



PAJARO VALLEY SHELTER SERVICES

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

SUMMER 2025

A Foundation for the Future: One Family's Journey Through Pajaro Valley Shelter Services



In the heart of Pajaro Valley, a single mother of five has quietly built something extraordinary...a foundation not just for survival, but for hope, dignity, and a thriving future. Rosalina's story, shaped and supported by the transformative work of Pajaro Valley Shelter Services (PVSS), offers a powerful testament to the impact of community invest-

ment and compassionate programming.

Rosalina, the head of a household with children ranging in age from 19 to five, first entered PVSS through the Family Emergency Shelter during a time of deep instability. Facing overwhelming challenges, she carried not just the weight of her own uncertainty, but the dreams and well-being of her children as well.

*What she found in PVSS
was more than a roof, it was
a path forward.*

Now in the Transitional Housing Program, she is living proof of what can happen when a person is met with the right resources at the right time. Through PVSS's unique "Three Pillars" program: Emotional, Financial, and Housing Stability, Rosalina began to build a new life. She enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) courses and secured full-time work in a local childcare center, all while developing strong savings skills with a single, determined goal: **homeownership**.

Her commitment has extended beyond her own growth. Rosalina's oldest son, now 19, just completed his first year at California State University, Monterey Bay, study-

ing Computer Science. Her second son, 17, was recently accepted to the same university and will begin in the fall of 2025, pursuing a degree in Agricultural Plant and Soil Sciences. Their educational success is a direct reflection of the stable, nurturing environment their mother has fought to create.

Rosalina and her two eldest sons are a model of perseverance and transformation, demonstrating how emotional support, financial literacy, and stable housing can fundamentally alter the course of a family's future.

Today, Rosalina is saving toward buying a home. She is no longer just dreaming of stability; she is building it...



brick by brick, dollar by dollar, with her children beside her. Her story is a reminder that when families are given the tools to succeed, they do more than overcome adversity. They thrive, contribute to the local economy, and inspire a stronger, more vibrant community for all.

This is the power of possibility, and this is what PVSS donors and staff make real every day.



Stronger Together: Navigating Challenges, Creating Change

Mike Johnson / Executive Director

Over the past year, the resilience, creativity, and commitment of our staff, participants, and partners have shone through in remarkable ways. The year has been a true rollercoaster of economic uncertainty and shifting fundraising landscapes amid deep safety concerns for many of our families. While these issues remain constant, hope is present. Our staff is building resilience and coming together with greater determination to serve families in need.

We remain unwavering in our mission: providing a path to self-sufficient futures for the most vulnerable in our community, the unhoused children and their parents. While we are not untouched by these challenges, PVSS is in a strong position to navigate this changing landscape. That strength comes from you, our community of private supporters, who provide 97% of our annual

funding. Because of your generosity, we remain stable, resilient, and ready to meet urgent needs head-on.

Looking ahead, we're expanding our partnerships to deepen our impact even further.

With Monarch Services, we are pursuing a collaborative grant to provide advanced domestic violence (DV) awareness training for PVSS staff and to deliver DV support services and prevention education directly to our families, equipping them with healthy tools and resources for a brighter future.

We're also partnering with the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) to equip our team with essential mental health knowledge, resource navigation skills, and effective communication strategies. In addition, NAMI will provide direct mental health services to PVSS participants.

Together, with your continued support, we can navigate the uncertainty ahead and create lasting change for the families who need it most.



For 25 years, **Laura Solis** has served families experiencing homelessness with compassion and empathy. In her current role as Operations Manager and throughout the years, she has stepped with willingness and grace. Showing up with determination and courage! We celebrate not only this incredible milestone, but the heart, skill, and dedication with which she has served.

Thank you, Laura, for your unwavering commitment to our mission!

New Team Members!

We're excited to welcome two new members to our PVSS team!



Miriam Caloca will be overseeing week-day operations of the Family Emergency Shelter, ensuring everything runs smoothly for our families.



Melinda Cortez will be taking the lead on weekends, and ensuring the Shelter families are well cared for when the office is closed. We're thrilled to have their passion and dedication providing consistent coverage and guidance for our most vulnerable families.

The Power of Partnerships: Back to School in Style

Preparation for the school year started with fresh haircuts prompted and hosted by Next Level Barbershop. The shop's owner Roger Contreras, once a child living in the shelter, generously opens his doors and regularly offers free haircuts to the boys and men of PVSS. Martin



and Jose, also from Next Level Barber-shop, volunteered their time to help the boys get ready for the first day of school. Liz Villegas joined the guys and served up cuts and curls for the girls. She later shared, "I volunteer because the girls need to feel confident and cared for regardless of their situation. It fills my heart to help."



The County Office of Education supplied 23 children with backpacks filled with essential school supplies – another confidence booster for the children as the school doors open.



The activities wrapped up with an unforgettable end of summer field trip to the Monterey Bay Aquarium. The Santa Cruz METRO generously provided safe and timely transportation to get us there and back. For most of the children and some of the adults, it was their first time experiencing the wonder of the aquarium.

We are deeply grateful for our community partnerships, whose care and support provide children with access, encouragement, and opportunities that strengthen their confidence and prepare them for success.

National Night Out

We had a blast at our recent **National Night Out** celebration, bringing together families, neighbors, police officers, fire-fighters, and Watsonville City leaders! The kids dove into the fun with giant bubbles, exciting games, face painting, a coloring station, and nonstop action in the bounce house. There was even a birthday celebration for one of our young friends. A huge shoutout to Angel, one of our newest board members, for showing the kids how to make those mega-sized bubbles—you were a hit!



Thanks to everyone who joined us for this unforgettable night of community, connection, and pure joy!



New Members to the Board!

This summer we welcomed three new members to the board of directors. We look forward to the diverse opinions and fresh perspectives these new leaders bring to the table.

Ellen Anderson brings passion for service along with practical knowledge of business systems and processes along with having her finger on the pulse of the local job market. "I can offer a different perspective based on what I see in the labor market of Santa Cruz County."

Stephen Carn offers a deep well of experience in operations, technology, and leadership. "I believe that supporting people through critical transitions not only transforms the individual's life but strengthens the community."

Angelique Milhouse values advocacy at a level that goes well beyond the average. She literally brought this deep commitment to life in her role as a foster mom of 22 children. "As a board member, I recognize the vital role I play in guiding its mission and contributing to its overall success."



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Mother's Day
Run and Walk
a Huge Success!



Photos
and Race
Results

The Mother's Day Run and Walk was a wonderful celebration of family and community. Coming together each year on Mother's Day reinforces our commitment to each other and to all the mothers struggling to provide for their children. **Thank you to all who were a part of it! We look forward to seeing you next year.**



PAJARO VALLEY SHELTER SERVICES

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Because of you...

79% of families moved into **Permanent Housing**

72% left with **Employment**

70% left with money in **Savings**



SHELTER to HOME

PAJARO VALLEY SHELTER SERVICES

Fall Giving Dinner

Thursday, November 6, 2025

5:30 Reception / 6:15 Dinner

Seascape Golf Club, 610 Clubhouse Drive, Aptos

To RSVP,
scan or
call today:
831-728-5649



*Together, we can help more families create **STABILITY** and **THRIVE!***