



# GILROY FOUNDATION

WINTER 2025

## **SHAPING THE FUTURE, WHILE PRESERVING THE PAST** *Mission San Juan Bautista Preservation Fund*

For generations, families across South County have carried their own memories of Mission San Juan Bautista.

School field trips where children stood in awe under the tall arches. Weddings that brought two families together in a place filled with history. Quiet moments spent walking along the gardens or lighting a candle for a loved one. The Mission has always been more than a landmark.

***It is part of who we are.***

Preserving the Mission is not only about bricks and timber. It is about cultural and community health. The kind of health that comes from remembering who we are and honoring what came before us. The Mission reminds us that our stories matter and they deserve to be protected for the next generation. They are the fabric of our community.

By establishing their fund at Gilroy Foundation, the Mission's supporters ensure that this piece of our shared identity remains strong. When a foundation behind community is healthy, places like the Mission can continue to educate, inspire, and connect people.

The Mission San Juan Bautista Preservation Fund is a reminder that when we invest in the places that shape us, we strengthen the foundation of our entire community. And a healthy foundation is what keeps our history, our culture, and our future standing strong.



Pictured Mission San Juan Bautista

***Building a healthier community from a***

**HEALTHY FOUNDATION.**



## ~ A message from your Executive Director

Dear Friends,

As this year winds down, I find myself thinking about the place that shaped me. I was born and raised right here in Gilroy. My earliest memories are of neighborhood events, school fundraisers, and families pulling together when someone needed a hand. This town has always taken care of its own. That is the part of Gilroy I carry with me every day.

Now, in this role, I get to see that spirit up close. I see youth programs packed with kids because they finally have a safe place to spend their afternoons, or nonprofits stepping in when families are stretched thin. I see donors who never want recognition, they simply want to help. This is the Gilroy I grew up in, and it is still the Gilroy we are all building together. And that is why the foundation you have built means so much.

**For 45 years**, Gilroy Foundation has been your way to strengthen the community we call home. Your giving has created scholarships, supported nonprofits, launched funds, preserved our heritage, and opened doors for families. When I talk to lifelong residents, they speak about us with pride. They talk about what the Foundation has made possible and the importance to keep it strong.

A healthy community foundation means a healthy community. Everything you see happening in Gilroy starts with the strength of the foundation behind it. Stewardship of every fund, support for local nonprofits, partnerships moving projects forward, and the quiet, careful work that keeps all of it running. Your support strengthens the foundation behind the impact you care about. When you give to the Foundation, you help your neighbors get help when they need it. You help youth programs grow. You help small nonprofits stay steady during challenging times. You help us bring partners together to solve problems as a community.

You have already built something powerful here. I see the legacy of your generosity everywhere I go. As someone who has spent my whole life in Gilroy, I want nothing more than to see this foundation stay strong for the next generation of families who will call this place home. As we look ahead, I hope you will consider a generous year end gift to strengthen your community foundation. Your support protects what we have built together and keeps Gilroy healthy and thriving for years to come. Your gift is not just a donation. ***It is an investment in the future of your hometown.***

It says that you believe in Gilroy and in the people who make this community what it is. It helps ensure that the programs and partnerships you care about can grow and serve even more families. I hope you will stand with us once again and make a meaningful year end gift to your community foundation. Together, we can continue building a healthy Gilroy for all.

With gratitude,

Jaci Muro



Executive Director  
Gilroy Foundation



***“Give Where You Live”***

# Susie Seledon Literacy Fund

*A healthy community educates our children*



Our new early literacy program, which delivers free books to children in Gilroy, carries the legacy of Susan Seledon, a beloved educator who shared her love of reading throughout her forty-one year teaching career. Her impact lives on in every child who turns the pages of a new book.

Earlier this year, Ed Seledon partnered with Gilroy Foundation to launch the Susie Seledon Literacy Fund in memory of his wife. The fund fuels a program that allows Gilroy families with children ages zero to five to receive one free book each month, in English or Spanish, through Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. Families enroll at [scld.org/imaginationlibrary](http://scld.org/imaginationlibrary), and once registered, each child receives a book every month until their fifth birthday.

Ed's hope is simple and powerful. He wants young children in Gilroy to experience the joy of reading at an early age and to begin kindergarten with confidence. He believes this initiative can boost literacy rates and strengthen the long term health of our community.

## NURTURING OUR ROOTS



***"Our farming families are the heart and history of this community — generations who've worked the land, supported our schools, and helped make Gilroy what it is today.***

*The Foundation continues to show what community spirit looks like — connecting people, supporting local causes, and celebrating the values that make Gilroy special."*

**- DR. ERIC NAGAREDA**



Susie Seledon and her students.

***IT WILL HELP MAKE KINDERGARTNERS AND FIRST GRADERS MORE IN STEP WITH READING.***

***ED SELEDON***

Every child deserves the chance to discover a love of books. A strong start in literacy shapes a child's future and opens doors throughout their education. When a community invests in its youngest learners, it invests in its own social and economic health.

A healthy community educates its children. By nurturing early literacy, we give our children the best possible beginning, strengthening the foundation of our entire community.



# A HEALTHY COMMUNITY OPENS DOORS

Born and raised in Gilroy, PJ Crocker carries the story of so many young people in our community. The son of Mexican American farm workers and cattle ranchers, he grew up surrounded by agriculture and a deep sense of family pride. He is also the first in his family to attend college, a milestone made possible in part by scholarships from Gilroy Foundation.

PJ says that support changed the direction of his life. His scholarships opened a door he never thought he would walk through.



PJ's story is more than one student finding his path. It reflects the health of an entire community. When we lift up young people, we strengthen the long term vitality of Gilroy. When doors open for one student, the ripple effects reach their families, their future careers, and the community they will one day serve.

A healthy community invests in its young people because their success becomes our shared future. PJ's journey is a reminder that when we support the next generation, we are building a stronger, healthier Gilroy for all.

*PJ Crocker said his scholarships from Gilroy Foundation enabled him to double major in environmental horticulture and agricultural business at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo.*

**90 Scholarships** *awarding* **\$511,200** *in* **2025**

## A HEALTHY COMMUNITY COLLABORATES

### South County THRIVES gains momentum

A community-driven initiative powered by an innovative multi-sector collaboration model, addresses some of our community's most pressing challenges—from housing insecurities to educational and economic gaps.

Together, we are cultivating a more resilient South County—one where every resident has the resources and opportunities needed to thrive.



Executive Director, Jaci Muro and CEO, Julian Castro of Latino CF at the Great Communities Collaborative Panelist Special Event.

*To learn more about THRIVES, please visit our website [gilroyfoundation.org](http://gilroyfoundation.org).*

## Our Mission

To establish a legacy of giving, Gilroy Foundation links charitable gifts from donors to the vital needs of the community.

## Our Vision

By engaging all aspects of the community, Gilroy Foundation is the recognized leader in connecting resources to community needs.

## Thank You

to our 2025 Sustaining

PINNACLE BANK



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## Connect with us!





A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

# A HEALTHY FOUNDATION

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*Meet our Gilroy Foundation Youth Board!*



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