



# CERES COMMUNITY PROJECT

## NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2023

*“What makes the Ceres food so special? The magic, the caring, the respect, the real affection that goes into it all.”*

—CERES FORMER CLIENT, CHOQOSH

# Growing Health

*by Melissa Hosking, Development Associate*

Choqosh Monroy is a former Ceres client who needed our meals due to a longtime battle with diabetes. For over ten years, Choqosh's illness was slowly but surely getting worse. She was on two types of insulin and was very isolated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. "I would just grab something convenient that would fill up the empty space. But once Ceres' carefully designed meals started to arrive, it helped me get a hold of my eating and control my diabetes," says Choqosh.

Like Choqosh, all of our clients are living with one or more serious health conditions that make it difficult to shop and cook for themselves. Our meal plans are medically tailored, meaning that they are customized to a client's medical condition(s). Our Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN),

Kim Madsen, works with our Executive Chef, John Littlewood, to develop recipes and meal plans that are based on whole, organic, local foods. Kim reviews the referral forms submitted by new clients' physicians and assigns them to the meal plan that meets their needs. The specialized meals, plus access to an RDN and nutrition education resources, assist clients in learning to self-manage their medical conditions, leading to better long-term health outcomes and lower healthcare costs.

Every meal is made and delivered with care by our teen and adult volunteers. What Choqosh loved most about Ceres were the smiles and conversations from our Delivery Angels, as well as the flower bouquets which accompanied her meals each week. Those interactions were some of the only ones she had since she had all but stopped going out into the community. The flowers

**Above: Former client Choqosh in Ceres' Santa Rosa Garden.**

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picked from our gardens made her feel special. “I just felt loved. The food is a ten, but the flowers take it over the moon.” Many of our clients’ experiences echo Choqosh’s – they are alone, unable to easily cook or grocery shop, and are faced with few easy, affordable options that meet their health needs.

Thanks to Ceres’ unique model, our clients aren’t the only ones who benefit. Our youth and adult volunteers also tell us that their eating habits improve, and that they feel more connected to their community thanks to the time they give at Ceres.

Choqosh recalls that “each meal was an education in what was good to eat and what was not.” She now makes more conscious health choices due to Ceres’ meals and though she still struggles with diabetes, we’re happy to report that she’s now taking less medication and feels better overall. Choqosh is just one of thousands of Ceres clients whose lives and eating habits have changed for the better. With the support of our community, we can help thousands more.

Visit [CeresProject.org/blog](https://CeresProject.org/blog) to learn more about the history and promise of medically tailored meals



**Right: Choqosh enjoying our Santa Rosa garden.**



*“After surgery, I couldn’t focus to follow a recipe or trust myself to cook, so the Ceres meals were really helpful, and they were geared to my health needs.”*

Meet Gail, read her story, and the impact you made possible for our clients and youth. Our Annual Report is online at [CeresProject.org/A](https://CeresProject.org/A)



From left: Lucy, Esther and Leanna at work in our kitchens and gardens.

# Celebrating Youth

Meet Ceres Community Project's newest board members – three of our own Teen Leaders who serve on our board to make a bigger impact. Say hello to...

**Lucy Fosnight** was part of our first Healthy Eating Educator Internship cohort and has been volunteering with Ceres since September 2021. She started volunteering at our original Sebastopol Garden and helped build our new garden last year. Lucy has been serving in her high school student government for three years and is also a student liaison and educator at a local reproductive health clinic in Sebastopol. She'll soon be attending Sonoma State to major in Environmental Sciences, a passion which grew from her time at Ceres.

**Esther Luvishis** is a sophomore at Maria Carrillo High School and has been volunteering at Ceres for over a year and a half. Esther is passionate about Ceres and is excited to be on the

board so she can bring a teen's perspective to our organization. She is a confident public speaker, has a curious mind, and is enthusiastic about her new role in our organization.

**Leanna Baltonado** has been volunteering since March 2021. Leanna is a junior in high school, where she is the President of the American Red Cross Club, a peer tutor for her classmates, and the team captain of her sports team. She is excited to share her ideas and expertise as a longtime teen volunteer.

Teen board members serve an important role in our organization by providing representation for our Teen Chefs, ensuring that all members of our organization have a voice and say in our decisions.

Our founder and CEO, Cathryn Couch, shares: "Engaging and empowering young people has been core to Ceres' mission since our first day in March 2007 when six teens and I cooked meals for four families who were living with cancer and other serious health conditions. Having teens serve as fully voting members on our board of directors – which we've done since 2013 – is the logical extension of that. Their voices are critical to ensuring we make the best decisions for our clients and community, and in the process they gain valuable experience about what goes into managing a successful nonprofit organization."

*We hope you take a little bit of Ceres out into the world with you!*

Join us in celebrating these Teen Chefs & Gardeners as they graduate high school. We are so proud of you and grateful for your contribution to our community.



