

Fall 2011 Newsletter

## The Loving Kindness of Ceres: One Client's Story

by Claire Victor



Today I am grateful for a healthy body and an open heart. There are many paths that can lead to an experience of unconditional love. Nothing prepared me for the surprising path that was to awaken my own heart.

I have always been a cheerleader, encouraging others to reach out and engage in their passion. My identity has been focused around being a voice teacher, spiritual coach, facilitator, music minister, mentor and care giver. I was self sufficient, dynamic and strong. That all changed this January when I was diagnosed with triple negative breast cancer.

My diagnosis was shortly followed by a mastectomy and because of the aggressive nature of these tumors, a dense dose course of chemotherapy followed by 25 rounds of radiation. My life as I had known it came to a screeching halt.

I had heard about Ceres Community Project through the Center for Spiritual Living. A dear friend and community member had recently gone through the cancer journey. She raved about Ceres and encouraged me to call. I have always taken care of myself with the help of my family but I called "just in case".

Little did I know how personally grateful I would be for Ceres. As the chemo progressed, I was taken to my knees. I had lost my right breast; my beautiful hair fell out in clumps until I was bald, my once energetic body was depleted and I felt helpless. I remember the day I felt my body shutting down from all the drugs and thought to myself, this is what dying feels like.

Thursday was delivery day and it became like Christmas. The food was exciting, new and nourishing. There were days

when I thought I couldn't eat but then there would be some interesting dish that got the better of my curiosity. Before I knew it, there I was eating! And it felt so right to eat what I knew was healing and supporting my immune system while moving through this difficult and frightening health challenge. Somehow, the food helped me start to feel safe again in my body.

What was most amazing about receiving the meals is that there were "no strings attached". The shock of diagnosis, the exorbitant medical expenses, the debilitation of my body - it was all so overwhelming. To suddenly have these meals come without attachment to financial means was magic. It was as if the universe itself was saying, "Claire, you are going to get through this". It gave me such a sense of gratitude and hope that strangers would show up to take care of me without me having to do anything in return. No obligation, no demand, just simple kindness at a point when I could not take care of myself. The food may have nourished my body, but the kindness nurtured my spirit and supported me into health.

The food I received from Ceres helped me to begin a journey to wholeness and health. I have lost 30 pounds, I exercise every day because I can, and I now take care of my body as the sacred temple it is. Ceres Community Project introduced me to a whole new way of eating.

In Buddhist tradition there is a Sanskrit word-Bodhicitta, the aim to bring happiness to all sentient beings and relieve them of suffering by having an awakened heart through the practice of selfless service. The Ceres Community Project exemplifies this to me. ♥



Ceres teens have prepared 90,000 meals for individuals and families dealing with cancer and other critical illnesses.

## What I've learned from Ceres

by Linnea Nierenberg

*Linnea sharing her story with our dinner guests at Harvest of the Heart on October 2nd.*



I understand that when a family member has a serious illness, the simple things are not so simple anymore, and that illness impacts the whole family. That's why it's great that Ceres brings the attention back to the basic foundation of providing nourishment through food.

I'm a teen volunteer with Ceres on the Tuesday crew – the “Greens Machines,” as I like to call them, or the “Chopper Moppers” or the “Crumble Rumlbers.” I joined the Ceres project a little over a year ago. I remember that first day when I walked into the kitchen, took a deep breath, opened the door, and hoped it was the right building. I didn't know how to cook and wasn't sure what I was getting myself into. By the end of my first day they had me burning food, which seemed counterintuitive, but apparently that's how you roast peppers!

Over the past year, Ceres has offered me invaluable opportunities and taught me many lessons. There are lots of people to thank: everyone who was welcoming and made me feel part of a community, and everyone who gives us responsibilities and teaches with us, not at us. I've had the chance to meet teens from many different schools and of all different ages. And when we come into the kitchen on Tuesday afternoons, it seems as if the outside world fades away and we're all able to focus and work together towards a common goal.

I understand that when a family member has a serious illness, the simple things are not so simple anymore, and that illness impacts the whole family. That's why it's great that Ceres brings the

attention back to the basic foundation of providing nourishment through food. It all came together for me one day when one of the clients stopped by the kitchen and told us her story. She visited while we were having our circle, where we usually read cards and talk about what we're doing, and she explained the role Ceres played in her life. It touched me that she would come in and share her personal journey with us, and I could feel her gratitude. I walked away not only moved but also empowered and motivated. I was happy for her that she had beaten her cancer, and honored that I could play a small part in her fight.

