

2024

Annual Report





2025 Annual Report Letter from the President/CEO

As we reflect on 2024, a year that marked Friendly Center's 100th anniversary, we are incredibly grateful for the unwavering support of our dedicated staff, partners, and community. This milestone year has been one of growth and transformation as we've worked to advance our mission of providing stability, opportunity, and hope to children and families in poverty. Together, we embraced new opportunities, refined our approach, and committed to looking beyond traditional methods to make a lasting impact. With a renewed focus on sharing our vision of ending the cycle of generational poverty in Orange County, we have seen our community increasingly align with and support this vital mission.

Our three core pillars—family Services, Food and basic Needs, and Education and workforce Development—continue to guide us in our work. Each pillar is interconnected, allowing us to provide holistic support to families striving for stability.

Family Services remain a cornerstone of our mission. This year, with the generous support of \$1 million in emergency rental assistance from Supervisor Doug Chaffee, District 4, we were able to help over 130 families with up to three months of rental assistance, keeping them in their homes and preventing eviction during a crisis. This initiative is a testament to the importance of providing families with the stability they need to overcome immediate challenges and build a stronger future.

Our Food & Basic Needs pillar has also seen tremendous growth. The launch of our mini-mart model has transformed the way we provide food and essentials to our community. In the first month alone, we served 1,200 individuals, and by the end of the year, that number grew to 3,000. This new model ensures that families have access to basic needs with dignity and respect, furthering our mission to offer hope and opportunity.



In Education & Workforce Development, we are proud to have launched programs like our Drone Bootcamp and the Unlimited Futures program for children, both designed to raise awareness of STEM and career technical education (CTE). These initiatives align us closely with local schools and colleges, opening new pathways for students to explore exciting careers in technology and beyond. For adults, we offer a new bilingual High School Equivalency program (English and Spanish) that helps individuals break the cycle of poverty by removing barriers to education and workforce entry. By providing supportive services like childcare, we ensure parents can focus on completing their education and securing better job opportunities. Additionally, we are excited to announce plans for a new Ambassador Program, engaging adult volunteers to strengthen our outreach and fundraising efforts, bringing in new partners to help us meet the growing needs of our community.

The need in our community is greater than ever, and we are so grateful to our loyal donors, volunteers, and partners who have stood by us and believed in our mission. Your commitment has made it possible for us to expand our programs, reach more families, and create lasting impact. Thank you for not giving up on us, and for standing with us as we continue to serve and uplift those in need.

As we look ahead to 2025, we remain focused on our mission, and with your continued support, we will continue working to strengthen families and end the cycle of generational poverty in Orange County.

With deepest appreciation,

Kenia Cueto, Ph.D.
President and CEO



Mission

TO BRING STABILITY, OPPORTUNITY, AND HOPE TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN POVERTY.

Vision

TO END THE CYCLE OF GENERATIONAL POVERTY IN ORANGE COUNTY.

Meet Our Leadership Team

Kenia Cueto, Ph.D.
PRESIDENT & CEO



Board Chair
Vito A. Canuso III
Retired
Intellectual Property Lawyer



Kris Erickson
Law Offices of Kristin A. Erickson



Marge Aguilar
Retired
Bank of America



Ken Fisher
Assistant Vice President
Corporate Development
Pacific Life



Patty Barrios
VP/Labor Services
United Business Bank



Gisela Meier
Philanthropist



Dennis Corbett
Retired
Pacific Life



Mark Richards
President
Associated Warehouses Inc.



Alisa Driscoll
Vice President
Community Relations
Chapman University



Laura Rothafel, MA, MFT, LPCC
Marriage and Family Therapist



Monique Dubiski
Head of Emerging Healthcare
Technologies
Wells Fargo



Fred Whitaker
Managing Partner
Cummins & White, LLP

Directors



Jessica Ruelas

DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS

As the Director of Community and Family Services at Friendly Center, I've had the privilege of supporting families in need by increasing access to resources, strengthening family resilience, and creating a supportive space where individuals can gain the tools, they need to build brighter futures. For the past 14 years, it has been an honor to walk alongside our community on their journey toward stability and growth.



