When you think about Ceres’ Teen Program, you probably don’t think about laughter yoga or the struggles of eating a healthy diet on food stamps – but these are two of the dozens of topics that Ceres’ teens explore through what we call Teen Ed.

Each day in the kitchen and garden, the teens break for half an hour. They gather in a circle, share a snack, and spend time learning about and discussing a broad range of subjects – all connected to creating a healthy life, a healthy community and a healthy planet.

Using Redwood Empire Food Bank’s Hunger 101 course, the teens have imagined being a single mom with two children and wrestled with the hard choices of how to shop for three on the limitations of food stamps. They’ve examined the trash that leaves the kitchen and explored what it would take to create a zero waste system. Sitting in small groups, the teens have shared stories from their own lives about feeling excluded and brainstormed how to make the Ceres kitchen and garden a more welcoming place for all.

The year-long curriculum is organized into six core areas:

- **Nutrition & Healthy Eating** includes topics like Ceres’ food philosophy and the health benefits of a whole food organic diet, reading ingredient labels, healthy snacks, and the impact of what we eat on cancer and other chronic illnesses.
- **The Global and Local Food Systems** area features topics like why eat local, growing rates of obesity and what we know about its causes, healthy proteins for people and planet, and hunger and food insecurity.
- **Team building, Values Clarification & Leadership** covers bonding games, work-ready skills, kindness and inclusion, intention setting, and reflection on what has supported teens in making positive changes in their lives.
- **What is a Healthy Kitchen from Input to Output** is where we talk about things like food safety and sanitation, proper hand-washing, kitchen terms and measurement, and where does the trash go.
- **Client Visits** – Three or four times each year we plan a two week block with a client coming each day to share their story with the teens. Clients talk about being diagnosed, their treatment, and how the meals – and the teens – have made a difference in their lives.
- **Living a Healthy Life** includes laughter yoga, eating with mindfulness, gratitude and other aspects of how we manage the stresses and challenges we all face.

The goal of Ceres’ Teen Program is to support young people in becoming the healthy, engaged and contributing members of the community that our world so needs. Teen Ed enhances the hands-on learning teens have in the garden and kitchen with information, conversation and reflection. The goal is to provide an environment in which teens can better understand the larger world, and the power they have – through their choices and actions – to make a difference.

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Our goal is to have each young person who participates at Ceres:

1. Know how to grow organic food and prepare a healthy whole foods meal.
2. Understand the link between what they eat, their own health, and the health of the planet.
3. Make healthy food choices.
4. Gain essential skills to be successful in school, work and life.
5. Be effective catalysts for positive change and fully contributing community members.
6. Develop the ability to work in diverse teams, and feel empathy and compassion for others.

Teen who have volunteered for 6 months are 50% more likely to encourage their friends to make healthier food choices, and 44% more likely to encourage their families to eat healthy foods.

After 6 months in the program, the share of Ceres teens who say they eat fast food on a regular basis drops 54% to just 13% of the teens.
Strengthening our Local Food System

Building community, making every bite count, reducing energy use, eliminating toxic exposures and leveraging your contributions are just a few of the factors that influence what goes into the meals we prepare each week for our clients. With $120,000 in food purchasing annually – and nearly that much in in-kind food donations – Ceres counts dozens of local farmers, food producers and grocers among our partners.

Behind this amazing list of people and businesses is Kitchen Manager Julie Stufflebeam, who joined the Ceres staff in 2009. With a fierce commitment to the quality of food we provide our clients, Julie has led the way in insuring that every ingredient entering the Ceres kitchen in Sebastopol is as nutritious as possible -- and that it's raised, produced and procured in a way that enhances the health of our community and the planet. That same commitment is now shared by key staff and volunteers at our Marin and Sonoma Valley program sites.

From local meat suppliers like Marin Sun Farms and Green Star Farm (who also supplies some of our pasture-raised organic eggs) and tempeh producer Alive & Healing, to Gibson Honey, Buddha Salt Company, Wild Brine and a dozen local farmers, the food that comes through our doors each week is a bounty of organic, sustainably-raised, nutrient-rich and lovingly produced goodness.

