



# Hope *in motion*




Stories of Impact, Made Possible by You.



Every act of generosity creates a ripple of hope that moves through communities, families, and generations.

These are the stories that show what that hope looks like in motion, the real impact of your kindness and the lives changed because you believe in our mission



## Dear Friends of Advance Community,

As we approach the end of another impactful year, I want to take a moment to thank you, our generous donors and supporters, for being the heart of our mission.

Because of you, lives have changed. Communities have grown stronger. Hope has been set in motion.

Enclosed is a storybook, *Hope in Motion*, a collection of real-life stories of hope, resilience, and transformation. These aren't just updates or statistics. They're celebrations of the incredible things you make possible around the world. Each story is a glimpse into **real** lives of **real** families whose **real** futures have been transformed by your generosity.

Whether you've been part of this journey for years or are just discovering our mission, I invite you to join us in moving hope forward in 2026. Your year-end gift will help build on the momentum of this past year, ensuring that even more individuals and families find access to the care, resources, and opportunities they need to thrive.

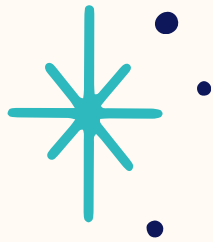
Together, we are advancing equity, opportunity, and community.

**Thank you for helping us set *Hope in Motion*.**

With Gratitude,



**Jeri Royce**  
President & CEO  
Advance Community



## The Meaning Behind Our Messaging



**Equity** removes barriers and expands access so everyone has the opportunity to thrive. It ensures every community has what they need to reach fair outcomes.



**Compassion** shows up through empathy, kindness, and understanding, strengthening the communities we serve and uplifting every person with dignity.



**Integrity** guides our words and actions, reminding us to stay honest, accountable, and grounded in the needs of the communities we serve.



**Cultural Awareness** honors and respects the traditions, values, and perspectives of every community we serve, building understanding and trust together.



**Tenacity** drives us to persevere through challenges, stay focused on our mission, and keep moving forward to create lasting, meaningful change together.



**Impact** is the lasting change created when compassion and action come together. It is the hope made possible by every person who joins our mission.

# Sustaining Hope Together

Thank you to our incredible Builders and Changemakers whose continued generosity makes lasting change possible. Your steady support allows Advance Community to plan for the future, sustain critical programs, and respond when communities need us most. Together, you keep hope in motion for families here at home and around the world.

## Builders

|                              |                         |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Silvia Alvarez               | Al & Suzette Marquiss   |
| Adam Baugh                   | Colleen McArtor         |
| Robert Booth                 | Elizabeth McDonnell     |
| Dawn Marie & Kenny Buckland  | Anne & Tony Milkamp     |
| Robert & Donna Cash          | Denise Mills            |
| Dolores Coates               | Denise Mueller          |
| Kevin Conlon                 | Raymond Nicholas Jr.    |
| Carol & Mike Durkin          | Jeffrey Optholt         |
| Ray & Michele Furtmann       | Oscar Perretta          |
| Edgar & Maureen Gomez        | Gerald Roose            |
| Mary Jean & Richard Grammens | Monica Ryden            |
| Elizabeth Greene             | Paul Salinas            |
| Thomas & Denise Gribbin      | Jill & Stephen Seagren  |
| Richard & Kristine Heinrich  | Regina Stewart          |
| Concepcion Henderson         | Patricia Sullivan       |
| John & Nancy Kaib            | Suzanne Tobin           |
| Mitchell Kotermanski         | Fay Willey              |
| Eugene & Carole Kralicek     | Alta Dee & David Willms |
|                              | Michael Young           |

*\*List as of November 7, 2025.  
We apologize for any omissions.*

## Changemakers

Nicholas & Sara Alcock  
Daniel Bao  
Doris & Richard Dale  
Michael Guzikowski  
Lynn Hagman  
Donald & Gail Kamm  
Gilbert Kelling  
Celia Lee  
Denny Mauser  
Mark Nichols  
Liz Ann & Richard Ricci  
John & Jo Robinson  
Ray & Marcia Sachs  
Larry Schulz  
Craig & Debra Stevenson  
Joseph & Lauren Vernath  
Peter Bujovich  
Phyllis Yates  
John Yuen

## Driven by Purpose

Behind every story of impact are the people who make it possible. Our donor community is filled with individuals whose generosity, compassion, and belief in our mission continue to bring hope to life. These donors represent the heart of that story, turning compassion into action and hope into lasting impact.



