## New Solutions for Challenging Times



# 2011 ANNUAL REPORT POENTE DE LA COSTA SUR

The Community Resource Center for the South Coast

## WHO WE ARE

Puente is a catalyst for inclusive new solutions and opportunities in our own rural community and beyond.

#### Puente:

- 1. Cultivates a vibrant and dynamic community that reflects and promotes the values of self-determination, self-sufficiency, social justice, and commitment to our natural environment, collective history, heritage, and community.
- 2. Provides comprehensive education and leadership development programs designed to transform lives and support residents to advocate for themselves and their communities.
- 3. Advocates for fair, equitable, prevention-oriented policies and practices in the areas of education, youth employment, housing, medical care, transportation, and food security.
- 4. Listens to you, our stakeholders. We take your trust seriously, and actively work to maintain effective programming, governance, and internal operations to ensure Puente's lasting presence for generations to come.

#### CREDITS

Design: Glen So

Photography: Lars Howlett Wendy Wardwell

Text: Julia Scott



Dear Puente Supporter,

Over the past year Puente has worked with passion and purpose to

- Strengthen the South Coast as a safe, vibrant and caring community
- Create greater economic opportunity for farm workers, farmers and ranchers
- · Provide safety-net services for low-income residents
- Improve the lives and educational prospects of local youth
- Foster bonds of friendship and trust among diverse residents of our rural home.

Your commitment to our work made this year's accomplishments possible. Thank you!

Just "over the hill" from the urban engine of innovation that is Silicon Valley, Puente primarily serves an isolated, rural population. Together with the farmers, ranchers, townsfolk, and retreat seekers – farm workers and their families help sustain the entire region physically through their agricultural production and spiritually through their stewardship of Place.

Puente champions solutions that build a better life for all.

We catalyze change by recognizing problems then working with a diverse group of stakeholders to find, hone and implement solutions that improve lives, model efficacy, and inspire hope.

With your help, Puente is working toward a community where people who live here can prosper and, alongside those who visit, can enjoy, protect, and sustain our beautiful, bountiful, inspiring coastal home.

We hope that you'll plan a visit to see us soon to see our work first-hand.

With great appreciation,

Keny lotul

Kerry Lobel Executive Director

# BIG Projects, BIG Results New Initiatives at Puente

## **Fighting Youth Substance Abuse**

Valentin Lopez is 16. Some of his friends drink or use drugs, but he doesn't. He has seen what happens to people when they get hooked. Lopez, a student at Pescadero High School, joined an alcohol and drug prevention youth group this year, principally to fight what he sees as a growing trend toward troubling behavior among kids his age and younger. He's been where they gather to drink and do drugs, the space under a bridge in town that's covered in swear words and gang graffiti. "Kids feel alone so they try to distract themselves," he explained.

In 2011, **Puente launched Project Success in South Coast schools** with a grant from San Mateo County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS). Puente counselors lead facilitated discussion groups to help students as young as



Students present their ideas for a mural at a public meeting

*See p. 5* 



Rosario Marin tutors Zeferino Presiado for a citizenship test

## A Path to Citizenship

Rosario Marin lived and worked in Pescadero for 26 years under a green card. She met her husband and raised two children here. On December 14, 2011, Marin, 40, stood under a brightly lit atrium with hundreds of other new U.S. citizens and pledged her allegiance to the American flag at a swearing-in ceremony.

"It's just the satisfaction of knowing that I am a citizen. I belong

## *"It's just the satisfaction of knowing that I am a citizen. I belong here."*

#### - Rosario Marin

here. I dream about voting," said Marin, who worked at Pescadero flower nurseries before taking a job as a cook at Duarte's Tavern.

*See p. 5* 

## La Honda Satellite Office Opens Its Doors

Last year Puente opened its **first-ever branch office in La Honda.** With a new base in the mountain town, Puente has begun offering Spanish and ESL classes free of charge, as well as mental health counseling, safety net services, and tutoring.

