



PAJARO VALLEY SHELTER SERVICES

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

SPRING 2025

From Sleepless Nights to a New Beginning – Ana's Journey

Ana and her children had been struggling long before they arrived at PVSS. Forced to leave their previous home when the landlord chose to rent to a family member instead. With no other options, they began sleeping in their car, relying on the kindness of friends for occasional showers and meals. For three weeks, Ana, exhausted and anxious, parked their car in a hospital parking lot, waking up with every loud sound to ensure her four children were safe. It was stressful for all of them.

A partner organization, Families in Transition, recommended PVSS. After touring, Ana felt an over-whelming sense of relief. However, the transition was not easy. She was battling depression and disability due to her mental health issues, but having stable housing, emotional support, and structure from PVSS program staff, she is finding her way.

Ana has embraced every opportunity for growth and actively participates in all of the workshops. One of her favorites, KidPower, brought parents and children together in a safe environment to face challenging issues. These classes allowed her to learn healthy parenting

tools. She also learned to budget and save money, something she had never done before.



In August 2024, Ana and her children moved into a two-year transitional housing unit. A space she described as "very beautiful." With newfound confidence, she set goals for her future, including becoming a Promotora to help others facing similar struggles.

Now, Ana and her children are moving into permanent housing. Their new place is nestled in the Redwoods of Aptos – a long way from the parking lot of the hospital. With a bright smile, she shared, *"I always dreamt of having a home for my children, and now I'm making it happen."* She expressed deep gratitude for the support she received and the unity her family has gained through this journey. Ana leaves PVSS not just with stability, but with hope, strength, and the belief in a better future.

Shelter, Strength and Self-Worth

Quesia entered the Family Emergency Shelter with her mother, Rosalinda, and a younger brother in early December. Their previous home was a small studio in

bad condition. The unit was subject to flooding and there were rats. They learned of Pajaro Valley Shelter Services through a faculty member at Radcliff Elementary School.

Rosalinda didn't want to consider moving into a shelter because of the

negative stories she had heard but a counselor with Monarch Services also encouraged her to reach out and take a tour – "sharing that it's clean and somewhere people feel like family." Quesia was also nervous about moving into the Shelter because she didn't feel comfortable living with strangers. *Now she shares that it's the best part of living here, "I have many friends here! I can be myself."*

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Building Strong Partnerships
Building strong partnerships with local schools and community providers is key to truly supporting families. These collaborations create a powerful safety net, ensuring families have access to the resources and support they need to thrive.



Standing Strong in Uncertain Times

Mike Johnson / Executive Director

The unwavering support of our community gives us the strength and stability to face uncertainty. These past few months have brought a high level of fear and anxiety to the families we serve.

We are working diligently to educate families about their rights, ensuring they have the knowledge and emotional support needed to navigate any challenges that may arise. Through workshops and one-on-one counseling, we are equipping them with the tools to advocate for themselves and their loved ones. They are showing up with courage and strength!

Fortunately, PVSS does not rely on direct federal funding for daily operations, allowing us to stay mission focused

and keep moving forward. However, as some supporters adjust their contributions, our team is exploring new opportunities to ensure a strong financial future. We are expanding our Section 8 Housing program to provide more affordable housing while generating additional rent revenue for our programs. We are also seeking new sponsors for our upcoming Mother's Day Run and budgeting conservatively for the year ahead.

We are incredibly grateful for the steadfast support of our community. Your dedication gives us the strength and stability to face these challenges head-on. Together, we can push through these uncertain times and create a brighter, safer future for the families who depend on us.

Thank you for standing with us!

March TO END HOMELESSNESS

WALK WITH US
--HOSTED BY: COALITION TO END HOMELESSNESS SCC--

Sunday
May 4th, 2025
10am – 12:30pm
Meet at City Hall
809 Center Street
Santa Cruz
CA 95060



Partnership and Possibility

The **Coalition to End Homelessness Santa Cruz County** is a network of 27 service provider partners dedicated to activating change through advocacy and education. Its purpose is to focus existing resources and innovation to accelerate impact and resolve homelessness in Santa Cruz County. Through the **March to End Homelessness**, the Coalition brings together a broad group of community members, including local nonprofit providers, businesses, and residents, to advocate for actionable solutions to homelessness.