For more than a decade, **Dr. Craig Stevenson** has shared his time, skill, and heart with Advance. What began with donating surgical instruments and supplies for medical missions has grown into broader, ongoing financial support rooted in a deep belief in Advance's mission and the people who make it possible.

"I was inspired by the passion of the staff," he shared. "Hearing about their local programs made me want to do more."

Over the years, Dr. Stevenson's generosity has funded everything from solar panels in Nicaragua to a stove for the nutrition program to critical medical supplies for international brigades. His commitment continues to be a key part of expanding International Programs, working directly with Advance's surgical teams to grow new opportunities for care and healing in Peru.

Because of his dedication, hope now reaches farther, and the gift of healing touches lives across borders.

## A Living Legacy

For more than two decades, dedicated supporters have stood beside our organization, first as Esperança and now as Advance Community, transforming compassion into action and helping families build healthier, more hopeful futures.

We are deeply grateful to our Legacy Donors, whose long-term generosity fuels medical missions, community health programs, nutrition initiatives, and life-changing opportunities around the world.

Because of their continued partnership, families have access to clean water, quality healthcare, and brighter futures that once seemed out of reach. Their legacy lives on in healthier communities and in the impact their generosity continues to create across generations.



## Recognizing milestone donors creating lasting change

### 50+ Years of Giving

Ramon and Joan Bermudez - 1973  
Olin Hughes Jr. - 1973

### 40+ Years of Giving

Rita Daniels - 1976  
John Tierney - 1977  
Camilla DeFriese - 1977  
Gorgon MacMaster - 1977  
Ann Cidoni - 1979  
Edward and Margaret Stokes - 1979  
Richard Luthy and Mary Sullivan - 1979  
Fred VanderLaan - 1979  
Joseph and Alice Vorbach - 1979  
Richard and Liz Ricci - 1979  
Tony and Anne Millkamp - 1979  
Michael and Laurie Dolan - 1979  
Mike and Carol Durkin - 1979  
Thomas and JoAnn Bailey - 1979  
Rose Marie Hilliard - 1979  
Thomas and Sandra Nenner - 1981  
John Robinson - 1984

### 20+ Years of Giving

Jake and Lori Logan - 2000  
Nicholas and Sara Alcock - 2002  
Thomas and Denise Gribbin - 2003

For more than six years, **Al Marqius** has been a steadfast supporter of Advance, drawn to its mission and inspired by the people behind it. What began as a professional connection with CEO Jeri soon became a personal calling to help underserved communities.

What moves him most are the moments that change lives forever...like an older woman seeing again after cataract surgery or a child walking freely after clubfoot correction. "Those moments give people independence for life," he emphasized.

As his passion grew, his involvement deepened. From donor to Board Chair, Al leads with vision and heart, helping Advance build a stronger future. Beyond his own giving, he champions the Arizona Charitable Tax Credit to inspire others to give with purpose. "I'd rather put my tax dollars toward programs that change lives," he stated.

Through his leadership and example, Al proves that when we give together, change multiplies.

For **Regina Stewart**, supporting Advance has always been a family calling. Her late husband, Dr. Stewart, was the organization's first founding executive director, a visionary who dreamed of bringing medical care to people in need along the Amazon River in Brazil.

From the very beginning, Regina was by his side: raising awareness, helping organize presentations, and even forming the Esperança Singers to inspire others to give. "We wanted people to understand the need and the hope this work could bring," she shared.

Today, she continues to give in his honor, proud to see Advance's mission grow while holding true to its original spirit of compassion. "Their caring has continued," she said, "and that same care is still reaching people around the world."

Her enduring generosity keeps a family legacy of compassion and selfless care alive.

## Hands That Move Hope Forward



**Alexa** started volunteering with Advance Community five months ago after friends shared our mission and volunteer opportunities with her.

Since then, she has helped cook meals for Stove to Table, assemble nutrition boxes, and has supported several special events.

