



CAB Newsletter

Eliminating Poverty & Creating Social Change

Spring 2022



Program Spotlight: Day Worker Center of Santa Cruz County

HIRE A DAY WORKER! Celebrating 9 Years of Day Worker Empowerment and Support

The “gig economy” is thriving, with independent contractors helping us with transportation (Uber, Lyft), food delivery (Grubhub, Doordash) and even dog-walking (Bark).

But for day laborers waiting for paid jobs near home improvement centers, a day job can be limiting. Those who hire these day workers directly are typically unaware of their skill-set or employment history, and workers have no guarantee they will be treated or paid fairly.

That’s what brought CAB’s Day Worker Center (DWC) into action. Celebrating its 9th anniversary in April, the DWC assists day laborers in Santa Cruz County to secure safe employment, develop job skills, improve wages, and become more fully engaged members of our community through leadership development and advocacy opportunities. CAB’s Day Worker Center

connects people seeking labor to day laborers in a safe hiring hall space and through an organized and dignified process. In addition to providing a location for potential employers to reach workers by phone or email during business hours, the center reaches out to day workers who would normally be soliciting work near home improvement centers.

DWC’s reliable, screened workers can accomplish a wide variety of tasks, including gardening, moving, cleaning, painting, building, hauling, clean-outs, and more.

To hire a day worker, call:

831-475-WORK (831-475-9675)

or visit: www.dayworkercentersc.org

The Day Worker Center of Santa Cruz County is at 2261 7th Ave., in Santa Cruz.

Santos Carranco Finds a Brighter Future Through CAB's Day Worker Center



Five years ago, Santos Carranco found himself without a home and without much hope. Always a hard worker with multiple skills, Santos showed up at the Watsonville Career Center every day eager

to find employment. But he found no jobs that matched his skillset and his schedule.

While applying for financial aid in Santa Cruz, he met a representative for the Day Worker Center of Santa Cruz County.

“They told me about the program, and it seemed too good to be true,” said Santos, then 29 years old.

Raised in Corralitos, Santos fell on hard times but did not stop searching for solutions. At CAB's Day Worker Center, he found people in his corner who believed in him.

The Day Worker Center (DWC) creates a safe space where workers can rely on being treated with dignity and respect and supported holistically in their job search needs. Through DWC, Santos was able to secure safe employment at what he calls a “dignified wage.” He was able to find consistent work to help him find a home and provide for his family.

“I was homeless for four months, so finding consistent work felt great,” he said. “At the beginning I took jobs no one else wanted, like weeding by hand – anything. Slowly and surely, I built a reputation and today I work interesting jobs, meet different people, and learn different skills.”

Santos' spouse also finds work through the center, and together they live in Watsonville with their four combined children, his two sons and her two daughters.

“It changed my life for the better,” he said. “I'm so much happier. I can spend time with my children, help my partner out at the house. It's really rewarding in that way.”

Santos is a qualified “handyman,” but takes on varying jobs, from painting to landscaping to construction. He particularly appreciates the flexibility the Day Worker Center provides. He is able to take his children to

school and attend their activities.

“It works with my schedule, and not like a 9 to 5 job, where you miss a day and get written up, or threatened with being fired. Here you just have to communicate your needs, and everyone is really understanding.”

He found CAB not only flexible to his needs, but responsive as well.

“They would have food drives and call us up to see if we needed food for our families,” he said. “During COVID they gave us masks, they made referrals to housing. They are always advocating for us simple day laborers. They go above and beyond.”

Santos loves the variety the jobs bring. His most memorable job came a few years ago when a client living in the Santa Cruz mountains hired him and another day worker to drive a giant U-Haul truck to Boston.

“We loaded this huge truck and it took us four days to get there,” he said. “It was all expenses paid...food, gas, hotels. And then they flew us back on an airplane. I never thought I'd travel like that. For someone like me it's a once-in-a-lifetime thing.”

Another time a woman in Soquel hired him to make a Halloween maze in her backyard. “She had all the equipment, and a huge garage filled with Halloween stuff,” he said. “It took me a whole week to make a maze for her, but it turned out really well.”

