CERES COMMUNITY PROJECT

Restoring the heart and health of community

2012 Annual Report
Dear Friends and Supporters,

Sixty years ago there was little need for an organization like Ceres Community Project. Most people ate a whole foods diet grown without chemical fertilizers and close to where they lived. Learning to cook was part of growing up with moms, grandmothers or aunties passing along family traditions. And when a friend or neighbor had a crisis, everyone helped.

For many of us this web of caring connection has been lost. Relatives who were mentors in past generations today live thousands of miles away. We struggle through illness with little or no support. Cooking from scratch and gathering around the dinner table is unfamiliar. And young people have few opportunities to find their place in the larger community, where heartfelt human connection is challenged by the fast pace of contemporary life.

Ceres Community Project is a simple but profound response to the disconnection in our modern world. At Ceres we come together – people of all ages and from all walks of life – to restore our personal and shared experience of what it means to be human.

The special foldout poster attached to the back inside cover – How We Make a Meal – is a visual map of the thousands of hands that come together each week to mentor young people in our community and provide nourishing meals to people in need. This is just one slice of the work we’re doing together – week in and week out – to strengthen the bonds of caring and connection at the heart of a healthy community.

As you’ll see throughout the Annual Report, Ceres continues to expand the difference we are making – both here in the North Bay and across the country. 2013 is a pivotal year. We have a bold vision to support replication of the Ceres model in 25 communities by 2015 while at the same time growing our impact locally to engage many more teens and support many more clients. Accomplishing this promise means strengthening our financial foundation and building organizational capacity in a range of areas. This is our focus for 2013.

Ceres Community Project is a model of hope that is thriving in Sonoma County and spreading around the country. Together we’re creating a future built on compassion, generosity, connection, nourishment, and the recognition of our deep and profound interdependence. Thank you for all the ways you support our work together.

With blessings,

Cathryn Couch
Executive Director

Sharon Keating
Board President
Ceres client Darlene with Client Liaison Jerilu

Photos – Client receiving bag of meals, Kitchen shots, Food

Teen chefs packing the meals for delivery

Teen chefs packing the meals for delivery

Delivery Angel Jim arriving with the week's meals

Teens picking beans in the Ceres Community Garden

The Kate Schaffner Healing Foods Kitchen
Nourishing Our Neighbors

Hearing the news that you or a loved one has a serious illness sends you on a journey that is stressful, frightening, debilitating and often lonely. At a time when whole foods nourishment is most needed, it is frequently the last thing on the list.

Ceres Community Project is here to help. The meals we deliver add nourishing food, love and support to a family’s day when a parent or child has a serious illness. For a single person living alone, Ceres food can mean the difference between oatmeal and the nourishment of a varied and nutrient-rich diet. And for a client in the midst of treatment, who can’t bear to even think about food, these meals can literally be a life-saver.

Through the offering of lovingly prepared meals and the support structure we provide around them, Ceres connects our clients to a caring community and provides vital knowledge about healthy eating. Client Liaisons visit each new client, and then stay in contact regularly throughout their months of service. And our loving Delivery Angels offer a weekly connection for our many clients who live alone. Through our home visits, New Client Packet, weekly Nutrition Bites, Nourishing Connections Cookbook, and Education Programs we help clients understand how to cook and eat for health – and let them know there are people willing to step up and care for them.

In January of 2012 we began a two-and-a-half year project to evaluate if and how our clients are changing their diets as a result of their experience with us. Early results show that clients do make significant changes – and maintain those months after completing the meal service. Clients report they are eating considerably more fresh fruits and vegetables (up 50%), and more than half say they have reduced the amount of processed food, fast food, white sugar and white flour they are eating. To learn more about our food philosophy and to see sample menus, visit the Client section of our website.

During 2012 we provided 39,726 beautiful, delicious and nourishing meals to 310 clients and their families – a 39% increase over 2011. Clients came from every town in Sonoma County – including Cazadero, Cloverdale, Sonoma, Petaluma and Bodega Bay.