Jennifer Acuna

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE

Jennifer Acuna is a results-driven education and workforce development professional with 12 years' experience in Career Technical Education (CTE), internship coordination, and project management at Santa Ana Unified School District. She is passionate about fostering student success through strategic partnerships, mentorship, and innovative curriculum development.



Steve Getman

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

As Friendly Center's Director of Operations, Steve Getman concentrates on three pillars - marketing and events, information technology, and donor engagement - using each to amplify the mission of providing stability, opportunity, and hope to Orange County families.

OUR IMPACT

Over the past three years, Friendly Center has remained steadfast in its mission to support the Orange County community. Thanks to the continued generosity of our donors, we are able to walk alongside those we serve and provide the assistance they need.

6,852 

households received food distributions, providing nutrition to **24,959** individuals and children.*

265 

Households participated in our Case Management Program - a program designed to bring families back to stability. These families and individuals may have been referred to Friendly Center through Orange County Social Services due to a crisis they have experienced within the home. 73% of households have remained stable after completing the Case Management Program.

 **Over 2000**

toys, and **248 school backpacks** distributed to **1091 children** through our holiday toy drive and other events throughout the year.

*Based on count of households checking in to food distributions across all sites. May contain duplicates.

184,363

Pounds of food distributed in 2024



555 

Thanksgiving dinners, feeding **2,558** individuals, fostering community bonds and ensuring joyful holiday celebrations and stronger families.



99 families, including **239** individuals and **98** children, received hygiene items, promoting health, well-being, and dignity in our community.

99,400 

diapers distributed, providing essential support to families in need and promoting healthier communities.



290 families received emergency food supplies, feeding **471 individuals**, including **192 children**, ensuring their nutritional needs were met.



121 families supported with **\$22,982** in **utility assistance** helping them maintain essential services, reduce financial stress, and improving quality of life.



291 families received **\$739,572** in rental assistance, preventing homelessness and providing stability and security for those in need.

2,057

unduplicated households received assistance from Friendly Center in 2024.

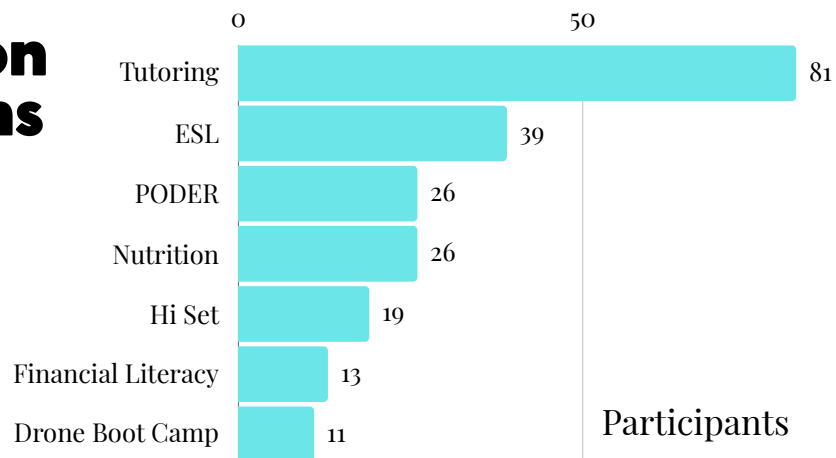


Education Programs Overview – 2024



Education Programs

served **137 individuals**
from **105 households**
throughout Friendly
Center facilities in
Orange and Buena
Park.



Educational Programs

After-School Program

The after-school program at Orange, Power of Me, transitioned to Unlimited Futures, served **81 students** throughout 2024. In the Fall, the program was renamed and changed curriculum design to focus on skill building for our elementary students. The program consisted of 2 hours of tutoring and literacy integration. Our 7 Chapman students and 2 volunteers along with the Educational Specialist and Director of Education, moved away from the focus of post-tutoring arts and crafts. Working together, the team built enrichment focused on **STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math)** and incorporated **SEL (Social Emotional Learning)** skills.

