



YUBA RIVER ENDOWMENT

FARMERS GIVING BACK | 2024

The True Unsung Heroes of Our Community

TRAUMA INTERVENTION PROGRAM GETS TWO SURPRISE DONATIONS

Following a \$30,000 donation to Trauma Intervention Program (TIP) in 2022, the Yuba River Endowment surprised their volunteers with two donations in 2024 – \$20,000 in January and another \$20,000 in December.

2025 is TIP's 30th year providing emotional and practical support to traumatized people in the Yuba-Sutter community. Volunteers have responded to over 15,000 calls.

There are currently 35 volunteer responders serving both counties, 1250 square miles and 170,000 residents. TIP serves all 35 Yuba-Sutter emergency agencies.

Local residents are trained to be TIP Responders and are available on a 24/7/365 day basis to assist law enforcement, firefighters,



Yuba River Endowment Board Members surprised TIP volunteers at their annual Christmas party

paramedics, deputy coroners and hospital personnel.

TIP volunteers respond to support survivors of all types of tragedy including sudden deaths, suicides, homicides, all types of accidents, drownings, victims of crimes, structure fires, and overdoses.

They remain the only TIP chapter in America that is 100% donation-based, not financial supported by the police, fire and sheriff's departments they support.

To learn more about volunteer and donation opportunities, visit www.yubasuttertip.org.

Yuba County Farmers Giving Back
WELCOME CORDUA TO THE YUBA RIVER ENDOWMENT!

In a first-of-its-kind effort, a group of Yuba County farmers has established a non-profit organization and fund, titled the Yuba River Endowment, to benefit Yuba County residents.

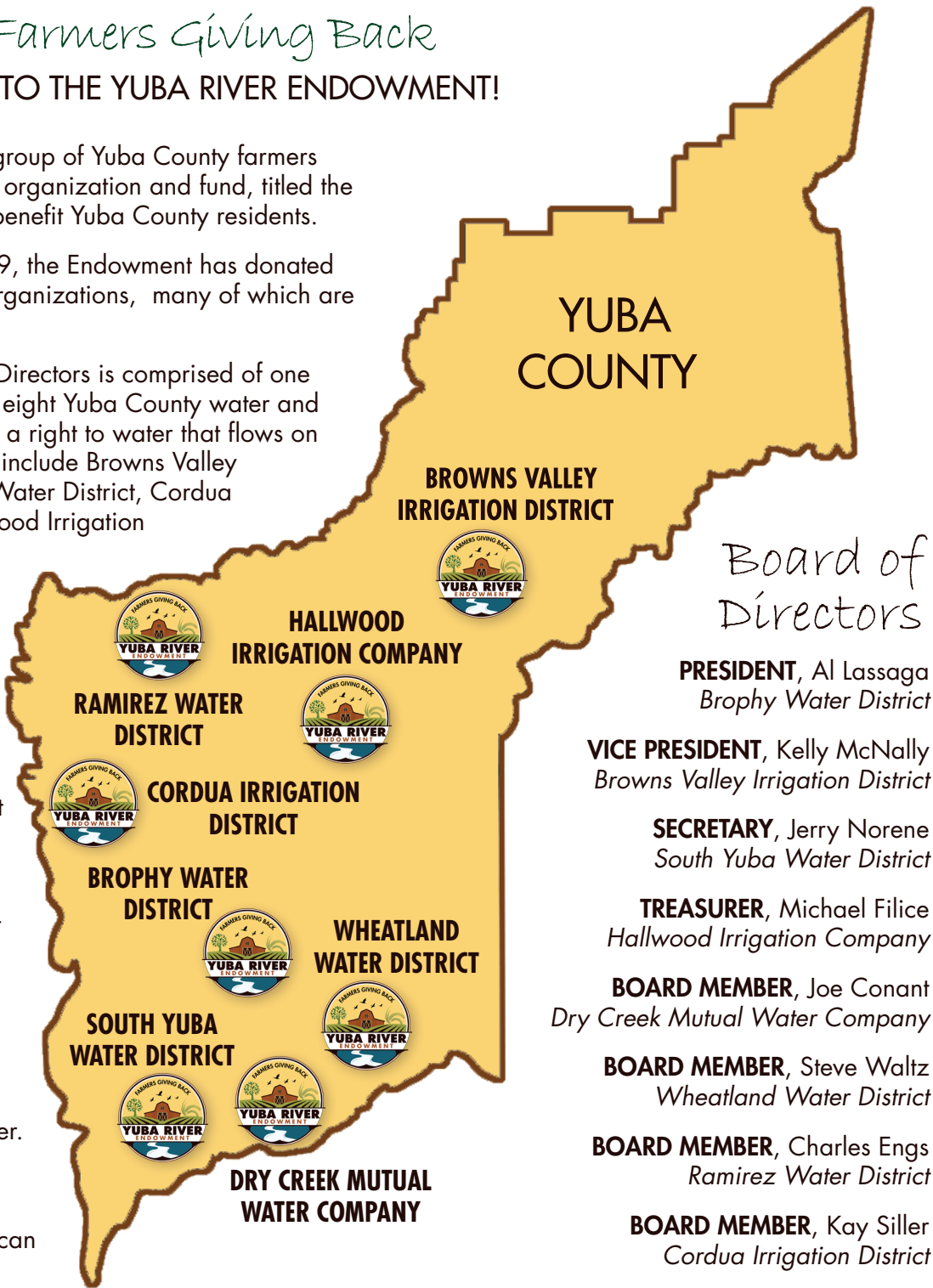
Since formation in late 2019, the Endowment has donated over \$1.1 million to local organizations, many of which are featured in this newsletter.

