vision
a community united
to ensure that every
child and adult is
free from poverty

mission
to build a community
free from poverty
by creating hope,
opportunity, and action.
we provide essential
services, work together
to improve our lives,
advocate for justice,
and inspire our community
to love, serve, and share.
It is still hard to breathe.

At a meeting on November 9, 2016, in the wake of such a breathtaking, divisive election, over a hundred community members convened to share their thoughts, hopes, and fears.

I have kept this particular remark shared by one of our grassroots leaders in my notebook ever since: "The best way to rise above this difficult situation is to remain united as the great family we are...to support one another and try to stay calm in these difficult times."

This sentiment sums up who we are—both the promise and responsibility of Sacred Heart Community Service. I have used her words like a meditation ever since.

The validation
Despite tremendous fear, our members reinforce who we are today, ideas that were easy for me to lose sight of.

First and foremost, we can and must “rise above” our situation. Our work involves getting people to envision a better, more just society and economy that values everybody. That is what we do. She reminded me of that.

Next, we must “remain united like the great family that we are.” Our work brings people together in meaningful relationships, often across boundaries of race and class. It involves building and maintaining unity. That is what we have done. We are a family—a great family. She reminded me of that.

We must “support one another.” Our work is not simply defined by what Sacred Heart does for the community anymore. The idea that we will figure it out by working together is at the heart of how we define our role today. She reminded me of that.

I can’t say that I have always remained calm this past year. I have feared that I am not doing enough, felt overwhelmed by the challenges we face, that I don’t have the answers.

Well, duh! Of course I don’t.

This meditation reminds me that we can and will rise above together, if we can stay united.

The progress
Ultimately, the past year has been one of the most difficult, creative and productive in our history.

• We spearheaded successful efforts to secure new resources and to lead countywide collaborative programs to protect immigrants and prevent homelessness.

• We lead transformative policy campaigns that will provide funding for affordable housing and transportation, protect renters, increase the minimum wage, and expand urban agriculture.

• We lead efforts to provide financial assistance to over 1,400 individuals and families displaced by the Coyote Creek flood last winter.

• We grew and innovated our programs, including a dramatic expansion of our service areas for food and financial assistance, doubling our summer youth academy, and developing new mutual support groups.

• We initiated efforts to bring community members and leaders together to address systemic racism.

What does it all mean?
Despite our progress, families still struggle, the safety net is under attack, immigrants live in fear, displacement of working poor families is real. We have not won every policy fight. The needs overwhelm the resources at our disposal.

But, I need to remember that we are not in this alone. I need to invite you to help, to volunteer, to donate, to learn, to create, to rise above, and to breathe.

Sincerely,

Poncho Guevara
Executive Director

how you can help

1. FINANCIAL GIFTS
   Your tax-deductible gift supports our programs. come see and experience how we put your gift to work.

2. VOLUNTEERS
   Give of your time and join the 100-200 volunteers needed each day to operate our programs. attend a volunteer orientation to get started.

3. DRIVES
   Organize a group to collect critical items. contact us and we’ll help you get started.

4. ADVOCACY
   Join our efforts to research and address public policy concerns affecting low-income residents.

5. LEARN
   Learn about the challenges facing working poor families by coming to an orientation, immersion, or plunge for you or a group.
Sacred Heart redesigned and aligned food and financial assistance service areas in Santa Clara County with our Emergency Assistance Network (EAN), United Way Bay Area, and Second Harvest Food Bank partners to better serve low-income residents. SHCS expanded service areas from 8 to 15 zip codes.

Sacred Heart worked with EAN sister organizations to develop and implement a countywide Homelessness Prevention System (HPS). HPS targets families at greatest risk of homelessness in Santa Clara County, and steps in before they lose their housing to help avoid the devastating financial and emotional costs of homelessness. HPS funding was assembled by Destination: Home, with investments from the County of Santa Clara, the City of San José, Google.org, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, and Sunlight Giving.

SHCS Board of Directors approved a new strategic plan for 2017-2019 that centers the necessity for wider community commitment to build a just society and economy. The plan balances program interventions that address the consequences of poverty with an emphasis on policy action and building solidarity to impact the root causes of poverty.

With support from the Shortino Family Foundation, San José Unified School District, and individual donors, SHCS doubled our Summer Academy program to provide academic enrichment to 220 1st-6th grade students, operating at the Gardner School campus for the first time.

In an historic win for residents of San José, City Council voted to adopt stronger protections for renters. After years of organizing alongside our Silicon Valley Renters’ Rights Coalition partners, the Council passed new rules that will provide protection from unjust evictions to nearly 450,000 renter households.

After 15 years, and more than 200,000 miles, the SHCS truck was ready to retire. Through fundraising events, crowdfunding campaigns, and matching donations, we raised enough to purchase our new truck, “Cora.”

Voters in Santa Clara County approved an Affordable Housing Bond (Measure A) and Transportation Tax (Measure B) which were advanced and shaped by Sacred Heart’s policy action committees. In addition to sending out our voter guide to 30,000 voters, 425 Sacred Heart volunteers and leaders put in more than 2,200 hours of voter outreach, including 40,000 calls. The results: $9.90 million to create housing affordable to thousands of our most vulnerable residents, and $500 million of transportation resources such as affordable fares and improved calls. The results: $950 million to create housing affordable to our most vulnerable residents.

Sacred Heart’s La Mesa Verde gardening network successfully campaigned for San José’s City Council to establish Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone policy which provides incentives for the creation of community gardens.

Sacred Heart lead financial relief efforts to those impacted by the Coyote Creek flood. We successfully advocated for additional assistance for overcrowded households, and ultimately, to provide help to those who had been living outside along the creek. 793 households received $2.3 million in direct assistance and 640 people whose belongings were swept away by the creek received over $300,000 of assistance.

SHCS sponsored the development of the countywide rapid response system and hotline with key allies. We train and deploy volunteers to support immigrants and their families subjected to immigration raids.

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Longtime Sacred Heart leader Rubi Quezada helps teach our Early Childhood Education Program and serves as a Lead Promotora for Pack-A-Back and holiday programs. Her children, Joshua, Jashon, Jesse, and James, participate in our education programs. “The programs at Sacred Heart,” Rubi told us, “help me be a better mother and person.”

“San José depends on you.”

This was a message left for us from a donor after making an online gift. It is the same sentiment we want to share with our supporters. Thank you to the thousands of individuals, companies, organizations, faith communities, unions, foundations and public agencies for making our work possible.

“San José makes love visible in our community!” - Carol Greene

PulseMaker Monthly Donor

Monthly gifts through our Pulse Maker Monthly Donor Program are a great way to support Sacred Heart and are vital to ensure we have steady funding throughout the year.

“It gives me a lot of pleasure to give a small monthly donation to Sacred Heart. By making it an automatic deduction I know I won’t forget to support the amazing work they do. This is an organization that really makes love visible in our community!” - Carol Greene

PulseMaker Monthly Donor
“My family and I moved to San Jose from Oakland 16 years ago. My mother, a single mom of 3, would wake up early and wait outside for the doors to open at Sacred Heart Community Service so that she could get food and clothes for my siblings and I. Giving back to the community and organizations that lifted my family up is what drives what I do everyday.”

– Yvette Gonzalez