





About MaxLove Project

Mission:

MaxLove Project is a non-profit organization dedicated to empowering families overcoming health risks with evidence-based culinary medicine programs designed to enhance quality of life and foster whole-body wellness. Our programs are available online and in-person, both in the community and hospital-based settings. Our nationwide online platform and physical locations in California and Georgia provide accessible support, while clinician and provider education ensures lasting impact. We support families facing childhood cancer, rare diseases and health risks.

Founding Story:

MaxLove Project was established in 2011 in Tustin, CA. The organization was founded by Audra DiPadova, MA and Justin Wilford, PhD after their young son was diagnosed with brain cancer. After experiencing significant inequities and disparities in the healthcare system, they combined Audra's background in culinary arts and leadership education with Justin's expertise as a professor in Public Health to create the organization.

Programs and Initiatives

Thrive Against Cancer:

- MaxLove Project is dedicated to improving the quality of life of families facing childhood cancers, pediatric rare diseases, and chronic hospitalizations with evidence-based culinary medicine, integrative care, and emotional health.
- Focuses on providing comprehensive quality of life focused support and education to childhood cancer and rare disease families.
- Offers culinary medicine classes in the hospital, online, and in community settings.
- Supports families with expert-led mental and emotional health programs as well as direct care from our graduate social work intern.
- Offers online community and expert e-learning courses focused on evidence-based health and wellness.
- Supports mothers with targeted care and retreats.

Culinary Medicine for All:

- We deliver evidence-based culinary medicine programs to all families with our children's museum and community collaborations.
- Provides essential culinary medicine education through our Fierce Foods Kitchen cookbook.
- Aims to make culinary medicine accessible to at-risk families in the communities we serve.
- Engages schools in garden and nutrition grant competition programs.
- Works on establishing a new community garden and outdoor teaching space in Savannah, GA.





Culinary Medicine Collaborative:

- We're bringing our innovative and evidence-based culinary medicine curriculum to providers across the nation. Our rigorously tested programs are tailored for the healthcare setting.
- Focuses on teaching healthcare professionals how to administer culinary medicine programs.
- The initial focus is on supporting Child Life professionals who are interested in culinary medicine.



Key Achievements (2021-2023)

Service to Children and Their Families:

- Served over 5500 kids and families through various touchpoints, ranging from single program encounters to regular in-depth care.

MaxLove Project Connect:

- Launched a new private e-learning and community platform, MaxLove Project Connect, specifically designed to serve childhood cancer families.

Turning Towards Grief Program:

- Initiated a grief and bereavement program called Turning Towards Grief, offering online learning and in-person retreats. Completed the second cohort of the program and in 2024 we're beginning the third cohort.

Parents Rising Program:

- Implemented an Internal Family Systems (IFS) based emotional health program for parents called Parents Rising.

Culinary Medicine Support:

- Provided innovative culinary medicine support and programming in hospitals, the communities we serve, and online.
- Launched a new partnership with Pretend City, the children's museum in Irvine.



Precision Nutrition Nutrigenomics Program:

- Pioneered precision nutrition for families through nutrigenomic testing, counseling, and education. Started the second cohort of this program in late 2023

Retreats for MaxLove Project Mothers:

- In 2023 we kicked off our annual “Reconnect to Self” retreat for mothers focusing on emotional health, stress reduction and self-care skill-building. The daylong retreat offers meditation, breathwork, sound healing and culinary medicine.

Physical Presence Expansion to Savannah, GA:

- Although we’ve been programming at the children’s hospital in Savannah, GA since 2017, in 2021 we took a step further and opened an office, initiating an expansion of our efforts in the community through community garden and teaching kitchen projects.

Internship Programs:

- Maintained a robust internship program for high school and college students.

Provider Advocacy Network:

- Built a network of providers called the Provider Advocacy Network that’s currently evolving into our Culinary Medicine Collaborative.





MaxLove Ambassador Program:

- Continued to bring Super Max the Turtle to children’s hospitals nationwide through the MaxLove Ambassador program.