The office is also home to La Honda's "Over-55 Club," and provides support for the town newspaper, *The La Honda Voice*. That's not all. In 2012 La Hondans won't have to go far to find **a homework club, tax preparation assistance, a knitting circle, free Wi-Fi and a bank of computers.** 

"There are a lot of people here who barely get by on food stamps, MediCal, Medicare," says Joann Watkins, Puente's Clinical Services Director (and longtime La Honda resident) who staffs the new office.



The new La Honda office

# Puente in Action A Year of Solutions

## **ECONOMY** In a Recession, Puente Is There



Farmworkers receive free dental care

The situation for Puente's poorest program participants continues to deteriorate as the agricultural economy worsens and benefits run out. Puente's safety net services **filled in** 

# "Puente's safety net services filled in the gaps for dozens of families this year."

the gaps for nearly 1/3 of the residents in the region, by providing emergency food, rental assistance, diapers and funds to underwrite cold weather costs such as propane, electricity, blankets and sleeping bags. "A lot of people lost their jobs and they need to come to Puente for financial assistance," explains Lorena Vargas, Safety Net Services Manager. Thanks to generous individuals, faith institutions, San Mateo County and grants from the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, San Francisco Foundation, and the Emergency Food and Shelter Program, people made their rent and had gas to get to work. Puente enrolled a record 243 participants in state and

federal health care programs and **connected them with dental care** through Sonrisas, a partner nonprofit.

## **EDUCATION** Being Green, and Seeing Green

Puente created its **Green Jobs Corps** to better position the South Coast for long-term

sustainability, and bring young people together to learn about

careers in farming, food and the environment. We underwrote the

costs of a semester-long Environ-

mental Field Studies course

and a Green Career Fair at



Camp Glenwood boys pause to listen to the sounds of nature

Pescadero High School. A collaborative grant from the California Green Jobs Corps, San Mateo County Workforce Investment Board, and TomKat Foundation helped Puente stage the entire Green Jobs Corps Program. A unique partnership with **Camp Glenwood allowed Puente to serve high-risk young men** who are facing detention in Juvenile Hall. The young men learned to identify coastal species, collect soil samples and monitor water quality in Pescadero Creek. Experts also provided Puente youth employees with hard skills like GIS mapping and outdoor survival training.

## SAFETY

## Tsunami Warning Leads to Emergency Training



Japan's earthquake and tsunami produced no crisis in California, but a-pre-dawn evacuation order from San Mateo County for homes in the coastal zone sowed **dangerous confusion and panic** that morning. Puente made dozens of personal phone calls and helped staff the Red Cross shelter, but families had already fled to higher ground with

CPR training at Puente

improvised emergency kits. "We realized there was no systematic way to answer to an emergency," says Rita Mancera, Puente's Program Director. Puente obtained a grant from the Silicon Valley Community Foundation to train 60 key community members including business and school leaders, ranch and nursery foreman, and others **in CPR and First Aid.** (Another 40 Puente youth and staff members also have First Aid and CERT training). Trainings were held in Pescadero, La Honda and at Moon Ridge/Main Street Apartments in Half Moon Bay.

# **OPUENTE** A Year of Growth and Change

## Puente Staff – or Superheroes?

Puente personified Pescadero's "can-do" spirit this year. Adult staff, youth staff and volunteers spent the year getting trained in so many new areas that they are practically superheroes, consistent with Puente's goal to create an organizational culture that promotes shared leadership and ongoing learning for participants and staff.

