

Women OF THE Year

Monica White

Food Share of Ventura County | President & Chief Executive Officer

Monica White joined Food Share of Ventura County as President and CEO in 2017 after having previously served on the Food Share board. Since taking on the role, Monica led Food Share out of a period of financial challenges while responding to some of Ventura County's most critical hunger relief needs during the Thomas Fire and the COVID-19 pandemic. Entering its 46th year as Ventura County's food bank, Food Share served over 260,000 individuals last year through a network of 190 community partners. In 2023, Food Share distributed the equivalent of over 15 million meals in Ventura County.

Monica comes to Food Share after working at the Ventura County Star as Director of Consumer Sales and Marketing. Her prior experience includes positions with the Walt Disney Company, ABC Television and Whamo! She recently served as the Board Chair of the California Association of Food Banks and is now a member of the Board of Trustees for Community Memorial Healthcare. Monica has been named in the Top 50 Women in Business by the Pacific Coast Business Times for the past 4 years.

Mary Maranville

SEEAG | Founder, President and CEO

Mary Maranville is the daughter of a dairy farmworker from upstate NY. His hard work and commitment to farming inspired her to found SEEAG in 2008, whose mission is to educate thousands of schoolchildren annually about the importance of local farmland and food literacy. It was not part of her school's curriculum to educate her and her classmates to appreciate farmland and our agricultural workforce, who ensured we had food on our tables daily. It is the same today; many schools' formal curricula do not include agricultural and food literacy.

Growing up on a dairy farm in upstate NY led to Mary Maranville founding Students for Eco-Education and Agriculture (SEEAG) in 2008. It's celebrating its 16th anniversary in 2024 and 11th anniversary as a 501(c)3. Through field trips and in-class learning, SEEAG educates school children about the farm origins of their food and to appreciate growers, farmworkers, farmland, and the food on our tables. SEEAG programs are locally relevant and give a realistic portrayal of agriculture. Through its programs, SEEAG is creating young agricultural ambassadors and future stewards of our local farmland.

For the first time, SEEAG is poised to attain close to \$1 million in revenue this fiscal year, which is a testament to the community's generosity and the importance of its mission.

Since its beginning, SEEAG has reached over 125,000 elementary school students in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties, California. This 2023 – 2024 school year, SEEAG will educate more than 10,600 students, including over 3,000 students who will attend 70 field trips to SEEAG's two Farm Labs in Saticoy and Santa Maria. Many of these students are considered low-income Title 1 students.

Under Mary's guidance, SEEAG's Child Wellness Initiative was developed using agriculture to inspire and empower children to make healthy daily eating and exercise decisions. SEEAG's STEM Career Pathways in Agriculture is for middle and high schoolers and introduces them to agriculture industry STEM career opportunities. Mary's work with children and their parents led to Mary founding Ventura County Farm Day and Santa Barbara County Farm Day. Each attracts over 6,000 attendees of all ages annually to local farms where visitors can see and learn about the food chain from farm to table. All SEEAG programs, including both Farm Days, are free.

Her newest achievement is founding Heritage Farmland Touring Co., which will benefit SEEAG.

Gagan Pawar, MD, MBA

Clinicas del Camino Real | Chief Executive Officer

Dr. Gagan Pawar is a highly accomplished and visionary healthcare executive, currently serving as the Chief Executive Officer of the Federally Qualified Health Center, Clinicas del Camino Real, Incorporated. With a steadfast commitment to providing quality care to all patients, Dr. Pawar has been instrumental in the recent growth and continued success of the organization.

Dr. Pawar completed her Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery at the Government Medical College, Amritsar in 2004. After receiving her medical degree and internship training, she served as Clinic Administrator and Physician at the Gaborone Medical Clinic in Botswana, Africa in 2005, where she earned her Professional Diploma of Clinical Research and completed both Fundamentals and Advanced AIDS Clinical Care training through the Harvard AIDS Institute. The following year, Dr. Pawar managed outpatient and inpatient care for severely immunocompromised patients at the Princess Marina Referral Hospital as Medical Officer, where she also performed diagnostic and therapeutic procedures. Her unique combination of medical expertise and business acumen has been a cornerstone of her career, enabling her to effectively navigate the complex landscape of modern healthcare.