Junior Board:

- We successfully launched our “Junior Board” in 2022. The Junior Board consists of high school students who are committed to fundraising and volunteering for our cause. Students learn invaluable leadership skills and hands on event management while also giving back.

Fundraising:

- Partnered with Rombauer Vineyards on their Blue Party events.
- Pioneered two new key events: our “Walk for Kids” and “Fork Childhood Cancer App-Off” both at Tanaka Farms.
- With the support of one of our most cherished donors we were able to launch a \$50,000 1:1 matching grant challenge that successfully raised another \$50,000.



Leadership & Staff

Audra DiPadova, MA, FMCHC - CEO, Co-Founder

Justin Wilford, PhD - Co-Founder, Director of Research & Emotional Health Programs

Carrie Benavides, MSc - Manager of Development & Operations

Alexia Hall, RDN - Culinary Medicine Dietitian

Brittany Lightsey, RD - Culinary Medicine Dietitian

Veronica DeRosa, RN - Grief Programs & Coaching

Samantha Chacón - Content Manager & Grief Programs

Alicia Wuth, PsyD - Emotional Health Programs Advisor

Jeni Rhodes - Graduate Social Work Intern

Andrew Johnson - Culinary Medicine Chef

Chef Cathy McKnight - Culinary Medicine Chef

Emily Frye - Graphic Design

Merima Basic - Accounting

Jordan Nishkian - Cookbook Editor

Board of Directors

Adrienne Marshack

Cathy McKnight

Iain Foshay

Sara Song

Tara Malue

Amanda Defour

Courtney Collins

Kelly Laule

Sophy Singer





Philanthropic Challenges

Despite facing a sharp decline in philanthropy in 2022 and 2023, MaxLove Project has shown resilience and adaptability, finding creative ways to navigate the changing fundraising landscape. The organization remains committed to its cause, acknowledging the importance of sustained support for families facing life-threatening conditions. The philanthropic climate remains MaxLove Project's biggest challenge to overcome. As we diversify our funding portfolio it's our hope that philanthropy in the United States strengthens in years to come.

MaxLove Project grew rapidly through 2019, reaching \$700,000/year in revenue that year. When the pandemic hit in 2020, generous and committed funders and government support programs saved the organization. In 2021, 2022, and 2023 however philanthropy has declined significantly and individual giving hit a record low that we haven't experienced since 1995. There are many factors at play here and MaxLove Project has been working hard to pivot and adjust in this climate. We're expecting 2024 to be very hard since it's an election year but hopefully individual, corporate and foundation giving will begin to increase in 2025.

In order to adapt to the new climate and facilitate growth into the future we've pivoted to focus our programmatic efforts and align those initiatives with specific fundraising plans. We've also innovated two new peer-to-peer team-based events, our Walk for Kids and Fork Childhood cancer App-Off events. These events focusing on group fundraising can deepen community engagement.

Key Partners & Funders:

- Tanaka Farms
- Metabolic Health Summit
- The Hershey Company
- Dwaine & Cynthia Willett Children’s Hospital of Savannah
- CHOC Children’s Hospital
- Pretend City
- Rombauer Vineyards

2024 New Initiatives and Events:

- Launch of a podcast series featuring experts in cancer, culinary medicine, emotional health, and overall quality of life care.
- Launch of the second edition of our Fierce Foods Kitchen Cookbook.
- Opening a new office in Orange, CA, offering Fierce Foods Academy classes.
- Initiating a “CSA” cooking class program at Tanaka Farms.
- Launching a new community-based Fierce Foods Academy project with the Savannah Children’s Museum.
- Started a new school garden grant challenge, engaging K-8 students in solving some of the biggest food & nutrition problems that we face.
- Save the Dates for key events, including “Walk for Kids” on April 28th and “Fork Childhood Cancer App-Off” on September 14th.

Community Engagement & Volunteering:

MaxLove Project values community engagement and extends its reach through events like “Walk for Kids,” “Fork Childhood Cancer App-Off,” and Rombauer Blue Parties. These events are not only fundraisers but are major “friend-raisers” for the organization. Throughout various events and programs we engage over 250 volunteers each year.





