



For 45 years, keeping Palo Alto seniors connected, healthy and independent.



ANNUAL REPORT
2016-2017

LETTER FROM OUR CO-PRESIDENTS

This past year, La Comida served over 41,000 communal lunch meals to Palo Alto's senior citizens, many of whom are low income, and celebrated its 45th year of service to the community.

As the senior population of Palo Alto continues to grow and the cost of living here reaches new heights, our mission—keeping our seniors connected and healthy by serving them nutritious and affordable lunch meals in a cheerful, communal environment—is more important than ever before.

We want to thank the volunteers, who serve our clients day after day. Their warmth, friendship and caring are foundational to the service we offer.

As many of you know, at the end of August 2017 we had to leave our 450 Bryant Street location in downtown Palo Alto (which is now undergoing extensive remodeling). We temporarily relocated to Stevenson House at 455 East Charleston in South Palo Alto. The team at Stevenson House has been extraordinarily welcoming and supportive, and we've started attracting new diners from South Palo Alto who hadn't previously participated in our lunches. We are looking forward to continuing to serve South Palo Alto's seniors.

In addition, we want everyone to know that La Comida plans to return to downtown Palo Alto in the coming year. This will enable us to serve a larger number of our seniors than ever before. We are also significantly expanding our community outreach, undertaking a new fundraising program and bringing on new Board members who can help lay the foundation for La Comida's next 45 years as an indispensable part of Palo Alto's senior community.

As a final note, La Comida has put in place a new leadership team. Bill Blodgett has stepped down from the presidency but will remain an active member of our Board of Directors. We look forward to Bill's continuing insight and support in the years to come.

Sincerely,



Peggy Simon
Co-President



Michael Patrick
Co-President

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Peggy Simon, *Co-President*
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LA COMIDA'S MISSION

To make our community a better place and keep our seniors connected and healthy by serving them nutritious and affordable lunch meals in a cheerful, communal environment.

HISTORY

La Comida was started by the Rotary Club of Palo Alto in 1972 as the first lunch program for older adults in Santa Clara County. Two years later federal funding for this program became available through Santa Clara County's Senior Nutrition Program, and La Comida became the first communal (often also referred to as "congregate") Senior Nutrition Program site in Santa Clara County.

Meals were first served in the Parish Hall at the Episcopal Church at the corner of Hamilton and Waverly Avenue.

In 1978, the kitchen at the Senior Center (Avenidas) was outfitted with the help of federal funds, as well as funds from the Rotary Club of Palo Alto to construct and furnish a dining room as an addition to the Senior Center.

La Comida is the largest provider of communal meals to seniors in Santa Clara County's Senior Nutrition Program.

La Comida is the largest provider of communal meals to seniors in Santa Clara County's Senior Nutrition Program. This program funds 39 communal dining nutrition sites in Santa Clara County, which collectively served 648,824 meals in fiscal 2015-16. La Comida served 45,768 of those meals. La Comida's service is of particular importance to low income seniors, who may not be able to afford more than the requested \$3 voluntary donation.



*"La Comida is an essential part of many seniors lives - especially those on a fixed income."
- Leilani Eng*



*"I have volunteered at La Comida, and seen the appreciation of the seniors in improving their quality of life."
- Alan Cooper*

WHY IS COMMUNAL DINING IMPORTANT?

Communal dining supports seniors' emotional and physical health. Studies show that social isolation is a major risk factor for seniors' health and ability to remain independent. Social isolation can result in health declines, which are accelerated by decreased interest in food and can lead to a gradual inability to manage self-care activities. Seniors are at particular risk of nutritional deficiencies as they age.



Communal dining is proven to reduce the health and emotional risks associated with social isolation in seniors.



Many seniors are unable to manage the logistics of grocery shopping and meal preparation and count on our senior nutrition program for a daily hot, nutritious meal.

WHY IS LA COMIDA IMPORTANT?

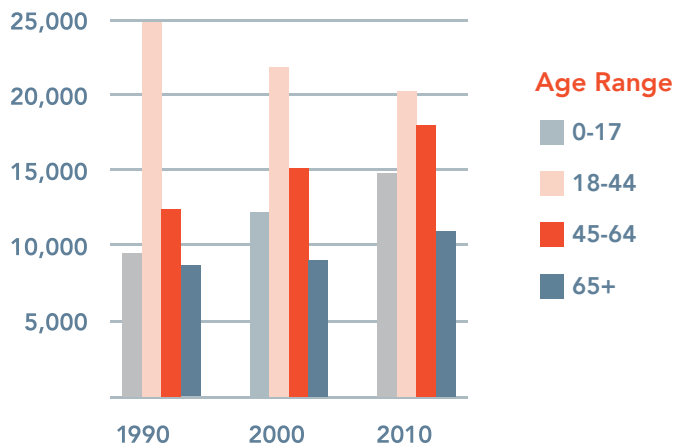
From 1970 to 2010, the median age in Palo Alto increased from 32 to 42. The number and share of residents aged 65 and above in Palo Alto will continue to increase.

In addition, a significant number of them will be low income. 54% of seniors dining at La Comida in 2016-17 are low income.

Not surprisingly, Palo Alto's demand for senior communal meals is large and growing. The number of meals served by La Comida has increased 19% from about 35,000 in 2012 to well over 41,000 in 2016-17.

La Comida is the only Senior Nutrition Program serving Palo Alto, and the demand will continue to grow.

