

Letter from the CEO

Hello everyone,

It is a profound honor to be part of our ever-growing family of programs, employees, volunteers, and community members. Together, relationship by relationship, we are strengthening connections that foster healing, growth, and resilience. Our Annual Event this past November was a powerful reminder of the breadth and impact of the work we are doing. The evening was dedicated to celebrating the incredible contributions of our 370 volunteers and 88 employees. Additionally, we took the opportunity to recognize the generous and ongoing support of the Codiga Family Foundation, whose partnership continues to make our work possible.

-Bill McCabe



Family Service Agency of the Central Coast

Counseling | Suicide Prevention | Survivors Healing Center | I-You Venture
Senior Outreach | WomenCARE | Mobile Crisis | 988 | Daisy Store

FSA Annual Event

Celebrating our Community

This past November, Family Service Agency hosted our Annual Event again for the first time since 2019. We welcomed several hundred employees, volunteers, donors, and community members and their loved ones for a celebration of the extraordinary work contributed by all who participate in our programs.

Each program honored select volunteers for their dedication to the vulnerable populations they serve. Congratulations to our awardees, and thank you again for all of your hard work!



CORE Grant

We are excited to announce that our Senior Outreach and I-You Venture programs were awarded CORE grant funding through Santa Cruz County. This grant, spanning 2025 through 2028, will allow both programs to continue providing their crucial services to benefit seniors living in Santa Cruz and Watsonville. Senior Outreach's peer-counselors help seniors by supporting them through aging challenges and life transitions by visiting them once a week in their homes and working through issues together. I-You Venture provides support to seniors living in care facilities. These programs and the communities they serve will benefit greatly from receiving this critical funding!

Celebrating Dia De Los Muertos

Honoring our Loved Ones

Members of the Suicide Prevention Service team had the privilege of attending two Dia De Los Muertos celebrations at the Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History and Hartnell Community College. We are incredibly grateful for the opportunity to join our community in honoring this beautiful and meaningful tradition.

During these events, we were able to connect with attendees and share the vital resources our agency offers, making an impact during this special time of year. It was truly heartwarming to engage with the rich culture and traditions of our community. In total, we had the honor of speaking with 160 residents from Santa Cruz and 98 from Monterey County, spreading awareness and fostering connections that will continue to support our community's well-being.



Holiday Helper

Spreading Cheer to Local Seniors

I-You Venture hosts Holiday Helper each holiday season to ensure that seniors living in local care facilities are not forgotten and have the opportunity to celebrate the holidays. This year, I-You Venture collected over 2800 gifts from generous donors, which were distributed to over 900 seniors. It is wonderful to see the smiles on their faces!

Thank you to all of this year's donors for your generosity, and for helping to spread holiday cheer to our seniors!



If you are interested in learning more about I-You Venture, or if you would like to plan to donate for next year's Holiday Helper, please contact Nancy Cleveland via email or phone at cleveland.n@fsa-cc.org or 831-459-8917.

Mobile Crisis Response Team

New Alternatives in Crisis Support

Our Mobile Crisis Response team is kicking into gear! This program is a community-based service designed to provide assistance for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis. The goals of this new program are to de-escalate situations, connect individuals with community resources, and reduce the need for law enforcement intervention and hospitalizations.

Training for this program is provided through M-TAC videos and via in person training by County of Santa Cruz Behavioral Health staff. M-TAC videos focus on equipping staff with the skills to respond to mental health emergencies, and allow our responders to practice crisis intervention scenarios. These training sessions allow staff to reflect on their responses, share feedback, and suggest improvements.

After each crisis call, there is a debriefing session where staff can discuss the call, evaluate what went well, identify areas for improvement, and ensure that best practices are followed in future situations. This approach aims to continuously improve the quality of support provided in crisis situations.

Since beginning last year, our Mobile Crisis teams have coordinated with community partners in Watsonville, including the Police Department and Sheriff. We have responded to calls from Watsonville and up to the Santa Cruz mountains. While the call volume for Mobile Crisis in Santa Cruz County has been initially slow, the County is actively working to increase awareness of the service through advertising. As a result, the volume of calls for mobile crisis support is gradually rising.

The Mobile Crisis team operates 4:30pm - 8am. In order to access Mobile Crisis in Santa Cruz County 24/7, please call 1-800-952-2335.



Farewell Andrea Tolaio

We send a fond farewell to Andrea Tolaio, who has resigned from her position as the Director of Suicide Prevention Services after three years of dedication to Family Services.

Thank you Andrea for all of your compassion, hard work, and commitment to your employees and the countless people who benefited from your program's work! Please join us in wishing Andrea the best in all her future endeavors.

Welcoming New Leadership

We are excited to welcome three members of the FSA community into their new directorial roles. These three women have done exceptional work in their time here, and we look forward to seeing what they will contribute to the agency and the communities their programs serve. Join us in congratulating Amber, Celeste, and Lizette!



Celeste Cisneros (left)
Suicide Prevention Services Director

Lizette Navarro (right)
Human Resources and Operations Director

Amber Burke-Helmuudt (not pictured)
988 Director

Upcoming Events & Other Updates

- » WomenCARE's Writing Circle meets virtually the 2nd Saturday of every month from 10am - noon. In this group, we write to what moves us, including poems, parts of other writing, music, photos, paintings, objects of personal meaning, and whatever else feels right to share. To join us for this peaceful and perfection-free afternoon, register with Beth Phillips Brown at b.phillips.brown@gmail.com by the prior Thursday evening.
 - » Survivors Healing Center welcomes Beth Austin, a physical therapist, craniosacral and somatoemotional process practitioner with over 30 years of experience, in a new inclusion to the Imagine Healing Workshops Series. Join us via Zoom on February 8th, 2025 from 10am-12pm for "Becoming A Healing Presence In Your Own Journey". Participants explore together the impact of how we respond to our own experience and ways to support deep healing based on neuroscience research. This will be a supportive, nurturing and experiential time of learning to recover our sense of power in our own healing process so we can arrive in a new sense of home inside ourselves. To register, visit SHC's EventBrite page. Please email shc.program@fsa-cc.org for more information.
 - » Join WomenCARE the 4th Saturday of each month for our Complementary Treatment Forum: Circle of Trust. Complementary Treatment Forum is an educational and collaborative group for women who want a safe place to learn, sort through, and share information about the many complementary cancer treatments. These workshops will be available via Zoom in a series for the following dates at 10am-12pm: January 25, February 22, March 22, and April 26. A "Circle of Trust" is when we dedicate space and time for the practice of deep listening and deep sharing. It is an opportunity to speak from the heart and be heard by a circle of compassionate listeners, and it is an opportunity to listen from the heart as a witness for others in the circle to share their process. These groups are hosted by Terra Collier-Young. To register, please call 831-457-2273 or email Paula at sims.p@fsa-cc.org
 - » I-You Venture is always welcome more volunteers for our Friendly Visitor Program. If you would like to spread cheer and give company to seniors in our local care facilities, contact Nancy via email or phone at cleveland.n@fsa-cc.org or 831-459-8917.
- Keep an eye on our programs' Facebook and Instagram pages for updates & ways you can get involved!

Donate Today!

Thank you to all of our generous donors for helping us continue to serve the Central Coast!

Donate on our website!
www.fsa-cc.org/donate-now



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