



WOMEN
— OF THE —
YEAR

50TH





SANTA
BARBARA

COUNTY

50TH





Teresa Alvarez

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

CARPINTERIA CHILDREN'S
PROJECT

Teresa serves as Executive Director of the Carpinteria Children's Project, leading efforts to expand opportunity for children and families. With more than a decade in nonprofit leadership, she is a strong voice for early learning, immigrant families, and lasting systems change.

Originally from Guanajuato, Mexico, Teresa was raised in California as an undocumented student—an experience that shaped her deep commitment to education and equity. She is a proud first-generation college graduate, earning degrees from UC Santa Barbara and Antioch University Santa Barbara.

Teresa is a founding member of the Santa Barbara Latino Giving Circle and has been recognized with the Woman of Service and DEI Advocate awards. Outside of work, she enjoys traveling, reading, and spending time with her two sons and husband.



Ingrid Bostrom

PHOTOJOURNALIST

SANTA BARBARA
INDEPENDENT /
FREELANCE

Ingrid is an award-winning photojournalist whose work appears regularly in the Santa Barbara Independent and other Santa Barbara County publications. Her photography has also been featured in Forbes and Patagonia Journal, among others.

Ingrid approaches photography as a disciplined practice of attention - an ongoing effort to sharpen her senses and deepen her awareness of the world around her. Through her lens, she seeks not only to refine her own perspective, but also to invite others to see more clearly and compassionately. Her work centers the stories and faces of historically excluded communities, using visual storytelling as a tool for advocacy and equity.

She serves on the boards of Citizens for the Carpinteria Bluffs, Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara, the Santa Barbara County Commission for Women, and Small Town Art Publications. She lives in Carpinteria with her ever-supportive husband, Matt, and their creative child, Fin.



Terease Y Chin

**ASIAN AMERICAN
COMMUNITY ADVOCATE**
SANTA BARBARA TRUST
FOR HISTORIC
PRESERVATION

Terease leads the community in continuing the preservation and inclusiveness of Santa Barbara's rich and diverse Asian American Heritage.

A Life Honorary Director with the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation, she helped to create the Trust's Asian American Affinity Group, 17 years ago. They formed the annual Asian American Film Series and Asian American Neighborhood Festivals, which symbolizes the cultural history of the Presidio Neighborhood, where a large Chinese and Japanese community once lived. They also include other Asian American cultural groups like the first Filipino families.



Ann Saunders McCarty

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

NORTH COUNTY RAPE
CRISIS & CHILD
PROTECTION CENTER

Ann has dedicated more than 30 years to advocating for survivors of sexual assault, child abuse, and human trafficking.

As Executive Director of the North County Rape Crisis and Child Protection Center, she leads the only 24-hour crisis intervention and advocacy agency for survivors of sexual violence serving mid and northern Santa Barbara County.

Since joining the Center in 1994, she has expanded prevention education in local schools—particularly in underserved communities—while strengthening comprehensive direct services for survivors and their families. She has been a member of the Santa Barbara County Human Trafficking Task Force since 2014 and is a respected local trainer on trafficking awareness and prevention. She is committed to fostering open dialogue, advancing trauma-informed care, and ensuring every survivor is heard, supported, and empowered.



Elisabeth Rizo

**EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION SPECIALIST**

RETIRED, SANTA BARBARA
CITY COLLEGE

Elisabeth has worked with children, families, staff, and students for 30+ years. She recently retired from her position as the director of the Orfalea Early Learning Center and the Early Childhood Education Lab School at Santa Barbara City College.

Elisabeth believes relationships are the core of this field. Throughout her various positions, she has formed deep connections with children, families, and staff. That includes mentoring many early childhood professionals, caring for countless children, and supporting numerous families. She takes great pride in the number of adult learners she taught and engaged with as a part-time instructor. Even after retiring, Elisabeth continues to support the field as the co-facilitator and co-creator of the Infant Toddler Professionals Collaborative with Yukiko Irie. She has been happily married to my husband for 46 years. She has two grown children and three wonderful grandchildren.



