



The annual Food from the Heart luncheon is a major fundraiser for Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County and the 1,500 older adults our program serves throughout Santa Cruz County.

## Record Fundraising at Food From the Heart

### Thanks for Making Food from the Heart a Success!

We are deeply grateful to everyone who contributed to our signature fundraising event, the Food from the Heart luncheon, on February 2 at Chaminade Resort and Spa. This annual gathering is a vibrant celebration uniting Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County's generous supporters and local leaders.

The 11th annual Food from the Heart was our most successful event yet, as the Friends of Meals on Wheels committee recruited 10 new members to join this year's Food from the Heart planning committee. With this infusion of people-powered support, event sponsorships increased by \$10,000 over last year, ticket sales increased by 50 people, and the event raised \$70,440 and counting, an increase of \$15,740.

The dedicated Food from the Heart planning committee members raised a collective \$30,665 through their networks. All funds raised go directly toward the delivery of meals to local older adults, ensuring there is no waitlist for people to receive their next meal.

This support comes at a crucial time, as Meals on Wheels' food costs have increased by \$46,522, or more than 5%, since this time last year. We rely on community support to fund nearly one of three meals! Together with the value of volunteer service, this local grassroots support provides one in every three meals served!

Please join us in thanking the Food from the Heart planning committee volunteers: Courtney Barrett, Michele Bassi, Brianna Carabba, Tere Carrubba, Meghan French, Ken Gorman, Dara Harris, Kathie Keeley, Alicia Kretsch, Julie Lambert, Anissa Novak and Cathe Race.

Thank you to each of you for making a meaningful impact in our community. We truly couldn't do it without everyone's help. We hope to see you again next year at Food from the Heart! If you would like to support the event planning committee with next year's event, please contact us at [donations@cbridges.org](mailto:donations@cbridges.org) or 831-688-8840 ext. 205.

## HELP LOCAL SENIORS THRIVE

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### A New Opportunity for the Live Oak Senior Center



*The Live Oak Senior Center has served as Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County headquarters for decades.*

### Community Bridges Offers to Purchase Live Oak Senior Center, Help District Halt Layoffs

We are excited to share that this month we submitted a letter of intent to the Live Oak School District to purchase the Elena Baskin Live Oak Senior Center. The \$2.4 million purchase would ensure continued operations of essential older adult services at the 1777 Capitola Road location and other essential Community Bridges programs.

This purchase would be a win-win, resolving a long-standing issue over the future use of the Senior Center and allowing the continuation of senior services provided by Senior Network Services and Community Bridges as part of the Area Agency on Aging's local network of services.

Since its inception, the Elena Baskin Live Oak Senior Center, named after the late local philanthropist and senior service advocate Elena Baskin, has been an irreplaceable hub for our community's older adults. In 2004, the community invested millions to preserve the location as such when they voted for

### News & Notes

The last three newsletters might have looked a little different than previous ones. Community Bridges and Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County recently changed our donor and email database provider, so there might be some slight differences from newsletters.

Rest assured, Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County's monthly newsletter will continue at its normal tempo and Community Bridges' will continue to receive donations without interruption during the transition.

Think you were left off the Meals on Wheels newsletter during the transition? Contact Anna Vaage at [annav@cbridges.org](mailto:annav@cbridges.org).

### In the Press

Click the headlines below to read local and national news about Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County and older adult services.

- [Community Bridges puts senior center purchase offer on table](#)
- [New program offers dental care, hygiene kits to seniors](#)

Measure E, a \$14.5 million bond measure benefiting the Live Oak School District. The school district used some of those funds to purchase the land to follow through on the community's goal of continuing these crucial older adult services for decades to come.

The Senior Center has been home to Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County since the 1970s, providing a centralized location for vital services for older adults and allowing Meals on Wheels to provide daily meals for over 800 older adults. The majority of those we serve are homebound and live below the poverty line.

In addition to the proposed purchase agreement, we are offering the Live Oak School District an option to purchase a nearby property primed for affordable housing construction, supporting the school district's long-held goal of developing a teacher housing project. The revenue from the purchase, including the \$800,000 down payment, would help the district resolve its immediate budget deficit, stave off potential receivership, and halt proposed teacher and staff layoffs, which hurt local teachers, students, classified staff, schools, and, ultimately, the community.

