



Winter Newsletter

Growing Our Gardening Program



Our gardening program began as a component of the Health, Wellness, and Nutrition Program that started taking shape in 2010. We thought that gardening boxes might be a nice way to introduce our children to fresh, healthy foods that they could take right into the newly redone learning lab kitchen to prepare nutritious meals. It was a start to a path toward encouraging healthier eating habits in conjunction with all the physical activities the Wellness Center had to offer. When the six 4' x 16' garden boxes were installed, we realized that there are a wider range of benefits to providing gardening activities for our children than we had first imagined.

There was a considerable amount of trial and error the first year that we used the boxes. It took us a growing season to get to know what

would work and what really didn't for our situation. In 2011 and 2012, the gardens were used to supply our learning lab kitchen with fresh organically grown vegetables. Children assisted with upkeep in the gardens and regularly picked out ingredients for meals that they would prepare in the learning lab kitchen and in their homes. During this time, we received guidance and inspiration from Life Lab at the University of California Santa Cruz, resource opportunities from the University of California Community Extension, and much practice of our own with what works well in our gardens, and what can be improved.

During all of this experimentation, we learned a great deal about the other benefits to providing a more formal gardening program to our kids, and we have recently begun taking measures to do so. In addition to providing nutritious food for our children, the gardening experience can provide opportunities to compliment their education, learn critical social skills, and provide therapeutic benefits.

The therapeutic benefits are what we are really going to foster

A Look Inside

- Chamberlain's Holiday Scrapbook
- Birdies Update
- Message from our ED
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Student Submission

as we begin to expand and develop the program. An excerpt from a paper on horticulture therapy explains it best:

"The psychological impact of gardening is that it is considered a serene occupation, an oasis of calm, a grounding experience. The combination of the fresh air and the physicality of the tasks helps oxygenate the bloodstream and energize the physical body while simultaneously releasing endorphins involved with stress alleviation.

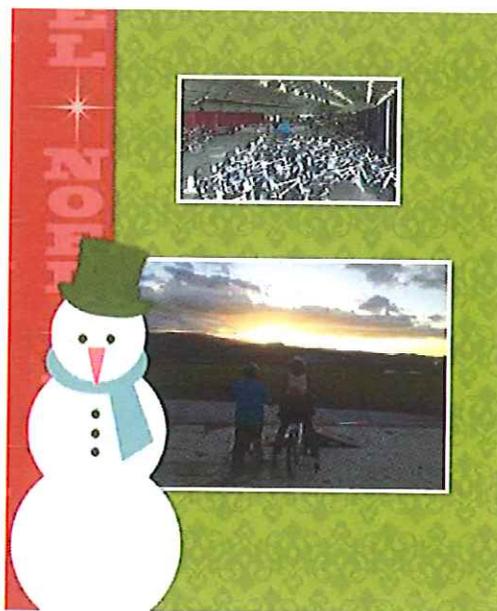
Gardens stimulate, they engage all of our senses not just the sights, sounds and smells around us, but touch too; the textures of soil tell a story, and feeling; the emotional satisfaction of a harvest or a successful cutting as well as the deeper side in a sense of belonging or a realization of a spiritual connection or spiritual/emotional peace." (Fiann Ó Nualláin)

Chamberlain's Christmas Scrapbook

The holidays are a magical time here at Chamberlain's Children Center. It is hard not to get into the Christmas spirit when it surrounds us this time of year, and 2012 was no different. We are overwhelmed by the love and support the community has shown our children over the holidays. We have several groups who regularly include us in their season of giving and this year we added several others to the list of Christmas contributors! All of our generous holiday donors made it possible for our children to experience the holidays like every other child. They received stockings, gifts, bikes, and plenty of other goodies. A big thanks to all of our holiday contributors!

Donation Spotlight: Santa Delivers

When adults think back to their childhood memories of the holidays, receiving a bike from Santa is among the most cherished. This year, almost every child at Chamberlain's Children Center received a bike under the tree on Christmas morning. This exciting surprise would not have been possible to pull off without an amazing donation from Turning Wheels for Kids, who distributes brand new bikes to underserved populations every year. The donation was supplemented by another organization, Unspoken Works, who donated four additional bikes as well as hygiene kits to each child. We are extremely grateful for each organizations contributions!