As a medical assistant, Alexa volunteers because she enjoys giving back to the community and working alongside the Nutrition Team



Above all, Alexa feels proud to support a mission that strengthens and uplifts the community she calls home. She remembers when ABC15 visited Advance to highlight the impact of our programs and volunteers, a reminder of how deeply their work resonates within the community.

**Lily** first discovered Advance Community through her involvement with other organizations in the Valley.



She started volunteering two years ago and quickly became one of our most consistent and dedicated volunteers. Lily spends her time in the Advance kitchen cooking meals for Stove to Table and assembling nutrition boxes with the Nutrition Program team.

Lily continues to volunteer with Advance because she loves serving the community and connecting with others who share her passion for helping people. She enjoys volunteering alongside Bradley, where teamwork and laughter make every shift rewarding. Volunteering with Advance is a meaningful way for Lily to give back and find purpose through service.

**Anne** has been volunteering with Advance Community for five years, but her connection to the organization spans decades. She and her husband, Tony, began donating in the 1970s after being inspired by a surgeon involved with Advance, then known as Esperança.



After retiring in 2020, Anne was looking for a meaningful way to give back and Tony encouraged her to volunteer her time. One of her most memorable moments was attending the first Día De Las Madres event.

She was able to see firsthand how Advance celebrates and uplifts mothers in the community we serve.

Every Wednesday, Anne spends four hours helping with various administrative projects. She loves the positive environment, enjoys staying mentally active, and feels especially grateful to be part of a mission that makes a difference every day.

**Gene** has been volunteering with Advance for a year and a half, supporting the Nutrition Program team by cooking meals for Stove to Table and assembling nutrition boxes.

After retiring, Gene wanted to spend his time helping others and looked for opportunities that combined his love of cooking with community service. His time with the Stove to Table program is especially rewarding as he helps prepare healthy meals for those in need.



For Gene, the most impactful part of volunteering has been the knowledge he's gained from Advance's Nutrition Team, Chef Paul and Bradley. He's learned about ingredients, cooking methods, and new ways to prepare food while connecting with others who share his passion for helping people. Through his work with Advance, Gene has found a renewed sense of purpose and the fulfillment of making a difference in people's lives.



## A Healthier School for Jhonatan

Every day at school, Jhonatan faced a quiet decision no 10-year-old should have to make: use the broken, unsanitary bathrooms—or wait until he got home. Most days, he waited. The lines were long, the doors hung loosely from their hinges, and the smell made it hard to breathe. It was uncomfortable, sometimes painful, but less embarrassing than using a restroom with no privacy. For Jhonatan and his classmates, this was part of daily life in their rural Bolivian village.

That reality began to change when Advance Community and its local partners launched a project to build new bathrooms in rural schools across the region, including Jhonatan's. The goal was simple but powerful, to give children a safe, dignified place to meet their most basic needs so they could focus on learning instead of worrying.

From the beginning, the whole community was involved. Parents volunteered to carry materials, teachers helped organize workdays, and students watched with excitement as the new structures took shape.



For many families, it was the first time they saw an investment in their village that directly improved their children's daily lives. For the community, this project was more than construction; it was a symbol of pride, progress, and hope. A sign that someone cared.

When the new bathrooms were finished, Jhonatan was one of the first to step inside. He smiled as he looked around the bright, clean space and told his teacher he was happy to come to school knowing he didn't have to be scared or uncomfortable anymore. Now, he could focus on learning instead of worrying about getting sick or being embarrassed.

Something as basic as a clean, working bathroom has had a remarkable impact on this school and community. School attendance is up; illnesses are down; and learning is easier.

Jhonatan's story shows how small changes can move communities forward. When dignity is restored, confidence grows, and futures open wide. When you give, you set transformational change in motion... helping more children learn, dream, and thrive.

**A gift of \$1800 provides clean, safe bathrooms for students like Jhonatan.**

## Dignity Restored for the Mendozas

Every day, the Mendoza family woke up to the same worries, especially on rainy days. Would their old, crumbling latrine hold up? Or would the wastewater overflow again, running toward the nearby stream that the community used for washing and cleaning?

For Jessenia, her husband, and their two children, this fear was constant. Living in the rural hills of Los Andes in Jinotega, Nicaragua, they relied on a latrine that was falling apart and unsafe to use, a challenge shared by many families in their village

"Every time it rained, we were afraid the wastewater would overflow," Jessenia recalled. The latrine's proximity to the community stream added constant worry. "We felt unsafe. The smell, the risk of disease, and having no other options left us afraid every day."

