



MORRISON

IN THIS ISSUE:



FLOWING FUNDS: NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR FEDERAL GRANT DOLLARS

New funding opportunities are available to stimulate the economy and may help support your organization.



FRACTIONAL CFOs

Founder Brent Morrison explains when and why a fractional CFO might be the best option.



GETTING TO KNOW DANIEL PAULSEN

Learn more about Morrison Business & Accounting Advisory Consultant Daniel Paulsen.

MORRISON SNAPSHOTS

Check out some of our highlights from this past season.

CLIENT CORNER

There is always something new going on, so get caught up with our latest client news.



THE JESUS CENTER

Poverty, hunger, and homelessness are issues communities throughout California and the United States are struggling to address, especially in light of unemployment in the aftermath of COVID-19, as well as complex factors including mental health, past traumas, and addiction. More than forty years ago, the Jesus Center, located in Chico, California, sought to help its community address these challenging issues and embarked on its mission to restore those suffering from isolation to community integration. Today, the Jesus Center provides shelter and transitional housing as well as vocational training through the Jesus Center Farm's community supported agriculture (CSA) program, Harvest Hope CSA, and their Bloomin' Hope flower cart.

In the early days of the non-profit organization, dedicated volunteers brought slow cookers of home-made food to a local thrift store, providing meals for anyone that needed one. Eventually, the Jesus Center acquired its own building, allowing the non-profit to expand its capacity and service offerings. On the first floor of this facility was a commercial kitchen and a dining area, where the Jesus Center staff and volunteers served breakfast and dinner six days a week to their guests, averaging 100,000 meals a year at the height of its service. Upstairs was the Sabbath House, an overnight shelter with 26 beds for sober women and their children. Sabbath House participants were invited to a comprehensive program

including life skill classes, a work program, and other service offerings to assist them in their path of restoration and self-sufficiency.

Seeing the Sabbath House program's effectiveness, the Jesus Center began to explore expanding its housing services. In August 2013, the Jesus Center opened the House of Hope as a next step for Sabbath House participants, providing structured transitional housing and support services to women and children. In February 2016, the Sage House opened for senior women experiencing homelessness. In October 2016, two more housing opportunities were opened: the Myrtle House for single women with children and the Birch House, the Jesus Center's first transitional housing program for men. In March of 2017, the St. Joseph Lily House opened for pregnant women and their newborns. The Holly House quickly followed in August 2017, offering another sober shelter for women.

Alongside housing, the Jesus Center identified the need for vocational training for these participants as a way to invest in their own futures and build a sense of dignity through work. The Jesus Center established a farm internship program by transforming a generous donation of land in 2012 into the Jesus Center Farm. The crops grown on the Jesus Center Farm are sold through Harvest Hope CSA subscriptions and are also provided to the Jesus Center

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kitchen for the inclusion in meals served to participants. Other vocational training opportunities the Jesus Center provides include placements at the Jesus Center kitchen, and opportunities in floral design through the Bloomin' Hope flower Cart.

Building on these many accomplishments, the Jesus Center leadership is constantly strategizing how to better address the increasingly complex issues their guests face. To that end, the Jesus Center recently moved to a new facility in May 2021 that has allowed the organization to expand to provide 60 beds for those in need, and for the first time, offer a robust day program of services to support those in-residence. The expansion is an effort towards the overall development of the Jesus Center's vision of a Renewal Center, a cross-agency effort designed to more holistically offer help and support to those struggling with homelessness.

With the purchase and opening of its new location, dedicated space exists for the great work proposed to be accomplished through the Renewal Center. More information on the Renewal Center can be found at www.renewalcenterchico.org.



Morrison has been blessed with the opportunity to serve the Jesus Center through our Business & Accounting Advisory and Grants services. Our work has included regular monthly assistance including budgeting and forecasting, and financial reporting consistent with the goals of the organization. Additionally, our Grants Team secured nearly \$500,000 in state grant funding for the Jesus Center through the CalRecycle Food Waste Prevention and Rescue Grant Program. Through grant funding the Jesus Center was able to add

new staff and increase their vocational training capacity as well as meaningfully divert food waste from going into landfills. Funding also paid for new vehicles and upgraded kitchen and storage equipment, including expanded cold storage and an oven.

It has been an honor to serve the Jesus Center and to support the incredible work they are doing in the local community. If you would like to learn more about the Jesus Center, please visit www.jesuscenter.org.