84% of Ceres Community Project clients are living with a cancer diagnosis. The other 16% have a wide range of illnesses including ALS, Crohn’s Disease, Parkinson’s, MS and Hepatitis C.

88% of our clients have household incomes below $45,000, and 57% have household incomes below $25,000.

Oh it brought tears to our eyes. The nourishment and loving preparation. The support and the relief from daily kitchen duties... We are so blessed. Thank you for arranging this amazing support. Do we need to pay for this...it seems too good to be given without reciprocating. Many thanks. The love we are receiving is just unfathomable.

~ An email note from a client after receiving their very first delivery.

I feel like strangers somewhere are helping me survive cancer and find hope.

~ Ceres Client

Ceres has provided us with the ability to both experience and participate in an amazing level of compassionate, meaningful, loving and health-enhancing community support. We are now and will forever be thankful to all who are involved in this rare and extraordinary organization.

~ Ceres Client
Photos of teens in garden and kitchen, with one another and with mentors, 100 mile dinner, Teen ed – especially teens learning together

Mentor chef Judy tasting the soup with teen chefs Madeleine and Jaki

Harvesting onions in the Ceres Garden

Afternoon teen circle break-out session

100 Mile Feast
Empowering Healthy Young Leaders

At Ceres Community Project we know young people have the same deep need as all of us to make a difference. And yet there are few opportunities for teens to play a meaningful role. Our approach is to place youth in the center of our work and organization allowing them to learn, grow, and naturally discover their gifts and ways of belonging.

As the primary gardeners and chefs at Ceres, teens experience their importance in the world, take on meaningful levels of responsibility, get to know youth from different backgrounds, learn how to work as part of a team, develop self-confidence and compassion, discover the joy of giving to others, and learn about the healing power of food from seed to table.

Working at Ceres sets teens up for a lifetime of healthier choices. After six months in the program, teens report significant changes in their diets, cook more often, and become advocates for healthy eating. Fruit and vegetable consumption rises by almost 20% and the variety of fruits and vegetables they are eating increases by 24%. The percentage of teens who report cooking at home at least once a week increases from 66 to 90%, and they are 22% more likely to talk with their friends and family about their food choices.

Each day in the kitchen and garden the teens spend half an hour learning about and exploring topics related to their work at Ceres. During 2012 this included visits from some of the clients they have cared for, learning about hunger in Sonoma County, discussing why local and organic makes a difference, reading ingredient labels and trying to guess what food the label came from, talking about healthy snacks, reflecting on values like inclusion and kindness, and planning the first seasonal organic “100 Mile Feast” shown below.

During 2012, 250 teens from dozens of Sonoma County schools helped grow the food and prepare the meals we served.

Teens contributed 10,500 hours of gardening, cooking, packaging, dishwashing, mopping, serving, teaching and sharing their gifts. Forty teens prepared and served the dinner at Harvest of the Heart, our annual fundraising event.

Working together, teen chefs and gardeners prepared 39,726 meals, grew and harvested 3,000 pounds of produce at the Ceres Community Garden, and created 1,100 bouquets of flowers for clients.

Through joy, laughter, and even tears we cook for people who need these meals— that’s being a true human being.

~ Ceres Teen Chef

Working at the Ceres Project has changed the way I think about healthy food.

~ Ceres Teen Chef

Ceres gives and gives. It gives me strength, confidence and compassion.

~ Ceres Teen Chef

In November 2012, more than 50 Ceres’ teens gathered to cook and eat the first annual “100 Mile Feast” — planning, procuring and preparing the multi-course meal with everything grown or raised within 100 miles of Sebastopol.
Michael Lerner, co-founder of Commonweal and a member of our Ambassador Council, speaks at The Cancer Journey.

Ed Bauman presenting at a Tea & Talk series lecture.

Healing Foods Cooking Course participants share a meal.

