



the COMMUNICATOR

FALL INTO WINTER 2021



Nourishing our Neighbors in Santa Ana

SOUTHWEST COMMUNITY CENTER
CELEBRATES 50 YEARS



A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT & CEO

Dear Friends,

It is that time of year again where we are looking forward to a season of gratitude. I always love this time of year, when there is a slight chill in the air, and we gather with family and friends to give thanks.

This year, I have gratitude that we are turning a corner on the amount of people suffering and dying from this deadly pandemic, which has unfortunately claimed so many lives. I am grateful for the dedication and tenacity of our CAP OC employees as they have worked feverishly – and continue to do so – to ensure our vulnerable neighbors have the resources they need. I am grateful for each of you, who take the time to learn more about us, volunteer, give generously and ask how you can help.

Without you, this past year would not have been possible. In many ways, we have grown as an organization, re-thinking how we deliver programs and services to ensure we are heart-centered, and that whatever door

our participants walk in that they are met with dignity and respect.

I hope you enjoy this issue, which is filled with news that your support has helped make possible. We are celebrating 50 years of service in Santa Ana feeding meals to the hungry and unhoused. We are also expanding programs, such as our Success Coach program and Workforce Development. We are empowering youth with opportunities to learn new skills and technology, in an effort to ensure that the next generation has an opportunity to get out of poverty and live a better life. We are also excited to launch our annual Hope for Holidays program, which helps so many families, many of which have been devastated by the pandemic and are still struggling to make ends meet.

All this is made possible thanks to the generosity of our partners and friends. You help make it happen!

May you have a happy holiday season.

With Gratitude and In Service,



Gregory C. Scott
President & CEO

Community Action Partnership of Orange County

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PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

SOUTHWEST COMMUNITY CENTER

This month kicks off a campaign celebrating Southwest Community Center's 50th anniversary serving the Santa Ana community. Southwest Community Center (SWCC) was founded in 1971 to serve lunches to homeless men. Over the years, SWCC became a day center where people experiencing homelessness could take a shower, do their laundry, collect mail, get clean clothes and other essential supplies. When CAP OC acquired SWCC in 2019, we began serving the low-income, working poor families with children, seniors, and adults residing in the surrounding neighborhood. We added bi-weekly food distributions and diaper, rental, and utility assistance for our low-income housed clients struggling to balance their budgets and make ends meet. We also added a Financial Empowerment program and free tax services. We offer coordinated referrals to outside resources and have Resource Days once a week where different organizations come on site to make their services known to our clients.

It doesn't take much to destabilize a family who lives on the margins. A job loss, an illness, or other traumatic

life event such as a divorce or a death can begin a downward spiral, or perhaps a once in a lifetime worldwide pandemic that we are helping our participants live through. Like the veteran who was homeless for over 20 years who got his mail at the Center and would access hot meals and other essential services. His mail began to pile up recently and SWCC staff inquired about his whereabouts to other clients to learn he just found permanent housing through the VA. Or the young family with a four year old daughter who came in for hot meals and emergency food and were couch surfing with relatives and living out of their car waiting for their housing voucher. Or the low-income older gentleman who came in for our free taxes and ended up enrolling in our Financial Empowerment Program. It is for these people that SWCC continues to exist 50 years after its founding. We help people who have fallen on hard times address their current crises and move toward stability.

To support our 50th Anniversary campaign, please donate by December 31, 2021 at

www.capoc.org/swccjubilee



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

ROSA RENTERIA

Rosa Renteria is the Center Manager for our Southwest Community Center (SWCC). Rosa, who has been with CAP OC for 23 years, serving previously as the Center Manager for our Anaheim Independencia Family Resource Center, transitioned to SWCC after we acquired the facility in 2019.

As Center Manager, she oversees our many SWCC services like Hot Meals Program, Emergency Food and Rental Assistance, Financial Empowerment, and much more.

"My favorite thing about working at SWCC is getting to know the unhoused participants and letting them know what resources are available. I am grateful and humbled that through the pandemic we were able to continue serving with donors/Meal Sponsors support. By adapting to the "new norm" we were able to keep Miss Annie Mae's Legacy going!"

