



NEWSLETTER

President's Message

Dear Friends of Gently Hugged,

As we move through another impactful season of service, I want to take a moment to share both a brief update and a heartfelt thank you.

Gold
Transparency
2024

Candid.

We're excited to let you know that Gently Hugged is transitioning to Google Workspace for Nonprofits. This important step will allow us to better organize our communications, collaborate more efficiently as a team, and protect sensitive information — all of which helps us operate more effectively and focus our energy where it truly matters: supporting newborns and families in need.

This change may seem small on the surface, but it's a meaningful step forward in our ongoing effort to strengthen our infrastructure and ensure we can grow thoughtfully while continuing to serve even more families throughout San Diego County. We're grateful to be able to access this powerful suite of tools at no cost through Google's nonprofit program — another example of how technology and generosity can go hand-in-hand.

As part of this transition, you'll begin to see all future emails from us coming from official @gentlyhugged.org addresses. This change will help ensure that you know our messages are legitimate and from trusted members of our organization. If you have any filters or contact lists, you may want to update them to reflect this change.

This upgrade is part of our broader goal to build a more sustainable, professional nonprofit — one that can continue to grow and serve our San Diego community for years to come.

We're also pleased to share that we are continuing to grow our network of distribution partners — local hospitals, clinics, and

community organizations who help us reach families in need across San Diego County. These new partnerships are key to expanding our impact and ensuring that no newborn goes without the essentials during their first few weeks of life.

In June alone, we were able to distribute 122 bags of essential items to families from our two offices — a testament to how your support directly fuels our mission.

And of course, none of this progress would be possible without YOU. Whether you donate baby items, volunteer your time, support us financially, or help spread the word — please know how deeply we value your involvement. Every contribution, large or small, helps us wrap our community's most vulnerable newborns in warmth and love.

Thank you for being such a vital part of the Gently Hugged family.

With deep gratitude,

Kara

Kara S. Tidemann
President/CEO, Gently Hugged



Hats Off To Volunteers

Carol Wigent



The Rancho Bernardo Hats Off to Volunteers Event honored volunteers from many organizations on April 26th at Rancho Bernardo High School's Performing Arts Center. This event is sponsored by the Rancho Bernardo Foundation.

This year, Gently Hugged was proud to honor Carol Wigent, a longtime office volunteer at our Rancho Bernardo location. Carol is the ninth volunteer we have been honored to recognize at this event over the years. Congratulations, Carol!



Volunteer Spotlights

North Coastal - Patty Deans

This month, we're pleased to recognize Patty Deans! Patty brings a positive attitude to the office, finding Gently Hugged a welcome break from her busy home life with her kids and extended family.

Before retiring, Patty excelled in administrative roles and enjoyed a senior position at a movie theater. Now she volunteers with us at least twice a week, as well as volunteering at the San Diego Food Bank. She is learning and taking on many roles and handles tasks like packing bags with care. She is ready to help with projects or during busy periods.

Patty's friendly and kind demeanor make her a great team member, and her love for music brings a bit of fun to the office. Thank you, Patty, for your dedication and positive spirit. We're grateful to have you on our team!



Rancho Bernardo - Ruth Tsoulos



Ruth Tsoulos has been a volunteer and supporter of Gently Hugged for many years. She is a retired school nurse and also worked at university hospitals, where she met her husband of over 50 years. Along with the work of packing bags in the office, she picks up donations in the Escondido area, brings them to the office regularly AND delivers finished bags too! She loves the mission and people of Gently Hugged. We are so thankful for her faithful and longtime service!



An easy way for supporters to donate to Gently Hugged is by shopping our Amazon Wishlist. Thank you to those who have participated! [CLICK HERE](#)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- President & CEO: Kara Tidemann
- Assistant Secretary: Vicki Geehan
- Dir. of Community Relations: Judy Blackford
- Dir. of Operations – RB: Sharon Dutton
- Co-Dir. of Ops – Coastal: Janet Lombardi
- Co-Dir. of Ops – Coastal: Kara Tidemann
- Vice President: Lauren Fair
- Treasurer: Vicki Geehan
- Secretary: Camille Currier
- Dir. of Finance: Roger Schlarb
- Dir. at Large: Judi Lawson
- Dir. at Large: Jan Rightmer

Interested in learning more about our volunteer Board positions? Email us at gentlyhugged@gmail.com. Our Board meetings are open to volunteers and we would love to have interested individuals join us!

