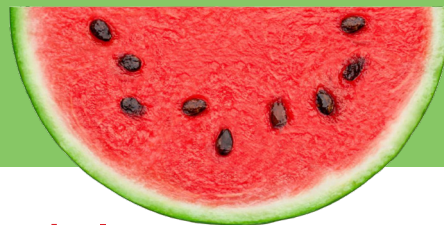




PAJARO VALLEY SHELTER SERVICES

Providing Families with a Path
to Stable, Self-Sufficient Futures

SUMMER
2026



From Sleeping in a Tent to Role Model — Tatiana's Story



Tatiana attending PVSS Summer Women's Retreat

At the heart of our mission is creating a safe, warm environment where parents can focus on rebuilding their lives. Mothers like Tatiana.

Before coming to PVSS, Tatiana, a mother of five children, was sleeping in a tent on Santa Cruz beach without her children. They are currently being cared for by their grandparents. Since coming to PVSS she has learned that she is capable of a lot more things.

"Thank you for donating to PVSS. Because of you, I'm able to have support to help me achieve my dreams. I left high school before graduation and now, at 36 years old, I'm going back to school to get my GED. I want to show my kids that school is important. My hope is to be reunited with my kids and to earn enough money to pay for all the things my family needs."

— Tatiana, Mother of five children and PVSS' Participant

Tatiana is making plans, working hard and moving towards a very bright future!

You Helped a Mom Find Her Smile — Elia's Story

Elia is a mother who historically put her family and others first. Elia came to us after leaving an unsafe partner. He would belittle her and tell her that she couldn't do anything on her own.

"I have always put my family first and never thought about myself. Being with all of you has helped me find myself and see who I am on my own. My partner told me that I couldn't make it without him. That I couldn't do anything on my own but I'm proving him wrong."

— Elia, Shelter Participant

In coming to PVSS, Elia learned that there were programs that provided a path to stability and people willing to help. She eagerly attended the workshops and followed the guidance of Shelter Coordinator, Miriam Caloca and others.

While taking care of everyone else, her own health suffered. Elia has struggled with her dental health which resulted in the loss of many teeth. For eight years the world was denied her smile. While living here, Elia embraced the opportunity to get dental hygiene care through our partnership with Dientes and received a new smile recently.



Elia surrounded by Dientes Staff & Sofia Moreno, PVSS Office Manager

"Seeing Elia's reaction when she looked into the mirror the first time was rewarding. It's a reminder that this is the kind of rewarding work that you can't get anywhere else. She is good!"

— Dr. Her — Staff Dentist, Dientes Mobile Clinic

Elia was all smiles when she shared, "I'm proud of myself. I am a strong woman. I feel self-sufficient! I am doing well now. I'll be leaving the Shelter soon and I'll be leaving happy."



Building a Stronger Team to Better Serve Families Mike Johnson / Executive Director

This summer brings us to the conclusion of our 2023–2026 Strategic Plan. I am proud to share the progress our team has made in creating better outcomes for the families we serve every day.

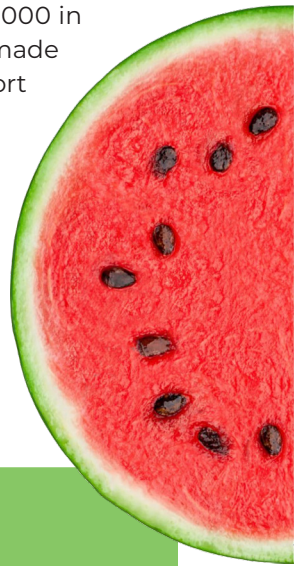
One of our highest priorities was investing in our staff, recognizing that exceptional services begin with exceptional people. During the past three years, we increased salaries by 18 percent in the first year, followed by annual cost-of-living adjustments to help keep compensation competitive. Just as importantly, every employee participated in professional development opportunities specific to their roles and designed to strengthen skills, expand knowledge, and enhance leadership.

We have seen higher employee satisfaction, stronger collaboration, and improved staff retention, allowing us to maintain the continuity and expertise that families need during difficult times. This combined effort has resulted in a 20% decrease in employee turnover in the

first year. Our current team is strong, engaged and passionate about our mission. These qualities allow for more consistent support and create an environment where families can thrive.