Students focused on communication and collaboration to expand their language and vocabulary. Growing plants to learn about growth mindset, practicing positive self-talk when struggling with homework, implementing point systems for project work and collaboration that was rewarded with purchasing in the student store, all positively inspired our students. With our results we will continue the program focus into 2025.

Our 2025 Summer program will be career exploration focused and is in planning with wider community involvement.

ESL

Working with **Santiago Community College**, we provided ESL classes, serving **39 clients** in Orange throughout 2024. Students learned interview skills with mock interview activities, presentation/ computer knowledge, how to write a proper email to an employer, and citizenship lessons. Providing childcare enabled our clients to participate in the evening workshops without distraction.

Financial Literacy classes were provided at both sites for both students and adults through partnerships with Hanmi and US Banks throughout the year. Classes included savings programs, setting up accounts, budgeting, and investments.

Friendly Center's **Annual Backpack Drive** provided **248 backpacks** to students in Orange County. Extra backpacks were kept year-round to serve emergency clientele.

New programs launched in 2024

CHOC PODER (Prevention of Obesity and Diabetes through Education and Resources) program served **26 clients** in Orange. PODER brings the whole family together for educational information on healthy habits and nutrition education, including low-cost healthy recipes, coaching on food purchases, and forming healthy habits.

Drone Boot Camp

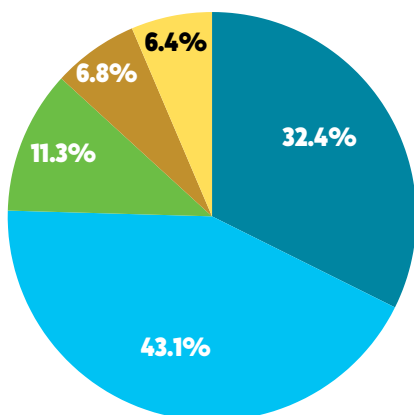
In the summer of 2024, Fullerton College partnered with Friendly Center to launch a hands-on drone boot camp, introducing students to drone technologies and real-world applications. The program raised awareness of Career Technical Education (CTE) and aligned with education & workforce needs..

Hi-Set (High School Equivalency) is a program that provides education, testing, and awards a graduation certificate upon completion to students 18 and over in Spanish and English. Enrollment for 2024 was **19 students**, with **4 graduates!** Classes are offered through **American Career College** at both Friendly Center sites and is an open enrollment as students work at their own pace to continue the program.

In 2025, Friendly Center is slated to expand its Drone Boot Camp and Unlimited Futures programs to offer even more students access to hands-on, future-focused learning. In partnership with local colleges and community organizations, we are growing our workforce development initiatives to support clients in upskilling through AI training, small business education and mentorship, and certification in office and administrative skills. These efforts are designed to equip both youth and adults with the tools they need to succeed in today's evolving job market.

OUR FINANCIALS

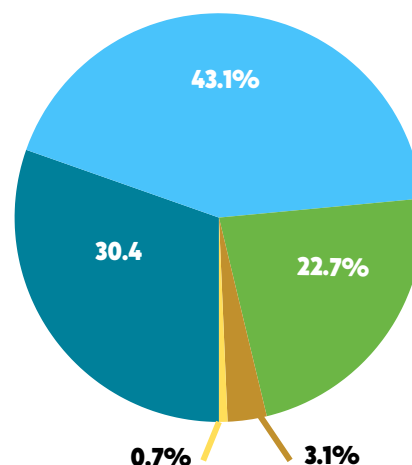
Income



FUNDING SOURCE	AMOUNT
DONATED ITEMS	\$1,087,868
GRANT INCOME	\$1,449,506
CONTRIBUTIONS	\$381,374
OTHER	\$228,597
FUNDRAISING	\$215,724
TOTAL	\$3,363,079