In 2024, everything began to change when Los Andes was selected to participate in a hydraulic flush latrine construction project supported by Advance Community in partnership with Green Empowerment and AVODEC. The goal was simple but powerful: to bring clean, safe, and dignified sanitation systems to families who had lived without them for generations.

Through the project, 50 new latrines were built, and residents received training on hygiene, maintenance, and healthy practices. More than 200 people in the community benefited from this effort, including the Mendoza family.



For Jessenia, the change was immediate: "I'm no longer afraid my children will get sick. We have a system that is safe and clean, I finally feel at peace."

Her eldest son, Andrés, agrees: "Before, everything was a struggle, especially during the rainy season. Now we live with dignity, our health has improved, and we have more time to study and work on the farm."

Today, the Mendoza family and their neighbors enjoy a safer, healthier life. Their story is proof that something as simple as sanitation can transform a family's and a village's, future.

In places where so many live in unsanitary conditions with unsafe water, your gift can bring health, dignity, and hope that transforms entire villages.

**A gift of \$820 provides complete sanitation systems for families like the Mendozas.**

## Nourishment and Hope for Jerry and Lei Lanni



When Jerry and Lei Lanni, both in their mid-eighties, opened the simple cardboard box on their kitchen table, they were filled with gratitude. Inside was a thoughtfully packed nutrition food box, filled with whole grains, colorful vegetables, fresh fruits, hearty legumes, eggs, bread, and butter. Included with these nutritious foods were carefully prepared recipes, provided to create inspiration for meals to cook using these ingredients.

For years, the couple had been living quietly below the poverty line on a fixed income. With rising grocery prices and chronic health issues, grocery shopping became challenging, and fewer trips were made. While Jerry began his own garden, it was not always enough to prepare daily meals. Sitting and sharing meals together is not just about eating to the couple, it's about sharing their day and connecting with each other and the daily life stresses and uncertainty of what meals to cook were starting to take away from their joy of sharing meals.



Everything changed when they were introduced to the nutrition food box program at Advance Community. The nutrition food box program is designed to support families with access to wholesome, balanced foods. Each box is curated to provide not only nourishment but also comfort and variety, making it easier for elderly adults to prepare healthy meals at home.

When Jerry and Lei Lanni received their first food box, they felt relief. A weight had been lifted knowing they were able to have nutritious foods that would allow them to cook at least 10 meals. Knowing they can rely on their monthly food box has made their lives even just a little easier.

Jerry, a retired service member of the Navy, and Lei Lanni, a retired minister, have both lived a life of service. Giving to others, even before themselves. For two people who have spent their lives serving others, they could not be more grateful to have a program that is now serving them.

Their story is a reminder that small acts of nourishment can have a lasting impact, feeding not just the body, but also the heart, the connection, and the hope that grows around every shared meal.

**A gift of \$70 provides monthly Nutrition Boxes filled with fresh produce, shelf-stable grocery items, a dozen eggs, and other cooking essentials for families like Jerry and Lei Lanni.**





## Resilience Through Community for Fidelina

Five years. Fidelina has been battling cancer every day for five years. But through it all, she showed up, eager to learn something new in the Salud con Sabor Latino class. For her, these afternoons weren't just about cooking; they were about healing, hope, and community.

The Salud con Sabor Latino program (translated "Health with Latino Flavor") helps adults build lasting healthy habits through hands-on cooking, nutrition education, and practical lessons rooted in Latino culture. Each class blends community connection with real-world skills, providing participants with nutritious food boxes and showing them how healthy food can support both physical and emotional well-being. It was through this class that Fidelina found strength and support when she needed it most.

At 78, Fidelina's life has been defined by perseverance. Originally from Michoacán, Mexico, she came to the South Ranch Community at a young age. As a mother of five, she worked tirelessly, sometimes juggling multiple jobs and selling clothes and food to make ends meet.

Diagnosed with cancer five years ago, life became a careful balance of doctor's appointments, chemotherapy, and sheer determination to keep moving forward.

