Dear Friends and Supporters,

The research is increasingly clear. A whole foods plant-based diet is one of the most important keys to reversing the epidemic of serious illness we’re facing. And, while 25 percent of us have no one to turn to in a crisis, being connected to others in supportive social networks leads to happiness, health and longevity.

At Ceres Community Project, we foster health and healing by bringing people of all ages and walks of life together around the nourishment of real food. Since March 2007, we’ve delivered more than 70,000 nutrient rich meals to clients and their families dealing with cancer and other life-threatening illness. Every one of those meals was prepared by a teen and delivered by one of our volunteer Delivery Angels.

This past year we focused on strengthening and improving all aspects of our work, and building the systems to support an organization two to three times our current size. And the timing for this work seems to have been right on target. In July, we began talking with the city of Sebastopol about a 2,650 square foot building that has been unused for several years. By this coming fall, we expect to move into this new location which will serve as a permanent center for our work in the years to come.

The new site will include a 1,100 square foot commercial kitchen, a large meeting/dining room, offices, a resource library and gardens where we can teach teens and adults alike about growing and harvesting fresh organic food. With this new facility, we’ll be able to triple our impact over the next three to five years – empowering more teens, helping many more clients and their families, and reaching thousands more people with information and inspiration about the healing power of whole food and community.

Working together we’ve accomplished miracles. This year we’re counting on your partnership more than ever before. Please join us in creating a healthy vibrant community here in Sonoma County and around the country.

With blessings,

Cathryn Couch
Executive Director

Tara Butler
Board President

Board of Directors
Tara Butler, President
Joe Marshall, Treasurer
Deborah Vogan, Secretary
Padi Selwyn
Julia Gombos
Nathan Boone
Cathryn Couch
Judi Perera
Sharon Keating
Columbia Shafer

photos & bios on the web at: www.CeresProject.org/board.html

A recent study estimated that by 2030, half of all adults will have type II diabetes – a disease that is almost solely caused by the combination of obesity and poor nutrition.

A 2005 Center for Disease Control study found that only 33% of adults are eating at least two servings of fruit a day and only 27% are eating at least three servings of vegetables.

We’re spending $500 billion a year on health care that could be totally avoided by changes in diets.

Without a shift, the generation of young people growing up today may be the first in recorded history to have a shorter life span than their parents.

More than half of all deaths in the U.S. – 52.5% – from heart disease, stroke, cancer and diabetes, have poor nutrition as a precipitating cause.

A 2005 Center for Disease Control study found that only 13% of adults are eating at least two servings of fruit a day and only 27% are eating at least three servings of vegetables.

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Making a Life-Saving Difference for Our Clients & Their Families

Who We Serve

Every Thursday afternoon, fifty-two weeks out of the year, forty to forty-five bags of meals leave our kitchen in Sebastopol destined for the home of someone struggling with a life-threatening illness. These clients range in age from 14 to 94, they represent all ethnic groups and come from all walks of life. The common thread is that their lives are in crisis, and the kind of nourishment that Ceres Community Project offers can help stabilize or turn the situation around so that healing is more possible.

Prepared meals bring a moment of normalcy to a family’s day when a parent has been diagnosed with cancer. For a single person living alone they can mean the difference between a diet of oatmeal and the nourishment of a varied and nutrient-rich diet. For someone in the midst of cancer treatment, who can’t bear to even think about food, ready to eat meals can literally be a life-saver.

How Nourishment Can Help

More than 90 percent of our clients have a cancer diagnosis. The reason is simple: cancer treatment is lengthy and often debilitating to the appetite. In fact, 80 percent of cancer patients end up malnourished because of their treatment – but if they are well nourished, with the kinds of nutrient rich meals Ceres provides, they have fewer side effects, treatment is more effective, and they recover more quickly once treatment is over.

We believe that whole local and organic food can make a similar difference for anyone struggling with illness.

Making Every Bite Count

When you’re ill and eating is difficult, every bite needs to count. At Ceres we work hard to create meals that are beautiful, delicious and packed with nutrition. We’re also committed to sourcing food that supports a healthy and sustainable planet. Here’s a brief overview of our food practices.

- Sprout and dehydrate nuts and seeds
- Soak beans and grains
- Make our own flour from sprouted, dehydrated and freshly ground spelt and whole wheat berries
- Organic locally raised poultry and sustainably caught seafood
- Local pastured eggs
- No cans with BPA lining
- Local organic brown rice and honey

26,100 meals delivered to 186 client families during 2010.

- Every thing is so good, and the love with which it is gathered, prepared and delivered comes through. We feel truly blessed to be a part of this. Life has become very hard for us in so many ways and this support makes a gigantic difference in both our lives.

