CEO Message

March was a great month for the agency. We continued to receive acknowledgment from local officials and community-based organizations throughout the county and the Central Valley for the impactful work we provided to our community. We also saw growth in our partnerships with healthcare organizations. I was especially proud to highlight our strong partnership with Sutter Memorial Health and the many wonderful individuals we connected with there. These achievements were a direct reflection of the WMCC team's strength and commitment to serving our community.

In March 2026, staff attended a retreat at the Jesuit Retreat Center in Los Altos, California. The purpose of the retreat was to reflect, reconnect with our spirit, and determine next steps for the agency. Staff appreciated the opportunity for spiritual growth and self-reflection.

We began developing a work plan informed by the findings from *El Plan del Pueblo: The People's Plan for Social and Economic Justice*. This effort is helping guide our priorities and next steps as we shape the future of our work. We are grounding this work in our current capacity and focusing on actionable strategies that staff can implement.

I also had the opportunity to attend the Stanislaus County Commission for Women event on Saturday, March 14th, at The Greens. The event honored several outstanding women who had made significant contributions to Stanislaus County. The President of the Commission delivered an enthusiastic and powerful message on the importance of caring for the most vulnerable members of our community.

WMCC was proud to have two board members recognized at this event: Jocelyn Cooper, our Board President, and Nancy Martinez, who had recently been elected to the WMCC Board of Directors. It was an honor to support these outstanding leaders for their commitment to serving vulnerable communities in West and South Modesto and throughout the county.

Each awardee was given the opportunity to speak. One of the most impactful remarks came from Ms. Martinez, who delivered a heartfelt speech in both Spanish and English. She spoke about the struggles and hardships her parents endured so she could have a better life in this country. Her words deeply resonated with me, reflecting experiences similar to those of my own Mexican American parents. Overall, it was a powerful and inspiring moment celebrating women from diverse backgrounds.

I also want to give a shout-out to our staff for their continued commitment to the community:

- Lily Felix for completing a certificate program at UC Merced
- Stephanie Ortiz, Maribel Torres, and Likhi Rivas for their ongoing outreach and leadership in youth programming that supported growth and enrichment

- Andrea Macias, Licensed Clinical Social Worker, for her dedication and high standards in serving families and children facing trauma and stress
- Jasmine Corona for her continued growth in developing our Marketing and Community Relations
- Cesar S., an intern/community worker, UC Berkeley graduate
- Monica Rivera and Martha Alvarez for their dedication to supporting mothers and families with newborns and toddlers through education and social development programs

I also extended my gratitude to our Board of Directors for their trust and belief in my leadership as we continued to grow and strengthen this agency.

A special thank-you to our management team: Reyna Perales, Blanca Marin, and Alison Bavaro, our accountant, who has done an excellent job managing our accounts and financial reporting. Reyna and Blanca truly served as the glue that holds the agency together. Reyna is set to graduate in May 2026 with her master's degree in public health from Sacramento State University. Blanca had been an outstanding Executive Assistant, deeply committed to serving the community and rooted in the community we serve.

I wish everyone a joyful Easter celebration. The Lord has risen to bring light into the world. I ask God every day to "empty me, fill me, and use me." As C. S. Lewis said, "The first fact in the history of Christendom is a number of people who say they have seen the resurrection. Christ has risen, and so we shall rise."