

Closing the Year Together: Gratitude, Purpose, and What Comes Next



Dear Friends of The Vines Foundation,

As we come to the close of this year, I find myself reflecting not only on what we accomplished, but on how we accomplished it—together.

This past year has been one of intention and momentum. We deepened our work in education, community wellbeing, and vocational training, while also laying the groundwork for what will become one of the Foundation's most important initiatives: the future Community Center. Each step forward has been guided by listening, learning, and building alongside the Tunuyán community.

From the graduation of our vocational students, to the research completed in partnership with the University of Notre Dame, to the everyday moments shared in our community dining centers, this year reminded us that impact is built through both long-term vision and meaningful human connection. Progress is found not only in plans and programs, but in people—showing up, creating together, and imagining what's possible.

None of this work would exist without the trust, generosity, and commitment of our supporters, partners, and community members. Your belief allows us to think bigger, act more thoughtfully, and remain grounded in the values that define The Vines Foundation.

As we look ahead to the coming year, we do so with clarity and hope. The foundation we've built together gives us confidence in what's next—and in our shared ability to continue creating opportunities, strengthening community ties, and supporting sustainable growth in the Uco Valley.

Thank you for being part of this journey, and for closing this year with us in gratitude and purpose.

Carolyn Gallagher
Executive Director

The Power of Words



To close out the year, the five community dining centers supported by The Vines Foundation became spaces of creativity, reflection, and shared celebration. Over the past week, children participated in Christmas workshops led by Laura Martorell, where art became a way to express ideas, emotions, and hopes for the season ahead.

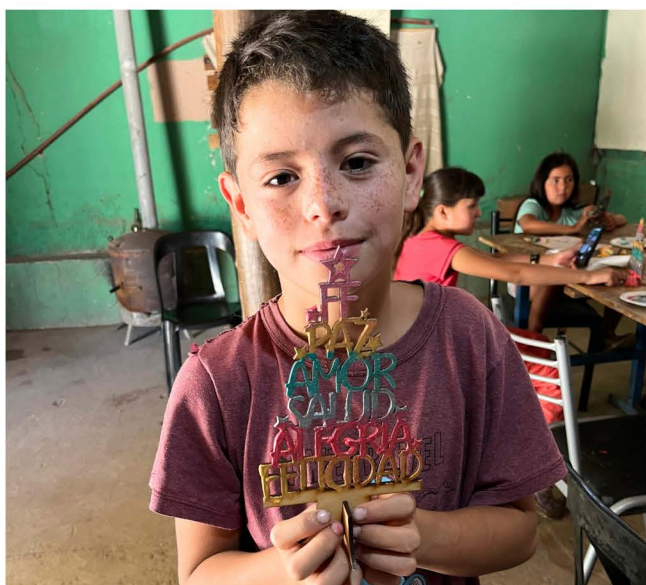
Each child received a wooden tree to paint freely. What began as a simple creative activity quickly evolved into something more meaningful.

This year, the trees took on a new form: a holiday tree built entirely from words chosen by the children themselves—words that reflected what they value, how they feel, and what they imagine for their future.

Under Laura's thoughtful coordination, the workshops offered more than a festive moment. They created space for children to be heard, to explore their creativity, and to see their voices take shape through color and language.



We were also joined by Carolyn Gallagher, Executive Director, and Emily Monaghan, Board Chair, who shared in the painting, conversations, and laughter—reinforcing the idea that community grows stronger when we show up together.



As we close the year, these moments remind us that community is built not only through long-term projects, but also through shared experiences that foster joy, care, and connection. We are grateful to everyone who makes this work possible and wish our community a season filled with warmth, creativity, and moments that truly matter.

Vocational Training: Turning Learning into Opportunity



A moment of recognition: Carolyn Gallagher presenting a diploma to a graduate of the Housekeeping Course.

This year, 47 students graduated from The Vines Foundation's vocational programs—each one representing a tangible step toward greater independence and opportunity.