The Endowment's Board of Directors is comprised of one representative from each of eight Yuba County water and irrigation districts who have a right to water that flows on the Yuba River. The districts include Browns Valley Irrigation District, Ramirez Water District, Cordua Irrigation District and Hallwood Irrigation Company in the north part of Yuba County; and Brophy Water District, Wheatland Water District, South Yuba Water District and Dry Creek Mutual Water Company in the south part of Yuba County.

These eight districts are part of a partnership called the "Yuba Accord" with local, state and federal agencies. This collaborative settlement initiative ended decades of controversy over flow requirements in the Lower Yuba River. The irrigation districts now provide their water for the environmental fish flows needed on the river.

When surface water and groundwater conditions are right, the irrigation districts can transfer a portion of their surface water and provide additional flows on top of the required environmental flows. This is called a groundwater substitution transfer, or conjunctive use of water.

A portion of the proceeds from these water transfers goes to the Endowment. It's truly Yuba County farmers giving back!



YUBA
COUNTY

BROWNS VALLEY
IRRIGATION DISTRICT

HALLWOOD
IRRIGATION COMPANY

RAMIREZ WATER
DISTRICT

CORDUA IRRIGATION
DISTRICT

BROPHY WATER
DISTRICT

WHEATLAND
WATER DISTRICT

SOUTH YUBA
WATER DISTRICT

DRY CREEK MUTUAL
WATER COMPANY

Board of
Directors

PRESIDENT, Al Lassaga
Brophy Water District

VICE PRESIDENT, Kelly McNally
Browns Valley Irrigation District

SECRETARY, Jerry Norene
South Yuba Water District

TREASURER, Michael Filice
Hallwood Irrigation Company

BOARD MEMBER, Joe Conant
Dry Creek Mutual Water Company

BOARD MEMBER, Steve Waltz
Wheatland Water District

BOARD MEMBER, Charles Engs
Ramirez Water District

BOARD MEMBER, Kay Siller
Cordua Irrigation District

BOARD MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Steve Springer, *Hallwood Irrigation Company*

Paul Baggett, *Brophy Water District*

Michael Rue, *South Yuba Water District*

Steve Danna, *Dry Creek Mutual*

Becky Hunt, *Cordua Irrigation District*

Honoring Yuba County's Agricultural Champions
SPECIAL SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED IN MEMORY OF MERLE COLLINS & ROGER MURRAY

MERLE COLLINS 1889-1975

Merle Collins moved to Marysville in 1929 to become Yuba County's Farm Advisor. Collins specialized in developing new products for Yuba County farmers and was also responsible for early water rights filings for irrigation.

In 1951 Collins joined the Yuba County Water Resources Board. In 1957 the Board released a report determining that irrigation water is necessary for the economic stability of the county.

Collins was instrumental in convincing Browns Valley Irrigation District landowners that construction of the Virginia Ranch Dam was needed for storage and water reliability. After completion of the Dam in 1963, BVID held a dedication ceremony and named the reservoir Collins Lake.

Merle Collins truly understood the importance of water in California and especially in Yuba County. He had the ability to see the potential of early water development within the county and spearheaded formation of irrigation districts to bring surface water to farmers and ranchers.



