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COMMUNITY BRIDGES
PUNTES DE LA COMUNIDAD

February 2023

A Focus on Older Adults



Community Bridges was busy this month helping individuals and families either start or continue their road to recovery from the recent winter storms. With more than \$100 million in estimated damage to public infrastructure alone, this work will continue for months and, likely, years to come.

At the same time, Community Bridges was also busy advocating for and providing essential services to our region's older adults. This included kicking off our [Digital Divide campaign](#) in which we provide free Amazon Fire Tablets to Santa Cruz County residents 55 and over who sign up for Lift Line or Elderday Adult Day Health Care.

We also received great news: We were [awarded nearly half a million dollars in multi-year grant funding](#) by the California Department of Health Care Services to help expand case management for older adults in Santa Cruz County with medically complex needs. This funding will go to Elderday to help ensure that clients with both medically complex cases and longstanding and co-occurring issues (homelessness, mental health, and substance abuse) receive the additional clinical support they need.

We would also like to thank all of Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County's supporters who advocated for continued partnership between Community Bridges and the Live Oak School District. Though the school district has not yet budged on the June 30th eviction date, we are encouraged by the fact that LOSD Board President Kristin Pfothenauer pulled the vote on the eviction date off the February 22nd agenda. We urge our supporters to continue to advocate for an outcome that is mutually beneficial to both organizations.

As always your continued support for Community Bridges is what allows us to continue our mission of supporting the older adults in our community and who helped build the communities we know and love.

Support Services Now

Food From the Heart Returns

Meals on Wheels
FOR SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
COMMUNITY BRIDGES
PUENTES DE LA COMUNIDAD

10th Annual
Food from the Heart

Friday, March 17 from 11am to 1pm
Chaminade Resort & Spa, 1 Chaminade Lane, Santa Cruz
Purchase your tickets at communitybridges.org/events

Purchase Tickets: **\$100** | Table for Six: **\$600** | Sponsorships:
Pot of Gold: \$5,000 | Rainbow: \$2,500 | Shamrock: \$1,000
Phone: **831.688.8840 x205**
Email: donations@cbridges.org

Join Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County to celebrate the 10th annual Food from the Heart luncheon.

This heartwarming annual gathering will be held on Friday, March 17th at Chaminade Resort & Spa. Join local business leaders, elected officials and philanthropic neighbors for a festive celebration with gourmet lunch, program updates, and an exciting live auction with opportunities to win unique local prizes.

All proceeds help more than 1,600 older adults live safely in their own homes. Your support ensures that seniors live healthy and independent lives with the assistance of a nutritious meal and a smiling face. Check out our [sponsorship opportunities](#) and join us today to ensure No Senior Goes Hungry in Santa Cruz County.

To purchase tickets or donate directly to Meals on Wheels, visit communitybridges.org/events/.

Buy Tickets Today

FEMA Applications Due March 16

3 Ways to Apply for Disaster Aid



ONLINE

DisasterAssistance.gov



FEMA APP

Download the
FEMA APP



CALL

800-621-3362



FEMA

Applications for assistance in recovering from the recent winter storms must be submitted to the Federal Emergency Management Agency by March 16th.

Applications can be completed online at disasterassistance.gov and over the phone at (800)-621-3326. They can also be completed in person at one of three Disaster Recovery Centers (DRC) in Santa Cruz County or one of Community Bridges' Family Resource Collective locations.

FEMA and U.S. Small Business Administration staff will be available to assist residents and businesses at the DRCs. Local social service providers will also be available.

The local DRC locations and operating hours are below:

San Lorenzo Valley

- Felton Branch Library: 6121 Gushee St., Felton
- Weekdays from 10am-6pm

Santa Cruz

- County Governmental Center: 701 Ocean St., Santa Cruz
- Weekdays from 9am-5pm

Watsonville

- City Government Center: 250 Main St., Watsonville
- Weekdays from 8am-5pm

The Count of Santa Cruz also has a virtual recovery center available [here](#).

For a list of federal and local resources, visit communitybridges.org/emergency. There, Santa Cruz County and North Monterey County residents can fill out our Damage Assessment Form and access local financial assistance that can help them on the road to recovery.

Bridging the Digital Divide



Community Bridges is addressing the digital divide of older adults by providing FREE Amazon Fire tablets to qualifying Santa Cruz and North Monterey County applicants across the agency's older adult-serving programs, including our Family Resource Collective, Elderday Adult Day Health Care and Lift Line transportation.

Low-income applicants age 55 and over who haven't already received a FREE tablet from Community Bridges are eligible to receive one today by doing one of the following:

- Signing up for Elderday Adult Day Health Care (for adults with dementia or complex medical problems; program is free for those eligible for Medi-Cal)
- Enrolling with Lift Line and downloading their free self-service mobile app to schedule medical and dental rides, social services connection, and essential rides.
- Receiving, or have received, a COVID-19 vaccination or booster at clinics coordinated by our Family Resource Collective.

To schedule a vaccination appointment at an upcoming clinic, call the Community Bridges Vaccine Helpline at (831) 219-8607.

For more information about receiving a FREE Amazon Fire tablet, call our Digital Access Helpline at (831) 471-7197.

Ray's Corner



As one of the leading health and human services providers for older adults in Santa Cruz County, Community Bridges has a unique voice and responsibility to the region's older adults. That is why it is so concerning to read recent news stories about the continued impact the COVID-19 Pandemic continues to have on this segment of the population and the swift reversal of many of the processes and procedures that saved countless lives.

According to the [New York Times](#), in January, there were about 2,100 COVID-related deaths among people ages 65 to 74, more than 3,500 among 75- to 84-year-olds and nearly 5,000 among those older than 85. Those three groups accounted for about 90% of the nation's COVID deaths in January. Even more concerning is that fact that while about 94% of people 65 and older had their initial COVID vaccines, only 36% have received the bivalent booster, according to the [Times](#).

Epidemiologists estimate that COVID vaccinations prevented 650,000 hospitalizations and 300,000 deaths among older adults and Medicare beneficiaries in 2021 alone. That is a staggering number and it has had tremendous impact. But we have seen less and less people continue ongoing vaccinations and boosters across all ages.

There are many challenges that have factored into slow booster uptake. Two of the biggest hurdles have been accessibility and awareness of the booster shots because of waning financial support from the federal government, societal pressure has diminished, and attention in the news cycle seems to have died down.

Community Bridges has continued to offer vaccinations and booster shots during our recurring resource fairs at our [Family Resource Collective](#) (FRC) sites and through our Digital Divide campaign. Older adults who receive their shot through our FRC program will also receive a free Amazon Fire Tablet. Our next resource fair is at La Manzana Community Resources in Watsonville on March 25. We are also holding a vaccine clinic at Mountain Community Resources in Felton on March 16. People can also call our Vaccine Helpline at (831) 219-8607 to set up an appointment. Please talk to the older adults in your life about the benefits of the booster. Let's help save lives.

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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[Sign-up to Volunteer](#)

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