Now 34, Santos believes in the program so much he serves as Vice President of the committee of day laborers that volunteer collectively to make the Day Worker Center as effective as it can be. “We sit down at a table and talk about how to generate more jobs and make it an easier process for everyone.”

Santos posts his most interesting experiences on social media, passes out flyers and has even been on the radio a few times to promote the Center.

“I am grateful,” he said. “When I started off, I had nothing. Today I have a motorcycle, a work van, another car, tools I need for jobs, a home to share with my family. And I have hope for the future. There's not a burden on my back. **Everything is different.**”

Follow CAB's DWC on Instagram:
[@DayWorkerCenterSantaCruz](https://www.instagram.com/DayWorkerCenterSantaCruz)



CAB's Luna Y Sol Familia Center Hosts Monthly Gatherings for Students and Their Families

In a celebration fitting for a program filling such a vital need in the community, the Luna y Sol Familia Center held a grand opening on March 30th in Watsonville.

A one-stop service center for South County youth ages 12-17 and their families, the center is a program of Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County, Inc. (CAB), and the culmination of community collaboration and support.

Among the more than 200 guests were many youth and families as well as program partners including representatives from the Watsonville Police Department, the Probation Department, school administrators, nonprofits serving families, Watsonville City Council Members, the Public Defender's Office, and more.

Held in the outdoor courtyard of the facility at 15 Madison St. in Watsonville, the event included a ribbon-cutting ceremony, tables with information about community programs, games, and raffles. There were

also small group walk-throughs (with masks and social distancing) of the Drop-In Center (homework/computer stations and study space), gymnasium, Community Room and game room.

In 2020, CAB received a grant from the Board of State and Community Corrections to create a one-stop service center for youth and families to get wrap-around help. Services may include tutoring, homework support, job search, volunteer hours, pro-social activities, sports, parent support groups and links to community resources. It is a drop-in service center where families and youth can come in between 3-7 p.m. without an appointment.

The Luna y Sol Familia Center is under the umbrella of CAB's Alcance program. On Instagram @AlcanceYouthAdultPrograms. For more information about CAB or any of its programs, visit <http://cabinc.org>.

CAB's Luna Y Sol Familia Center hosts monthly gatherings for students and their families in the Pajaro Valley Unified School District the first Friday of each month from 4-7 p.m. at the PVUSD Family Engagement & Wellness Center on 530 Palm Ave.,

in Watsonville (EA Hall Middle School campus). Monthly activities are organized in response to changing family needs and include information on available community resources.

(CAB in the News continued)

Paz Padilla named a Community Champion by KSBW's Project CommUnity

[click to view full story online](#)



Paz Padilla, Director of Programs & Impact for the Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County, Inc. (CAB), has been named a KSBW Community Champion, a recognition that honors people and organizations that strengthen Central Coast communities.

Inspired by her parents who brought their family to a new country from Mexico, Padilla has long felt committed to giving back and helping others in need.

"It's always been my passion. It's always been something that identifies me," Padilla told KSBW on their Community Champion Spotlight segment. "Currently, my service is leading our staff, right now in helping our homeless. I'm helping those individuals who need rent assistance, in assisting and creating programs that drive that service to help people get out of poverty."

Padilla worked for a Catholic Charities' immigration and citizenship program for 20 years before coming to CAB.

"I really look up to her," CAB's Elyssa Sanchez told KSBW. "The way she goes about everything. She lights up a room when she speaks. I can't say enough positive things about her."

CAB's Youth Homeless Response Team Coordinator Anissa Banuelos presented with Cesar Chavez Community Award



The Cesar Chavez Community Awards recognize individuals, organizations and businesses that engage Watsonville youth and empower them to help contribute to their community.

Keynote speaker Dolores Huerta -- celebrated labor leader, activist, and community organizer -- spoke on the event's theme "Determination," one of the 10 values recognized by the Cesar Chavez Foundation. It is due to the fierce and loving determination of YHRT coordinator Anissa Banuelos and her team that 149 unhoused youth have been supported with everything from daily health & hygiene supplies to wraparound support finding stable housing.

