

Santa Maria
URBAN MINISTRY

2026 Impact Report

Promises Kept

Since 1983, Santa Maria Urban Ministry has walked alongside families and neighbors from across San José, from our home in the Guadalupe-Washington neighborhood.

Last year, we shared our plans with you. This year, those plans took shape — in classrooms, in workshops, in the boardroom, and on a new concrete slab next to our building. These are some of the stories.

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Fiscal Year 2026 · July 2025–June 2026

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A year ago, we made you some promises.



This year, together, we made those promises real.

We promised that Santa Maria would work with our community to build transformational programs in Spanish-language reading, financial skills, and workforce readiness. We promised to find a better way to share clothing with our neighbors. We promised that development of these programs, and everything we do, would grow from the community itself.

This year, together, we made those promises real.

“Cuentos que conectan” brought families, authors, and university partners together around stories told in Spanish. Our first event welcomed Francisco Jiménez, author of *The Circuit*, to MACLA.

“Manos a la obra” started with something our volunteer tax preparers noticed. In the 2026 VITA season, more than a quarter of the 184 returns we prepared pointed to the same opportunity: stronger record-keeping. Migdalia Rodríguez Cubides, a longtime VITA volunteer, responded with a free business finance workshop. Ten seats filled in three days. By the time the workshop began, twenty-four neighbors had signed up.

Next to our building, a concrete slab now holds a 10-by-12-foot permanent home for our Clothes Closet — a space that finally reflects the dignity of the neighbors who shop there.

Our board has grown too. We have developed and implemented new policies for governance. We welcomed three new members with deep experience in health care and banking. And we created a Junior Board Member designation, so young people can help shape the decisions that shape their community while gaining hands-on experience in leadership.

Many of you joined us in Los Gatos for our first Donor Circle Appreciation Party. It was a joy to thank you in person and to deepen the relationships that are behind all of this work.

Every one of these milestones started with a gift. I invite you to read their stories in the pages that follow.

You are part of Santa Maria.
You are the way this work gets done.

¡Juntos Podemos! Together We Can!



LOUIS POWELL,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FY2026 AT A GLANCE · JULY 2025-JUNE 2026

What your support made possible

39,400+

times neighbors took home fresh vegetables, fruit, bread, and other staples

$2.2M+

in food shared through community partnerships

5× Your gift, multiplied

Through our partnership with Second Harvest of Silicon Valley, every cash dollar given to our food programs delivers five times its value in food. That's not a marketing claim. That's the budget.

$243,030

Returned directly to working families through 184 free VITA tax returns

5,796

sandwiches in 2,898 bag lunches shared with people experiencing homelessness

19,130

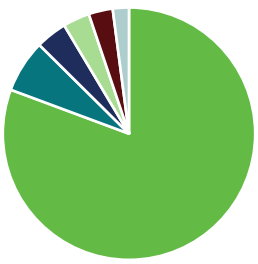
volunteer hours given by community members. That's the equivalent of more than 9 full-time employees.

Also in FY2026: 1,538 new families welcomed · 13,487 visits to our Clothes Closet · about 30 adults in ESL classes monthly

Financials · Fiscal Year 2025-2026

Where our support comes from

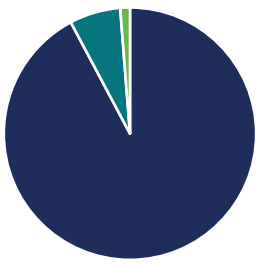
Operating revenue: $2,889,284
plus endowment & other: $102,323



- Donated food & goods (in-kind) **80.7%**
- Individuals **6.8%**
- Family foundations **4.0%**
- Endowment & other **3.4%**
- Corporate & organization grants **3.1%**
- Congregations & the Diocese **2.1%**

How we put it to work

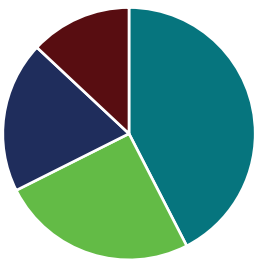
Total operating expense: $2,987,541



- Community programs **92.2%**
- Administration **6.5%**
- Fundraising **1.2%**

Cash gifts by source

Total cash gifts: $476,163



- Individuals **42.4%**
- Family foundations **25.1%**
- Corporate & organization grants **19.4%**
- Congregations & the Diocese **13.0%**

Fiscal year July 1, 2025–June 30, 2026, from Santa Maria's year-end statement of activity (cash basis). Following Second Harvest of Silicon Valley's format, operating revenue includes donated food and goods, and program expense includes the food and goods distributed. Food is valued at $1.69 per pound, consistent with Feeding America. Detailed financials are available upon request.