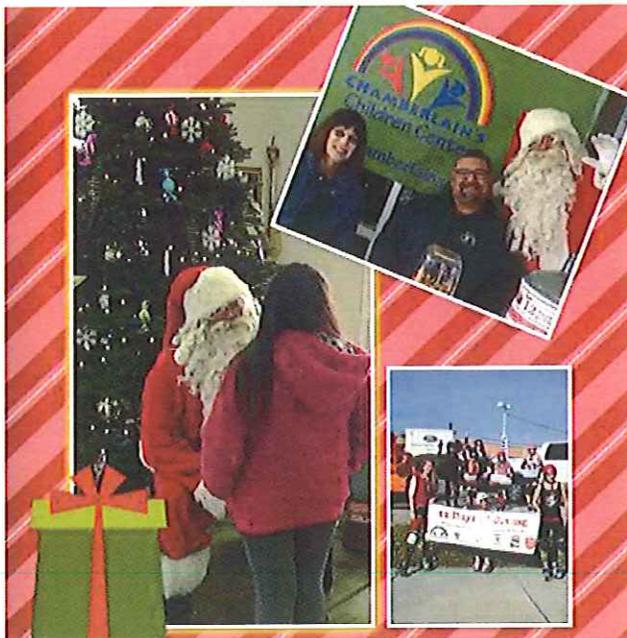
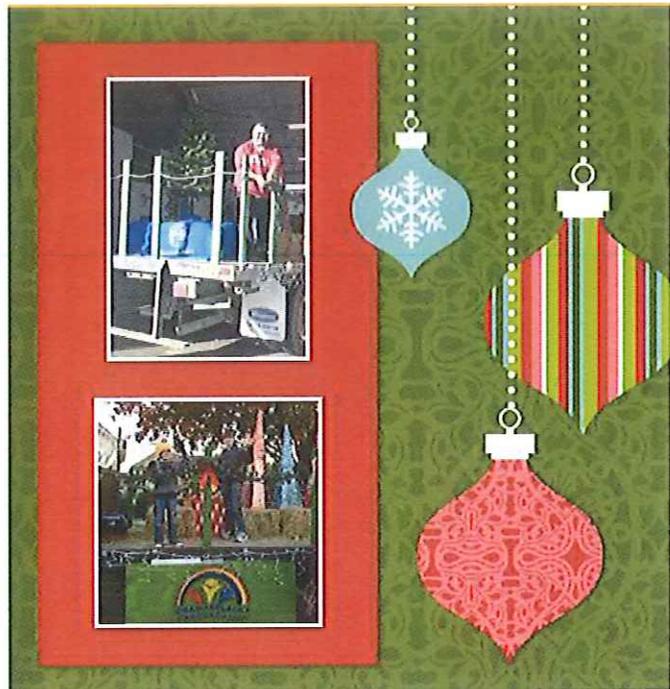


Deck the Halls

Chamberlain's Children Center once again participated in decorating a tree downtown for this year's Light's On festivities. This year, our older girls volunteered to trim our tree (pictured left) with ornaments to fit the "holly jolly" theme. We decided on snowflakes and snowmen ornaments with a beautiful bow on top. The efforts of the ladies earned them an honorable mention in the contest! They did an amazing job, and got in the spirit while doing it! Great job, girls!

12 Days of Giving Events

We had a lot of fun participating in the 12 Days of Giving events that were coordinated by the Community Foundation for San Benito County. All the events were designed to raise money for six local charities, including Chamberlain's, but each event provided a unique opportunity to celebrate the holiday season with the community as well. The event was kicked off during Light's On with participation in the holiday parade. The six charities all pitched in to decorate and staff a float. Robert did his part to spruce up the flat



bed we used (pictured above). Patrick's boys got to ride the float during the parade (pictured above).

The finale event was held at Tiffany Ford. Each organization was represented. There was live entertainment all day, classic cars, trucks, road equipment, and treats for the kids. Santa Claus came out to join us, too! We were able to raise money for some great causes, keep donations local, and have an amazing time with the community! It is an event you won't want to miss out on next year!