Erica Ruvalcaba

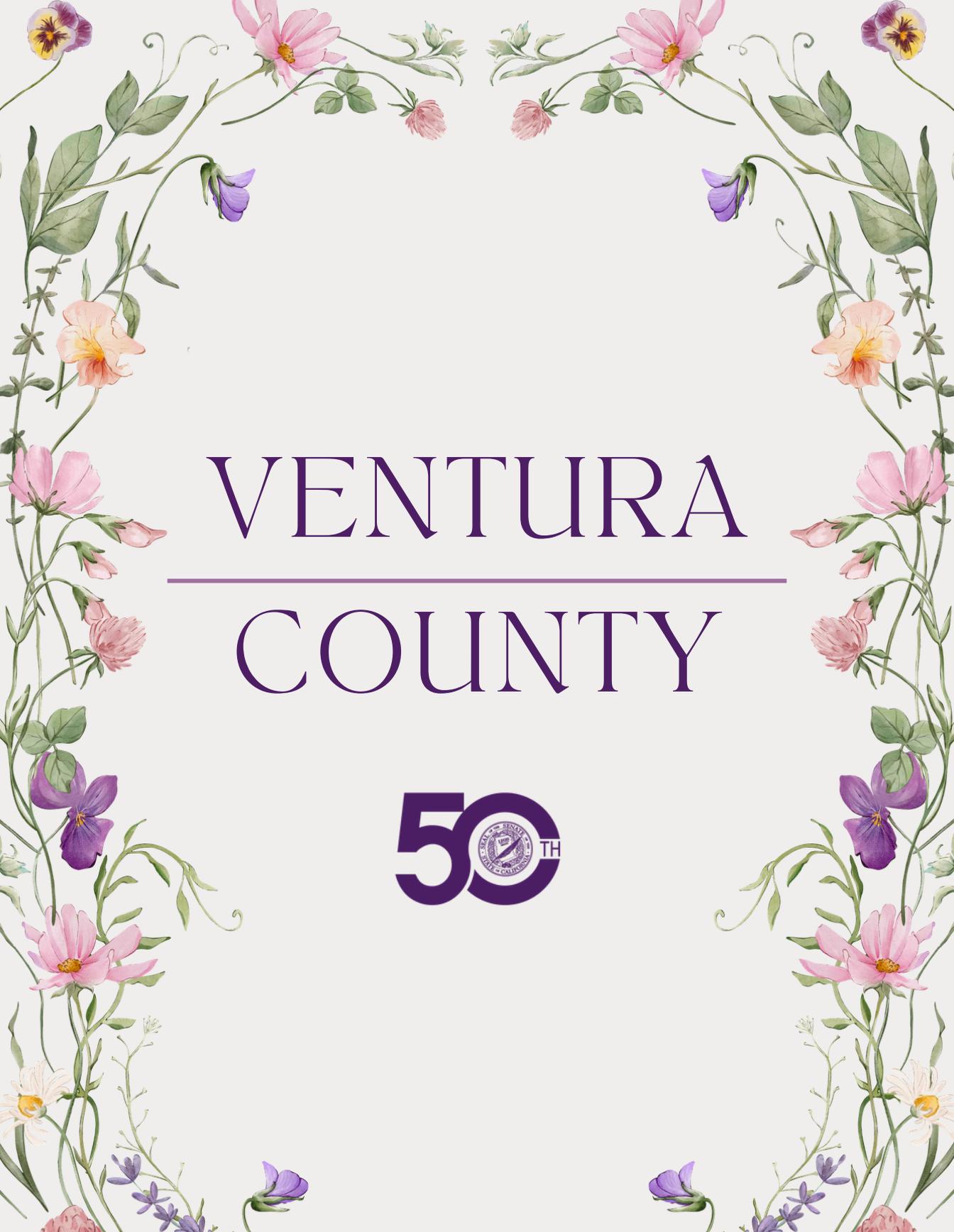
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
AND FOUNDER**

CORAZÓN LATINO

Dr. Erica Ruvalcaba has spent over 20 years proving that leadership is about moving others toward a better future. The daughter of fieldworkers, Heriberto and Virginia Ruvalcaba, Erica's journey from the fields to a Doctorate in Organizational Leadership from the University of La Verne fuels her mission to uplift the Latinx community.

As a dedicated educator at Allan Hancock College, Erica founded Corazón Latino to bridge critical gaps in mental health and end-of-life care. Through Emotional CPR (eCPR) and the community-driven Caminata con Propósito, she provides healing, financial relief, and dignity to families facing terminal illness or crisis.

As a First 5 Commissioner and a decade-long leader for Latina Action Day at the State Capitol, Erica bridges grassroots service with systemic change. Whether in the classroom or advocating for policy, Erica remains a steadfast "daughter of the fields," ensuring every family has the tools to live an empowered, dignified life.



