



PO Box 2744
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And homeless near a
thousand homes I stood,
And near a thousand tables
pined and wanted food.

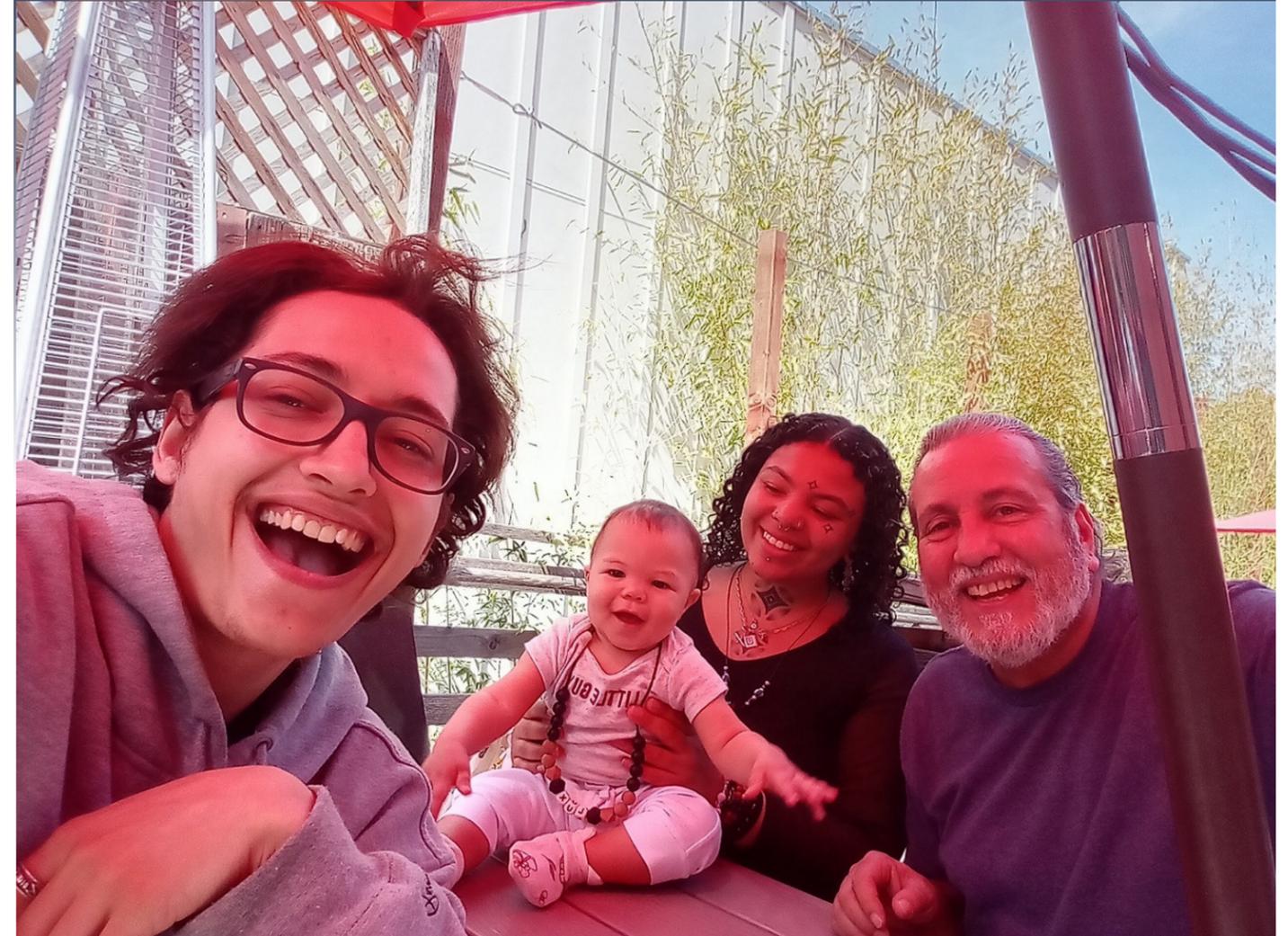
- William Wordsworth

Help Us Meet Our Match!

COTS is excited to announce the return
of our Holiday Match Challenge!
This year, an anonymous donor has
challenged our community to raise
\$100,000 by #GivingTuesday, and they
will match it.

Will you help us reach our goal?

Scan Me!



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Dear COTS Supporters and Friends:

In this edition, we wanted to focus on gratitude. All of us here at COTS hope that you read this newsletter in good health and high spirits.

Personally, I am grateful for the incredible team we have built here at COTS. Our organization is full of compassionate, skilled, and dedicated employees who work to end homelessness in our community every day. I am humbled by the talent and compassion of our staff, and invite you to attend one of our events over the coming months to meet them for yourself!

