

APRIL 2018

# Montecito

## NEIGHBORS

*An exclusive magazine serving the residents of Montecito*

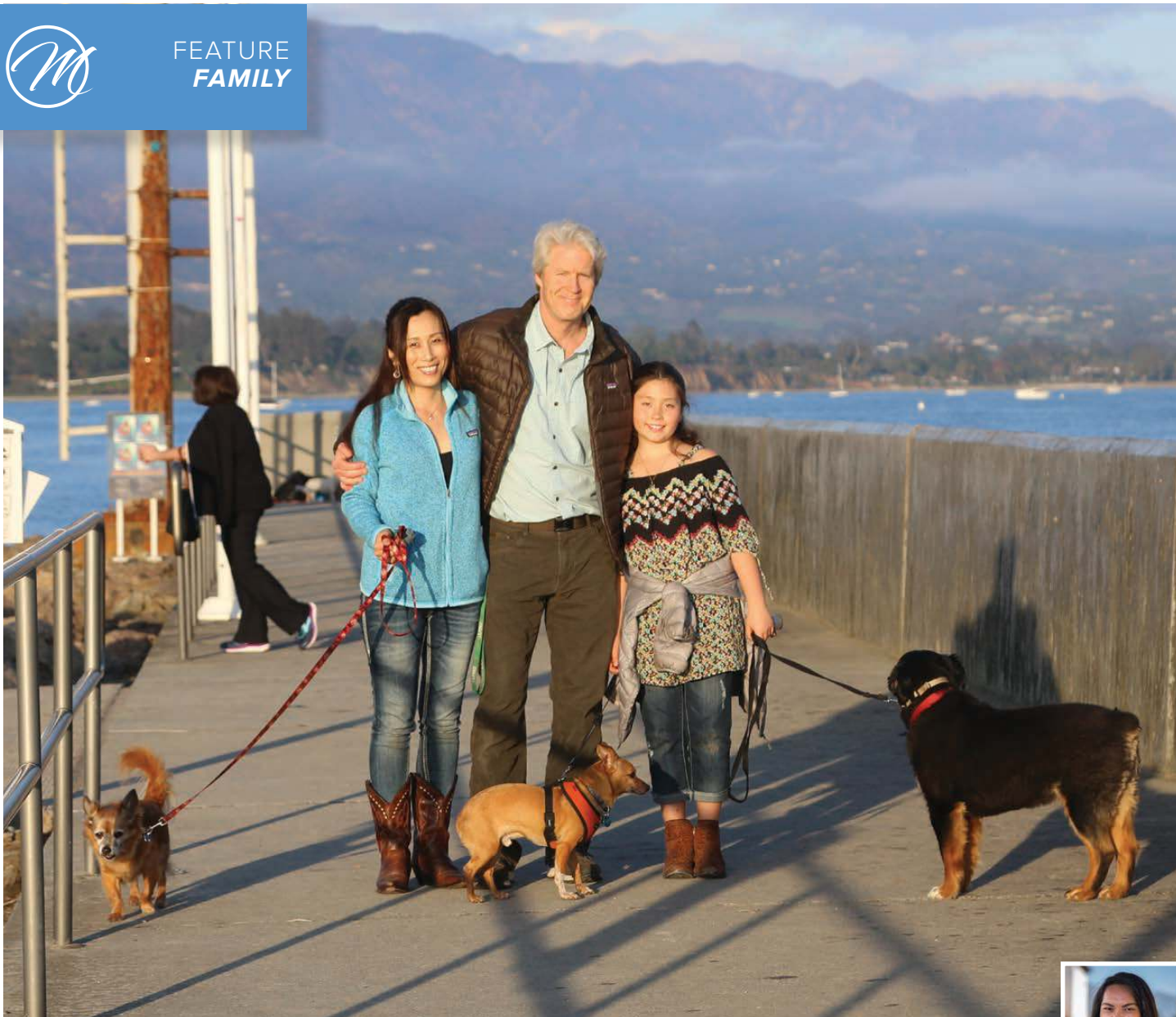
**MEET THE FULLER FAMILY:  
FULL(ER) CIRCLE**



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Cover photo by  
Linda Blue





## FULL(ER) CIRCLE: Meet the Fuller Family

If there is anyone who knows what it's like to grow up in Montecito, it's Gary Fuller. He reminisces about growing up in the very home he now shares with his wife Makiko, their daughter Nanami and his mother Barbara, "Montecito is a wonderful place to grow up. I'm so lucky to have my daughter attend the same elementary school that I attended, Cold Spring Elementary School." A passionate supporter of the Cold Spring Elementary STEAM program, Fuller points out, "They concentrate on teamwork as much as they do on science, and I think that is something that most schools are leaving behind." Gary and his daughter made the local

news this past December when their Ring camera alerted them of motion in their yard post-evacuation orders caused by the Thomas Fire. It turned out to be a firefighter monitoring a small fire across the street from the Fuller residence. He assured the Fullers that their home was safe. "One positive thing about natural disasters is you get to meet a lot of your neighbors. It's amazing how jovial my neighbors have been even though they are out shoveling mud," says Fuller.

