



CERES COMMUNITY PROJECT

NEWSLETTER SPRING 2023



Moving A New Kitchen...

We are proud to announce that our volunteers and staff will soon be welcomed into the first fully dedicated space for our Marin County kitchen.

Cathryn Couch, Founder and CEO, said, "We are so thrilled to be moving into this new kitchen in Novato that will give our team full access, seven days a week. This means we'll be able to add a fourth shift for youth volunteers, giving 30% more young people a chance to be involved. The kitchen will also enable Ceres to provide up to 50,000 more meals a year to community members in need."

Since the start of our Marin County program in 2010, we have operated from shared commercial kitchen spaces with constrained hours, storage, and equipment; because of this, we've had limitations on our production capacity and youth engagement. The new kitchen had long been used by Good Earth Natural Foods. We will soon complete a set

of upgrades needed to meet current code for commercial kitchens, and after inspections are completed, we'll move in. Once the team gets settled, we will gradually scale up meal production, allowing us to support more clients and their families, including in underserved areas like West Marin. The kitchen, with its ample refrigeration, will also help relieve constraints at our Santa Rosa and Sebastopol sites.

As the year goes on, we expect to add to our weekly schedule, starting with new morning shifts, and eventually employing the same model we use in our Sonoma County kitchens, with four cooking days and 2 delivery days per week. This means that teens currently on a waitlist can join our Youth Development Program, where they'll gain confidence and new skills, learn to prepare and enjoy healthy meals, and benefit from the caring, supportive atmosphere created by our staff, adult mentors and their peer Teen Chefs. The site

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Above: Teens Chefs and staff in front of our new kitchen in Novato.



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will even feature an herb garden, which our Teen Chefs will tend, alongside a couple of our adult volunteers who are Master Gardeners.

Lastly, the staff and volunteers are excited to craft and design the facility to optimize their specific workflows and needs, rather than having to set up and break down their space each week. In fact, upon hearing the news, one Teen Chef excitedly exclaimed, "So we'll always know exactly where the spices are?!" We're so excited that everything—and everyone—will have a home.

We're deeply grateful for the following funders who contributed toward making this new kitchen a reality:

- Buck Family Fund of Marin Community Foundation for funding significant plumbing and ADA upgrades.
- The Bothin Foundation for awarding us a capital grant to replace the kitchen flooring.
- Good Earth Natural Foods for donating existing kitchen equipment and financial support to help with necessary improvements.
- The purchase of kitchen equipment was supported in whole or in part by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the California Department of Aging (CDA), and no official endorsement by the CMS or the CDA shall be inferred.

Stay tuned for more stories about this exciting new site!

Left: A walk-in refrigerator! Marin Site Manager and Chef Lindsay with Associate Chef Ashley, admiring the new space.

People Power

In 2022, 582 adults volunteered their time and talents.

We're grateful to these individuals who have dedicated 300+ hours to our work.

Karen Anderson	Embree De Persiis	Beth Harlan	Darrell Luperini	Amara Rothchild
Kyra Auerbach	Vona	Elizabeth Harris	David Mallie	Barbara Schlumberger
Mary Barone	Patricia Deignan	Rodney Helvey	Jennifer Mann	Jacques Schlumberger
Sharon Beckman	Nancy Derr	David Jasper	Donna Maricle	Paula Shaul
Nancy Bernstein	Steve Derr	Ronald Jenkins	Sarah Marovich	Kathi Silverman
Karen Boga	Rayne Dessayer	Ruth Johnson	Martha McCabe	Robert Sohr
Katie Booth	Sarah Dove	Allyn Kaufmann	Mary Miller	Lori Spiekerman
Max Bridges	Anne Dowie	Laurel King	Marlene Montalvo	Anne Stephens
Stan Burford	Frank Dono	Carie Krumme	Michael Montalvo	Jeanette Swanstrom
Julie Burford	Delbert Evans	Beth Lamb	Julia Morris	Edith Ullman
Michael Carpenter	Janet Evans	Sherry Lester	Erin Nathan	Diana Van Ry
Cie Cary	Carol Felch	Alan Lewitter	Pamela Neuberg	Chantal Vogel
Lien Cibulka	Arlene Ford	Ileene Link	Jeff Parker	Ann Wathen
Mike Clementi	Jane Frances	Bim Lipp	Linda Patterson	Wally Wathen
Ron Cohn	Ruth Fults	Jennifer Lorenzen	Elizabeth Quinto	David Weinstein
Angie Cominsky-Wachs	Lindy Hahn	JoAnne Loughlin	William Riggsbee	Melissa Yates
Diane Cowdrey				Sue Zee Poinsett
Irma Curriel				

*We make every effort to keep accurate records.
Please let us know if we've omitted your name in error.*

Volunteers Kathy and Susan in our Santa Rosa kitchen.