Our strategic investments in people also enabled broader organizational success. We expanded programs for people in Long-Term Housing, and increased housing revenue by 130 percent with the conversion of four transitional units to Section 8 rentals. We grew overall organizational revenue by approximately 47% while overcoming the loss of more than \$153,000 in healthcare-sector funding. This work is made possible because of the incredible support from committed donors and partners in the Pajaro Valley and throughout Santa Cruz County.

Completing the goals outlined in the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan has allowed us to build a stronger organization that is better equipped to help families achieve lasting emotional, financial, and housing stability.



A Big Thank You to Our Grantors

The strategic funding from the following organizations has a significant impact on families in PVSS programs. Their partnership provides not only safe, warm shelter for children and their parents but also the emotional and financial resources to overcome barriers and build a strong future for their children.



Back to School – Ready for Success

Gearing up for Back to School started with students receiving backpacks from the Stuff the Bus initiative and other independent community organizations. Thanks to these generous donors, 27 PVSS children ranging in grades TK to 12th grade received backpacks to set them up for success.

Next Level Barbershop owner Roger Contreras returned to offer his services, and Chantelle Mendoza owner of Saiah Salon, joined in for the first time serving the young girls. Both owners offered their services free of charge to our families. A haircut can seem like a small thing, but for someone navigating a crisis, it can be a reminder that they are seen and they matter.

“Thank you for letting me be a part of their back to school preparations! I feel blessed to have met each of their beautiful souls.” — Chantelle Mendoza

The End-of-Summer activities wrapped up with a trip to Monterey that included visiting the Monterey Bay Aquarium and touring Cannery Row on a quadricycle.

We are honored and humbled by a community that cares so deeply. Our families are officially set up for an incredible school year ahead.



Feeling Welcome is So Important — Jennifer’s Story

Jennifer is a mother of three that found her way to PVSS after leaving a toxic and physically abusive relationship. On the way to finding PVSS, she and her children spent many uncomfortable nights at her childhood home feeling unwanted.

She expressed a feeling we hear so often from the mothers that come through our doors: “When my children are not safe, I’m not at ease.”

Moving into the Shelter provided Jennifer with the safety, space and guidance to unpack years of trauma. When asked how she felt on the first night in the Shelter, through tears she responded, “To have a bed, a space that is yours, and to know you’re welcome there is so important.”

Jennifer bravely examined her life experiences while attending the ACEs workshops and she met regularly with her Case Manager, Annette Melendrez. “The workshops are amazing and it feels great to be connected. I saw myself in the other ladies.”

Jennifer embraced all that the Three Pillars of Self-Sufficiency programs offered and stayed focused on

her goals. By following her plan and working hard she created a solid foundation for her family to move into permanent housing.

In a recent conversation and referring to her children, Jennifer shared, “I’m in my new safe space. My success has become their foundation!”



Jennifer (right) with another mother (Prema) at a PVSS celebration



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**SHELTER
to HOME**

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Fall Giving Dinner

Thursday, November 5, 2026 **Seascape Golf Club**, 610 Clubhouse Drive, Aptos



Together, we are changing the trajectory of lives and restoring hope.

Engaging, Serving, and Building a Stronger Community

Our dedicated Board volunteers serve with passion and heart for the families in our community. Board service is a meaningful way to put your experience, wisdom and expertise to work for the greater good.

We are seeking community leaders who are passionate about strengthening families and willing to roll up their sleeves to get engaged. Consider lending your voice and leadership skills to advance our mission and help families thrive.

Board Interest



2026 Phil Rather Awards



2026 Mother's Day Run and Walk



2026 National Night Out



2025 Shelter to Home

Celebrating National Night Out

We had a wonderful time celebrating National Night Out with our families, neighbors, and first responders! Our evening was filled with laughter, good food, and plenty of fun. Thank you to everyone who joined us and helped make this special event a success.



The Mother's Day Run & Walk *was a beautiful morning of celebrating Mom!*

Gathering each year on Mother's Day renews our commitment to support all the mothers who struggle to provide for their children. Thank YOU for your support, time and participation at this year's Mother's Day Race! We look forward to seeing you next year on May 9th, 2027 – Save the Date for Early Bird Registration Opening on October 1st!



Photos and Race Results

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