



CERES COMMUNITY PROJECT

SUMMER 2021 NEWSLETTER



Partnering to Support Healthy Eating for All

by Cathryn Couch, Founder & CEO

Ceres has worked with our local community health centers for many years, but those relationships were never more important than during the COVID-19 pandemic. Now we're building on that work to reach and serve important parts of our community with nourishing meals and support for healthy eating.

Community health centers, sometimes called Federally Qualified Health Centers or FQHCs, are the primary providers of health care for people covered by MediCal, the insurance program for those with incomes below 138% of the Federal Poverty Level, and for people in our community who are un- or under-insured. These are non-profits like Ceres who share our deep commitment to the health and well-being of every person.

During the COVID-19 pandemic we've kept our health center partners informed about Ceres' capacity and changing services – for example double meals or meals plus a bag of groceries if clients screened positive for food insecurity. As the effects of the pandemic rolled

through the community last March, referrals from the health centers increased dramatically. And with it has come a change in our client profile. Today 40% of our clients are Hispanic/Latino and 32% are Spanish speakers. More than 40% are living with a chronic health condition like diabetes, heart disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

Building on these FQHC partnerships, we've launched several pilots to explore how nourishing meals might improve health outcomes for two high-needs populations. The first pilot, which is just wrapping up, provided 12 weeks of meals for everyone in the family to people who were struggling to manage their diabetes and/or hypertension. Patients from Center for Well-Being and Santa Rosa Community Health Center's blood pressure clinic received coaching and health education from community health workers and meals from Ceres. We'll be

looking to see if patients who received the meal support had better success at improving their health than those without meals.

To improve our ability to care for our Hispanic and Latino neighbors, we're thrilled to share that we've just hired a full-time bilingual Registered Dietician Nutritionist to join our team as our Nutrition Care Manager. Crystal Orozco was born and raised in Cloverdale. She received her Bachelors degree in Clinical Nutrition from UC Davis and has worked at a community health center in Sacramento for the past six years.

Teen volunteers Paula, Rosie and Jake in the Sebastopol garden.

cont'd on page 5

Purslane

In the Garden



PURSLANE IS A NUTRITIONAL POWERHOUSE THAT HAS BEEN ENJOYED SINCE ANCIENT TIMES AS A VEGETABLE, SPICE AND HEALING PLANT.

Some of nature's healthiest foods are readily available for harvesting all around us, whether you're a gardener or not. Consider purslane. It's an annual plant that grows just about anywhere from fertile garden soil to the poorest arid soils, all around the world.

Many consider it a weed, but purslane is a nutritional powerhouse that has been enjoyed since ancient times as a vegetable, spice and healing plant. Find tasty ways to enjoy it and turn this garden foe into a friend.

This hardy succulent's benefits include:

- It's the highest plant source of omega-3 fatty acids
- More vitamin A than any other leafy vegetable
- Contains more magnesium and potassium than either kale or spinach
- Rich in B vitamins, vitamin C, iron

Enjoy it in the recipe featured in this newsletter, where you'll also find photos of it growing in our Sebastopol garden.

Above: Garden volunteer Marcela regularly picks purslane that grows abundantly in the Sebastopol garden. She explains to Garden Manager Sara McCamant how it is used in Mexican cooking - her mother taught her to appreciate it as a child. Her favorite way to enjoy it is in salads and salsa verde.



Teen volunteers Genevieve and Shannon packaging Rock Cod Veracruz in the San Rafael Kitchen.

Elevating Youth Voices

“I joined the YAC so I could be more involved in Ceres' policy work. I wanted to make my voice heard to create change in the world. A little bit of effort can go a long way.”

—Zoe O'Halloran, Youth Advisory Committee Member

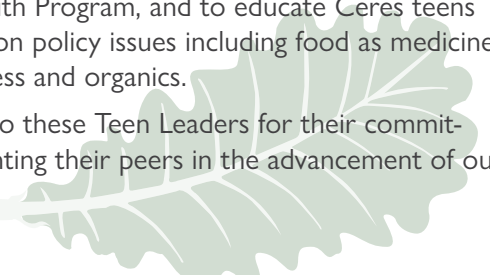
Ceres' commitment to youth includes giving them a voice in the management and evolution of the Youth Development program by soliciting their feedback, suggestions and constructive criticism. Our new Youth Advisory Committee brings together Youth Program staff and Teen Leaders to further these conversations, and to educate and engage teens in areas of our work beyond the gardens and kitchens.

Inaugural youth members of the committee are Teen Leaders Keira Connolly, Alex Farrow, Glynna Nathan, Zoe O'Halloran, Lila Weber, and Mia Fleisher-de Kozan and Micah Reyes (who also represent youth on our Board of Directors.)

Members are selected from all program sites for a term of 6 to 12 months.

The group's goals for this year are to act as a voice of the Youth Program to our staff and board, to create a youth-led fundraising campaign that will raise awareness and funds for the Youth Program, and to educate Ceres teens about our work on policy issues including food as medicine, healthy food access and organics.

We are grateful to these Teen Leaders for their commitment to representing their peers in the advancement of our Youth Program.



