PO Box 2744
Petaluma CA 94953

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

- William Wordsworth

Back again for 2026 and more delicious than ever!

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SUMMER NEWS 2026

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A Note From Chris

Some of the most important work happening at COTS doesn't begin with intake paperwork, case management, or appointments. Sometimes, it begins with a hot meal.

At Mary's Table, every lunch and dinner served is an opportunity to create connection, restore dignity, and remind someone that they belong. For many of our neighbors experiencing homelessness or housing instability, these meals are more than nutrition, they are stability, connection, and belonging.

Each day, COTS welcomes volunteers to step into that experience alongside us. Whether preparing food, serving meals, cleaning tables, or simply offering conversation, our volunteers help transform Mary's Table into a space where people feel seen and respected.

One of the things I hear most often from volunteers is surprise—not at the challenges people are facing, but at how quickly they recognize themselves in the stories they hear. Rising housing and grocery costs. Overdue medical bills. A lost job. The line between stability and crisis is much thinner than people realize.

Recently, one client shared that coming to Mary's Table at COTS gave them the routine and human interaction they had been missing for years. Many others describe the relief of knowing there will be a warm meal and familiar faces waiting at the end of the day while they worked toward securing housing.

At COTS, we know that ending homelessness requires housing, services, and systems change, but it also requires community. Mary's Table at COTS is a powerful reminder that each person has something meaningful to contribute.

To everyone who has volunteered, donated, prepared a meal, or joined us at the table: thank you.
You are helping create moments of dignity today and pathways to stability tomorrow.

Warm regards,

Chris Cabral

Growing Food, Growing Community

At the Eames Institute, food is not just something that is grown. It is something that connects people.

Through its on-site farm, the Eames Institute grows a wide range of vegetables, fruits, grains, and flowers with a deep respect for ecology and community. That philosophy is now extending beyond the farm through a new partnership with COTS, providing fresh, seasonal produce for meals served at Mary's Table, COTS' community kitchen for neighbors experiencing homelessness.

For Senior Farm Manager David Evershed, farming is rooted in interdependence. "When you work with nature, you realize pretty quickly that nothing exists on its own," he said. "Everything is connected."

That belief guides why the Eames Institute prioritizes sharing its harvest. Reducing food waste and making sure good food reaches people are central values. Produce that might not sell due to minor blemishes or surplus now helps nourish individuals and families through COTS.

> **"One of the things that matters most to me is knowing this food is feeding people," David shared. "If we are putting in all this care, it feels right that it ends up on someone's plate."**

At Mary's Table, those donations help ensure every meal includes fresh fruits and vegetables, supporting both physical health and a sense of dignity.

The partnership reflects a shared belief that meaningful change happens through collaboration. Drawing inspiration from nature, where ecosystems thrive through cooperation, the Eames Institute and COTS are working together to support the community in a practical, deeply human way.

Good food, when shared with intention, becomes more than nourishment. It becomes connection.

Why Mary's Table Matters

Every day, Mary's Table, COTS' community kitchen program, serves more than food. It offers comfort, stability, dignity, and a pathway to better health for neighbors facing some of life's greatest challenges. For many clients, reliable access to nutritious meals is a critical step toward improved health, housing stability, and overall well-being.

The impact is clear. **Clients rated the positive effect of consistent access to COTS meals at 4.36 out of 5**, highlighting the vital role our kitchen plays in supporting recovery and long-term success.

One client shared:

> **"The staff has been the best, the resources here are great. I very much need the medical and housing to be in the same place because I am in poor health. The food is also great and you get so much you feel full and its helping bring my health back. Thank you all."**

Another client reflected on the importance of the support they receive:

> **"I do recommend COTS to any friends who are having a hard time in life. Housing and help for the food is great. COTS is a very good place to be in, wonderful help. Thank you very much."**

For many, the kitchen is part of a larger network of support that helps them move forward:

> **"COTS is an amazing program that is about helping people improve their lives, whether its housing, finding work, improving mental health or physical health. They sincerely want to see all of us be successful in finding the resources one is seeking."**

These stories remind us that a meal can be so much more than nourishment. It can be a source of hope, healing, and connection.

The continued success of the Mary's Table depends on community support. Every donation helps ensure that individuals and families have access to nutritious meals while they work toward greater stability and independence.