-Rosa Renteria,
Center Manager

HOPE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

THIS HOLIDAY SEASON, HELP SPREAD SOME HOPE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIFE OF SOMEONE IN NEED. HERE ARE SOME WAYS YOU CAN GET INVOLVED:



Adopt a Family

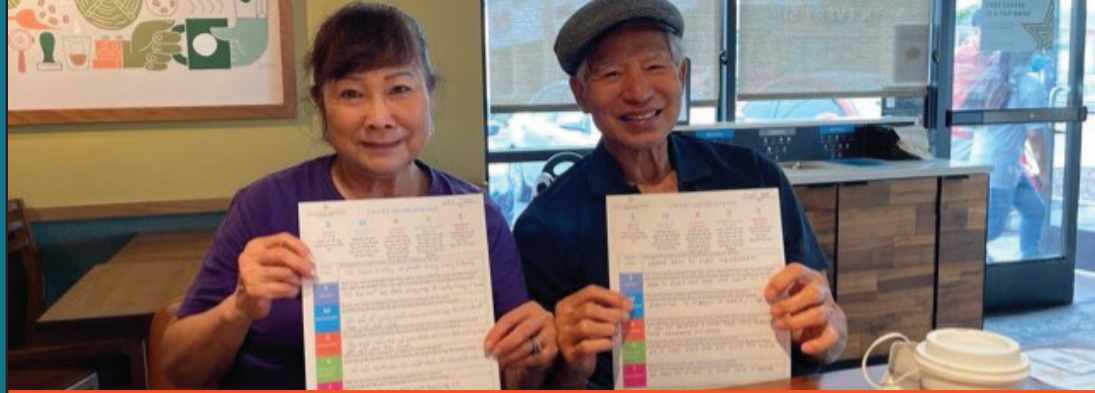


Virtual & Physical Food Drives



Feed the Hungry

Additional ways to get involved and more info at www.capoc.org/hope



COACHING THE COMMUNITY TO FIND SUCCESS

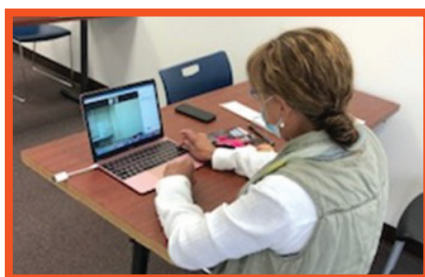
CAP OC has embraced a Whole Family Approach and as part of that model launched our Success Coach program. The program was initiated with seniors who received Senior Food Boxes through our OC Food Bank program and has recently expanded to include families.

The 90-day program offers individualized help and family-centered coaching to seniors who are interested in achieving at least one S.M.A.R.T. goal (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely). Some of

the goals our participants have identified have been to enroll in ESL, get a part-time job, learn Spanish, and learn how to use a smart phone (over 50% of seniors want help with digital literacy).

Family Centered coaching is a holistic approach that moves beyond traditional case management. This model also works with families to set goals, access services, and strive to achieve their greatest potential, focusing on the families' goals and collaborating with them.

SENIOR SUCCESS STORIES



Corina is a graduate of our Success Coach program. She was able to achieve her goals of learning Zoom, looking for an online class, and purchasing a new laptop. She is currently attending our Financial Empowerment classes and will be taking another class at Santa Ana College. Corina is very eager, confident and she loves to challenge herself to continue improving her skills.



Maria used to stay connected with family and friends in her home country via prepaid phone cards. Now that she has been through our program, she knows how to make audio and video calls for free with apps, rather than use a phone card. She is also now enrolled in our Financial Empowerment workshops via Zoom (another tool she learned to use)!



A NEW APPROACH TO WORK

Pilot program approaches “Getting a Job,” as more than Skills-building but a Chance to Build Better Emotional Wellbeing

CAP OC launched a pilot Workforce Development program earlier this year. By partnering with community organizations like Ready S.E.T. OC and the Employment Development Department (EDD) CAP OC is able to provide training, and support, focusing on youth ages 18-24.

“Our goal is to augment existing services in the community while also addressing barriers that may be impacting how a person shows up to work each day,” began Justin Amigo, Program Manager for the Workforce Development Program. “We take into account adverse childhood experiences so that we can provide the necessary support for individuals seeking a job.”

