



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Wednesday, February 15, 2023, 5:00 PM to 7:30 PM

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/613973795>, Meeting ID: 613 973 795

REGULAR SESSION DRAFT AGENDA

- 5:00 1. CLOSED SESSION**
- 5:50 2. Adjourn Closed Session**
- 5:50 3. Call to Order/Establish Quorum**
- 5:50 4. Agenda Review (5 min)**
- 5:55 5. Announcements/Program Updates (10 min)**
- 6:05 6. *CONSENT AGENDA – Action Items (5 min)**
**In approving the consent agenda, the Board is approving recommendations within each committee’s minutes listed below.*
6.1 Draft Minutes of the January 18, 2023 Board of Directors Meeting
6.2 Draft Minutes of the February 8, 2023 Governance Committee Meeting
6.3 Draft Minutes of the February 8, 2023 Finance Committee Meeting
- 6:10 7. Receive comments from members of the public on “Items not on the Agenda” (5 min)**
- 6:15 8. BOD Chair Report – Jack Jacobson (5 min)**
- 6:20 9. CEO Report – Ray Cancino (10 min)**
- 6:30 10. Extended Case Management for Elderday (20 min)**
- 6:50 11. Development Report–Tony Nunez/ Anna Vaage (15 min)**
- 7:05 12. Finance Committee Update – Doug Underhill (15 min)**
- 7:20 13. Newspaper Articles**
- 7:20 14. Items for Next Agenda (10 min)**
- 7:30 15. Adjourn Regular Meeting**

Next Meeting: *Wednesday, March 15, 2023, 5 pm - 7:30 pm, Meeting Location TBD – Zoom will be offered.*



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Wednesday, January 18, 2023, 5:00 PM to 7:30 PM

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/613973795>, Meeting ID: 613 973 795

Present: Ray Cancino, Jack Jacobson, Silvia Morales, Ryan Friedrich, Mary McMillan, Seth McGibben, Tyler Smith, Doug Underhill, Sara Siegel, Steph Ruhl (5:11pm), Brenda Griffin (5:46pm), Jesus Bojorquez, Anna Vaage, Mayra Melendrez, Lisa Hindman Holbert, Tony Nunez, Lois Sones, Dana Wagner

Minutes: Mary Mackenzie

Public: Jeffrey Arlt

REGULAR SESSION DRAFT MINUTES

5:00 1. CLOSED SESSION

6:00 2. Adjourn Closed Session

6:03 3. Call to Order/Establish Quorum
Quorum

6:00 4. Agenda Review

6:12 5. Announcements/Program Updates
None

6:12 6. *CONSENT AGENDA – *Action Items*

**In approving the consent agenda, the Board is approving recommendations within each committee's minutes listed below.*

6.1 Draft Minutes of the November 9, 2022 Board of Directors Meeting

6.2 Draft Minutes of the December 14, 2022 Governance Committee Meeting

6.3 Draft Minutes of the January 11, 2023 Governance Committee Meeting

6.4 Draft Minutes of the December 14, 2022 Finance/Audit Committee Meeting

6.4a **MOTION to approve the Audit. Motion moved by Silvia/Sara. MSP.**

6.5 Draft Minutes of the January 11, 2023 Finance Committee Meeting

6.5a **Motion: Approve staff recommendation to add a second \$200k payment to pay off the Owner Carry Note and purchase a truck (approx. 75k) for LL Maintenance. Motion moved by Jack/Mary, MSP.**

6.5b **Motion to Recommend: We recommend that the staff recommend a policy change to be considered at the next board meeting that would allow CEO to do appropriate purchasing in order to spend down contracts where funds are at risk. Motion moved by Mary/Jack, MSP.**

6.5c Motion to roll expiring 375K 3-month t-bill to 12 month t-bill. Motion Moved by Jack/Mary, MSP.

6.6 Action Item: Approve appointing site supervisors as facility designees

6.7 Action Item: Designate the Site Supervisors/Program Managers as agency representatives with Community Care Licensing

Motion to approve consent agenda. Motion moved by Mary/Jack, MSP.

6:11 7. Receive comments from members of the public on “Items not on the Agenda”

Jeffrey Arlt is looking for a CBO to run a non-violent mental health crisis program, it would cost \$1.3M for the first year. Mental health advisory board, Elise Hemple Padaluma, SC Council for justice, and all of chiefs are in favor, Watsonville and Santa Cruz have discussed this proposal. Have you reached out to other CBOs, yes reached out. Economics of it makes sense for Nonprofit CBO and there is funding available. This would be a 24/7 operation. Definitely believe in the service, however, it comes down to economics, and getting the staff. CB would want to have the right trained personnel.

6:11 8. BOD Chair Report – Jack Jacobson

None

6:14 9. CEO Report – Ray Cancino

Want to take a minute to appreciate all of the efforts for the Winter Storms. Also, the unsung heroes in HR and Fiscal for changing the payroll system. CB received a personal message from Jimmy Panetta. CB is helping a lot of people, but it is very sad situation. Floods impacted all three of senior communities in Watsonville. The FRCs have stepped up to fill the gap.

9.1 EED – Lisa Hindman Holbert

Licensing has revamped onsite visiting schedule using new tools and has a plan of correction. Increasing paperwork pieces. PD invites a board member(s) to be involved in the PSE. PD showed a picture of staff. Silvia Morales and Breda Griffin have agreed to be involved in the program and with the PSE.

What would the board like to have PD discuss next session she attends? Maybe TK, and UPK for next meeting with EED. What are the numbers? There are 70 children enrolled right now. Also HP has given 6 tours. There is a high need for infant toddler.

9.2 LL – Jesus Bojorquez

See Presentation pdf. Board feedback: Way to keep crushing it. And thanks for providing transportation during the winter storms. We’ve had so much improvement in LL services with Elderday and wants to thank PD and LL. CFO added that the number of rides for Q1 is 13,058 Rides.

9.3 CACFP – Erika Rodriguez

Moved to next Meeting

6:46 10. Winter Storm Recovery Update

CB is in the recovery session with Community Foundation and CAB and is helping with financial assistance referral, FEMA Process, and to provide community wide zoom. Onsite

FEMA application support, also moving forward with lending service – house remediation program. Large americorps group has been coordinating with.

6:48 10. Board/Staff Retreat

The Board Retreat will be on March 24, 2023 at RCNV. The Retreat subcommittee and facilitators are working on the agenda. Mary Hillard and Amari Thomas will be facilitating the retreat.

6:51 11. Development Report–Tony Nunez/ Anna Vaage

11.1 Donation Progress Report – Anna

In reviewing donations through holiday season, CB has ended last fiscal year very strong. \$923,954. The first six months into the current fiscal year, the outlook is not as positive: 14% down from previous year. CB has raised \$522,725 in the first 6 months of this FY. Mountain Affair was 25% lower than the previous year. Will Elderday relocation have fundraising opportunities? Yes, we will bring those forward again to promote the grand opening. Driscolls has offered to support outdoor patio area. Marketing and Communications manager is going to reach out to program directors by the end of this week to set up dates with photographer, EED, Elderday, and photos of new location.

11.2 Upcoming Events (Food from the Heart)

Skipped

6:57 12. Finance Committee Update – Doug Underhill

A lot has been going on in Fiscal world. Fiscal did successfully complete the audit. No findings once again this year. The major programs audited this year were CACFP, ERAP and EED which is audited each year. Programmatic things – are you certifying things correcting, etc. This is a really big deal. Fiscal is helping to implement the new payroll system. It's going to streamline the onboarding process and create efficiencies in fiscal processes. There are healthy reserve numbers for the period ending Nov 30. CB broke ground on the Elderday property. CCAH gave CB a \$2.5M grant, of which \$2.25M was paid out as an advance. There is continued net asset gains. Trying to provide breathing room for Elderday. The ADA is low as it is on a statewide level. EED saw a large contract increase: \$427k. Large increase in cash and cash equivalence due to Elderday payment. Investments have gone down, but have seen bump up in the last two months. CB is extremely fiscally sound at the moment. Measure D reserves will be used to pay down the owner carry note on the Ohlone property. Feedback: Sounds like we're doing great.

7:04 13. Newspaper Articles

7:04 14. Items for Next Agenda

7:05 15. Adjourn Regular Meeting

Next Meeting: *Wednesday, February 15, 2023, 5 pm - 7:30 pm, Meeting Location TBD – Zoom will be offered.*



Governance Committee Meeting

Wednesday, February 8, 2023, 6-7 pm

Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/326410777>

Meeting ID: 326 410 777

Present: Jack Jacobson, Sara Siegel, Silvia Morales, Ray Cancino, Doug Underhill, Tony Nunez (6:11)

Minutes: Mary Mackenzie

REGULAR SESSION DRAFT MINUTES

6:00 1. Meeting to order/Establish Quorum

6:00 2. Closed Session

6:16 3. Consent Agenda (3 min)

a) *1/11/23 Regular Session Draft Minutes*

Motion to move minutes as written Silvia/Sara, msp

6:16 4. Agenda Review (2 min)

There was an additional protest on Tuesday at MCR. CB is working with the unhoused population to make sure they're safe and not camping on our property.