Whether you make a financial contribution, volunteer your time, organize a food drive, or help spread awareness about our mission, your support directly impacts the lives of our neighbors in need. Together, we can continue providing the meals, care, and encouragement that help people build healthier, more stable futures.

Join COTS This Summer

In 2025:

208,391 meals were served, over a 52% increase compared to 2024

8,929 hours were served by volunteers

33,724 pounds of food waste were diverted from the landfill

Volunteers are central to COTS. Whether serving meals, sorting donations, supporting families, helping events, or sharing skills, your time directly supports people working toward stability and housing. Every role strengthens the community and brings hope, dignity, and support to those who need it most.

Cook. Serve. Care.

Join us in the kitchen! Weekends and afternoons are when we need you most. Every shift means another neighbor gets nourishing meal. Sign up today by visiting cots.org.

Give the Gift of Home.

Imagine moving into a new place with nothing in the cupboards. A Welcome Home Basket filled with everyday basics helps a family settle in with dignity and warmth.

Fill the Pantry.

COTS serves over 200,000 meals a year. Help us keep shelves stocked and stomachs full by donating food from our holiday wishlist.

They took care of me, I got stronger every day, so I could do more and more. And it became a family. And then it reached the point where I was doing it [volunteering] because I wanted to, not because it was air conditioned. I was doing it because there's such camaraderie in the kitchen. **I had lost myself, and being here with people who care about you, and where you are giving back was, it changed my life. It allowed me a place to kind of heal and find myself.**

-Suzy, a former COTS client and volunteer

From Mary's Table to Yours

Stuffed Zucchinis
Serves about 4

Ingredients

- 1 very large zucchini, halved lengthwise and hollowed out
- 1 medium tomato, diced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 (6-ounce) jar marinated artichoke hearts, chopped, plus 2 teaspoons of the marinade
- ½ cup fresh mozzarella cheese, diced
- ¼ cup cheddar cheese, crumbled
- ¼ cup breadcrumbs
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How to Make Stuffed Zucchinis

- Preheat oven to 450°F
- Place the hollowed zucchini halves in a baking dish.
- In a bowl, combine the tomato, garlic, artichokes, marinade, mozzarella, cheddar, and breadcrumbs.
- Spoon the mixture evenly into the zucchini halves.
- Bake for 25–35 minutes, or until the zucchini is tender and the filling is golden.
- Serve warm.

Enjoy!

♡ Chef Janin

Our kitchen is a place of nourishment, creativity, and connection, where fresh seasonal ingredients are transformed into meals that bring comfort and joy. During the summer months, community garden donations help inspire delicious dishes like this stuffed zucchini, filled with tomatoes, garlic, marinated artichokes, mozzarella, cheddar, and breadcrumbs.

Donations of homegrown fruits, vegetables, and herbs help us provide fresh, nutritious meals and introduce clients to new flavors. If your garden is abundant this season, we invite you to share your harvest with our kitchen. Your generosity helps nourish our community and ensures that fresh produce doesn't go to waste.

Above is the stuffed zucchini recipe that had everyone asking for seconds.

Seven Years. One Community.

Since 2018, a simple idea from local real estate agent Karl Bundesen has grown into a cherished Petaluma tradition. Created to showcase the city's outstanding local restaurants while raising support for COTS, the raffle has expanded from 35 participating restaurants to a beloved annual community event.

Now in its 7th year, the COTS Raffle continues to bring together local businesses, residents, and supporters around a shared goal: helping individuals and families experiencing homelessness find stability and hope. Every ticket purchased supports COTS programs, funding shelter, meals, and housing services for those in need.

The raffle's exclusive focus on Petaluma restaurants not only raises critical funds but also celebrates the locally owned eateries that help make our community special. Over the years, it has inspired countless acts of generosity, including winners who chose to donate their restaurant gift cards back to COTS.

More than a fundraiser, the COTS Raffle reflects the power of community coming together to make a difference. Thank you to everyone who has purchased tickets, donated prizes, or helped spread the word. Your support continues to create opportunities for our neighbors to move toward stability, dignity, and hope.

Good luck this year!

Pictured above: Karl Bundesen, Erin Krueger COTS Development Director, and Bill Gabbert drawing the winning tickets for the 2025 COTS Raffle.

Pictured below: Chris Cabral, COTS CEO, and Bill Gabbert drawing the winning tickets for the 2025 COTS Raffle.

For the latest raffle updates and information, visit cotsraffle.com or scan the QR code.

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 development@cots.org or 707.789.6396.