I'm lucky to have learned all the lessons Ceres has taught. Number one: It's possible to make a difference as a teenager. Number two: Healthy food can taste good! Who knew garbanzo bean chocolate cake would be so delicious? Number three: Kitchen appliances are important to understand. As in: the proper placement of the top of the blender is critical. Number four: We all have our ups and downs and sometimes the most important thing we can do as friends and neighbors is to support our loved ones in their time of need by being there. And lastly: I have learned from Ceres that if you're ever asked to chop sixty cups of onions, run as fast as possible in the other direction! ♥

## Kate Schaffner Celebrates Community with Gift for New Building



Ceres Community Project was an instant match for Kate Schaffner. In 2010, Kate was diagnosed with cancer. She had recently moved to Sonoma County and had no family nearby. New friends and folks Kate didn't even know rallied to support her. They cooked meals, helped her get to doctors' appointments, and cared for her horses when Kate wasn't able to.

During her recovery, Kate learned about Ceres' Healing Foods Cooking Course – our 16 hour program that helps those recovering from illness create a health-supporting way of eating and living. Right away, Kate knew the program was for her. After completing the course Kate sent a donation and promptly became a volunteer Delivery Angel.

"Having just dealt with my own health issues and being on the receiving end of amazing support from my new Sonoma community and friends, I knew Ceres was the perfect group to become involved with. Ceres mirrored what was given to me and what I wanted to give back."

When she learned about the new building Kate sent a \$12,000 gift from the Franklin and Jean Schaffner Foundation to help with the purchase of kitchen equipment. In late August, she joined us at the new building for our Shinto Blessing Ceremony. A couple of days later, Kate called to talk with me about the project. She wondered how much

money we still needed to complete the remodel, and what it was going to cost to buy the building. Later that week, Kate told us that she would be making a \$225,000 donation towards the remodel and purchase!

This is by far the largest donation Ceres Community Project has ever received – and also, by far, the largest donation Kate has ever made. She told me, "It gives me such joy to donate this money to Ceres. I feel very strongly about the work Ceres is doing, and there was a big need right now with the building project. I learned early in life about the importance of giving back and it nourishes me to make this gift."

When I asked Kate what inspires her about Ceres, she said "There is so much that inspires me, but I guess I would have to say the example Ceres sets in regards to community – the importance of being involved and of supporting one another. The clients inspire me. The depth of gratitude shown to me as a Delivery Angel is often overwhelming. And the teens and other volunteers inspire me with their giving nature."

Thank you Kate for being an inspiration to all of us! Together with all those who have donated to or volunteered on the building project, your gift will help Ceres nourish and nurture many thousands of people in the years ahead. ♥

### Ambassador Council

**Donald I. Abrams, M.D.**,  
Chief of the Hematology-Oncology  
Division, San Francisco General  
Hospital

**Dr. Keith Block**,  
Co-Founder, Block Center for  
Integrative Cancer Treatment

**Jed Emerson**,  
Executive Vice-President,  
ImpactAssets

**James S. Gordon, M.D.**,  
Founder and Director,  
Center for Mind Body Medicine

**Rebecca Katz, MS**,  
Author, *Cancer Fighting Kitchen*

**Michael Lerner**,  
President and Co-Founder,  
Commonweal

**Dr. Liz Lipski, PhD, CCN, CHN**,  
Author, *Digestive Wellness*

**Michael Pollan**,  
Author and Director of the  
Knight Program in Science and  
Environmental Journalism,  
University of California at Berkeley

**Brian Swimme, PhD**,  
Professor of Cosmology, California  
Institute of Integral Studies

### Board Members

**Tara Butler**, President

**Joe Marshall, MBA**, Treasurer

**Deborah Vogan**, Secretary

**Jasmine Elliott**, Teen Member

**Julia Gombos**

**Sharon Keating**

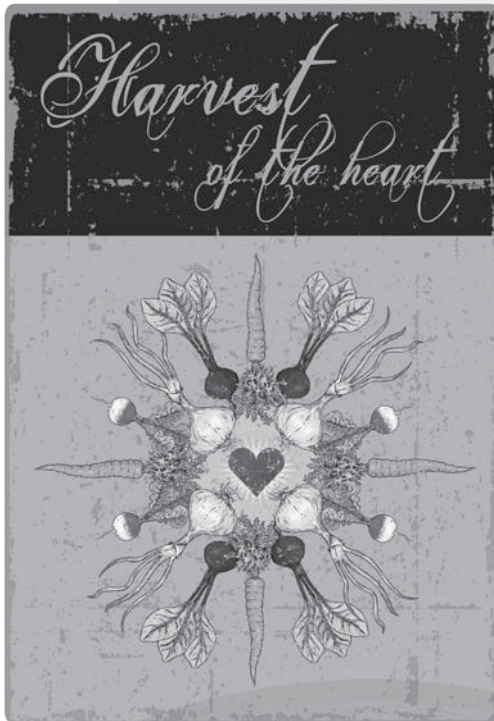
**Judi Pereira**

**Kristee Rosendahl**

**Padi Selwyn**

**Donna Tokugawa**

**Nez Tokugawa**



## Our annual fundraising event, **Harvest of the Heart**, was a huge success.

We raised over \$85,000 to help get more teens into our new kitchen over the coming year, and expand the circle of support for our community members dealing with life-threatening illness. This event highlighted the amazing community we live in, from all of the volunteers who worked to ensure our guests had a fabulous evening, to the many individuals and businesses who donated goods and services; from our sponsors, who covered all of the event costs, to our table hosts and all of our guests. We extend our deep gratitude.

