



Hand to Hand CHRONICLE

NOVEMBER 2023 | A FUND OF THE COASTAL COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

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Our Mission Statement

Hand to Hand makes an impact in the lives of women and girls in San Diego County by directly providing resources to programs that empower change and self-sufficiency.

OVER
\$488,000
given to the local
community

First grants
awarded in
2009

14
YEARS
of impacting the
lives of women
and girls

Hand to Hand is honored to share the exceptional work of the nonprofit organizations funded by our organization in 2023.

All Tribes Charter School

The Hand to Hand grant to All Tribes Charter School made it possible for 40 girls to engage in construction projects. Every girl participated in the building of the Greenhouse at the Farm next to the school, in addition to building seven garden beds and a gazebo. The girls were 1st to 12th grade in age. Each girl also learned how to use all the proper safety equipment including protective devices for the head, eyes, and ears.

With the challenges of weather, material delays, student sports and academic schedules, the Greenhouse build paralleled the types of delays in the industry, similar to real life. The project enabled the girls to learn how to read construction plans and how to use a hammer, drill, jig, tape measurer and table saw. This experiential learning provided a sense of accomplishment and a sense of the construction industry where few women participate. Learning the tools, tricks and tribulations in this field have given 40 girls more self-confidence, self-esteem, self-sufficiency, identity, and independence, as well as a possible new career choice ahead.



The most significant outcomes of this project are self-esteem and pride for the girls. The tangible outcome is a greenhouse and gazebo constructed by the girls and women. Skills learned have already been exhibited in the current year projects. Tools from the Hand to Hand grant are being used to construct tiny homes, build pow-wow drums, make walking sticks, and build tables for the garden.

The lessons learned as the program was implemented are:

- Girls under the age of 8 need to work one-on-one with an adult when working around tools for the first time.
- Weather and illness can be limiting factors that lengthen completion timelines.



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Operation Hope - North County



Operation Hope's vision is to promote economic self-sufficiency and positive change to the lives of women and children who are experiencing homelessness. Their goal is to rebuild lives in a safe and secure shelter and help their clients reclaim their independence through the Steps to Independence program. Our grant was earmarked for this program and benefited 109 women and girls this year (169 overall including boys).

Due to the increased cost of housing and the decrease of available housing, clients stayed longer than the usual 3 to 4 months. Grant funds were used for bi-weekly case management salaries for case managers working directly with their clientele.



One example of success is Julia's story. Julia entered the shelter with her 9-month-old baby in August 2022. She was not employed, had no transportation, and no child care. During her stay she was able to obtain her updated Registered Nurse (RN) certification, find full-time employment in her field, and find full-time child care. She received a salary increase after 30 days, and won an award, the "Live Your Dream Award," through the Soroptimist organization. She was able to save most of her earnings while living at Operation Hope and was successful in finding her own housing in March 2023.

Overall, Operation Hope is a high barrier shelter, operating 24/7. Sixty percent of clients graduated successfully and were able to secure steady jobs and housing. Operation Hope knows a positive difference was accomplished with the women and children that they serve. The local community and Hand to Hand helped make them reach their goals.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- 208 skill building classes were provided for the adults and 48 skill building classes for the children.
- 3680 hours of case management were provided, not including hours that their interns managed.
- 936 hours of youth services were provided.
- 60% of clients graduated successfully and were able to secure steady jobs and housing.

North County African American Women

The North County African American Women's (NCAAW) organization is dedicated to providing a support network through education, health awareness, and life skills program for women and girls in San Diego North County. Their mission aligns with Hand to Hand's mission by increasing the self-sufficiency of women and girls.

The grant funded the Becoming a Global Citizen Mentoring Program. During the 2022 school year, 20 eighth grade girls participated. In 2023, 22 girls registered to participate.



The funds were used for a Culmination Celebration Activity and to cover the cost of transportation for a STEAM field trip to Mira Costa College.

As a result of the program, the girls are now able to respond positively to reduce stress and anxiety, and are more resilient when difficulties arise. They also learned strategies and techniques to resolve conflicts successfully.