Holiday Donor Recognition

A huge thanks to everyone who has made this season a little brighter for our children by donating holiday items: California Giant ▪ El Teatro Campesino ▪ Department of Social & Employment Services ▪ Hollister Figherfighters Local 3395 ▪ PEO Group ▪ Pizza Factory ▪ Ridgemark Recyclers ▪ San Benito County Cattlemen's Association ▪ San Jose Garden Club ▪ Turning Wheels For Kids ▪ Unspoken Works ▪ Annabel Hurtado ▪ Debra Lollar ▪ Jeanette Ramirez ▪ Linda Raphael ▪ Lisa Lopez ▪ Mike & Nancy Fales ▪ Paul & Marlene Fales ▪ Faultline Derby Devilz

Birdies for Charity Update!



Don't miss out on this amazing opportunity to maximize the impact of your donation and get yourself entered to win a great golf package. Thanks to enormous support so far, we have raised

\$9,490 before match. We are so close to our goal of \$10,000. Please consider helping us reach our goals. Below is a recap of the program:

The Monterey Peninsula Foundation runs the program to coincide with the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am. Donors may pledge an amount per birdie during the tournament or a flat fee, but every dollar raised will be matched up to 20% by the Foundation. All donations have to be made through Monterey Peninsula Foundation by mailing in a check or going online to <http://www.attpbgolf.com/charity/birdies-for-charity/participating-charities>. Each donor is entered for a chance to win two United Airlines roundtrip tickets (up to \$500 each) and one night at The Inn at Spanish Bay with a golf package for two at The Links at Spanish Bay.

New ways to stay informed!

◆ Chamberlain's is on LinkedIn! Come follow us there!



◆ Go online to sign up for our e-news feature. There is a sign up window on our website. In addition to receiving online versions of our regular newsletter, you will receive special announcements throughout the year.

If you have any questions about these new features, please contact us. We are happy to answer your questions about anything new we have going on.



DONATION FORM

Name _____ Amount Donated _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please make your tax-deductible check payable to:

Chamberlain's Children Center, Inc.
Federal Tax I.D. Number 94-2357401
Mail to: Chamberlain's Children Center
PO Box 1269, Hollister, CA 95024-1269
We appreciate your support!

Executive Director Report:

The Sweet Smell of Success

As I reflect back on my past four years as the Executive Director of Chamberlain's Children Center, I am so proud of the successes we have achieved!!!



Homes: Our campus is ever developing. We have met our goal of having four group homes on our campus with the final home being completed the summer of 2009. Since then we have built the Health, Wellness and Nutrition Center, started the development of garden boxes, and renovated our school adding technology everywhere! We purchased two newer vans so that our children can be transported safely. All of these milestones have been completed with the goal of providing a "home-like" environment for the children in our care.

Healing: We added Vercila Chacon, Clinical Supervisor to our Clinical Team. Vercila, along with Case Managers Tiffany Schindler and Samantha Zaragoza and Interns Martin Wallace and Agnes Matter Dang have revamped our therapy program and it has had a positive effect on our children. Based on a Family Model, the children are having sessions on leadership, empowerment, physiological development, grieving, and cooking. These group sessions are transformative and truly meet our mission of empowering our children, discovering their strengths, and developing the skills they need to achieve life-long success.

Hope: Many of the children come to Chamberlain's broken – With little or no trust, with little or no nurturing, with little or no positive relationships with adults, with little or no guidance and no hope for a better future. What I see every day are children receiving nurturing, guidance, love, and compassion. I see them building trust and I see them building confidence and hope.

Help: Thank you to everyone who supported me and Chamberlain's. I have appreciated all the support and encouragement I have received over the past four years! I have thoroughly enjoyed being a member of Hollister Rotary, an alumnus of Leadership San Benito and an alumnus of the Community Foundation San Benito's Nonprofit! We are also very grateful for the financial support we have received from the Community Foundation San Benito County, Monterey Peninsula Foundation, Community Foundation Monterey County, United Way of San Benito County, Bank of America Foundation, Safeway Foundation, Kohl's, Teknova and many others!