Young adults participate in an

online series of recommended courses that teach soft skills such as Resume Writing and Professionalism & Work Ethic. Then participants are then required to participate in a series of four workshops. The workshops enable youth to begin to understand who they are as an individual. For instance, during the Building Identity/Intersectionality + Diversity, Equity, Inclusion workshop youth are asked to complete an identity wheel and learn to understand differences in an effort to prevent discrimination.

There are three phases to the program. The first phase is the online classes and getting a baseline of soft skills. Participants are then asked to complete the workshop series and begin their job search in earnest. Upon completion of the workshops and securing employment, CAP OC Workforce Development Coordinators continue to follow up and check-in with participants for 12-months.

Participants are provided incentives to complete each phase of the program.

“Some of the youth, they are used to just waking up one day and deciding to quit a job,” said Amigo. “Our goal is to help prepare them to not only understand what is required to get a job but to be successful at that job you may have to address some emotional triggers that can hold you back.”

By intersecting CAP OC existing program curricula, youth are also taught healthy communications, concepts of wellness, and conflict resolution to name a few. The pilot currently has 30 young adults enrolled in the program, in addition, CAP OC is working with LA Challenge to help prepare 70 Justice Involved youth for the job market.

To partner with CAP OC for these efforts, please reach out to Justin Amigo at JAmigo@capoc.org.

WHAT OUR COMMUNITY NEEDS

In 2021, CAP OC conducted a comprehensive community needs assessment to understand the emerging and ongoing needs of low-income individuals and families in Orange County. Here are our Top 2 of 6 areas of need:



Health

Food insecurity skyrocketed, up to **13.7%** from **8.5%** in 2018. 60% of Survey Respondents reported they had difficulty seeing a doctor on a regular basis and maintaining adequate health insurance.

More than 60% of survey respondents report that making rent/mortgage and utility paychecks are difficult.



Housing

To read the full report, visit [capoc.org/about](https://www.capoc.org/about)

KEEPING HOMES SAFE: WARM IN WINTER, COOL IN SUMMER

CAP OC offers no-cost energy upgrades, called Weatherization (WX), for those who qualify under income guidelines. WX can include replacing drafty doors, insulating attics, and other repairs. The upgrades help reduce energy bills and create a more comfortable, safer, and healthier home. Due to lack of income, families are living in older, less efficient buildings which lead to higher energy costs. When it comes to heating and cooling, low-income households spend 3x the amount spent by higher income households for electricity.

Lang, a vulnerable senior, heard about our WX program from a neighbor. “We exercise and get Thai tea together. She had her home (weatherized) and told me about it,” Lang says. Due to Lang’s mobile home walls being so thin, summer days would be uncomfortably hot inside and it would be so cold inside when winter comes. She was thrilled to be a part of our program.

Our dedicated staff were able to replace several appliances for Lang, including a new hot water heater, furnace, air conditioner,

new insulation, and other minor measures to ensure she could live comfortably.

“I can’t believe I got all 3 (main appliances)! I am so happy to have everything I need now. It’s warmer, it’s so nice in my home. I am very grateful for the program.”



-Lang,
WX Participant

AGENCY PARTNER HIGHLIGHT: CREER



Over the course of the pandemic, our OC Food Bank has seen an increased need in Orange County, evidenced by our 3x increase in food distributed. We wouldn’t be able to distribute this much needed food to the community without the help of our network of Agency Partners who utilize our Food Bank to provide for their communities directly. We wanted to take this opportunity to shine a spotlight on one of our great partners, CREER Comunidad y Familia.

Pre-pandemic, CREER offered many empowerment programs for their community like After School and Summer Programs. However, during the first few weeks of the Stay-at-Home orders, CREER noticed the shift in constant pleas and help about food. In the height of the pandemic, they were serving 950 – 1,050 families per week.

CREER became one of our Partner Agencies in September of 2020 and since then, we have been able to support CREER food distributions by providing proteins, waters, and snacks by the pallet.

“As our economy opens back up, many of our families are still experiencing food insecurity. The battle continues as they begin to piece their lives back together. Reduced hours, low wages, extremely high rents, and the continued rise in the price of goods are making our families sink into levels of poverty never seen before. Our partnership with OC Food Bank is vital so we, at CREER, continue with our food distribution efforts to help our families continue to put food on their tables” writes Angeles Ceballos, Executive Director of CREER.