Gary married his wife Makiko in 2003 after convincing her to let

him teach her how to surf. Makiko, a registered nurse at Cottage Hospital, came to Santa Barbara at the age of 27 from Kobe, Japan, to pursue her studies. Gary is a licensed general, electrical, and plumbing contractor who runs his own business, Acme Leak Detection based in Santa Barbara. "Running Acme Detection keeps me very busy and it's difficult to get away for any length of time." After thinking a white-collar life as a lawyer would improve things Gary quickly grew weary of the stress of his new profession and realized he would always be blue-collar at heart and returned back to the building business. Acme Detec-

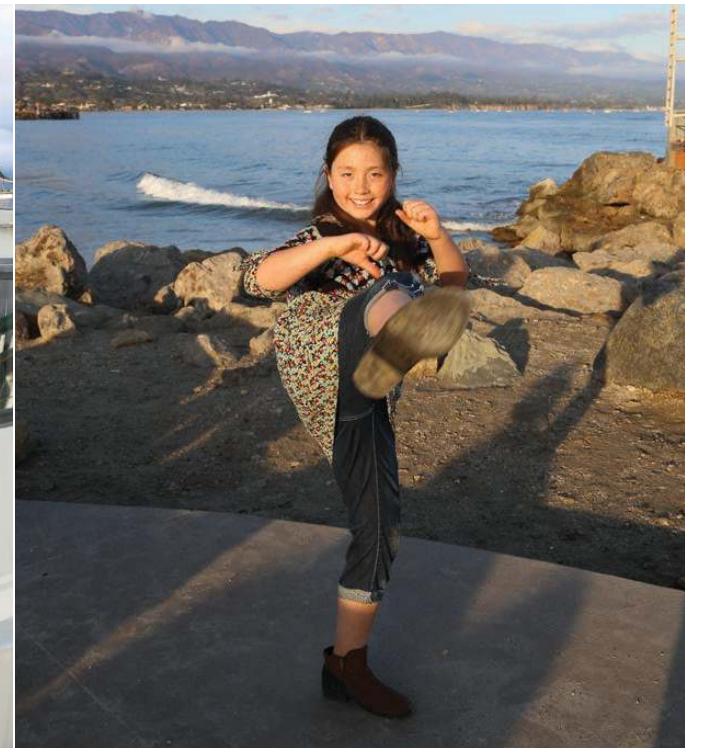
By Marina Satoafaiga  
Photos by Linda Blue



Meet The Fullers, Makiko, Nanami and Gary

tion keeps Fuller on his toes. "I really enjoy the business as it is something different on every call and always puzzle-solving." Their daughter Nanami, an orange belt in karate, is fluent in both English and Japanese. She has been perfecting her karate for the past six years at South Coast Karate. Rounding out the Fuller family are their four-legged family members and rescues; Kenji, a Chihuahua mix; Billy, a Chihuahua Terrier mix; and Nico, an Australian Shepherd. The Fullers are fans of the outdoors. They surf, attend Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church and volunteer for beach and creekside cleanups when they can. It's an annual tradition for Makiko to head West with Nanami to visit her parents and sister in Japan.

When the family gets some time off, they don't have to look too far to escape, "Living in Montecito is like a vacation. We spend as much time as possible at the Channel Islands kayaking through the sea caves and snorkeling. They are a true paradise and only an hour away by boat." he shares. When asked what his favorite memories were as a child growing up in Montecito, Fuller shares, "Until recently we loved hiking cold Spring Trail up to Montecito peak. It was a beautiful hike going up the creek tree-lined canyon before it daylighted



Nanami Fuller is an Orange belt in Karate

out and climbed up the hill. Montecito peak is still a wonderful place to sit and have lunch, but the Cold Spring Creek section will never be the same as I remember growing up. The neighborhood nature has changed but wild animals are still abundant. We have bobcats and if you are lucky you can get a glimpse of one darting across the road," says Gary.

"The neighborhood has changed some over the years. The White family across the street has been there for many generations. Their family actually homesteaded their land." It's clear the Fullers too have established roots in Montecito. "My grandfather George Fuller was a land developer and has built several buildings in Montecito and Isla Vista. My father was a simpler man and enjoyed working with his hands and was a union electrician before going out on his own with me. They moved into the Fuller's current home several months before the Coyote fire (in 1964) nearly burnt everything to the ground. They lost the garage but my father stayed behind and was able to save the house." Despite almost losing his home twice to natural disasters, Gary is grateful to be able to raise his daughter in his hometown. When asked about the current state of their Montecito residence today, Gary

shared, "We lost a corner of the yard, approximately 100 feet of a retaining wall. The house was undamaged but as I look around I see all kinds of new cracks in the walls and foundation. The house shook like an earthquake for more than an hour during the flooding." When asked what his family motto was, his reply was, "We couldn't be luckier."

### DO YOU KNOW A NEIGHBOR WHO HAS A STORY TO SHARE?

Nominate your neighbor  
to be featured in one of  
our upcoming issues!

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