Finally, I am also very proud of my leadership team: Patrick Ellis who oversees the Residential Treatment Program and was the driving force for us securing accreditation, Gracie Lucatero who provides guidance and support to the House Supervisors and staff, Reena Sharma our classroom teacher who is getting the most out of our students, our front office staff Krystal Jones and Carolyn Mead who field calls, take care of our staff needs, and make sure the lights stay on and the

(Report Cont'd page 7)

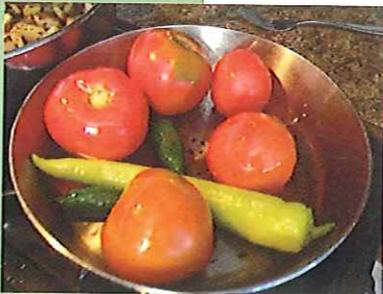
Get Involved

There are several ways to get involved with Chamberlain's right now! If you would like to volunteer for any of the below opportunities, please contact Kim Meininger at kim@chamberlaincc.org or call (831)-636-2121, ext. 129.



- ◆ **Campus Work Day:** On April 13 from 8:30am to 2:00pm, we will be partnering with Kohl's volunteers for their Go Green event. Volunteers from the Gilroy store will be helping us clean up the campus. If you would like to participate in this event, please RSVP to Kim (see contact above) by March 25th. We would welcome the extra hands.
- ◆ **School Volunteers:** The Keith Thompson Non-Public School on campus is looking for volunteers to assist with one-on-one interactions with the children. This would be a 6-8 week commitment for 1-3 hours on the scheduled day during school hours. Volunteers would need to be fingerprinted and pass a TB Test.

Gardening, Cont'd.



We believe that gardening could be an important tool in helping our children heal from the effects of the physical and emotional abuse or neglect that they have suffered.

As we look towards the future, we have many plans to add elements to the gardening program. In 2013, we will be ready to formalize our program to include the children in every step of gardening, from soil prep to harvest. We will be using curriculum and resources received from Kids Gardening, Life Lab and exploring the possibilities of providing horticulture therapy as a part of our clinical services. In addition, our gardens will be expanding to include a pizza garden, a living teepee, pumpkin patch, and aromatic flower and herb garden.

Report, Cont'd.

previously mentioned clinical team! In addition, our amazing Fund Development Associate Kim Meininger not only developed this newsletter and ones over the past year, she has developed a database, developed our eNewsletters and eBlasts, is now writing grants, and does much of the leg work for the Mari's FUNd Day Event! These folks all believe in and execute our mission and provide a special "home like" environment for the children in our care!

In addition, I want to publicly thank the Chamberlain's Board of Directors. Many of these folks hired me four years ago and have stuck around to see through the hard work necessary to make our organization one that we can all be proud of!!

Speaking of Mari's FUNd Day, please join us on May 18th at our fourth annual Mari's FUNd Day BBQ. Meet the children of Chamberlain's and enjoy a great BBQ meal provided by Hollister Rotary!

So what is this sweet smell of success I started with? In part it's what I describe above, but it's more so the sweet smell coming from the wellness center kitchen on Tuesday evenings. As I mentioned in previous newsletters, my office is right next to the Wellness Center, so in addition to the clanking of fitness equipment, I now smell the Thai food, stir fry, and Chinese fried rice that they are learning to cook! As I open the Wellness Center front door and take a peek at happy children learning new life skills, I think to myself "*Now this is the sweet smell of success!*"

Keith Thompson Student Submissions

Don't Run Away

Don't run away from the truth

I'm not giving up on you

I'm trying to give you flowers

You don't make sense

Don't run away from the truth

I'm not giving up on you

Don't run away, don't run away

You're my babe, you're my babe

Oh, oh, oh

Don't run away from the truth

I wont make you cry

Hold my hand if you're scared

Don't run away,

don't run away from the truth.

Chamberlain's Children Center empowers at-risk children in a home-like environment to heal from past trauma, discover their strengths, and develop the skills they need to achieve life-long success.

Mission Statement:

Chamberlain's

Save The Date!

Mar's FUND Day BBQ Fundraiser is on May 18th, 2013 from 12pm-3pm. This is a fun event with activities for children, a raffle, and a silent auction. Proceeds directly benefit the programs at Chamberlain's. Sponsorship opportunities are available. For more information contact Kim Meininger at kim@chamberlaincc.org or 831.636.2121, ext 129.



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