



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UpValley Family Centers expands free bilingual tax services

For 16 years, the UpValley Family Centers have helped low income individuals with free tax preparation service. Since 2010 over \$4.5 million in refunds has resulted from these efforts

"While the number of individuals we help has grown each year, we know there are more residents who qualify for our services," says Jenny Ocón, Executive Director, "In the 2016 tax year, our volunteers and staff helped 601 households receive free tax preparation assistance, which generated more than \$810,000 in refunds, averaging \$1,348 per family. This number of returns is equivalent to approximately 26% of all 2,271 up valley households that fall below median household income."

UpValley Family Centers (UVFC) is expanding our free federal and state tax preparation services in response to the growing need to help build financial literacy among low-income individuals. From January 22 to April 17, our Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program will be offered at our offices in St. Helena and Calistoga, evenings and weekends and on site at farmworker housing centers, apartments and a new partnership with the St. Helena Library.

Services are available to individuals with low-to-moderate incomes (under \$54,000/year). We assist with Earned Income and Child Care Tax Credits claims as well as Individual Tax Identification Numbers (ITINs) for residents without a social security number.

Our goals are to help low-income residents increase financial literacy and work toward building economic stability through the process of filing taxes and increasing their savings.

"We come back every year because we are consistently treated with kindness, warmth, a smile, and most of all respect. We know we will be taken care of and it's very reassuring." ~ Barbara, VITA client.

The VITA tax preparers, required to complete an extensive training course, include local 26 residents and students in the Business and Economic Department at Pacific Union College. Many are bi-lingual.

Our generous funders include: Citibank, Mechanics Bank, Napa Valley Community Foundation, Auction Napa Valley/Napa Valley Vintners, United Way of the Bay Area and many individual donors.

For more information on UVFC's VITA tax preparation services, or to make an appointment in any of our locations, call 707-965-5010.

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