This year, a participant from last year's program returned as a freshman volunteer for the new crop of eighth graders. She really enjoyed being in the program last year, and has made this her high school community service project. She learned so much in the program, such as finding her voice, gaining confidence and giving back to the community.

One of the most rewarding aspects of this program is having parents speak highly about how their daughters have grown and matured since enrolling. They now have sisters of former mentees enrolling in the program. More than 250 girls have been served since inception of the program.

ElderHelp of San Diego

ElderHelp focuses on the needs of seniors in San Diego, enabling them to be independent and remain in their homes. The majority of their clients are women.

ElderHelp served over 5,000 senior women this past grant period. The Care Coordination Program enabled senior women to continue to live independently. The components of this program are monitoring and advocating for continued good health in order to remain in their homes, providing meals, and food.

ElderHelp volunteers provide visits to the seniors to reduce their isolation. Volunteers also provide assistance with financial planning and in-home safety features modifications.

With rising rents and cost of living expenses, ElderHelp expanded the Shared Housing Program. As a result, ElderHelp exceeded all outcomes.

- Hospitalizations and skilled nursing placements reduced.
- Groceries and meals were delivered to 449 seniors monthly.
- A total of 8,000 rides were provided, the majority of which were to medical appointments.
- An office was opened in San Marcos which greatly expands availability to North County senior women.

A success story was shared by an Oceanside participant in the Shared Housing Program. She was delighted that



she was matched with someone with similar interests. The extra income was helpful in buying more nutritious food. Prior to the "shared housing" she was afraid she would have to sell her home. She said, "just amazing and I could not be happier in my life right now."

ElderHelp is celebrating their 50th anniversary in San Diego County. They have served, and will continue to serve seniors, enabling them to live healthy, independent lives.

Served over
5,000
senior
women



Congratulations to K.J. Koljonen Coastal Community Foundation Volunteer of the Year

K.J. Koljonen was nominated by the Coastal Community Foundation as "Volunteer of the Year" and was recognized at an event sponsored by North County Philanthropy Council on November 3, 2023. K.J. is a founding member of Hand to Hand and has served as the Lead Chair twice. Her enthusiasm and leadership have resulted in tremendous growth in Hand to Hand's membership.

"Before my work with Coastal Community Foundation, I had only a vague notion of what community philanthropy meant, what purpose it served or why I should care. I learned quickly that giving locally meant connecting neighbors in need with neighbors who care. Giving local is between neighbors, we together make that happen!"

K.J. Koljonen

- Children are capable of being capable. With instruction, guidance and supervision, children can build.
- Support adults need a training workshop prior to working with the girls. Adults need to understand that children learn from mistakes. Adults are there for advice, safety and to pick up construction supplies from vendors.

Grant funds were spent on construction supplies, including corrugated plastic, fasteners, and corrugated tin purchased for the construction of the greenhouse. Class sets of safety equipment including eye, ear, hand, and head protection were purchased, in addition to ten tool sets, including tool boxes, general hand tools, impact drills, screw guns, four table saws, chop saws, Kreig jigs, clamps of various styles and sizes, saw horses and saw stands.

Sub-flooring is being installed in the first two homes being built. Middle school girls are learning to set footings and construct a shade structure. The success of the program has initiated what is intended to be a three-day build a house project. The project will match 10 girls with 10 women who will work together to construct a tiny home in three days.

The program was and continues to be very successful. The tools purchased will be used for many years to come and will go through multiple hands.



For information about the Hand to Hand Giving Circle:
K.J. Koljonen: 4KJKSD@gmail.com



handtohandsandiego.org

Our History

In the spring of 2008, a group of women began to discuss ways that they could make a difference in the community for women and girls through their joint philanthropy. In October 2008 Hand to Hand was established as a charitable fund at Coastal Community Foundation. Nineteen women joined as founders.

Chair Persons

Lead ChairK.J. Koljonen
GrantsMary Freeman
Grantee RelationsJoyce Mehrberg
FinanceTrisha O'Neal-Ayala
MembershipDori Patterson
HospitalityCarol Hutmacher
Administrative CoordinatorSue Steele



Coastal Community Foundation was founded in 1987 by community members dedicated to improving the quality of life for all who live in North County San Diego by bringing together and directing philanthropic efforts toward community needs.