In 2007, Dr. Pawar took her expertise to Stanford University Medical Center, where she served as a non-resident Physician and continued her passion for helping individuals with HIV/AIDS. She completed her residency and trained in the full spectrum of family medicine at the nationally ranked Department of Family Medicine and Community Health, University of Pennsylvania. As Chief Resident, she instructed medical personnel at all levels and began her leadership efforts in the United States.

With two decades of experience in the healthcare industry, Dr. Pawar has consistently demonstrated a deep understanding of healthcare systems, operational excellence and strategic planning. Beginning as a Family Medicine Physician at Clinicas del Camino Real, Inc., she quickly earned the role of Chief Medical Officer based on her unwavering commitment to patient-centered care. She has since fostered a culture of collaboration and innovation through her work as Chief Medical Officer and stepped in as Interim Chief Executive Officer after championing Clinicas' strategic COVID-19 response throughout the organization and the community. She also earned her Master of Business Administration in Business of Medicine in 2022 to advance both her medical experience and administrative expertise.

As CEO of Clinicas del Camino Real, Inc., Dr. Pawar has spearheaded numerous initiatives that aim to propel the organization to new heights in excellence. Under her leadership, Clinicas has both expanded to new locations and implemented brand new service lines, while continuing to offer the same quality care that patients in the community have come to expect for over fifty years.

Her contributions to the field have also earned her numerous accolades, including the Pacific Coast Business Times 50 Most Influential People in the Region. Dr. Pawar continues to practice as a Family Medicine Physician to advocate for patient-focused care, health equity and access to quality care. She actively works with policy makers and community leaders to help shape the future of healthcare in Ventura County and beyond.

Through her strategic vision, unwavering dedication and profound understanding of healthcare at all levels, Dr. Gagan Pawar continues to drive transformative change, delivering exceptional care and positively impacting the lives of countless patients.

Elizabeth Botello

Ventura High School | Assistant Principal

Elected to the Oxnard Union High School Board of Trustees in 2020, Ms. Elizabeth Botello is an educator and administrator. She is currently an Assistant Principal at Ventura High School. She previously served as an English teacher, Journalism Advisor, and ASB Director at Oxnard High School.

Raised in Southern California, Ms. Botello taught in Orange, LA, and Ventura Counties. She graduated with two bachelor's degrees and her teaching credential from UC Irvine, a master's degree in journalism from UC Berkeley, and a master's degree in education with administrative credential from UCLA's Principal Leadership Institute.

Ms. Botello is an advocate and ally to our most vulnerable and underserved students. A collaborative educational leader, she is passionate about serving our youth and families across Ventura County.

An Oxnard resident, wife, and mother, Ms. Botello strives to support student achievement while being an agent of change for our community.

Celina L. Zacarias

Port Hueneme Board of Commissioners | President

Celina L. Zacarias has held the position of Executive Director of Community and Government Relations for California State University Channel Islands (CSUCI), the 23rd campus in the California State University System since 2007. Celina is the first person to hold this position at CSUCI. As Director of Community and Government Relations Celina is responsible for advancing California State University Channel Islands' positive presence and goodwill at all levels throughout the culturally diverse service region, the state, the nation and internationally by planning, directing, and implementing a comprehensive proactive program of community and government relations. Celina is also responsible for establishing and maintaining strong relationships with local elected officials, Sacramento state legislators, and U.S. Congressional representatives in Washington D.C. and their staff members to communicate positions on issues and obtain support for resources on behalf of the campus.