Key Volunteer Groups:

- MaxLove Project Junior Board
- Orange County School of the Arts - Mekjian Family Culinary Arts
- National Charity League Chapters
 - North Tustin
 - Rancho Irvine
 - Capistrano Coast
- Lion's Heart Service - San Juan Capistrano
- Tustin Boys Charity Service League
- Boys Community Service - League North Tustin
- Mercer College of Medicine - Savannah, GA
- Saddleback College - Mission Viejo, CA
- Santa Ana College - Santa Ana, CA



Testimonials

“MaxLove was our light during our darkest moments in our life. It is very difficult to put into words how grateful we are to be part of this amazing family.”

- Joanna (Momma to Sarah - Forever 8)

“The Fierce Foods Academy for MaxLove families is beneficial beyond the recipes taught. I’ve been able to meet other teens who have been in similar medical situations, which makes me feel that I am not alone.”

- Daniel (Ewing Sarcoma Survivor)

“The programs and events that MaxLove offers became such a huge support system for our family. Strangers who just GET IT became friends who soon turned into family. We had found our people! We had found our little light at the end of the tunnel.”

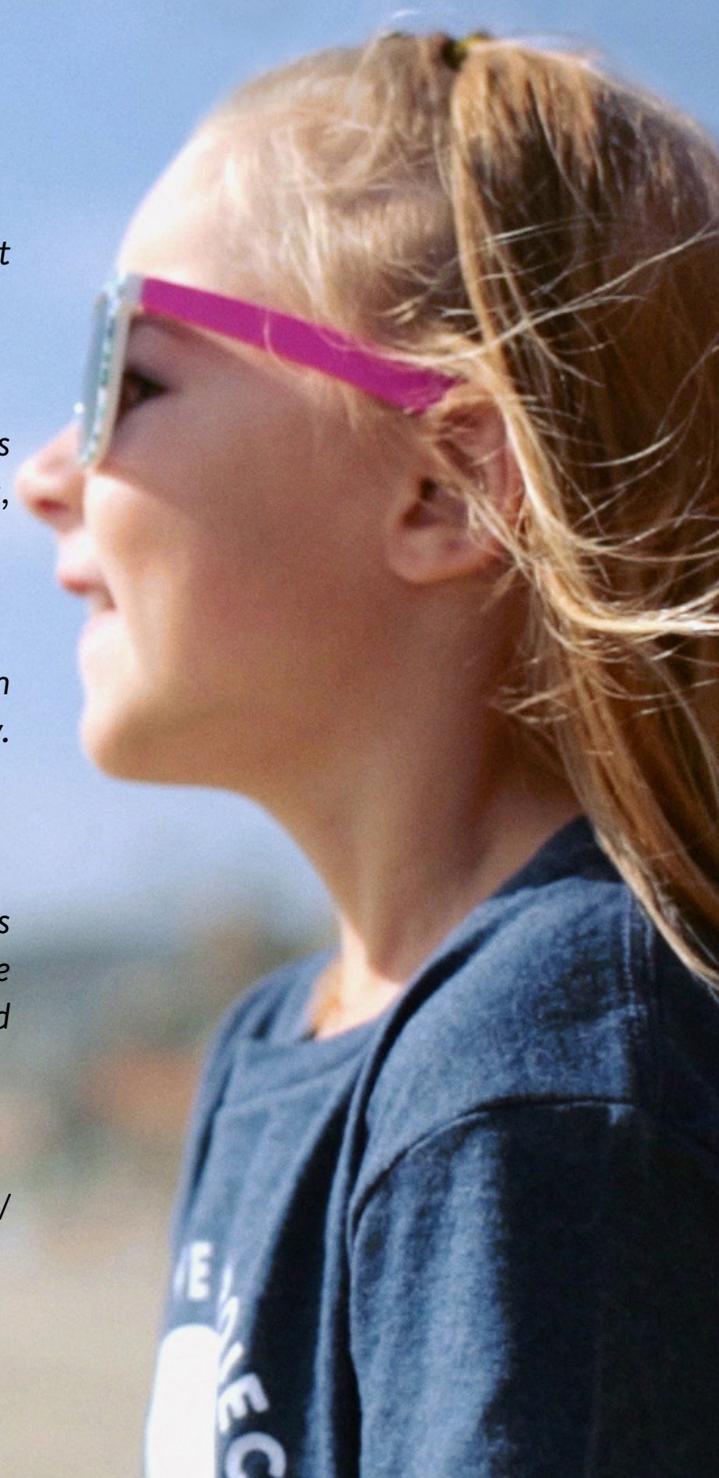
- Hildie (Olivianna’s Mom)