As an organization, COTS wants to thank you for your invaluable support of our mission—your generosity, advocacy, and overall support have helped us make a significant impact in the lives of countless people in our community.

Since 1988, your contributions have provided shelter, and sustenance, and helped COTS restore hope to thousands of our neighbors. Collectively, we will continue to offer a pathway toward self-sufficiency for vulnerable community members.

COTS is humbled and inspired by your unwavering support to create a community where everyone has a place to call home. Once again, COTS is profoundly grateful for your partnership in this important mission.

Warm regards,

Chris Cabral

What's Inside



Meet the Board

We sat down with COTS Board Member, Phyllis Rich Cohen, MD.

Dr. Phyllis Rich Cohen joined the COTS Board in October 2022. Phyllis has over 25 years of experience working with an underserved population of patients, including, low-income, unhoused, immigrant, mentally ill, and substance using individuals. She also has a sub-specialty in HIV medicine. Phyllis moved with her husband, Steve, to Santa Rosa in 2018 from Los Angeles just as their daughters were starting college at UC Berkeley. We sat down with her to learn more about how she got involved with COTS' Board of Directors.

How did you find out about COTS?

Former Board Member Mike Resch worked at Amy's Kitchen with my husband and mentioned the opportunity to him. When my husband told me about it, I said "Wait, that might be a good fit for me." I knew of COTS and what a great reputation they had in the community.

What interested you in being on COTS board?

I have always been passionate about serving those most vulnerable in our community. In my professional life I worked in HIV, particularly in community clinics where there's more of an underserved population. I took care of a lot of people who were homeless and had substance abuse and mental health issues. So, I am familiar with the population COTS serves and with my background, thought I could be of service.

Tell us more about your past volunteer experience. When my family lived in Los Angeles, I chaired the Feeding

the Homeless committee through my synagogue. My daughters, who were in high school, then volunteered with me. Then during the pandemic, I spent some time volunteering at Redwood Empire Food Bank. The need was just so high.

Tell us about your experience on the board so far:

It's educational and collaborative. I'm learning a lot about the programs within Sonoma County and the progress that's being made, which is very hopeful. Everyone seems like they work really well together and get along really well and very, you know, they're very supportive of each other and positive attitudes. I'm joining the Programs committee which is slated to start meeting soon.

What has been the most beneficial part of being on the board for you?

I'm working part time so my experience on the COTS Board augments might work and gives me more opportunity to use my knowledge and share my knowledge and feel like I'm contributing to the community.



In the Business of Giving: Team Ghilotti

In 2007, when Glen Ghilotti founded Team Ghilotti, there was one driving value: that a company is only as good as its employees. As you'd expect with a name like Team Ghilotti, teamwork is the bedrock of their success. Their teamwork expands beyond the work site and into the community partnering with local organizations to give back to the community.

Team Ghilotti has a long tradition of giving back to the community – “not because we feel like we have to, but because we earnestly want to support

the places we love and where our Team calls home.” Whether through in-kind donations, helping with construction projects, scholarships or charitable giving, Team Ghilotti is actively giving back to our community.

“ [We give give back] not because we feel like we have to, but because we earnestly want to support the places we love and where our Team calls home.”

As Jennifer Ghilotti put it, [giving back] is just one of our core values is. You know, we have children from our employees that go to these schools and these businesses you do work in the city within the city. So,

we just support giving back to the community that we are in.”

Team Ghilotti first started supporting COTS not too long after their founding. Glen asked his board of directors

which organizations in the community were the most important to support and COTS was on that list. After Glen passed away and his son Kevin took over, COTS remained on their list of organizations to support - to both give back to the community and honor his father.

Here at COTS, we're so grateful to local businesses like Team Ghilotti for their financial support. If your business is interested in learning how to partner with COTS through volunteerism, in-kind donations, or financial support, please contact us at development@cots.org.



Client Story: Donald

Before COTS, Donald was living a successful life with a good job. But as he said, “everything fell apart, and then I fell apart.” His relationship with his children wasn't in the best place. He hadn't spoken to one son in almost two years. His daughter lived out of the state.

When COVID hit, Donald moved in with his sister, Stella, to be her full-time caretaker. Sadly, Stella's health continued to decline, and her son stepped in to move her to a care facility and Donald was told to move out. But he had no place to go.

One of his sons told him he had to go to COTS. It was near his work, so Donald could visit, and a stay at COTS would give him time to find housing.

It was a hard choice, but he decided to go to COTS. Soon into his stay, he met with volunteers and staff in our Red Tape Club to get the assistance he needed to find housing. Donald learned he was eligible for social security. So, he secured his own ride to the



Social Security Administration to get his card and secure his benefits. He found out he was able to work and continue to receive benefits, so he set his sights on getting a job. Lucky's grocery store is a close walk from COTS. He spoke to a manager about getting a job and was told to apply online. “I don't know how to use computers”, said Donald, so a Red Tape Club volunteer helped him fill out the online application and was hired immediately.

