



# *A Letter from the President of the Amigos Board of Directors*



**Dear Amigos Family,**

As President of the Board of Directors of Amigos de Santa Cruz, it is with great pride that I write to tell you what the organization has been up to in these unprecedented times. Back in March we were blown away by your generous donations, and we have done extraordinary things with them. Our last letter, from the Amigos staff leadership, told of continuing to pay staff their salaries, helping with buying medical supplies, addressing food security and creating jobs for those found unemployed due to the lack of tourism.

Over the past five months, I have been so impressed with the flexibility of the Amigos team headed by the fabulous trio of Jessie, Alex and Rosalia. These three have made sure that the 33 Amigos employees are kept busy in ways that we never imagined.

The local government only came into office in January and had not found their stride by the time lockdown occurred. Amigos has been vital in helping them to think responsibly about how best to address this pandemic. I am proud to say that the standing of the institution of Amigos, not only within the community but at a governmental level, is incredibly high and we are looked to for advice and leadership on many levels.

We have now purchased 39 tons of corn, beans and rice. Much of this has already been distributed and, especially at the beginning when transport was incredibly restricted, we helped communities stock their empty shelves. We have gathered lists of the most vulnerable in the population in order to assure that the neediest are served both by Amigos and other government institutions. Rosalia shared one story with me of a recent trip she made to an elderly woman's house, her backpack laden with provisions, where she was met with overwhelming gratitude. Our reach is widespread and knowledge of the community unparalleled.

Alex came up with interesting statistics to conceptualise the scale of our COVID response efforts in the Santa Cruz communities. Think of Amigo's programs relative to the population of Santa Cruz compared to the U.S. Federal Government relative to the U.S. population. By the end of September, the scale of Amigo's COVID response programs would look like this in the U.S:

- 12 million people employed for an average of 3 weeks each
- 430 million masks donated and \$324 million in total medical supply donations
- Food packages donated to 16 million families comprising 202 million personal food rations
- \$4.3 trillion in total stimulus spending (actual U.S. stimulus spending is currently around \$3.5 trillion – 82% of Amigo's stimulus package)

In addition to the emergency support, our Jobs Stimulus Program has been getting roads built, tul reeds planted (a plant that filters toxins out of the lake), rubbish collected and footpaths repaired, giving people jobs at a time when the money is so desperately needed and having a lasting effect on infrastructure and the environment in the local communities.

Many members of our board have been in Santa Cruz during the pandemic and I believe that this local knowledge gives the organization a unique advantage. We know the local situation and can offer advice and guidance as well as having the ability to react at the drop of hat. All that being said we could not do any of these programs without the support of all of you. We are so grateful for all the funds raised and hope that the community of Santa Cruz will be able to welcome tourists, both national and international, in the near future.

Best wishes and stay safe,



*Deedle Ratcliffe*

Board President, on behalf of the entire Board of Directors

MAKE A DONATION



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