



A HISTORY OF CARING

For fifty years, Community Services Agency (CSA) has been providing vital social services for residents of Mountain View, Los Altos, and Los Altos Hills. We understand that hardship can come at any time and knows no age limit. We provide a safety net so that independence and self-sufficiency can be restored and maintained.

- The first Brownie and Scout groups for minority children, now integrated into the Girl Scouts.

The agency has also sought and established partnerships with other nonprofit providers, to ensure their delivery to CSA's clients. Examples: Women Infants and Children, Lawmobile, and Rotacare.

An evolving name reflects an evolving organization

CSA has grown from humble origins. In 1957, a group of Mountain View residents, concerned about the welfare of low-income families in the city, gathered to talk about the plight of the local migrant farm workers. They decided to form the Mountain View Welfare Council to address the needs of this population. Within a year, the council was incorporated, and it was planning its first sharing of holiday gifts for families.

By 1967, the interests of the council had expanded to include housing issues, immigration issues, and the needs of senior citizens. Accordingly, its name was changed to the Mountain View Community Council.

With a move into larger, permanent office space in 1974, the organization changed its name once again, this time to Mountain View Community Services, reflecting the increasing services provided, such as meals and counseling.

CSA assumed its present name, Community Services Agency, in 1982, in recognition of a client base that extends through Los Altos to Los Altos Hills.

A growing repertoire of programs and services

CSA's first program in 1958 was a holiday gift distribution called Christmas Clearance. Later called Santa Claus Exchange, the program remains today an important element of CSA's work, now the Holiday Sharing program.

1974 was a big year for the agency. Clothing distribution was added to a growing list of Emergency Assistance services. Also, the agency moved into larger facilities at 204 Stierlin Road, Mountain View. Interior painting of the building was performed by clients and board members, while volunteers from the Mountain View Police Department handled the move from the old office space to the new.

Another milestone occurred in 1977, with the initiation of food service to the needy.

CSA's Emergency Assistance program added crisis intervention services in 1982 and the Community Kitchen (food distribution) and financial assistance services in 1983. The Senior Services program added transportation in 1983 and case management in 1984.

In 1989, the agency launched a new Homeless Services program designed to lift the homeless up from their situation to rejoin society. The Alpha Omega Shelter was the first service offered, in cooperation with 17 local churches.

CSA conducted a capital campaign and dramatically upgraded its facility in 1990. Among other features, the building had greater capacity for food service, then termed the Food Closet.

The Homeless Services program stepped up in 1995 with the creation of Graduate House, a transitional housing facility managed by Project Match. CSA was a partner in this facility.

In 1998, CSA fundamentally changed the nature of its Food and Nutrition program by creating the Food Pantry (grocery store for the needy) at the Stierlin Road facility and discontinuing its meals program.

Another fundamental change occurred in 2006, when CSA discontinued the rotating homeless shelter in favor of enhanced case management services, pursuing the demonstrated "housing first" model for serving the homeless. The revised program is now called Alpha Omega Homeless Services.

Programs Originated or Facilitated by Community Services Agency

Throughout its history, CSA has been a source for new, innovative social services within the community. Many of these services are now administered by other agencies. A few examples:

- The first day care center in Mountain View, now Whisman Child Care Center.
- Mountain View Community Health Center, now managed by a community group.
- Transportation services for students in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, now operated through Mountain View-Los Altos Adult Education.

CSA Today

Mature at age fifty, CSA now follows a strategy of first contact for the community's needy, providing fundamental services and referring clients to other agencies for additional services.

Caring for the homeless

CSA's Alpha Omega Homeless Services provides case management, direct assistance, and referral services (most importantly housing) to individuals and families. CSA partners with numerous other county service providers, assembling a comprehensive package of assistance to the local homeless population. Caring for the working poor and unemployed

CSA's Food and Nutrition Center supplements the nutrition requirements of needy families with fresh and staple groceries. Food items are contributed by community supermarkets and by nonprofit organizations like Second Harvest Food Bank and Hidden Villa.

CSA's Emergency Assistance program provides a much needed helping hand to those afflicted with short-term severe needs. Assistance includes rent, utility payments, short-term shelter, medical purchases, and many services for children, especially related to school.

Holiday Sharing, providing food to families and fun toys to kids, is a joyful program that draws together volunteers and clients from throughout the community.

Caring for the elderly

Senior Services is the fastest-growing CSA program, reflecting the growth of the elderly population in our community. Case managers deliver in-home assessments, counseling, referrals, and educational seminars, designed to allow local seniors to remain safe and independent.

Our Senior Nutrition Program at the Mountain View Senior Center serves subsidized hot lunches every weekday, countering the isolation and apathy that can afflict the elderly.

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