



WHERE STANGERS BECOME FRIENDS

## 2005 Annual Report

### ABOUT US

*Puente de la Costa Sur* (Bridge of the South Coast) is located in Pescadero and serves Pescadero, Loma Mar, San Gregorio and La Honda. In December 2004, we became a 501 (c) (3) faith-based nonprofit organization after 6 years as an outreach program of Pescadero Community Church, United Church of Christ. Our annual budget is less than \$182,000 and includes a full time executive director and two part time staff (a community outreach worker and fund developer/office manager). In addition, we have a part time bookkeeper who is on contract for 10 hours a month.

*Our mission is to create connections between the Spanish and English-speaking people in the underserved and isolated rural region around Pescadero and to make resources available to all.* Puente offers dignity and a safety net compassionately making these strangers our friends. Puente also distributes basic survival items; refers those in need to social service agencies in the community; provides emergency services; offers a safe, comfortable place for multi-cultural social gatherings; increases community awareness and understanding of the inequities in the areas of economics, housing and working conditions.

For solid bridges to be built between the two cultures and strengthen us as a community, Puente also provides opportunities for shared meals, Spanish classes with clients serving as "tutors", and tours of the ranches, nurseries, and housing sites. We sponsor retreats and interactive situations for English speakers to help them understand the common ground from which we all have come as immigrants.

### CLIENTS

Since its inception in 1998, Puente has served the unaccompanied Mexican National workers, whom we refer to as "The Men Alone." The men range in age from 14 to 75, are single or married with families in Mexico who come to the Pescadero area to work in the agricultural and floricultural industries.

After crossing the border with the aid of a "coyote" and at the cost of \$2,000 to \$3000, as many as 12 men arrive in Pescadero each month. The men arrive with little more than the clothes on their back and rarely have had more than a year or two of school. Puente staff greets, welcomes, and counsels the men in Spanish, and is available to help them overcome the numerous barriers they face while living and working in an English-speaking country.

At least 83 of the 321 men we served last year were given a welcome bag filled with toiletries, towels, socks, sweatshirts, a phone card (to make that critical first call home to say they have arrived safely), and a \$10 coupon from the local taquería. Last year 96 blankets and 28 sleeping bags were distributed to those who were homeless or without bedding, and 36 bicycles were given to those in need of transportation.

2,330 encounters were tracked and logged into Puente's new client database. These encounters represent the numerous times we assisted the men with food coupons (181 in all when there was little or no work); brokered 69 day jobs when community members needed day laborers, and made 43 referrals for medical and dental needs. In addition, we made referrals for counseling, helped with utility payments, emergency housing needs, and provided 564 bus trips on SamCoast.

At 104 biweekly gatherings of *La Sala*, the Community Living Room, 10 to 15 men attended each gathering where they met with volunteers and had an opportunity to find common bonds which helped build critical bridges between the two cultures. In addition, the men ate healthy snacks, played games, practiced their English, learned about job and housing opportunities, and most importantly took a much needed break from overcrowded housing and isolation.

At our Thanksgiving and Christmas celebrations 20 community volunteers provided food, gifts, transportation, and camaraderie to over 80 workers which helped to significantly reduce the men's homesickness for their families. The men were amazed that relative strangers happily and willingly spent part of their holidays with them.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

79 volunteers contributed a total of 1,788 hours through a number of activities including: La Sala gatherings, monthly Second Harvest food distributions, special holiday celebrations, creating welcome bags, hosting Puente meals. Without these generous donations of time and energy, Puente would not be able to offer the personal and varied services it does.

## **PRESENTATIONS & TOURS**

Puente's executive director Rev. Wendy Taylor reached 3,105 people while making 19 different presentations to faith and community organizations ranging in size from 20 to 700. In addition, Wendy gave tours of our service area to 112 people who visited the 18 ranches/nurseries and living sites in our service area that encompasses 450 square miles.

## **DONATIONS & GRANTS**

Puente is blessed to have 442 active donors who in 2005 contributed both money and much needed items from our wish list. Over 1,400 people received our bi-annual newsletter printed in the spring and fall.

In 2005, our \$181,751 budget called for \$107,000 (59%) in foundation support, \$45,000 (25%) from individuals, and \$28,000 (16%) from faith communities and church individuals. 69% of our expenses went toward program services, 25% was spent on management/general and 6% on fundraising. (See Financials on page 3 for 2005 Actual Income).

