



SAMARITAN
HOUSE



SUMMER 2025

The Samaritan



A Letter from Our CEO

Thank you to everyone who made our Enchanted Garden Gala a remarkable success. With your help, we raised essential funds to feed families, keep seniors housed, provide healthcare for uninsured neighbors, and more. I am so grateful.

The year ahead promises to be challenging. Food prices remain high and shortages of basics like eggs and chicken are an ongoing concern. **As food costs continue to rise faster than income, the impact is being felt deeply by the people Samaritan House serves.** Rising food prices disproportionately impact low-income families; our food program is critical to offsetting this expense, so they can put their dollars to best use for other necessities like rent and utilities. That struggle is compounded by a decline in food donations from some of our regular suppliers. The food landscape, both in San Mateo County and the nation at large, is increasingly dire. We see it firsthand in our kitchen and pantry, and we know our clients feel it as well.

But where the current climate has created gaps, our community is building bridges. I've seen it when neighbors like you came together to ensure we had enough turkey, chicken, and ham, to put holiday meals on our clients' tables. **I've seen it in our kitchen, where volunteers have stepped up and helped us double our daily meal service, preparing up to 3,000 meals on our busiest days.** That's no small accomplishment!

I've been inspired by so many of our neighbors who go the extra mile, and it has only strengthened my faith in our community's ability to face these challenges head-on. In this newsletter, you'll hear from partners who make a real difference, like Nico and Aram, two elementary aged kids who held a fundraiser for Samaritan House, so our clients could enjoy turkeys and hams at their holiday meals. I applaud these boys' efforts and the efforts of all our supporters and volunteers who do this important work.



How can you be a part of meeting the need in our community? There are so many ways.

- **Run a food drive** in your neighborhood. Contact our team at donationdrives@samaritanhousesanmateo.org to learn about our most critical needs.
- **Donate clothes to Kids Closet.** The savings families gain by getting essentials at Kids Closet is an important way to offset other critical expenses, helping them better meet their family's basic needs.
- **Make a financial gift** at samaritanhousesanmateo.org/donate. Your gift goes further when we pool it with other donations to purchase in bulk, stretching your dollars to buy as much as possible.

However you choose to give, thank you for showing up for those in need. When we work hand in hand to fight poverty and lift lives, we all come out stronger together. Thank you for being with us!

Be well,

Laura E. Bent
Chief Executive Officer

Anthony's Story

Anthony has always been a hard worker, taking on extra hours when he could and stepping up to fill in for coworkers when needed. But, when an injury on the job site left him unable to work, everything changed. The severity of his injury meant he'd be out of work for months. And, it wasn't just the pain of his injury that was tough, the mental toll was even harder. "I'm a pretty tough guy, so if something hurts, it hurts. On top of not being able to work, you have that pride, which also hurts. So, it's not just the physical pain, it's the mental anguish. It was a terrible struggle."

Anthony was careful with his money. "I've always been able to manage my funds and live within my means." But, when his savings ran dry and it became very clear he wouldn't be able to pay his rent, Anthony knew he needed to find help.

In his moment of crisis, Anthony turned to Samaritan House and received assistance with his rent. It was a relief to know that he didn't have to worry about housing while he was recovering. "If it wasn't for Samaritan House, I'd probably be homeless." But it wasn't just the financial relief - it was knowing that he wasn't on his own.

The support didn't end with rent. To help stretch an already strained budget, Anthony started picking up groceries from our drive-thru pantry. It was convenient and provided quick access to the food he needed to survive.

Then, in 2024, Anthony started getting his groceries at our newly-opened Cora's Community Market. He enjoys being able to browse the market, picking out the food that he likes. "This is a blessing. I love it that we're able to come in here." He's thoughtful about how to make the most of it, pairing the essentials he gets at the market with smart shopping done at local grocery stores. The supplemental food makes a difference, especially with food prices remaining high and unpredictable.



For Anthony, Samaritan House isn't just a safety net—it is a way to get back on his feet with dignity. And for so many in our community, that kind of support is life-changing.

It's a lifesaver because I would be spending hundreds of dollars otherwise. The two times a month I come here, those are about half the meals I eat during the week. If I can save \$100, it's a huge help.

