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## **The Fund for Santa Barbara Welcomes New Executive Director**

Eder Gaona-Macedo Selected to Lead Local Community Foundation

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY – The Fund for Santa Barbara’s Board of Directors has selected Eder Gaona-Macedo as its next Executive Director.

“It is an immense honor to join the Fund for Santa Barbara’s incredible team,” said Mr. Gaona-Macedo. “My years of experience in the nonprofit sector have taught me how to lead with love on behalf of the community while also being strategic and effective. The FUND’s mission of building movements for economic, environmental, political, racial and social justice issues are close to my heart, and I look forward to continuing the legacy of the leaders that came before me in my new role.”

Mr. Gaona-Macedo emerged as The FUND’s next Executive Director after an extensive and competitive selection process that spanned nine months. The search process involved a set of initial stakeholder interviews, the formation of a community-based transition team, a search committee composed of internal and external stakeholders, and interviews with members of the Fund’s staff as well as its Board of Directors. Dozens of candidates applied, with three finalists emerging as top candidates. The process was overseen by the FUND’s Board President, Eric Cárdenas, and by former Fund Executive Director and current search consultant, Nancy Weiss.

“On behalf of the FUND’s Board of Directors, I am thrilled to welcome Eder into this position of leadership,” said Mr. Cárdenas. “He is the right person for this job – in this place and in this time – and I am confident that his skill sets and perspectives will not only complement our existing work, but enhance it in ways we haven’t yet imagined.”

Mr. Gaona-Macedo brings with him more than a decade of experience in the nonprofit sector. Prior to accepting his new position, Mr. Gaona-Macedo served as the Senior Officer for Community Engaged Research at the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center (CSRC) where he led participatory action research throughout the State of California. He is also the former Executive Director for Future Leaders of America, an organization that provides leadership and education experiences to Latinx youth in



California. During his seven-year tenure, FLA addressed education and health disparities through youth-led grassroots organizing efforts.” Under his stewardship, FLA increased its budget from \$150K to \$2M/year.

In 2018, Mr. Gaona-Macedo co-founded the 805undocufund alongside CAUSE, MICOP, the McCune Foundation, and the Ventura County Community Foundation. The 805undocufund offers disaster relief to undocumented immigrants in Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties during natural disasters, climate-related events, and pandemics. In 2020, under his leadership, the 805undocufund distributed more than \$6.1M dollars to 4,500 undocumented families impacted by the COVID19 pandemic.

“For years, I’ve watched Eder’s evolution as he’s grown to become an incredible leader in our region,” said Marcos Vargas, the Fund’s outgoing Executive Director. “His background in executive leadership, fundraising, youth leadership development, and strategic planning are a perfect fit for our organization as we inch closer to our 50th year of building, supporting, and funding grassroots movements in the south central coast.”

For his part, Mr. Vargas will be stepping down from the role of Executive Director, and will directly assist the Fund’s Board of Directors with Mr. Gaona-Macedo’s transition through the end of 2023. Under Mr. Vargas’ eighth year of leadership, the FUND successfully fostered collaborations and organized philanthropic partnerships for progressive social change in Santa Barbara County, holding funders’ briefings around criminal justice reform, climate justice, and immigrants rights, among other issues. Most notably, The FUND, in partnership with UCSB’s Blum Center and the USC Equity Research Institute, led in the establishment of the Central Coast Regional Equity Initiative, an ongoing initiative that aims to advance equity throughout the region.

Mr. Gaona-Macedo will take the helm of the 43-year old community foundation on Monday November 6, 2023. He resides in Santa Maria with his wife Gloria and two puppies Pequitas and Chickis.

**About the Fund:** The Fund for Santa Barbara (est. 1980) is a non-traditional community foundation that supports organizations and groups working for progressive social change in Santa Barbara County. The FUND is dedicated to helping find solutions to current and emerging social problems and issues that challenge our society as a whole. We understand that social conditions improve most dramatically when those who have been denied power and justice lead on their own behalf to



PO Box 90710, Santa Barbara, CA 93190 | P: (805) 962-9164  
120 East Jones Street, Suite 110, Santa Maria, CA 93454 | P: (805) 922-1707  
[www.fundforsantabarbara.org](http://www.fundforsantabarbara.org)

confront, challenge, and change the conditions that have denied them access to justice and equity.