Leticia, a recent client, shared how Ceres’ meals and services helped her come through her treatment and regain her health.

“I was diagnosed with breast cancer last year. When the hospital social worker advised me to call Ceres to get help with meals, I thought it wouldn’t be necessary, but I’m so glad I called. The way the chemotherapy treatment affected me, I couldn’t cook for myself. My son Donovan (age 20) is the only family I live with, and he works long hours, so I was home alone a lot. When I received the meals, I could feed myself. There’s no way I could have shopped and cooked. I didn’t have the energy.

When I got my first delivery, I opened the door and saw the bag with the food containers. I liked it so much because the gentleman who brought the food was very friendly. He greeted me as though he already knew me.

I had a Liaison, who visited my home and spent a lot of time getting to know me. Her name is Liz, and I really like her. She took time to call me every week and ask how I was, if I liked the meals, or if I wanted to order anything extra. She helped me to understand all the foods I was getting, and why they were good for me. She recommended ginger glycerite, which really helped with my nausea, and also kefir, which was so refreshing during my treatment.”

Both of these are “Ceres’ Extras,” available to all clients.

“Donovan and I both received meals. We liked the food and have changed the way we eat now—it’s healthier. There were some new flavors and foods. I always liked vegetables, but now we eat more kinds, like beets, squash and mushrooms, all in the way that Ceres prepares them. We use much less sugar and salt in general now, and eat less meat and more fresh vegetables and fruits, nuts and seeds, plus a little fish and organic chicken. I feel like the food helped me recover my energy and health after my treatment ended.

It was a blessing, that all the people who volunteer at Ceres out of love, without being paid or receiving anything in return helped my son Donovan and me so much. We felt cared for, we felt comforted, we felt supported by this food which we enjoyed not just for one day, but for months. This is so important for people going through an illness like mine. I hope more people can support Ceres with their time or donations so that many more families who are facing cancer can be blessed with this food. I’m so grateful to all those who give so that Ceres can do this work”.

♥

“Thank you so much, because you cared for my son and me. You cared for us.

You gave us love and you gave us food. Not just food, but love, too.”

Leticia, Ceres Client
In August we crossed a major milestone, delivering our 50,000th meal to support Marin residents struggling with the challenge of a serious illness such as cancer.

Since launching in late 2010, Ceres’ program in Marin County has grown nearly six-fold – from delivering 3,200 meals in 2011 to nearly 18,000 this year. In August we crossed a major milestone, delivering our 50,000th meal to support Marin residents struggling with the challenge of a serious illness such as cancer.

After five years of incredible leadership, the Marin Program is moving the day to day work of the program from the able shoulders of volunteer founders Julie Burford and Ann Wathen to a recently formed staff team that supports better support sustainable growth and a long-term presence in Marin. Ceres’ Marin program would not be where it is without these two tireless leaders, and we’re thrilled that while their roles are changing they will continue to serve as ambassadors, mentors and supporters.

Along with this notable accomplishment, our Marin team has been busy laying the foundation to support sustainable growth and a long-term presence in Marin. That’s meant adding some wonderful new staff members and, after five years of incredible leadership, moving the day to day work of the program from the able shoulders of volunteer founders Julie Burford and Ann Wathen to this staff team. Ceres’ Marin program would not be where it is without these two tireless leaders, and we’re thrilled that while their roles are changing they will continue to serve as ambassadors, mentors and donors.

Over the past year three new staff have joined Program Manager Linda Dovbish and Executive Chef Trudy Schafer, both of whom have been on the Marin team for more than two years. New staff includes:

**Teen Coordinator Rebecca Schilling**
A recent graduate of Smith College, Rebecca has expanded outreach to new schools, and created a stronger system for onboarding, scheduling and following up with teens that miss their shifts – the foundation of accountability for all the teens in the program. With her help, we’ve also expanded mentoring of teens, and begun identifying and developing a group of Teen Leaders who are given increased levels of responsibility both in the kitchen and as Ceres’ ambassadors.