As soon as she learned about SSL, Fidelina was one of the first to sign up and quickly became one of its most devoted participants. She even apologized in advance in case treatments made her miss a session. And on the days she couldn't attend, she called for notes and recipes, determined not to miss a single lesson.

Fidelina often shared that being older and sick didn't mean she couldn't keep learning and improving her health. She wished classes like this had been available sooner, knowing how much they could have helped her earlier in life.

"I am very grateful for this program and for the opportunity to learn new things," she said. "I learned a lot and felt special in every class and each time I received my food box. This is something very good for the community."

She graduated from Salud con Sabor Latino in March and continued receiving food boxes through October. Each time, she called to express her gratitude and share how much the fresh ingredients helped her cook nutritious meals after chemo.

Fidelina's story illustrates how nourishment can come in many forms, through food, learning, and community. She found strength and purpose in connection and care. For others still seeking that same sense of hope and belonging, your gift can carry that hope forward, reaching more people like Fidelina.



**A gift of \$25 provides grocery gift cards for SSL participants like Fidelina to buy healthy foods for their families and stay active and connected.**



## A Healthier Future for Anthony

Sometimes change begins with something small, like writing your name on a signup sheet. When Anthony first joined I Choose Wellness in third grade, he wasn't really thinking about his health. He just wanted a fun place to hang out after school with friends.

What he didn't realize was that five years later, he'd still be showing up but with new purpose and a whole new outlook on life.

His whole life, healthy food hasn't always been easy to come by. Anthony and his sister are being raised by their single mom, who works long hours to keep a roof over their heads and make sure they're safe and cared for. With little time or money to spare, quick and processed meals have often been the only option.

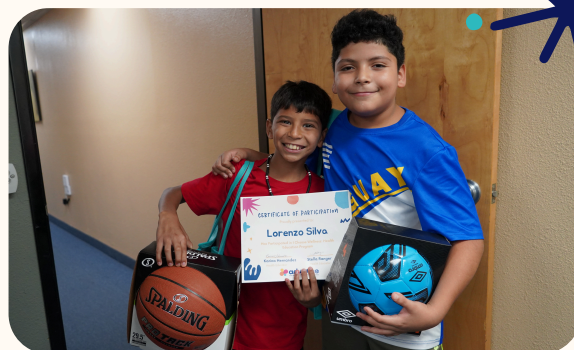
In I Choose Wellness, Anthony began to discover how food and activity affected his weight, energy, and confidence. He learned to pay attention to portion sizes, recognize the difference between real hunger and emotional eating, and keep moving even when exercise felt tough.

With encouragement from his counselor, he started setting small goals and making little changes like choosing more nutritious foods in the school cafeteria and participating more during PE.

Over time, Anthony's perspective shifted. He felt so much better when he made healthier choices, and those wins motivated him to keep going. He participated in I Choose Wellness again in fifth grade, and once more in eighth, each time bringing a little more focus and maturity to his goals.

Now, as he prepares for high school, Anthony is stronger, more confident, and proud to be setting an example for his sister. He knows that small choices add up and that the decisions he makes today can shape a healthier, more hopeful tomorrow.

Anthony's story is a reminder that when kids are given support, encouragement, and the right tools, they can build a healthier, happier future. For countless kids who haven't yet had that chance, your gift can set change in motion...helping them learn, grow, and take charge of their health, one choice at a time.



## A Stronger Voice for Kathy

At 17, Kathy never imagined she'd be leading conversations about health with confidence. Not long ago, even introducing herself to a group felt daunting. But something inside her shifted when she joined Show Up!.

It was her mom who originally encouraged her to join Show Up!, a public health training program that helps high school students explore health careers through learning and real-world experiences. Kathy was intrigued by the opportunity to earn professional certifications, but mostly she agreed to join in hopes of doing something productive over summer break.



From that first day, Kathy began to see herself differently. Through hands-on activities and supportive mentors, she began stepping out of her comfort zone.

The program introduced her to new ideas, new people, and a new kind of confidence. She started learning not only about community health but about herself.

**A gift of \$150 provides sports equipment for one I Choose Wellness cohort, helping youth like Anthony build healthy habits for life.**



"I'm really glad I joined," Kathy said. "Show Up! helped me find my confidence. Now I feel comfortable speaking up, educating others, and helping my community."