PROMISES KEPT

“Manos a la obra”

Financial & Career Pathways

Last year’s report named the programs our community asked for. This year, two of them opened their doors.

The idea came from our VITA tax prep program. During the 2026 tax season, our volunteer preparers saw a pattern. More than a quarter of the 184 returns they prepared pointed to the same opportunity: stronger record-keeping. Skills that keep a household’s books in order also keep a small business running.

Migdalia Rodríguez Cubides saw it first-hand. A longtime VITA volunteer and founder of Migdalia Finanzas, she designed a free two-session workshop: “Finanzas para tu Propio Negocio.”

We opened registration with a goal of ten seats. They filled in three days, so we opened more. By the time the workshop began, twenty-four entrepreneurial neighbors had signed up.

That pilot is now the foundation of “Manos a la obra,” a three-track program: Business Finance, Personal Finance, and Resume & Interview Prep.



Migdalia Rodríguez Cubides leads the Business Finance workshop.

“…they let you make smart financial decisions to invest in or grow your business.”

— Maria A. Montanez, business workshop participant

VITA BY THE NUMBERS

2026 tax season

184 returns prepared

$243,030 in federal and state refunds

$1,710 average refund

73 returns for seniors

34 returns claiming the Earned Income Credit

9 volunteer tax preparers

5 volunteer greeters

Every dollar of those refunds goes to the working families who earned it.

PROMISES KEPT

“Cuentos que conectan”

Spanish-language reading · families reading together · community storytelling



“Una Tarde con Francisco Jiménez” at MACLA.

Stories connect people. Stories connect generations. “Cuentos que conectan” is Santa Maria’s Spanish-language family reading program, built with Prof. Jill Pellettieri of Santa Clara University and Prof. Belén Moreno of San José State University, and funded by a $50,000 grant from Wishbook and The Mercury News as well as grants from The Rotary Club of Los Gatos and the Episcopal Diocese of El Camino Real. So far, these funds have allowed us to purchase 800 books for families and community groups to read together.

Families gathered at MACLA for our inaugural event, “Una Tarde con Francisco Jiménez.” About 50 people spent the afternoon with the author of *The Circuit*. The program is now in its second phase: supporting small groups of families coming together around food to share their stories and read together.

“I would make up my own stories in Spanish based on the pictures.”

— Francisco Jiménez,
The Circuit

A BETTER WAY TO SHARE CLOTHING



Families made 13,487 visits to our Clothes Closet.

For years, neighbors chose their clothing outdoors in our parking lot, through sun, wind, and rain. Now the Clothes Closet has a permanent home: a 10-by-12-foot indoor space where families can browse and choose in comfort, whatever the weather.

Same families, same generosity — now a space worthy of their dignity.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Cándida

What Cannot Burn or Be Forgotten



Cándida Santiago Meléndez

Cándida Santiago Meléndez left her village in Oaxaca at 16 with her father's blessing and a hunger to learn. She swept floors with her notes taped to the broom handle. She washed dishes with her notes in the window. She earned two bachelor's degrees — in moral theology and in ancient languages — studying in Mexico, Spain, and China. In one Chinese village, she spoke with her students in Latin, the only language they shared.

A position as Assistant Director of the Vatican Library was waiting. First, she went home to say goodbye to her father, and she stayed. The institution never issued her diplomas. Cándida built a career anyway — secretary, library director, music teacher. She taught her daughter, Belén, to multiply with soda bottle caps. By six, Belén could multiply and divide. Today Belén speaks English, Japanese, and Chinese.

Today Cándida gives her time at Santa Maria too.

"Study, mija, what I can't give you — open your own path."

— Cándida's father

"Belén brought me to Santa Maria because she could see I was overwhelmed. And what I found here was a family. Not even in the convents I lived in did I feel this. Here there is humanity — from the director to the one who sweeps the yard, we all feel equal."