VENTURA

COUNTY

50TH





Elena Brokaw

**THE BARBARA BARNARD
SMITH CEO**

MUSEUM OF VENTURA
COUNTY

Elena has devoted her career to building stronger, more connected communities through arts, culture, and public service. A graduate of Harvard University with a degree in art history, she has worked extensively as a cultural consultant, leading citywide cultural plans for Reno, Minneapolis, and Capitola, and guiding public art initiatives in multiple communities.

Today, she serves as The Barbara Barnard Smith Chief Executive Officer of the Museum of Ventura County, the region's largest repository of history. Under her leadership, the Museum creates bold, inclusive experiences in art, history, and culture that spark curiosity, foster compassion, and strengthen community connection. She is committed to ensuring that everyone's story is preserved and shared for generations to come.

Elena previously served as Director of Ventura's Parks and Recreation Department and has held senior development roles, including at the American Film Institute. A Ventura County native, she lives in Santa Paula with her husband and son.



Christine M. Cardona Threadgill

**DIRECTOR OF
PROGRAMS**

FRIENDS OF
FIELDWORKERS

Christine lives in Ventura County with her husband and three children. She graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from CSU Northridge in 2010 with a desire to use her career to help others, yet soon after she put her career on hold to stay home with her children when her daughter was diagnosed with autism. She spent the next several years navigating the world of special needs parenting.

She volunteered with the PTO (Parent Teacher Organization) at her children's schools and began volunteering for Friends of Fieldworkers in 2022. Seeing the high needs of the community, she served on the Board of Directors, was Board President, and later accepted a staff position as Director of Programs in November 2024. She continues to serve the community through the organization's many programs such as Farm Visits, Scholarships, Emergency Funds and Laundry Love.



Haley Ehlers

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

CLIMATE FIRST:
REPLACING OIL & GAS
(CFROG)

Haley is the Executive Director at Climate First: Replacing Oil & Gas (CFROG), a grassroots environmental advocacy organization on the Central Coast.

A resident of West Ventura, she brings experience in cross-cultural community organizing, fundraising, nonprofit administration, and policy. Haley has a M.S. in Political Science, Applied Community and Economic Development from Illinois State University and a B.B.A. from Pacific Lutheran University. She served as a community economic development volunteer with the Peace Corps in Timor-Leste, partnering with a rural savings and loans cooperative on capacity-building initiatives. This is where she became mobilized into fossil fuel accountability work. She has worked and volunteered at various nonprofits in Ventura and her hometown, including the Boys & Girls Club of Salem, Marion and Polk Counties.



Melissa Miller

**COMMUNITY
PARTNERSHIPS MANAGER**

**VENTURA COUNTY CREDIT
UNION**

Melissa is the Community Partnerships Manager for Ventura County Credit Union, where she is passionate about building meaningful connections between businesses and community partners while championing support for those who need it most. A dedicated community advocate and lifelong volunteer, Melissa brings heart, collaboration, and purpose to everything she does. A native Californian, she made Ventura County her home in 2014. Melissa actively serves in numerous leadership roles in the county, including the Foundation of VCCU, Camarillo YMCA, Moorpark College Foundation, Ventura County Leadership Academy (VCLA), and the advisory board for the Center for Non-Profit Leadership for CLU. She is the current Board Chair for both Turning Point Foundation and the Moorpark Chamber. She is a proud graduate of California State University, Long Beach, a member of VCLA Cohort 26, and a Credit Union Development Educator (CUDE). Deeply committed to giving back to Ventura County, she focuses her work on expanding opportunity, strengthening nonprofits, and uplifting local families. Above all, Melissa is a proud daughter, wife, and mother who leads with kindness, service, and love.



Angela Montgomery Timmons

**LICENSED CLINICAL
SOCIAL WORKER**

COMMUNITY ADVOCACY
COALITION

Angela, a longtime resident of Ventura County, graduated from Oxnard High School. She then attended undergraduate school in Columbia, Missouri, and earned a graduate degree from Atlanta University. Lastly, she obtained her Doctorate in Public Administration from the University of La Verne. She is licensed by the California Board of Behavioral Science as a Clinical Social Worker with over 40 years in the field.

Music has been a constant in her upbringing. Angela shares this gift with many organizations and faith congregations in the Ventura County area. She is the proud daughter of the late Bennie C. Montgomery and Pearl D. Montgomery, who were also active in Ventura County. Angela has two adult children and is married to Rev. Alan Timmons.