- Four staff members became licensed **Red Cross Instructors**
- Three staff members became certified Zumba fitness instructors
- Two staff members became notaries public
- Two staff members became ham radio operators for emergencies
- One staff member became a paralegal
- One staff member and three volunteers became
- IRS-certified tax preparers

## Puente Youth Staff

Carina Amezcua Barbara Amezcua Monica Amezcua Marcos Arellano Esteban Cabrera Ricardo Cabrera Daniel Castro Chavez Jose Antonio Castro Chavez Elizabeth Chavarin Araceli Cruz Nicholas Curran Bernardo Flores Edward Flores Edith Flores Jesus Flores Elizabeth Flores Gabriela Flores Aldo Flores vera Barbara Guzman Isabel Guzman Jairo Guzman Yessenia Herrera Ronnie Hodgkinson Brenda Lopez Diana Lopez Hector Lopez Jose Lopez Luis Lopez Mariela Lopez Valentin Lopez Fernando Macias Isela Marin Nestor Marin Patricia Marin Cristian Martinez Luis Mendez Ricardo Mendez Javier Morales Omar Ortega Jose Resendiz Jovany Rios Laura Rodriguez Raul Rodriguez Eduardo Rogel Ariana Salgado Cristina Salgado Maxwell Talbot Israel Vargas Jorge Vargas Miguel Vasquez



- Puente provides childcare and transportation for every group program.
   Staff members care for 100 children each week.
- Puente adult learning and ESL programs reach **194 people each year.**
- Puente awarded **\$2,950** worth of college scholarships to 7 Pescadero and La Honda youth.
- Puente's Green Jobs Corps put **24** high-risk young men at Camp Glenwood to work for the environment, doing soil and water testing.
- Puente kept 18 families from homelessness by providing more than \$17,000 in emergency rental assistance.
- Puente provided nearly **1,700 homecooked meals** to farm and nursery workers.

### Fighting Substance Abuse from page 3

10 to develop skills for managing social and peer pressure to use substances. Clinicians also do one-on-one counseling.

With support from a BHRS community partnership grant, a group of youth, including Lopez, recently started designing a town mural that depicts hope and resilience with the image of two palms cupped together releasing a flock of doves. The mural will read: "We dream with strength and courage and together we succeed." The teens hope it will send a message to everyone about new beginnings.

### A Path to Citizenship from page 3

Marin first sought citizenship in 1997, but gave up when she realized how expensive and onerous the process would be. Then last year she found out that Puente had expanded its immigration and legal services and could help.

Thanks to a grant from the Grove Foundation and numerous volunteers, including Marin, Puente has extended immigration services to 36 participants since the program's inception, including citizenship and visa/green card renewals. Another 16 participants were assigned Individual Tax Identification Numbers (ITINs), an IRS program that allows people without Social Security Numbers to file federal tax returns.

# PUENTE'S YEAR OF FOOD

## Eating Fresh, Staying Fit



Puente founded new Certified **Community Farmers' Markets** in Pescadero and La Honda in 2011, accomplishing a long-held goal to make healthy, locally grown food available to residents of the South Coast and devise new ways to help build the local economy. More than 15 local farms and ranches provided everything

from dry-farmed tomatoes to goat cheese and grass-fed beef. The bounty drew as many as 200 shoppers per week.



Puente's Tokens program gives produce discounts to qualifying shoppers



Best of all, it was affordable. Pescadero Grown! was the first market of any kind on the South Coast to accept vouchers from the Women Infant Children Nutrition Program (WIC) and CalFresh (formerly known as Food Stamps and federally known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the only Farmers' Market on the Coastside to accept food stamps. Thanks to contributions from generous neighbors, Puente's Pescadero Grown! Program matched up to \$10 a week at the market -\$10 became \$20, doubling purchases for low-income neighbors. Puente also developed a South Coast Foodshed Map in an effort to highlight the vast number of agricultural producers in the region.

"What a great way to spend your food stamps – on fresh food instead of a bunch of junk," says Karen Walker, who lives (and shops) in Pescadero.

## The food-fitness nexus

Eating well is only half the battle. Student obesity rates are high: a recent statewide fitness test found that **46 percent of 9th** graders at "high risk" for adult obesity.

Puente's expanded fitness program features Zumba, a popular Latin-inspired dance class that draws more than 30 teens, parents and retirees. Grant funding from the **Bella Vista Foundation** and Kaiser Permanente helped Puente train 3 licensed instructors and offer Zumba twice a week. "It gets me sweaty and my heart pumping!" exclaims one Zumba lover.



