



Abundant Grace Coastside Worker – Our Story

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Mission

To transform the lives of Coastsiders experiencing or at risk for homelessness through meaningful employment, skill training, community-building, food justice and other supports.

Outcome Goals woven into all programming

Housing, Employment, Health, Sobriety, Food Security

Programs

Full Circle Food Justice – Our signature program is a partnership with Potrero Nuevo Farm, south of Half Moon Bay. Each week, we bring individuals experiencing homelessness to the Farm where they can participate in three different projects:



- Farm Work Days
- Farm Apprenticeship
- Conservation Crew

Farm work days are the foundation of our partnership at PNF. Twice per week we hire a group of up to 10 people to plant, tend, and harvest some 20,000 pounds of fresh organic produce annually. The harvest is then distributed for free to local low-income families in Half Moon Bay.

The **Farm Apprenticeship** started in 2019. We offer 5 rounds of the apprenticeship each year, and each round consists of 7 weekly sessions. Each participant selects a project to complete on the farm, studying subjects like irrigation, native plants, herbs and flowers, pest control, and more. In addition to completing their individual project, apprentices participate in training sessions led by expert guest speakers in topics like mindfulness, accountability, and personal responsibility. Finally, each participant works on a series of goal-setting sessions called “future authoring;” this is an incredibly powerful part of the apprenticeship as many of our participants have never been asked or challenged to set goals for their own lives. We have seen some amazing goals come to fruition, including continuing education, admission to rehab for substance abuse, and, one participant even saved the money he needed to

achieve a dream of buying a sailboat to live on.



New in 2021, the **Conservation Crew** is also offered in 5 rounds throughout the year. Each round consists of 7 weekly sessions, like the apprenticeship, but whereas the apprenticeship is focused on individual growth and self-discovery, the Conservation Crew is focused on helping participants build teamwork and collaborative skill sets. Each round presents a team project to complete various



Abundant Grace
COASTSIDE WORKER

conservation tasks on the Farm – pond restoration, trail building, invasive species removal, native plant installation, and more. The members of the Crew must work together to plan, execute, and complete the project on time. This exciting new program option has opened opportunities for us to collaborate with other local agencies, including Peninsula Open Space Trust and Point Blue Conservation Science.

Coastside Clean Team – Four days a week we lead a group of 7-8 participants to pick up garbage from the Coastal Trail, Poplar Beach, along the creek near the homeless encampment, and other locations as needed. Abundant Grace's partnership with the City of Half Moon Bay has been wildly successful and popular both with our program participants as well as the residents of Half Moon Bay. Since its inception, the Clean Team has removed an annual average of 20,000 pounds of garbage from the beach, coastal trail, and park spaces, though in 2021 we are on pace to pick up almost double that amount. The City of Half Moon Bay provides the majority of funding for this program.



Workforce Development Center Community Services – Purchased in 2020, the Workforce Development Center is the hub for AGCW. Located at 515 Kelly Avenue in Half Moon Bay, the WDC serves as the starting point for our programs, holds our administrative offices, and provides the following services for homeless residents:

- Showers
- Laundry
- Laptop, WiFi, and electronics charging access
- Mail delivery
- Small temporary storage
- Clothing distribution
- Food distribution, both brown-bag lunches and produce distribution from the Farm
- Safe gathering space
- Assistance with resumes, job and/or housing applications, and accessing county programs

In addition, we partner with LifeMoves to provide on-site case management services; LifeMoves rents dedicated office space at the WDC. Finally, the Street Medical Team uses the WDC as a space to consult with people in need of medical care. One highlight of this partnership is that we were able to host two Covid vaccine clinics at the Center this past spring.

Organizational History



Abundant Grace Coastside Worker was established as a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization in 2015 by Executive Director Eric DeBode. By that time, we had already been partnering with Potrero Nuevo Farm for almost 4 years to provide the early version of our Full Circle Food Justice program through the former Catholic Worker program in Half Moon Bay. Once we incorporated as a nonprofit, we changed "Catholic Worker" to



"Coastside Worker" which has allowed us to partner with all of the different faith communities on the Coast, include new volunteers and supporters, and deepen our efforts to engage the larger community in living out of shared, common values to care for those in our midst who are really struggling. Shortly thereafter, we began partnering with the City of Half Moon Bay to offer the Coastside Clean Team program. In 2019-2020, we completed our capital campaign to purchase the building for our Workforce Development Center.



In 2020, we partnered with two other Coastside nonprofits, Coastside Hope and ALAS (Ayudando Latinos a Soñar) to operate the Coastside Crisis Fund, an emergency response fund to assist low-income families during Covid-19 shutdowns. Together we raised \$400,000 to support 175 families and 40 homeless neighbors on the Coast.

What is “meaningful work?”

One intangible outcome of our collective efforts is the sense of community instilled in those involved – from homeless individuals and low-income families to local volunteers. We consistently remind our program participants that they are successfully cleaning the beaches and trails and improving the environment in Half Moon Bay and that they are growing much-needed food for low-income families. We believe that the experience of responsibility, teamwork, the self-awareness of being a valuable part of a larger community, and the pride that comes from work with dignity are key steps toward making better decisions toward self-care and life transformation. Furthermore, we believe that meaningful work helps to re-weave the web of community ties that many homeless individuals have lost or severed through their experience of homelessness.

Organizational Value – Accompaniment

Abundant Grace's primary operational value is to practice *accompaniment*, of walking alongside someone "shoulder to shoulder," and listening to them articulate their situation, needs and hopes. To accompany each participant wherever they are in their life's journey, we evaluate each person based on 5 outcome goals: **housing, employment, health and wellness, food security, and sobriety**. We then accompany each individual as they make strides toward achieving each of these 5 outcome goals instead of dictating a set course of action that each person must follow.



Future of the Organization

We continue to deepen our partnerships with San Mateo County, the City of Half Moon Bay, Potrero Nuevo Farm, and other agencies operating on the Coast while expanding our services, providing job-readiness training, and developing our programs to respond to needs in our community.



In the short-term future, we will be introducing a new bicycle donation program which will include volunteer work days for local cycling experts to assist with bicycle repairs. We recently completed construction of a farm stand at the WDC that allows us to distribute produce much more efficiently than we were able in the past. We are also excited to expand our team to include a second program staff member in the summer of 2021.

In the next 3-5 years, we aspire to secure property to convert into affordable housing for the Coastsider, as most affordable housing is located outside of Half Moon Bay. We have begun preliminary exploration for this pursuit. Considerations include whether we might be able to find an existing multi-family housing unit, apartment complex, or duplexe, or whether we will need to purchase property and build from scratch.