Donald had a strong drive to get his life together and get his family back. That drive and focus became a real inspiration for several clients. “My old bunkie told me when I come here and see you it makes me know that I can do it that, I

“ My old bunkie told me when I come here and see you, it makes me know that I can do it that . . . that I can survive.”

can that I can survive.” Donald was a great listener for fellow residents, many of whom just needed a listening ear, but he was also quick to tell them that they needed to put in the effort if they wanted to see a change in their life.

Eventually, Donald was able to secure housing right before the holiday season. He hosted Thanksgiving for some of his friends he'd made at COTS. As they sat down to eat, one of his friends started to cry – it was

his first time having a family-style Thanksgiving dinner.



Then, his wish to reconnect with his family came true. His two sons came to his new place on Christmas Day. He now has a daughter-in-law and a grandson in his life. His kids told him, “We're proud of you dad, we've got you back.” He's reconnected with his ex-wife, who recently helped get him to a doctor's appointment.



Food For Their Futures



“ I am so grateful to have such well thought out healthy meals, I couldn't heal properly without them.”

-Linda Guajardo

Recuperative Care and Cuisine

The road to healing requires food, rest, and care, which is what COTS RC embodies. COTS' six-bed Recuperative Care (RC) unit is a medical respite shelter program that offers a safe, clean environment to hospital patients who are ready to exit from the hospital but

who do not have a home in which to heal. Each person receives care and three meals a day from our kitchen at the Mary Isaak Center. These meals are more than food, they are a way to move forward in the healing process.

These meals, and the over 8000 meals we serve monthly, are made possible by the generosity of our local grocery stores. Not only do these grocery stores help fill a need by providing COTS with their overstock food, they help reduce corporate food waste too!

“ Chef, and her team, play a crucial part in the healing needs of my clients, the meals that are created play a very important part in recovery process of our clients. I would remiss not to mention that the meals created are tasty too.

- Pat Higgins

“ I love the fact that the kitchen always serves fruit, vegetables, and salad along with the main meal as a complete meal is crucial for my healing process.”

-Ahmed Shaheed



“ The kitchen provides great meals, and atmosphere, that creates the opportunity for a whole healing experience.”

-Florence Cocoran

Embracing The Spirit of the Season

As the holiday season approaches, a spirit of generosity fills the air, and we find ourselves reflecting on the importance of giving. While the holidays are a time for joy, togetherness, and celebration, they are also a reminder of the profound impact of your support for COTS.

For many individuals and families, the holidays can be a challenging time. Financial stress, food insecurity, and lack of access to essential resources can be especially pronounced during this period. Donations made during the holidays can directly address these needs, providing food, shelter, clothing, and other essentials to those who need them the most. The holidays is also a time

when your gift here at COTS is amplified – with our upcoming Holiday Match Challenge, your gift will be doubled. We hope we can count on your support to reach our goal. Giving takes various forms. Your generosity this holiday season, whether through volunteerism, in-kind donations, or financial support makes a meaningful difference in the lives of COTS clients.

Toys brighten a child's spirit, and helping in our kitchen provides nutritious meals to those facing food insecurity you're your financial support allows COTS to fund programs where it is most needed at the moment. As we head into colder temperatures your support literally allows us to

extend warmth and compassion during the winter months to those most vulnerable in our community.

The act of giving during the holidays reminds us to be grateful for what we have and to share our abundance with others. It encourages us to take a moment to reflect on the blessings in our own lives and consider those who may be less fortunate.

Your gifts are a powerful way to embrace the true spirit of the season. We hope this holiday season you will find a way to support COTS. There is no gift or act of service too small; thank you for your support.



Want to help brighten the spirits of residents at Mary Isaak Center or the Studios at Montero through song or art projects?
If interested, email Erin Krueger, Director of Development at ekrueger@cots.org



Santa's Little Helpers

Every year, the holidays are a time for celebration and giving. Last year the Secret Santa program was able to tap into the community's spirit of giving and spread cheer far and wide. With over \$350,000 raised, 19,676 people were served and 26,585 gifts were given to families in need.

As the holiday season approaches quickly, we would like to remind our COTS community that if you are looking for a way to give back, consider adopting a heart or letter, signing up to volunteer, or use the hashtags #SonomaCountySecretSanta or #AdoptAHeart to start a conversation on social media. "The GIVING TREE began in 1988 at the Volunteer Center of Sonoma County with gift wishes

for individuals on Red Heart Ornaments displayed on trees around Sonoma County. KZST started the SECRET SANTA program in 1990 with Brent Farris sharing letters on air from individuals and families with their needs. While both groups were successful in finding individuals in the community to give generously, something was missing. In 2008, The Giving Tree and Secret Santa joined forces with encouragement from Bill Friedman, and working together, they found a better way to meet growing needs during the holidays.