“The support we have received from MaxLove Project has been invaluable! Joshua loves Ohana as his family. At an Ohana event, where families were planning to attend Fierce Foods Academy class that was during his baseball game. I let Joshua know we would be missing Fierce Foods and the whole room heard him exclaim, “this is my support!”

- Vanessa (Joshua’s Mom)

“Through MaxLove Project’s program, Esther was able to get her Nutrigenomics/ Epigenetics tested by 3x4genetics, wish was information worth its weight in gold.”

- Julie (Esther’s Mom)





Program Sponsorships

We welcome sponsorships to underwrite the costs of each program. Support MaxLove Project at the most fundamental level. We'll be honored to recognize your generous support by adding your family, foundation or company's name to one of our essential and innovative programs. Below we've included a list of very basic program costs for each offering. Underwriting sponsorships are offered for one year.



Fierce Foods Academy:

- Community - Southern California
 - \$15,000
- Hospital - Southern California
 - \$20,000
- Community - Georgia
 - \$15,000
- Hospital - Georgia
 - \$20,000
- Online - Nationwide & International
 - \$10,000
- Nutrigenomics
 - \$25,000
- Fierce Foods Kitchen Cookbook (re-print)
 - \$15,000

MaxLove Project Connect App:

- E-learning, content, online cookbook
- \$45,000 for the technology and content creation & management

Emotional Health:

- MaxLove Mommas Retreat
 - \$5,000
- Turning Towards Grief Program
 - \$25,000
- Online Care: Parent's Rising Internal Families Systems, Support Groups, Social Worker position
 - \$10,000

Ohana Days:

- Quarterly family-focused events in Southern California that include a Fierce Foods Academy cooking class as well as additional activities.
 - \$2,500/class
 - \$10,000 for all four classes



Our Impact

Since 2011

Since 2011 MaxLove Project has served over 35,000 families with at least one of our health promoting interventions. From Super Max the Turtle to the Ohana Project to Fierce Foods and MaxLove Connect, we've supported families across the U.S. and around the world with an empowering community and quality of life care.

Over \$5M

Since 2011 and thanks to our incredible community we've raised over \$5M for our cause. Funds have been used to grow our impact through our innovative programs and support services.

12+ Years

We've grown from our founders' kitchen table into a thriving grassroots, community-based nonprofit organization. In 2021 we celebrated our first ten years! That's a big deal, it's not an easy road for any nonprofit to persist past a decade.

30+ Partners

MaxLove Project is proud to partner with over 30 children's hospitals and nonprofit organizations to bring quality of life care to all families facing childhood cancer and related rare diseases.





Award-Winning Programs

Our programs are innovative, evidence-informed, rigorously developed & tested, and have won multiple awards over the past ten years. We directly support families in areas where the healthcare system isn't equipped to provide care.

Original Research

We've published original research! Learn more about "The Ohana Project" peer-reviewed published research study: www.maxloveproject.org/our-research and learn more about our approach: www.maxloveproject.org/our-approach

Coast to Coast

We offer evidence-based programs nationwide, online and in-person, that are designed to enhance quality of life, reduce health risks, and foster whole-body wellness. Our nationwide online platform and physical locations in California and Georgia provide accessible support, both in person and online.

Over 1000 Families

Over 1000 families in treatment, survivorship and grief are held in direct care each year, both online and in person. Over 2500 families are served in total with at least one MLP touchpoint each year. It costs us \$450 on average to serve one family for one year.