Since graduating from the program, Kathy has become one of Show Up!'s most active alumni. She continues to attend events, eager to learn new things, stay connected, and give back.

Kathy now volunteers at local health fairs, where she helps take health measurements and speaks with community members in both English and Spanish. She hopes to pursue a career in healthcare and credits Show Up! for helping her discover her passion for making a difference.

Kathy's story demonstrates that confidence can be the spark that ignites a lifetime of purpose. For every young person longing to find their way, your gift can light the path of possibility...helping them step forward, find their voice, and shape healthier futures for us all.

**A gift of \$500 helps teens like Kathy attend Show Up! Intensive courses and grow into health leaders and role models in their communities.**

Every week, Laura sat quietly at the back of the classroom, notebook open, pen in hand. She never missed a session of Advance Community's Salud con Sabor Latino class, but she rarely spoke. While others chatted easily, she listened and took careful notes but kept her distance from the group.

Behind her calm presence, Laura was struggling with a sensitive issue involving her children. She didn't know where to turn.



Then Laura learned that Advance's Stronger Together program connects families to community partners who can help with needs beyond health and nutrition education. Through that program, she was introduced to NotMyKid, an organization that helps parents navigate difficult conversations and challenges with their children. It sounded like exactly what she needed.

That was the connection that changed things for Laura. As the facilitator shared stories and strategies for approaching tough topics, Laura began to nod along, understanding welling in her eyes. When the presentation ended, she stayed behind, hesitated for a moment, and then approached the facilitator. For the first time, she opened up about her own situation, asking for advice and sharing what she had been carrying alone for so long.

That small moment of connection reflected exactly what Stronger Together was created to do: build trust, break down barriers, and connect families with the resources that can truly make a difference.

Laura left that session feeling lighter and more hopeful, knowing she wasn't alone. She left with a plan and a path forward.

Laura's story reminds us that the right support changes everything. No one should walk through hard things alone. For others still carrying their struggles in silence, your gift can extend a lifeline...helping families feel seen, supported, and strong enough to take the next step forward together.

**A gift of \$120 covers a year of Stronger Together sessions, helping women like Laura find strength through connection.**



## A Healthy New Chapter for Rodrigo

Sometimes it takes a single moment to change the course of your life.

For Rodrigo, that moment came the day he stepped on a nail at work. The wound became infected, leading to the amputation of two toes. He was only 51. He had been living with uncontrolled diabetes for too long. He knew something had to change.

For years, his wife had worried. Their conversations had often turned into arguments about his eating habits and lack of motivation to control his disease. But now, Rodrigo was ready to listen. Together, he and his wife enrolled in Advance Community's Diabetes Empowerment Education Program (DEEP), determined to take control of their health.

At the start of the program, Rodrigo's A1C was dangerously high at 12%. His body was struggling. Through DEEP he began to understand more about diabetes and how he could control it. He began to see how small changes like measuring portions, making healthier food choices, and moving everyday, could make a big difference in his long-term health. Then he began applying those changes at home.

Within three months, his A1C had dropped to 8.4%. But the transformation went deeper than the numbers.

"You can only change what you're aware of," his educator reminded the group, "and you can't change what you don't know." That message stayed with him.

Learning what was happening inside his body gave Rodrigo the knowledge and the confidence to act. And the changes he made began improving more than his health. It healed the tension at home and strengthened his bond with his wife.



Rodrigo says he feels like a different person now. He has more energy, is more focused, and feels optimistic about the future. He and his wife enjoy cooking balanced meals and staying active together every day. And Rodrigo proudly shares his story to help others in his community.

Rodrigo's life shines a light on the lifesaving power of knowledge and support. For others whose health hangs in the balance, your gift can help them take the first step toward healing and hope.

**A gift of \$60 provides diabetes education and self-care tools for adults participating in DEEP, like Rodrigo.**

## A Brighter Smile for Josefina

For years, Josefina hid her smile. At 65, she had learned to live with discomfort after decades of dental pain, financial strain, and shrinking confidence.

When she finally saved enough money to buy a set of dentures, it felt like victory.

But the relief was short-lived. She hadn't known how much care dentures required, and soon she was facing new challenges she didn't understand how to manage.