6:17 5. Board Retreat Next Steps (10 min)

Silvia, Mary and Steph will be meeting with Amari to finalize the agenda. Amari Thomas will be checking in with the Board members. Please expect either Amari or Mary Hiland to reach out to you prior to the retreat.

6:18 6. CB Strategic Plan (10 min)

In terms of getting board members' input, we're trying to wrap that into the Board Retreat. CB is working on how we get Board input into CB strategic plan, is going to be wrapped in through the back end of the process. CEO is asking Amari for help with finishing up the CB strategic plan. This round the firm that CB was using felt the focus needed to be on staff, but now we're trying to go back and increase Board involvement. It was like 50,000 foot level. Still final approval from the board. CB is hoping Mary or Amari would help us use the board retreat to do some linkages.

6:24 7. Items for next GC Agenda/BOD Agenda (5 min)

6:25 8. Adjourn

Next Meeting: March 8, 2023, 6-7 pm

Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/326410777>,

or call +1 669 900 6833

Meeting ID: 326 410 777



Finance Committee

Wednesday, February 8, 2023, 5:00-6:00 PM

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/326410777>

Zoom Meeting ID: 326-410-777

Santa Cruz County, CA

Present: Lisa Berkowitz, Jack Jacobson, Ray Cancino, Doug Underhill, Mary McMillan, Steph Ruhl, Alma Molina, Lisa HH

Minutes: Mary Mackenzie

DRAFT MINUTES

5:06 Agenda Review

5:06 CFO Report – Doug Underhill

a) Department updates and announcements

1. Paycom payroll system transition

CB has migrated from ADP to PayCom, which is going to create efficiencies in HR and fiscal.

2. Fiscal Staffing – New Grants Analyst 2/20/2023

Fiscal has had a grants analyst position open for over a year which puts a couple programs onto the CFO, CFO is happy to announce that he hired a fourth GA starting on the 20th of this month.

3. Lift Line Principal Payment- Owner Carry note paid in full

CB has made the \$400k payment, which paid off the Owner Carry Note, therefore LL has stopped paying interest on it.

4. New Funding: Comcast \$25K, CFMC \$30K, CFSC \$30K, DHCS PATH-CITED ECM funding \$469K

CB has received a \$25k donation from Comcast, ear marked for emergency response but given to the agency unrestricted. CB has been awarded a PATH-CITED grant from the California Department of Health in the amount of \$469K to build out ECM services infrastructure. Elderday has a contract in place with CCAH to provide ECM services. It will take a bit to set up the program and get it going. This is huge for Elderday. The grant spans over an 18 mo. time period. Once personnel is in place, CB can begin billing immediately. Elderday is working on hiring a couple of social workers, etc.

b) Dec 31st 2022 Program Budget Summary

WIC – Not a lot of movement, which is common in the first few months of the fiscal year. The program usually starts off in a slight deficit due to parking permits. WIC is about to do a budget amendment.

EED – Has the same challenges and has a projected \$28k loss this fiscal year. Fiscal has removed some projected new children who haven't materialized.

Elderday – In a challenging situation with an ADA of 48 for January. Elderday has a projected loss of \$302k. Elderday needs to get ECM revenues going in order to fight back so they can get closer to the break even point.

MOW – At beginning of the year needed prior year funding, however, program is in great shape right now and has seen some strong donations and is projected positive for the year.

LL – There has been minimal change and LL is projecting a gain. LL has been using taxis more and has hired a couple new drivers in the last month. A lot of these taxis are after hours (4:30pm-7:00pm). CB knows that once LL is done paying off the building, they are going to have 2 more drivers. Rides are approaching pre-covid levels, but are very ties to Elderday ADA, which is not yet to pre-COVID levels.

FRCs – In aggregate the four FRC's are even on the year. Trying to give the budgets enough money for this year, and at the same time push every dollar possible to next year. CB knows CORE will not be there along with ERAP, HRSA and other one time funding. CB has some major grants for next year, including Packard and 1440 foundation but still has a budgetary gap.

CACFP – Just started their new fiscal year, entrance review (audit) has been conducted, the state will conduct a fiscal review and programmatic review in March. The program is now administered by CDSS.

Admin – Admin is positive for the year. Admin was one of the programs that needed prior year funds from last year. Some of the reason it is in the positive is that there have been vacancies and a lot has been new revenue brought in and grantee allocated.

Dev. has a projected loss of \$35.6k, but it is a bit of a moving target.

LOCC had been seeing drops, but now is showing gains (this is from Dec. 31).

501 Main – Big change due to a +\$590K budget amendment. Reserves were moved down from Elderday to 501 Main. Elderday is down \$126k in net reserves. The other expense was \$43k asbestos abatement.

c) Investments and Funds – Jan 31, 2023

Burrows – increases – through 1/31/23. Low was \$425K, it is now back to \$475K.

T-Bills – Expiration Date and Costs. The first three month expired, 4k gain from it.

Unrealized gain is 10,759 for the others. If we didn't do any reinvestments we will see a gain of 49.7k from the investments.

5:30 Elderday 501 Main, ADA and ECM services

Elderday has a 41 ADA but needs a 70-71 ADA to balance the budget. ADA for the year down to 51. The projected loss has been somewhat mitigated by relationship we've developed with Kaiser. They've given us a \$150k for this year, and commitment for \$100k for next year. There is a need to get the ADA back into the 60s, next year we can stabilize, and once they're in the new property it should be better. We have 25% of our social workers, and 1 person is going from 40 to 30 hours.

5:40 Meals on Wheels LOI

For 541 Ocean St. We presented a few different scenarios. Offering a tiered value in terms of how much he's willing to finance. Option 1: \$2.155M to purchase the building. We have to put 30% down for loan, about \$750-800k. Option 2: Owner finance property Buyer provide 20% down, secured by the subject property with 5% interest for 25 years. Offer him a \$450.00/sq ft. Option 3: seller shall carry \$1M, secured with 4.75% interest for 5 years as the secondary financing at \$450.00 per sq. ft. Allows us not to have to put as much down.

MOW PD: Ocean – the owner does not live in SC, lives out of town. It would not be in a good position if he doesn't want his employees to sell building and sell business. If they do accept letter of intent, we're looking forward to a thorough discovery process. Trying to find out more about the easement beside the building that is owned by the city of SC. Working with Charlie Eadie – to find out about any restrictions re: graveling it so we can use it for other purposes.

Water St – The owner did call and said that he needed to move forward with other opportunities for the building.

5:45 Early Education Division Surplus and HP Projections and Enrollment

There is a lot of excess funding in EED. A lot of that is due to a +\$427k contract increase on Jan 1, 2023. Right now there are two major lines where EED is accumulating unspent revenues: classroom/supply lines and fixed assets. Absent any new hires there is \$750k that needs to be spent out. We need to have a plan to spend as much as possible. EED is showing a major surplus on subsidized side, but projecting a loss due to Private Pay side. HP is running barebones and running \$250k in expenses and is currently projected at \$202k in revenues. There is \$124k that needs to be made up in enrollment to operate break even.

Communications piece has been moving forward, TV, flyers, outreach. Purchases of Public announcements, etc. There are some needed large capital expenditures, EED received a complaint at VV because one of our play areas didn't have a gate next to it. The claim was changed from a violation to a warning or acknowledgement. EED needs to buy a new playground.

EED PD: EED had a licensing complaint regarding a ladder. This type of violation is a serious violation, and requires a letter to all families enrolled, and a disclosure to all potential families. This may be enough to bring forward to CDE through an emergency repair. The playground will have shade attached. Licensing has been out 3 times on this issue. The annual unannounced visit yesterday and was 7 hours. EED had no citations. Each site has prepared a list of what they need, new floors, HVAC, child sized

sinks, etc. We also have a lot more classroom supplies that need to be purchased and will be revamping all of the programs.

HP – PD has hired a new site supervisor. HP was closed to two additional weeks in the mountains due to the storms. EED has conducted 10 tours of HP in the last few weeks. The people who are walking through the doors are really needing it. 1000 additional funded child slots for alternative funding are being provided from the County of Santa Cruz next year. Reach out to County of SC through CAL Works to support families. Offered a position for a lead teacher in RM and she has accepted the positions, so will be able to reopen the doors there soon. EED is advertising through Growing up in Santa Cruz in two publications, and will be up on the website for a year. The State has adjusted the rates upwards for the state funded sites.