Crafter Spotlight

Sachiko Breke



Sachiko Breke has been our Gently Hugged super crafter volunteer for over 10 years. This generous and skilled lady sewed over 1000 masks during Covid. She also sewed children's capes for our fun run event.

Sachiko continues to contribute beautiful quilts, bibs, and burp cloths. Handmade items are welcome additions and cherished by the families who receive them. Hats off and special thanks to our lovely crafter lady, Sachiko.

Community Support

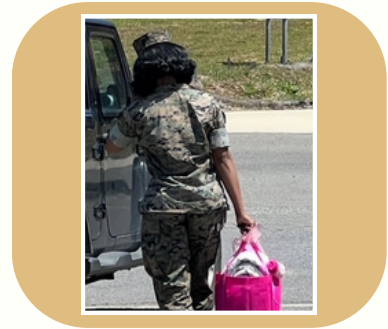
Family Health Centers of San Diego

Gently Hugged is thrilled to announce a new partnership with Family Health Centers of San Diego! As a new distribution site, Family Health Centers will receive canvas bags filled with gently used and new clothing, blankets, and small essentials for newborns in need. Together, we are advancing our mission to keep San Diego newborns warm and clothed during their first year of life.



Armed Services YMCA

We are pleased to announce a new distribution site for Gently Hugged! We have formed a partnership with the Armed Services YMCA, which will store bags at their Pendleton Pantry and distribute them to families in need through the New Family Support Program on Camp Pendleton.



Peñasquitos Lutheran Church

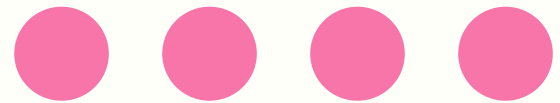


Peñasquitos Lutheran Church held its third annual Gently Hugged Baby Shower on May 10th. Sponsored by the PLC missions Leadership Team and Girlfriends and Grace, this event brought in two full large bins of sleepers along with clothing, blankets and toys weighing 50+ lbs!

The activities included sorting and folding the new sleepers, ironing on cute decals to white onesies, and making sock dolls. Thank you to Penasquitos Lutheran Church for supporting Gently Hugged through this fun event!

The Woman's Club of Vista

Gently Hugged is honored to be a nonprofit grant recipient recognized by the Woman's Club of Vista on their Donation Day. The generous \$1250 grant will allow us to purchase materials for volunteers to knit, crochet and sew beautiful baby clothing, quilts, and blankets for San Diego County babies in need. We are so grateful!



Foundation for Women Warriors

Gently Hugged was privileged to have a booth at the Bright Beginnings Baby Shower sponsored by Foundation for Women Warriors. Over 100 blankets were given as gifts to pregnant military moms. We are grateful for the opportunity through this outreach to support these heroes serving our country.



Kim Lubesnick

We are so honored and grateful to the Lubesnicks, who asked guests at their 50th wedding anniversary party to bring baby clothing for Gently Hugged in lieu of gifts. In addition to this wonderful collection of items, one of their guests donated \$1,000 to further our mission in San Diego. Thank you!



Painted Rock Elementary

Thank you to Painted Rock Elementary School for donating leftover infant clothing from their highly successful garage sale to Gently Hugged. Shannon Osborne connected with us and invited our volunteers to pick up anything we could use - resulting in a great donation of clothing books and toys. We are so appreciative of their support!



The Wednesday Etc. Club

The April luncheon of the Wednesday Etc. Club was a baby shower for Gently Hugged. The event featured fun games and a raffle. Judy Blackford, Kim Linnell and Judi Lawson attended and were overwhelmed with a carload of beautiful donations, which included 17 books, 13 blankets, 37.5 pounds of new clothing plus cash and gift cards. A huge thank you to Wednesday, Etc. for their generosity and continuing support!



We are always grateful to Pay It Forward Processing for contributing much-needed monthly funds donated by the Every Swipe Benefits Charity (ESBC) Program. With Pay It Forward, your business can donate to Gently Hugged at NO COST to you. You will be giving back while using a service that you need. To find out more, [CLICK HERE](#)

2025 Q1 DONATION AMOUNT: \$1,354.16



The Rancho Belles, a social organization of women based in Rancho Bernardo, hosted a baby shower on May 27th in support of Gently Hugged. Volunteer bag packer, Kim Linnell, attended to demonstrate how to pack a Gently Hugged Bag for a San Diego newborn in need. We are so grateful to these fun women for their continued support of Gently Hugged and our mission.