When Advance Community offered an Oral Health Workshop at her senior housing community, Josefina hesitated to attend. Embarrassed about her dental history and her age, she quietly took a seat in the back of the room, unsure if she belonged there at all.

But as the instructor began explaining how to brush, floss, and properly care for dentures, Josefina leaned in. Listening intently, she took notes and asked thoughtful questions.



## A Sense of Belonging for Rosa

The knock on her door always comes right on time. That familiar, simple sound means more than food delivery for Rosa, it means someone remembers her.

When Rosa lost her spouse, her whole life changed. A senior widow, living in subsidized housing, surviving on a fixed income, she often struggled to afford groceries. Rising prices turned a quick trip to the store into a source of anxiety as she tried to stretch her budget from week to week.

Rosa had spent a lifetime caring for others, but now she found herself aging and alone, unsure how to manage this new life. She tried to make small meals last, often skipping fresh produce and healthy ingredients because they were too expensive. She had once loved to cook, but now it just felt like a sad reminder of what she had lost.

That changed nine months ago when Rosa began receiving weekly Stove to Table meals, freshly prepared and delivered right to her door. Each week, volunteers bring nutritious dishes made with care. And Rosa looks forward to the sound of that knock and the joy it brings to her day. The meals have provided her with consistent access to healthy food and eased the stress of wondering how she would afford her next meal.

But more than the food itself, Rosa says she now feels seen and connected again: "I feel so lucky to receive these meals. They've introduced me to dishes I never would have tried on my own. It's made cooking fun again, and I don't feel so alone."



Maria, one of Advance Community's dedicated volunteers, agrees: "Delivering meals to Rosa and others is one of the most rewarding parts of my week," she shared. "It's more than just food; it's a moment of connection."

Rosa's story reminds us how connection and food can fill the void of loneliness and hunger. For isolated seniors, your gift can deliver nourishment right to their doorstep, filling plates, lifting spirits, and restoring hope.

**A gift of \$25 provides five freshly cooked, nutritious meal for seniors like Rosa through our Stove to Table program.**

Around her, neighbors nodded in understanding, sharing smiles, and small moments of encouragement. For the first time, she understood that caring for her dentures was part of caring for herself. And she realized that she wasn't alone in her struggles.

Her shame disappeared, and she approached the instructor after class to say thank you: "When I was getting my dentures, I didn't realize that they needed special attention and care. Now I finally understand how to take care of them the right way."

Josefina left the workshop feeling much different than when she had come. She was hopeful, armed with knowledge, and filled with a renewed sense of pride in her smile. Each morning, as she follows her new routine, she's reminded of what a little education, in a compassionate community, can do.

Her story is proof that it's never too late to start caring for your health or to regain confidence in your own reflection. For those still hiding in the shadows, your gift can set transformation in motion, replacing pain with comfort, shame with confidence, and hidden smiles with pure joy.



**A gift of \$20 provides oral health education and dental hygiene kits to children, adults, and seniors like Josefina.**

## A Path to Healing for Melvin

When Melvin was born, his tiny cries were met with both love and fear. Seeing the opening in his lip, his parents instantly knew every day would be a fight to help him survive. In their remote Mayan Pocomchí village in northern Guatemala, babies born with cleft lip and palate face life-threatening challenges caused by malnutrition and poverty. There are no doctors in the area. No help with feeding difficulties. Melvin's parents worried constantly, hoping for a way to give their child a chance to thrive and grow.

That chance came when Melvin was four years old. The family learned about a free nutrition program through AVIS, a local organization supported by Advance Community, that provides formula, special bottles, vitamins, medical checkups, and care for children, including surgeries for those born with cleft conditions. And they were coming to Melvin's village.



When the day arrived for his pre-surgery exams, doctors discovered Melvin also had a heart murmur. His parents feared the worst, but further tests showed it wasn't serious. Soon, Melvin was able to undergo his first corrective surgery for his cleft palate. That day marked the beginning of a new chapter. The procedure was a complete success, allowing Melvin to not only eat, but to grow, and thrive for the first time in his young life.

Since then, Melvin has continued receiving feeding and nutrition support and has been gaining weight and building strength for his next surgery. Each visit brings encouragement and joy to his family, who have watched their once-fragile little boy become playful, curious, and full of life.

