



Abundant Grace
COASTSIDE WORKER

THE YEARS IN REVIEW...

Abundant Grace has had an amazing journey! Many thanks to all of our supporters, colleagues, the city and county, faith communities, civic organizations and more

April 2024

by Eric DeBode



One of the joys of our work is getting to know people like Donna... She brightens up our days!

2023 Annual Statistics:

These numbers are the result of our hard work, and also collaboration with colleagues at LifeMoves, El Centro, CARES, County Mental Health, Abode Services, Pacifica Resource Center and ALAS

Housed	14
Employed	20
In Recovery	13
Pounds of Produce given away	18,000
Pounds of Trash picked up	157,000
Amount Paid to Participants	\$142,000
Total number of Participants	125

It's good to reflect on where we have been these past years... Next year will be our 10th anniversary, if you can believe that!!! What follows is a brief timeline of highlights...

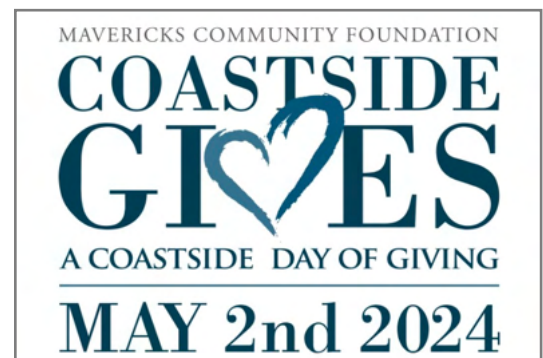
- **In 2011** Eric, Alice and their two kids moved to Half Moon Bay and started picking up food at Potrero Nuevo Farm and coordinating the free breakfast at Coastsider Lutheran Church. Soon, they met Bill Laven and Christine Pielenz at Potrero Nuevo Farm along with Jay and Suzie Trexler, and began bringing the homeless to the farm. This set off a few years of outreach to faith communities, school groups, Odd Fellows/Rotary/Lyons Clubs, City Council, and County.
- **October 2015** Officially incorporated as a non-profit, allowing donations to be tax-deductible and matched by employers. Welcome to the world, Abundant Grace!
- **May 2017** We started the Coastsider Clean Team in partnership with the City of Half Moon Bay.
- **July 2019** We hired Joyce Shanahan as our Fundraiser, and as our first official employee! Abundant Grace is ready to grow!
- **January 2020** With lots of help from our generous community donors, Bodas Construction, Ed Love, Robin Rourke, Steve Kikuchi, the City and the County, we purchased 515 Kelly Ave and began transforming it into our Workforce Development Center. Hired Rhiannon Rogstad as our Director of Philanthropy.
- **April 2020** Along with ALAS and Coastsider Hope, we responded to the COVID-19 pandemic with the Coastsider Crisis Fund, ensuring that we could serve our community through a challenging few years.
- **July 2020** With so many changing needs, we hired Judy Bross as our first Program Manager.
- **August 2021** Developing a rhythm and growing, we hired Lexi Hamilton and Susie Mahoney as Program Managers, and we started to expand our services and offer employment programming six days a week.
- **March 2023** Partnering with Second Harvest and Safeway, and with Susie Mahoney's expertise, we began operating a weekly food pantry year-round, so that even outside of harvest season, individuals and families can access food at Abundant Grace.
- **January 2023** changed Suzie and Jay Trexler from contractors to Directors of Farm Programming and Coordinators of Farm Fundraising, formally incorporating them into our team.
- **March 2023** hired Lindsay Weinberg as Development Director.
- **February 2024** hired Laura Fajardo as Latino Outreach Coordinator and WDC Program/Site Manager.

2021-2024 has seen board expansion and development of board structures, an employee and board handbook, and clarification of roles. Financials have been outsourced and systematized, and a board finance committee was started. *We are maturing.*

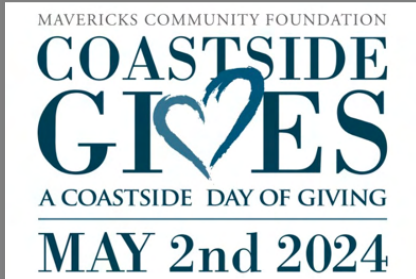
Development of our vision:

When I first moved here in 2011, we were farming, sharing donations, giving away donations, and more focused evenly on the Latino Farmworker and homeless population. As time went on, and we incorporated as a non-profit and started the Clean Team, it became clear that our role in the community was best served if we were more laser focused on the homeless community, employment programming, personal growth and development.