In February of 2020, Celina was appointed by her fellow Oxnard Harbor District Board of Commissioners: Port of Hueneme to the vacancy left by the passing of Dr. Manuel Lopez and in November 2020 she was elected by the voters to the position for a four-year term and made history by being the highest vote getter in the history of the Oxnard Harbor District. Again, in January of 2024 Celina elected made history by being Elected the First Latina Woman to serve as President of the Oxnard Harbor District: Port of Hueneme.

The daughter of migrant farmworkers, Celina was born in Michoacán, Mexico and came to the United States when she was three years old. Both her father and grandfather were a part of the Bracero Program from 1942-1964. Growing up in Oxnard, Celina worked alongside her mother on weekends, winter/spring breaks and the summers picking strawberries here in Oxnard. From a young age, she has always possessed the desire to be excellent in all her endeavors from picking berries to being the first to attend a University in her family.

Celina graduated from UCSB with Bachelor of Arts Degrees in Spanish Literature and Hispanic Civilization. She has studied abroad in Cuba, China, the Czech Republic, Hong Kong, and England.

Celina also has 25 years of extensive business experience in the emerging and new market segments stemming from her careers at GMAC Mortgage, Wells Fargo, and Cabrillo Economic Development Corporation. Celina's focus during her mortgage banking career was First-Time Homebuyer Programs and Affordable Housing Projects.

In 2011 Celina was one of the 40 participants selected from throughout the United States by the U.S. Secretary of Defense to participate in the Joint Civilian Orientation Conference which allowed her to engage with top senior leadership at the Pentagon and at the numerous military commands throughout the country. In 2014 Celina was a part of the Commander Naval Air Force Distinguished Visitors Program which allowed her the opportunity to embark aboard the U.S. Navy aircraft carrier, USS Ronald Reagan.

Celina has been a keynote speaker locally and nationally on various topics ranging from Homeownership, Real Estate Fraud, and Latina Women in Business to the importance of Higher Education. In 2014 Celina was a keynote speaker at the California Department of Education State Migrant Parent Conference: “The Universe is Small for the Potential of the Migrant Child”. In 2011 Celina was a keynote speaker at the United States Office of Education –National Migrant Education Conference: “The Bracero Program and its impact on my life”.

For many years Celina has been extensively involved in the community holding numerous leadership positions in professional, economic, and charitable organizations. Celina is active in all the Ventura County Chambers of Commerce and is Past Board President of the Camarillo, Oxnard, and Simi Valley Chambers of Commerce. She presently serves on the Board of Directors of the Workforce Development Board (WDB) of Ventura County, Economic Development Collaborative (EDC), Ventura County Economic Development Association (VCEDA), Ventura County Civic Alliance (VCCA), Regional Defense Partnership (RDP), League of United Latin American Citizens(LULAC) – CA Corporate Advisory Board, Casa Pacifica, Community Memorial Health (CMH) System, Community West Bank, Students for Eco-Education and Agriculture Advisory Board, Girl Scouts of California’s Central Coast, University Preparation School at CSU Channel Islands, Women’s, and Leadership California just to name a few organizations. Her contributions to the community have resulted in many awards and acknowledgements by legislators, civic organizations, and the business community.

Recent awards include the 2021 Pacific Coast Business Times (PCBT) Top 50 Most Influential People in the Tri-Counties, 2021 PCBT Top 50 Women in Business in the Tri-Counties, 2020 Girls Scouts of California’s Central Coast Woman of Distinction, 2018 Pacific Coast Business Times Latina Leadership Award, 2012 Top Latina in Higher Education Award and the 2006 Top Woman in Business by the Pacific Coast Business Times ; others include the Oxnard Chamber of Commerce 2011, 2016, and 2022 Chairman’s Award of Excellence, 2007 Woman of the Year and the 2016 Citizen of the Year by the Oxnard Chamber of Commerce, 2007 Diversity Ambassador by the American Red Cross, and numerous other recognitions for service to the community.