5:55 Questions and Items for next Agenda

6:00 Adjourn

Next Meeting March 8th, 2023

COMMUNITY BRIDGES Program Budget Summary December 31, 2022											
Projections for Year Ending 6-30-2023											
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	J	K
PROGRAM NAME:	6/30/22 Unaudited Balance	Annual 22/23 Approved Budget	Current Projected Expenses	Current Projected Revenues	As Yet Unsecured Revenues	(E-D) Net 2022-2023 Gain/Loss	(B+G) Cumulative Gain/Loss	Goal 25% Reserve %	Change from Prior Mo	% Change	14.53% Gen'l & Adm Exp
WIC (CB FY)	206,645	2,620,475	2,646,598	2,645,284	0	(1,314)	205,331	7.8%	(7)	0.0%	394,214
Early Education Division	500,512	2,344,980	2,787,542	2,759,401	300,000	(28,141)	472,371	17.0%	3,557	0.1%	342,796
Elderday	176,504	2,043,432	2,062,445	1,759,805	439,951	(302,640)	(126,136)	-6.1%	(55,971)	-2.7%	283,037
Meals on Wheels	1,449,078	2,856,854	2,493,798	2,577,098	618,921	83,300	1,532,378	64.0%	(21,893)	-0.9%	351,563
Lift Line	(86,780)	2,807,659	2,982,149	3,002,871	220,000	20,722	(66,058)	-2.5%	(1,476)	0.0%	295,670
La Manzana Commty Res	328,607	1,135,721	1,577,609	1,584,912	150,000	7,303	335,910	21.5%	(12,092)	-0.8%	223,444
Mountain Commty Res	377,584	674,721	988,012	974,176	75,800	(13,836)	363,748	37.2%	(515)	-0.1%	81,824
Nueva Vista Commty Res	337,237	354,910	467,275	471,146	65,000	3,871	341,108	73.7%	(417)	-0.1%	66,972
Live Oak Commty Res	194,821	308,834	443,622	446,952	98,000	3,330	198,151	44.7%	25,189	5.7%	63,534
CACFP (CB FY)	65,606	4,233,196	4,011,270	4,048,628	40,000	37,358	102,964	11.2%	(9,898)	-0.2%	67,619
Administration	67,026	2,283,002	2,308,066	2,361,620	234,450	53,554	120,580	5.2%	(10,196)	-0.4%	16,064
Philanthropy	460,561	338,535	345,077	309,380	229,059	(35,697)	424,864	123.1%	7,251	2.1%	50,144
TOTAL PROG OPERATIONS	4,213,302	22,002,319	23,113,463	22,941,273	2,471,181	(172,190)	3,905,210	20.90%	(76,468)	-0.3%	2,236,881
LOCR-Capital Campaign	445,746	-	25,000	11,271	0	(13,729)	432,017	NA	12,424		0
CBHQ FY 20/21 Activity	-	-	153,724	150,355	0	(3,369)	(3,369)	NA	(589)		0
501 Main Street	500,598	-	3,588,598	3,088,000	0	(500,598)	-	NA	(262,233)		14,184
Fixed Assets & Gen'l Agy	4,157,435	-	1,780	564	0	(1,216)	4,156,219	NA	20,533		0
TOTAL AGENCY	9,317,081	22,002,319	26,882,565	26,191,463	2,471,181	(691,102)	8,490,077	20.90%	(306,333)	-1.1%	2,251,065

Fixed Asset purchases and Pass-Thru expenses exempt from Indirect; Revenues and Expenses include all pass-through

*582K of Prior Year Funds were in approved BOD budget for programs: 188K ELD, 54K Admin, 340K MOW

*Below the line 501 Main expenditures will turn into capitalized fixed assets and will affect -Cash-Flow / +Net assets in terms of neutral financial gain/loss

*501 Main projected expenses do not include a \$322,309 10% contingency in the budget - this contingency is unfunded by program funds at this time

**Program Budget Summary
December 31, 2022**

PROGRAM NAME:

WIC	Minimal Changes, Some EE's on LOA's, Potential New Hire LT's
Early Education Division	Subsidized expenditures 793K of 2.5M for first 6 months, 32%. Private showing 32K projected loss. Decreased Indirect.
Elderday	Health related closure in Dec, 36 ADA Jan, Projecting 50 ADA Feb - Jun
Meals on Wheels	-76K projected donations, +32K OTO AAA funding, -8K Raw Food, -11K Personnel
Lift Line	Paying off owner ccarry not 545 Ohlone (400K), 75K vehicle exp added, +TDA rev \$93K, Increased Taxi
La Manzana CR	+15K PVHT Rev, +20K Personnel, +30K CF Emergency Services Grant
MCR	+7500 Dudley rev, -26K First 5 rev (personnel), -18K personnel (Advocate term)
Nueva Vista CR	+3.5K Personnel, +3K (utilities and phone), minimal other changes
Live Oak CR	+28K first 5 (from MCR), +2K personnel: Total FRC roll-up +2K, Need new hire Clinical Supervisor
CACFP	Oct DCH Count = 378, Projected Nov = 371 (less migrant homes), slight Increase personnel
Administration	Increased personnel costs (Overlap of Facilities), +Contract Services (Fiscal), Increased agreeegate G.A. from programs
Philanthropy	Solid donations in Dec., 111K through Dec 31, projecting 78K additoinal this FY
LOCR-Cap Campaign	Actual YTD less proj FY 22/23 expenses, 12/31/2022 \$457,017
La Manzana Property	Actual Revenue/Expense through 12/31/2022
501 Main Street	+634K (60K contingency) 501 Main Renovation Budget, Shifted 300K in reserves from ELD
FAs & Agy Unrestr.	Actual YTD less projected FY 22/23 expenses, Endowment Balance 12/31/2022 \$696,425
Total Agency	Total Programs -172K, Total Agency -691K, BOD aproved budget -582K



Chief executive officer of Community Bridges, Ray Cancico, heads up a flood recovery information session Thursday at the Pajaro Village Community Room in Watsonville. —Tarmo Hannula/The Pajaronian

Featured News Local News

Meetings educate public on insurance, resources after floods

By: TODD GUILD January 13, 2023

3 374

WATSONVILLE—When filing an insurance claim for damage incurred during the recent storms, property owners are advised never to use the word “flood.”

Insurance companies—driven by profit and therefore disinclined to part with their money—typically categorically deny claims for flood damage. That was among the advice dispensed at a public session in Watsonville Thursday afternoon sponsored by Community Bridges.

Amy Bach of United Policyholders—an advocacy group for the public—says that instead, storm victims should adjust their language to a cause that is covered by insurance. This can include describing a hole caused by a branch torn loose by heavy wind that let in water. Or say that wind-driven rain made entry into one’s house.

The session was one of [two public meetings](#) the organization held on Thursday. An additional one will be today at the Mountain Community Resource Center in Felton at 4pm at 6134 Highway 9.

The meetings were a way to tell the public that there are many resources available Countywide, and that knowing how to speak to insurance companies is crucial to recovery, says Community Bridges spokesman Tony Nuñez.

This begins with reading and understanding one's policy before calling their insurance company, and being polite but firm with agents and adjusters.

Renters and property owners who suffered damage during the recent storms and flooding—or who find themselves in such a situation in the future—should take photos and video of the damage, Bach said.

If a claim is denied, policyholders can turn to a private adjuster or find information at fema.gov/flood-insurance.

"It's always good to get your own opinion before you give up or decide what to do," Bach says.

Also at the informational session was La Manzana Community Resources—a program of Community Bridges—which is offering help with filing claims and case management as well as cleaning supplies for people whose residences were damaged.

To see or hear video and audio recordings of the meetings, visit communitybridges.org/events.



Salsipuedes Creek burst through several spots of a levee near the intersection of Delta Way at Bronte Street in Pajaro Vista. Photo: Tarmo Hannula/The Pajaronian

Featured News Local News

Community Bridges offering free cleanup tool rental program

By: **STAFF REPORT** January 19, 2023

0 223

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY—Community Bridges is providing cleanup tools and resources at Family Resource Collective (FRC) locations, aiming to help the community recover from the floods and mudslides produced by the recent storms.

Residents can rent items such as air movers, dehumidifiers, wet/dry vacs, carpet cleaners, push brooms, and pressure washers, at no cost. Other single-use cleanup items such as contractor bags, gloves, sponges, and disinfectant are also available through support of Community Foundation Santa Cruz County, American Red Cross and Home Depot Foundation grants.

“It was critical that we responded as soon as the emergency began by purchasing items that would be likely to be sold out during the immediate days following the disaster,” said Community Bridges CEO Raymon Cancino. “Knowing that those with the means would have the resources to repair while many working families and seniors would be with no other options isn’t a reality we wanted to see. This was a necessary response to ensure equity in recovery exists.”

Items are available at the following FRCs:

- La Manzana Community Resources, 521 Main St., Ste. Y, Watsonville. Phone: 724.2997
- Live Oak Community Resources, 1740 17th Ave., Santa Cruz. Phone: 476.7284
- Mountain Community Resources, 6134 Highway 9, Felton. Phone: 335.6600

Community Bridges urges people to call the FRC they intend to visit ahead of time, to check on availability. To rent the equipment, one must fill out a damage assessment form and liability release form at the location. Equipment will need to be returned no more than one week after check out.

In an effort to expand the rental program, Community Bridges is asking the community to donate lightly used tools and new single-use items. Donations can be dropped off at any of the participating FRC locations.

News

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By Ricardo Tovar

FOLLOW

Published January 24, 2023 11:23 AM



Community Bridges hosting flood information recovery session for Monterey County residents

MONTEREY COUNTY, Calif. (KION-TV)- Community Bridges and Monterey County are hosting a virtual recovery session to help Monterey County residents impacted by the winter storms.

This online session will be hosted on Thursday, Jan. 26, at 6 p.m. The webinar will be available in English, Spanish, Mixteco and Triqui.

ADVERTISING



Monterey County Flood Recovery Info:

- Thursday, January 26 at 6 p.m.
- Zoom Link: us02web.zoom.us/j/81336522678
- Facebook (English): facebook.com/CommunityBridgesSC/live_videos
- Audio Only by phone:
 - English 669-444-9171
 - Espanol 831-313-4273
 - Mixteco 831-220-8334
 - Triqui 831-230-3399

"Attendees will hear from experts in disaster recovery, insurance claims, and Federal Emergency Management Agency assistance for individuals, families, and businesses," said Community Bridges.

