

# **PRESS STATEMENT**

## **MILPA SUPPORT STATEMENT FROM PHILANTHROPY PARTNERS**

*Today, communities across California are confronting the failed system of mass incarceration and pushing for a new vision that prioritizes care over cages. MILPA and its leaders have been long-time champions of this work, empowering incarcerated youth and formerly incarcerated people from marginalized and criminalized communities to become voices for social change.*

*We as philanthropic partners value MILPA as a trusted partner in the Salinas Valley. Their healing informed, youth development, community empowerment, and justice advocacy work are critical to the Salinas community. Their impact ripples throughout the State to mobilize the most marginalized communities to address systemic inequities. MILPA's political and restorative justice education--rooted in teachings from Aztec, Maya, and other indigenous peoples--has helped numerous Salinas residents to heal from violence and trauma, learn about their cultural heritage, and uplift their communities. Their work makes Salinas safer and healthier.*

*We understand the powerful work MILPA does on a daily basis is part of a regional effort on the Central Coast toward creating a more just and equitable justice system to achieve health and racial equity.*

*Our support of MILPA's mission is part of a larger statewide effort that we proudly support. It is work in communities across California that focuses on breaking down a justice system built on systemic racism and puts those from the most impacted communities at the forefront of transformational systems change.*

*We, as Philanthropic partners are speaking out in strong support of MILPA because we know firsthand that organizations and advocates working to reduce violence in their community and bring peace to so many, are at times targeted themselves for speaking out and pushing for systems transformation to an oppressive and discriminatory justice system.*

*We hope Salinas and all communities will embrace community-based alternatives to arrest and incarceration. We need to support organizations, especially those like MILPA that are so deeply rooted in community, as they effectively work to bring a voice and resources to the people they serve.*

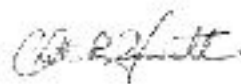
*To make it clear, we together as funders do not condone any violence, criminal or gang activity. We have witnessed firsthand the long-term trauma it causes on individuals, families and communities throughout our state.*

*We support the statements made by the Board of Directors of MILPA and The Action Council of Monterey County and trust that they will conduct an appropriate personnel investigation.*

Sincerely,



Dr. Robert K. Ross  
CEO  
The California Endowment



Chet P. Hewitt  
President and CEO  
Sierra Health Foundation

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