I’ll never forget that first day.

Gathered with six teens in the kitchen at the Community Church of Sebastopol, we worked together to prepare meals for four families who needed help:

- a mother of two pre-teens struggling with the physical and emotional challenges of stage four metastasized breast cancer
- a man who lived alone and after suffering a stroke was unable to prepare his own meals
- a couple in which each was dealing with a medical condition and now she had fallen and broken her arm
- and finally, a single woman in her 60’s with breast cancer living alone with no support

Some days were chaotic. We weren’t always sure who would show up to help or whether we’d have enough Delivery Angels. But every week, week after week, the meals were made and delivered. Our clients sent cards telling us they could feel the love in the food, and they couldn’t believe people they didn’t even know were helping them through this challenging time – it felt like the whole community cared.

The word slowly spread. More teens and adult volunteers offered to help. People sent checks and told us how much they believed in the work we were doing. By the end of that first year – 2007 – we were cooking for 12 families in our one day a week shift at the church. Twenty-one teens had prepared 4,500 meals for 28 families.

It’s been eight years since that small beginning with a simple idea: teach young people how to cook and provide meals for families who, in the midst of a serious illness, don’t have the energy to prepare meals yet desperately need the nutrition they provide.

You’re part of that “community that cares”. Today – thanks to you – Ceres Community Project has provided 275,000 meals to families just like the four we cooked for that first day. More than 1,400 young people have learned and grown during 70,000 hours of mentoring and service learning. We’ve added new program sites in Marin County and Sonoma Valley. And we’ve trained eight communities around the country to replicate this simple yet profound model that fosters not only healthier people but a healthier environment too.

While there’s much to be proud of about the past eight years, here at Ceres we’re focused on the future. We know Ceres helps young people blossom, growing in confidence and purpose as they gain skills and discover their power to make a difference. Our clients who are struggling with the stress and challenge of serious illness feel cared for and less alone, receive vital nourishment, and make changes in their eating habits that set them up for a longer and healthier life.

We’re committed to making this life-changing and life-saving difference for thousands more young people and the families they support. To do that, Ceres needs to have a strong and sustainable foundation.

(continued on next page)
Thank you Whole Foods Market!

We are thrilled that the Ceres Deli Salad Program is rolling out to all 43 stores in Northern California. Please visit a Whole Foods Market store near you, purchase the Ceres salads offered in the Deli Case, and thank them for supporting Ceres' work. If you don't see any of the Ceres salads in the case, encourage the store to offer them.

That's why this year we’re launching our first ever Annual Fund to raise $1.6 million. Reaching this goal will help us provide a break-through 93,000 meals in 2015 – letting 600 families know they aren’t alone at the most challenging time in their life, nourishing them and helping create a healthier future. It will also transform the lives of 500 young people during 20,000 hours of mentoring and learning in the Ceres Community Garden and our three commercial kitchen sites. And it will help us make vital investments – in staff, facilities, systems and research – so that we can make an even bigger difference for teens and clients in the future.

We wouldn’t be here if it weren’t for your support. I’m counting on you to continue to invest in a healthier future for all of us by contributing as generously as you can throughout the year ahead.

Remember, reaching this financial goal means everything to the potential client who will call us today, tomorrow and the day after desperately hoping we can help. And it means a brighter and healthier future for the young girl in foster care who tells us Ceres is the first place she’s seen and experienced kindness and for the young man who discovers a career and a purpose thanks to Ceres.

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Educated for the Long Term

Linda Wilson was one of many Exchange Bank executives who were inspired by Ceres Executive Director Cathryn Couch’s talk on leadership at the bank’s Quarterly Officer’s Breakfast. When she was diagnosed with breast cancer just two weeks later, she called us to find out about meal support for herself and the family members she lives with and supports, her 86 year-old mother living with dementia, and her older brother, who is disabled. As the “financial anchor” for her family, Linda needed to stay as healthy and strong as possible so she could continue to work during her ongoing treatment.

She and her family began to feel the benefits of Ceres’ healing foods soon after their first delivery arrived the week of Thanksgiving, as Linda was recovering from surgery. Linda credits Ceres’ meals with helping to keep her white blood cell count high enough so she can continue chemotherapy. Despite the treatment and its side-effects, she feels her overall health has improved, with a positive weight change, more energy and a newfound love of foods she was unfamiliar with or previously shunned.