Community Bridges and the County of Monterey will also host in-person information sessions in Pajaro, Salinas, Greenfield, and the Monterey Peninsula. The dates and times for these events will be posted at another time.



Caroline's Non Profit Thrift Shop volunteer Dominique Daubenbiss, left, holds a giant check with volunteer Jan Adamson for Shared Adventures Founder Foster Anderson. His organization received a \$10,000 donation from Caroline's on Sunday. —Todd Guild/The Pajaronian

Featured News Local News

Caroline's Thrift donates \$550,000 to local nonprofits

By: TODD GUILD January 25, 2023

2 169

SANTA CRUZ—In 2022, Coastal Kids Home Care provided in-home nursing care for 65 children with serious and life-threatening illnesses, work that also benefited 228 family members.

Such services are vital in Santa Cruz County, where an estimated 1,700 young people need such services, says Christine Licker, whose store Caroline's Non Profit Thrift Shop donates thousands of dollars every year to local nonprofits.

"The need here is great," says Licker. "These children are living with cancer, cystic fibrosis, muscular dystrophy and congenital conditions and others."

The 18-year-old Coastal Kids Home Care received a \$40,000 check from Caroline's on Sunday, one of 29 nonprofits that were honored in the store's annual gifting ceremony in the UC Santa Cruz Hay Barn.

To date, the 13-year-old nonprofit has donated more than \$2.8 million.

All told, Coastal Kids Home Care served 562 kids last year in Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Benito and Santa Clara counties for a total of 5,200 visits by skilled nurses, says Development Director Kelli Mullin.

The organization served Licker's daughter Caroline, who inspired her mission to provide donations to youth-serving nonprofits. Caroline died in 2007 at the age of 16.

The "Caroline Licker Therapy Room" is used by pediatric physical and occupational therapists to offer clinic-based therapy to children with developmental delays.

Mullin says the donations through the years have among other things allowed the organization to renovate a new building in Salinas, where a physical therapy room is named after Caroline.

"It's always wonderful to be the beneficiary of a donation like that, because it comes from the heart of a parent who has lived the life of the families that we serve," she said.

Licker praised the group of roughly 50 volunteers who do everything from receiving donations to renovating and selling them to making hand-crafted merchandise—the latter of which netted more than \$20,000 last year, Licker says.

"I feel really proud of what this group of people has done," she said. "The volunteers work incredibly hard to make this happen. As a mother it's a little bittersweet—it's hard because I lost my daughter, but I also think this would make her happy."

•

Other recipients

AIM Youth Mental Health—\$3,500

Big Brothers/Big Sisters—\$20,000

Building for Generations—\$3,000

Camp Kesem—\$15,000

Court Appointed Special Advocates—\$25,000

Community Bike Collective—\$5,000

Community Bridges—\$25,000

Circle Family Center—\$20,000

Dientes Community Dental Care—\$25,000

Diversity Center—\$15,000

Divine Equine—\$5,000

For Kids Monterey Bay—\$20,000

Hope's Closet—\$15,000

Hospice of Santa Cruz County—\$40,000

Jacob's Heart—\$40,000

Live Like Coco—\$10,000

Monarch Services—\$30,000

NAMI Santa Cruz County—\$20,000

Nourishing Generations—\$20,000

Pajaro Valley Shelter Services—\$20,000

Partnership for Children—\$15,000

Salud Y Carino—\$13,500

Second Harvest Food Bank—\$25,000

Shared Adventures—\$10,000

Special Parents Information Network—\$20,000

Survivor's Healing Center—\$10,000

Teen Kitchen Project—\$25,000

Walnut Avenue Family & Women's Center—\$20,000



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Central Coast nonprofits receive grants to help storm victims

Updated: 12:49 PM PST Jan 26, 2023

Infinite Scroll En



Leslie Duarte

Reporter

MONTEREY, Calif. — The Community Foundation for Monterey County (CFMC) has granted more than \$200,000 to nonprofit organizations for storm recovery. Organizations like Community Bridges, Casa de Cultura and Community Emergency Response Volunteers of the Monterey Peninsula (CERV) are among the organizations that have received grants.

The community foundation awarded CERV \$50,000 to help farm workers that lost wages during the recent storms.

Advertisement

CERV is an organization that encourages preparedness, and readiness, for emergencies and disasters. During the recent storms, CERV helped farmworkers who lost wages and jobs. With the grant money from CFMC, the organization was able to distribute checks to 168 preselected farmworkers that showed a loss of income due to the storm.

CFMC said they will continue to work with organizations helping people recover from the storms until the needs are met.

"The floodwaters have receded, but there is a need, and so the fund is open for people to make contributions so as long as they feel compelled to do so," said Daniel Baldwin, CEO of the Community Foundation for Monterey County. "But people are going to be grappling with the after-effects of this [storm] for a long time, and so the funds are going to stay active as long as we have funds."

Other organizations in line for some of the grant money include Meals on Wheels of the Monterey Peninsula, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Monterey and Wonder Wood Ranch

The Community Foundation for Monterey County is not a service organization; they raise funds, but organizations must contact the foundation to see if they qualify for the grants.

How to apply for disaster aid in Santa Cruz County

By Jesse Kathan | January 27, 2023 | Tags: City of Capitola, City of Watsonville, Felton, Flood, storms



The Pajaro River threatened some Watsonville homes this month while rain flooded others. (City of Watsonville)

WATSONVILLE >> For some Santa Cruz County residents who were evacuated during January's storms, floods and other storm damage have led to a maze of applications for federal and local aid.

"The biggest barrier, at the beginning, was just not knowing where to start," said Tony Nuñez, spokesman for the Watsonville-based nonprofit group Community Bridges.

Since the heavy rain and floods have subsided, leaders from Community Bridges and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA, have tried to guide storm victims toward aid for repairs. Some lessons from the process could help others prepare for disaster.

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Disaster victims' first step has been to photograph the damage to homes and property, then create a comprehensive list of what was damaged for any insurance company claims, said Nuñez.

Although residents can apply for FEMA assistance before or during an insurance claim, FEMA won't distribute money until the claim has been processed, said FEMA spokeswoman Tiana Suber.

Santa Cruz County residents affected by the storms can apply for money from FEMA for:

- Damage to homes, vehicles and other property.
- Rental assistance.
- Transport and storage fees.
- Child care expenses.
- Cleanup and waste disposal.
- Replacement for lost wages.

Aid workers have said there has been confusion among some South County storm victims about whether aid is available to non-citizens. FEMA assistance is available to families with at least one U.S. citizen, non-citizen national or person with "qualified alien" status. Immigrant parents and guardians of a child with citizenship can apply as a co-applicant with their child — even if the parent or guardian is not in the country legally.

Eligible residents can apply for assistance online, by phone at 1-800-621-3362, or in person at a FEMA Disaster Recovery Center. Recovery centers are open 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily at:

- Ramsay Park, 1301 Main St., Watsonville.
- Felton Branch Library, 6121 Gushee St., Felton.

Options for Spanish speakers are available online, by phone, or at disaster response centers. Interpreters for other languages are available by phone.

FEMA applications must be submitted by March 16 to be considered, Suber said.

Types of assistance

The federal government offers two main kinds of assistance: Low-interest loans administered by the Small Business Administration and direct financial assistance from FEMA that doesn't need to be paid back.

Individuals who apply for assistance first may be directed to the Small Business Administration to complete a loan application.

- Homeowners can borrow up to \$200,000 for home repair.
- Renters and homeowners can borrow up to \$40,000 to replace or repair destroyed or damaged property.
- Small businesses and nonprofits can borrow up to \$2 million to cover losses.
- Loans are paid back over a period of up to 30 years and accrue no interest for the first year.

Applicants referred to the Small Business Administration should complete the application process, even if they don't want a loan, said Suber. Applicants don't need to accept the loan to receive money or housing from FEMA.

Applicants who aren't offered a loan due to poor credit or other issues are referred to FEMA and may receive additional grants. Residents who reject the loan or don't apply for it will be eligible for fewer types of FEMA assistance.

"To get all of the federal assistance they may be eligible for, they should complete the SBA loan application process," wrote Garth MacDonald, a spokesman for the SBA.

Grants for immediate housing assistance are not dependent on the SBA loan application, Suber said. Individuals may be offered FEMA grants of up to \$40,000, Suber said.

Núñez, of Community Bridges, said the loan application process has been “a roadblock for some people, or at least a point of hesitancy.” Although some applicants may be wary of the loans, the low-interest money can help with costly repairs, Núñez said. “If it’s something that you can afford to pay back, we are telling our clients to take it,” he said.

Once applicants have registered with FEMA, an inspector will make an appointment to see the damaged property within three to seven days, Suber said.

Applicants should be wary of scammers who have targeted disaster survivors while posing as FEMA officials. FEMA inspectors “will have your registration number and will have a federal badge,” said Suber. “If anybody comes to your home unexpectedly or is asking for money, or asking for money throughout the process, that is a definite red flag.”

Within a week after inspection, FEMA will send applicants money or a request for more information.