Marketing & Press

[Voice of OC](#)

June 3, 2022

[San Clemente Times](#)

August 8, 2022

[California Live KNBC](#)

August 10, 2022

[OC Register](#)

September 12, 2022

[LA Times](#)

January 22, 2023

[Sweet Buffalo NY Television News](#)

March 13, 2023

[LA Times](#)

April 22, 2023

[San Diego Tribune](#)

July 24, 2023

[LA Times / Daily Pilot](#)

September 6, 2023

[Good Morning America](#)

September 6, 2023

The San Diego Union-Tribune

Carlsbad family with son fighting cancer shares story — 'I wasn't alone anymore'



The Singer family on a vacation trip. From left: Dr. Singer, Taylor Singer, Sasha Singer and Michael Singer. (Photo by Michelle Loring)

Los Angeles Times Daily Pilot

Celebrity chef Jet Tila joins MaxLove Project's new fundraising event



Finger foods at last year's Farm to Fork Dinner. MaxLove Project's App-Off Faves will give guests the chance to sample appetizers created by donors and their chef partners. (Lindsay Stoltz Photography)

Irvine — There is one appetizer that is hard for celebrity chef Jet Tila to resist.

"I think an appetizer's job is not to fill you up but to start your journey on your meal, so a crudo or a sashimi — it's going to be pretty hard for me not to order that, to be honest with you," said Tila.

It's something the teams might want to keep in mind at MaxLove Project's first App-Off Finale, where Tila and his wife, Ali, will be judges. The event is the organization's newest Fork Childhood Cancer Challenge and brings a new format to the annual Farm to Fork Dinner.

Daily Pilot Times OC

Fundraiser to culminate in best appetizer contest



CHIEF JET TILA and his wife, Ali, will be judges at MaxLove Project's App-Off Faves on Sept. 6.

Daily Pilot

ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

MaxLove Project raises awareness for childhood cancer at 8th annual Farm to Fork Dinner on Sept. 17



Guests enjoy the Farm to Fork Dinner at Tanaka Farms in Irvine last year. The eighth annual fundraiser will be held Sept. 17. (Courtesy of Jenelle Baines Photography)

Daily Pilot

The power of food: 14-year-old cancer survivor attends Culinary Arts Academy



SC Times

LOCAL NEWS YOU CAN USE

Home News Sports Life Business Local News You Can Use

OUT ONLINE NEWS HEADLINES

Local 'Stark Naked' Winner Displays Physical Prowess, Raises Money for Charity

ORANGE COUNTY BUSINESS JOURNAL



2023 Women in Business Award Nominees

Audra DiPadova Wilford, Chief Hope Officer, Founder, & CEO MaxLove Project, Tustin

When Audra DiPadova Wilford's son, Max, was diagnosed with brain cancer in 2011 at just four years old, they faced not only a tough diagnosis, but also no curative strategy. As she consulted with experts to improve Max's future survivorship, she saw an incredible opportunity to support other families like hers fighting childhood cancers and related life-threatening illnesses. Using her classical training in the culinary arts and business acumen, Wilford launched MaxLove Project - a nonprofit dedicated to increasing the quality of life and reducing health risks for all children surviving cancer, both in treatment and beyond. Over the last 13 years as founder and CEO, she has impacted thousands of families across the United States through evidence-based culinary medicine, integrative care and emotional health resources including an innovative new cookbook released this year, wellness retreats, personalized nutrigenomics, an e-learning mobile app, online and in-person classes, and more.



Los Angeles Times Daily Pilot

MaxLove Project cancer walk returns to Tanaka Farms in Irvine on April 30



Ramona Mathison holds a picture of daughter Sarah with son Ryan and husband Ryan at Tanaka Farms in Irvine. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)

Daily Pilot Times OC

SUNDAY, JANUARY 22, 2023 | Serving the coastal cities of Orange County and beyond | dailypilot.com



CHIEF JET TILA and his wife, Ali, will be judges at MaxLove Project's App-Off Faves on Sept. 6. (Photo by Jenelle Baines Photography)

The power of food
14-year-old cancer survivor attends culinary arts program

FV. to build its 1st fully inclusive play area

Designed to foster play for people of all abilities, the playground will be constructed at Freeman Valley Sports Park.