“One day this huge container of beet, barley and arugula salad arrived. I absolutely hate beets! No one else in my family would touch it. I closed my eyes and said ‘you need to do this for your body,’ I took a bite. It was delicious! I ate it at breakfast, lunch and dinner until I finished every bite.” Other foods she’s learned to love include Brussels sprouts and kale.

Thanks to Ceres, Linda comes home to enjoy a healthy prepared meal with her family, and her brother’s stress level is reduced by not having to do the cooking that Linda used to do. His health has also improved thanks to the change in his diet.

Of the many types of illnesses faced by the clients we serve, about 80% are in cancer treatment. Kaiser Santa Rosa Oncologist Dr. Jeffrey Ye says the healthy meals that Ceres provides are important due to the debilitating effects of cancer treatment, which can leave patients with little energy to prepare any type of food for themselves. His patients like Linda benefit from the balanced combination of nutrients in Ceres’ meals, and the guaranteed nutritional support. Dr. Ye points out that Ceres fills a gap that exists in services not provided by government programs or medical support. He also sees that the meals from Ceres provide patients with a sense of community and a feeling of being cared for beyond medical treatment.

For Linda, who has long volunteered to support youth transitioning out of foster care through her contributions to the annual Santa Rosa Junior College Independent City Teen Resource Fair, the fact that teens are volunteering their time to prepare meals for her is especially touching and meaningful.

Linda finds herself “on new path at age 60.” After years of working long hours to support her mother, brother and son as a single mom, her cancer experience has helped her create more balance in her life, and more focus on health and wellness. A deeply religious person, Linda credits her faith and Ceres for getting her through her health challenge, and feels like “Jesus was sending me a message to trust that I don’t need to work so much.”

“I’m educated for the long term,” Linda shares. “I’m working 8 hours a day, rather than 10 or more, and I’m looking forward to keeping my family on this healthy diet as I get better and start to cook again. I talk about Ceres to everyone, and am truly grateful. It seems like such a simple act, but it has paid forward in so many ways.”

As the “financial anchor” for her family, Linda needed to stay as healthy and strong as possible so she could continue to work during her ongoing treatment.

$2,880 supports a family like Linda’s with 12 weeks of life-sustaining meals

$180 means a week’s meals for a family of three

Kaiser Santa Rosa Oncologist Dr. Jeffrey Ye points out that Ceres fills a gap that exists in services not provided by government programs or medical support. He also sees that the meals from Ceres provide patients with a sense of community and a feeling of being cared for beyond medical treatment.
Ceres’ Teen Leaders Making Waves

Jessie Brandt, Sebastopol Teen Leader, was among the winners of the 2014 International Youth Food Culture Contest. Her personal essay, “The Ubiquity of Food,” took second place. Jessie has been active in the kitchen since 2011 and became a Teen Leader in 2014. She is a senior at Summerfield Waldorf School in Santa Rosa.

“I am a strong believer in the beauty and power of the ripple effect. Food has the potential to be an influential wave. It is the bass of the music of life, it is our support. If we the youth spread our explored knowledge on nourishment, we are helping to begin the push.” Read Jessie’s essay online: www.CeresProject.org/JessiesEssay

Luke Lindenbusch, former Sebastopol Teen Leader, is a recipient of the 2015 Gallatin Global Fellowship in Urban Practice. Luke is pursuing a B.A. in the Political Economy of Sustainable Development at New York University. His fellowship will take him to Berlin this summer, where he’ll research urban regeneration and community health as impacted by urban agriculture.

Christina Saschin, former Sebastopol Teen Leader, writes the food column Readers, Digest for her college newspaper, The Orion, and is a regular contributor to Parade Magazine. She is a senior at California State University, Chico majoring in Nutrition and Food Sciences with an option in Food and Nutrition Communication. Christina’s website (CandidCameraCooking.weebly.com) and YouTube cooking channel, CandidCameraCooking, feature her original recipes.
Ceres Nurtures New Possibilities for Teens

Thanks to her experiences at Ceres, Teen Leader Ashlyn Dean has become passionate about a career in public policy. Here’s her story.