If FEMA rejects a request for funds, applicants can appeal the decision and provide additional documentation of storm damages receipts for costs like cleanup materials and hotel rooms.

Local money

Local grant money is available for residents who are ineligible for FEMA money, have not yet received insurance payouts or FEMA funds or need additional financial assistance. The program is administered by Community Bridges, Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County and Catholic Charities Diocese of Monterey.

So far, the program has raised \$355,000 from Catholic Charities Diocese of Monterey, the Community Foundation Santa Cruz County and the Community Foundation for Monterey County. The money is being distributed on a triage basis to flood victims in Santa Cruz County and North Monterey County, said Community Bridges CEO Raymon Cancino.

The money can be used to cover the costs of a hotel, rental housing, household items or needs not covered by insurance or other sources.

Applications for the money are available online or at any family resource location:

- La Manzana Community Resources: 521 Main Street, Suite Y. 831-724-2997. Open 9 a.m. to noon and 1-4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.
- Live Oak Community Resources: 1740 17th Ave., Live Oak. 831-476-7284. Open 9 a.m. to noon and 1-5 p.m. Monday through Thursday.
- Mountain Community Resources: 6134 Highway 9, Felton. 831-335-6600. Open 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 1-4:30 p.m. Monday and Thursday. Open 9 a.m. to noon and by appointment 1-5 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday.
- Nueva Vista Community Resources, 711 East Cliff Drive. 831-423-5741. Open 9 a.m. to noon and 1-15 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday.
- Davenport Resource Service Center, 150 Church St., Davenport. 831-425-8115. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday.
- Catholic Charities, 656 Main St., Watsonville. 831-316-9122 or dcmp@catholiccharitiesdom.org

For information about the disaster assistance fund, call 211. Local nonprofit group Community Action Board also has a hotline for residents who need connections to resources, including rent assistance. Call 831-440-3556. Call center workers speak English, Spanish, Mixteco and Triqui.

As the long process of repairs begins, the long-term effects of the storm are still unclear, Nuñez said. Community Bridges is working on longer-term disaster relief assistance for repairs and wage assistance for those who lost their jobs, he said.

Other resources

- Community Bridges has free rentals for tools and cleanup equipment, as well as other resources, Cancino said.
- The County of Santa Cruz has public dumpsters for storm-damaged furniture, carpet, drywall, clothing and other items. The trash bins are in Soquel, Rio Del Mar, Davenport, Felton Grove, Paradise Park, Ben Lomond, and two areas near Watsonville.
- Recordings of flood recovery information sessions held by Community Bridges are available online in English, Spanish, Mixteco and Triqui.
- The Volunteer Center of Santa Cruz County is accepting requests from people who need help with cleanup or other assistance.

Editor's note: This story has been updated to clarify eligibility and rules for FEMA and SBA money.

OPINIONCOMMENTARY

Guest Commentary | Volunteers showing up with love for post-storm cleanup

By **SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL** |

January 29, 2023 at 2:41 p.m.

By Raymon Cancino, MariaElena De La Garza, Karen Delaney, Erica Padilla-Chavez and Susan True

With nearly three feet of rain in three weeks, national news picked up on the big impacts in our small county.

Folks from Nebraska to North Carolina saw images of our battered coastline and the wreckage of Seacliff State Beach and Capitola Village. But the public — and the president — didn't get to see the communities whose homes and livelihoods were impacted by the storms and they didn't see who showed up to help. They didn't see who it was that filled and delivered 40,000 sandbags, helped evacuate and feed seniors, or got over 5,000 hot meals to people in need. And they aren't going to see the expert disaster case managers guiding people to resources they may be able to benefit from.

But what locals saw was quick, skillful action fueled by love and encouraged by generosity. During the New Year's downpours there were power outages, slides, floods, and trees crashing down. But unhoused people, day workers, young adults with the California Conservation Corps, city public works and legislative staff, and staff from various nonprofit groups from the South County Triage group including Second Harvest Food Bank, Community Action Board, Community Bridges, and the Volunteer Center showed up for this community. We were neighbors helping neighbors with shovels, trucks, generators, wheelbarrows, ponchos, chainsaws, tarps, rope, food, phone numbers to call, and most importantly, love.

Day workers, parents, and WatsonvilleWorks! crew made up of unsheltered community members worked alongside employees from the City of Watsonville, Second Harvest, United Way, Monarch, Community Bridges, PV Prevention and Student Assistance, and Community Action Board preparing and delivering thousands of sandbags. Community leaders from across the county did door-to-door outreach in English, Spanish, and Mixteco to make sure families — including the families of indigenous agricultural workers — were safe. Meals on Wheels and Second Harvest drivers delivered food to evacuated seniors' hotel rooms and shelters, comforting them as they worried about their flooded homes. The Community Foundation activated its Disaster Fund as a trusted place for people to donate and immediately issued grants to nonprofit partners for supplies and support.

Since New Year's Day, our local nonprofit agencies have partnered to hone a system for delivering information and triaging aid. But as we continue to struggle with the economic fallout of the pandemic and rebuild from CZU fires, big questions remain. We are often asked where people can find help

For all residents struggling to muck out their homes, for small business owners coping with damages and lost income, for employees suddenly displaced and without a paycheck, and for those who have lost everything, we have financial assistance to help. Resources that were given by neighbors to help neighbors. Please contact your nearest family resource center to find support. The newly created disaster resource centers in Watsonville and Felton are also here to guide people.

Long after visiting dignitaries and the news have moved on, we will still be here for each other. Even when it feels like the obstacles to a fair recovery are insurmountable, we have an infrastructure of love and partnership that holds us together. We know how to do this. We've done it before, and we'll do it again. We'll have ponchos ready for those out working in the storm. We'll go door-to-door distributing food, showing up to a neighbor's house to lend a hand, donating what we can, or helping someone manage their way through the applications and claims forms. This is work we do, because as people with love in our hearts for this place and its people, it's simply work worth doing.

Resources:

- Winter Storm Relief information: 2-1-1
- Community Foundation Disaster Fund: cfsc.org/disaster
- Volunteer at scvolunteercenter.org
- Second Harvest Community Food Hotline: 831-662-0991, thefoodbank.org/food-distribution-for-flood-affected-areas
- Indigenous Language Hotline: 831-440-3556

Raymon Cancino is CEO of Community Bridges; MariaElena De La Garza is Executive Director of Community Action Board, Inc; Karen Delaney is Executive Director of Volunteer Center of Santa Cruz County; Erica Padilla-Chavez is CEO of Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County; and Susan True is CEO of Community Foundation Santa Cruz County.

Live Oak Senior Center leaders seek space in teacher housing project

By Grace Stetson | January 30, 2023 | Tags: housing, Live Oak, Live Oak School District, senior care, transportation



A senior center near Capitola Road and 17th Avenue in Live Oak is slated for redevelopment into teacher housing for Live Oak School District. (Grace Stetson — Santa Cruz Local)

LIVE OAK >> A proposed 30-unit teacher-housing complex is expected to displace the Live Oak Senior Center this summer, but a new Live Oak School District committee is set to consider whether the senior center could become part of the new project.

Because of a lack of affordable housing and needed repairs at the senior center at 1777 Capitola Road, school district officials said in 2019 that they wanted to build housing on the property. The lease was extended several times, and it's now set to end June 30.

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Live Oak School District leaders recently said that an ad-hoc committee will take up the matter. The next school district board meeting is at 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 8 online and in-person at Live Oak Elementary School.

Live Oak School District superintendent Daisy Morales said that she and the school board believe that the property is a key part of the district's plans to provide affordable, workforce housing. The property is across the street from Live Oak Elementary School.

"This could be a critical strategy for attracting and retaining top talent to our schools," Morales wrote in an email to Santa Cruz Local. "We are open to a joint-use facilities agreement, and also understand if the tenants need to find other locations from which to provide services as the district figures out the final use of the facilities." Morales wrote. A joint-use agreement would allow senior services in the complex or as a nearby structure in the complex.

Senior center leaders have said the property's mid-county location is a central place to prepare and deliver meals to older residents in the county through its Meals on Wheels program. The center is also on a bus line, which facilitates wide participation in other services.

"It's such a great location for us," said Community Bridges spokesperson Tony Nuñez. "We'd like to stay there if possible." Community Bridges funds and supports many services at the senior center.

Even if the senior center could become part of the new teacher housing complex, the center would still need to find an interim commercial kitchen and meeting space while the homes are constructed.

"It's encouraging that they did decide to put together a committee," Nuñez said.

The Live Oak School Board has said that the ad-hoc committee is expected to address the needs of the school district and community partners. The senior center's tenants have been invited to participate, Morales said. It's not clear whether the senior center's lease could be extended after the committee finishes its work.

Senior services

Opened in 1977, the senior center at Capitola Road and 17th Avenue serves more than 1,000 Santa Cruz County residents each month through Meals on Wheels and Senior Network Services. It also has offered programs through the Alzheimer's Association, the County of Santa Cruz and others.

- The Meals on Wheels program has been at the site since the mid-1990s. About 250,000 meals were cooked on site and delivered to homes across the county last year.
- The Live Oak School District has owned the center since 2004. The district rents the space to leaders of the senior center. The nonprofit Community Bridges and the Seniors Council of Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties help fund the center's programs.
- In part because of a lack of workforce housing and high rents compared with teachers' salaries, a plan began in 2019 to build teacher housing on the site.
- There was discussion about integrating the senior center into the housing project, but communication waned in 2020 during the pandemic.