Above: Alexis (center) with fellow Teen Chefs at our Novato kitchen.

What truly matters

A moving college application essay from a Teen Leader

by Alexis Weiss

When I was ten years old, what mattered most to me was if fairies visited the houses I built for them and if I would win four-square at recess. Never did I worry about anything that truly mattered. Until I had to.

One moment we were perfectly okay, and the next, my mom had an illness she might not survive. For six months after her breast cancer diagnosis, I watched her get so sick she was unable to move from bed; I watched her hair fall out; I felt her hugs get tighter, but her bones get weaker; I watched my mother fight for her life. I will never understand how she managed to be such a beautiful bald woman and fight cancer with such grace and strength. I know she put on a brave face for her daughters, but somehow, even on the days she was feeling her worst and the most hopeless, she never once let us see that side of her.

Cancer is a family disease that significantly impacts everyone, and for those without the support that my family was fortunate to receive, it's challenging to get through.

Did you know?

44% of Ceres teens stay in our program longer than 1 year.

Over the last nine months, I have volunteered over 60 hours at Ceres Community Project — an organization dedicated to preparing medically tailored meals for people facing serious illnesses such as heart disease or cancer. My hours in the kitchen, along with other youth volunteers, have taught me to make healthy homegrown meals, package them with care, and send them off with love.

Having lived with this challenge, I thought I knew how others felt until we received a card from a client. She thanked the Ceres volunteers for everything we do and even more impactful were her words that said we saved her life because, without us, she would've been incredibly alone. Volunteering at Ceres helped me realize how important community is and that we all need to be cared for sometimes. I feel really lucky that I can give others the same love and care that my family benefited from and everyone deserves.

Thank You

to the following corporate and foundation partners who've provided recent funding of \$1,000 or more, or over \$2,000 in-kind donations.

Allensby Charity Fund Trust – San Rafael Elks Lodge

AmericanAg Credit

Animal Hospital of Sebastopol

Bethlehem Foundation

Bodega Harbor Men's Golf Club

Bryan Blossom Foundation

Cadence Design Systems

Clover Sonoma

Community Foundation of Sonoma County

Earthtone Construction

Exchange Bank

Good Earth Natural Foods

Google, Inc.

Gourmet Mushrooms

Grace US Foundation

Harbor Point Charitable Foundation

Jonas Family Foundation

Kebok Foundation

Keysight Technologies

MarinHealth Medical Center

Mercy Wellness

Netflix

OMW Corporation

Osmosis Day Spa Sanctuary

Redwood Credit Union

Salesforce.org

Scott Evans Foundation

Sebastopol Independent Charter School

Solful

Sonoma-Cutrer Vineyards

Sonoma Federal Credit Union

Southpoint Self Storage

SPARC

Sutter Medical Group of the Redwoods

Sutter Pacific Medical Foundation

The Bothin Foundation

The Buck Family Fund of MCF

The James Irvine Foundation

Westamerica Bank

Whole Foods Market

Willow Creek Wealth Management

World Centric

Happy Birthday to our Garden!

Just one year ago, we tilled the soil at our new Sebastopol garden. Thank You to everyone who has helped to create this wonderful community resource. Watch the garden grow at Ceresproject.org/GardenVideo

Above: Teen Gardener Ronit harvesting the first jalapeno peppers in the new Ceres garden.

2022
BY THE NUMBERS

202,810

MEALS DELIVERED

CLIENTS SERVED

1,319

298

**TEEN CHEFS &
GARDENERS**

29,229
**HOURS OF ADULT
VOLUNTEER
SERVICE**

**% Clients living on less
than \$27K per year**

83%

Advancing Access

Because we believe that everyone should have access to the food they need to support their health, we use our voice and experience to advocate for systems change. The small amount of time and resources we've invested, alongside our colleagues in the Food is Medicine Coalition, are yielding big results.

- In California, doctors can now prescribe medically tailored meals (MTM) to their patients who are MediCal members. Ceres holds a contract with Partnership HealthPlan to provide MTM to their members.
- The White House has a bold National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition and Health that aims to end hunger and reduce diet-related disease by 2030, in part by increasing access to MTM and other food as medicine interventions for Medicaid and Medicare beneficiaries.