To find out more and support youth experiencing housing instability, follow YHRT on Instagram @YouthHomelessResponse



A Bright Future!

Apply for DACA or US Citizenship for FREE with CAB's Immigration Project!

Scholarships available to cover costs of application filing fees for DACA and U.S. Citizenship at CAB's Immigration Project!

Take advantage of this incredible opportunity to apply for FREE and call 831-724-5667 to make your appointment today!

I "Heart" Davenport!

Spring into Action for Davenport – Help the North Coast bloom!

Support this beloved coastal community to thrive this summer by sponsoring essential goods & activities at CAB's Davenport Resource Service Center (DRSC).

DRSC has provided critical community resources and support services to the remote North Coast community of Davenport for over 50 years. Take action today to support a thriving Davenport community at whatever level you can give:

- ✓ Sponsor a farmworker with work boots, a blanket, and a warm jacket – Goal to support 40 North Coast farmworkers
- ✓ Sponsor positive recreation activities for 25-30 participants of DRSC's Youth Summer Camp
- ✓ Sponsor the distribution of fresh and hearty free food to anywhere between 25-140 families each month!
- ✓ Sponsor youth Driver's Licenses: Help connect isolated North Coast youth to services and activities in town

To find out more & get involved, visit: cabinc.org

PLUS: Look out for I <3 Davenport merchandise in Davenport stores & restaurants this summer



DAVENPORT

Meet the Board: Board Co-Chair Voices

Co-chairs of CAB's diverse board stay true to the mission

As a Community Action Agency, CAB is fortunate to have a tripartite Board of Directors, with one third low-income representatives from throughout the county, one third elected officials and one third representatives from diverse areas across the private sector. The directors sit in alignment with the major areas of need in Santa Cruz County, according to community input through our Community Action Plan process every two years.

Our Board Co-Chairs Jaime Molina and Elizabeth Carr come from diverse backgrounds, Molina from county mental health and Carr from the financial sector. We asked each co-chair about their reasons for serving on CAB's board:



Jamie Molina

Now (semi)retired, Molina worked for 12 years as a Prevention and Early Intervention Coordinator for Santa Cruz County's Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services (MHSAS). The Behavioral Health Division

provides a wide range of prevention and treatment options for Santa Cruz County adults, children and their families.

When he left the county, Molina knew he wanted

to stay connected to what he calls "the heart of the community." He was approached by several organizations asking if he would be interested in serving on their board. He chose CAB very intentionally and for specific reasons. "It's about relationships, trust, passion, and the cause," he said. "I have known to some degree the important work that CAB does for those they serve. I have known (CAB executive director) MaríaElena for many years, and we have always had a great connection. I consider her a friend and have seen her passion and dedication."

When they discussed a possible seat on the CAB board, Molina knew right away what an honor it would be to serve.

"It hit me like a train," he said, "the reality and challenges of our homeless relatives, the great need of so many community residents who need immigration services, support and guidance (my own family included), and the economic impact of those who spend sleepless nights worried about how to maintain a roof over their family, honest paying jobs, and the high cost of living to afford rent in Santa Cruz County."

Being on the CAB Board gives Molina a sense of civic



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May is Community Action Month

“Across the country, Community Action Agencies are the nation’s eyes and ears about what’s getting in the way of a family’s economic stability and what’s working to help them succeed.”

- Denise Harlow, CEO of the National Community Action Partnership

What makes Community Action different?

- Our advocacy power as a national antipoverty network
- We amplify community voices through biennial Community Action Plan needs assessments
- Our tripartite Board of Directors with low-income representation
- We were born out of the 1960’s War on Poverty

Efforts YOU Can Support:

- Share CAB’s social media posts in May - look out for Impact Wednesdays!
- Support CA Senate Bill 843 Renter’s Tax Credit and Assembly Bill 1891 Affordable Housing Tax Credit (for more information, visit: CalCAPA.org)
- Volunteer to tutor youth with CAB in Watsonville or Davenport
- Volunteer to support CAB’s food pantry & weekly food distributions in Davenport

“We’re the bridge between grassroots and systems...”