We look forward to working quickly with the Live Oak School District to ensure we can meet the needs of seniors and educators alike in our community. Please [contact the Live Oak School District's Board of Directors](#) and encourage them to move forward on this win-win solution allowed under SB98.

— Ray Cancino, CEO, Community Bridges

- [1 in 5 older adults don't have someone they can depend on in time of need. It's driving up ER visits and food insecurity.](#)

#### CONTACT THE SCHOOL BOARD

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### Aging with Grace in Santa Cruz County

The Santa Cruz Human Services Department, in partnership with the Seniors Council and local cities, is developing a Master Plan for Aging, which will be a blueprint for implementing strategies and partnerships that promote healthy aging for all.

This effort is called Age Well Santa Cruz County. Age Well Santa Cruz County is developing a Master Plan for Aging, a 10-year blueprint to ensure people of all ages and abilities in Santa Cruz County are afforded equitable opportunities to thrive as they age, how and where they choose.

To learn more about Age Well Santa Cruz County visit:

[AgeWellSantaCruzCounty.org](https://AgeWellSantaCruzCounty.org).

The Age Well Santa Cruz County survey is collecting community feedback focused on aging locally. If you are a resident of Santa Cruz County and 40 years or older we encourage you to take the survey now: [tinyurl.com/AgeWellSantaCruz](https://tinyurl.com/AgeWellSantaCruz)



Are you 40 years or older? Age Well Santa Cruz County wants to hear from you



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## Nutrition Corner



## DASH to a Heart-Healthy Lifestyle

February is American Heart Month, so let's treat the hardest-working muscle in our bodies well. Following the "DASH diet" is one of the best ways to keep your heart healthy.

DASH stands for Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension. It is a flexible and balanced eating plan that helps create a heart-healthy eating style. The DASH eating plan supports overall heart health and helps lower high blood pressure and LDL, the "bad" cholesterol.

The DASH diet recommends:

Eating vegetables, fruits, and whole grains.

Eating foods rich in potassium, calcium, magnesium, fiber, and protein.

Choosing low- or reduced-sodium or no-salt-added versions of foods.

Including fat-free or low-fat dairy products, fish, poultry, beans, nuts, and vegetable oils.

Limiting foods that are high in saturated fat, such as fatty meats, full-fat dairy products, and tropical oils such as coconut, palm kernel, and palm oils.

Limiting sugar-sweetened beverages and sweets.

Find DASH recipes, tools, and resources at: [nhlbi.nih.gov/DASH](https://nhlbi.nih.gov/DASH)

—Caren Dix, Registered Dietitian Nutritionist

### DASH Diet recipe: Jumpin' Jambalaya

Makes 9 servings

#### Ingredients:

- 1 pound boneless skinless chicken breast
- 14 ounces low-fat turkey kielbasa
- 1 medium celery stalk, chopped
- 2 small onions, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 small bunch green onions, chopped
- 1 medium green bell pepper, chopped
- 1 can (14 ½ ounces) no-salt-added diced tomatoes
- 1 ½ cups uncooked brown rice
- 4 cup water
- 2 cubes low-sodium chicken bouillon
- 1 bay leaf

- 1 ½ teaspoons cayenne pepper
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped parsley

**Instructions:**

1. Cut the chicken breast and kielbasa into 1-inch chunks.
2. Spray a medium-sized pot with nonstick cooking spray. Brown the chicken and kielbasa over medium heat and remove from the pot.
3. Add the next six ingredients (celery, onions, garlic, green onions, bell pepper, and diced tomatoes) to the same pot. Cook over medium heat for 10 minutes.
4. Return the cooked meat to the pot. Add the brown rice, water, bouillon, bay leaf, and cayenne pepper.
5. Bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat, and let simmer for about 50 minutes or until the water has evaporated. (Instant brown rice will take less time to cook).
6. Stir in parsley and serve warm.

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Thank you for your ongoing support. Your kindness is transforming our community.

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