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**COMMUNITY BRIDGES**  
**PUNTES DE LA COMUNIDAD**

# STORM RECOVERY

A community update of where we are and where we're going



## The Power of Advocacy

### In the news

Community Bridges Family Resource Collective has received headlines for its response to the winter and spring storms:

- [FRC distributes nearly \\$2M in aid to storm-impacted residents](#)
- [Kaiser Permanente powers FRC storm recovery](#)



*Family Resource Collective Advocates Ana Albor and Monica Chavez-Gonzalez have helped Pájaro families return home, find alternative housing, and obtain federal assistance following the March 11 flood.*

## **Family Resource Collective Advocates help Pájaro families return home after floods**

An advocate is defined as “a person who argues for, recommends, or supports a cause or policy.”

At Community Bridges’ Family Resource Collective (FRC), we call our devoted case managers “Advocates” because we know that helping a family receive the resources and assistance they deserve goes beyond handing out flyers and filling out forms. Our Advocates treat families with dignity, respect, empathy, and compassion and fight for the best possible outcome for everyone who steps through their doors.

Over the past six months, our Advocates have been working with hundreds of families who were forced from their homes when the Pájaro River Levee breached on March 11. Many of those families have returned home or found alternative long-term housing and are beginning to regain a sense of normalcy. This includes 25 families, or 106 people in the long-term shelter program, with severe recovery cases to which our Advocates and partner organization Catholic Charities Diocese of Monterey have provided disaster case management thanks to the County of Monterey and numerous foundation partners.

- [Monterey County looks at a long-term recovery planning committee to rebuild Pajaro](#)

**Learn More About our Family Resource Collective sites**

- [La Manzana Community Resources](#)
- [Live Oak Community Resources](#)
- [Nueva Vista Community Resources](#)
- [Mountain Community Resources](#)

“It was sad, the flood and people being displaced from their homes, but the job that we have been doing, working with a lot of partners, working with the community, it feels great to help people,” says FRC Advocate Ana Albor. “It’s really rewarding to see families returning to their houses.”

Ana and fellow Advocate Monica Chavez-Gonzalez have been our stalwarts in charge of the day-to-day services at the Pájaro Long-Term Recovery Center, a new temporary resource center in Pájaro operating under the umbrella of the FRC. The Pájaro center opened in July to bring Community Bridges’ services closer to those impacted by the flood.

**‘It’s really rewarding to see families returning to their houses.’**

- Ana Albor, FRC Advocate

Ana and Monica spend three days out of the week at the Pájaro center to help residents who have returned home but still need assistance. On the other two days, they provided disaster case management to displaced Pájaro residents.

Disaster case management responsibilities include providing economic assistance and essential items (clothing, hygiene products, clean-up tools, etc.) when available, helping residents apply for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Small Business Association (SBA) benefits and appeals, finding alternative long-term housing, navigating renters/homeowner insurance benefits, connecting homeowners with contractors, inspectors, and permit centers, and directing families to services related to their personal recovery plan, including mental health and behavioral health services.



*Family Resource Collective Advocate Ana Albor works with a Pájaro resident at the Pajaro Long-Term Recovery Center.*

FRC Advocates have helped distribute around \$1.2 million in direct economic assistance to flood-impacted Pájaro families thanks to more than 1,600 donors and our foundation partners, including the Community Foundation Santa Cruz County and the Community Foundation for Monterey County. This financial distribution is far different than any previous disaster as we have established a model in which equity is operationalized to support families who are most in need due to income, impact, and resources. We have worked diligently to verify these aspects to ensure we support those most in need first while still ensuring our doors are always open.

Monica says helping families find long-term housing options and halting the permanent displacement of residents who have called Pájaro home for decades has proved difficult because of the challenging rental market in the Pájaro Valley and Santa Cruz County. Still, her determination to help the community of Pájaro has never wavered.

“My goal is and my hope for them is that they all have a place to move back to,” Monica says. “I know that the times are hard, but I hope they all have a secure place and that this winter is better than the last.”

Support the FRC to ensure that their essential storm response work continues.

DONATE TODAY



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**CASA NOSTRA • 9217 HWY 9 • BEN LOMOND**  
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**COMMUNITYBRIDGES.ORG/EVENTS**



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## Tickets on Sale for Mountain Affair

The Mountain Affair is back!

This annual event features fine cuisine, local wines, live music, and a silent auction showcasing valley businesses. It is a festive gathering of community builders under the redwood trees at Ristorante Casa Nostra in Ben Lomond.

All proceeds help Mountain Community Resources to build a warm, friendly, safe place for San Lorenzo Valley residents to access life-saving and life-building services, including emergency preparedness, disaster recovery and crisis support services.

[BUY TICKETS NOW](#)

## A Thousand Days Later

Three years after the CZU Lightning Complex, many San Lorenzo Valley families who lost their homes to the fires are still wading through the long road to recovery.

Thanks to the Long-Term Recovery Group and Community Foundation Santa Cruz County's Fire Recovery Fund, families can receive the support they need, and our case managers can continue to help them weave through the pricey, complex, and challenging recovery process.

Our Mountain Community Resources Advocate, Suzie Schwilk, says, "I love this community so much. It's in my heart."

It's that love that keeps us going.

We thank the Community Foundation for supporting the San Lorenzo Valley and our ongoing work.

[READ MORE](#)

## Join the FRC Team!

Community Bridges envisions a thriving community where every person has the opportunity to unleash their full potential.

Our Family Resource Collective Advocates and Program Managers work collaboratively with community partners, residents, businesses, foundations, donors, supporters, volunteers, and the Community Bridges family of programs to provide our participants with access to resources that offer stability and hope for the future.

Current open positions:



- [Program Manager - Mountain Community Resources](#)
- [Advocate - La Manzana Community Resources](#)
- [Advocate - Mountain Community Resources](#)

These are full-time, 40-hour per week positions with competitive starting wages and a robust benefits package.

APPLY NOW



Show your support of Community Bridges and the Family Resource Collective by shopping at our TeePublic storefront! A portion of the proceeds of every sale go toward Community Bridges and the FRC!

SHOP COMMUNITY BRIDGES MERCH



Local advocacy makes a difference. The Family Resource Collective can not sustain its services without strong backing from local elected officials. Contact your representatives, ask questions, and advocate for our programs.

CONTACT YOUR SUPERVISOR



The Family Resource Collective's work would not be possible without our dedicated volunteers. From helping with food distributions to conducting community outreach, our FRC centers have a plethora of volunteer opportunities.

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