**October 2 at DeLoach Vineyards**

*Our thanks to Belinda Fernandez of Studio B for donating the gorgeous logo design for Harvest of the Heart.*



*Padi Selwyn & Sharon Keating, Harvest of the Heart Co-Chairs with Deborah Vogan, Silent Auction Chair (above)*

**Like Us on Facebook at:**  
[www.facebook.com/CeresProject](http://www.facebook.com/CeresProject)

**TEEN VOLUNTEERS**

- Alissa Woolsey
- Andrew Martin
- Chandler Gomez
- Christina Sashin
- Columbia Shafer
- Dylan Jones
- Dylan Periera
- Fiona O-Young
- Gabe Whitson
- Gus Leveque-Eichorn
- Ivar Bjornsson
- Jasmine Elliot
- Jessica Reid
- Johnnie Lushenko
- Linnea Nierenberg
- Marbeya Garcia Bermudez

- Mathilde Amiot
- Maya Campbell-Voss
- Maya Contardi
- Michael Hillstrom
- Mikaela Dibble-Kahn
- Molly Endries
- Rita O-Young
- Sam Bright-Thonney
- Shelby Tansil
- Sophie Leveque-Eichhorn
- Tony Garcia Bermudez
- Tyler Smith
- Ursule Amiot
- Xavier Herrera-Keehn
- Zac Mayer

**ADULT VOLUNTEERS**

- Amelia Miller
- Ana Bermudez
- Annaka Karle
- Barb Weems
- Becky Thomas
- Brandon Grundy
- Candler Weinberg
- Cathie Irwin
- Celosia Arcadia
- Cherie Lippard
- Cheryl Hanhart-Beck
- Cynthia Newcomb
- Danielle Steffener
- Elizabeth Christie
- Elva Zimmerman
- Francesca Fifis

- Gary Pace
- Irena Nickels
- Janet Foster
- Judi Pereira
- Judy Wachs
- Keala Peterson
- Ken Beck
- Kristen Murphy
- Kristie Amezcua
- Linda Noren
- Longwillow Fudemberg
- Louise Mangan
- Lucy Sutter
- Maile Arnold
- Mariola O-Young
- Martha McEwen

- Martini Baggett
- Melissa Wood
- Melissa Yates
- Monica Ashley
- Pat Ehrmann
- Paula Reynolds
- Prudence Kent
- Renee Blevins
- Rick Goldberg
- Sonya Dexter
- Susan Watson
- Tai Tokugawa
- Teresa Mitchell
- Toby French
- Wanda Cardiff
- Warren Arnold
- Yvette Chass



*Jasmine Elliott, Teen Chef, Teen Board Member & Event Speaker with Cathryn Couch, Ceres Executive Director (above)*



*Susan McCam, Ceres Client & Event Speaker (left)*



Thanks to the generous support of our event sponsors, 100% of ticket and auction sales will directly support our work teaching young people and delivering nourishing meals to families in need.

*Presenting Sponsors*



*Event Sponsors*

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## Building Update & Save the Date!

### Save the Date:

Saturday  
December 10  
3 to 6 pm

Holiday Party &  
Celebration of  
Our New Home

7351 Bodega Ave  
Sebastopol



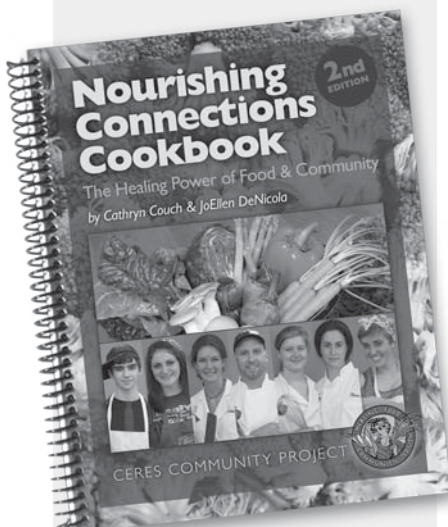
A huge thank you to all of the volunteers who have been helping with the remodel of our new home in Sebastopol, especially Marcia Larkin, Betsy Hall & Gene Wright, Jim Glenn, and Gene Powers – all of whom have been regulars at our Saturday work parties or who've taken on significant projects. And of course a huge thanks to our project manager, Greg Miranda from Community Builders Group. Greg has been a stellar ambassador for Ceres over the past six months, engaging dozens of contractors and suppliers to donate or discount their work, managing a huge number of details, and never failing to keep his sense of humor or his joy in supporting Ceres.

