Nichole Warwick greets me at the front door of her Forestville home with a big smile and a hug. She looks vibrant. In June her doctor confirmed what I sensed, telling Nichole, “I think you are very healthy now.” It’s an incredible success story given what Nichole faced over the past seven months, and Ceres Community Project had a big part to play.

A consultant to the Sebastopol School District and the mother of 13 and 16 year old boys, Nichole had spent the past few years bringing a host of exciting programs to elementary and junior high school students, from yoga and movement to recycling, composting and food growing. Her work was deeply meaningful. “I started these programs because they fed me and I was part of the community,” she told me. Everything changed the day her doctor called to tell her that she had stage 2 Breast Cancer with lymph involvement.

“It was incredibly hard leaving my work. I suddenly felt so isolated and disconnected.”

Within a week, on October 8, she began every other week chemotherapy sessions. For eleven days after the first session she could barely keep anything down – including pain medications she’d taken for years for Fibromyalgia. Withdrawal complicated and exacerbated her side effects. And then after just two sessions her doctors told her the drugs weren’t working. With limited choices, Nichole chose to have a double mastectomy.

Ceres began delivering meals to Nichole, her husband Al and her two boys on October 19th. “When I was in the midst of those first chemotherapy sessions and not able to eat it was incredibly comforting to know that those meals were there for my family. And when I was able to eat, every Friday was like a mini holiday! Sometimes I would put all the food away in the fridge and then take a picture and share it with friends telling them “So much bounty! I feel so well loved.” Nichole also credits the Ceres meals for making a big difference in how quickly she recovered from the surgery and told me that her doctors were also very surprised at how well she did.

Nichole’s ordeal wasn’t over. Six weeks after the surgery, her doctors recommended a different form of chemo. Despite her reservations, she finally agreed to go ahead. Then, during her first session, Nichole went into anaphylactic shock. “For 10 days I thought I was going to die,” she told me. After she recovered Nichole followed her instincts and chose to focus on nutrition, acupuncture and other wellness practices.

Thank you for helping us provide 34,500 meals to 240 clients in the first 7 months of this year – 70% more than last year.

We’re excited to introduce COLOR to our newsletters. New technology allows us to share all the vibrant color of Ceres for just pennies more than our black and white costs.

(continued next page)
“Receiving the meals from Ceres gave me the time to unwind those beliefs and helped me learn to give my body what it needed for optimum health.”

Nichole Warwick

“Inaugural “Local Foods” Parent Dinner

A group of lucky parents recently enjoyed a local foods feast and gained a deeper understanding of the role their teens play at Ceres and in our community. About 60 parents and friends gathered on June 22nd for a Ceres-style dinner planned, prepared and served by our teen chefs and gardeners, and featuring foods sourced from within 100 miles of Sebastopol. The evening gave Ceres’ staff a chance to honor the commitment, heart and skill that our teen volunteers bring to the kitchen and garden each week, while parents had a chance to connect with each other and learn more about Ceres and just how beautiful, delicious and nourishing the food is that their teens prepare. As Margaret Howe, Director of Sonoma County Programs, said to the parents that evening: “Teens get a bad rap in the world, but at Ceres we see them differently and know that the common attitude about teens is way off. We experience teens as creative, caring, capable and wanting to engage and make a difference in the world; your teens make us (Ceres’ staff) cry every day.” We look forward to making this gathering an annual tradition at Ceres!”

Ceres Community Project Teen Program intends to have each teen:

1. Experience growing, cooking and eating healthy, whole foods.
2. Gain cooking and gardening skills, and learn how to prepare a healthy meal.
3. Understand where food comes from and why organic, local sources are crucial to a healthy life and planet.
4. Discover new parts of themselves, gain self confidence and become more empowered.
5. Understand the link between what they eat and both their health and the health of the planet.
6. Discover that they hold the ability to positively impact lives and their world, and that there is joy in doing so.
7. Experience working with a wide variety of people and how to work as a team.
8. Gain real-life job skills that will translate into the work world and beyond.
9. Awaken a greater capacity for compassion and gain a greater ability to be with suffering.

Requests for Service Way Up over 2012

The demand for Ceres’ services is higher than ever before, Nichole’s family is just one of the 240 clients that you’ve helped support with 34,500 meals during the first seven months of 2013. This represents a 70% increase over the 20,300 meals Ceres delivered during the first half of 2012. Ceres clients come from all walks of life. During the first half of 2013 more than half of our clients have had household incomes below $10,000. For these clients in particular, the high quality organic meals that Ceres delivers would be out of reach without our support. Two-thirds of clients have been women and one-third men. Clients have ranged in age from 22 to 91 years of age, with 10% under age 40, 44% between 41 and 59, and just 46% 60 or older. For the 54% of clients under age 60—who don’t qualify for Meals on Wheels—Ceres is the only available option for prepared and delivered meals during their illness.