RECIPE

Chopped Middle Eastern Salad *with Purslane*

INGREDIENTS

(4 generous servings)

3 large tomatoes
1 large cucumber
2 cups chopped purslane
1 cup finely chopped parsley
½ cup finely chopped mint
salt, fresh ground pepper to taste

Dressing

zest of one lemon
2 Tbsp fresh lemon juice
2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1 Tbsp mayo or plain yogurt

Dice tomatoes in ½ inch pieces, place in colander, sprinkle with salt, and let drain while you prepare other ingredients. Chop cucumber in ¼ inch pieces and place in large bowl. Trim purslane, discarding roots and large stems and keeping tender stems with attached leaves. Wash well in salad spinner, rinsing several times. Chop coarsely so pieces are about an inch long. Add purslane to cucumbers. Wash mint and parsley, spin dry, chop finely with chef's knife or food processor, and add to cucumbers and purslane.

Zest lemon and squeeze juice into small bowl. Add mayonnaise or yogurt to lemon juice and whisk until well combined. Keep whisking as you add olive oil, about half a tablespoon at a time, until all oil is combined with other ingredients.

Remove tomatoes from colander, blotting dry with paper towel if they still seem wet. Gently combine tomatoes, cucumbers, purslane, mint, and parsley. Drizzle dressing over and combine again. Season salad with salt and freshly ground pepper and serve immediately.

Thank You

to the following corporate and foundation partners who've provided \$1,000+ donation or \$2,000+ In-kind

American AgCredit
The Bancroft Foundation
Bank of America Charitable Foundation
Beegles Aircraft Services, LLC
Big Lots Foundation
Bill Graham Supporting Foundation of the Jewish Community Federation and Endowment Fund
Buck Family Fund of MCF
Cadence Design Systems
Clover Sonoma
Community Foundation Sonoma County
County of Sonoma - Board of Supervisors
CVS Pharmacy Inc. - CVS Health Foundation
Daniels Chapel of the Roses Funeral Home
Design in Wood
Exchange Bank Foundation
Giving Marin Community Partnership
Gourmet Mushrooms, Inc
#HalfMyDAF
Harbor Point Charitable Foundation
Impact100 Sonoma
Kaiser Permanente
Keysight Technologies
North Bay Association of Realtors
Rotary Club of Sebastopol
Silk Road Teas
Sisters of St. Joseph Healthcare Foundation
Sonoma-Cutrer Vineyards
St. Joseph Health, Sonoma County
Synergy Agricultural Products, LLC
To Celebrate Life Breast Cancer Foundation
Wells Fargo Foundation
Westamerica Bank

Partnering

cont'd from page 1

In April we launched a small pilot providing meals and fresh produce to low-income pregnant and new moms. Early data has shown that improved access to fresh fruits and vegetables can significantly reduce pre-term births and help improve birth weight – two factors that can lead to birth complications. Over the next year, 60 pregnant women from West County Health Center and Santa Rosa Community Health's gestational diabetes clinic will receive a combination of meals and fresh produce throughout their pregnancies and post-partum. We hope to receive federal funding in the Fall to extend this pilot to another 240 women over the next several years.

At Ceres, we're committed to making sure that every person has access to the healthy food they need to get and stay well. We're grateful to our health center partners for working with us to reach and serve our community.

A NEW LOOK



We're excited to debut a refreshed look for Ceres, with an update to our logo, fonts and color scheme. This refresh is part of a larger project that includes the launch of a new website that is more accessible across all types of devices.

We hope you enjoy this bright new look.



Harvest of the Heart



Our signature fundraising event is a celebration of our collective power to affect change in our community



Harvest of the Heart introduces new people to our work and raises funds to sustain our neighbors who are too ill to shop and cook for themselves, and to provide a safe, nurturing place for youth to gain skills and give back. We need your help to keep saying "yes" to the clients and youth who depend on us. Here's how you can help:

- Have your business or organization sponsor the event. Contact Grants & Corporate Outreach Manager Evie Facendini at Evie@CeresProject.org
- Become a peer-to-peer fundraiser for our campaign running August 21-September 18
- Support our online auction. To donate an item, contact Development Associate Melissa Hosking at mhosking@CeresProject.org. Auction runs September 1 - 19
- Register for our in-person kick off event on August 28 and virtual event on September 18

Visit CeresProject.org/Harvest2021 to learn more
Bookmark our event page and check back for all the fun ways you can support this event, our clients, and youth.

Thank You to our early sponsors!




Help Your Community

“I have worked with Ceres as both a recipient of their amazing life-saving food and now as a Delivery Angel. As I returned to health, I am now honored and blessed to be able to give back.”

—Eric, Marin Delivery Angel

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

I MAY ONLY BE
ONE PERSON.
BUT I CAN BE
ONE PERSON
WHO MAKES
A DIFFERENCE.

 AMERICAN AGCREDIT



Volunteers from American AgCredit and Traditional Medicinals enjoy work days in the Sebastopol garden.

Volunteers are the heart of Ceres.
Find out about all the rewarding ways you can partner with us to strengthen our community. Visit CeresProject.org to learn more and apply, or email Evie@CeresProject.org to inquire about corporate volunteer opportunities.