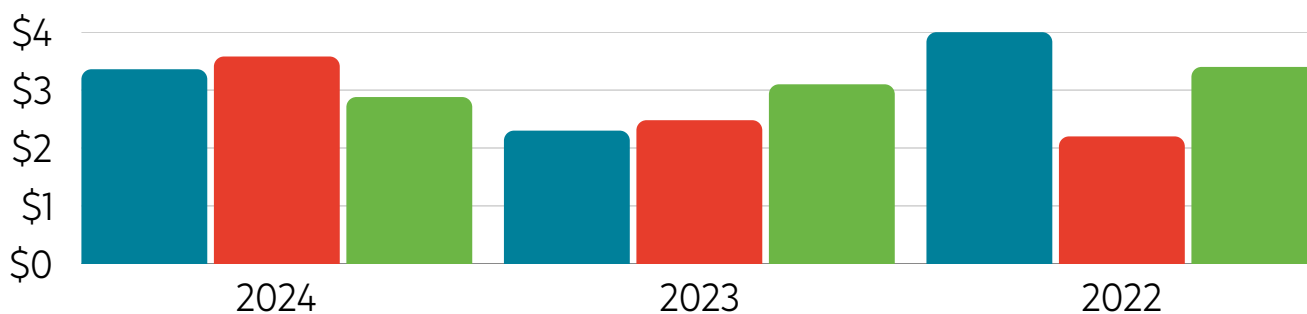
EXPENSES	AMOUNT
IN-KIND EXPENSES	\$1,087,868
PROGRAM EXPENSES	\$1,544,297
ADMINISTRATIVE	\$813,683
FUNDRAISING	\$110,762
OTHER	\$24,136
TOTAL	\$3,580,746

Expenses



Three Year Analysis in millions of dollars

● Income
 ● Expenses
 ● Net Assets



A Second Chance: **MAYRA'S STORY**

I'm Mayra, a mother, a student, and—thanks to Friendly Center—a survivor with hope for tomorrow.



Just a few months ago, my family was on the brink. My husband, Lorenzo, had his landscaping hours slashed, leaving us with barely enough to cover rent for our small Orange County apartment. While I searched for work, a diagnosis blindsided us: advanced breast cancer. Overnight, fear replaced every plan we had for our two young sons.

Finding a lifeline

Desperate, I walked through Friendly Center's doors. I expected a handout. Instead, I found a community ready to stand beside us.

At Friendly Center, I was able to receive a number of services including:

- Emergency groceries and hygiene kits meant my boys never went to bed hungry.
- Counseling and caring case managers* helped us navigate treatment schedules, bills, and the heavy emotions no family should carry alone.

Most important of all, Friendly Center shielded us from homelessness. By weaving together three sources of rental support—the Orange County District 4 Emergency Rental Assistance Program, Phase 41 funds, and direct Friendly Center relief—they secured five months of rent. For my family, that wasn't just assistance; it was breathing room to fight cancer without losing our home.

Hope takes root

Today I'm celebrating remission. Yet Friendly Center's impact goes far beyond my health:

- I'm studying for my GED through their HiSET classes, determined to qualify for a better job once treatment ends.
- My sons receive therapy to process the upheaval we've endured.
- We still visit Friendly Center's food distributions, where friendly faces greet us by name.



Finding a lifeline

Because of you, my family has a second chance. From the depths of my heart—gracias. Your kindness changed our story, and I know it will light the way for countless families who walk through Friendly Center's doors after us.