Ceres

• Works as part of a unified team.
• Takes responsibility.
• Keeps her/his energy positive and enthusiastic.
• Honors commitments.
• Is caring and welcoming to all.
• Puts passion and love into the food.
• Looks for what is needed and does it.
Teen & Client Survey Results Prove Big Impact!

Every day at Ceres we hear and see how our work together is giving people hope, nourishing them and their families, and helping young people learn to cook and eat for health while they discover their power to make a difference. Now we are excited to share preliminary results from a US Department of Food & Agriculture funded evaluation study. It shows that both teens and clients are profoundly impacted by their participation at Ceres, and are making changes that will pay dividends for a lifetime.

What clients say about their Ceres experience:

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

Ceres gave me a foundation for making positive changes in my way of eating.

I learned how to begin to view food as medicine and to make healthy dietary choices in my life… and that there is no end to the possibility of eating for life.

I felt love from strangers and discovered that I wasn’t alone.

I am the healthiest I have ever been in my life.

What teens say about their Ceres experience:

We care so much about each other and that is the reason our meals are full of love for our wonderful clients.

I’ve learned what a shocking difference eating healthy can make in my everyday life.

I am the healthiest I have ever been.

I’ve learned what a shocking difference eating healthy can change people’s lives.

Teens Become Advocates for Healthy Eating

This year nearly 300 young people will help grow the vegetables and prepare the meals for our clients during 13,000 hours of service learning. We ask teens to complete a survey when they join the program and then again after they’ve participated for six months. Teens that are part of Ceres Community Project eat more fresh fruits and vegetables, increase the variety of vegetables they eat, cook more often, and become advocates for healthier eating among their friends and family. Here are some highlights:

- The percentage of teens who say they cook from scratch at least once a week increases by 65%, from 23% to 38% of teens.
- The percentage of teens who report eating at least 3 servings of vegetables a day increases by 27% after six months at Ceres.
- Teens are 48% more likely to encourage their friends to make different healthier food choices, and 50% more likely to encourage their family to do the same.
- Consumption of nearly all categories of unhealthy foods declines (the only one that doesn’t is baked goods – which we hope they are now making themselves!).
- 61% of teens say they are extremely confident that they can prepare a healthy meal and the remaining 39% say they are fairly confident that they can do this.

Clients Make Healthy Eating a Priority

This year we’ll deliver 60,000 beautiful, delicious and nutrient-rich meals to more than 400 clients struggling with a serious illness. The meals provide vital nourishment, help clients know they are cared for, relieve stress and help teach them to become committed to healthy choices.

- The percentage of clients who describe their diet as “Only dinners from scratch with lots of fresh vegetables” more than doubles from 17% to 39% of respondents.
- The percentage of clients who rank “Healthy for me” as their most important priority when choosing what to eat increases by 49%, from 53% to 79% of respondents.
- Clients increase their fruit consumption by 50% and their vegetable consumption by 61%.
- Nearly 80% of clients say they are eating less packaged/processed food, fast food and white flour.
- 100% rated it extremely important that the healthy food helped them recover more quickly, and 83% rated it extremely important that they learned a lot about nutrition and healthy eating.
- 82% of clients told us that their weight moved in a positive direction because of the meals we provided.

We hope you are as excited as we are by seeing the tremendous difference that our work is making – for the clients and their families that we support, and for the youth that help make it all happen every day in the Ceres Community Garden and kitchen.

Thank you for helping renew health and hope – one family, one teen, and one garden fresh meal at a time.
Wendy Mardigian and Eddie Gelsman

WHOA Farm Grows Vegetables with Love for People in Need

With t-shirts that read “The best food money can’t buy” our partners at Work Horse Organic Agriculture share Ceres Community Project’s mission to insure that everyone – regardless of income – has access to high quality, organically grown fruits and vegetables. With more than 100 acres of Petaluma Hill Road in Santa Rosa, WHOA Farm is the brain-child of Leadership Donors Eddie Gelsman and Wendy Mardigian. Although they’d been feeding their family from a two-acre home garden for years, in 2010 Gelsman and Mardigian realized that they had to do more. “We just couldn’t sit on the sidelines anymore.”

Gelsman said. “Too many people are going hungry. We wanted to start the fight locally.”

The idea was to grow organic produce, model farming with horses (the work horse part), and give everything away to non-profit partners that help feed people in need and educate the community about the power of healthy eating. Starting with a 5-acre parcel, they’ve slowly bought 109 acres and currently have 15 acres in production. Farmers Elli and Balyn Rose, who met while studying sustainable agriculture at UC Santa Cruz, joined the team in 2012 and live on the farm with their one-year old daughter Olivia. WHOA Farm’s goal is to create a model of sustainable farming with low carbon impact, and to have the produce they grow make the biggest possible difference for families in need.