Scan to learn more
about Merle Collins



Scan to learn more
about Roger Murray



ROGER L. MURRAY 1929-2016

Roger Murray moved to the Wheatland area in 1948. The early years were spent growing rice and wheat and doing research on the seeds most profitable for his plantings. He built up a dairy milking 160 cows and named it "The Marysville Milk Farm".

Roger helped start the Plumas Brophy Fire House on Dairy Road where local 4-H meetings used to be held. He was on the Board of Trustees for Wheatland High School for 43 years, from 1957 to 2000, tied in 4th place for all time longevity in California school board history. In 1988 he got the support of the board to start the Agriculture Department at Wheatland High School. When he retired from the board in 2000, the Ag-Mechanic building was named after him.

In the early 1980's he was the general contractor building the South Yuba and Brophy Water Districts. In the late 1990's he built phase one of Dry Creek Mutual Water Company and also completed many projects for the Yuba Water Agency. He had a natural understanding of elevations, water flows and the needs of the area farmers for irrigation.

Roger never retired from his work and was quick to support anyone who needed help getting a job done. All who knew him were first and foremost struck by his kind nature and willing leadership towards the youth of our community.

\$100,000 in Scholarships Awarded

45 AWARDS TO YUBA COUNTY STUDENTS PURSUING COLLEGE & TRADE SCHOOL

After completing interviews of potential scholarship recipients, the Yuba River Endowment board unanimously approved increasing their second-year scholarship fund from \$75,000 to \$100,000 helping 45 students.

To be eligible, applicants need a primary residence in Yuba County, or need to be a senior at a Yuba County high school; and the applicant must be planning to attend, or continue at, a trade school, junior college, or college in the fall of 2024.

145 students applied and 45 were interviewed by a panel of Endowment board members. All 45 were given awards, including 30 high school seniors and 15 students continuing at community or four-year colleges.

Trinity Duran of Lindhurst High School was awarded the first Merle Collins scholarship of \$5,000. Matthew Brockhoff, who is continuing at Montana State, was awarded the first \$5,000 Roger Murray scholarship.



Wheatland High scholarship recipients



Lindhurst High scholarship recipients



Marysville High scholarship recipients



Marysville Charter Academy for the Arts scholarship recipients

Merle Collins Award
Trinity Duran



Roger Murray Award
Matthew Brockhoff



2024 Scholarship Recipients

 Abbi Oliver 	 Abigail Redfield 	 Alexa Barragan-Martinez 	 Alyssa Hendrickson 	 Anahi Lule 	 Anna Galvin 	 Asher Perla 
 Bella Heryford 	 Caleb Eberhardt 	 Chase Uhrich 	 Claira Goss 	 Cody Frerichs 	 Cynthia Salazar 	 Dyane Ortega 
 Ethan Xiong 	 Gabriela Paredes 	 Grace Mallen 	 Gurkeerat Dhillon 	 Hailey Hicks 	 Hallie Prather 	 Hayden Witt 
 Isaiah Alexander 	 Jace Roper 	 Jade Lassaga 	 Jena Bhandal 	 Jesus Ochoa 	 Joshua Eres 	 Justin Bradford 
 Kelsie Gardner 	 Laney Halsted 	 Linzee DeGraff 	 Logan Beach 	 Maia Spallino 	 Meah Jung 	 Myliah Ramirez 
 Norberto Montero-Hernández 	 Sofia Edwards 	 Sofia Walter 	 Tayton Slade 	 Ziannie Jatziri 		



Wheatland High FFA SURPRISE \$40,000 DONATION!

Big things happening for Wheatland FFA! Three new ag classrooms have opened on campus, including a fully renovated shop for ag mechanics.

FFA students continue to give back through community service, which included food drives, events to support Beale AFB, a trip to the Senior Center, partnering with the Middle School in a buddy program, and monthly farm work days.

The Wheatland FFA program currently has 420 students involved and have a goal to hit 460 in 2025.

Yuba River Endowment's previous donation was used to help fund State Convention, all the field day activities and the upcoming trip to Nationals. Following a stellar presentation by the students in September, the board voted unanimously to donate another \$40,000 to the program. Board member Steve Waltz had the honor of sharing the great news on campus.