Certificates were awarded during a formal ceremony at the Tunuyán Convention and Exhibition Center, marking the completion of a program that continues to grow and expand access to sustainable employment in the region.

Launched in 2024 through a collaborative effort between the Municipality of Tunuyán, The Vines Foundation, and IES 9-015 Valle de Uco, the Vocational School was further strengthened in 2025 with the addition of local partners Piedra Negra and La Morada, expanding its reach and impact.



This year's graduates completed training in Housekeeping, Forklift Operation, and Front Desk—three programs specifically designed to respond to real workforce needs in the Uco Valley, particularly in tourism, hospitality, logistics, and service industries.



Tunuyán Mayor Emir Andraos addresses the graduates alongside Carolyn Gallagher and partner representatives from La Morada and Piedra Negra.



Beyond the numbers, what stands out most are the individual stories: people gaining skills, building confidence, and opening new professional paths. The Vocational School is a clear example of how public-private collaboration and social investment can create long-term opportunities and meaningful change within the community.

Building the Foundations of What Comes Next



Carolyn Gallagher, Emily Monaghan, and Michael Evans during a meeting with the student team.

This year marked an important milestone in the development of our future Community Center with the completion of the research project led by the University of Notre Dame Capstone Team—the fifth cohort to collaborate with The Vines Foundation since 2021.

Throughout the semester, the team worked closely with the Foundation, local partners, and members of the Tunuyán community to understand local realities, employment needs, and vocational models. Their research focused on how to design a vocational school that is practical, accessible, and deeply rooted in the community it serves.

Key insights from this work highlighted the importance of flexible training schedules, clearer pathways into hospitality and service-sector employment, and the integration of technical training with essential soft skills such as communication, professionalism, and confidence. These findings are now helping shape a holistic and sustainable model for the Community Center.

This research phase represents a critical step forward in our most ambitious project to date—ensuring the Community Center is built on listening, collaboration, and long-term impact.

Capstone Team: Camila Bergoglio, Clayton Chauncey, María del Rosario, Martina Ponce, Joe Ricotta, María Rodríguez

Advisors: Steve Reifenberg, TJ D’Agostino



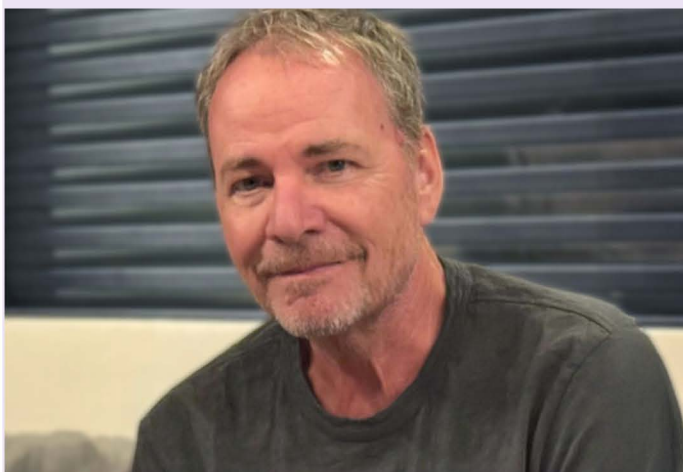
Notre Dame students Clay Chauncey, Martina Ponce, María Del Rosario, Camila Bergoglio, María Rodríguez, and Joe Ricotta — together with Emily Monaghan and Art Monaghan

We are deeply grateful to the students and faculty for their dedication, time, and care, and to everyone who continues to support this vision. Together, we are laying the foundations for a Community Center created with—and for—the Tunuyán community.



The final meeting, where students presented their work alongside their advisor Steve Reifenberg

A Conversation Shaped by Shared Work



Some moments don't call for a recap — they call for reflection.