OUR SUPPORTERS

Alisa Driscoll

Angelita Pezina

Angels Baseball Foundation

Ametek/FMH Aerospace

AO Architects

AOF/Pacific Affordable

Aqua Tots Swim Schools

Art and Laura Rothafel

BAPKO Metal

Bertha Hernandez

Bob Myers

Brad and Melinda Chisick

Brandon Turonek

California Credit Union

CAPOC Diaper Bank

Chapman University

Chapman University,

Department of Student

Engagement

Charles McCandless Tile

Chris and Susan Simpson

Christine Drobish

Craq Jerky

Crumb! Cookies

Daena Hullinger

Daniel Safford

Dan and Janet Ugalde

Dan & Jeanne Scott Family
Foundation

Deborah Acuna

Dennis and Kathy Corbett

Dhont Family Foundation

Dixie Healy

Donna Nelson

Doug and Paulette Chaffee

Efrain Irizarry

Enterprise Rent-A-Car

Felicia Kaefer

First United Methodist Church
of Orange

Fred and Mignon Whitaker

Golden State Water Company

Grace Hill

Innovative Intuitive Technology

Insperity

Jeff and Chantell Tibbets

Jennifer Monson

Jim and Betsy Little

John and Cyndi Ganahl

Jordan Valdez Soto

Jose and Nora Cueto

Educational Fund

Judith Atwell

Judith Bailey

Ken and Gisela Meier

Ken and Janice Coulson

Kevin Boudreau and Patty

Barrios

Kevin McBride

Kindred Westminster

Kiwanis Club of Orange

Kurt Adams and Kris Erickson

Lance Rabun

Larry and Lynda Zadra

Margaret Aguilar

Marisa Zarate-Zweiback

Mark and Beth Richards

Martha and Rebeca Nelson

McMaster-Carr Supply

Company

Melinda Moore and Steve

Wernett

Michael Anant

Michael Landier

Michael Lerner

Monique Dubisky

Natalie Carroll

Neale Davis

Nick and Nora Clayton

Orangeland Recreation Vehicle
Park

**Orange County Board of
Supervisors, Doug Chaffee**

Orange County Community
Foundation

Orange County Trial Lawyers
Charities

Orange Cycle

Orange High School

Pacific Life Foundation

Panera Bread

Patrick and Anne Truex

**P.C. & Rosana Hsu Chao
Foundation**

PetSmart

**Promising Futures Orange
County of the OC Community
Fund**

QPS

Ray and Deborah Chao

Ray and Jill Button

RC Hobbs Foundation

Richard and Kara

Dannenbring

Richard and Sue Guilford

Rick Nazzareno

Rick Suarez

Robert and Kelly Lobato

Robert and Madonna

Frackelton

Ron and Claudia Nagele

Ron and Diana Shepard

Ron and Diana Shepard

Roosters Foundation of
Orange County
Ross Loehner
Roy and Michelle Berelowitz
Sajjadian Medical
Corporation
Scott Squires Fund
Second Harvest Food Bank
Shelley Ho

**Sister of St. Joseph Healthcare
Foundation**

Solvay
Southern California Edison
Starbucks
States Logistics
Stater Brothers Charities

Storehouse Foundation

Sunwest Bank

**The Sharon D. Lund
Foundation**

The Waltmar Foundation

Temple Beth Sholom
Tina Lopez
Tom Gibbons Jr.
Tonda Fields

**Ugalde Family Charitable
Foundation**

U.S. Bank

United Business Bank
Victor and Kenia Cueto
Villa Park Rotary

Vito and Renee Canuso

Walmart Transportation
Wendy Peterson
Woman's Club of Orange

*Names are listed based
on gifts of certain criteria
made in 2024. We
apologize for any names
inadvertently omitted.



266

volunteers



3,211

hours worked



\$99,530

value contribution



GET INVOLVED



Donate

Support financially. Professional Services. Give food and hygiene items. Sponsor.



Volunteer

Tutor. Distribute food. Event support. Skill-based volunteering. Admin support.



Attend

Golf Tournament of Hope. One Heart Gala. Back Bay Beerfest. Other events.



Partner

Food drives. Workplace giving. Start a Facebook fundraiser. Become a partner with Friendly Center.



Other Ways to Give

Donate stocks, mutual funds, securities. Include Friendly Center in estate plans.



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