



## What is our NORTH STAR?

I'm proud to lead a fantastic team of social justice professionals. Thanks to their creativity and perseverance, we reached 10s of thousands of community members during FY 2022. But what is the "why" behind what we do at Nuestra Casa? The numbers we share in this report reflect our day-to-day activities. But I want to be clear about our North Star, which is a vibrant mid-peninsula community where every resident thrives - no matter where they live.

For us, this means protecting and preserving the long-term residents who built the communities we serve. We want to ensure they are still here in ten years and in a much better position than they are today. That means better health and affordable housing, adaptation and resilience in the face of climate change, and policies and programs that meet the needs of all residents.



To get there, we are meeting a spectrum of needs in the community. We help stabilize families, and we build leaders with excellent solutions to the housing crisis and past environmental injustices.

Thank you for supporting our journey!

*Miriam*

### FY2022 BY THE NUMBERS

#### Community Education



**12,000+**

average # of people per month informed about COVID prevention, vaccination, & rent relief

**13,316**

people informed in FY22 about important community issues & resources

**17,130**

people informed in FY22 about safety net resources by LIBRE Project outreach

**65**

people informed in FY22 about important community issues through virtual workshops

#### Leadership Development



**186**

promotoras trained since 2010

**74**

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

**50/2,329**

People registered to vote/ people informed about Spring 2022 primary elections

#### Community-Driven Advocacy



**5,429**

average # grocery kits served per month through Food Distribution

**15,347**

average # pounds of food rescued per month from landfill by Food Distribution

**400/\$2.2M**

Families helped to secure rental assistance/ dollars recovered

**943**

Community members participated in civic engagement activities



## "ES INJUSTO, PERO A MENUDO NO ES ILEGAL."

"It's unjust, but it's often not illegal." That's what attorney David Carducci of the Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County must tell some tenants when landlords buy their buildings and then try to evict them by claiming they will "substantially remodel" the units. Typically, they do this to drastically increase the rent, displacing moderate-income families from their homes and the community.

The cost of housing is entirely out of reach for many. The stories are heartbreaking. The vast majority of the community members we serve work in the service industry sector in Silicon Valley, and most have multiple jobs to survive in our region. Many families live in unofficial garage conversions, 2-3 families per apartment, and sometimes out of their cars or RVs. It's not unheard of to rent a kitchen floor for your family for \$400 per month. With housing affordability so out of reach, many longstanding residents are leaving the area, displaced and distressed.

The result: gentrification and an unraveling of the community engagement and supportive systems we once had. One resident told us, "I grew up in East Palo Alto, and I see a lot of things changing. We don't have community-building events anymore. Living here is not affordable anymore, and many people are leaving. People are coming from other places to live here."

As one community member told us: "All of the technology companies coming in bring more people to our area, and everything is more expensive. We can't take these businesses out of our city, but we can do something to keep families in their homes."

Technology companies are an important part of revitalizing previously disenfranchised communities. But we need a better approach to this revitalization to include the people who live in these neighborhoods. For example, we are working with community members to develop a housing policy agenda that more directly addresses their concerns. Including longstanding community members in policy-making is vital because they have lived experience and great ideas.

We interviewed community members to ask what policies and changes they would like to see to address the housing crisis. They talk about the problem from a "system" perspective. One of our promotoras summed it up: "The system is not made for low-income families to easily get housing. Redwood City has been building affordable housing for years, but families who should qualify for this housing are still not getting it." Another community member pointed out that the number of affordable units included in new developments is typically a small percentage. We're barely even working at the margins.

No silver bullet exists to fix the local housing crisis, but we see glimmers of hope. Newly passed legislation clears the way to fix zoning laws to increase housing production. American Rescue Plan dollars supported rental relief, which, coupled with eviction moratoriums, prevented thousands of evictions. Pathways to homeownership exist for low- and middle-income residents, but we need to better inform and connect people to them.

**Now is not the time to give up.** The housing crisis is a problem that we can solve in our lifetimes.

