

Community SOLUTIONS

See how your generosity helped local youth and families in crisis!

Spring 2025

Aitana lived in fear from the childhood she fled

Thank you for helping her find safety and joy in the present moment

"I lived in fear and did not like going to school due to feeling unsafe no matter where I went. I would have nightmares and constantly think about the people that hurt me," says Aitana, age 14.

Aitana's family fled Mexico to escape death threats from the cartel, leaving behind everything – family, friends, community, and Aitana's beloved childhood dog.

Due to the violence she experienced, Aitana lost trust in people and lived in constant fear. She couldn't focus in the present moment. She struggled to manage family life and academics and even to make friends.

Thanks to your generosity, Aitana was able to get the specialized mental health care she needed to heal from her trauma. Her treatment team gained her trust through patience, kindness,



Your support provided Aitana with a caring and patient therapist trained specifically to help youth and survivors of trauma. You helped her regain a sense of safety and control over her life. Thank you!

and consistency.

In therapy, Aitana learned to identify her triggers and understand her experiences and the emotional and physical symptoms that she developed because of her trauma. She learned healthy coping skills, such as breathing techniques, talking to others, and journaling.

"I learned to calm myself and manage my emotions through interventions to support myself in feeling better and not focus on the past but in the present moment," she says.

Thanks to you, Aitana no longer lives in fear. Today, she is smiling, social, doing well in school, and hopeful for her future. What a gift!

"I am grateful for being supported in feeling better and not just [dwelling] on the negative experiences of my past." – Aitana, age 14

More stories about your generosity inside >>>

Passing the leadership torch

Erin O'Brien announces retirement effective December 31, 2025

On January 14, 2025, the Community Solutions Board of Directors formally accepted the retirement notice of our President & CEO, Erin O'Brien, effective December 31, 2025.

Erin has been an integral part of Community Solutions since 1996, beginning as a social work intern before quickly advancing into leadership roles. She was named President & CEO in 2003. Erin's tenure has been defined by her unwavering dedication to our clients, her deep commitment to our staff, her spirit of collaboration, and her enduring pursuit of justice and equity.

Under Erin's leadership, Community Solutions has grown from a staff of 60 to over 400 and expanded services throughout Santa Clara County and into San Benito County. Through this remarkable growth, the agency has significantly broadened its reach and impact, providing comprehensive support services to individuals and families navigating life's most difficult challenges.

On February 11, 2025, the Community Solutions Board of Directors unanimously and enthusiastically appointed Rachel Montoya, Community Solutions' current Chief Financial Officer, as Erin's successor.

Since joining Community Solutions in 2019, Rachel has been a trusted partner and close collaborator with Erin, demonstrating exceptional leadership, strategic insight, and a deep commitment to our clients, our mission, and the Community Solutions team.



Erin O'Brien, President & CEO (left) and Rachel Montoya, Chief Financial Officer (right), are working together to ensure a smooth transition of leadership by year-end.

Throughout her tenure, Rachel has played a key leadership role at both the local and state levels, guiding Community Solutions, and the broader human services sector, through major challenges such as the COVID-19 epidemic and significant statewide behavioral health system transformations.

Erin's retirement follows a thoughtful, multi-year succession planning process to ensure the agency remains under strong, capable leadership well into the future. Community Solutions' Board and leadership team are deeply committed to continuing the agency's tradition of action and advocacy while meeting the growing and changing needs of our local communities.

As Erin and Rachel continue their working partnership throughout the transition, we remain grateful for Erin's visionary leadership and are excited for the future under Rachel's stewardship.

Jonnie and Javi were struggling

Thanks to your care, they've made it through their time of crisis

Jonnie is a newly single father whose spouse struggled with substance abuse and recently abandoned the family. Jonnie was feeling overwhelmed by suddenly needing to navigate finances, work, and his son's school and care all by himself. "I just felt tired all the time," he says.

Thanks to your generosity, Jonnie was able to get support through our new Enhanced Care Management program, which is designed to connect families to critical healthcare supports and community services that can improve their lives.

Jonnie was initially skeptical; he had tried to get help before but felt that nobody truly cared about his struggles. But his care team was patient, giving him space to vent his frustrations, while determining what supports would make the biggest



Thanks to you, Jonnie and his son, Javi, were connected to health-care supports and community resources that dramatically improved their wellbeing — including bikes for getting to school!

difference for the family.

For Jonnie, this was dental care for debilitating mouth pain and therapy for him and his son, Javi.

With new dentures, Jonnie's self-confidence has improved dramatically and

The care team also referred Jonnie to a local free bike program which has made Javi's school commute more fun and manageable. Father and son can now enjoy a 15-minute bike ride to school instead of an hour-long bus ride.

"Thanks for actually caring."

Jonnie, age 47

he's even started to cook again, a joy he had given up due to mouth pain. Therapy has helped him to be more organized and structured in his life. He is now active in a job placement center and current on rent.

Jonnie recently shared that Javi is now happily enrolled in an after-school program and just celebrated his 11th birthday.

Thanks to your care and generosity, Jonnie and Javi are thriving today!

Your help needed for local families in crisis

Your urgent gift can provide safety and care for a local family today

As you read this, families and individuals are desperately seeking safety from domestic violence, help with anxiety, depression and severe mental illness, and even groceries and rent support for their day-to-day survival.

At the same time, many who are hurting in our community are afraid to seek support due to deportation threats and the fear of families being torn apart.

Which is why your support is more important than ever right now.

Your donation of just \$43.54 can provide one day of safety and care for a family or individual who is hurting right now.

Your gift will provide emergency shelter from domestic violence, life-saving mental health care, groceries, rent support, and more -- the things a struggling family needs to survive.



Your gift will provide a local family or individual in crisis with safety and care, including safe shelter from violence, mental health care, groceries, and more.

That's an incredible gift you can give to a local family who is hurting right now!

Please help today by sending 1, 2 or even 3 days of safety and care to help a local family or individual in crisis.

Your gift of just \$43.54 can provide one day of safety and care for a local family in crisis!

My special donation to help a local family in crisis!

☒ **Yes, Erin! I want to help a local family in crisis and support all the essential work of Community Solutions. Enclosed is my gift of:**

- ☐ **\$43.54** to provide 1 day of safety and care for a local family in crisis
- ☐ **\$87.08** to provide 2 days of safety and care for a local family in crisis
- ☐ **\$130.62** to provide 3 days of safety and care for a local family in crisis
- ☐ \$ _____ to provide as many days of safety and care as possible for a family in crisis

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Give quickly, easily and securely online at www.CommunitySolutions.org