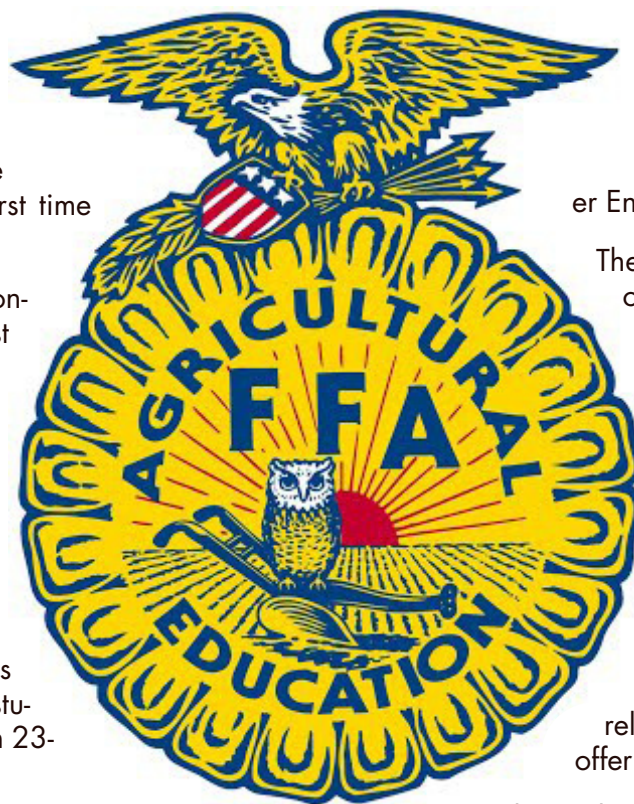
Lindhurst FFA TURNING CHALLENGES INTO WINS

Lindhurst FFA started the year with 185 FFA students, and had an "Unstoppable Year" theme. 18 students attended State competition, with 27 slated to go this year. Five students attended Nationals – the first time flying for four of them!

They had students participate in regional and sectional FFA offices for the first time in school history, went on five college visits, leadership retreats to Dhillon Beach and Shady Creek, and had their best year at Fair. They now have 210 members and a new "Leave Your Legacy" theme.

In the 22-23 school year, they had 4% of their members attend leadership conferences; in 23-24 it was 21%. In 22-23 only 27% of the FFA students were continuing FFA students; in 23-24 it was 82%.

The Endowment once again donated \$40,000 to the program – we can't wait to see what 2025 brings!



Marysville High FFA 500 MEMBERS STRONG!

In September the Marysville High FFA leadership students gave a phenomenal presentation of recent accomplishments and upcoming plans to the Yuba River Endowment board.

They have a "4-ring" model for their club, consisting of community service, supervised ag experiences, FFA participation and classroom activities.

They had 400 students at their August FFA meeting; 500 total members in the club now – 100 more than last year. They have added two officer positions for Historian and Parliamentarian.

Marysville High now offers 16 ag-related courses now, four of which offer college credit.

The Endowment's last donation was used to attend the Made for Excellence conference, Advanced Leadership Academy, State Convention, and the Career & Leadership Development Team activities where 25 students competed from San Luis Obispo to Oregon, visiting 8 colleges along the way. 12 students are headed to Nationals this year, which will be October 22 – 26 in Indianapolis.

The Endowment board voted unanimously to donate another \$40,000 in September. The growth of Yuba County's FFA chapters with these funds has been measurable and remarkable.

New Podcast Studio FFA STUDENTS LEARN, FILM, PRODUCE

In a continued partnership with Marysville's 93Q Radio, the Yuba River Endowment donated \$25,000 to fund a podcast studio, and give all Yuba County FFA chapters the opportunity to create, film and produce their own podcasts.

The rebuilt podcast studio will be home to the creation of at least one FFA chapter podcast each month. The studio will also be available for rent to community businesses, organizations and individuals who wish to create podcasts.

93Q is a non-profit radio station started in 2015. Through their morning live community interviews they have featured over 3,000 community members ranging from law enforcement personnel, to educational leaders, to non-profit volunteers. To learn more visit www.93qradio.com.





Feeding Those in Need 112,000 LBS OF RICE DONATION TO-DATE

Yuba River Endowment board members delivered 16,000 pounds of locally grown rice to the Yuba-Sutter Food Bank in both January and December. The rice, valued at almost \$30,000, has been distributed to over a dozen Yuba County Food Pantries.

"Our motto for the Endowment is 'Local Farmers Giving Back,' and there's no better way we can help our community than by supplying our locally grown food," said Yuba River Endowment's, Al Lassaga.

Founded in 1983, the Yuba-Sutter Food Bank is leading the fight against food insecurity through community partnerships in the Yuba-Sutter area. They presently serve over 25,000 people every month and distribute over 3 million pounds of food a year.