If you haven't driven by the building lately, please take a look. By the time you read this, our new home will be transformed both inside and out. The

exterior is sporting all new siding and paint, new windows and doors, and new pathways. Most of the old landscaping has been removed and we're beginning to lay the foundation for installing Wellness Gardens over the winter and next spring. The interior is virtually brand new – from our 1,200 square foot kitchen, to the gorgeous new meeting room and beautifully tiled bathrooms.

We plan to move the week of November 14th. If you have time to help, please let Kosima know what days and times work for you ([kosima@ceresproject.org](mailto:kosima@ceresproject.org)). If you have a truck, van or horse trailer (!!) let us know! And, of course, please plan to join us on Saturday December 10th to celebrate this incredible accomplishment – which each and every one of you has helped make possible. ♥

## Whole Foods Market Sebastopol Featuring Ceres' Recipes!



Our friends at Whole Foods Market Sebastopol keep coming up with creative ways to support Ceres. The newest venture is their Ceres Community Project deli salads. Deli Team Leader Chris Maritzen has adopted two recipes from our *Nourishing Connections Cookbook* – Fruited Quinoa Salad and Summer White Bean Salad – and is featuring them regularly in the deli and the packaged salads section of the store. Special signage with our logo links the salads to Ceres Community Project.

Even better, \$1.00 from each pint is being donated to support our work. Already, the salads are selling at a rate that will translate into nearly \$4,000 over the next year. And Chris is just getting rolling. He plans to add two more salads and several soups to the rotation. Colin Davidson, Sebastopol Team Leader, is looking to roll the program out to more stores as soon as they work out the kinks.

Thanks Whole Foods Market Sebastopol for your leadership in providing healthy whole foods, spreading the word about Ceres Community Project, and supporting our work in so many ways. ♥

## A Special Thank You to Ceres Project Partner Oliver's Markets



Organic poultry and sustainably caught seafood are by far the most expensive items in our meals, but thanks to our friends at Oliver's Markets they cost us a lot less than you might think. Since July 2008, Oliver's has been giving us 50% off all of our poultry and seafood, week in and week out, fifty-two weeks a year! That in-kind support amounted to \$8,379 last year and will likely top \$9,300 this year.

With the help of Oliver's fantastic weekly specials, it's not uncommon for Ceres to pay as little as \$5.00 a pound for fresh wild salmon, or \$3.50 a pound for fresh sole. Together with produce donations from Whole Foods Market Sebastopol and dozens of local farmers, Oliver's Markets' generosity helps us keep our out of pocket food costs remarkably low.

So far this year, Ceres is spending just \$1.47 a meal for completely organic food including all of the medicinal herbs we use.

Oliver's support doesn't stop there. Last year, Oliver's donated all of the desserts for our annual gala and supported the launch of our Ceres Community Foods' sauerkraut line with great in-store discounts. In August, Oliver's catered our reception for Shinto priest Rev. Koichi Barrish. They also provided the 50 pounds of salmon for the entrée at Harvest of the Heart.

Thanks to Tom Scott and Steve Maas, to Stony Point store manager Eric Meuse, and to all the butchers at Stony Point for your partnership. It's a joy to have you on our team! ♥

Ceres Community Project is blessed to have partners like Oliver's Markets' Tom Scott and Steve Maas who are working hard to support a healthy local food system for all of us.

## Buying or Selling a Home?



Now you can generate **BIG DONATIONS** for **Ceres Community Project** when you buy or sell property through our fund-raising partner, My Broker Donates.


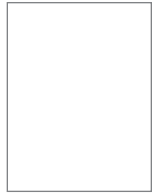


- ZERO cost to you
- ZERO cost to Ceres Community Project
- Caring, qualified brokers that you approve
- A \$500,000 home = A \$2,000+ donation

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CERES COMMUNITY PROJECT  
PO BOX 1562  
SEBASTOPOL CA 95473

WWW.CERESPROJECT.ORG  
707-829-5833



## Naming Ceres Community Project in Your Will or Trust

It's easy to make a lasting gift by including  
Ceres Community Project in your will or estate plan.

If you've done so already, we'd love to know.

Please call Deborah at 829-5833 or email [deborah@ceresproject.org](mailto:deborah@ceresproject.org).

To find out more, talk with your lawyer or estate planner.

Gifts can be unrestricted or designated for a specific program.

Ceres Community Project's tax ID is 26-2250997.