We are especially grateful to Oliver’s Markets, Redwood Hill Farm & Creamery, Gourmet Mushrooms, Laguna Farm and Whole Foods Markets. These businesses donate to Ceres each week – with a combined annual in-kind donation of more than $40,000. Artisana, a producer of high-quality organic nut and seed butters and coconut oil, became a Ceres partner in 2013 and now donates thousands of dollars of product each year.

Our most important partner is W.H.O.A. Farm. With the mission statement, “the very best food money can’t buy” nonprofit W.H.O.A. Farm is committed to raising the highest quality food possible, and donating 100% of it to other nonprofits like Ceres who serve those most in need in our community. Each Monday morning founders Wendy Mardigian and Eddie Gelsman arrive at Ceres with a van filled with produce harvested fresh that day. On a recent Monday the bounty included 16 dozen eggs, 12 pints of strawberries, 1 case each of kale, eggplant and summer squash, 2 cases of peppers and 250 pounds of tomatoes!

We are deeply grateful to each of these partners for their support of Ceres, and for the incredible work they are doing to build a healthy, robust and sustainable food system for all of us. ♥
Why Organic?

Thais Harris, Nutrition Education Program Manager

Ceres’ meals start with whole fresh foods rather than canned or processed foods because they offer the highest nutrition and enzyme levels, and don’t contain refined sugar and flours, nor trans-fats. Whole foods also have a smaller environmental footprint, as they save much of the water, electricity and packaging used for processed foods.

Our secondary emphasis is on the sourcing and quality of those whole foods. We equate organic with quality because we know that organic foods contain more nutrients than foods grown conventionally, and don’t contain toxic pesticides.

A new study published in the British Journal of Nutrition, which analyzed 343 peer-reviewed research papers documenting the nutritional benefits of organic grains, fruits and vegetables, found that organic crops have higher concentrations of antioxidants, lower levels of cadmium and nitrates, and fewer pesticide residues than non-organic crops. The study concluded that switching to an organic diet would provide a 20 to 40% increase in antioxidant and polyphenol consumption, which the authors conclude is equivalent to eating an extra one or two servings of fruits and vegetables a day. 1 Antioxidants and polyphenols are known to help prevent diseases triggered by oxidative damage like coronary heart disease, stroke, and certain cancers.

We also choose organic foods because “in the United States, more than 1.2 billion pounds of pesticides and herbicides are sprayed on or added to food crops each year. That’s roughly five pounds of pesticide for each man, woman, and child.” 2 This widespread use of chemicals in our food supply has been linked to a significant number of cancers, and it is now known that their compounds can damage our bodies’ detoxification mechanisms, so we are not only getting more toxins, we can’t get rid of them. According to a recent paper published by the University of California at San Francisco, pesticide exposure is also linked to adverse reproductive and developmental health outcomes, can interfere with all developmental stages of reproductive function in adult females, and has been associated with sterility in males. 3 The National Academy of Sciences 4 and the University of California, Irvine 5 each published studies showing brain anomalies in children exposed to pesticides. The list of studies showing negative health outcomes from pesticides gets longer each day. 6, 7

Organic farming reduces pollution in soil and water, and is safer for farmers and farm workers; it offers a greater biodiversity and avoids the use of genetically modified seeds. Using organic ingredients which are grown without the use of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers better supports our clients in their recovery from illness, helps increase demand for organic food, supports organic farmers in their vital work, and helps insure a more sustainable planet for all of us.

Excerpted from our White Paper. Read the full report on the science behind our food philosophy at www.CeresProject.org/FoodPhilosophy

Ceres’ Food Philosophy

♥ Whole
♥ Organic
♥ Local (see page 2)
♥ Low-Glycemic
♥ Made with Love

Switching to an organic diet provides a 20% to 40% increase in antioxidant and polyphenol consumption, equivalent to eating an extra one or two servings of fruits and vegetables a day.