In May 2022, Live Oak School District leaders wrote a letter to senior center leaders with a notice to leave the property by Oct. 21.

Live Oak School District maintenance staff also said the senior center needed roughly \$500,000 in maintenance.

"That was unbeknownst to our senior programs," said Clay Kempf, executive director of the Seniors Council of Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties. The council funds Senior Network Services at the senior center and works with Community Bridges and Meals on Wheels.

“That information was taken to the school board, and the school board reacted immediately to give everyone a six-month eviction notice,” Kempf said. “That was when we first heard about any of this.”

Community Bridges obtained another estimate for the work at a little more than \$100,000. Community Bridges offered to make those repairs on the condition that the lease was extended for two years.

The notice to leave was extended to Dec. 31, but senior center leaders said there wasn’t enough time to find an alternate site. On Dec. 14, the Live Oak School Board agreed to another lease extension through May 4. It was later extended to June 30. Demolition could start as soon as June, school district leaders said.

Communication problems

People involved with the property discussions before 2020 said there had been collaborative conversations about the senior center and its future. The meetings involved the school district, school board, staff, county staff, county supervisors and members of the Community Foundation Santa Cruz County. Once the COVID-19 restrictions started, those meetings switched to Zoom.

Some senior center staff said they then started to get information about the center’s future by watching Live Oak School District board meetings.

“It’s been pretty much a scramble,” Kempf said. Kempf said he has not received updates or insights on ways to include the senior center in the teacher housing proposal.

When Daisy Morales became superintendent of Live Oak School District in July 2021, she was more open to conversations about the future of the senior center than her predecessor, Kempf and Nuñez said. Both hope there will be a chance for continued partnership.

There aren’t many ideas for what the site could look like, but Nuñez said there have been some discussions about the possibility of a multi-use facility on the site similar to the new and nearby development at 1500 Capitola Road. That project includes a Dientes Community Dental Care clinic and a Santa Cruz Community Health Center that opened a few months ago. Fifty-seven units of affordable housing also are expected to finish construction on the property in the fall.

“The way I look at it, that’s the type of project that can be a community hub here. I think we could have something that helps everybody,” Nuñez said.

At the senior center site, there could be space for senior services on the ground floor levels, with workforce housing above, Nuñez said. With just a few months until the summer deadline, Nuñez said the center is in a tough spot.

“It’s difficult to buy anything in six months. Even if we don’t buy — if we choose to rent somewhere — to find a facility that makes sense for Meals on Wheels will be challenging,” Nuñez said.

Kempf said, “We’d hate to see resources that are just (as) scarce — that are used to feed seniors or keep them housed — end.”

Homeowners Return to Unhealthy Conditions After Storms

From fecal matter to mold, many of the residents flooded out of their homes are discovering dangerous contamination

<https://www.goodtimes.sc/homeowners-return-to-unhealthy-conditions-following-the-storms/>

By Roxanne Hoorn

January 31, 2023



Water was pumped into the Salsipuedes Creek in Watsonville to help mitigate the flooding caused by the recent storms.
PHOTO: Tarmo Hannula

Francisco Elcanto shleps a 5-gallon bucket into the backseat of his car. He lets me peek under the lid, revealing an assortment of neatly packed cleaning supplies. Today, all he needs is some cleaning supplies, which he is borrowing from the Santa Cruz Volunteer Center.

The center is one of 20-plus organizations with booths at Ramsay Park, one of two relief centers that FEMA set up to help residents recovering from the storms. Elcanto is one of

the 900 people who have visited the Ramsay Park center in search of assistance since it opened. He plans on using the supplies he borrowed to clean up the mud and debris recent floods brought into his Santa Cruz home.

As a local landscaper, Elcanto has a trailer full of rakes and shovels—cleaning up debris is part of his job, so he is more familiar than the average homeowner with navigating the post-storm damages to his home.

Elcanto says when it comes to those damages, he's lucky compared to some residents in Watsonville and Santa Cruz: his home was only flooded through the entryway, and he isn't worried about any long-term damage to his house. That means he's also not too concerned about the health risks of flood damage, aside from mold.

But as more residents return home, the health threats they face can be severe. Currently, the county uses an [online portal](#) to list resources, recommendations and updates for residents to access to help them return home safely.

Since the storms began, the county has also completed over one thousand free inspections that can help with obvious structural and electrical threats and warn homeowners of future issues that can seriously impact long-term health. But with the high demand for inspections, it could take anywhere from three to seven days to get someone on site.

Over 180 homes are marked as yellow, meaning they can be safely inhabited but require repairs. 20 homes have been “red tagged,” which means they cannot be entered without significant repairs. Most red-tagged houses are in the Santa Cruz Mountains and are off-limits due to the movement of soaked soil that makes foundations unstable.

With unique issues plaguing different communities around the county, it's challenging to implement a widespread alert system to notify residents of the health risks to consider before re-entering their homes.

“At the county, there's no one-message-fits-all,” says Tony Nuñez, communications manager at Community Bridges. Different communities will face unique threats and may need explanations in different languages and levels of detail, he explains.

Since the first storm on New Year's Eve, Community Bridges has been going door to door in Watsonville and Felton communities, as well as sending text messages with services available to prepare for and respond to storm damage, including short and long-term health threats. Over 350 people have filled out their [winter storm assessments](#), allowing them to be connected with the best local resources.

“Our messaging is crafted around communities, so we can cater to different demographics,” says Nuñez.

HEALTH RISKS: A CASE STUDY

Amy Thomas' home along Corralitos Creek flooded after the first atmospheric storm on New Year's Eve and again in the subsequent waves of storms.

Residents like Thomas received text alerts telling them when it was safe to return home to evacuation zones, but there isn't a notification system that tells people about the myriad of safety and health threats that may lie inside their homes when they get there.

According to FEMA's guide, "Coming home after a flood," residents risk electrocution if precautions aren't taken to examine electrical appliances. The minerals dissolved in water make it great at carrying electricity from appliances, wiring and outlets. Touching or stepping into this energized water can deliver deadly shocks, and electrical appliances that have been submerged can potentially cause fires if turned back on.

Appliances that run on natural gas can also be easily corroded, leaking highly flammable gas into the air that can cause poisoning, fires and explosions. If a home wasn't dry within 48 hours of flooding, residents should also assume there's mold growth. Mold can have devastating health impacts, with exposure leading to asthma attacks, eye and skin irritation and allergic reactions.

Thomas is one of the unlucky residents dealing with mold.

"They're taking out everything," she says. "They're taking out the floors; they're taking out the walls; taking out underneath the house—they're taking it all out." Even her insulation and electricity have to be removed.

Hiring a mold inspection or remediation professional can cost between \$300 and \$4,500. Thomas spent \$6,900 on clean-up from the first storm alone, only to have her home flooded again.

Thomas also found fecal matter in her yard after the floods receded, which county officials attributed to local homeless encampments. The infected mud that swept across her yard and into her home means that the top layer of soil in her yard will also have to be removed.

One of the other major concerns with Thomas' home is asbestos exposure. In houses built before the 1970s, it's common to find asbestos in insulation, but it can also be a component in many other areas like tile floor and ceiling tiles, wall panels and caulking. Flooding can break down the bonds in these materials, releasing asbestos into the air. Asbestos fibers can also sit on the surface of standing water. If inhaled, they can cause long-term lung damage and lead to conditions like mesothelioma and lung cancer.

These precautions can help protect against other hazardous agents during flood clean-up, including any remnants of sewage, pesticides or other chemicals and bacteria that can

collect in stormwater. Contaminants and bacteria in floodwaters can increase the risk of illness, such as rashes, fever, chills, ear infections, vomiting and diarrhea.

“We want to urge anyone, if you have any concerns or qualms that your home might not be safe, to get help,” says Nuñez.