A Zumba class at Puente

*"What a great way* to spend your food stamps – on fresh food instead of a bunch of junk!" - Karen Walker



### **Internships Give Puente Youth Real-World Work Experience**

Before they graduate, high school students are often asked, "What do you want to do with your life?" That can be a tough question to answer. In 2011, Puente gave 8 local graduates the chance to try out a career with its new youth internship program, supported by the San Mateo County Workforce Investment Board and TomKat Foundation. The paid summer internships opened doors at some of the region's most fascinating (and fast-paced) work environments – including Symantec, the San Mateo County Bar Association, Half Moon Bay Chamber of Commerce, and core service agencies in Pacifica, Davenport and El Granada.

Monica Amezcua's considerable knack for numbers came in handy in the Finance Department at Half Moon Bay City Hall, where she calculated dues to the city's Hotel Tax.

"Every time they made a mistake, we would tell them," says Monica. "Either [the hotels] owed City Hall money or they had given them more money than they had to."











### What was your favorite part of your internship?



(Student at Cañada College) Kick Off to Kinder, Pescadero Elementary School

"Kids were so adorable all the time. If I had another chance to do it, I would."



#### **Gabriela Flores**

(Student at Cañada College) Rotacare Clinic Half Moon Bay "What I liked as a translator was to be the voice of those who didn't know English.'



#### Monica Amezcua

(Student at Cañada College) Symantec and Half Moon Bay City Hall

"I felt important because Symantec is a very big company."



#### **Cristina Salgado** Student at Cañada College) Coastside Hope "Seeing the clients, and how they gave us their trust to talk









#### **Izzy Guzman**

(Student at Cañada College) Rotacare Clinic Half Moon Bay "I enjoyed translating for the patients even though they were nervous having someone knowing their condition or reason for coming."

#### Mariela Lopez

(Student at Cal State Monterey Bay) Architect Jacki Yahn

"It was great to experience something on my list of potential careers. At the end, I decided that this career was not the path for me."

#### José Resendiz

Senior at Pescadero High School) Stanford University Sun Research Center "Being at one of the best colleges in America and seeing what research was being done in the area of heliophysics."

#### Barbara Guzman

(First year student at Cal State Monterey Bay) Half Moon Bay Coastside Chamber of Commerce

"My two interests, business and government policy, were combined ogether in a work environment."

# Thank You To Our 2011 Donors and Volunteers for your Generous Support

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With your gift each and every month, you make Puente stronger and more sustainable. Your consistent support ensures the continued effectiveness of our programs and saves paper. We are most grateful.

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Kidding Around With Chocolate Left Coast Grass Fed Lenscrafters Markegard Family Grass-Fed Microsoft Matching Gifts Program New Leaf Community Market Peery and Associates Pescadero Creek Inn Bed and Breakfast Pescadero Country Store Pescadero Foods, Inc. Recommind SageCoach Savvy Skirts Sexton Arts LLC Starbucks Coffee Studio 4 Pilates Symantec Taqueria de Amigos Tunitas Creek Ranch UPS Store 1604, Half Moon Bay Weller/O'Brien Insurance Services Wells Fargo Bank

#### **GOVERNMENT AGENCIES**

California Farmers' Market Consortium, California Department of Agriculture/ Roots of Change California Fire Station #59, Pescadero La Honda Elementary School La Honda Pescadero Unified School District Migrant Education Program, Santa Clara Office of Education Pescadero Elementary School Pescadero Middle and High School Pescadero Municipal Advisory Council Sacramento State University San Mateo County Commission on the Status of Women San Mateo County Court San Mateo County, Office of the County Manager Department of Health, Housing and Human Services: Behavioral Health and Recovery Services, Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention (Project Success and South Coast Prevention Partnership) Children's Collaborative Action Team Children's Health Initiative Community Development Block Grants (Safety Net Services) Core Services Network (Safety Net Services) Get Healthy San Mateo San Mateo Medical Center Seasonal Flu Clinics Workforce Investment Act San Mateo County Transit District: SamCoast

