



## PRESS ROOM – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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# Must Charities Launches a \$403,000 Progressive Workforce Development Program with El Camino Homeless Organization

*A collaboration between Must! Charities and El Camino Homeless Organization to empower individuals through comprehensive food service and culinary training while also including a sustainable social enterprise venture.*

**Paso Robles, CA** – Must! Charities recently launched an enterprising \$403,000 workforce development project with El Camino Homeless Organization (ECHO). The ECHO Workforce Development Kitchen Program will invest in critical job training skills in all aspects of culinary service, develop employment pathways, and create a social enterprise venture that will provide sustainable revenue and training opportunities. The ECHO Workforce Development Kitchen Program will not only benefit the individuals directly involved; but also, contribute to our community's broader economic and social health.

The California Employment Development Department estimates that from now until 2030, the leisure and hospitality industry in San Luis Obispo County will require 37% increase in its workforce. Restaurant cooks are expected to have the most job openings and with the second highest pay. This growth highlights the increasing demand for skilled labor to meet the industry's needs.

"Expanding an already successful program to incorporate job training, skills management and a social enterprise venture while also meeting a critical community job force need is a win-win." says Becky Gray, Executive Director at Must! Charities. "ECHO continues to demonstrate a tenacious desire to help individuals lift themselves out of homelessness. We are honored to partner with ECHO on such a paramount economic and social project."

The Workforce Development Kitchen and the management of the kitchen programs will increase ECHO's impact and reach by:

- Developing the first pathway to employment and stability, with the goal of creating future opportunities for clients across various industries.
- Creating a management position to oversee meal programs, coordinate volunteers, and support client workforce training.
- Generating income and raising awareness of ECHO's mission by selling products within our local market.
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"Expanding the Workforce Development Kitchen Program has been a constant goal in our strategic plan," says Wendy Lewis, CEO of El Camino Homeless Organization. "This project is so much more than just creating a comprehensive food training program - it is about strengthening our capacity to further our mission and empower people to make positive change. The long-term impacts are huge and we are thrilled to see the project come to fruition."

To find out more about the Must! Charities fundraising charitable campaigns, visit [mustcharities.org](http://mustcharities.org) or call 805.226.5788. Interviews are available upon request.

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### **About Must! Charities:**

Must! Charities is a nonprofit organization dedicated to changing the model of philanthropy. By uniting donors, pooling resources, and investing strategically in our region while empowering nonprofits and educating our community. At Must! Charities: 100% of community donations go directly into projects, thanks to our Executive Board and a few private donors covering all our operating costs.

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