Miriam

We are so grateful for this community member, who reached out during her lunch break to meet one of our volunteers and donate gently used baby items. It can really be this simple - you just have to ask!



Office Volunteers

This quarter we continued to have groups of volunteers come through our Rancho Bernardo and North Coastal offices. Many continue to be frequent flyers, who show up week after week in support of San Diego babies - like the Bookies, National Charity League chapters, and the Woman's Club of Carlsbad. We are also so grateful to the friends of Alan and Robyn Krasner and the Encinitas Mamacitas for joining us this quarter! If you'd like to join our office volunteers, please send us a message through the contact form on our website: [CLICK HERE](#)



Clothing Drives

Kids Care Club



Thank you to Kids Care Club of Penasquitos and 4S Ranch for hosting clothing drives for Gently Hugged. So many donations were collected that we needed several trips to transport all of the infant clothing, blankets, toys and other essentials to the Gently Hugged Office. We are so thankful for the continuing support of Kids Care Club and for the help of the families that continue to donate.

Carlsbad City Libraries

Sending a big Gently Hugged thank you to Carlsbad City Libraries (Georgina Cole Library, Dove Library, and the Library Learning Center) who each hosted collection bins from June 16 - July 7 this summer. Thank you to all library patrons who brought gently used baby clothing in to donate for San Diego babies.



MyGym Carlsbad & Bleach and Brawn



Teaming up can be a great way to collect clothing donations! That is what neighbor businesses Bleach and Brawn and MyGym Carlsbad did in order to collect more donations for San Diego babies in need.

Thanks to the generosity and community spirit of both businesses and their owners, more local families will have access to essential items during their babies first year of life. Together, we are making a difference in our community, one gently hugged baby at a time!

Peñasquitos Christian Preschool

We are so thankful to Peñasquitos Christian Preschool for their continued and heartfelt support of Gently Hugged. This generous and community-minded school, led by Director Jennifer Kelly, has partnered with us for many years through their annual baby clothing drive—and their commitment never goes unnoticed.



On just the first day of this year's drive, a full carload of baby clothing and essentials was donated to help us support newborns in need throughout San Diego County. We are incredibly grateful for the compassion, organization, and care that Jennifer and the entire preschool community pour into this effort each year.

Collection Bins - List and Thank You!

We always include a special section in our newsletters to say thank you to ALL the local businesses, daycares, preschools, and individuals that host a Gently Hugged collection bin, making it as easy as possible for donors to drop off their gently used clothing and baby items. We continue to be humbled by the number of community sites that want to support San Diego babies in need. Check our current list of active bins at this link: [CLICK HERE](#)

With our growing number of partnerships, for which we are incredibly grateful, it is impossible to spotlight every clothing drive in our newsletter. But we are pleased to share pictures from some sites that hosted bins this quarter:

- San Marcos Library
- Elevate Training
- Olivenhain Pioneer Elementary
- New Song Church
- St. John's School



Crafters Corner

Thank you, Crafters!

We are so grateful to the amazing women of The Sundance and Good Cheer Groups of the North County Quilters Association have donated many beautiful handmade items for our Gently Hugged bags. The Good Cheer Quilt Committee thoughtfully prepares kits of pre-cut fabric, batting, and backing that members pick up at guild meetings to create bright, cheerful quilts for local babies. We are also loving the handmade quilts brought to our Rancho Bernardo office by the Nighthawk Quilters.



We are constantly amazed by the beautiful work by many of our volunteers. These handmade crafts provide a meaningful and personalized touch to the families and babies that receive Gently Hugged bags. Below are projects from a few volunteers that we would like to highlight this quarter:

- Sue Devicarlis - pink flower quilt
- Casa Knitters - knitted blankets and cute bumblebee toys
- Deanna Pennock - crocheted blankets
- Diane deBruyn - "I spy" quilts



If you would like to learn more or join our volunteer crafter team, please email Jennifer Bollish at crafter.gentlyhugged@gmail.com.