Take Action for a Healthy Food System

Ceres Community Project has endorsed the Sonoma County Food Action Plan and you can too! Lend your voice in support of a food system that provides healthy affordable food for all, takes care of our environment, and strengthens our local economy. Endorsing the Food Action Plan is simple. Follow this link to learn more and take a stand for healthy food for all: www.SonomaCofSA.org/endorse
Research verifies what our hearts have been telling us for a long time. Ceres Community Project’s Healing Meals for Healthy Communities program is a powerful and cost-effective strategy for catalyzing healthy eating and strong social networks — cornerstones for building better health for people and communities.

Not surprisingly, the vast majority of clients at Ceres are in treatment when they begin the program. The majority of Ceres clients (85%) have cancer with the remainder facing a wide range of other health challenges. Three-quarters of our clients have household incomes below $45,000 annually with about 25% having household incomes below $10,000.

The results below are based on comparing eating and cooking habits three months after they stop receiving meals with habits before they began the service. The average client receives fourteen weeks of meals.

**Healthy Eating**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Increase</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Fruit consumption increases 25% from 2.4 to 3.0 servings daily; there is a 29% increase in the percentage eating at least three servings daily.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21%</td>
<td>Vegetable consumption increases 21% from 2.8 to 3.4 servings daily; there is a 27% increase in the percentage eating at least three servings daily.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following percentage of clients report that they are eating MORE of these healthy foods:

- **65%** vegetables
- **48%** fruit
- **48%** whole grains

The following percentage of clients report that they are eating LESS of these unhealthy foods:

- **74%** packaged/processed foods
- **73%** sugar
- **72%** fast food

**Cooking Behavior**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Increase</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>47%</td>
<td>The percentage of clients who report cooking full meals from scratch either daily or frequently increased 47%, to 87% of all clients.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59%</td>
<td>The percentage who describe their dinners as only from scratch with lots of fresh vegetables increased 59%, to 33% of all clients.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Value of Ceres Service**

- **100%** of clients say the healthy food helped them recover more quickly.
- **93%** of clients say the meals helped them feel cared for and less isolated.

Thanks to a grant from the California Department of Food & Agriculture, Ceres completed a 2½ year program evaluation study this June. We’ve shared just a few of the highlights here. To learn more, visit www.CeresProject.org/HealingMeals for a 12 page fact-filled summary of the impact Ceres is having.

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**Your Mother was Right**

**Eat Your Veggies!**

Eating more vegetables may be the simplest and most effective step you can take in protecting your health. A study released earlier this year in the Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health found that eating 7 servings a day – or about 3 ½ cups of vegetables – was associated with a 42% lower risk of death from all causes, a 25% lower risk of cancer and a 31% lower risk of heart disease.
disease and stroke. That's the good news. The bad news is that only 25% of adults in the United States are eating even 3 servings a day – and the rates for teens are even lower.

Ceres Community Project is helping to close that gap. This year we’ll provide about 85,000 meals with plenty of vegetables for people struggling with a health challenge and their families. Each of those meals will be made by teen chefs as they learn about growing, preparing and eating a wide variety of vegetables and other healthy foods.

**TEEN RESULTS**

Youth who participate in Ceres’ program cook more often, eat better, and become advocates for healthy eating. They also gain self-confidence, develop leadership and feel more connected to the community.

Because many of the youth attracted to Ceres are interested in food and nutrition, they start the program already eating a healthier diet than the average person their age. Despite this, teens make significant positive changes in three areas: cooking behavior, diet, and advocacy about healthy eating.

The numbers below represent results for teens after six months at Ceres.

**Cooking Behavior**

- 98% of youth are either somewhat or very confident that they can prepare a healthy meal from scratch.
- 28% The share of youth who say they cook full meals at home from scratch increases 28%, to 60% of all youth.

