

Martha's Kitchen



Feeding the Hungry with Dignity

2026 Annual Report

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OUR MISSION

Martha's Kitchen provides nutritious meals with dignity to people in need by mobilizing volunteers and rescued food, ensuring no one is left behind.

OUR STORY

Martha's Kitchen was born out of a simple act of kindness. In 1981, our founder, Louise Benson, began making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches in her garage to share with hungry neighbors in San Jose. Her commitment to feeding others grew beyond what one person could manage; what began as a "little soup kitchen" quickly became a gathering place where dignity, compassion, and nourishment were shared in equal measure.

Now, 45 years later, Martha's Kitchen has transformed into one of the region's most trusted providers of food security. Our mission goes beyond just feeding those in need; it's about shattering the relentless cycle of hunger and empowering those we support.

The story of Martha's Kitchen is still unfolding. As the need for food assistance continues to grow, so too does our responsibility to rise to the challenge and meet it. For the first time in 45 years, Martha's Kitchen has moved into our own permanent facility. Our new **Food Hub** is the future of food security in our region, poised to grow the capacity of our hot meal, grocery, and food rescue programs. The new site will:

- Expand meal production to 7M meals per year, meeting the rising demand.
- Store more rescued food safely: preventing waste, feeding more people, and saving on costs.
- Create a dedicated space for volunteer production, the backbone of our mission.
- Build efficiency into operations to reduce costs while increasing reach.

A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BILL LEE

Dear Friends,

As I reflect on the past year, I can confidently say that it has been one of the most eventful and transformative in Martha's Kitchen's 45-year history.

Since 1981, Martha's Kitchen has remained committed to ensuring that nutritious food is accessible to all. What began as a small soup kitchen has grown into a regional food security organization serving families, children, seniors, and unhoused neighbors across five counties. Yet even after 45 years of service, this past year stands apart as a defining moment in our journey.

One of our most significant milestones was the acquisition of our new Food Hub at 749 Story Road in San Jose. For the first time in our history, Martha's Kitchen has a facility of its own. This year, we completed construction on Phase 1 and proudly opened our Volunteer Prep Hall in June 2026. Volunteers are the lifeblood of Martha's Kitchen, and our new volunteer space allows us to better support these remarkable individuals while expanding our ability to serve the community. The Food Hub will ultimately increase meal production capacity, expand food rescue efforts, and strengthen our ability to meet growing demand for years to come.

This year also marked our first full year as the senior nutrition services provider in San Benito County. Through Meals on Wheels and daily congregate dining programs, we have had the privilege of serving older adults throughout the county, helping ensure they have access to nutritious meals and meaningful connections. We are excited to continue this important work in the years ahead.

We also celebrated a historic fundraising achievement. Our inaugural Spring Luncheon brought together supporters from across the community and became the most successful fundraising event in Martha's Kitchen history. The overwhelming generosity displayed at the event affirmed the strength of our mission and the community that stands behind it.

Across all of our programs, the need for our services continues to grow. Rising costs of living, reductions in public assistance programs, and ongoing economic uncertainty have placed tremendous strain on working families, seniors, and vulnerable individuals throughout our region. In response, Martha's Kitchen remains committed to serving as a reliable safety net.

None of these accomplishments would have been possible without you. Your support fuels every meal prepared, every grocery distribution, and every opportunity to help a neighbor in need. As we celebrate 45 years of service, we do so with gratitude and optimism. Together, we are building a stronger future - one where nutritious food is accessible to all and where every member of our community has the opportunity to thrive.

Bill Lee



OUR IMPACT

11.5M+ MEALS

Over 11,500,000 meals provided to those in need over the last 5 years.

10.7M+ POUNDS

In the last 5 years, we have rescued over 10.7M pounds of food, lowering our costs and preventing good food from going to the landfill.

98K+ HOURS

Over the last 5 years, volunteers have spent over 98,000 hours with us, totaling \$3.8M in value to our organization.

89 PARTNERS

We partnered with and provided food support to 89 nonprofits, schools, and faith-based organizations across Santa Clara, San Benito, Santa Cruz, Monterey, and Fresno Counties this past fiscal year.

Platinum
Transparency
2026

Candid.

HOLIDAYS AT THE KITCHEN



VOLUNTEERING AT THE KITCHEN



Our volunteers are the heart of everything we do. Come join us!

marthas-kitchen.org/volunteer

THANK YOU SUPPORTERS

The following sponsors and supporters represent a selection of the many individuals, foundations, corporations, faith communities, and organizations that made our work possible this year. While space does not permit us to recognize every donor by name, we are deeply grateful to all who invested in Martha's Kitchen. Every contribution, regardless of size, helped nourish our neighbors and strengthen our community.

The Aggarwal Family
The Baker Family
The Best Electrical Company
Blanchard Family BTB
City of San Jose, Environmental
Services Department
Comerica Bank
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The Schott Family
Second Harvest Food Bank
Star One Credit Union
Summit League
Sunlight Giving
The Thomas and Ellen Hogue
Family Foundation
Valley Water
The Weiner Family
Western Alliance Bank

"Without the partnership of Martha's Kitchen, our families would have so much more of a burden worrying about how they are going to feed themselves as well as their children, on top of everything else they are currently dealing with. Thank you, Martha's Kitchen, for being a lifesaver for these families, literally!"

-Amigos de Guadalupe

"Partnering with Martha's Kitchen has allowed us to scale our impact in ways we couldn't achieve alone. Their operational expertise combined with our shared passion for service ensures that no one in our community has to go to bed hungry. We are constantly inspired by the resilience of the people we serve and the seamless spirit of collaboration that defines this partnership."

-The Salvation Army Watsonville

"Your team often provides our dinner meals at the shelter and I just wanted to say how grateful we are to have food that tastes delicious while working through these situations. I've been through enough places to know the difference between food prepared with hearts of love aside from that which is made just because it's a job. And your team exemplifies the former. So thanks again to all the volunteers and staff who work so hard everyday to make sure America's 'forgotten' are respectfully and tastefully fed."

-Resident at Julian Street Inn



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