STORM RECOVERY RESOURCES

Disaster Recovery Center

Ramsay Park
1301 Main St., Watsonville

Felton Library

6121 Gushee St., Felton

La Manzana Community Resources

(Community Bridges’ Free Cleanup Tools)
521 Main St., Ste. Y, Watsonville
831-724-2997

Live Oak Community Resources

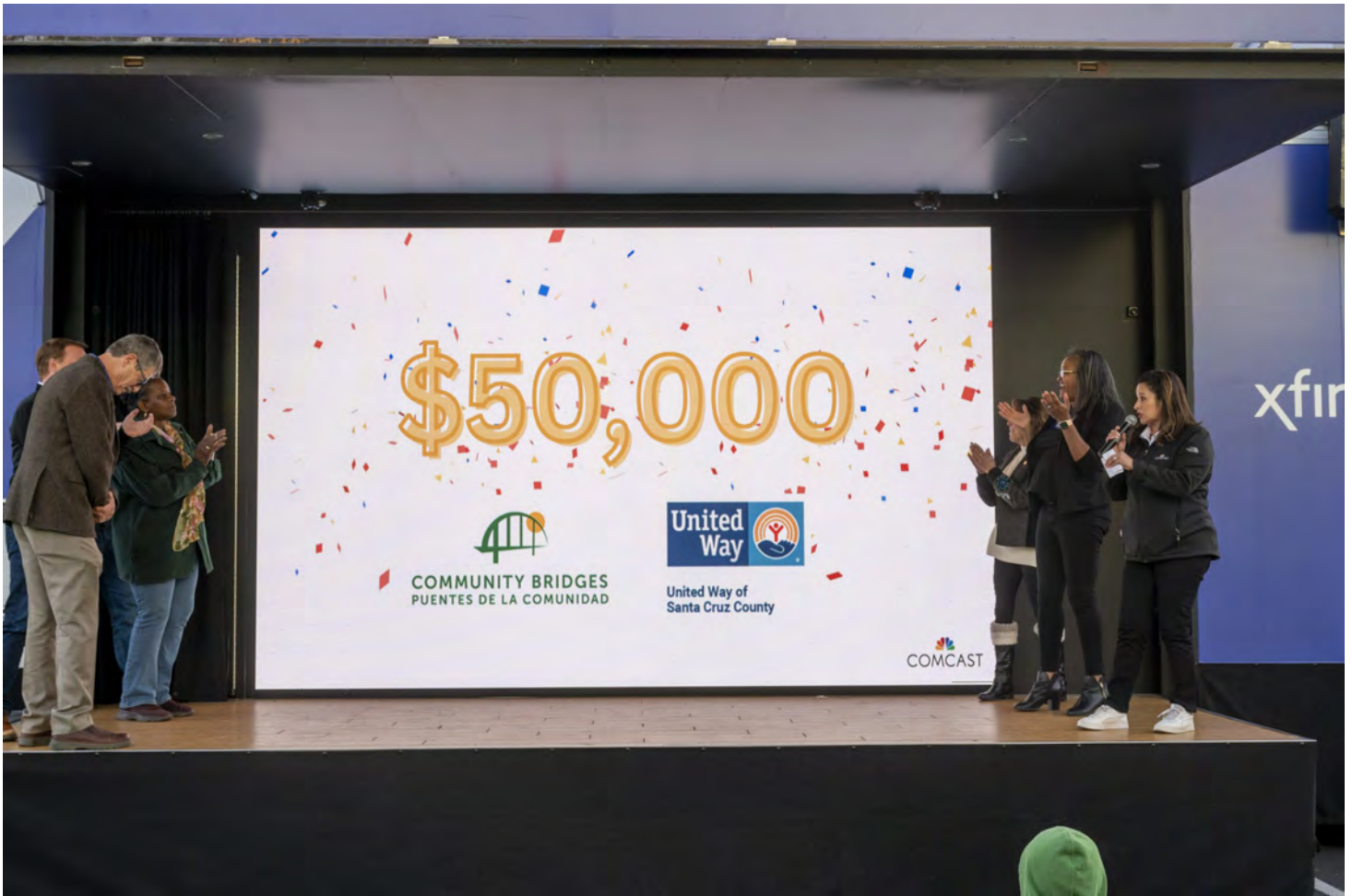
1740 17th Ave., Santa Cruz
831-476-7284

Mountain Community Resources

6134 Hwy 9, Felton
831-335-6600

Santa Cruz Volunteer Center: 844-965-1386 or scvolunteernow.org/flood

Water Quality Program: 831-454-4624 or waterquality@santacruzcounty.us



Comcast Hosts Community Event in Santa Cruz & Makes \$50,000 Donation for Storm Recovery

FEBRUARY 2, 2023

As Santa Cruz County works to recover and rebuild from the recent historic rainstorms that caused massive flooding, downed trees, landslides and other devastation, Comcast yesterday hosted a free event to support the community and made a \$50,000 donation to the United Way of Santa Cruz and Community Bridges of Santa Cruz.

“The Santa Cruz area has suffered so much from the recent storms – the devastation has been heart wrenching to experience and witness,” said Ray Cancino, CEO, Community Bridges. “This partnership and financial support from Comcast is coming at the ideal time and will provide important, valuable resources as the community strives to get back on its feet.”



Xfinity on Wheels on Wednesday, Feb. 1, 2022 in Scotts Valley, Calif. (Peter Barreras/Comcast)

“We appreciate Comcast hosting yesterday’s event. It was so nice to enable this hard-hit community to take a break, come together and support each other, while having some fun.” said Keisha Browden, CEO, United Way of Santa Cruz County. “Comcast’s financial contribution to our community will help us not only expand our recovery efforts but also help us rebuild from this catastrophic disaster.”

A unique feature at the Scotts Valley community event was the Xfinity Experience trailer, which features a 12 foot by 18-foot LED screen on which the movies Sing 2 and Minions: Rise of Gru were screened. The trailer also enabled free WiFi access and power so attendees could get online and charge their devices. Attendees can enjoy free food and beverages from local restaurants and there will be raffles with a variety of door prizes and special giveaways.



Xfinity on Wheels on Wednesday, Feb. 1, 2022 in Scotts Valley, Calif. (Peter Barreras/Comcast)

Throughout the series of dangerous and severe storms, Comcast provided a range of services to evacuation and community support centers in Northern and Central California. Comcast's network and engineering technicians monitored the storms' impacts and worked diligently to restore Xfinity and Comcast Business services that were impacted as quickly and safely as possible so customers could stay connected.

Comcast also made available for free use by anyone its 147,000 public Xfinity WiFi hotspots throughout Northern and Central California. This helped residents and emergency personnel stay connected during the rainstorms.



Xfinity on Wheels on Wednesday, Feb. 1, 2022 in Scotts Valley, Calif. (Peter Barreras/Comcast)



Emergency workers trek through flooded streets near Bay Village in Watsonville in January. —Tarmo Hannula/The Pajaronian

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Floodwaters contaminate residences throughout Santa Cruz County

By: **ROXANNE HOORN** February 3, 2023

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WATSONVILLE—Francisco Elcanto schleps a five-gallon bucket into the back seat of his car. A peek under the lid reveals an assortment of neatly packed cleaning supplies. Today, all he needs is some cleaning supplies, which he is borrowing from the [Santa Cruz Volunteer Center](#).

The center is one of 20-plus organizations with booths at Ramsay Park in Watsonville, one of two relief centers that FEMA set up to help residents recovering from recent storms. Elcanto is one of the 900 people who have visited the Ramsay Park center in search of assistance since it opened. He plans on using the supplies he borrowed to clean up the mud and debris recent floods brought into his Santa Cruz home.

As a local landscaper, Elcanto has a trailer full of rakes and shovels—cleaning up debris is part of his job, so he is more familiar than the average homeowner with navigating the post-storm damages to his home.

Elcanto says when it comes to those damages, he's lucky compared to some residents in Watsonville and Santa Cruz: his home was only flooded through the entryway, and he isn't worried about any long-term damage to his house. That means he's also not too concerned about the health risks of flood damage, aside from mold.

But as more residents return home, the health threats they face can be severe. Currently, the county uses an [online portal](#) to list resources, recommendations and updates for residents to access to help them return home safely.

Since the storms began, the county has completed more than 1,000 free inspections that can help with obvious structural and electrical threats and warn homeowners of future issues that can seriously impact long-term health. But with the high demand for inspections, it could take anywhere from three to seven days to get someone on site.

Over 180 homes are marked as yellow throughout the county, meaning they can be safely inhabited but require repairs. Twenty homes have been "red tagged," which means they cannot be entered without significant repairs. Most red-tagged houses are in the Santa Cruz Mountains and are off-limits due to the movement of soaked soil that makes foundations unstable.

With unique issues plaguing different communities around the county, it's challenging to implement a widespread alert system to notify residents of the health risks to consider before re-entering their homes.

"At the county, there's no one-message-fits-all," says Tony Nuñez, communications manager at Community Bridges.

Different communities will face unique threats and may need explanations in different languages and levels of detail, he explains.

Since the first storm on New Year's Eve, Community Bridges has been going door to door in Watsonville and Felton communities, as well as sending text messages with services available to prepare for and respond to storm damage, including short- and long-term health threats. More than 350 people have filled out their [winter storm assessments](#), allowing them to be connected with the best local resources.

"Our messaging is crafted around communities, so we can cater to different demographics," Nuñez says.

Health risks: A case study

Amy Thomas' home along Corralitos Creek flooded after the first atmospheric storm on New Year's Eve and again in the subsequent waves of storms.

Residents like Thomas received text alerts telling them when it was safe to return home to evacuation zones, but there isn't a notification system that tells people about the myriad safety and health threats that may lie inside their homes when they get there.

According to FEMA's [guide](#), "Coming home after a flood," residents risk electrocution if precautions aren't taken to examine electrical appliances. The minerals dissolved in water make it great at carrying electricity from appliances, wiring and outlets. Touching or stepping into this energized water can deliver deadly shocks, and electrical appliances that have been submerged can potentially cause fires if turned back on.

Appliances that run on natural gas can also be easily corroded, leaking highly flammable gas into the air that can cause poisoning, fires and explosions. If a home wasn't dry within 48 hours of flooding, residents should also assume there's mold growth. Mold can have devastating health impacts, with exposure leading to asthma attacks, eye and skin irritation and allergic reactions.

Thomas is one of the unlucky residents dealing with mold.

"They're taking out everything," she says. "They're taking out the floors; they're taking out the walls; taking out underneath the house—they're taking it all out." Even her insulation and electricity have to be removed.

