



PRESS ROOM – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Tickets Now on Sale for Must! Charities' The Pitch 2026

Ten Nonprofits. One Community. Countless Possibilities.

Paso Robles, CA - Tickets are now on sale for Must! Charities' The Pitch 2026. Six local nonprofits will take the stage after months of coaching and mentorship, competing for a share of \$60,000 in cash awards from Must! Charities. Last year, Must! Charities' cash awards combined with real-time audience giving brought nonprofits more than \$185,000. The event will take place on Tuesday, November 10, 2026, at the Performing Arts Center San Luis Obispo at Cal Poly.

"The Pitch is about much more than a competition," said Randy Gray, Director of Community Investments at Must! Charities. "It's an investment in the leadership, storytelling, and long-term sustainability of our local nonprofits. Every participant leaves with stronger skills, stronger connections, and greater visibility in our community."

Ten Local Nonprofits Selected

Ten San Luis Obispo County nonprofits have been selected to participate in this year's program. Through three months of coaching, each nonprofit leader will work alongside experienced

volunteer coaches to refine their message, elevate their impact, and prepare to share their story onstage. Six organizations will ultimately be selected to take the stage at The Pitch 2026.

The 2026 participating nonprofits are:

- City Farm SLO
- Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo, Inc. (CAPSLO)
- Creative Alternative for Learning & Living
- Friends of Camp Natoma, Inc.
- One Cool Earth
- Paso Robles Children's Museum
- Paso Robles Youth Arts Center
- Positive Ride
- SLO Noor Foundation
- Son Care Foundation

Meet the 2026 Coaches

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| • Ali Atkinson | • Lacie Johns |
| • Mike Bickel | • Wendy Lewis |
| • Tamara Bingham | • Angela Lynch |
| • Katie Bruce | • Kim Mott |
| • Morgan Couch | • Debby Nicklas |
| • Ellen Curtis | • Jane Pomeroy |
| • Mike Dawson | • Emily Rutter |
| • Peggy Einnehmer | • Maggie Tillman |
| • Whitney Hrdlicka | • Carol Yeaman-Sanchez |
| • Jennifer Idler | • Mike Zappas |

Each participating nonprofit is paired with two experienced volunteer coaches who work alongside the organization's leaders from August through November. Together, they refine messaging, strengthen presentation skills, and build the confidence needed to communicate their mission more effectively.

"I am so grateful to have participated in The Pitch 2025 with Must! Charities," stated Dr. Ramona Friedman, President and Co-Founder of Center for Youth Mental Health. "The experience truly transformed my ability to articulate the complexity of youth mental health and communicate our impact in just three minutes. Being part of this program, crafting my message, receiving thoughtful feedback, and witnessing how our community can unite for the greater good, was incredibly rewarding, memorable, and humbling."

The program culminates on November 10 with a high-energy event where six finalist organizations each deliver a powerful three-minute presentation before a live audience and a panel of judges. Every finalist leaves with meaningful financial support.

Audience members are more than spectators. Throughout the evening, attendees will vote in real time by giving to the participating nonprofits that inspire them most. Every contribution becomes a vote of confidence in an organization and its pitch. One hundred percent of every dollar contributed goes directly to the organizations they choose, helping them expand their impact throughout San Luis Obispo County. Community members are encouraged to come ready to vote with their dollars.

Tickets are available now and are expected to sell quickly. Community members are encouraged to reserve their seats early for an evening of powerful nonprofit stories, live giving, and meaningful investment in local organizations.

For tickets and event information, visit **mustcharities.org/what-we-do/the-pitch**

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About Must! Charities

Must! Charities strengthens San Luis Obispo County by investing in innovative programs, collaborative partnerships, and local nonprofit organizations that improve the quality of life throughout the community. Through initiatives like *The Pitch*, Must! Charities equips nonprofit leaders with the tools, visibility, and financial support they need to create lasting impact.

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