



LA LUZ CENTER

A catalyst for change in Sonoma Valley through health, education and financial security



Our start:

La Luz Center was founded in 1985 by a small group of neighborhood volunteers working to establish a safe place for local immigrants.

In its early years, La Luz Center offered help to Sonoma Valley farm workers in cases of emergency, as well as in building their new lives.

In 2009, Vineyard Worker Services joined La Luz, and their programs of assistance and outreach for the vineyard-worker community continue.

Over time, the number of services and classes has expanded, and the Center's programs now focus on wellness, education, community engagement, and economic success.



Impact100 Sonoma

awarded a

\$100,000 Impact Grant

to the La Luz Center for its program *Strengthening Families & the Community* (2012) and a \$15,000 Community Grant to offer computer literacy workshops (2015).

What we do:

La Luz Center has become the “go to” place for local families seeking assistance in managing and improving their lives. La Luz and its collaborative partners currently serve over 7,000 children, youth, and adults every year. The Center offers English-language training, financial support services, computer-skills training, food distribution, medical and legal services, crisis counseling, and events that celebrate the multicultural richness of the community. The quantity and quality of La Luz Center services ensure that Sonoma Valley residents facing all types of challenges have the opportunity to actively participate in shaping the economic, social, and cultural aspects of our society.

A single story:

Emily has volunteered at La Luz for the past four years, since she was 14. In her words: “La Luz helps so many people. There are people who think because they are not legal they have no rights. When they come in, we explain to them that they do have rights – not the same as someone who is a citizen, but we help them understand that just because they don't have papers doesn't mean they don't have legal rights. Without La Luz, there would be many more people without jobs, more homeless people, and many more people without food. Sometimes people come by just to talk.”

Many of those who have been helped by La Luz find ways to say thank you – sometimes in the simplest of ways. After a recent Saturday event, a La Luz staff member was returning items to a local business, but the door was closed. He asked, “Are you still open?” The shop worker asked who he was, and when he learned he was from La Luz, the clerk responded: “Of course I can help you. We actually closed about five minutes ago; but for La Luz, I can help you. It is because of La Luz I have my job. Because I was able to take computer classes, my English is better, and I learned the computer skills I needed for this job. I am so happy and thankful to La Luz.”

La Luz Center helps change lives. The Center offers help, hope, and support to members of our community, empowering them to become self-sufficient and gain self-esteem.

Our future:

La Luz Center is continuing a capital campaign to revamp its reception and intake area to provide for safer and more discrete interactions. This includes a child-care area, a new entranceway to accommodate strollers and needs of the disabled, private offices for counselors, and adequate work spaces for staff and volunteers.