"Every step we take today is powered by partnership and possibility. **As a coalition of service providers, we know that ending homelessness takes more than compassion—it takes commitment,**" said Mike Johnson, Executive Director of Pajaro Valley Shelter Services. "With our community's support, we're not just marching for awareness; we're marching together toward real, lasting change."



JOIN US:

- Sign making
- Real-life testimony
- March for community
- Resource Fair
- Meet the Santa Cruz Coalition to End Homelessness

Shelter, Strength and Self-Worth continued from cover

In their short time with PVSS, Rosalinda and Quesia have made great accomplishments.

The Hope and Home classes with Margarita showed Rosalinda what's possible in the future and she is hopeful. She wants a safe home for herself and her children – one that she can afford on her own. That's self-sufficiency! The ACE's and Family Strengthening led by Mireya was instrumental in helping Rosalinda overcome barriers and heal a relationship with her father. She noted a specific exercise in class that was a catalyst for her personal growth.

Asked to complete this sentence:

I am good at _____,

Rosalinda couldn't fill in the blank.

She truly could not think of one thing to fill in the blank. Years of low self-esteem and negative thoughts kept Rosalinda from seeing her true gifts. Today, Rosalinda knows her worth! She confidently fills in the blank with ***"I'm a good mother, a good cook, and better at socializing with the other ladies in the Shelter."***

"Thanks to PVSS, I have a place to call home because it's been a while since I had a place to call home." — Quesia



Quesia has flourished since moving into the shelter and her grades have improved. In January, she successfully applied for and was accepted into the Cabrillo Advancement Program (CAP). The program comes with a scholarship for Cabrillo College, along with counseling, tutoring, and guaranteed admission into Saturday Academies, field trips, and a Summer Institute – all preparing Quesia for success in college!

"PVSS has been a blessing. In the moment when I needed the most help – I found a place for me and my children."

— Rosalinda

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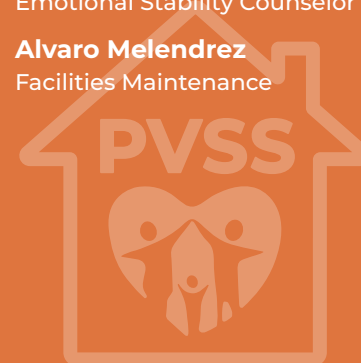
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PAJARO VALLEY SHELTER SERVICES

115 Brennan Street
Watsonville, CA 95076

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SANTA CRUZ, CA
PERMIT #200

Return Service Requested

Because of you...

93% of families moved into **Permanent Housing**
78% left with **Employment**
76% left with money in **Savings**

Thank you for your generous support!

Because of you, families find shelter, education, and case management – but more than that, they find **HOPE**. Together, we are changing lives and futures. Every gift matters!



Want to become a partner?

Making a **one-time donation** or becoming a **monthly donor** will support families working hard to break the cycle of homelessness. You can donate online today at **PVShelter.org** or scan the code:



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

Pajaro Valley Shelter Services

41st Annual

MOTHER'S DAY RUN WALK

Run for Hope and Home

Sunday, May 11, 2025

Location:

Pinto Lake County Park

1K Kids Fun Run — 7:45am

5K Run or Walk — 8:00am

10K Run — 8:45am



Register today:

pvshelter.org or scan QR code





Welcome to Our New Team Member Maria Lopez

Maria Lopez / Economic Development Coordinator

Maria brings over 20 years of experience in business development, marketing strategy, business strategy, relationship building, and market expansion for a variety of industries including private industry and non-profit. We welcome her to the team and look forward to working together to empower families on their journey out of homelessness.

Thank You ...

The latest Strategic support from the following organizations has a significant impact on Ana, Rosalinda and so many others. Their commitment 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.

Caroline's
NON PROFIT THRIFT SHOP



MONTEREY
PENINSULA
FOUNDATION



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We sincerely thank our sponsors for their generous support for this year's Mother's Day Run and Walk. It wouldn't be possible without you!

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