2023 Farm Walk PR and Marketing Results



16 – PR Hits

The total number of stories, articles, mentions, etc. secured as a result of KTM's media outreach efforts.



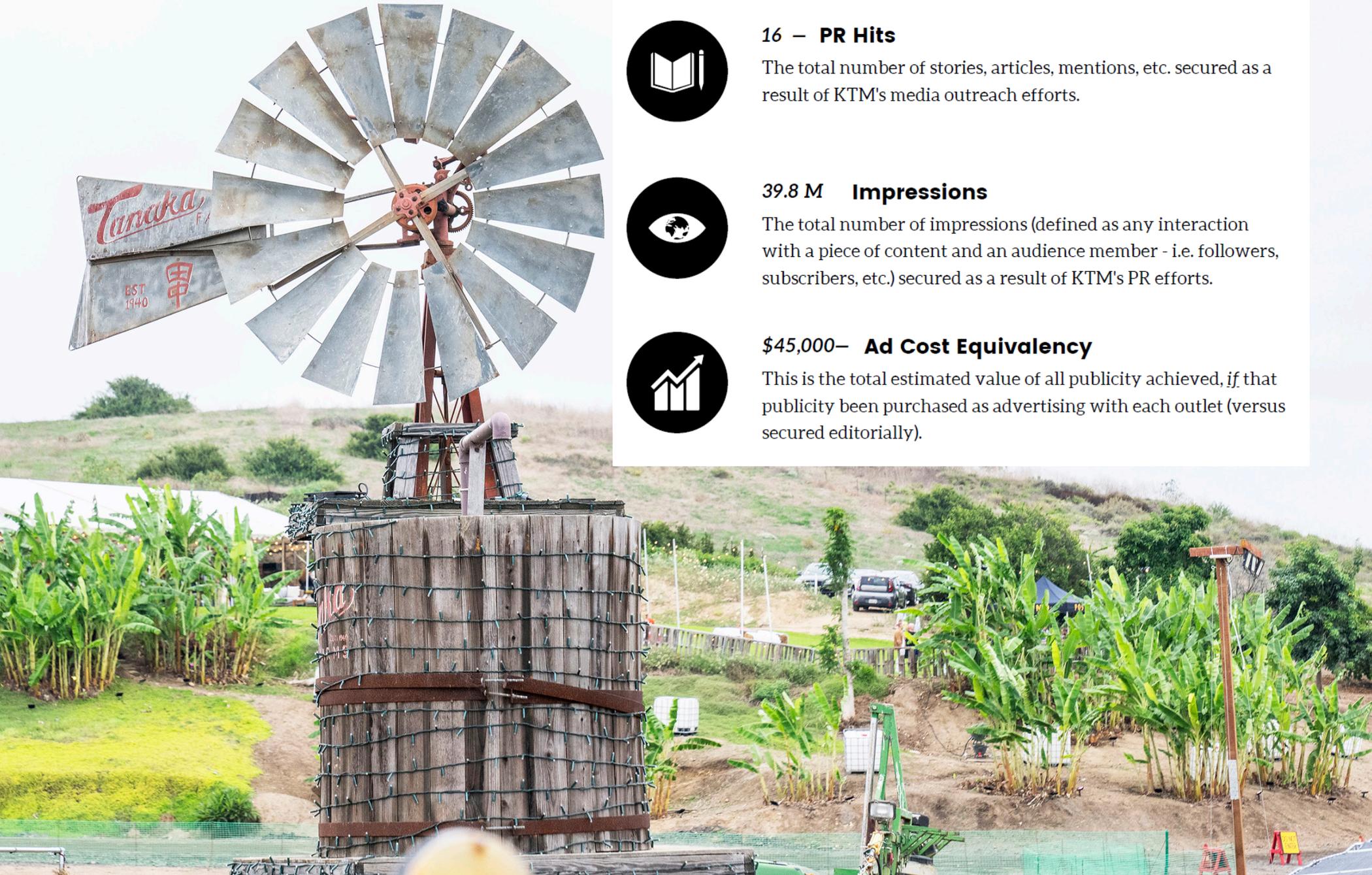
39.8 M Impressions

The total number of impressions (defined as any interaction with a piece of content and an audience member - i.e. followers, subscribers, etc.) secured as a result of KTM's PR efforts.



