



Casa
ESPERANZA

Transitional Homes for
Women and Children

Hope NOTES

JULY 2026

9th Annual Hearts of Hope returns in September

ENJOY A NASHVILLE, MUSICAL THEMED NIGHT IN YOUR CASUAL COUNTRY DUDS



On September 17, the community will gather for Casa Esperanza's Annual Hearts of Hope Gala, and we hope you'll join us.

At Casa Esperanza, women and children find more than shelter—they find hope, healing, and a path to lasting stability. By attending Hearts of Hope, you help make those new beginnings possible.

Join us at the Bakersfield Marriott for an inspiring event featuring a delicious dinner, exciting auctions, heartfelt stories, and meaningful connections.

Every ticket, sponsorship, and donation helps provide safe housing and supportive services for families rebuilding their lives.

Learn more, purchase tickets, a table, or become a sponsor... Click the link: [HEARTS OF HOPE](#)



Growing with purpose – Expanding leadership for Casa Esperanza's next strong chapter

Every milestone in Casa Esperanza's history has been made possible through the support of volunteers, donors, community partners, and dedicated staff. As we enter an exciting new growth phase, we are pleased to expand our core team with two accomplished leaders, Esperanza Contreras as Program Manager and Christine Lollar as Executive Director of External Affairs.

Together with Executive Director Diane Contreras (no relation to Esperanza Contreras), they create a leadership trio uniquely positioned to guide the organization into its next chapter.

Continued Page 3 – Expanding Leadership



Expanding leadership CONTINUED

Executive Director Diane Contreras continues to implement the organization's strategic vision and provides steady leadership that has helped Casa Esperanza grow its impact. Her commitment to the agency's mission has been at the heart of every initiative and program.

Executive Director of External Affairs Christine Lollar will lead efforts to drive organizational growth and draw on her expertise in strategic nonprofit development and philanthropy; increasing public awareness through communications and marketing,

As Program Manager, Esperanza Contreras will oversee program design, implementation, and participant services, drawing on her commitment to dignity and community. She will help ensure compassionate, individualized support for participants.

Together, the team will work to empower women and children on their path to living-wage employment, financial stability, and permanent housing. "Our mission is rooted in hope, compassion, and opportunity," said Board Chair Sr. Sherry Dolan. "As our organization continues to grow, we're investing in leadership that allows us to deepen our impact while remaining true to the values that have guided Casa Esperanza from the beginning." ***Here we grow again!***

When you help a woman fulfill her potential, magic happens.

Sarah Blakely, Philanthropist

2026 Give Big Kern – THANK YOU!



Executive Director Diane Contreras, Assistant Program Manager Erin Ortega, and Bakersfield Mayor Karen Goh.

A "big" thank you Kern County for the incredible generosity during Give Big Kern 2026! Over \$70,000 was raised to provide safe transitional housing, workforce development, behavioral health, and life skills for long term stability for women and children. **THANK YOU, KERN COUNTY!**



Community partners "give shade" in the best way possible!

Children at Casa Esperanza now have a beautiful, new, cool shade over the playground!

Donations of materials and installation are providing a safe space to play, learn, and grow.

Thank you Farmers Crane and Specialty Trim and Awning and Dave Packer, Board Member.



Casa
ESPERANZA

HEARTS OF HOPE

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17 • 6PM

BAKERSFIELD MARRIOTT AT THE CONVENTION CENTER

*Enjoy a Nashville themed, musical night
in your relaxed, casual country duds.*



LIVE
AUCTION



INSPIRING
STORIES

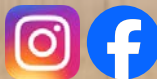


GREAT
FOOD

*All funds raised help provide intensive transitional
housing for women and children in Bakersfield.*

Watch for previews of live
auction packages

@casaesperanzabakersfield



MUSIC BY



WWW.ESPERANZABAKERSFIELD.ORG

WANTED:

Silent Auction items (\$50-\$250 value)

Live Auction items \$2000+

Please contact Julie Cesare 661 203 6022



Alumni Spotlight – Sereena and Emily

Casa Esperanza Transitional Home for Women, served its first resident participant in 2022. Since then 27 successful women and 61 children have been served – with 100% attaining permanent housing and zero recidivism. This year we celebrate two new graduates of the intensive two year program and honor their dedication and hard work.

SEREENA (right) has graduated from Bakersfield College, earning her Associate of Science degree in Criminal Justice Administration and successfully paid off all outstanding debt and continues to work to



achieve her financial goals. Sereena is now in the second phase of Casa Esperanza's transitional housing

program, in her own apartment unit with a full time job in addition to her own business. ***We're proud of you, Sereena!***

EMILY, shown with Dave Packer, Board Member, continues to maintain an excellent credit rating and recently paid off her vehicle ahead of schedule. Within her financial plan, Emily continues to build her savings as she works toward the goal of becoming a homeowner. She works full time for a local eatery and part time at a local nonprofit.

We're proud of you, Emily!



Workforce Development – Career Pathways Program

Through personalized education and vocational training, Casa Esperanza works to empower women to gain the skills and confidence to secure stable employment. Casa Esperanza staff, together with a team of volunteers and community workforce stakeholders, work to help empower participants and achieve long-term sustainability.

Thank you, **Hard Rock Casino Tejon**, for hosting Casa Esperanza's Career Pathway Program. Participants were invited to explore career possibilities with a tour, lunch, and a presentation from Hard Rock's Director of Marketing Kathy Degolia. ***Thank you, Kathy!***



We welcome **Robert Morris**, new volunteer who is helping participants create individual development plans focusing on career goals, job readiness, and long-term success. Through his guidance, the women receive support building resumes, preparing for interviews, enhancing

professional skills, and planning for financial stability as they transition toward independence. Robert brings nearly two decades of banking experience as credit administrator at Citizens Bank.

Welcome Robert!



Celebrating participant milestones

Casa Esperanza proudly announces its two most recent graduates! Mariah, Griselda, and their families have completed the intensive Journey to Success program. While being provided with transitional housing, they participated in Career Pathways workforce development and financial literacy, programming while receiving behavioral health support and more. Their children all completed the "Second Step Out-of-School" child enrichment program.



Congrats Mariah!

MARIAH - *We are so proud of you!*

Congratulations to Mariah for obtaining her Associates Degree in Public Health Sciences from Bakersfield College. Her children also earned multiple honors in school.

Congrats Griselda!



GRISELDA - *You are amazing!*

Congratulations to Griselda for earning her Career Technical Education Certification in Business Management from the Farmworkers Institute of Education and Leadership Development (FIELD). Griselda's son also earned honor roll recognition. Upon program exit Griselda was reunited with her family.

Be a part of something meaningful.



Join us on social media!

@[CASAESPERANZABAKERSFIELD](https://www.instagram.com/CASAESPERANZABAKERSFIELD)

Attend our "Success Celebration"

August 27

RSVP to e.ortega@casaesperanza.org



Honoring volunteer - Lorraine Cook



Casa Esperanza is grateful for its more than 30 dedicated volunteers, who are essential to helping our families. In 2025 they provided over 1,000 hours of support. This month we recognize and honor volunteer **Lorraine Cook** for her dedication and compassion. Through our Cooking en la Casa program, Lorraine prepares alongside participants, sharing delicious food while fostering learning, confidence, and connection. She also generously prepares meals for monthly Success Celebration dinners, honoring participants' milestones. Lorraine's kindness, generosity, and joyful spirit have made a lasting impact.

Thank you Lorraine!