— Cándida Santiago Meléndez

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Alfonso

The Hand He Now Extends

Alfonso Méndez is an agricultural engineer.

In Colombia, he helped farmers in the Huila region replace coca with legal crops like rice, cotton, and tilapia. That work brought threats against his life and his children. In 2000, he brought his family to San José. They knew no one and spoke no English.

Within two months, their savings were gone. A Santa Maria volunteer — who later became his daughter's preschool teacher — told him about us. Alfonso came for food, and for warm clothes for children who had arrived from a hot climate in September.

Once he found work, he came back as a volunteer. For nine years, he gave two days a week. Then came a part-time evening role, then operations manager. Today Alfonso is Santa Maria's Director of Operations. Children from our preschool years now stop him on the street to introduce their own children.

"Sometimes people just need someone to listen, and I am here for that."

— Alfonso Méndez



Alfonso with his certificate of appreciation from Mayor Matt Mahan.

"For me, Santa Maria is not just a workplace: it is a place I defend as if it were my own home."

— Alfonso Méndez

PARTNERSHIPS THAT MULTIPLY

For Love, Not Money

Calero High School's Adult Transition Program

When food comes off the truck at Santa Maria, Ahn is already there. He unloads it and puts it away. The work is hard, and he says so. Then he says the part that matters most:

"I do it for love.
I'm not doing it for money."

— Ahn

Ahn is a student in Calero High School's Adult Transition Program, in his second year at Santa Maria. He rides the city bus here on his own. His job coach, Erick Ramirez, meets his students at Santa Maria, then steps back: "Hey, you're on your own, and if you need help, call me."

Santa Maria is where they practice. Every load is different. Every person is different. There is always something to do. Erick's students keep asking to come back, and he knows why: "The fun-ness of it all. The adult-ness of it all."

Former students now hold full-time jobs. When the boxes come in, Erick says, they think: "Hey, we did this at Santa Maria."

Ahn is applying for jobs across San José. Wherever he goes next, he already knows something true:

"I like you.
But everybody here likes me."

— Ahn



Erick Ramirez (back right) and the Calero team, with Ahn (back left).

No one builds a stronger community alone.

In FY2026, students, universities, businesses, and neighbors brought their skills to Santa Maria — and every partnership puts more of your gift to work.

WHO WE BUILD WITH

Second Harvest of Silicon Valley
Fresh food and food rescue for our pantry

Santa Clara University
"Cuentos que conectan" and the Arrupe student program

San José State University
MPH fieldwork and "Cuentos que conectan"

Calero High School Adult Transition Program
Real work, side by side, for students building independence

County of Santa Clara Public Health Department
Our new naloxone distribution site

USF Nursing and SJSU Nursing
Health screenings

Cristo Rey
Student interns, one day each week

Community Cycles of California
Bike safety clinics twice a month and off-site food distribution

Wishbook and The Mercury News
$50,000 grant for "Cuentos que conectan"

Rotary Club of Los Gatos
Grant support for "Cuentos que conectan"

Christie's International Real Estate Sereno
1% For Good partner

New Leaf Community Markets, Silver Creek
Envirotokens partner

Also walking alongside us: Martha's Kitchen, Apple, Target, Grocery Outlet, and our congregational partners.

BOARD DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE

A Stronger Table

Santa Maria's board grew in 2026 — in size, in structure, and in the range of voices at the table. Ken Rousseau stepped into the role of Board Chair in October, and Peter Troop continues as Treasurer. The board works through four committees: Finance, Fundraising, Programs, and 10-Year Planning.

Our board grows from within our community. Barbara Fishman and Victor Niemeyer both began as Santa Maria volunteers. Rosalinda Aguilar has spent more than a decade on the board of the Guadalupe-Washington Neighborhood Association, including serving as its President.

Board members also opened doors this year. Anna Maria Valenzuela introduced Santa Maria to the Sereno 1% For Good program. Barbara Fishman introduced our presentation to the Rotary Club of Los Gatos. Peter Troop co-signed our application to the 100 Women Charitable Foundation.

