Mama’s Kitchen is committed to fighting HIV/AIDS and cancer through the power of nutrition. With the belief that every person is entitled to the basic necessity of life—nutritious food—we deliver hot, home-cooked meals to neighbors too ill from AIDS or cancer to prepare meals for themselves, and their children. We also operate a pantry for low-income, HIV positive people who are vulnerable to hunger and in need of nutritional support.

By collaborating with case managers and healthcare providers to reach people in need, we strengthen San Diego County’s safety net of social services for people struggling with AIDS or cancer. And it works. In our 25 years of service, Mama’s Kitchen has served 7.5 million meals and helped tens of thousands of individuals through their illnesses.

Our critically ill neighbors need nutritious food:

❤️ Despite new medications, there are still no cures for AIDS or cancer.
❤️ The debilitating side effects of AIDS and cancer treatments include nausea, fatigue, and intense pain, making it impossible to cook. When good nutrition deteriorates, recovery and stabilization are much harder.
❤️ Currently over 14,000 people are living with HIV/AIDS in San Diego County. New health challenges are being faced due to the long term effects of the disease.
❤️ The California Cancer Registry estimated 13,455 new cancer cases were diagnosed last year in San Diego County, the second highest in the state.

Mama’s Kitchen continues to make a difference 25 years later:

❤️ Last year Mama’s Kitchen delivered:
- 284,925 meals to 394 San Diegans affected by HIV/AIDS
- 70,602 meals to 196 San Diegans affected by cancer.
- 46,584 meals to 106 children whose parent was affected by HIV/AIDS or cancer

At Mama’s Kitchen we believe that everyone is entitled to the basic necessity of life — nutritious food. As a community-driven organization, we provide nutrition support to men, women, and children affected by AIDS or cancer who are vulnerable to hunger.

Food remains our single largest expense. For community members struggling with AIDS or cancer, access to nutritious food provides stability in meeting their basic human needs, such as housing, medical care, and case management. Studies show a strong correlation between meeting these needs and improved health. Mama’s Kitchen spends over $1,000,000 annually on food alone.

The Goal:

The goal of the 25th Anniversary is to raise half of Mama’s Kitchen’s food bill for the year, $500,000.
Since 1990, we have never charged for our home-delivered meals or pantry food, denied food to an eligible individual, or started a waiting list. We remain committed to this tradition of serving neighbors in need.

**Our History**

**1990**

Mama’s Kitchen was established by Laurie Leonard, who enlisted volunteers to help prepare and deliver free lunches and dinners from a church basement to San Diegans suffering from AIDS. Having lost her brother to the disease, Laurie chose to honor her mother by naming the agency “Mama’s Kitchen.”

Mama’s Kitchen had grown in geographic scope and breadth of service to be able to provide 100% nutrition to clients living throughout San Diego County, and to begin feeding clients’ dependent children.

“*When cancer hit our family it was devastating. As a wife and mom my first concern was about taking care of my children and my husband. After my surgery I was not able to work, drive, lift heavy objects, shop, let alone cook. When Mama’s Kitchen came to my doorstep with prepared food, I was lifted from a burden that I worried about. Mama’s Kitchen has helped take the stress off me. I appreciate your help and appreciate all the volunteers! Thank you Mama’s Kitchen!*”

— Kristy, 34 year old woman with breast cancer and mother of 15 month old twin girls

**1999**

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**2004**

Mama’s Pantry opened to low-income, HIV positive local residents who are in need of nutritional support. Once a month, shoppers may select up to 25 free grocery items to stretch their food budget.

**2006**

After 16 years of exclusively serving individuals living with HIV/AIDS, Mama’s Kitchen expanded its mission and began serving people with cancer, under age 60. This demographic was previously overlooked by other meal delivery agencies, which typically target seniors age 60 and above.

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**2011**

After almost 17 years operating from a leased church basement, Mama’s Kitchen purchased and renovated a permanent home. Mama’s Kitchen moved into its permanent facility on August 11, 2011.

**2014**

On April 2nd, 2014 Mama’s Kitchen delivered its seven-millionth meal to San Diegans too ill to prepare their own meals.

**MAMA’S RESPONSE**

The Vicious Cycle of Hunger and Ailing Health

Hunger causes AIDS and cancer medications to be less effective (or worse, toxic) and makes it difficult for people to safely take these medications.

Mama’s Kitchen responds to San Diego’s need for a county-wide meal delivery service for local residents who are living with AIDS or cancer and are physically and/or mentally unable to prepare meals for themselves or their children. We strengthen the safety net of services available to these local residents by providing the nutrition they need to:

- maintain essential weight and strength
- strengthen their immune systems
- properly metabolize medications
- minimize side-effects
- return to independent living whenever possible

“*When cancer hit our family it was devastating. As a wife and mom my first concern was about taking care of my children and my husband. After my surgery I was not able to work, drive, lift heavy objects, shop, let alone cook. When Mama’s Kitchen came to my doorstep with prepared food, I was lifted from a burden that I worried about. Mama’s Kitchen has helped take the stress off me. I appreciate your help and appreciate all the volunteers! Thank you Mama’s Kitchen!*”

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**VOLUNTEERS**

Our volunteers are the heart and soul of the Kitchen. As of December 31, 2014, over 5,500 volunteers have donated 843,139 hours of service to the mission of Mama’s Kitchen, an estimated value of $15,048,254.