



Nuestra Casa IMPACTO COMUNITARIO

You Can Count on Us.

When I sit down to write this annual update, I always check in with my staff about the highlights of their year since the numbers below only tell part of the story. Our program staff members, Roxana and Adriana, shared their excitement that our Environmental Justice Academy graduates are speaking up at local city planning meetings about the potential environmental impacts of new building projects. Adriana reflects, "We knew we were onto something with this program, but the lightbulb went off for participants, and they are genuinely activated on the issue now."

Sonia, our Food Distribution Coordinator, is thrilled to be an integral part of the growth of our Food Distribution program. We have more partners than ever, and, together, we put food on the table for 6,000 residents monthly while rescuing 30,000 pounds of edible food from landfills.

Maritza and Maricela recount many compelling stories about our promotoras' conversations with community members about COVID-19 rent relief, vaccination clinics, and other available helpful resources. Regarding our rent relief application assistance, Maricela commented, "I'm thankful that I can provide support to the families in some way. Families really appreciate our assistance and leave our office with hope."

I am grateful to my entire team for the work accomplished during FY 2021. I'm also thankful to our many partners and donors who have supported our growth these past 19 years. Whether you've been part of Nuestra Casa since the early days or you are new to our familia, thank you for walking this journey with us.



"This isn't just a job. People are really counting on me and Nuestra Casa. This is what motivates me every day!"

- Sonia, Food Distribution Coordinator

FY2021 By the Numbers

Community Education



3,000+

People per month informed about COVID prevention & vaccination

4,500

People informed about voter registration & ballot issues

1,400+

Families informed about safety net resources by Project LIBRE Outreach

Leadership Development



8

New Promotoras trained during FY 2021

170+

Promotoras trained since 2010

84

Parents & HS age youth trained on local climate change issues and solutions through Environmental Justice Parent Academy

Community-Driven Advocacy



6,000

People per month served through Food Distribution

30,000

Pounds of food rescued from landfill monthly by Food Distribution Program

60

Families helped to complete COVID rental assistance applications

82

Community members participated in civic engagement activities



How Nuestra Casa Addresses Racial Justice & Inclusion in our Community

"How does Nuestra Casa address racial justice and inclusion in the community?" We get asked some variation of this question on grant applications regularly in the wake of the tragic death of George Floyd. Frankly, we're glad our funders are asking it.

However, for the Nuestra Casa team, this is not a new question or a surprising one. The national focus on racial justice that emerged last year put an issue—at the core of everything we do—front and center, which is exactly where these important issues should be. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to how we do our work. These goals and principles are reflected in our organization's mission and values and in our board bylaws. But to understand how integral racial justice and inclusion are to our work, one needs to know why we exist and how we approach our work.

Nuestra Casa has served the safety net needs of our immigrant and low-income populations for almost 20 years. Our local context includes a history of segregationist housing policies faced by many across the United States. These policies left their mark and continue to impact East Palo Alto, Belle Haven, and North Fair Oaks, even today. When people are cut off physically by highways and economically by incorporation status, they don't have the decision-making autonomy and the leverage of wealthier neighborhoods.

East Palo Alto is a stark example of this. The city's residents still don't have access to adequate water rights or high-quality drinking water. The city's soil remains contaminated from early land-use decisions like the

Romic Hazardous Waste Facility (shut down thanks to grassroots efforts in 2007), and the city is much more vulnerable to climate change than other communities especially when it comes to sea-level rise.

At Nuestra Casa, we have a deep understanding of these issues because our team members live, work, worship, and have children who go to school in our communities. Our families know who we are and what we do, and they trust us. Everyone on staff at Nuestra Casa has lived experiences similar to the community members we serve. We know what it's like to live in crowded housing, to be an English Language Learner, and to feel left out of decision-making that affects our lives. For this reason, we empathize with the current and evolving challenges facing our community, and we work with community members to develop solutions through our programs.

One of our distinctive contributions to addressing racial justice and inclusion in our community is that we always listen to community members first rather than developing solutions for them first. We base everything we do and every program we offer on what we've heard from within the community. Our promotoras are integral to this process. They provide us with a constant feedback loop based on what they hear during their outreach. This input helps us adapt programming to meet the community's specific needs.

At Nuestra Casa, we are building leaders who will transform our community for years to come. Together, we will build a community that leaves no one behind.

