

SHORTCUTS

GIVING BACK



Photo: Kelli Uddall

Heal Together Fosters Hope in Challenging Times

BY RENEE BRINCKS

Kelli Mullen Brown, director of Heal Together, with Intake Coordinator Yadira Chavez, Program Specialist Elizabeth Birruete and Intake Coordinator Marlene Cisneros.

In 2021, as communities wrestled with pandemic uncertainties and loss, Hospice Giving Foundation launched a grant campaign called Heal Together. The foundation then partnered with Coastal Kids Home Care, a local nonprofit that supports the families of children facing serious illness, to expand the grief and bereavement care available to diverse Monterey County audiences.

To date, Heal Together has reached more than 3,500 people through its resources and programs—including art therapy, pet therapy, poetry experiences, yoga sessions, cooking classes, therapeutic music performances, bilingual bereavement support and more. Local agencies and practitioners help administer the offerings.

"It has turned into this incredible movement

of really compassionate, talented people who are healers at heart," says Kelli Mullen Brown, director of development for Coastal Kids Home Care.

Feedback has been so positive that organizers are exploring ways to continue Heal Together programs after the initial \$1.52 million grant ends later this year. Interest in programs that build social connections remains especially high.

"People were very lonely during the pandemic, so finding different ways to bring different communities together has proven incredible," says Mullen Brown. "It's been amazing to watch this movement develop around a community prioritizing its own health."

For more information, visit www.heal-together.org or call 831/320-0947.