We decided on our 5 outcome goals in 2016: **Housing, Employment, Sobriety, Food Security and Health & Wellness.** Those became the main topics of our conversations, our agenda when we worked with people, and also determined which partner organizations we should try to develop relationships with. These are the goals



We love that we receive such generosity from so many people - It's a sign to us that we are a work of the community. This year, we have a \$50,000 matching grant from a handful of major donors. Help us make the match!



coastsidegives.org/organization/Abundantgracecw



Community supper at the center



Abundance at the farm



Creating a community of healing and wholeness

that animate our work, that get woven into programming, and tracked in our database.
Growth this past year:

Programming is steady, and we now have 8 work sessions each week, 4 at the farm and 4 with the Clean Team. Our participants are familiar with our system, with its carrots and sticks, and new people are easily incorporated and trained. While I am always eager to grow and develop more, I have to say, our schedule is pretty full, and everyone on staff is always busy. Staff is growing in their roles, feeling comfortable within the structure, and developing as program managers to meet the specific needs of our population.

Lexi wants to spend more of her time accompanying people through the housing process because we have all seen how difficult it is. Susie wants to use her training to develop ways to help people receive mental health services. Jay and Suzie have developed the **Milestones Program** where participants progress through stages of requirements and rewards to try to get them more ready to work and pursue our 5 outcome goals. They are also developing the Apprenticeship and Conservation Crew curriculums to incorporate value added production, creek restoration, pond construction and other environmental projects at the farm.

Biggest Struggles

Organizationally, it's hard for us to deal with alcohol and drugs, their impacts, spotting when people are high, supporting sobriety and so on. We had an AA meeting here in the mornings for a year, which was poorly attended. Meth still doesn't have a good treatment, medical or otherwise, whereas alcohol and other drugs do have medical interventions that are very effective, which has benefitted some of our participants. We drive people to medical detox at County Hospital anytime, and our focus on sobriety has helped people. We had our biggest growth ever in sobriety last year with 13 participants working a sobriety program.

Similarly, mental health issues are difficult to deal with in the confined space of the center. As you can imagine, the unpredictability of people, and their inability to see how treatments like therapy and medication can help them are an ongoing challenge. We have a great relationship with Coastsides Mental Health, which is right behind us in Shoreline Station, but that doesn't mean our folks are going to go. We also have Street Medicine here weekly, which has a mental health component, and a psychiatrist who has been coming with their team. I am hopeful we can develop and grow in our ability to respond helpfully to that sector of the homeless population as well.

Finances:

We have a breadth of funding sources that help us meet our budget. We receive generous support from over 900 individual donors, approximately 20 foundations, great relationships with the city and county who have contracts with us, and 5 fundraising events each year: Step Up for the Homeless in February, Coastsides Gives in May, the Bike Hut Classic in July, the Farm to Table Dinner in September and Year-End Fundraising from Thanksgiving to New Years. We are committed to fiscal responsibility and I'm proud that we have so many local supporters donate each year - thankfully, every year so far we have raised just a bit more than we spent.

The Future

We have a great staff who really and truly care for the people we work with, for which I am deeply grateful. At our staff retreat in December, I led with a reflection on all the people we worked with this past year. I played a meditative song and slowly read the names of each of our participants. All of us chuckled knowingly at some, remembering any variety of events, and with others we teared up at the level of suffering they endure and obstacles they have courageously faced. It was a great way to put **accompaniment** at the center of our circle and the forefront of our minds and hearts.

Following the spirit and taking the next peaceful steps has always been my way. Listening to my inner self, listening to those we serve and consulting with colleagues has been my guide. My sense is that we are transitioning into a process of formalization for the organization, maturing into a more solid place with standards, structures, data reporting, better tracking for finances, a more well organized board, and clear staff roles and responsibilities. If we set the right goals for the next few years, we will maintain our slow and steady growth, and continue to be a servant to our homeless community, as well as be a healthy, well-loved Coastsides non-profit.

Please remember us for Coastsides Gives on May 2nd: Our Power-Hour is 10am!

Gratefully,

Eric, Lexi, Susie, Jay, Suzie, Laura, Lindsay, Sam and the Board