Today, Sonoma County's Secret Santa Program is a partnership of Center for Volunteer & Nonprofit Leadership (CVNL), KZST Radio Station & Friedman's Home Improvement, along with

IN 2022:

26,585
Gifts were given

103 Nonprofits
engaged

Over \$350,000
was raised

19,676 Individuals
were served

thousands of local businesses, agencies, volunteers and donors who work together to bring joy and hope community-wide."

While they are not ready to receive gifts quite yet, get ramped up and start thinking about what you or your organization can do! For more information on Secret Santa please visit: <https://blog.secretsantanow.org/what-is-secret-santa/>

If you'd like to support Secret Santa, gifts will be available to purchase after Thanksgiving.

Why They Donate

“It’s my favorite charity. The money is extremely well-spent. [COTS] helps people who have just had a rough shake in life. It’s a great investment.”

- John Sedlander

Former Board member and donor for more than 20 years

“We chose to support COTS because of their commitment to their mission and the community. The wide range of resources they offer in order to help people find permanent housing communicates to us that their approach comes from a place of empathy and a deep understanding of homelessness.”

- Ramona and Jose Lopez-Adair
New Donors

“COTS is the number one charity; your money really goes to helping people in their daily lives. To me, there is no waste. Your investment really does work.”

- Judy and Michael Tuhtan

Former Board Member and donors for more than 20 years

“It’s an investment in making Petaluma a safer, kinder, and more humane place to live. We are raising our kids here. We want to build up those around us.”

- Daniel and Sarah Hudspeth
New Donors



Petaluma's 20-30 Club

What is the 20-30 Club?

The 20-30 Club is a group of like-minded individuals who are interested in helping their community, interested in leadership roles, and gaining friends. We are an international organization, so, Petaluma is just one of many clubs.

How do people join the 20-30 Club and what are the benefits of joining?

We have a meeting every month, and people can just show up to any meeting, email us, or reach out to us on Instagram or Facebook. The only limit for the club is that you must be between the ages of 20 and 39. We want the young to serve the children so that when those children grow up, they can join the club and it kind of creates a cycle. We really encourage the younger people in our community to join us because it’s hard to get involved and it’s hard to make friends at this age when you’re not going to school anymore and you’re just working. Another benefit is becoming a better leader by serving on our board of directors.

What are some events of the Petaluma 20-30 Club?

Our back-to-school project in August takes place at schools every year on the second Saturday of August. Normally, we fundraise all year for that event. This year, we took 70 Petaluma-based kids shopping, including

over a dozen from COTS programs back to school shopping, for a total of 130 kids combined with our Sebastopol Club. We provide them with clothes, school supplies, food. We were even able to do quick dental exams and haircuts this year. It’s amazing. And these kids are so grateful. And these families are so grateful, and it makes all of it worth it. In May, we have what’s now called the “Petaluma Great Ribbon Chili Cook-Off”,

“There’s a lot of places that you can donate to, but you don’t really get to see [it] directly affect your personal community [like you do with COTS].”

formerly known as “Ribs for Kids”. It’s a rib competition. We have competitors from all over come out, everybody from chefs to the backyard barbecuers. Then we have “Burning Ham” in September. While like the “Petaluma Great Ribbon Chili Cook-Off”, this one is all different kinds of pork, not just ribs. Both events have live music, games, and a family-friendly atmosphere. Our community really shows up in attending these events and volunteering at our events.

The “Pool Hall” happens in December, and this is where we directly work with COTS. The optional “entry fee,” is a gift card to any sort of activity that’s local. It could be restaurants, bookstores, grocery stores, or anything where families can do something together. At the end, we donate all of the

gift cards to COTS.

Why does the 20-30 Club support COTS?

The 20-30 Club chooses to support COTS because COTS is local, serves Petaluma, and our missions are aligned. We serve the people who really need it and who really deserve it, and we take care of one another in our community.

What would you tell another organization that's considering donating to COTS?

COTS is a great organization and can give back to the people specifically those in our community. There are a lot of places that people can donate to, but with COTS, they really get to see the direct effect their donation has on the community. I think the greatest part about donating to COTS is that we can go around town, and we can see the difference we make.

ways to give



ONLINE, CASH, OR CHECK



APPRECIATED SECURITIES & STOCKS



LEAVE A LEGACY



MATCHING GIFTS



MONTHLY GIVING

To learn more about giving to COTS, visit cots.org/ways-to-give, or contact Erin Krueger, Director of Development, at ekrueger@cots.org or 707.765.6530 x126