**Kitchen Coordinator Larkin Gayl**
Larkin has worked as a caregiver and volunteer for children and adults with life-threatening illness, and spent more than 10 years as an educator, mentor and wilderness guide for youth. At Ceres Larkin partners with Executive Chef Trudy to support all aspects of the kitchen program, including procuring all the fresh, organic and healthy ingredients for the kitchen ensuring our clients are well-nourished.

**Client Coordinator Kristin McKenna**
An R.N., Certified Nutrition Consultant, and Certified Natural Chef, Kristin has worked as a nutrition educator at UCSF and as a nutrition cooking instructor for The Cancer Project. She volunteered as a Ceres Client Liaison volunteer for two years before stepping into the Client Coordinator position. Kristin is responsible for onboarding new clients into Ceres’ program and for training and supervising our Marin team of volunteer Client Liaisons.
As part of our expanding focus on nutrition education for our clients and the larger community, in May we held our first Healing Foods Basics class in Marin. Led by Ceres’ Nutrition Education Manager Thais Harris, the two-hour class provided an overview of what to eat, what to avoid and why, along with tips for shopping and cooking on a budget. The class will be offered in Marin several times during 2016.

With a strong staff team, expanded outreach to youth and more hours at our Community Action Marin kitchen, Ceres is ready to have 2016 will be our most impactful year yet in Marin County. ♥

Sonoma Valley Update

Ceres Community Project has always served clients in the Sonoma Valley area but two years ago we decided to launch a pilot project at Hanna Boys Center in Sonoma. Our goal was to build collaborative partnerships that would help us better serve both teens and clients in this region of Sonoma County.

With Program Manager Francesca Fifis at the helm, the pilot has been a wonderful success. In the two years that Ceres has been cooking in Hanna’s catering kitchen, we’ve provided nearly 20,000 meals for 120 clients. Those meals were prepared by 120 youth during 4,500 hours of mentoring and work-based learning. Their efforts have been supported by numerous adult volunteers, including Ruth Baillie, Kim Pack and Abbey Golden. Thanks to this effort Ceres is now much better known in the region and has garnered respect from clients, health partners and funders alike. We’re proud and grateful to have financial support from Impact 100 Sonoma, Junior League of Napa-Sonoma, Speedway Children’s Charities, Rotary Club of Sonoma Valley and Whole Foods Market’s stores in Sonoma and Napa – along with many individuals.

Over the past six months we’ve built a strong partnership with Sonoma Valley Hospital. The hospital will soon be offering Ceres’ recipes as “grab and go” items in their café and it’s likely that some of these items will make their way into patient meals. In August, Ceres’ Nutrition Education Manager Thais Harris taught our Healing Foods Basics class to 29 participants at the hospital. And in the next month we’ll begin a pilot project with the hospital’s Community Care Network. Targeting middle-age adults who are in the early stages of chronic illness, the project will combine meals from Ceres with the hospital’s outpatient nutrition services and home visits. The goal is to support the lifestyle changes that are key to improving long-term health outcomes for this high-risk group. We’ve also begun working with Sonoma Valley Teen Services to see how we can align our work to better provide healthy eating education and culinary job training opportunities to youth in the Sonoma Valley area. ♥
New Dream Center Program
Site Expands Ceres’ Impact

In February Ceres Community Project will bring our powerful Youth Development Program to a very special new location – the Dream Center in Santa Rosa, California. Developed by Social Advocates for Youth, a leader in youth services in Sonoma County, the Dream Center will support SAY’s commitment to bring support, hope and opportunities to the youth in our community who need it most.

As SAY says so beautifully, “We know that life has challenges, bad times, and is not always pretty. People make mistakes, bad decisions, exercise poor judgment. We don’t avoid this, deny this, or run away from this. We embrace it as an opportunity to learn, change, and grow. It’s easy to be with people when they’re at their best, but people need support most when they are at their worst. Youth bring anger, fear, shame, guilt, anxiety and sadness with them. They need SAY for help, support, and transformation. This incredible capacity for hope and change shows us what we know -- that people are amazing, wonderful, resilient, resourceful, beautiful, unique, and worthy. It’s our honor to be there for them when they need us the most.”