WHOA Farm’s partnership with Ceres developed after Eddie and Wendy attended our 2011 Harvest of the Heart event and came to Ceres to see the teens in action as they prepared meals for our clients. “We were so moved by how Ceres empowers young people, and by how productive and engaged the teens are. We want the food we grow to have real impact. With youth involved and clients learning about good nutrition as well as getting these beautiful meals, Ceres really leverages the contribution we make. We can’t imagine a more perfect partner.”

Last year WHOA Farm grew more than 15,000 pounds of produce and Ceres was the grateful beneficiary of a third of this bounty – some 5,000 pounds of produce and nearly 500 dozen pastured organic eggs valued at about $14,000. Eddie’s regular visitor on Monday mornings, arriving with cases of freshly picked and nutrition-packed produce that our teens chefs turn into beautiful, delicious and nourishing meals for our clients. In addition to supporting our Healing Meals program, WHOA also partners with Ceres’ Nutrition for Wellness Program, every other week nutrition education classes offered free of charge to West County Health Centers’ patients. During heavy production months WHOA delivers freshly picked bags of produce to the clinic and every patient coming to class goes home with a bag of beautiful food to help them put what they’ve learned into practice.

Like Ceres, WHOA Farm is an expression of love and of the responsibility and opportunity we each have to make a difference in our world. Every day, WHOA’s produce nourishes and transforms people’s lives, knitting relationships of caring across our community. Thank you WHOA Farm for helping us create meals that heal for our clients struggling with serious illness, and for helping our teen chefs learn to cook and eat for health while discovering the joy of giving. To learn more about WHOA Farm visit them at whoafarm.org.

Ceres Executive Chef Rob Hogencamp inspecting a recipe with Teen Chef Jenna

Ceres Culinary Class offers Teens School Credit for Service

Starting this fall, teens working at Ceres will have the option to earn school credit for their volunteer service. Thanks to a partnership with Sonoma County Office of Education, Ceres will be home to the first non-school based Regional Occupational Program culinary class. Called Ceres Culinary Class, students will work 7½ to 8 hours in the kitchen and garden as well as attending a 2½ hour class taught by Ceres Executive Chef Rob Hogencamp. Enrolled students can earn 10 credits per semester.

Students from any high school in the county can enroll for this ROP class. To enroll, sign up at Ceres with Margaret Howe (margaret@ceresproject.org) or Rob Hogencamp (robb@ceresproject.org) or register at your school in the fall.
Ceres works so well because of its many teams: the teens, the volunteers, the staff, its board and its donors. As a donor I feel even more connected to the Ceres family when I’m part of a challenge-grant team. We don’t know each other but we all know it feels doubly rewarding when we write that check! Ceres Leadership Donor, Ron Trefzer

I have found a love for helping people and spending time with others who do as well. The only place that I have ever found this is at Ceres. Thank you so much for the opportunity Ceres Teen Chef

Teen Education Challenge Gift Campaign

Our heartfelt thanks to the over 122 people who contributed to the teen education challenge gift campaign. Through a huge outpouring of last minute donations we far exceeded the $20,000 that we needed to secure the $20,000 challenge gift. Simply put, this means we now have over $50,000 to grow the impact of the Teen Education program!

Upcoming Classes & Events

Visit our website to register and get more information about our classes and events. www.CeresProject.org

Harvest of the Heart
Ceres Community Garden
August 17, 5:00-9:00pm
See page 10.

Upcoming Volunteer Orientations
August 29 or September 17 or November 19, 5:30-6:30pm
Take the first step to becoming a part of our vibrant community of volunteers. Please register at www.CeresProject.org.

Healing Foods
Cooking Course Series
September 6, 13, 20, 27
October 18, 25, November 1, 8
Learn more about or register for this 16-hour interactive, hands-on course geared towards those recovering from serious illness by visiting our website. www.CeresProject.org/HFCC

Harvest of the Heart: A Model of Community Spirit

Exchange Bank has been sponsoring Ceres’ Community Project since 2011, and this year they have doubled their investment in our work by signing on as a major sponsor of Harvest of the Heart, our annual fundraising event.

Exchange Bank is a local leader in giving back to the community. Their longest standing and perhaps best-known program has been the Doyle Scholarship, which since 1948 has awarded $76 million to 115,000 Santa Rosa Junior College students.

