

WINTER 2026 UPDATE

Moving Forward: A New Chapter



LETTER FROM THE CEO

As we step into a new year, I want to begin with gratitude.

The start of a new year offers a moment to reflect on what we have accomplished together and recommit to the work ahead. As I look back on the past quarter, one thing is abundantly clear: our mission is only possible because of the incredible dedication of our partners, volunteers, and supporters.

Throughout the holiday season, when the needs of those experiencing homelessness are often at their greatest, our partners showed up in extraordinary ways. Through donations, volunteer hours, outreach, and encouragement, your support carried us through one of the busiest times of the year. Because of you, individuals and families found warmth, safety, meals, and hope during a season that can otherwise be isolating and uncertain. On behalf of our staff, board, and the people we serve, thank you for standing with us as we entered the new year together.

As we look ahead in 2026, we are filled with anticipation and momentum. Clients are moving into Zeiter Navigation Center and Pathways Neighborhood is in the final stages of preparation. These spaces represent more than additional beds. They represent safety, dignity, and opportunity. Our teams are working diligently to ensure these shelters are welcoming, trauma-informed, and ready to meet community needs. We are deeply grateful to the partners who made this possible, and look forward to sharing more soon. While we are hopeful for what's ahead, we also begin this year with heavy hearts.

In December, we lost our dear friend Bill Topp, a devoted volunteer, steadfast supporter, and cherished member of the St. Mary's Community Services family. Bill and his wife Joan, gave

generously of their time, leadership, and compassion through years of service as volunteers, supporters, and board members. Their commitment strengthened our organization and our ability to serve those most in need.

Beyond his dedication to SMCS, Bill was a respected professor at the University of the Pacific and a true pillar of the Stockton community. He was known for his generosity, integrity, and deep commitment to education and service. Known for his generosity and integrity, he led with humility, wisdom and kindness. His presence made those around him better, and his belief in our mission helped move our work forward in meaningful ways.

Bill's passing is a profound loss, but his legacy lives on through the lives he touched and the impact he helped create. We are forever grateful for his friendship and service, and we extend our deepest condolences to the Topp family.



William "Bill" Topp

As we move forward into 2026, we do so carrying both gratitude and remembrance. The strength of our community, and the enduring legacies of people like Bill remind us why this work matters. Together, we will continue striving toward a future where everyone has a place to call home.

Thank you for being part of this journey with us.

Krista Fiser
Chief Executive Officer,
St. Mary's Community Services

With Grateful Hearts: Thank You to Our Above-and-Beyond Donors

Every day, our mission is made possible by generosity—but there are some supporters who go a step further. To those donors who consistently give, respond when needs are urgent, and invest in our vision for the future, we extend our deepest thanks.

Your above-and-beyond support does more than fund programs—it creates stability, dignity, and hope. Because of you, doors stay open, meals are served, shelter is provided, and innovative solutions become reality. You help us respond not only to today's needs, but also to tomorrow's challenges.

These extraordinary gifts allow us to dream bigger and serve better. They strengthen our ability to offer compassionate care, expand services, and create spaces where individuals feel safe, respected, and supported on their journey forward.

To our donors who lead with heart and generosity: **you are partners in every success story**. Thank you for believing in this work, standing with us when it matters most, and making a lasting difference in the lives of those we serve. Through the generosity of our community sponsors — **Legal Solutions and Attorney Services, Inc., Central Valley Association of Realtors (Stockton), and Mike & Jeanie Kiley** the children and their parents were able to attend Home for the Holidays performance at Stockton Civic Theater on December 20th, 2025.

A heartfelt thank-you to **Sharron Benninger and her amazing crew** for collecting and beautifully preparing the stockings shared with children on Christmas Eve. Your time, care, and attention to every detail made the event truly special.

We also extend our sincere gratitude to **Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus—Annette DePauli and Cody**—for spreading joy and holiday magic by personally handing out toys donated from our partners at **Community Medical Centers**. Your presence brought smiles, laughter, and unforgettable memories to so many children and families.

Because of your generosity and holiday spirit, Christmas Eve was filled with warmth, wonder, and hope. Thank you for making the season brighter for those we serve.



Sharron Benninger and crew filling the stockings with little surprises and big smiles.



Santa and Stockton Ports Mascot "Splash" making festive memories.



Mr. & Mrs. Claus



A SAFE PLACE FOR EVERY MEMBER OF THE FAMILY—PAWS INCLUDED

For many people experiencing homelessness, a pet is more than an animal—they are family. Pets provide comfort, routine, protection, and unconditional love, especially during times of crisis. That's why Pathways Neighborhood (tiny room shelter) proudly welcomes pets alongside their owners.

Each tiny room offers a private, calm space where guests can rest knowing their companion is safe right beside them. By allowing pets, we remove one of the most common and heartbreaking barriers to seeking shelter: the fear of being separated from a beloved animal.

Statistics show that when pets are allowed, people are more likely to come indoors, stay engaged in services, and focus on next steps toward stability. The presence of a trusted companion reduces stress, eases anxiety, and creates a sense of normalcy during an otherwise uncertain time.

Our pet-friendly model reflects a simple belief: supporting the whole person means honoring the bonds that matter most. By keeping people and their pets together, we create a shelter environment rooted in compassion, dignity, and hope—one small room making a big difference for every member of the family.

Honoring Our Roots.

The photo in this newsletter takes us back to 1986. It shows our dining room near St. Mary's church, where men, women, and families once stood in long lines for a hot meal. That small space is where our mission began.

The dining room was more than a place to eat. It was a place of welcome and dignity. Volunteers stood shoulder to shoulder to serve meals. Guests were greeted warmly. No one was turned away. In that room, our commitment to ensuring everyone belongs took root.

Today, our work extends far beyond that original space. We provide shelter, navigation services, and pathways toward stability. Facilities like Zeiter Navigation Center and Pathways Neighborhood show how far we have come. Yet the heart of our mission remains the same. We are still creating spaces of safety, respect, and hope for those who need them most.

That progress is possible because of community support. Just as volunteers once stood shoulder to shoulder in that dining room, today's donors stand with us to keep doors open and lives moving forward. Join us in keeping doors open for our neighbors in need. Your financial contribution sustains daily services, expands safe shelter, and creates opportunity for individuals and families seeking stability.

From those early meals to today's shelters, every step forward is thanks to this community.



Picture from 1986 reminds us; that in every line there is a story of hope.

2025 Impact Report

4,692

Unique Clients

458,598

Services Provided

89,639

Safe Shelter Nights

96,801

Clothing & Showers

213,929

Meals Served



545 W. Sonora St.
Stockton, CA 95203

SUPPORT OUR MISSION – MAKE AN IMPACT TODAY

Everything we accomplish is made possible by the generosity of supporters like you. As we continue to grow and serve our community, we invite you to partner with us in making an even greater difference.



Financial Contributions

Monetary donations allow us to respond to where the need is greatest. Visit www.smcares.org



In-Kind Donations

In-Kind donations of food and clothing reduce our costs. Bring your in-kind donations to 545 W. Sonora St. Stockton, CA 95203



Volunteer With Us

Your time and talents are just as valuable as financial support. Give us a call 209-467-0703 or Email volunteer@smcares.org



Ready to get involved?

Visit: www.smcares.org
Email: info@smcares.org
Call: 209-467-0703