Ceres shares SAY’s belief in our resilience as human beings, the gifts that young people bring to our community, and the transformative power of providing love and support to one another during our most challenging times. We’re honored to be the only non-profit partner operating on site at the Dream Center. Youth engaged in SAY’s programs – and others from the surrounding community – will learn to cook and eat healthy food, gain the skills to get and keep that important first job, and discover their power to make a difference for someone in need.

The Dream Center will include housing for 63 youth, and counseling and job training for hundreds more. These are young people who – for a whole variety of reasons – haven’t had the care or support they need or deserve, including many who were homeless or in the foster care system. Combining the expertise of two stellar non-profits, Ceres and SAY will work to empower these young people with the skills, knowledge and self-confidence they need to become healthy, engaged and contributing members of our community. As Teen Leader Lily Leveque-Eichhorn shared at our Harvest of the Heart fund-raising event in August, “I come from a loving supportive family and Ceres has made an enormous impact on my life. I can only imagine the impact Ceres will have on the life of someone who hasn’t had a place to feel at home.”
When fully developed, Ceres’ programming at the Dream Center will include:

- Afterschool program where youth volunteer in Ceres’ on-site organic garden and commercial kitchen, learning to grow food and prepare meals for low-income community members struggling with a serious illness
- 12-week culinary job training program to prepare youth to get and keep that important first job; we’re also working to have this program earn credit in Santa Rosa Junior College’s Culinary Arts Program
- Expanded catering program providing on-the-job training and paid internships in both food preparation and customer service

Our February launch will include a start with reproducing our two day a week afterschool meal preparation program two days a week, and the moving and expanding expansion of Ceres’ catering program which will be based at the Dream Center. We hope to open the café – which will serve the public – by mid-year, and pilot the 12 week culinary training program over the summer.

Opening this new site means Ceres will be able to deliver 40,000 more meals a year for low-income families in our community struggling with a serious illness, and offer 13,500 hours of work-based learning and job training each year for our youth.

Alameda Point Collaborative

Ceres will also launch a program on-site at Alameda Point Collaborative, a supportive housing community serving 200 formerly homeless families on 34 acres that includes an acre and a half organic garden. Youth from APC and surrounding schools will gain life and work-ready skills, learn about the benefits of healthy foods, and gain self-confidence and self-esteem that comes from giving to others. The meals that youth prepare will serve clients at Charlotte Maxwell Clinic, a nonprofit clinic in Oakland serving very low-income women with cancer. To support food access and nutrition education among the APC families, each day that we cook, youth will make enough of one dish to take four servings home to their family.

Opening these new sites means Ceres will be able to provide 65,000 more meals a year for families in need, and an added 15,000 hours of work-based learning and job training each year for the youth who need us most.
Ceres Youth Raise Healthy Eating Awareness at International Conference

Ceres had an expanded presence at this year’s Bioneers Conference, held October 16-18 in San Rafael. The conference, now in its 26th year, brings together visionary leaders and innovative thinkers from a wide range of domains to share solutions for humanity’s most pressing environmental and social challenges.

Ceres teens have attended the conference for the past four years, and nine teens attended sessions this year on varied topics relating to food and the environment. As part of our ongoing Teen Education program, these teens will share what they learned and what inspired with them with the rest of Ceres’ teens as they return to our kitchens and gardens.

This year, we deepened our conference participation in the following ways:

- Ceres youth designed and led “How Food Connects,” an interactive workshop for youth looking at how food connects both communities and the issues facing the world—including food insecurity, health issues, climate change, clean water and loss of topsoil—and what communities can do to address these issues. Levi Hylton, Hannah Pyeh and Sofie Leveque-Eichhorn, all Ceres Teen Leaders, developed and presented this well-received workshop.

