.

Sarasua holds a Master of Arts Degree in Leadership from St. Mary's College and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Organizational Behavior from the University of San Francisco. A lifelong learner who believes strongly in continuous improvement, she earned her Executive Education Certificate in Public Leadership from the distinguished Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and is a graduate of California's premiere executive training program – THE POST Command College. She is an adjunct professor at the University of San Diego where she has taught courses for the Master of Science Program in Law Enforcement and Public Safety Leadership.

Chief Sarasua is deeply involved in community service both in her public and private life, and in 2010, she founded the Jefferson Award winning nonprofit organization, Bridgwatch Angels. During all major holidays, Sarasua leads thousands of volunteers to engage in suicide prevention on the Golden Gate Bridge and raises awareness about mental health and trauma-informed care.

"I would like to thank our City Manager Kevin Woodhouse for selecting me to lead this excellent department," Chief Sarasua said. "I'm excited to work with the dedicated men and women of the Pacifica PD, and our city and civic leaders. I look forward to getting to know the needs of our community and building trusting relationships and partnerships between the police department and all of those we serve."

Sarasua is married to Benjamin Sarasua, a retired United States Marine who currently works as a police sergeant in the bay area. She is the proud mother of two children. Her son is a commissioned officer in the United States Army and her daughter is attending college. She loves to spend time exercising outdoors, travelling abroad, and volunteering.

The City of Pacifica is grateful to Police Captains Chris Clements and Bill Glasgo for their leadership during this transitional period and their Acting Police Chief roles at different times during the past nine months. In addition, the City of Pacifica is grateful to retired Colma Police Chief Kirk Stratton for his six-month interim chief service during this period.



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