Miso Ginger Soup.

Michael Lerner, co-founder of Commonweal and a member of our Ambassador Council, speaks at The Cancer Journey.
Educating for Healthy Eating

All of Ceres Community Project's programs inform and educate people about the vital link between what and how we eat and our long-term health and the health of our planet. Through our classes and other Educational Programs we provide resources, hands-on learning and the ongoing support most of us need to make and maintain changes in how we eat and live.

Healing Foods Cooking Course

Our 16-hour Healing Foods Cooking Course graduated 50 people in 2012. Combining mind-body practices, cooking skills, nutrition information and support, HFCC is designed specifically to provide our clients who are transitioning off the meals program, others dealing with serious illness, caregivers, and medical professionals with the skills they need to cook nutrient-rich, whole food meals for health.

Community Classes

Healing Foods Basics, a new program in 2012, reached 75 people with an introduction to whole foods nutrition.

More than 130 people attended the ten evenings that comprised our Tea & Talk series on food, healing and wellness. Topics included: Stress, Burnout & Exhaustion – a Path to Recovery for Caregivers, Cooking Delicious Soups with a Pressure Cooker, Transitioning to Life after Cancer, The Edible Effect of the Six Flavors, Meditation Practices for Difficult Times, and The Benefits of Vegan & Raw Meals.

More than 50 people attended Nourishing Connections Classes, including the four-part Garden as Medicine series. Topics in the cooking classes included broths, sprouting, fermenting, and gluten-free, sugar-free and dairy-free desserts. Garden as Medicine classes covered planning your vegetable garden, planting and growing tips, hands-on harvesting experience, and techniques for saving the harvest.

The Cancer Journey

The Cancer Journey gathered 160 participants for an extraordinary day of integrated healthcare speakers, bodywork sessions, music, nutrition demos and a delicious nourishing lunch prepared and served by Ceres’ teen chefs. Our goal was to deepen cancer thrivers understanding of how to support their healing, and to provide a safe space in which they could share their experiences and learn from one another.

Community Collaboration

Nutrition for Wellness, a collaborative program serving West County Health Centers’ primarily low-income patient population provides classes on eating whole food, heart healthy and anti-inflammatory meals. Thanks to our partnership with Ceres donor WHOA Farm, many of the 300 class participants in 2012 received a bag of fresh local organic produce to take home with them after class. West County Health Center also refers patients to our Healing Meals for Healthy Communities Program.

Ceres’ Nutrition Director JoEllen DeNicola also reached about 60 Kaiser Permanente employees through a series of talks that were part of their employee wellness program. Through the Annie Appleseed and National Association of Nutrition Professionals conferences, we reached another 400 people with information about healthy eating and Ceres’ work.

During 2012 we reached more than 1,300 people directly through 190 hours of free and low-cost educational programming at Ceres Community Project, West County Health Centers and Kaiser Permanente.

More than 1,200 people purchased Nourishing Connections Cookbook, which is now owned by people in 37 states and several other countries!

We reached hundreds of thousands more through interviews on the nationally syndicated radio broadcast eTown, two interviews on nationally broadcast Bread for the Journey radio, an interview on The Organic Connection, and television coverage by CBS Channel 5 in the San Francisco Bay Area.

I have renewed hope, new knowledge and more courage to meet the challenge of cancer. JoEllen is a treasure sharing her wealth of knowledge in these classes. Thank you.

~ Former Client Tammie Fraser

I will begin to exercise, bring more attention to breathing, and prepare more meals… no buying foods with long lists of ingredients! I have learned so much in terms of hands-on cooking as well as theory, connection and cause and effect. JoEllen is a well of information on how to use food and drink to care for ourselves. I am eager for another class and very grateful!