- Cathryn Couch, Ceres’ Founder and Executive Director, was part of a panel on Food as Medicine and the innovative strategies Ceres and other groups are using to help heal both individuals and communities.

- Ceres catered a healthy, organic, local foods lunch for 350-400 youth attendees. Underwritten by RSF Social Finance and Indigenous Designs, the lunch came about after Ceres teens who’d attended past conferences commented that the food being served did not reflect the values and issues being discussed at Bioneers.

See photos of Ceres at the conference at www.CeresProject.org/Bioneers.
Annual Fund update

Thank you to all who have contributed to our 2015 Annual Fund. Your generosity touches and transforms lives each day, fostering caring connections and healthier eating for our clients, teens and adult volunteers. The delicious healing meals help nourish our clients back to health, and show them they’re not alone at one of the most challenging moments in their lives. Just as importantly, teens discover their power to make a difference, gain skills and learn to cook and eat for health in our gardens and kitchens.

As of the end of September, we’ve raised $1,150,000—more than 70% of our goal.

We need your financial support to reach our goal by the end of the year. Please consider making a generous donation, either with the enclosed envelope, or at the end of the year.

Thanks to Ceres’ unique program, every dollar you give reaches clients with healing meals at a time when they most need good nutrition and are least able to shop and cook for themselves. That same dollar also mentors youth in our community, helping them get that important first job, and setting them up for better health through improved eating habits over the course of their lifetime.

Ceres is a good investment in the health of our community. Thank you for partnering with us in this important work! ♥

Healing Foods Essentials

Thursday, October 29
6:00 to 8:00pm

If you have already taken the Healing Foods Basics class and would like to know more, this class is for you. In this class, we will delve a little deeper into:

♥ Anti-inflammatory Foods
♥ Fats: which to use and how to cook them properly
♥ Managing your blood sugar

This class involves a hands-on portion, and we will make a healthy dish together! Healing Foods Essentials is open to those who have taken a Healing Foods Basics class.

Ceres Community Meeting Room
7351 Bodega Avenue
Sebastopol, CA 95472

Healing Foods Essentials details and registration online:
www.CeresProject.org/HFB
Annual Campaign
Goal $1,600,000
Contribute online or with enclosed envelope today
www.CeresProject.org

Cashew Butter Chocolate Chip Cookies
Here’s a delicious cookie recipe for the holidays, lightly sweetened and featuring healthy fats and proteins.

1/2 cup pitted medjool dates
(about 6 to 8 dates)

1/4 cup hot water

1/4 cup virgin coconut oil

1/4 cup maple syrup

2 eggs, lightly beaten

2 tsp vanilla

1 cup cashew butter

1/2 cup rice flour

1/2 cup buckwheat cereal

1/2 cup finely ground almonds or other nut

1/4 cup maple syrup

3/4 tsp baking soda

2 tsp vanilla

1/4-1/2 cup mini chocolate chips (or cacao nibs)

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Lightly grease a large cookie sheet with coconut oil.

2. Place the pitted dates and water in a blender and let them soak for 5 minutes. Add the coconut oil and maple syrup, then blend until the mixture is very smooth.

3. Transfer date-oil mixture to a mixing bowl and add eggs and vanilla; beat on medium with an electric mixture until combined. Add cashew butter and beat again.

4. Sprinkle the rice flour, buckwheat, almond meal, baking soda, and salt over the cashew butter mixture then stir or beat the mixture until well combined.

5. Mix in chocolate chips or cacao nibs. Stir by hand until evenly combined.

6. Place large spoonfuls of cookie dough on the greased cookie sheet. Lightly press each cookie down with the palm of your hand. Bake for 10-12 minutes. Remove the cookies from the cookie sheet gently with a thin spatula and transfer to a wire rack to cool. The cookies will be slightly fragile when hot but will hold together very well after about 5 minutes of cooling.

Servings: 9       Yield: 18 cookies