As she contemplated what to do for her school Senior Project last fall, she got a bit stuck. When the only thing that came to mind was Ceres, Ashlyn approached Cathryn Couch and Margaret Howe, Ceres’ Executive Director and Associate Director.

Cathryn told Ashlyn about Ceres’ upcoming participation in Social Advocates for Youth’s new Dream Center campus in Santa Rosa, opening in late 2015. Staff at Ceres and SAY were in the process of meeting, getting to know one another and working out how Ceres would run a Healing Meals program at the SAY site. That initial conversation eventually developed into Ashlyn’s Senior Project of helping Ceres to build a bridge to the SAY community and youth.

Ashlyn joined these “design” conversations in early 2014, learning about how nonprofits create win-win partnerships, and bringing a youth perspective to the conversations. As she became more aware of the issues facing the youth SAY supports, Ashlyn knew she wanted to get to know these youth and personally make a difference.

With the launch of the Dream Center a year away, the design team was brainstorming things we could do now to bring our organizations together. Ashlyn stepped forward with an idea about Sunday Suppers at SAY’s Tamayo Village (providing affordable housing and services for former foster youth as well as young people transitioning from homelessness). With assistance from Teen Leaders Alya Bohr and Levi Hylton, Ashlyn coordinates a monthly program where residents and the Teen Leaders team up to prepare and share a healthy meal. The program has been really well received with more than half of the Tamayo Village residents participating. She also regularly joins SAY’s Street Outreach Team, which brings nourishing food to youth living on the streets, and connects them with services that can help them get on their feet.

The work that Ashlyn and staff at Ceres and SAY are doing together is helping lay the groundwork for a successful partnership at the Dream Center, where Ceres will be opening a brand new kitchen in January 2016. The goal is to develop programs that will help youth in our community gain the confidence, self-esteem and skills they need to be successful in school, life and work.

“The work I’ve been doing with SAY has been a complete life changer for me because to me, there’s nothing more important than our generation helping our generation. I’m sharing what I’ve learned with people my age who need it. Seeing their faces light up when they get their first oven-cooked meal or a warm sandwich, it’s amazing. There’s no word to describe it.”

Of her plans for the future, Ashlyn says: “I am hoping to study public policy. I want to understand what happens on the policy-making level and how I can help create a more equitable and healthier society. My interest has developed, I would say, almost solely because of the opportunity Ceres has given me to work with SAY. I have seen how important healthy food is, and how food brings people together and the sense of pride the food gives to people when they make it. I love seeing those things every time I work at the Tamayo Village or do outreach. Ceres has given me the medium of nutritious food which has opened the door to people and experiences I otherwise never would have had and ultimately Ceres has really helped shape my goal of dedicating my life to public service.”

Ashlyn is just one example of the many teens discovering their passion to make a difference in the world, and gaining the skills and confidence to do so, thanks to their experiences at Ceres. From the two teen members on our Board, to teen committees helping to shape our programming, to the teens—including Ashlyn—who will represent us at the National Teen Service Learning Conference in Washington, DC next month, and those who credit Ceres with inspiring them to pursue higher education, our Teen Program is helping to empower leaders whose impact will ripple out far beyond the walls of our kitchens and the rows of kale in our gardens.

♥

$3,120 means six months learning in the Ceres garden and kitchen for a young person

$120 covers a week at Ceres
Upcoming Classes & Events

March 23
Ceres Online Auction Begins
www.biddingforgood.com/cerescommunityproject
(see back cover for details)

April 25
Ceres Marin Music Benefit
San Rafael Yacht Club
4:00 to 6:30pm
Music provided by San Marin Jam Band, followed by Buck Nickels and Loose Change.
Tickets at www.CeresProject.org/music

April 30
Healing Foods Essentials
6 to 8pm, Sebastopol*

May 17
Volunteer Appreciation Party
3 to 5pm, Sebastopol

May 26
Healing Foods Basics
6 to 8pm, Marin County*

June 25
Healing Foods Basics
en Espanol 6 to 8pm, Sebastopol*

June 27
Matanzas Creek Winery’s 19th Annual Days of Wine & Lavender Festival
Benefiting Ceres Community Project.
We’ll be on hand with some of our teen chefs serving up tastes of a few Ceres specialties. Enjoy an afternoon on the grounds of Matanzas Creek Winery in Santa Rosa sampling exquisite wines paired with unique foods featuring lavender from the best local chefs. The estate lavender gardens will be at their most fragrant and beautiful for this fun and popular event.
Find out more and purchase tickets at www.MatanzasCreek.com.