The pilots and research studies we conduct help us build the evidence to encourage the health plans we work with to offer and pay for these services for their members and patients. Recent examples include:

- A randomized control trial with Kaiser Permanente that showed a 35% reduction in all-cause mortality for MTM recipients;
- A pilot with Santa Rosa Community Health which resulted in improvements in diabetes and blood pressure management for participants; and
- An ongoing pilot with two Sonoma County clinics to test the effect of providing a combination of healthy meals and produce bags to very low income women during their pregnancy and immediately following birth.

Learn more about how we're helping people get the food support they need to live longer and healthier lives at [Ceresproject.org/research](https://ceresproject.org/research)

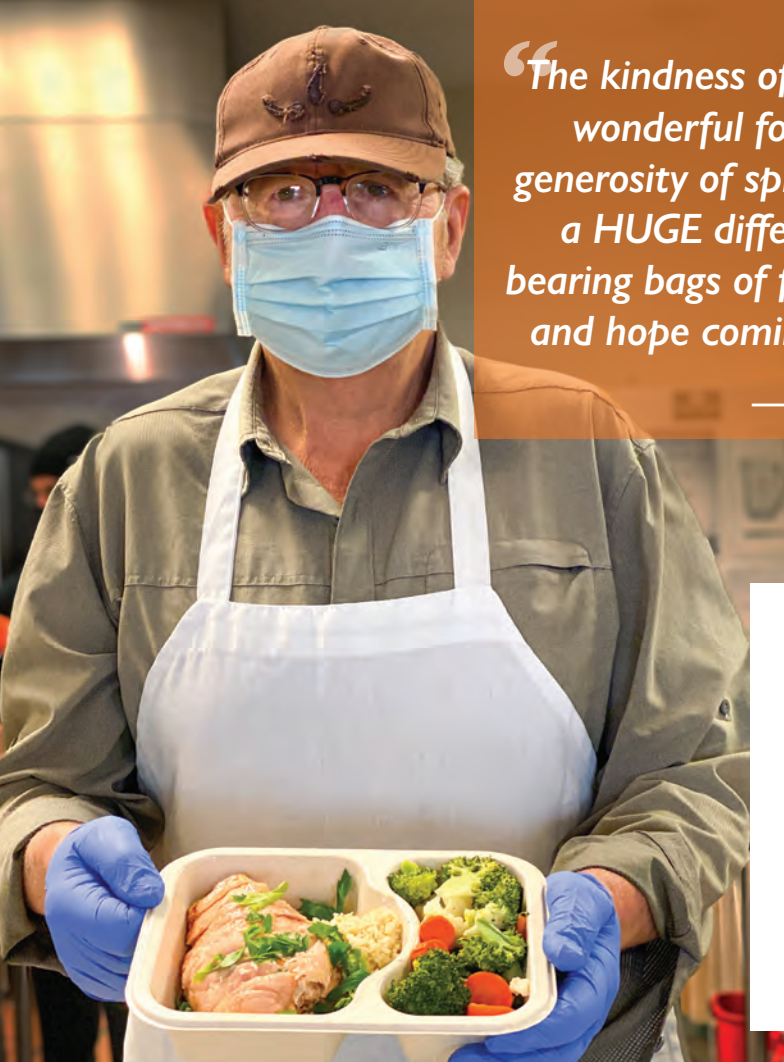
Harvest of the Heart



**You can help make our
event a success!**

*Contact us about:
sponsorship opportunities,
hosting a table, or
donating auction items.*

email: development@ceresproject.org



“The kindness of the volunteer that brought the wonderful food your chefs made, and the generosity of spirit in which it was offered made a HUGE difference... every time they came bearing bags of food, it was like a beacon of light and hope coming up the stairs—with a smile!!

—BRIGITTE, CERES CLIENT



Ceres Community Project
PO Box 1562
Sebastopol CA 95472
707-829-5833 • CERESPROJECT.ORG



Join the Kale Club!

From now until March 24, we're looking for 30 more people to join. Through our monthly donor club, you can nourish our clients and empower youth volunteers starting at just \$5 per month.

Fun fact: Kale was the first crop harvested from our new Sebastopol garden.

online at
Ceresproject.org/KaleClub



Meet Gail, the first client to visit our new garden to thank the teen volunteers for caring for her.