**Healthy Eating**

- 16% Consumption of fresh vegetables increases 16% from 3.2 to 3.7 servings daily and there is a 29% increase in the share of youth who report eating at least 3 servings of vegetables each day.
- 54% Consumption of nearly all categories of unhealthy food decreases, particularly sodas and fast food. The share of youth who say they eat fast food daily, frequently or occasionally drops 54%, to 13% of youth. The share of youth who drink sodas daily drops from 47% to 29% of youth.

**Advocacy**

- Youth are 50% more likely to be encouraging their friends to make healthier food choices on a daily or frequent basis.
- Youth are 44% more likely to be encouraging their family to make healthier foods choices on a daily or frequent basis.

Thank you for being part of creating a healthier generation of young people, improving health outcomes and lowering health care costs for patients, and building a healthier local food system …one nourishing and vegetable-based meal at a time!
Food as Medicine

Candra Anaya and her family started receiving Ceres’ meals after Mary Wyman, her Nurse Practitioner at Sebastopol Community Health Center, encouraged her to contact us. Candra was diagnosed with two life-threatening conditions within a four-month period.

“Having a double diagnosis of multiple sclerosis and a very rare form of cancer was beyond devastating for my family. This on top of having a one-year-old baby left us scrambling every day. We were scrambling financially, we were scrambling physically, and we were scrambling with becoming new parents while dealing with devastating diagnoses. Ceres supported us by bringing us pre-made meals when we did not have money. It saved time and energy for my wife who became my primary caretaker and practically a single parent overnight.”

Mary has other patients who have benefited from Ceres’ services in the form of our Nutrition for Wellness classes offered at her clinic’s Forestville Wellness Center. More than 300 people a year attend these classes with a physician referral. The classes provide nutrition education and simple cooking demonstrations to support those at-risk for, or living with, a chronic condition such as diabetes, heart disease or obesity.

According to Mary, “The caliber of the education is excellent. The people who attend get so much out of these classes. Those who change how and what they eat, start to notice how much better they feel, and yes, we do see changes in weight, blood pressures, improved diabetes markers, etc. This greatly supports our work as primary care providers.”

Candra’s many hospital stays deepened her appreciation for Ceres’ services: “I felt incredibly blessed to find a service that provided organic, nutritious food that would not compromise my health, but instead support my health through substantial nutrition. Being in the hospital so many times I was stunned by the incredibly poor quality of food that is offered in mainstream medical facilities. I felt like Ceres was literally delivered to me by angels.”

For Candra, Ceres “was integral in creating consistent support during a time of utter chaos and crisis. My family is eternally grateful to you and for you and the wonderful work that you do.”

Mary tells us: “I agree with the Ceres philosophy that food is medicine. I am sure that it contributed to Candra’s healing process. Candra had a healthy diet prior to her diagnoses. During that really difficult time, having the food she believed was best for her body available to her and her family had a very meaningful impact.”

“Through the nutrition classes, I see how educating our community will change our community. Many of our patients are being empowered to be change agents within their families, their friends and communities. It is setting up a massive ripple effect that will continue to improve the health of our greater community.”

Welcome to our newest Board members: Teen Leaders Mimi Largier and Sophie Leveque-Eichhorn. We’re thrilled to report that our teen Board members now have full voting rights!
Collard Greens are nutrient powerhouses, offering cancer-protective properties and the ability to lower LDL cholesterol. Conventionally-grown collards test high for pesticide residue, so go organic!
You’re Invited!

Holiday Open House
Sunday, December 7, 3-5pm
See page 7 for details.

www.CeresProject.org

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.

Celebrate Octoberfest Ceres·style &
groove to the sound of Luce
at Lagunitas Brewing Company
Monday, November 3, 5:30 to 8:30pm
$25 per person includes organic dinner

Tickets at
www.CeresProject.org/CeresFest
or call 707-829-5833

Music by SF-based rock band Luce
Raffle
Delicious Seasonal Food

All proceeds from this event benefit Ceres Community Project.

Join us at Lagunitas for a fun evening!
Lagunitas Brewing Company
1280 N. McDowell Blvd Petaluma