

Conejo Teen Organization

Supporting Our Community

I am happy to be sending you our 6th edition of our newsletter. I'm also happy to report that our micro-grant program continues to be impactful and that we have just eclipsed giving over \$135,000 in grants since we started the program in 2022. This edition highlights several of the non-profits we partner with and shares stories of the young people that we have helped in this past year. You'll also read about one young man we helped previously who is now thriving in Medical School. In addition, we have included an update on Eddie who is the young man I continue to mentor. I am very happy to report Eddie is doing great at USC's School of Cinematic Arts, has secured an internship, and remains on track to graduate in May of 2026. I have also started mentoring another young man named Chris. I am very hopeful of the things he can accomplish and have been impressed with the strides he has made already. I hope to share more about him in next year's newsletter. We are now working with eight local non-profits who know they can turn to us when a young adult needs help. Together, we are able to provide timely and meaningful support. I'm also pleased to share that we have increased the maximum micro-grant amount to \$5,000. With inflation increasing pretty significantly since we started the program, coupled with the challenges being immense, we felt it was important to expand our ability to help, and I am glad that we are fortunate to be able to help in a greater way. As always, I thank you for your continued support in my mission.

Jim, Diane, Kristin, Kevin, Brenden



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Meet Gia from CASA

Gia is a dedicated non-minor dependent pursuing her college degree while working part-time to support herself. Gia relies on transportation to attend school and work, and proudly purchased her first car on her own. Over time, the repair costs for the car far exceeded its actual value. In collaboration with CASA and Raising Hope, and with Gia's own contribution, Conejo Teen Organization donated money toward a

used car in good condition so that Gia could continue her education and job responsibilities.

We are honored to partner with our local charities, and proud to help Gia secure reliable transportation and cheer her on as she works toward her degree.

Helping a young adult in crisis isn't just kindness—it's an investment in the strength of our community.

CTO Partners

CASA: [Home](#) | [CASA of Ventura County](#) | [Be the Voice for Foster Youth](#)

Casa Pacifica: [Casa Pacifica Centers for Children and Families - Children's Charities - Top Nonprofit - Donating to Charity](#)

Harbor House: [Home](#) | [Harbor House](#)

Interface: [Interface Children & Family Services](#)

James Storehouse: [James Storehouse](#)

Many Mansions: [We Believe - Many Mansions](#)

Mesa Farm (NEW!): [What Mesa Does](#)

Raising Hope: [home - Raising Hope](#)

CTO Mission—Support Through Microgrants

The transition into adulthood for aged out foster care youth can be especially challenging for these young people, who often face high levels of trauma and instability. Without a strong support network, they are at greater risk for depression, substance abuse, homelessness, early involvement with the justice system, and unemployment. Many have had limited opportunities to build confidence, trust in others, or develop essential life skills.

At CTO, we work to identify individuals and organizations in need and provide assistance in the most effective and appropriate way possible. Our focus has been on supporting youth in life transition or crisis.

In addition to financial assistance, we believe that positive, safe, and supportive relationships are key to helping these young adults thrive. Advocacy is not only about speaking up for them—it's also about empowering them to speak up for themselves. And above all, providing steady emotional support can help them achieve brighter, more stable futures. This is why we partner with 8 local nonprofits to ensure these individuals are getting the help they need. See our great nonprofit partners at left.

We hope you are inspired by the resilience and determination of the young adults we serve.



Faith, Volunteer Coordinator Intern at Many Mansions 2025

Many Mansions Teen Intern Program

Conejo Teen Organization is proud to support Many Mansions by funding their innovative and exciting new internship program. During Covid, many teens lost the strong mentor relationships that once helped guide them through high school and toward college. Many Mansions is working to rebuild that connection through a **paid internship program**, where older teens gain hands-on experience across several Many Mansions departments. Along the way, the interns are building resumes, developing job skills, and regaining the confidence that comes from having caring adults in their corner.

Many Mansions understands the power of **tutoring and mentorship** for young adults in high school. But the support can't stop there. Beyond high school, many young adults face new challenges as they navigate college and career pathways. Recently, through the networks of the Many Mansions Board and Advisory Council, they were able to connect a few of the Vicky's Scholarship recipients with urgent tutoring to help them pass critical courses—and even secured internship opportunities that moved them closer to their goals. These experiences showed just how powerful a strong tutoring and mentorship system could be.

With dedicated staff and resources, Many Mansions has expanded these efforts, combining work experience, academic support, and mentoring to help teens and young adults thrive—restoring relationships, unlocking potential, and shaping brighter futures.

Meet Faith: Many Mansions Intern

This spring, Faith embraced her role as Volunteer Coordinator Intern with Many Mansions. Interning over a 10-week period, Faith outreached to over 40 prospective volunteers, completed 14 volunteer interviews, managed a schedule of volunteers for 5 properties, and developed a presentation for volunteers who wanted to learn more about Many Mansions' efforts.