We are fortunate to have a number of grants from Bay Area funders including: Peninsula Community Foundation, The San Francisco Foundation, van Loben Sels/Rembe Rock, Philanthropic Ventures Foundation, Atkinson Foundation, Homeless Trust Fund of San Mateo County, Rotary Club of Half Moon Bay, and Northern California Northern Nevada Justice and Witness Fund. A few of these funders also provide emergency funds to help with medical and dental needs, utilities, disasters, and rental assistance.

## **MEDIA**

Due to widespread media coverage many people throughout the Bay area became acquainted with Puente. Articles and live reports appeared in the *San Mateo County Times*, *Half Moon Bay Review*, *The Pacific School of Religion's Bulletin*, and *KQED*. On *Cinco de Mayo*, we hosted a grand opening celebration where 100 supporters attended and a door prize of a night at *Old Thyme Inn* in Half Moon Bay was awarded.

## **THE WOMEN'S SEWING COLLECTIVE**

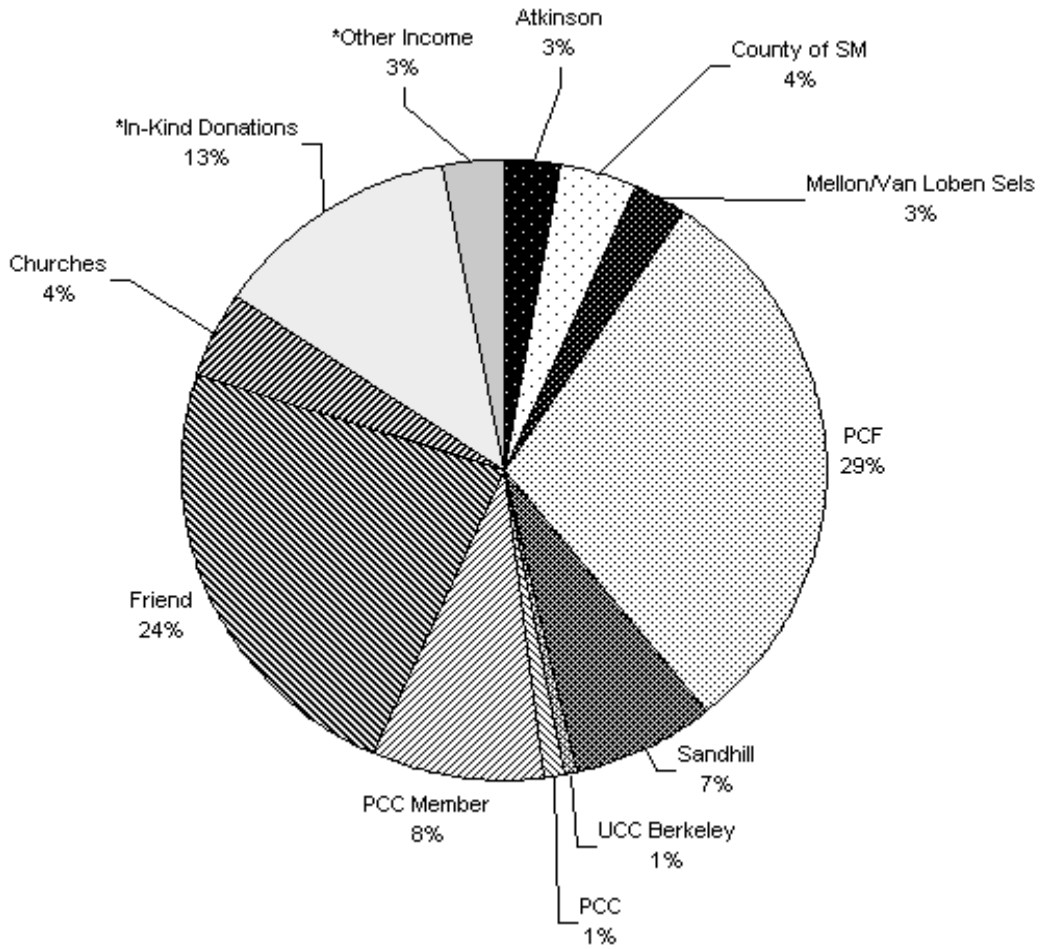
The *Nopalera* in barrio Rubén Jaramillo, Cuernavaca, Mexico supports low income families and their children's education. Since 2003, Puente has been selling t-shirts and blouses made by the collective and returning the money in full to Mexico through the Benedictine Sisters at the Guadalupe Retreat Center. This past year we sent \$4,800 to help with the education needs of these low income children.