Watching their son grow stronger each day feels like seeing their dreams come true. Now, Melvin is ready for what comes next. He'll start school next year, carrying a bright red backpack filled with crayons, hope, and big dreams for the future.

Melvin's story reminds us that hope can take root in the most remote places.

For families who feel like they have nowhere to turn, your gift can be the bridge to healing, bringing nourishment, care, and brighter futures to children across Guatemala.



**A gift of \$1500 provides full cleft care for children like Melvin, including nutrition support, feeding tools, medical checkups, and surgery preparation.**

**A gift of \$150 supports mothers like Melvin's with training, feeding guidance, and encouragement as they care for a child with a cleft condition.**

## New Steps for Alicia

High in the mountains of Cusco, Peru, in a small village surrounded by winding dirt roads, a young mother cradled her newborn baby girl. Tears of joy mingled with fear for little Alicia's future. Born with two club feet and cerebral palsy, her mother knew her daughter's life would be hard.

As Alicia grew, she never knew what it felt like to walk without pain or even to wear shoes. Simple daily activities, like standing to brush her teeth or playing with friends, felt out of reach. Her mother could only watch with hope, praying that one day her daughter might move freely and without pain. Still, she refused to give up, carrying Alicia everywhere and comforting her through long days and restless nights.

When Advance Community's pediatric orthopedic medical brigade arrived in Peru, everything changed. Alicia was carried into the makeshift clinic, nervous but trusting. The team gently examined her and prepared for corrective surgery that could transform her life. Each member worked with care, skill, and empathy, fully aware that this procedure could open doors to a world Alicia had never known.

Weeks later, after surgery and recovery, Alicia did something she had only dreamed of. With her mother's help, she stood on her own. Slowly, she took her first steps. And then she picked out her first pair of shoes, bright pink sneakers. When she slipped them on, she called them "magical." Tears of joy filled the room.

## Specialized Care for Fabiola

Every day, Reyna spent hours feeding her little girl by hand, praying that the next bite would not make her choke. Fabiola was born with cerebral palsy and because of this, she was especially vulnerable to malnutrition from an early age. In rural El Salvador, that means a life of struggle. Feeding her baby was slow and difficult and challenged Reyna's patience.



As a single mother, Reyna has always done everything in her power to care for her child. But raising a medically complex infant with no specialized care and no help, Reyna could not properly care for her baby and as a result, Fabiola became dangerously malnourished.

Reyna felt helpless. She worried that there were no options for her baby.

She turned to members of her community who connected her with Advance and Materna Foundation. Reyna received a Materna Kit, including a manual breast pump, nipple shields, and an infant hygiene kit, along with education in infant nutrition and maternal health. These tools and trainings gave her the knowledge and confidence to better support Fabiola's growth and care. This critical assistance and specialized support, built for families in rural areas facing complex medical needs, gave Reyna a path forward. For Fabiola and Reyna, that was the beginning of real hope.

Fabiola received professional feeding therapy tailored specifically to her condition. Reyna learned how to support her baby in new ways and continue her care at home. For the first time, she felt confident that Fabiola could continue growing stronger. Materna's support lifted a huge weight from her shoulders, reminding her that she was not alone.



"Fabiola gives me strength," Reyna shared as she watched her daughter smile during a therapy session. "I care for her the best I can, even when things get hard. This support has made it so much easier."

Today, Fabiola continues to gain strength and radiate joy each day. Her story is a powerful reminder that specialized care can reach the most remote corners of the world, and that behind every milestone is the compassion of people who care. For families facing impossible medical needs, your gift is a lifeline that moves them into a healthier, more hopeful future.

**A gift of \$25 provides kits with manual breast pumps, nipple shields, and hygiene supplies, and supports critical medical care for children like Fabiola.**

Carmen, Internal Coordinator at CADEP, Advance's partner organization in Peru, recalled that moment: "It reminded our whole team why this work matters. Every child deserves the chance to walk, run, and live with dignity." Alicia's journey is just one example of the joy, hope, and healing that your generosity brings to children in places where care is scarce and opportunities are few. Every gift you give carries compassion to the highest mountains, changes lives, and shapes brighter futures.

**A gift of \$1500 provides corrective clubfoot surgery and post-operative care for children like Alicia.**



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