This year, The Vines reached an important threshold, and the Foundation continued to deepen its work on the ground in Tunuyán. Between conversations, shared workdays, and time spent together during Vinesapalooza, it became clear that the story is no longer about beginnings, but about direction.

That made it the right moment to sit down with Michael Evans, Founder of The Vines and CEO of The Vines Foundation. Not to restate milestones already known, but to reflect on what has been learned, what is working, and what needs to be strengthened as we move forward.

In this conversation, Michael reflects on community, consistency, and long-term commitment — from the Foundation's first five years to the importance of creating real opportunities through projects like the Community Center. His words help frame where we are today, and how we continue building with care, intention, and shared purpose.

◆ *This year, The Vines marked 20 years with a celebration that brought friends and family from many places together. What did that gathering mean to you beyond the celebration itself?*

Having so many owners, investors, friends, and family come together from all over the world. That's what stayed with me. A sense of completion, in the best way. Hitting 20 years is a real testament to the team and the community we've built together. But it also felt like a beginning. We have a lot of work left to do, especially through the Foundation. The opportunity is big. We can help strengthen this community in a way that lasts. I've been overwhelmed by the generosity from everyone backing the Foundation with real commitment. Now we turn that into measurable outcomes in 2026.

◆ *The Vines Foundation is also marking five years of work. When you look back on that journey, what feels most meaningful to you from a human perspective?*

Five years taught us what works. Families keep coming back. Partners keep leaning in. The team shows up with care and consistency. We've seen the wins: a kid staying in school, a young person trained and working, a family getting support at the right moment. Now we use what we've learned to do a lot more. The foundation is there. The trust is there. The support is there. Time to scale what's working and reach more families in 2026 and beyond.

◆ ***After years of working closely with the Tunuyán community, what lessons or insights have stayed with you the most?***

Listen first. Stay consistent. Quick fixes don't last. Relationships do. Dignity has to be built into everything. How we welcome people, how we design programs, how we follow through. When people feel respected, they engage. When they engage, things change. Good intentions aren't enough. Programs need clear goals, steady execution, honest measurement. We keep building with local leaders and families, adjusting based on what we learn.

“When people feel respected, they engage. When they engage, things change.”

◆ ***The Community Center represents the Foundation’s most ambitious project to date. Why is this space so important for the future of the community?***

Real jobs. Stability. For people and for the community. When you have a real space, you can run training every week, create safe after-school options, bring services together. But more than programs, it's employment. It's careers. It's people building lives they can count on. This is our most ambitious project because it's the platform for everything next. A long-term commitment that says we're here, we're in this with you.

◆ ***As the year comes to a close, what gives you the most hope about the path ahead—for the Foundation and for the community we’re building together?***

The circle is widening. More people involved, more partners stepping up, real momentum without losing heart. I see young people in Tunuyán who want opportunity and will work for it when the path is clear. Our job is to keep that path practical and real. Grateful for the owners, friends, and guests supporting the Foundation. Not charity. Shared commitment to this place and its people. Stable funding, clear priorities for 2026, honest measurement. Keep getting better.



“I see young people in Tunuyán who want opportunity and will work for it when the path is clear. Our job is to keep that path practical and real..”

Closing the Year with Gratitude

2025 leaves us with a deep sense of progress shaped by care, consistency, and community.

Before the year closes, we'd like to share one final update. We are \$16,214 away from reaching our \$250,000 annual goal, which directly supports the Foundation's programs and the work happening on the ground.

This is a meaningful moment to help us reach our annual goal. Every contribution and every shared message helps move the work forward.

[Donate Now](#)

Thank you for walking alongside us, for reading, sharing, asking questions, and supporting the work as it unfolds. None of this happens in isolation — it moves forward because of a community that cares and stays engaged.

As we look ahead, we wish you a healthy, hopeful, and fulfilling 2026
THANK YOU!!

We invite you to follow our work and help amplify it. Every shared voice helps strengthen lives in the Uco Valley.

Let's grow this movement.

Thank YOU!