“Our biennial community assessment process allows Community Action Agencies to remain close to low-income voices, and in turn advocate for both the top needs of those impacted by poverty and community-sourced solutions.”

- David Knight, ED of the California Community Action Partnership Association (CalCAPA)

May Events Sponsored by CAB:

May 1st

Housing Santa Cruz County's 1st Anniversary

Housing Santa Cruz County's 1st Anniversary Event, 2-4 p.m. at the Cabrillo College Sesnon House, Aptos

May 12th

Housing Santa Cruz County's "Housing for a Healthy Watsonville" Forum:

4 - 6 pm at the Pajaro Valley Community Health Trust on 85 Nielson St. in Watsonville. Join to discuss the needs, challenges, and opportunities in creating affordable homes for the residents of the Watsonville area.

May 13th

We Belong - Perteneceemos: Immigrant Justice Research, Resource Fair and Film

Screening 5 - 9:30pm at the Watsonville City Plaza. Come celebrate immigrant families, connect to community resources, watch live dance & locally-filmed movie "Fruits of Labor," and learn about the findings of a 3-year project: We Belong: a Collaboration for Community-based Research and Immigrant Justice.

May 26th

Regeneration Pajaro Valley Climate Action: 4th annual Climate of Hope Forum:

Community Visions for a Healthy Future on May 26 from 4 - 6 p.m. (online event with options for in-person watch parties). Join the local conversation on how to create community-driven climate resilience throughout the Pajaro Valley.

“...and helping to build equity in our community.”

- MaríaElena De La Garza, CAB Executive Director

(Board Co-Chair Voices continued)

responsibility: it “helps me stay aligned to who I try to be every day and the example I want to be for others.”

Molina respects CAB’s mission and vision, which is to eliminate poverty, and to create social change and equity. “CAB is leading by example, and I feel I can align to these values,” he said.

As Co-Chair, Molina shares the important task of holding all the board members accountable to the privilege and responsibility it is to serve others as a nonprofit like CAB. He also vows to report back, and communicate with transparency, to CAB’s many community stakeholders, funders, and donors.



Elizabeth Carr

As Board Co-Chair, Carr represents the financial sector, serving as President/CEO of the Santa Cruz Community Credit Union.

“CAB represents some of the very best work in our community,” she said. “I believe, as the organization believes, that we still need to keep working toward that goal. Don’t give up.”

As the CEO of a not-for-profit financial institution, Carr hopes to leverage inclusive financial access, financial learning and financial tools to join CAB in supporting the whole person.

“I really understand the heart of the organization and it matches my own heart for our community,” she said. “What CAB does is amazing, and is similar to the work we are doing. What is that saying? ‘It takes a village.’”

Santa Cruz Community Credit Union is an independent, member-owned, not-for-profit financial cooperative that promotes economic justice. It pursues a vision of vital local communities whose members contribute individually and collectively to a just society.

Carr loves being part of CAB, where there are “ordinary people like me, focused on making a difference in other people’s lives,” she said. “No lip service – it’s the real thing.”

She believes that CAB is building a legacy story under executive director MaríaElena De La Garza’s leadership.

“Supporting her and the organization just makes logical sense,” said Carr. “I hope we can achieve more, by more organizations coming together as a powerful force to end poverty and help change the lives of people in a significant way.”