The bank’s efforts have been recognized with a number of recent awards, including the United Way’s Campaign Excellence Award for 2012-2013, Blue Ribbon Corporate Sponsor Award from the Board of Directors of the Sonoma County Fair (2013), the Association of Fundraising Professionals’ 2012 Spirit of Philanthropy Award, and the Corporate Champion prize for the 2012 Human Race for raising $69,186 for local nonprofits.

We’re grateful to all of the sponsors of this year’s Harvest of the Heart event, including Exchange Bank. It’s thanks to their underwriting of events costs that 100% of the money we raise at the event goes straight into funding our programs, bringing the experience that Lori and her son had to more families, and delivering more healing meals to individuals and families facing a health crisis.

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An Invitation to Harvest of the Heart, Ceres’ Annual Fundraiser
Saturday August 17, 5:00 to 9:00pm
Ceres Community Garden
O’Reilly Media, 1005 Gravenstein Hwy N. Sebastopol
Tickets $150 each, tables of 8 - $1200

Please join us in the Ceres Community Garden for an evening of food prepared by a gathering of the finest chefs in Sonoma County paired with some of the world’s best wines, all served in the Ceres way—with warmth, generosity, and abundance of spirit!

Please not only enjoy yourself thoroughly—you’ll also help us raise needed funds to provide 60,000 organic healing meals to our clients and their families this year!

The evening begins with a garden reception featuring an array of culinary delights paired with local wine, beer and a signature naturally fermented soda. Bid on an exceptional selection of silent auction items ranging from gift certificates to favorite local restaurants to adventures, outings and guest stays. Enjoy live bluegrass music with Marshall and David Thiessen as you explore the garden.

Then sit down to a multi-course family style dinner prepared by Chef Josh Silvers and the Ceres Teen Chefs paired with wines from Hafner Family Vineyards and Wind Gap Wines that will delight and nourish body and soul.

You’ll hear inspiring stories from Ceres’ clients and teens. Thrill to our live auction featuring a week’s stay at a fantastic Baja guesthouse, an exciting Foodie Mystery Tour, an adorable custom-made chicken coop with all the supplies and much more! Also back by popular demand: our “Golden Ticket” raffle, with the winner choosing one of six live auction items.

A scrumptious dessert buffet with confections from renowned local pastry chefs and coffee from Bella Rosa Coffee Company will conclude the evening.

Local Celebrity Chefs
Barbara Hom, Nightowl Catering
Daniel Kedan, Backyard Restaurant
Jeff Mall, Zin Restaurant & Wine Bar
Karen & Lucas Martin, K&L Bistro
Frank Miller, Chef to the Stars
Josh Silvers, Three Squares, Jackson’s Bar & Oven and Ceres’ own Executive Chef, Rob Mogencamp with our Teen Chefs

Highlights from our Auction
One of a Kind Sculpture from Patrick Amiot and Brigitte Laurent
Objects destined for the dump are integral to the renowned junk-art sculptures created by Patrick Amiot and meticulously painted and brought to life by his wife, Brigitte Laurent. Now you can have your own unique sculpture created by Patrick and Brigitte exclusively for Harvest of the Heart.

East Meets West Gourmet Wine-Paired Dinner for 8
East Meets West when chefs and friends John Ash and Barbara Horn team up to create an exquisite six course wine-paired dinner. Considered the ‘father of Wine Country cuisine,’ John has been a proponent of fresh, organic and seasonal food since the 1980’s. The former manager of Culinary Institute of America at Greystone, Barbara has been a premier wine country caterer for over 20 years.

Wine & Cheese Tasting with Ziggy “The Wine Gal”
Bring five of your best friends and enjoy an educational and fun-filled experience with Ziggy, The Wine Gal. You’ll meet at Ziggy’s home and enjoy a selection of extraordinary wines from her personal cellar paired with some of the very best local cheeses.

Considered one of the most enthusiastic, authoritative and entertaining libation experts, Ziggy is a driving force behind the national movement towards making wine hip, fun and accessible.

Full House Instant Wine Cellar – Bubbles, Whites, Reds, Port, Aged Wines & Magnums
One lucky guest will go home with an instant wine cellar of incredible Sonoma and Napa County wines valued at $2,500. We’ll be selling just 52 cards for $100 each in this raffle. Includes wines from Rack & Riddle Winery, Hasley Winery, Lynmar Estate, Windsor Oaks Vineyards and Winery, Preston Vineyards, KAZ Winery, Outpost Wines, Woodenhead Winery, ZD Wines and more!
Coming soon to a screen near you: a new short film about Ceres’ work and impact, starring our fabulous volunteers and inspiring clients. Watch for it in September!

Join us for our biggest fundraising event of the year, at the Ceres Community Garden

Saturday August 17
5:00 to 9:00pm

Tickets are limited! Get yours today at www.CeresProject.org