July 15
Concert with Rupa at Osmosis Day Spa Sanctuary
Benefiting Ceres Community Project

Ceres teens will cater and serve a delicious dinner for this annual concert event in the beautiful meditation gardens. This year’s great artist is Rupa of Rupa & the April Fishes. Graciously organized and hosted by Osmosis to support our work.

July 29
Healing Foods Basics
6 to 8pm, Hanna Boys Center, Sonoma*

August 15
Harvest of the Heart
(see next page for details)

*Our Healing Foods Basics & Essentials classes are open to the general public. These fun, supportive classes are designed to give you accessible tools, knowledge and strategies for healthful eating and lifestyle choices. Healing Foods Basics provides an overview of Ceres’ food philosophy and includes a food demo. The Healing Foods Essentials class is new this year; and designed for those who’ve taken the Basics class and want to learn more. This class includes hands-on preparation of a healthy dish. Visit www.CeresProject.org/HFB to learn more.
Harvest of the Heart

New date!
Saturday, August 15
Ceres Community Garden, Sebastopol
Mark your calendar. You won’t want to miss our biggest fundraising event of the year, featuring fabulous food from local chefs and the Ceres teens, an exciting Live auction, fine wines, and much more, all in the setting of our beautiful garden.
To learn more about becoming a Corporate Sponsor of this event, or hosting a table, contact
Scott McDougall
scott@ceresproject.org
or 707-829-5833 x 130

Chinese Cabbage Salad with Citrus Splash

This recipe is from our Sebastopol kitchen, and was featured in the Kale Club newsletter. Did you know that you can join the Kale Club by becoming a monthly donor to Ceres? Making a monthly donation provides Ceres with sustainable income we can count on to provide delicious nutrient-rich meals like this one to aid our clients in their recovery. When you join, you’ll begin receiving a monthly email with a menu we’re delivering to our clients, along with all of the recipes. We even include some information about the health benefits of select ingredients! You can find out more about the Kale Club at www.CeresProject.org/KaleClub.html

Ingredients
- 6 cups thinly shredded cabbage
- 2 carrots, cut in half lengthwise and sliced thinly on a diagonal
- 1/2 cucumber, cut in half lengthwise and sliced thinly on a diagonal
- 1 small red bell pepper, cored, seeded and thinly sliced
- 3 green onions, trimmed and sliced on the diagonal
- 2 oranges, peeled, seeded and cut in sections
- 1/4 cup chopped cilantro
- 1/2 cup cashews

For the dressing
- 1/2 cup orange juice
- 1/4 cup tamari
- 1/4 cup toasted sesame oil
- 1/4 cup seasoned rice vinegar
- 2 Tbsp minced ginger
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1/2 tsp honey

Directions
1. Combine the dressing ingredients (orange juice through the honey) using an immersion blender or whisk.
2. Gently toss all of the veggies together. Add the oranges and dressing and toss very gently. Top with cilantro and cashews.
Servings: 6

A recent study suggests that short-cooked and raw cabbage were the only types of cabbage to show cancer-preventive benefits—long-cooked cabbage failed to demonstrate measurable benefits.
You’re Invited!
Ceres Volunteer Appreciation Party
Sunday, May 17, 3-5pm
www.CeresProject.org

Online Auction March 23 to April 3

Support Ceres by shopping online for a huge variety of services, restaurant gift certificates, vacation getaways, jewelry, art, wines and much more.

Preview the auction now at
www.BiddingForGood.com/CeresCommunityProject

And share this link with your friends and family far and wide. Everyone can participate in raising funds to support our clients and the valuable service learning opportunities we provide for teens.

Help us raise $20,000 online!