Client’s Partner Pamela

- I had forgotten about it so I had almond butter out for a feast of crackers & almond butter... I heated up the fish dinner. Wow, I felt so good by the time I was done (and I was able to eat it all). It’s funny, but this organization brings me to tears more than anything. I’m so looking forward to the day when I can be a part of the giving too. But for now, I will graciously receive. Thank you!

Client Jacqui

- My chemotherapy treatment was extremely difficult to get through. I had severe side effects to the drugs which left my body depleted of the necessary nutrients. The food that I received from Ceres helped me to replenish and gain strength to continue with treatment. It is because of the Ceres Community Project that I was able to bounce back as quickly as I did. I am now on my last week of radiation. It has been a tremendously difficult time in my life yet it has brought me into a community that is filled with love, compassionate, and determined individuals wanting to make a difference in people’s lives one meal at a time. I look forward to being on the other side of this disease and become a volunteer with this worthy project.

Client Julie Carmen

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Client Julie Carmen
During 2010, 137 teens spent time in the Ceres Project kitchen. Together, they donated more than 5,000 hours of service.

Empowering Youth Leadership

Making a Healing Difference

At Ceres Community Project we believe that young people are intelligent, responsible, capable, creative and caring, and that they must be central participants in shaping our collective future. As the chefs in our Healing Meals for Healthy Communities program, our teen volunteers make a healing difference for our clients.

Leaders in the Kitchen & the Community

Through our leadership program teens are invited to take on increased responsibility as their skill level and commitment grows. Teens who have worked for three months receive a Ceres Project apron with their name embroidered, and teens who have worked for about a year, and who demonstrate leadership in the kitchen, are invited to become Teen Leaders. These teens receive a chef coat with their name and the Ceres logo. As Teen Leaders, they work with Chef & Teen Coordinator Rob Hogencamp and our Adult Chef Mentors to ensure that the kitchen runs smoothly. Teen Leaders help orient new teens to the kitchen, lead recipes, assist at Volunteer Orientations, help with fundraising events, give presentations about Ceres, go on the radio, coordinate our annual holiday gift project for our clients, and more. Each year we also invite one teen to serve on the board of directors.

2010 Teen Volunteers

As Teen Leaders, they work with Chef & Teen Coordinator Rob Hogencamp and our Adult Chef Mentors to ensure that the kitchen runs smoothly. Teen Leaders help orient new teens to the kitchen, lead recipes, assist at Volunteer Orientations, help with fundraising events, give presentations about Ceres, go on the radio, coordinate our annual holiday gift project for our clients, and more. Each year we also invite one teen to serve on the board of directors.

The highlight of my week is the moment I step into the Ceres kitchen on Thursday afternoons. All my worries and obligations fade away with the knowledge that I am focusing 100% of my energy to help people in dire need heal. I feel that for every effort I have put into Ceres, I have benefited as much as the clients who receive our meals.

Teen Chef Julia Paxton

Being at Ceres Project taught me the most important lessons in my life thus far. I’m proud to say I could be a part of something so wonderful.

Teen Chef Amy Tucker

Forbes Best Of article on the web at: www.CeresProject.org/press.html
Inspiring Lasting Changes in People’s Diets

Education is part of everything we do at Ceres. And over the past few years we’ve learned that to make lasting changes in how we eat, most of us need more than just information. Through our Education Programs, we provide the knowledge, skills, inspiration and a community of support that can make an unfamiliar way of eating into a satisfying way of life.

The Healing Foods Cooking Course is our four hour a week, four week program for people recovering from serious illness, their family and caregivers. The course includes mind-body practices, time in the garden, cooking skills, nutrition information and support. In 2010 we graduated 69 people from this course. We are grateful to the Lloyd Symington Foundation for their generous support of this program.

Open to the public, our Healing Foods Lecture Series presents important topics related to food and health. In 2010, the lectures were offered in partnership with The Center for Spiritual Living in Santa Rosa. One hundred sixty-five community members attended five lectures covering topics such as Herbal Adaptogens for Health & Healing, The Ecology of Cancer and Cooking with Sea Vegetables.

Community Classes are open to everyone and provide hands-on experience with sprouting, fermenting, broth making and healthy, sugar-free desserts. In 2011 we are excited to offer our first collaborative gardening program, a series of five classes called The Garden as Medicine. Expert organic gardeners will share knowledge on everything from preparing a container garden to harvesting and seed saving.

Nourishing Connections: the Healing Power of Food & Community, published in December 2009, is taking the Ceres Community Project’s message to people and communities across the country. Through Nourishing Connections, we’re supporting people with cancer and other serious illnesses, teaching people how to cook and eat for health, and inspiring new projects like Ceres in communities from Bay Village, Ohio to Summit, New Jersey and Seattle, Washington.

After being a Ceres client last year, I wanted to continue to eat the wholesome and tasty cancer-fighting foods that had been delivered weekly. I was making batches of immune broth and had questions about it as well as other food and health-related questions. The Healing Foods Course clearly answered all my questions...I am thankful to JoEllen and the Ceres Project for offering this practical and useful course. The camaraderie that evolved and joy we experienced were fringe benefits of the class.