From Ruby's Kitchen to Teriyaki Chicken



Many in our community depend on Samaritan House for food. At Cora's Community Market and our drive-thru pantry, families can find fresh groceries and pantry staples that cater to a wide range of cultural backgrounds. In our kitchen, Ruby and her team cook up thousands of hot meals every day—served nightly at our San Mateo Dining Hall and delivered to clients in our shelters, partner sites, and beyond. For seniors and homebound clients unable to visit our sites, volunteers deliver meals through Mobile Meals, ensuring no one is left out.

It's a true community effort, that relies on the generosity of our volunteers and neighbors. Local grocery stores also play a vital role, keeping our shelves stocked and our meals flowing with food donations through our grocery rescue program. Together, we ensure that everyone has access to the food they need—because no one in our community should go hungry. One of our community's favorite dishes is teriyaki chicken. Give it a try with your family!

Teriyaki Chicken, as prepared in the Samaritan House kitchen

Ingredients (serves family of 4)

- 2 chicken breasts
- 1 medium onion
- 2 carrots
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 1/4 cup water
- 1 1/2 Tbsp packed light brown sugar
- 1 Tbsp rice vinegar
- Sesame seeds to taste

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Cut chicken breast into strips. The strips should be roughly a half inch wide. Cut onions into long strips and slice carrots into bite size pieces.

3. Toss chicken, carrots, and onions together in a pan with some olive oil to prevent sticking. Put in the oven for 20 minutes, until chicken is browned and carrots are tender enough to pierce with a fork.
4. While the chicken and veggies cook, mix together water, vinegar, soy sauce, and brown sugar in a saucepan. Heat the sauce over a low-medium heat to thicken it. Stir occasionally. Once it has thickened, remove from heat.
5. Mix sauce with chicken and veggies. Sprinkle sesame seeds over the top and serve with rice for a delicious, nutritious meal!

Want to add more veggies to your meal? Broccoli, cauliflower, and bell peppers all make great additions. Cut your favorite vegetables into bite size pieces and bake with the chicken. It's a great way to use up vegetables in your kitchen! Our clients love it and you will too.

Our Impact



On average, families who receive food save
\$2,200
every year



More than
1 Million
pounds of food are saved through
the Grocery Rescue program



more requests for
food assistance



4.9 Million
meals are distributed per year

Community Spotlight

Nico and Aram, two elementary school students, recently turned their compassion into action by organizing a bake sale to support Samaritan House. As part of the ROPES Project, which encourages students to give back to their community, the boys wanted to help people struggling with food insecurity. "We decided to raise money for Samaritan House because of all the sad people I've seen on the street," Aram shared. Nico added, "We wanted to put other people's needs before ours and try to help people build their lives up." With a goal of providing groceries for families in need, the duo quickly got to work.

To spread the word, Nico and Aram created a video explaining their project, which their families shared with friends and relatives. Their efforts paid off—through their bake sale, they raised enough money to purchase and donate high-protein foods to Samaritan House's Food Pantry. "I am proud of all the baked goods we made and the money we earned," Aram said. Nico agreed, adding, "We did a really good job making the baked goods, selling them, and buying the protein we needed to deliver to Samaritan House."

Their advice for other kids who want to get involved? "Some people aren't as lucky as you are and are in need of clothes, toys, or even food," Nico said. Aram echoed the sentiment: **"We have everything we need—some people don't. We should help them."** Their story reminds us how even the youngest members of our community can make a meaningful difference in the lives of others.



Help Our Littlest Clients, Give the Gift of Backpacks!

Looking for a way to help kids in need this summer? Scan here to donate to our Back to School program! You'll be giving a child the gift of confidence as they head back to the classroom in a few months.



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Support Samaritan House: Many Ways to Make Change

Make a lasting impact on our community by making a donation that aligns with your financial goals.

- **Stock Donations** – Donate appreciated securities to maximize your contribution.
- **Donor-Advised Funds (DAFs)** – Recommend a grant to Samaritan House through your DAF.
- **IRA Charitable Contributions** – Make a tax-free gift directly from your IRA if you're 70½ or older.
- **Cryptocurrency** – Support our mission with a tax-efficient crypto donation.
- **One-Time or Monthly Gifts** – Give online to provide steady support.
- **Legacy Gifts** – Create a lasting impact by including Samaritan House in your estate plans.

By donating stock, DAFs, IRA distributions, or cryptocurrency, you may reduce capital gains taxes, receive a charitable deduction, and maximize the impact of your gift. These methods ensure more of your contribution directly supports Samaritan House's mission to Fight Poverty and Lift Lives in our community.



Scan the QR code or visit
samaritanhousesanmateo.org/ways-to-give today!