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COMMUNITY BRIDGES PUENTES DE LA COMUNIDAD

December 2022

2022 Accomplishments



500,000

Pounds of food



28,000

Door-to-door rides



20,000

Children, families and seniors served annually



360,000

Meals delivered



45th Anniversary



10 Programs



20 Sites

Celebrating All We Have Accomplished Together

Community Bridges continued to expand services to meet community needs this year despite devastating funding cuts and sharp rises in operating costs. In 2022 we celebrated 45 years of strengthening our community through our family of ten programs.

Our essential services of nutrition, education, transportation and more weave a safety net of resources that meet household needs. We also provided vaccine appointments and clinics, eviction prevention legal aid and emergency rental assistance, and offered affordable bilingual mental health counseling to participants of all ages.

These accomplishments would not have been possible without the generous commitment of our supporters. Your partnership is behind every person and service we provide.

Thank you for joining us in envisioning a thriving community where every person has the opportunity to unleash their full potential. View our Annual Report here at communitybridges.org/annual-reports

Click [here](#) to watch our short video, and join us today to help families in need.



Support Your Community Today

Child Tax Credit Enhancement Fails; What Happens Now?



The Child Tax Credit (CTC) enhancement lifted 2.1 million children out of poverty in 2021, according to the Census Bureau.

But the renewal failed to make it into the \$1.7 trillion federal spending package despite [hundreds of community-serving organizations across the nation](#) imploring congress to reinstate the CTC expansion in President Joe Biden's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The move faced heavy pushback from Republican lawmakers who were wary that the expansion would discourage parents from working.

The failure to include the expansion will mean nearly 19 million kids won't receive the full \$2,000 benefit this year because their parents earn too little, according to a [Tax Policy Center estimate](#).

More than 36 million families with more than 61 million kids received monthly payments through the CTC under ARPA. It helped drive child poverty down to 5.2%, a drop of 46%, according to the Census Bureau's Supplemental

Poverty Measure. Columbia University found that the CTC caused a reduction in food insufficiency by 19% among families with children.

This means that, for now, the CTC expansion is off the table. But policy experts believe that the conversation around CTC expansion is not over, and that the issue could be back in front of lawmakers should the U.S. hit a recession. We urge our supporters to speak to congressional representatives [Jimmy Panetta](#) and [Zoe Lofgren](#) to ensure this is a top policy objective this coming year.

For up to date information on the CTC and ongoing advocacy efforts, visit Food Research & Action Center's website, frac.org.

Senior Nutrition Funding Gets Watered Down



The \$1.7 trillion federal budget passed this week for 2023 containing a 25.7% increase in funding for home delivered meals, and 4.9% increase in congregate dining services within the Older Americans Act Nutrition Program that supports services like Meals on Wheels.

While these increases are necessary to meet the increased need for senior nutrition services, the amount passed was 41% less than was recommended by the Biden Administration, and 140% less than recommended by Meals on Wheels Associations of America (MOWAA) to cover the increased need for services and offset growing cost increases.

Combined factors of a growing senior population, challenges to food access during the pandemic, followed by increasing food, fuel and other operating costs this past year has cut into our ability to feed every senior that needs our services.

Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County served twice as many meals than usual (198% increase) the first year of the pandemic, and we are currently serving 200 more seniors this year than last year. Our staff and volunteers are dedicated to meeting the need despite the continued challenges brought on by the pandemic and rising costs. But we cannot meet the growing needs without sufficient funding.

Heading into a new budget cycle, we urge our supporters to remind our Senators [Dianne Feinstein](#) and [Alex Padilla](#) that not only do these services reduce the need for costly hospitalizations and assisted living care, but more importantly, they allow residents to live safely in their own homes and in our community where they belong.

Sharing the Love with Seniors this Season

We are grateful to Meals on Wheels America for advocating on behalf of seniors. We are partnering with Subaru of America to Share the Love this season.

For every new vehicle bought or leased until January 3, Subaru will donate \$250 to Meals on Wheels. Since 2008, Subaru has enabled the delivery of nearly 4 million meals and friendly visits to seniors in need. Thanks to Subaru for keeping us on the road.



Ray's Corner

Advocating for an Equitable American Dream

Three years ago, the Trump Administration made sweeping changes to the so-called “Public Charge” rule that penalized people seeking permanent residence in the U.S. for accessing public benefits such as food, health care or housing assistance.

In essence, the change turned the path toward U.S. Citizenship into a wealth test in an effort to keep out poor immigrants who by and large only seek better opportunities here in America. On December 23rd, those changes will no



longer be the law of the land, as a new set of public charge rules will be put in place by the Biden Administration.

The Department of Homeland Security stopped enforcing the Trump-era regulations in March 2021, but our communities are still trying to roll back the chilling effect that those changes and other policy decisions had among our immigrant population. It will take us years to unravel the harm and fear that this has caused amongst the undocumented communities.

The [Migration Policy Institute](#) found that even before the 2019 public charge regulations went into place, there was evidence of sizable disenrollment from public benefit programs by legal immigrant families arising from fears that such use could doom future applications for legal permanent residency and mark an end to their American Dream.

This reluctance to access the public benefits awarded to them hurts immigrant families and our community in various ways. Over the past year we have worked to uplift immigrant voices. Community Bridges has implemented a new program that helps immigrant families access the benefits they are entitled to. The Santa Cruz County ITIN and Child Tax Credit Project has assisted eligible families and individuals in filing for their Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) and Child Tax Credits (CTC), as well as accessing the state and federal Earned Income Tax Credits (ETIC).

Since December 2021, 61 individuals and families have either filed for a new ITIN or renewed their number through the program at Community Bridges' four Family Resource Collective (FRC) locations across the county. As a result, those ITIN filers accessed approximately \$122,000 in IRS refunds,

and saved a total of \$4,160 in document preparation fees. In addition, 97 individuals and families have benefited from state and federal EITCs, bringing in an estimated \$232,800 to our community.

Simply filing for and obtaining an ITIN, a tax processing number for individuals who do not have, and are not eligible to obtain, a Social Security number, make a person eligible for dozens of supports like EITC and CTC. This brings local dollars into the community, strengthens a person's case for future citizenship reviews, and provides low-income community members needed funds for basic needs, improving local outcomes for individuals and families. Federal and state EITCs alone keep an estimated 840,000 Californians (including 376,000 children) out of poverty, according to research from the Public Policy Institute of California and the Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality.

Working undocumented immigrants across the nation leave billions on the table that they are legally eligible to receive through over taxation. Our goal has always been to improve the well-being of working families through creative and focused asset building such as this project. We are thankful for the support from David and Lucile Packard Foundation and Community Foundation Santa Cruz County for their support in sponsoring this program.

Community Bridges is an exempt organization as described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code; EIN #94-2460211. Donations are tax deductible in excess of the value of any goods or services provided in exchange for your contribution.

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519 Main Street, | Watsonville , California 95076
831-688-8840 | info@cbridges.org



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