With dedicated staff and resources, Many Mansions envisions a program that combines hands-on work experience, mentoring, and academic support—helping teens and young adults alike gain the skills, confidence, and connections they need to succeed. It's about more than jobs or tutoring; it's about building relationships, unlocking potential, and ensuring that every young person they serve knows they have support and guidance.



Partnering with James Storehouse

Through our partnership with James Storehouse, CTO is able to step in during pivotal moments and provide essential support to young adults facing crises. CTO provided tuition balance assistance for a young adult who aged out of foster care, helped another young adult with off-campus rental support to ensure stability while studying at UCSB, and covered rental car payments

for an individual recovering from an unexpected accident. In addition, CTO continues to assist an aged-out foster care young adult with his car payments, ensuring reliable transportation as he pursues his education.

Together, these efforts reflect our commitment to standing beside young adults when they need it most.

Helping a young adult in crisis isn't just kindness—it's an investment in the strength of our community.

CTO Partners-Superpowers

The nonprofits we partner with are the true heroes in the everyday, as they play a vital role in building strong, resilient communities. They identify gaps in social services, provide resources and support to those in need, and create programs that promote education, health, safety, economic stability, and trust. We are grateful for the opportunity to partner with them.

More Microgrants with CASA and Interface

CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) of Ventura County recruits, screens, trains, and supports volunteers who advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected court-dependent children in courtrooms and communities. In partnership with CASA, CTO covered the car repairs for a college student, ensuring reliable transportation for both school and work.

Interface Children and Family Services provides services for children and families in crises, including mental health and trauma treatment, domestic violence and child abuse prevention, youth crisis and homelessness, human trafficking prevention and intervention, justice services, and 211 information and assistance. Collaborating with Interface, CTO provided funding to purchase a computer for a student, ensuring she had the necessary technology to continue her education and fully engage in learning opportunities.



Quinn Kaurich, 2025

Meet Quinn, Resident Physician, Indiana University

In Quinn's own words:

As I started my first semester of medical school in the fall of 2021, I was thrilled to finally be learning the intricacies of medicine and to start doing what I'd always dreamed of - taking care of patients. I threw myself into my studies with full commitment, but soon found myself facing an unexpected challenge: I no longer had reliable transportation. Without a car, getting to classes, study sessions, and clinical rotations became a major source of stress during an already demanding time. In that difficult time, a grant from Conejo Teen Organization provided the critical support I needed to purchase a vehicle. This generous assistance allowed me to stay focused on my education without disruption and brought me one step closer to becoming the physician I had always aspired to be. Now, as a resident physician in internal medicine at Indiana University School of Medicine, I reflect often on the impact of that support. It not only helped me stay on track academically, but also inspired me to pay that kindness forward in the way I care for my patients every day. Conejo Teen Organization's commitment to empowering youth through practical support continues to create a lasting impact. I cannot express my gratitude to this organization enough. I remain deeply and eternally grateful for its role in my journey.

Transportation—Why is it important?

Instability for youth in crises can be a constant companion. One particular disruption—the lack of reliable transportation—can be very challenging and disruptive to youth pursuing education and employment. CTO strives to assist when we hear of the absence of consistent, reliable transportation.

Since 2022, CTO has provided 15 transportation microgrants, including funds for car repairs, the purchase of used vehicles—often with the assistance of the youth, and funding for public transportation when needed.

Additional Microgrants 2025

CTO provided funding for Conejo Valley Youth Orchestra to cover travel expenses and venue rental, and rental and purchase of licensed sheet music. CVYO works with over 150 local students from Ventura County.

Through Many Mansions, CTO provided support to an Army veteran who sustained serious injuries during his service. The family struggles with significant financial challenges, supporting three children on a limited income, including a four-year-old non-verbal child with autism.

Interface—Youth Crisis Drop In Center

Interface’s Oxnard office is home to its Youth Crisis and Homeless Services department. Interface requested assistance in furnishing and remodeling a conference room space into a Youth Drop In Center. The vision and hope for the space was to provide a safe location where youth ages 12-24 can access needed resources, receive case management, and participate in group activities with peers in the program. CTO funded the remodel of the conference room space to help Interface bring this vision to life.



Interface Youth Drop In center, Oxnard

Pacific Palisades Fire—Helping victims

On January 7, 2025, Natalie and Kevin began their day in Pacific Palisades like any other, with Kevin doing construction work, and Natalie tending to her family business. When the Lachman fire started, they began taking care of an elderly, blind neighbor, and other neighbors that congregated at their house to “watch the fire from the roof.” As the day went on, things became more serious as the fire spread toward town, and by early evening, it was clear they needed to evacuate immediately. They never thought the fire would reach them, and with such deadly force. They left with the clothes on their backs, their cat, and their cars. They lost 2 homes in the fire. CTO provided emergency money for clothing and essentials in the days following the tragic fire.