## **BOARD MEMBERS AND STAFF**

### **Board Members**

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> Kate Haas, Secretary

Wendy Wardwell Carol Young-Holt,

Robert Johnson, Chair

Suzanne Abel Academic Director

**Carol Black** Office Assistant

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> Tricia Dell **Development Director**

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**Edwin Fernandez** Community Outreach Worker\*

> **Iris Fernandez** MFT Intern

**Dinorah Gudino** Childcare Provider

Jorge Guzman MFT Intern. Prevention Services Director

Julie Hosfeldt Women, Infants and Children Program\*

Suzanne Hughes, MFT Mental Health Counselor

> Susan Lagow Youth Outreach Worker

> > Kerry Lobel Executive Director

Nancy Raulston Vice Chair and Treasurer

Staff

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Veronica Ortega Office Manager

Denise Sandoval Benefits Analyst\*

Margaret Sedillo Parent Outreach Worker

**Kassandra Talbot** Learning Center Assistant

Lorena Vargas de Mendez Safety Net Services Coordinator

Alicia Vega Community Outreach Worker

Joann Watkins, MFT Clinical Director

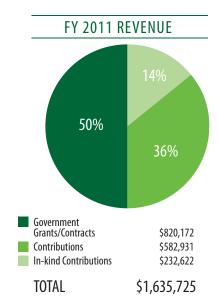
Norma Zavala Early Head Start Home Visit Specialist\*\*

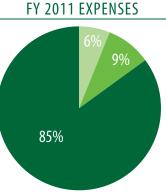
\*Posted by the County of San Mateo \*\*Posted by the Institute for Human and Social Development

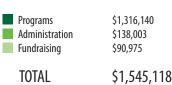
# **Financial Highlighs**

FY 2011 AUDIT AND EXPENSE REPORT

Statement of Financial Po June 30, 2011	sition			
sets2011		2011	2010	
Current assets				
Cash and cash equivalents	\$	139,589	\$	96,760
Accounts and grants receivable		107,133		47,761
Prepaid expenses and other current assets	-	9,944	-	7,797
Total current assets		256,666		152,318
Property and equipment, at cost				
Furniture and equipment		19,239		19,239
Leasehold improvements		78,762		39,137
Accumulated depreciation and amortization		(27,016)		(14,188
Total		70,985		44,188
Total assets	\$	327,650	\$	196,506
Liabilities and Net Assets				
Current liabilities				
Accounts payable	\$	28,824	\$	19,748
Accrued liabilities		43,030		18,518
Deferred revenue	<u> </u>	6,950		
Total current liabilities		78,803		38,266
Net assets				
Unrestricted		93,984		39,699
Temporarily restricted	-	154,863		118,541
Total net assets		248,847		158,240
Total liabilities and net assets	s	327,650	s	196,506









### **Our Vision**

Puente is an integral and active member of our rural San Mateo County South Coast community — a community that is healthy, inclusive, and sustainable, with diverse populations that accomplish their highest individual and community dreams.

### **Our Mission**

As the region's only Community Resource Center, Puente serves the San Mateo County South Coast communities of Pescadero, La Honda, Loma Mar, and San Gregorio. Puente both advocates for our communities and leverages resources that foster economic prosperity and security, and that promote individual and community health and wellness. We support local leaders and work together with our neighbors creating solutions for our diverse communities.

### **Our Values and Guiding Principles**

Puente answers, first, to our South Coast residents of La Honda, Loma Mar, San Gregorio, and Pescadero. Puente respects and honors our collective history, heritage, and community. We believe in our community's capacity to turn dreams into action, and we believe that every member of our community deserves opportunities to learn and grow.

Our values and guiding principles apply to our work at all levels, inside our organization with staff, volunteers, and program participants as well as in all our relationships with our broader community.



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