~ Class Participant Vern Doughty
Fox Valley Food for Health, Geneva, Illinois
Food for Love, St. Helena, California
Village Food Project, Bay Village, Ohio
Teen Kitchen Project, Soquel, California
Pathways Cooks, Summit, New Jersey
Ceres Marin, San Rafael, California
Teen Chef Maggie
Seeding our Vision

The word is out that together we’ve created something very special at Ceres Community Project. Beginning three years ago – in 2010 – people began calling us, passionate about bringing the Ceres vision to their community. We’ve helped with one-on-one mentoring, training at our Sebastopol site, and ongoing support.

Recognizing that interest in the model is growing organically, in late 2012 we committed to a bold vision: to deepen our impact here in Sonoma County through collaborative projects and satellite sites while replicating the Healing Meals for Healthy Communities program in 25 communities across the country by the end of 2015, nurturing the expansion of our community-building efforts to meet the magnitude of need.

More than 1 in 3 people in the United States now experience cancer during their lifetime. Research shows that 80% of chronically ill people experience malnourishment at some time in their treatment. It is also well documented that many common diseases including cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure can be prevented and treated by the kind of diet Ceres promotes.

In 2013 we expect to train 6 additional teams to launch a Ceres affiliate in their community. We’re working to document critical program elements, create a comprehensive handbook, and develop a structure of ongoing partnership and support to help these teams succeed. In Sonoma County, we’re exploring the potential to develop after-school programs at several high schools, create a satellite program in one of the communities farthest from Sebastopol, and partner with another nonprofit to bring the Ceres program to an underserved group of young people.

We feel in our hearts the powerful difference Ceres Community Project is making for our clients and their families, for the teens that play such a critical role, and for the vitality of our entire community. Through Ceres, we have the chance to share our gifts, connect in heart-centered ways with others, and restore a feeling of being whole and “at home in the world”.

During 2012 we trained three additional communities to launch programs based on the Ceres model, bringing the total number of “affiliate” projects around the country to seven.

Food for Love, St. Helena, California  July 2010
Ceres Marin, San Rafael, California  Sept 2010
Village Food Project, Bay Village, Ohio  Jan 2011
Pathways Cooks, Summit, New Jersey  April 2011
Teen Kitchen Project, Soquel, California  Sept 2012
Fox Valley Food for Health, Geneva, Illinois  Nov 2012
Meals2Heal, Brentwood, Tennessee  Jan 2013

Collectively the wonderful people in these communities prepared and delivered nearly 15,000 meals to 400 client families during 2012. More than 270 teens provided 5,000 service learning hours. Just like at our home base in Sebastopol, hundreds of adult volunteers, donors and in-kind community partners joined hands to support these projects with their time, talents, products and financial resources.

New conversations with folks inspired to start a Ceres affiliate in their community are arising on a steady basis. We’re currently working with people in a half-dozen other communities about replicating Ceres’ Healing Meals for Healthy Communities model.

Thanks to the powerful and generously shared training we received from Ceres, dozens of teens, adults, service groups, health professionals and others here in Geneva provided 330 meals to 7 families during our first 6 weeks! We couldn’t have done it without you!

~ Susan Leigh, Fox Valley Food for Health; Geneva, IL

Ceres has done extraordinary work to help our Nashville community benefit from meals for cancer patients, a knowledge base of healthy cooking, and for teenagers to develop a lifetime of healthy habits.

~ Chef Waller McInnes, Meals2Heal; Brentwood, TN
Photos – Oliver’s, Whole Foods, Gourmet, Redwood Hill Dairy, WHOA Farm, Laguna Farm, volunteer receptionist, sterilizers, adult prep, delivery angel

WHOA Farm Gourmet Mushrooms
Laguna Farm Whole Foods Market
Oliver’s Markets Andy’s Produce

Teen chefs Aja and Anja

Ceres’ volunteer Michael
Ren, butcher
Creating Heart-Centered Connections

Thousands of people join hands to play vital roles in accomplishing Ceres Community Project’s mission each year – from our hundreds of teen and adult volunteers, and thousand+ financial donors, to the dozens of local businesses that donate food, auction items, and services. We feel blessed to have your partnership.