STEM OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR YOUTH

At CAP OC, we believe that we can end poverty for a family in 2 generations. Which is why our programs not only address our community's immediate needs, but also finds ways to empower them.

This past Summer, our two Family Resource Centers, Anaheim Independencia and El Modena Family Resource Center, resumed in-person activities with a small youth educational STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) program. The program included two sessions with a max of 10 participants for each cohort. Cohorts met three times a week for four hours. Free summer meals as part of the Kids Café program were also provided. Through this summer series youth learned the basics of software development and coding with small robots, learned how chemicals react by making their own ice cream, and

were taught engineering basics with a model airplane. Other activities included learning about the Solar System, the natural process behind fossils and a strawberry seeds project. Our youth also got to visit the Aquarium of the Pacific to learn about marine life.

"The Summer Program was fun! I learned a lot about the Solar System and Water Cycle," says Leslie T. (7).

The benefit of the STEM program is that it re-engaged children and youth who struggled during the quarantine due to being disconnected from friends and peers. The Summer Youth Program was the first time youth were able to participate in in-person activities while learning important tools to support them on their educational journey.

CAP OC is grateful for the support of Edison International who helped fund this program.



GIVING TUESDAY **THREE WAYS TO GIVE!**

Giving Tuesday, November 30, 2021, is a global generosity movement that utilizes the power of people and organizations to transform their communities around the world. This year, CAP OC is excited to offer 3 different ways to donate this Giving Tuesday:



Hope for the Holidays

We have many different ways you can support families in need during the holiday season at capoc.org/hope



Kendra Scott Jewelry

We've partnered with Kendra Scott jewelry, in Fashion Island, who is giving a portion of her sales to CAP OC! Learn more at capoc.org/giving-tuesday



Cryptocurrency

Starting Giving Tuesday, CAP OC will be able to accept cryptocurrency as a donation! Learn more at capoc.org/donate-crypto



A NIGHT OF PROVIDING HOPE

On October 13, 2021, we celebrated our 4th Annual Hope for Holidays Kick Off with “A Night of Hope” honoring **Disneyland Resort** for their 30 years of partnership. The event was held at The FIFTH Rooftop Restaurant in Anaheim and emceed by Henry DiCarlo, AMS Meteorologist and Sportscaster for KTLA Channel 5’s Morning News. The event helped raise funds for CAP OC’s programs and services and kicked off our annual Hope for Holiday campaign which include programs like Adopt-a-Family, Turkey and Toy Drives and more! For photos of the event, visit www.capoc.org/gallery.

DONOR PROFILE: THE GIFT OF GIVING

It all began with a glass bowl filled with food that the local church pre-school had pulled together for the young, single mother. When Jade Jenkins opened her door, she was shocked to see someone standing there with a glass bowl filled with food items for her and her young daughter. It was nearly Christmas, and she had not asked for help, but the single act of kindness shaped Jenkins’ desire to give to others.

Jenkins has donated to CAP OC for 10 years. She first discovered the agency when she was visiting companies in the area to see if they would benefit from her company’s business. When she realized that there was a Food Bank, she immediately recalled that feeling as a young mother when she was

provided with food.

“It eliminates the shame for a parent. Everyone has a moment here and there where they need help and nobody wants their kid to be hungry and to not be able to feed them. [Food Banks] provide dignity for the family,” said Jenkins on why she has chosen to support the organization.

For the past 35 years, she and her husband (Jenkins eventually re-married) have committed themselves to giving locally, whether it’s backpacks to the schools their children attended, United Way contributions, or giving to CAP OC, they have a deep respect for the work charities do for the community. The work at CAP OC especially appeals to her because it is a “huge resource center” where families can

get additional assistance such as utility, rental assistance and other services.

When asked what she would share with others about the power of giving, Jade states “Just give whatever hits your heart.”

Today, Jade still has the glass bowl that someone once gave to her.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Contributions listed are from
**April 1st, 2021 – September
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to assure accuracy. If you have
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Thank you for your incredible
support of Community Action
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