Hiring a mold inspection or remediation professional can cost between [\\$300 and \\$4,500](#). Thomas spent \$6,900 on clean-up from the first storm alone, only to have her home flooded again.

Thomas also found fecal matter in her yard after the floods receded, which county officials attributed to local homeless encampments. The infected mud that swept across her yard and into her home means that the top layer of soil in her yard will also have to be removed.

One of the other major concerns with Thomas' home is asbestos exposure. In houses built before the 1970s, it's common to find asbestos in insulation, but it can also be a component in many other areas like tile floor and ceiling tiles, wall panels and caulking. Flooding can break down the bonds in these materials, releasing asbestos into the air. Asbestos fibers can also sit on the surface of standing water. If inhaled, they can cause long-term lung damage and lead to conditions like mesothelioma and lung cancer.

These precautions can help protect against other hazardous agents during flood clean-up, including any remnants of sewage, pesticides or other chemicals and bacteria that can collect in stormwater. Contaminants and bacteria in floodwaters can increase the risk of illness, such as rashes, fever, chills, ear infections, vomiting and diarrhea.

"We want to urge anyone, if you have any concerns or qualms that your home might not be safe, to get help," Nuñez says.

Disaster Recovery Centers:

- Ramsay Park, 1301 Main St., Watsonville
- Felton Library, 6121 Gushee St., Felton

Community Bridges' Free Cleanup Tools:

- La Manzana Community Resources, 521 Main St., Ste. Y, Watsonville, 724.2997
- Live Oak Community Resources, 1740 17th Ave., Santa Cruz, 476.7284
- Mountain Community Resources, 6134 Highway 9, Felton, 335.6600
- Santa Cruz Volunteer Center: 844.965.1386 or scvolunteernow.org/flood
- [Water Quality Program](#): 454.4624 or waterquality@santacruzcounty.us

They were at the bull's-eye of the Bay Area storms. Now, these communities are in economic crisis



Santiago Mejia / The Chronicle

NORA MISHANEC, BRONTË WITTPENN, SANTIAGO MEJIA

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/weather/article/california-rain-storm-damage-17760088.php>

Feb. 3, 2023 Updated: Feb. 5, 2023 5:20 p.m.

Moldering houses, sodden with rainwater. Muddy back roads awaiting bulldozers to clear away debris. Families without flood insurance wondering how they will afford to repair their wrecked homes and replace belongings.

This is the reality for many low-income and working-class residents in Santa Cruz and Monterey counties, the bull's-eye of a series of historic atmospheric river storms that began on Dec. 26 and lasted through Jan. 18. The storms dumped as much as 3 feet of water in parts of the Santa Cruz Mountains, flooding homes, blocking critical access roads and trapping communities. Across the state, at least 21 people died in the deluges.

The floodwaters have receded, but one month later, residents are still struggling to move forward with scant resources while navigating bureaucratic labyrinths to procure promised

federal aid. The storms put many residents already on the fringe into an economic tailspin. For them, what recovery looks like remains an open question.



Evidence of the flood line in the aftermath of the surging of the San Lorenzo River in Felton (Santa Cruz County).
Photos by Clara Mokri/Special to The Chronicle

In Felton’s Lompico neighborhood in Santa Cruz County, gale-force winds uprooted trees, damaging homes and cars. On New Year’s Eve, Lompico resident Valorie Torres recalled, the gusts felt like “a freight train crashing through the redwoods.”

That evening, Torres lost power at the rental home she shares with her husband and a daughter with cystic fibrosis and Down syndrome, a rare combination of conditions that requires constant care. The chaos of the days that followed would upend the family’s finances, already strained by medical bills.

Torres and her husband spent close to \$500 running a propane-powered generator for six days to operate their 2-year-old daughter’s vital medical equipment. They later moved into a hotel for two weeks, racking up what Torres estimates was another \$500 in bills, not counting the loss of Torres’ car, which was crushed under a falling tree.

“Every time we get ahead, it’s like we take 10 steps back,” Torres said of her family’s finances.

As the mother of a daughter who was born with special needs during the CZU Lightning Complex fires, which scorched the region two years ago, Torres has lived in a perpetual state of upheaval.

“Recovery,” she said. “I don’t even know what that word means.”



Homes in a neighborhood off of Holohan Road near Watsonville were damaged by flooding.
Brontë Wittpenn / The Chronicle

The damage wrought by increasingly intense storms linked to climate change has disproportionately harmed the poorest — those least able to prepare and recover from extreme weather events. But Susan True, CEO of Community Foundation Santa Cruz County, said most discussions about storm damage obscure the underlying forces that push many people to reside in high-risk areas.

Those living on the margins of urban areas — in forestlands or floodplains — have often been displaced by steep rents and home prices, especially in Santa Cruz County, where the typical home value is above \$1.5 million, Zillow data shows.

“More and more people are living in drought-, flood- and fire-prone places,” True said.

Service workers and low-wage laborers tend to be the hardest hit by California’s ever-rising cost of living, True said, meaning those workers have been pushed to endure long commutes and forced to bear the heaviest burdens when wildfires and floods strike.



Map: Jenny Kwon / The Chronicle

Isidoro Garcia didn’t know the storm was coming until it reached his Watsonville home on New Year’s Eve.

A pot of pozole was sputtering on the stove when Garcia first noticed a puddle of water pooling at his feet. Within hours, floodwater was seeping into his garage, destroying a lawnmower, weed wacker and pressure washer that he had bought for his fledgling landscaping business.

“We didn’t have any notice,” Garcia said in Spanish. “It came as a complete surprise.”

The days and weeks that followed were a frenzy as he worked to remove heaps of mud left behind.

Roughly one month after floodwaters inundated Garcia's rental home, the carpenter and his family are still facing the fallout from the devastating rains that blindsided them during their New Year's Eve celebrations.

Between the destroyed tools and a wrecked car, Garcia estimates his financial loss was close to \$7,000. He also missed weeks of potential carpentry jobs during the storms. And without his own tools, he will have to return to the precarious life of a day laborer, taking odd jobs as they become available.

For itinerant workers such as Garcia, days of lost work during the storms will compound the challenge of recovery, said Maria Rodriguez, director of programs at the Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County.

"At the end of the month, when checks aren't coming in for day workers ... the impact is going to be huge," Rodriguez said.



Residents of Watsonville, where many homes were damaged by flooding, watch a presentation at a local community center. Patrick Tehan / Special to the Chronicle

Few places were harder hit during January's punishing storms than Santa Cruz County, where President Biden visited after declaring it a major disaster zone, paving the way for an influx of federal aid. The declaration is intended to funnel assistance to families and individuals for cleanup costs. Whether the aid will reach cash-strapped households is less certain, advocates said.

“Disaster resources are intimidating to most people,” said Ray Cancino, CEO of Santa Cruz nonprofit Community Bridges. “There are a lot of hidden realities why people don’t ask for help.”

Some families are afraid because of their immigration status, Cancino said. Others are afraid of being displaced if inspectors deem their homes unsafe or ineligible to be rebuilt. In some cases, he said, the county can reassess taxes on a damaged property or require extensive upgrades.

Though there are exceptions, in many cases undocumented immigrants are barred from applying and receiving federal aid.

Language is another barrier in a region where Spanish and Indigenous translation services lag, Cancino said. The result, he said, is that those with the greatest needs are often the least likely to hear about oncoming storms or recovery resources.

For Nicolas Parral, a field worker from Oaxaca, Mexico, difficulties during an already slow work season were compounded by the historic storms.



Cynthia Parral, 29, grabs bags of clothes after a series of storms caused flooding of the homeless encampment where her family lives near Highway 101 in King City (Monterey County). Brontë Wittpenn / The Chronicle

As January progressed, a mix of rainfall and runoff from the Monterey hills swelled the Salinas River, pushing it above flood level. A community of unsheltered residents who lived along the riverbanks in King City were forced to flee, including Parral.

“It’s been really hard,” Parral said. He and his family immigrated to the Central Coast just three months ago in an effort to escape cartel violence.

The flooding meant Parral, Teofila Gonzalez — Parral’s wife — and their four children had to gather their belongings in haste from their home, a structure constructed of plywood, tires and tarp. Over the course of the month, the Parrals attempted to return, but the threat of flooding persisted for weeks.

“When I evacuated I didn’t want to return back to the camp with my kids because it was so dangerous,” Parral said in Spanish.

For future storms, Cancino, of Community Bridges, sees children as a possible resource to connect their families to much-needed resources and information. School districts are “trusted messengers” that can email and text parents to help ensure warnings and alerts reach more families, not just those already tapped into local warning systems.



Flooding reached the backyard of Mike Cisneros’ home on Anderson Lane in Watsonville. The home sits on the banks of Kelly Lake and has experienced flooding before. Brontë Wittpenn / The Chronicle

He also sees an opportunity to restructure how post-storm recovery money is distributed, with the goal of prioritizing the neediest families, rather than giving out aid on a first-come, first-served basis.

True, of the Community Foundation, said local nonprofits and philanthropists are already helping to meet residents' urgent needs with small grants before federal aid arrives. That could tide some over in the immediate future. But for those who suffered the most in the storms, which unleashed damages and impacts across the state at a scale not seen in decades, it's early in the recovery.

"It is so important that we don't lose sight of the invisible people who keep California's economy running," True said.

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