2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ken Rousseau Board Chair · Finance; Fundraising

Susan Stanat Vice Chair · 10-Year Planning; Programs

Peter Troop Treasurer · Finance

Victor Niemeyer Secretary · Finance; Fundraising

Rosalinda Aguilar Director · 10-Year Planning; Programs

Natalya Barrientos Junior Board Member · Fundraising

Dr. Tamra Chávez Director · 10-Year Planning; Programs

Barbara Fishman Director · 10-Year Planning; Programs

Darryl McClanahan Director · Finance; Programs

Anna Maria Valenzuela Director · 10-Year Planning

Full board biographies at santamariasj.org

WELCOMING OUR CLASS OF 2026



Natalya Barrientos

Private Wealth Advisor Partner at U.S. Bank. She previously served on the Finance Committee of Sacred Heart Nativity School and is a member of the Leadership San Jose 2026 cohort.

Fundraising

"…as a Latina woman, I feel a personal connection to the missions of organizations like Santa Maria."



Dr. Tamra Chávez

Regional Director of PATH Santa Clara County, leading its housing, outreach, and supportive services across the region. A licensed clinical social worker, she brings a human-centered approach to strategy, operations, and partnerships.

10-Year Planning & Programs

"Our careers and the value of preserving our communities' dignity align."



Darryl McClanahan

Regional Director of Air and Ground EMS Operations for American Medical Response. A career paramedic, he brings deep experience in budgeting, operations, and leading teams through change.

Finance & Programs

"I believe in recognizing where [people] are today and helping create opportunities for them to move forward."

WE ARE SANTA MARIA

Our Mission

To help individuals and families achieve stability and transformation in their lives, ultimately influencing and uplifting the surrounding communities.

Our Vision

The vision of Santa Maria Urban Ministry is to feed the body, mind, and spirit — through nutritious food, learning opportunities, critical services, and real pathways for every person to contribute to our community.

Our Values

Community: We believe in the power of collaboration and collective action to support each other.

Dignity: We hold firm to the inherent dignity and worth of each and every individual.

Compassion: We engage with empathy, striving to understand our differences and meet people where they are.

Empowerment: We invest in the capacity of individuals and families to lead their own lives and strengthen the communities around them.

Respect: We celebrate diverse backgrounds, cultures, wisdom, and experiences.

Integrity: We act with honesty, accountability, and transparency in all we do.



LOOKING AHEAD

The foundation is poured.

The next chapter is ready to build.

"Manos a la obra" grows to three tracks. Business Finance, Personal Finance, and Resume & Interview Prep. A proposal to the 100 Women Charitable Foundation will expand the program to reach 185 neighbors.

Clothing moves indoors. Creating a permanent, indoor space for our Clothes Closet was possible through community partnerships and a capital investment of almost $10,000.

Life-saving care at our door. Santa Maria is now an official County of Santa Clara naloxone distribution site. In the first week, neighbors took 24 boxes of naloxone, half our starting supply, so we ordered 240 more.

A community health picture for the next decade. San José State University Master of Public Health students gave 650 hours of fieldwork. Carla Mori's community-based health assessment, with a 10-year outlook, will help guide our work, and Ankitha Rajesh brings culturally responsive nutrition education to our pantry. Ankitha's recipes and Carla's report can be found on our website. The Santa Maria cookbook is coming soon.

More stories in Spanish. "Cuentos que conectan" is now developing its second phase: in-home family reading groups led by promotoras with food, books, and administrative coordination through Santa Maria.

JOIN A DONOR CIRCLE

Sustainer Circle

monthly recurring gifts

Champion Circle

annual gifts of $1,000–$4,999

Visionary Circle

annual gifts of $5,000–$19,999

Luminary Circle

cumulative gifts of $20,000 or more, recognized in perpetuity

Legacy of Light Circle

planned gifts and estate plans

WHAT IT WILL TAKE

Every program in this report began with someone who chose to invest in our neighbors. The next chapter will too.

A gift to Santa Maria moves through Santa Maria and into the lives of the families who build this community every day. Cash gifts to our food programs go five times further through our partnership with Second Harvest of Silicon Valley and other community organizations. That is the Santa Maria business model.

"It's scary out there, but you're not by yourself."

— Erick Ramirez, Job Coach, Calero High School

You are part of Santa Maria.
You are the way this work gets done.
¡Juntos Podemos! Together We Can!

Thank you!

