



LOS MEDANOS HEALTH AREA CONNECTION Newsletter

WELCOME TO AUGUST

Welcome to the SECOND Quarterly Edition of the Los Medanos Health Area Connection Newsletter. August brings meaningful moments for our community, including **Breastfeeding World Week** and **National Night Out**, both celebrating connection, support, and coming together as a community.

In this Summer Term edition, we're excited to highlight two of our grantee programs: **Opportunity Junction** and **White Pony Express**. Their dedication and impact continue to shine, and we're proud to share their work with you. We hope you enjoy this month's updates and stories. Thank you for being part of our LHMA community!

PROGRAM UPDATES & REMINDERS

We're excited to share that our 2026 presenter calendar is now fully booked, and we've already begun scheduling presentations for 2027. A special thank-you to **Gigi Crowder**, **Luis Marroquin from NAMI Contra Costa**, and **Nick Wilson from Loaves and Fishes** for kicking off our July presentations. In August we welcome Barb Hunt from St Vincent de Paul - RotaCare Free Clinic and Pittsburg & Bay Point Food Pantries.

Your organization is invited to be featured in our next newsletter, and you're welcome to share your work at an upcoming Advisory Committee meeting. If you're interested, please email us for details—we'd be happy to highlight your work.

UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

Concord National Night Out

Date: Tuesday, August 4th

Location: Concord Library
2900 Salvio St, Concord

Time: 5:00PM - 7:00PM

Pittsburg National Night Out

Date: Tuesday, August 4th

Location: Small World Park
2551 Harbor St, Pittsburg

Time: 4:00PM - 8:00PM

Concord WIC World Breastfeeding Week Celebration

Date: Wednesday, August 5th

Location: 2727 Systron Drive, Concord

Time: 1:00PM - 3:00PM

San Pablo WIC World Breastfeeding Week Celebration

Date: Friday, August 7th

Location: 501 Gateway Ave, San Pablo

Time: 1:30PM - 3:30PM



Certified Nurse Assistant Program



Opportunity Junction's (OJ) Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program offers motivated job seekers the opportunity to enter the healthcare field, earn a higher wage, and access pathways to greater economic success – all at no cost to them.

The program includes 12 weeks of CNA training, career skills training, hands-on clinical experience, and job placement assistance.

[Apply here](#). Next Class Start on September 8, 2026

Ryan's path toward becoming an Occupational Therapist began in 2023 when he enrolled in Opportunity Junction's CNA program, funded in part by the Los Medanos Health Area. At the time, he was earning minimum wage in retail and searching for stability and a meaningful career. With tuition, materials, meals, and other essentials covered, Ryan was able to focus fully on his training. Beyond clinical skills, he gained confidence, financial literacy, and professional tools that set him apart. *"The program gave me so much more than a traditional program could have,"* he shared.

After graduating, Ryan secured a full-time CNA role with a starting wage 23% higher than his previous job. More importantly, he found purpose. *"Being there for my patients every day is a very important role. The work is very fulfilling to me,"* he said. Today, Ryan is pursuing a degree in Kinesiology and is on track to graduate in 2027. His journey demonstrates how access to affordable healthcare training, mental health and confidence-building supports, and pathways to stable employment can transform individual lives and strengthen the community.

Opportunity Junction's Healthcare Career Pathway aims to build a diverse, patient-centered healthcare workforce in Contra Costa County. By increasing access to healthcare training and connecting residents to stable, higher-wage employment, the program directly advances several Los Medanos Health Area priority health areas, including expanding access to care, supporting mental well-being, and improving long-term economic and community stability.

For additional information about Opportunity Junction's Programs, visit their website:

<https://opportunityjunction.org/>



The **White Pony Express (WPE) Food Rescue Program** continues to be a vital lifeline for families across Contra Costa County, providing a logistics-driven solution to hunger while preventing food waste. Operating seven days a week, WPE recovers the equivalent of more than 11,000 healthy meals every day, delivering fresh, high-quality food to 144 nonprofits countywide—always free of charge and with no questions asked.



In Pittsburg and Bay Point, WPE delivers directly to 19 nonprofit partners, making fresh food accessible where it's needed most.

The impact in the Los Medanos community has grown significantly: In the first half of 2026 alone, WPE delivered over 450,000 pounds of nutrient-dense food—more than ever before—as demand for healthy food continues to rise.

Volunteers carefully inspect all donated food, tailor deliveries to match each organization's cultural and dietary needs and provide same-day refrigerated delivery. As one School Pantry Coordinator shared, *"Meat, bread, produce, eggs—there is such a variety that we receive through White Pony Express. The food is fresh and it's such high quality. A lot of it is organic and healthy. We are seeing more struggles for families these days, with inflation and high food prices. We are very grateful for our partnership with White Pony Express."*

WPE also supports students and families year-round through its School Pantry Program, keeping distribution sites open throughout the summer so children continue to have access to fresh food outside of the academic year. Their work reinforces the belief that nourishment is foundational to stability. As another pantry coordinator stated, *"Food access supports stability—whether families are unhoused, temporarily housed, or living on the edge of financial crisis."*

With safety-net funding diminishing and community need continuing to grow, WPE's role in the Los Medanos community has never been more essential. Every pound of food recovered and delivered is an investment in the health, dignity, and future of neighbors in Pittsburg and Bay Point. White Pony Express remains wholeheartedly committed to showing up every day for those who rely on them.

For additional information about WPE visit their website: <https://whiteponyexpress.org/>