



# EMPTY BOWLS

A fundraising  
campaign  
to benefit  
Pajaro Valley  
Loaves & Fishes

2021



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Dear Friends,

I am writing to ask for your support of our 2021 Empty Bowls campaign to support Pajaro Valley Loaves and Fishes. In my first year as Director, I have been deeply moved by your generosity and care for our neighbors. Your support has made a **direct impact** alleviating hunger and food insecurity in our community. Because of YOU, our small but mighty organization continues to serve nutritious and healthy food to families and individuals during this time of challenge, uncertainty, and loss.

Our team works diligently to meet the needs of the community, working on the frontlines Monday through Friday, rain or shine, including holidays, to offer food and access to health resources. In 2020, we had 15,364 pantry visits – a **30% INCREASE** from 2019. We distributed more than 588,000 pounds of wholesome food and fresh produce through the pantry and served 29,000 filling, well-balanced lunches. We are also pleased to organize on-site walk-in vaccination clinics in partnership with the Homeless Persons' Health Project of Santa Cruz County Public Health. By addressing the needs of our most vulnerable population, our entire community is lifted up.

**In addition to creating the safest environment possible for our clients, we will also proceed with caution in our fundraising efforts. Again, this year, instead of an in-person event, we are raising funds through an Empty Bowls Campaign.**

Since 2004, our Empty Bowls Dinner and Auction has raised vital funds to support year-round operations of our food pantry and lunch programs. In 2019, we raised 28% of our operating expenses AND funds for facility improvement.

Through careful planning and steadfast commitment from board members, staff, and volunteers, not only were the floors replaced throughout the facility, including the kitchen, but every room was painted as well. This project required moving all pantry and office furniture, kitchen appliances, and food preparation tables out, while simultaneously continuing all food services to our clients without interruption. Thanks to your generosity, the inside of Loaves and Fishes looks and feels bright, clean, and beautiful.

**Our Empty Bowls Campaign goal is to raise \$80,000 to sustain our food pantry and lunch programs and extend the hours of our pantry.** Many of our farmworker clients, who work long hours harvesting food for us all, find it difficult to make our 3pm pantry closing time during the harvest season. We plan to extend Pantry hours to 6pm one or two days a week to accommodate their needs. The expected cost of these extended operating hours for the year is \$25,000. **Please join us in our work to make healthy food accessible to all our neighbors in need.**

**Thank you for sharing our vision by supporting our Empty Bowls Campaign as a sponsor or donor.** I look forward to gathering for Empty Bowls next year. Until then, take care and know that together we are making a difference in our community for those in need.

With sincere appreciation,

*Ashley Bridges*

Ashley Bridges, Executive Director