

May 5, 2020

**Dear Friends of Community Services Agency,**

With the shelter-in-place order now extended through May, it's clear that we are in this for the long haul. So what does that mean for CSA and the community we serve? For starters, food insecurity is going to become an even greater concern, especially with the growing supply chain issues that we are already experiencing. CSA will need to deploy additional staff and financial resources to support this increased need. You don't need a crystal ball to see that we are heading into an economic downturn, which means more clients and potentially fewer donors.

We are seeing people who never thought they would be applying to CSA for services. Some are small business owners who have been forced to close their doors, at least for the short run, and lay off their employees. Some are getting relief from the stimulus packages; others are not or it's too little, too late. There's so much uncertainty, and people are really terrified. For all of us, it's sinking in how important CSA's mission is - helping people get food on the table and a roof over their head. It is unbelievable how, in a very short period of time, many community members feel like they are on the brink of a major financial crisis.

### **Rising to the Challenge**

Since the COVID-19 health crisis began, every day at CSA has involved new challenges; however, we've been able to rise to the occasion with the help of the community. For example, when the Senior Center closed, our Senior Nutrition Program, which provides lunch to nearly 200 seniors every weekday, was forced to close as well. We worked with the city to quickly re-open the program as a drive-through distribution.

When our volunteer corps began to shrink because many were in the 65+ category, new volunteers, including employees from the cities of Mountain View and Los Altos, rose to the challenge - and now we have waitlists for volunteer support. We are finding joy in the simplest of pleasures. Last week, when a porta-potty hygiene station was installed at CSA, it was a cause for celebration, with four staff members standing by and enthusiastically applauding. Having access to a restroom and hand-washing station may not sound like a lot, but is of critical importance to those living on the streets or in RVs as they try to keep themselves and their families safe from a terrifying virus without regular access to running water.

The CSA team is fantastic - throughout all this, they are holding up valiantly - stepping up to the plate, taking initiative and getting the ball where it needs to go. Half of our staff are working remotely, the other half are here on the front lines ... and there are a few more people who have joined the ranks on a temporary basis to help with the massive volume of rental cases and new food pantry clients. We make it work. I think this health crisis is underscoring the importance of the nonprofit sector in a way we've never seen before, as well as how much our employees contribute to the health and safety of the community.

### **#GivingTuesdayNow**

Today is #GivingTuesdayNow - a day created to recognize the unprecedented need nonprofits are currently seeing in their communities. If you are able, please [contribute](#) to help those in immediate need in our community. 100% of all funds received will go directly to provide direct client assistance for rent, utilities and other emergency needs, as well as food. For those who have already given, thank you - we are most grateful for your support.

As always, please contact me with any questions or comments. I appreciate hearing from you.

Please stay safe and healthy!

Tom Myers  
Executive Director