Carol King

I just want to express my gratitude for your work in the community. I enormously enjoyed the lecture last night (Spice it up! by Mary Sheila Canella, CNC). It gave me information I did not know about, and it was fun to taste everything. I’m going to make Chai today (soaked my almonds last night).

Dr. Thao Nyugen
2010 saw the first replication of the Ceres Community Project model, beginning with a small project in St. Helena, California, launched with the help of Cindy Cantril, formerly nurse navigator for the Martin O’Neal Integrative Cancer Center at St. Helena Hospital. The project is now being coordinated by Amy Cohen of a+a kitchen in St. Helena.

In September, with leadership from volunteer project manager Julie Burford, we launched a pilot project in Marin County. The project is a partnership with the Marin Youth Center’s Culinary Program led by chef Caesare Assad. A small group of teens are now preparing meals weekly for about six client families and will continue expanding in 2011 thanks to generous support from the Joanne and Peter Haas, Jr. Foundation and other Marin County donors.

In September we hosted Barb Harrell and Michelle Slatton from Bay Village, Ohio. Barb’s mother-in-law in Chicago had gotten a copy of our Nourishing Connections cookbook. When Barb read about Ceres Community Project, she knew she wanted to bring it to her community. Barb and Michelle spent three days apprenticing with us and their Village Food Project launched in January 2011 with wide-spread community support.

Other projects are in the works in Seattle, Chicago and Summit, New Jersey. Ceres Community Project is providing mentoring, connections, and apprenticeship opportunities.

Spreading the Work – from Napa to New Jersey!

The vision that you have brought to reality through the Ceres Community Project and have shared with us and many others is incredible. You have changed and are changing literally thousands of lives. You have empowered and encouraged others to run with that vision.

Sebastapol, CA and Bay Village, OH are hundreds of miles away from each other, but have so much in common. Thank you for sharing, encouraging, and empowering so many.

Blessings,
Barb Harrell
The Village Food Project

Arame & Ginger Sauerkraut Salad Wins Good Food Award

2010 saw our first food products for sale in local grocery stores. With leadership from Ceres Project volunteer Rick Goldberg and a generous in-kind donation from Deutsch Design Works, we launched Ceres Community Foods with two flavors of traditionally fermented sauerkraut made with local, organic cabbage.

These products extend our commitment to educating our community about the connection between what we eat and our health while generating income to support our programs. Ceres volunteers have reached thousands of people through demos at local markets including G&G and Oliver’s, sharing information about Ceres’ work and the health benefits of fermented foods like our Sauerkraut Salads.

In January 2011 our Arame & Ginger Sauerkraut Salad was honored with the Good Food Award – one of just 71 products nationally. The Good Food Award celebrates products that are not only delicious but also good for their communities and for the planet.
One Hundred Sets of Hands

Ceres Community Project is a community -- of people, civic and religious groups, and businesses -- working together to build a vibrant and more life-affirming world. Our deepest gratitude to all of you who have lent your hands and hearts to our work this past year.

A special thank you to all of the adult volunteers who donated their time in 2010.

Adult volunteers delivered meals, picked up food donations, sterilized containers, mentored our teen chefs, coordinated all of our deliveries, made supplemental products, photograph food work, staffed tables and helped with events, films, produced, edited and scored our new video, wrote press releases, sent out mailings, managed our Facebook page and Constant Contact communications, sleeched boxes, provided event coordination for our annual fund-raiser at Lyrmat Estate, moved furniture, assisted in the Healing Foods Cooking Course, taught yoga and qigong, presented lectures, fulfilled all of our book orders, managed book distribution to stores, sampled sauerkraut, managed sauerkraut distribution, helped with bookkeeping and more!

Adult Volunteers

Donated 8,200 hours value of $180,400 in 2010.
Ceres offers something special to the teens who cook here. Because we want to bring healing energy to the foods we prepare, the energy in the kitchen is always loving, open and centered. In that kind of environment, we accept each other and value each other’s contributions. It’s an amazing gift to spend time with other teenagers outside the crucible of social judgment. I’m really proud that I can cook food that helps people who are fighting cancer, but I’m just as proud that I’ve learned how to healthily feed myself. I’m grateful to Ceres for showing me a whole other side of cooking.

Teen Chef Columbia Shafer

You can review the Ceres Federal Tax Form 990 on the web at: www.CeresProject.org/FedTaxForm.html
Our Mission

The Ceres Community Project works to restore locally-grown, organic whole food to its place as the foundation of health for people, communities and the planet. We do this through an integrated model that provides those facing cancer and other life-threatening illnesses with nourishing meals, gives teens experiences of growing and preparing healthy food, and educates the larger community about the connection between food, healing and wellness.