The Graying of Palo Alto's Population

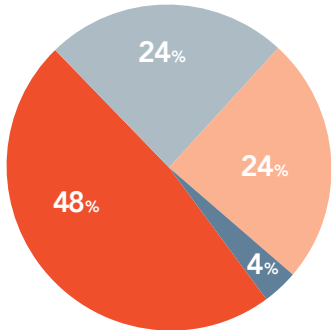


Source: U.S. Census

The 65+ cohort is growing steadily as a percentage of the total, and the 45-64 cohort is expanding dramatically. As the senior population of Palo Alto continues to grow, the demand at La Comida will continue to increase.

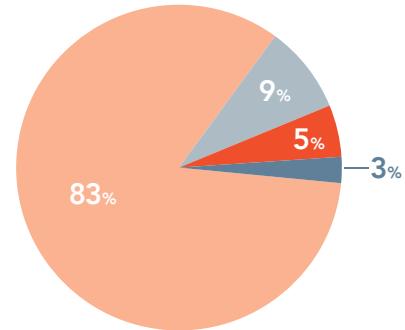
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

2016-17 Expenses
\$406,646



- Salaries & Benefits (\$195,690)
- Food (\$97,450)
- Program Operations & Administration (\$99,106)
- Rent (\$14,400)

2016-17 Funding Sources
\$406,646



- Santa Clara County Reimbursement (\$339,675)
- City of Palo Alto Reimbursement (\$35,469)
- Donations (\$20,973)
- Investment Fund (\$10,529)

LA COMIDA 2016-17 BY THE NUMBERS



41,466
hot meals were served.



55 volunteers devoted
8,000+ hours.

35%
of diners live alone

59%
of diners are 75 or older

54%
of diners are low income

96%
say the socialization at
La Comida helps them
maintain their physical
health and spirit.

PLANS FOR THE COMING YEAR AND BEYOND

Because our temporary space in Stevenson House is smaller than the one at Bryant Street, our average number of meals served per day will be lower in 2017-18 than in the year before. That reduction will also result in a corresponding loss of income from the County of Santa Clara as we are paid solely on the basis of number of meals served.

Our presence at Stevenson House has introduced us to residents of South Palo Alto who were not previously participants in our program. We hope to increase our visibility in South Palo Alto going forward in addition to re-establishing a large dining facility in downtown Palo Alto later this year.

Traditionally, La Comida has maintained a very low expense rate and, as a result, has always had a balanced budget. In order to meet expanding needs of the community's seniors, the Board has determined that La Comida will require additional resources and is embarking on an expanded outreach effort and a new fundraising program.

While county and city reimbursements covered over 90% of our costs, we expect that percentage to drop as we expand our fundraising activities and services to support our vision of expanding to more closely meet the needs of our community.

As we expand our services in the next year we will need to rely on charitable donations to fund the increased expenses.



"My grandmother looked forward to having a daily meal with friends at La Comida. She had a hard time making meals for herself due to disability. This not only serves food to seniors, but also feeds heart and soul with friendly faces and friendship."

- Diana Wegbreit

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!

La Comida depends on volunteers—many of whom are themselves seniors—to help in the dining room with setup, registration, hosting and serving.

Abilities United
Audrey Albin
Minerva Arey
Parvin Bari
Celia Blancaflor
William Blodgett
Luz Castillon
Judy Chang
Kuo-Jung Chang
Alex Chen
Iris Chen
Sabrina Chen
Jane Chin
Tommy Derrick

Barbara DeZur
Ken Dinwiddie
Sue Dinwiddie
Don Douglas
Carmelita Golez
Myra Green
Jack Hamilton
Jim Hewlett
Jan Holliday
Hope Services
Greg Jones
Sung Wan Kang
Luba Keller
Lydia Kou

Ingrid Lai
Chi Ling (Linda) Lee
Judy Liu
Patty May
Alice Meyers
August Mozart
Shirley Negrin
Alexa Ng-Quinn
Angela Ng-Quinn
T.C. Ou
Maryanna Preston
Ding-Taou (Clark) Sheen
Corinne Simonini
Andrea Smith

Yoshihiro Tanaka
Pierre Tronik
Eric Tsao
Roberta Uebbing
Ruben Vinluan
Ruth Wachs
Paul Wang
Sue Wang
Ji Quan Wang
Dan Dan Xue
Taneyo (Tiny) Yamagi
Brian Zelaya

THANK YOU DONORS!

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Stephanie & David Beach
Alan Bennett
Mel & Aviva Bernstein
Trey Blakey
William Blodgett
Davina Brown
Frank Lee Burns
Carolyn Carr
Rosangela Carr
Maria Carter
Judy Chang
Gloria Hou & Talso C. P. Chui
Barbara Criner
Joni & David Cropper
Dennis Daly
Sarah Davison
Don Douglas
Angie Dugan
Mr. & Mrs. Jeff Dunker
Wei Qun E & Poul Hansen

Terry Foss
Crystal Gamage
Gleim Jewelers
Margaret Goodale
Marion Weinberger-Greenberg
& Bernard Greenberg
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Warren Hausman
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Carmel Triska
Mee Leng Wang
Kay Wangelin
Richard Wrenn
Xiaoying Yu & David Williams
Ben Young
Annie Zacanti

We apologize for errors or omissions. Please contact us at (650) 322-3742 or email manager@LaComida.org with changes to your listing.



Send tax-deductible donations to:
La Comida
455 East Charleston Road
Palo Alto, CA 94306

Design and
production by:





La Comida

Stevenson House
455 East Charleston Road
Palo Alto, CA 94306



“I donate to La Comida because my father loves seeing his friends and enjoys the wonderful meals.”
- Elise Smith

TO DONATE OR VOLUNTEER PLEASE VISIT WWW.LACOMIDA.ORG.