CAB Board Members:

Low-income Sector Representatives

Watsonville

In recruitment

Santa Cruz Westside & North Coast

Esabella Bonner

San Lorenzo Valley & Scotts Valley

Jo Kenny

Aptos, La Selva Beach, Freedom

Romina Rodriguez

Live Oak, Capitola, Soquel

In recruitment

Public Sector Representatives

City of Watsonville Official

Vanessa Quiroz-Carter, Councilmember

City of Santa Cruz Official

Shebreh Kalantari-Johnson, Councilmember

Alternate: Eva Bertram

City of Capitola Official

Kristen Brown, Councilmember

County Official

Supervisor Ryan Coonerty

Alternate: Silvia Austerlic

County at Large

Thomas Batley

Private Sector Representatives

Health Care Community

Jaime Molina

Farmworker Community

Ernestina Solorio

Financial Sector

Elizabeth Carr

Alternate: Everardo Muñoz

Low-income Residents Impacted by the Criminal Justice System

Leo Moreno

Non-profit Representative

Monarch Services

Alma Mendoza

Alternate: Jasmine Najera

Equity Champion CAB Executive Director Takes Short Learning Sabbatical



I am excited to share that last year the CAB Board of Directors approved a short sabbatical from my official duties as Executive Director for 2022.

As part of a Packard Foundation funded CAB wellness and succession plan project, my sabbatical – from

April 15 to July 19 – will offer an amazing opportunity for both myself, CAB leaders, and the people we serve.

Following 31 years of nonprofit service without significant break, I welcome this chance to see things from a different perspective, to have time to reflect, travel, integrate powerful learnings from the past few years, and visit some Community Action partners that work with immigrant families in other parts of the state and country.

During my brief absence, CAB's strong leadership team will continue supporting the agency where current Assistant Director & COO Helen Ewan-Storey will serve as Acting Executive Director, Paz Padilla will continue as the Director of Programs & Impact, Loretta Zevallos will continue at the helm of CAB's Fiscal Department, and former CAB Assistant Director Tom Helman will come out of semi-retirement to provide additional support to the agency.

We are proud of our collective work that has allowed CAB to grow significantly over the past few years. CAB's work, aligned with our mission to eliminate poverty and create social change, has allowed us to be responsive to urgent needs, focus on day-to-day operations, participate in local, statewide and national initiatives, as well as support important equity efforts. There is a need to make space for reflection, innovation, and learning and I am extremely honored and grateful to have been given this opportunity.

My vision is to return from this short break with new perspectives, ideas to further support wellbeing, and

new ideas to ensure that our agency continues to be responsive to our community's needs.

As recently outlined in the "Lessons from Sabbatical" article by the CEO of the Women's Foundation, Surina Khan, nonprofits have used sabbaticals to help increase organizational capacity, create innovation and ensure a sustainable path toward the future. Many studies also support this theory: A 20-year retrospective study of the Durfee Foundation's sabbatical program confirmed that sabbaticals can be a lever for positive systems change within nonprofits. Since 1997, Durfee has financed sabbaticals for more than 100 nonprofit leaders. The study revealed that "very few capacity building interventions provide as much bang for the buck as the simple act of offering a sabbatical."

I am excited about what lessons I will learn and I am fully committed to return to CAB and help weave new ideas into our agency culture. It is important we never stop trying to improve, as individuals and as a community. CAB is strong, effective, and widely respected, but we can always do more. I am also looking forward to how our leadership team will build capacity, challenge themselves, and create new pathways for service.

While I am away, my plan is to report back on what I've discovered through short videos on TikTok – Join me on my adventures and learning @tianena2022.

To connect with CAB while I'm on sabbatical, please see the website/social platforms at:

www.cabinc.org

FB: @CommunityActionBoardSC

Instagram: @CabSantaCruzCounty

I deeply appreciate the Packard Foundation, CAB's Board of Directors, and CAB staff for seeing the vision and supporting my journey. I am confident in the strength of our CAB leadership team who have been thoughtfully planning for a year to lead us seamlessly through this exciting time.

¡Nos vemos pronto!

María Elena De La Garza



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 Watsonville, CA 95076



Welcome to the CAB Newsletter!

¡Bienvenidos al Boletín Informativo de CAB!

We're excited to share CAB's first Spring Newsletter with you all— Look out for the next one this fall!

Estamos emocionados compartir este primer boletín informativo de CAB contigo – ¡el próximo viene este otoño!

f @CommunityActionBoardSC
@CABSantaCruzCounty
@Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County
www.cabinc.org