At Ceres Community Project our intention is to educate all members of our community about healthy eating, and to have each of us experience the healing power of connecting in heart-centered ways. Recently we asked volunteers whether being involved with Ceres had inspired them to make changes in their diets. Here are just a few of the many comments we received:

A lot more dark green, leafy veggies. Eating veggies grown locally and in season.

Much healthier, I try to only eat what serves my body well.

Much more conscious of what I eat.

I eat more kale! And sauerkraut. I eat less sugar. I use more “medicinal” herbs as seasoning. I cook more.

What Adult Volunteers Do at Ceres

Our volunteer community of 320 adults kept Ceres Community Project running smoothly in 2012. These exceptional people delivered meals, picked up food donations, mentored our teens, met with our clients, delivered more than 3,000 bags of meals, sterilized containers, made Immune Broth, Vital Bites and sauerkraut, translated materials into Spanish, photographed our work, staffed tables and helped with events, wrote press releases, sent out mailings, provided computer assistance, procured auction items, coordinated and staffed our annual event, assisted at all of our Educational Programs, mailed and delivered cookbooks, presented lectures, taught yoga and qi gong, and much, much more.

Adult volunteers: 320
Adult volunteer hours: 13,000
Value of donated time: $286,000

Farmers, grocers and food producers: 40
Number of donations: 630
Value of donations: $55,000+

Other In-kind donors: 215
Value of in-kind donations: $105,500

We are honored to partner with Ceres Community Project knowing that our weekly donation of organic produce helps willing teens and caring volunteers to serve our community.

~ The Team at WHOA Farm

I have become more involved with the community. It is just amazing the love, thought and concern that is part of the Ceres Community Project--office, garden, kitchen, client. It is so exciting to be part of an organization that has involved so many parts to make a whole. The positive energy is intoxicating. It is a thrill to see so many teenagers involved and happy.

~ Volunteer Winnie Kelley

Ceres provides my son and me a way to live our values. We have had some amazingly meaningful and heartfelt conversations during our Ceres delivery shifts. The people we meet, the circumstances we find ourselves in, and the fact that we have the dedicated time to be together provides such a great environment to talk about things that really matter.

~ Volunteer Delivery Angel Charmaine Stainbrook

To see a list of all of our in-kind and cash donors for 2012, please see the fold-out poster at the end of the Annual Report.
Where does the money come from?
Total Income $774,503
- 9% $71,856 Corporate Sponsors
- 11% $81,420 Government Grants
- 12% $91,988 Earned Income
- 17% $128,104 Foundation Grants
- 51% $401,134 Individuals

Where does the money go?
Total Expenses $719,144
- 11% $368,000 Healing Meals for Healthy Communities Program
- 19% $137,443 Education Program
- 19% $137,126 Fund-Raising & Outreach
- 51% $328,655 Sonoma
- 5% $39,345 Marin

Ceres Community Project Marin
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What We’ve Accomplished Together

Clients
- 2007: 28
- 2008: 71
- 2009: 124
- 2010: 186
- 2011: 233
- 2012: 310

Meals
- 2007: 4,500
- 2008: 17,300
- 2009: 21,900
- 2010: 26,100
- 2011: 28,550
- 2012: 39,726

Teens
- 2007: 20
- 2008: 70
- 2009: 108
- 2010: 137
- 2011: 158
- 2012: 250

Total Expenses $719,144
Teen chef Mimi with major vegetable
Executive Director Cathryn Couch
Kale chips
Adult volunteers sterilizing containers
Delivery Angel Ralph and Client Darlene
WHOA Farm chicken
Executive Chef Rob and teen chef Jenna
Solstice Party in the Ceres Community Garden
Mission Statement

We build healthy communities by restoring fresh, whole and organic food to its place as the foundation of health, and by connecting people in heart-centered ways to themselves, others and the earth.