



Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy

CAUSE

regional power in action

Santa Maria Chapter Newsletter

Spring 2019

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CAUSE Community Leaders in front of the State Capitol

Santa Maria Young Adult Leaders in Sacramento to Fight for Health Access for All

Access to basic health services is still difficult for many community members. Here in Santa Maria's westside, more than half of adults lack health insurance. Although the Affordable Care Act helped millions of Californians gain health insurance, over 1.4 million undocumented Californians continue to lack access to basic healthcare because they are excluded from healthcare assistance. Our Santa Maria young-adult leaders headed to the state capitol in Sacramento to directly meet with state leaders and ask them to support Health4All, state legislation that would allow all Californians to get healthcare through Medi-Cal regardless of immigration status.

CAUSE Youth Advocate for Free Bus Passes for Low Income Students

One of the biggest obstacles facing youth in Santa Maria is a lack of transportation to help them attend school, part-time jobs or after school activities. Many Santa Maria youth have to take long bus rides from northwest Santa Maria to locations like Pioneer Valley High, Allan Hancock College, Marian Hospital and retail jobs on the east and south sides of the city. This spring, CAUSE youth leaders met with city leaders to voice their concerns and present to them with state grant opportunities that could help the city provide free bus passes for youth. Thanks to our advocacy, the city applied for the state grant and was awarded \$35,000 to offer 50 free youth bus passes. Youth are also continuing to advocate for improved bus routes to connect the east and west sides of the city.



CAUSE Youth Leaders talk with Mayor Patino about youth transportation needs

CAUSE's Mission is to build grassroots power to realize social, economic and environmental justice for the people of the Central Coast region through policy research, leadership development, organizing, and advocacy.

CAUSE's Vision is that together we can create a global community where we all contribute to, and benefit from, a sustainable economy that is just, prosperous and environmentally healthy.

Farmworker Housing and H-2A Workers

As the cost of housing goes up, growers are having a harder time finding workers because wages in the fields aren't keeping up with the cost of living. Many agricultural companies in the Central Coast are now using H-2A workers, temporary workers from Mexico contracted to work for a season. But some wealthier Santa Maria neighborhoods are opposed to H-2A farmworkers living in nearby motels and residential homes, and proposed a discriminatory ban on farmworker housing in their areas. CAUSE worked to stop this ban but also worked with growers and the city to pass a requirement that landlords have to pay three months' rent to any local family that gets displaced by converting their building to H-2A housing.



Speaking at city council about farmworker housing in our community



CAUSE and our partner organizations release our report on our vision for the future of Santa Maria!

Community's Voice on the Future of Santa Maria

The City of Santa Maria is doing lots of planning for the future, including a downtown plan, a transportation plan, and even the General Plan, which guides all future development and growth in our city. CAUSE is working to ensure that the voices of our community are included and our needs are met for housing, transportation, education, health and more. We gathered hundreds of community surveys, held a huge town hall meeting, and put out a report on what local residents want to see for the future of Santa Maria, including more affordable housing, better connected public transit, and local higher education opportunities.

Clean Water and Bathrooms for Farmworkers

CAUSE leaders have been speaking up for years about the need for clean bathrooms and drinking water for workers in the fields. We are now in a partnership with the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department to research and develop a program to inspect farms for the health conditions of their field toilets and drinking water. A researcher will be inspecting 50 local farms this summer to make a report to the Santa Barbara County Supervisors about healthy working conditions for farmworkers.

Welcome our new Santa Maria Organizer Zulema Aleman!



Get Involved!

- **Adult Committee:**
Contact Zulema Aleman (805) 310-4165
- **Youth Committee:**
Contact Zulema Aleman (805) 310-4165
- **Young Adult Committee:**
Contact Abe Melendrez at 805-253-3686