**NOVATO**  
 Paige Barta,\* 406\*\*  
 McCabe Christian, 202  
 Keira Connolly, 382  
 Ella Galetti, 415  
 Ava Kerr, 227  
 Cece Kirk, 278  
 Ben Kula, 151  
 Sophie McKenna, 178  
 Sydney Moseley, 147  
 Luke Owens, 162  
 Molly Wiens, 229  
 Kallen Wank, 206  
 Ian Parnes, 422  
 Iris Pedrick, 239  
 Eliza Ray, 78  
 Zelle Walker, 63  
 Alexis Weiss, 80

**SANTA ROSA**  
 Gemma Ahern, 72  
 Tristan Angus-Henry, 249  
 Amber Amezcuca, 64  
 Leah Cederborg, 390  
 Teagan Craig, 301  
 Malcolm Dinani, 127  
 Cassidy Dorr, 403  
 Cesaria Gonsalves, 87  
 Rylan Herring, 122  
 Kiara Lizarraga, 268  
 Elizabeth Mira, 42  
 Colleen Morris, 307  
 Lily Matalon, 126  
 Zoe O'Halloran,\* 404  
 Emerson Parker, 205  
 Shruti Pillai, 202  
 Owen Reis, 40

**SEBASTOPOL**  
 Marlena Bennett Hall, 103  
 Hannah Berkheimer, 307  
 Cassidy Burry, 93  
 Dante Cushman, 230  
 Lucy Fosnight,\* 127  
 Isabella Garvin, 273  
 Teagan Hill, 124  
 Genevieve Lickliger, 302  
 Reilly McKnight, 109  
 Genise Mestrovich, 354  
 Raven Nicholas, 243  
 Dax Swinstrom, 85  
 Bella Reyes, 88  
 Hannah Salisbury, 24  
 Zoe Stockette, 61

\*former or present board members  
 \*\*Volunteer hours

# Gratitude

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

In our last newsletter, we honored the 582 adults who volunteered 300+ hours of their time and talents to Ceres in 2022. Since April, the following individuals surpassed 300 hours:



The Ahlsten Foundation  
Bill Graham Supporting Foundation of the Jewish Community Federation and Endowment Fund  
Buck Family Fund of Marin Community Foundation  
Clover Sonoma  
Community Foundation Sonoma County  
County of Sonoma Board of Supervisors  
Domaine Carneros  
Exchange Bank Foundation  
glassybaby foundation  
Gourmet Mushrooms, Inc.  
Oliver's Market  
Presbyterian Church of Novato  
Redwood Riders Motorcycle Club  
Rotary Club of Sebastopol  
Santa Rosa Behavioral Healthcare Hospital  
To Celebrate Life Breast Cancer Foundation

Susan Boden  
Don D'Avanzo  
Hannah DeRousseau  
Teresa Hallowes  
Neil Herring  
Katherine Jones  
Susan Markx  
Charles McGowan  
Susan Mulcahy  
Steffan O'Neill  
Robert Place  
Sue Zee Poinsett  
Alice Redding  
Jean Schlesinger  
Buck Shortridge  
Lynn Wilgus  
Susan Winer



*Ceres adult and teen volunteers, staff, and family members celebrated community, food and health in the annual Sebastopol Apple Blossom parade.*

# Harvest of the Heart



**Saturday, September 9**  
4.30 - 8 pm

**Luther Burbank Center**  
Santa Rosa

Raise a glass and raise your paddle in support of our clients and youth.  
Food and beverage pairings • Live and online auctions • An exciting raffle  
Stories from our clients and youth

**NOW ENROLLING** table hosts and sponsors  
Early bird prices end August 9

Learn more and purchase tickets: [CeresProject.org/harvest-of-the-heart](http://CeresProject.org/harvest-of-the-heart)  
email: [harvest@ceresproject.org](mailto:harvest@ceresproject.org)

## Ways to help!

### Shop to Give Back

Make your shopping count. These stores will donate to Ceres when you designate us.

- Fircrest Market
- Mollie Stone's
- Oliver's Market
- Petaluma Market
- Scotty's Market
- Sports Basement
- Woodlands Market
- Or any other eScrip store

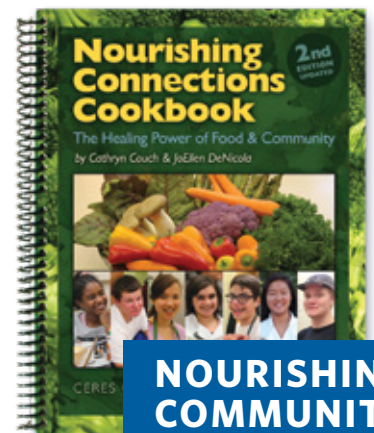
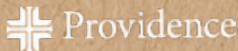


Send a bit of Ceres to a friend or family member. One of our cookbooks makes a great gift, especially for someone who is facing an illness but doesn't live in Marin or Sonoma counties. Get our cookbooks and much more in our online store at:

[ceresproject.org/shop-to-give-back](http://ceresproject.org/shop-to-give-back)



Thanks to our growing list of sponsors



From the Ceres Affiliate Partner Family



*"I can't thank Ceres enough. Knowing that I was eating healthy food, geared exactly to my needs, and that youth are involved... It's amazing!"*

—CERES CLIENT, GAIL

Ceres Community Project  
PO Box 1562  
Sebastopol CA 95473  
707-829-5833 • [CERESPROJECT.ORG](http://CERESPROJECT.ORG)

Get the recipes for our broccoli and cheese frittata with roasted yams and the arugula, beet and quinoa salad at:  
[CeresProject.org/SummerRecipes](http://CeresProject.org/SummerRecipes)



## Calling all Volunteers!

We need more adult and teen volunteers to help us nourish our community. Pass this newsletter on to a friend or family member. Ceres is a fun and rewarding place to spend a few hours a week making a difference!

[CeresProject.org/volunteernow](http://CeresProject.org/volunteernow)

Left: Teen Chef Oliver has been volunteering at Ceres for two weeks. Here, Oliver helps to pack healthy meals for our clients.