Remember Eddie?

We featured Eddie in our 2024 CTO newsletter. Placed in the foster care system at age 13, Eddie has overcome many challenges and continues to thrive. He is currently studying at the USC School of Cinematic Arts and is on track to graduate in May 2026. Over the last year, he has balanced his studies with an internship in the film industry, gaining valuable hands-on experience. His current journey is a testament to resilience, courage and the power of education to change lives. We are so proud of Eddie’s accomplishments and invite you to join us in supporting his continued success!

Meet Cece from Mesa Farm

Working with aged out foster care young adults, Mesa Farm provides single occupancy tiny homes built within a main central home in Ojai. Read more about Mesa Farm below!

Cece is a current resident at Mesa Farm. Despite growing up in a studio apartment with 6 people and suffering from abuse and depression, she has worked hard to build a better future. At age 18, Cece began therapy, which helped her heal and inspired her to pursue a career in nursing, driven by her desire to support her family and help others. She has earned 3 associate's degrees, maintained a GPA of 3.5 or higher with multiple Dean's list honors, and completed over 50 volunteer hours in hospitals as a COPE Health Scholar. CTO is proud to support Cece by funding her tuition to become a CNA marking the first step toward achieving her nursing degree.



Every young adult deserves someone who sees their potential, even if life feels impossible.

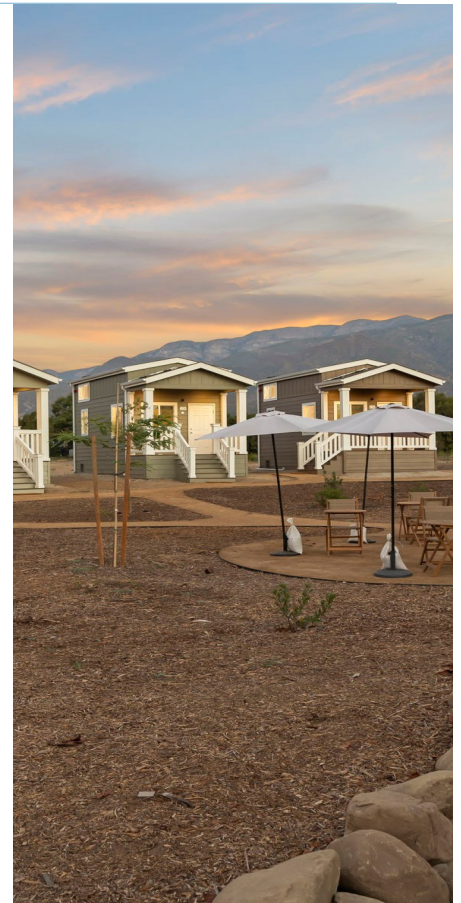
Mesa Farm, Ojai

Mesa is a Ventura County-based nonprofit that provides transitional housing and trauma-informed programs for young adults, ages 18–24, who are facing homelessness. Mesa addresses the root causes of housing instability through a whole-person approach that includes wellness, education, vocational support, and relationship-building. By offering more than just a roof, Mesa offers a real opportunity for young adults to heal, grow, and create a sustainable path forward. With 10 single occupancy tiny-homes and two rooms in a main house, Mesa can house up to 13 young adults. It is located on a 10-acre property on the east end of the Ojai Valley. At Mesa, they don't just house people—they believe in them. Every young person

who walks through the doors carries a story of strength and survival. Mesa feels their job is to offer them a place to rest, reset, and rise. With the support of the community, they are not just focused on ending youth homelessness—they are cultivating possibility.

In Cece's own words:

“Getting my Certified Nursing Assistant training will provide me with the opportunity to be a more competitive applicant for nursing school. In addition to the certificate, it will allow me to get nursing experience. Once I have the CNA license, I will be able to earn enough money throughout nursing school to pay for tuition and housing.”



Conejo Teen

Organization - CTO

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Conjeo Teen Organization Mission—Thank you

Nonprofits are often the connection to a healthy community. We notice needs that might otherwise be overlooked, whether that's helping young people find stability, or supporting a family in crisis. Every hour and dollar spent goes toward making life better for someone. Unfortunately, there continues to be a high volume of requests. We constantly strive to make a difference in the lives of young people by offering support that is thoughtful, responsive and real. This holiday season, we are deeply grateful for your belief in the mission of Conejo Teen Organization and for your continued support. Your words of encouragement inspire us and reaffirm that we are making a meaningful difference in the lives of young people.

Conejo Teen

Organization - CTO

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