\$45,000– Ad Cost Equivalency

This is the total estimated value of all publicity achieved, *if* that publicity been purchased as advertising with each outlet (versus secured editorially).





2023 Farm Walk PR Hits

MEDIA OUTLET	TOTAL HITS	CIRCULATION/UVPM	IMPRESSIONS
Riviera OC Magazine (print)	2	42,302	84,604
Daily Pilot (online)	1	13,343,250	13,343,250
Daily Pilot (print)	1	30,000	30,000
Epoch Times (online)	2	11,000,000	22,000,000
Epoch Times (print)	1	400,000	400,000
EventCrazy	1	55,470	55,470
My City Scene	1	2,400	2,400
OC Register (online)	2	1,300,317	2,600,634
OC Register (print)	2	160,919	321,838
Patch.com	1	500,000	500,000
Scene Think	1	14,580	14,580
Yelp	1	500,000	500,000
TOTAL HITS:	16	TOTAL IMPRESSIONS:	39,852,776



2023 App-Off PR and Marketing Results



17 - PR Hits

The total number of stories, articles, mentions, etc. secured as a result of KTM's media outreach efforts.



79.7M Impressions

The total number of impressions (defined as any interaction with a piece of content and an audience member - i.e. followers, subscribers, etc.) secured as a result of KTM's PR efforts.



\$48,500 - Ad Cost Equivalency

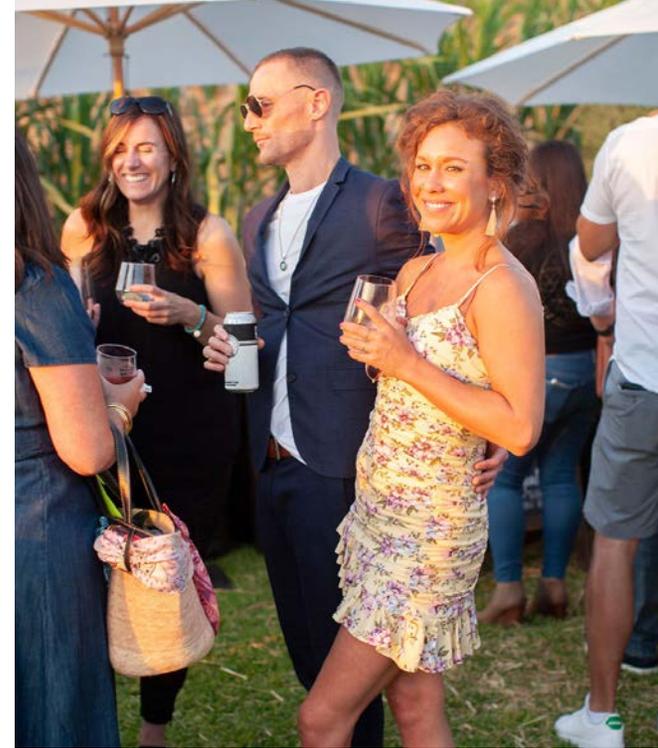
This is the total estimated value of all publicity achieved, *if* that publicity had been purchased as advertising with each outlet (versus secured editorially).





2023 App-Off PR Hits

MEDIA OUTLET	TOTAL HITS	CIRCULATION/UVPM	IMPRESSIONS
EventCrazy	2	55,470	110,940
Fox 11 News / Good Day LA (TV)	1	4,300,000	4,300,000
My City Scene	2	2,400	4,800
Patch.com	2	500,000	1,000,000
Riviera OC (print)	1	42,302	42,302
San Diego Union Tribune (online)	1	52,000,000	52,000,000
San Diego Union Tribune (print)	1	7,825,000	7,825,000
Scene Think	2	14,580	29,160
SparkOC	1	1,560	1,560
Times OC (online)	1	13,343,250	13,343,250
Times OC (print)	1	30,000	30,000
Yelp	2	500,000	1,000,000
TOTAL HITS:	17	TOTAL IMPRESSIONS:	79,687,012



Contact Information

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