## **HOPES AND DREAMS**

The workers, Board of Directors and staff have expressed their hopes and dreams for the future: The purchase or lease of a ranch or nursery where the men can work and/or live. For those who don't work on site, we would continue to serve as a point of contact for community members needing day laborers. Puente could operate a laundromat which would also have bathrooms and showers. And of course, we would continue to welcome everyone by name and treat each one with the respect they deserve.

**FINANCIALS**

Since Puente's inception in 1998, we have managed to maintain a healthy reserve each year. Even with a doubling of staff, office rent, and growth in infrastructure, the year ended with a \$5,000 carry over. When we first began as an outreach ministry, we never imagined that the future would hold such a stable and sustainable agency presence for the sake of The Men Alone and our community.



<u>2005 All Income</u>		<u>Grant Income</u>		<u>Other</u>	
Atkinson	5,000.00	Atkinson	5,000.00	Interest	678.09
County of SM	7,000.00	County of SM	7,000.00	T-Shirts	4,816.00
Van Loben Sels	5,000.00	Van Loben Sels	5,000.00	In-Kind Contributions	2,693.96
PCF	54,500.00	PCF	54,500.00	In-Kind Services	20,286.00
Sand Hill	13,000.00	Sand Hill	13,000.00		28,474.05
UCC Berkeley	1,250.00	UCC Berkeley	1,250.00		
Pescadero Community Church (PCC)	1,936.55		85,750.00	<b>Total 2005</b>	
PCC Members	15,371.91			<b>Income</b>	<b>\$ 182,272.48</b>
Friends	42,971.02				
Churches	7,768.95				
*In-Kind Donations	22,979.96				
*Other Income	5,494.09				

## 2005 Board of Directors & Staff

Charles Nile, Chair

Fran Barnsley

James Brigham

Elizabeth Chapman

Gabriel Echeverría

Gabriel Gutiérrez

Julia McKeon

Nancy Raulston

Rev. Ted Schapp

Carol Young-Holt

Rev. Wendy J. Taylor, Executive Director

Darla J. Donovan, Fund Developer/Office Manager

George Aranda, Outreach Worker

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

In a push to increase the size of Puente's Board of Directors, three new members joined while two of our founding members "retired" to offer their talents to other organizations; putting the Board at eight members at the end of 2005. The Board consisted of two Mexican national workers, two retired ranchers, four Spanish speakers, and a variety of talented community members who contributed two to ten hours a month overseeing and advising the director and staff on policy, programs, and fund raising. To build even stronger bridges in the community between the Spanish and English-speaking residents, three Board members enrolled in the Monday night Spanish classes taught at Puente by Rev. Taylor.



### A Worker's Story

*At the age of 17 and soon to be a father, Pedro decided his best chance to give his wife and soon to be born child a life free of poverty was to come to the United States to work. Some weeks after his arrival, he was still without work. His in-laws had paid the medical costs for the birth of his son, and because Pedro couldn't repay them, he felt a failure as a man and father. Pedro became deeply depressed. Had he made the wrong decision about leaving his wife and child in Mexico with his in-laws to seek work in the U.S.? In his depression, Pedro also became panicked and confused. He thought his wife was here, but he couldn't find her. His frantic search brought him close to collapsing. Fortunately, a local psychiatrist, whom we had just recently helped to find a day laborer, volunteered her services should we ever need them. With her help, Erick was referred to the best mental health services in the county. Since working with his bi-lingual caseworker, Pedro has regained his sense of reality, is now employed full time, and able to support his wife and son back in Mexico. Pedro shows his gratitude by speaking on Puente's behalf at presentations, faith community events, and Board meetings; he willingly tells his story to all who will listen, and is a testament to the need for our services*

Puente Center

1956 A Pescadero Creek Road

P.O. Box 554

Pescadero, Ca 94060

650-879-0743 (office)

650-879-0701 (fax)

[info@puentedelacostasur.org](mailto:info@puentedelacostasur.org)