

MRC Spotlight: Caye Gomez de Soler, St Vincent de Paul MRC of Lane County – written by Mark Schorr*



“We’ve got an amazing group of volunteers, small and mighty,” said Caye Gomez de Soler, Unit Coordinator for St. Vincent de Paul Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) of Lane County. Caye, short for Cayetana, is enthusiastic about supporting the volunteers, while working to grow the program. “More people means more places we can get to quickly, like remote areas where people now have to wait longer.”

The program has been through organizational challenges when problems with federal grant funding forced the former MRC sponsor, Lane County Public Health Department, to step back. Fortunately, St. Vincent de Paul Society of Lane County stepped

forward. Caye has been very impressed with the organization. “People know of the thrift stores, but they do so much. Providing shelter and all sorts of social services. Working to be sustainable in a creative way. For example, they recycle wax that’s brought to them and provide it for craft projects. As well as providing services for our county’s most vulnerable.” Caye believes being a part of St. Vincent de Paul is an excellent fit, “Given the extensive services and support they provide the community, the MRC will be a valuable asset.”

Caye came to the United States from Spain in 2017, arriving with family, first in Hawaii. There she met her husband, an Oregonian from Eugene, and traded palm trees for Douglas Firs. In Lane County, she began working as a volunteer medical interpreter and helping at a senior meal program. When COVID-19 hit, she helped with a vaccination program and realized, “I want to be more hands on.” In 2023, she went to work for Lane County Public Health as the MRC Coordinator, then became trained and licensed as an EMT, and in April of this year transitioned to St. Vincent de Paul.

“My responsibilities include volunteer recruitment, training, and maintaining program policies, protocols and SOPs (standard operating procedures) to ensure effective program operations.”

She appreciates that volunteers are giving the gift of their time and expertise to the community. “I have tremendous respect and admiration for every individual who chooses to dedicate their time, skills and energy to help others and strengthen our community. Volunteers are the foundation and heart of any MRC. They bring our mission to life, responding when our communities need them the most, providing essential support during emergencies, and keeping the MRC active and prepared.”

Caye noted that her most memorable experience has been “witnessing the dedication and commitment of our group of volunteers during a time of uncertainty and transition. For more than six months, while we did not know if we would find a new sponsor for the MRC, these volunteers remained engaged and committed to the future of the program. They continued meeting monthly, sharing updates, staying connected and preparing for the day when the program would have a new home. Their willingness to stay involved, share ideas and help to plan for the future demonstrated their dedication to the community we serve.”

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