To learn more about the Yuba-Sutter Food Bank, visit www.feedingys.org.

Meals on Wheels

\$25,000 DONATION TO BRIDGE THE GAP

The Yuba River Endowment donated \$25,000 to Meals on Wheels Yuba & Sutter Counties (MOW) to help fill a gap in funding and provide meals for some of Yuba County's most vulnerable residents.

MOW serves homebound seniors with five meals per week. The meals are nutritionally complete, overseen by a registered dietician and prepared through a partnership with local restaurants including Pete's Restaurant & Brewhouse, 2 Bits Café and Las Brasas Mexican Restaurant. The MOW volunteer who delivers the meals also performs a welfare check, provides social interaction and additional resources and referrals as needed.

MOW currently serves 120 clients in Yuba County – 61 of which came into the program during COVID. Recently the COVID relief funds ended that had been covering the additional cost.



Volunteer applications are actively being accepted. Delivery routes are completed on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday mornings. Volunteers are encouraged to commit to at least 2 to 3 hours per week, for a minimum of three months.

Bringing HOPE to Homeless Students

MJUSD PROGRAMS ENCOURAGE ATTENDANCE AND SUCCESS

The Yuba River Endowment board unanimously voted to donate \$25,000 to the Marysville Joint Unified School District's (MJUSD) HOPE Program, to assist local homeless students.

MJUSD HOPE functions as an advocate for homeless children and youth and their families. Their staff work with school sites to protect the educational rights of students experiencing homelessness allowing them to enroll in, attend, and succeed in school.

"MJUSD currently has over 540 students identified as homeless, and unfortunately that number is continuing to grow," said Amanda Book, MJUSD Homeless Advocate. "We have been blessed to receive grant funding to provide outreach and support for these students, but we must rely on community donations to implement our additional incentive programs that have proven so highly effective. The Endowment's donation ensures some of those programs will be available for next year's students."

A homeless student is defined as any child who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime



Marysville Unified staff distributed gifts, food and supplies to homeless families in December.

residence. The HOPE program was founded nine years ago and operates through the MJUSD Education Foundation. Grant funding for HOPE provides the essentials a family needs to get a student to school, such as transportation, gas, clothing, and hygiene items. Three years ago, Book implemented several additional incentive programs including "High 5" providing small prizes and gift cards when a homeless student successfully completes 5 days of school; "Hope for the Holidays" which pairs homeless students with

volunteers to purchase Christmas gifts; "Random Acts of Kindness" which provides bags of snacks and breakfast items for homeless students; and the "Extra! Extra!" program which funds a homeless student's extracurricular expenses, such as an FFA jacket, a field trip, sports equipment, or a cap and gown.

If you know of a homeless student in the Marysville Joint School District who needs help, please contact the HOPE Team Homeless Advocate at (530) 682-9494.

Thanks for the Thanks

PARTY AT THE POSSE ARENA

Volunteers from the Yuba County Search & Rescue threw a hoedown party to thank the Yuba River Endowment in July. Through multiple donations the Endowment has donated about \$80,000 to help create the large animal evacuation center and barn.



Yuba River Endowment board members pose with Yuba County Search & Rescue volunteers at the Posse Arena.

National Pumpkin Weigh Off

15 YOUTH ENTRIES KICK-OFF THE GIANT EVENT

It turned out to be a battle of Oregon growers at the 2024 National Pumpkin Weigh Off. In the end, an enormous pumpkin nicknamed "Hank the Tank," grown by Jim Sherwood of Mulino, Oregon, weighed in at 2,453 pounds to take first place in one of North America's most prestigious pumpkin contests, at Bishop's Pumpkin Farm in Wheatland, California.

Sherwood's first place win earned the top prize of \$9 per pound, for a total of \$22,077. Sherwood missed breaking the Oregon State record by a mere 17 pounds. The record was set by Steve Daletas in 2018, at 2,469 pounds.

The Weigh Off opened with the Future Farmers category sponsored by the Yuba River Endowment. 15 youth, ages seven to 17, entered their giant pumpkins. Harrison Kennedy, age seven, took home the top prize of \$1,000 for his 856 pound giant. All entrants were given an award, with the top ten splitting a total of \$3,500 in cash prizes.

Bear River Middle School's Shelli Stinson and Blake Gouker once again propagated and helped distribute over 100 giant pumpkin plants to local hopeful growers. Three of the top ten Future Farmer winners were grown from these plants.

With the highest prize pool in the world, the National Pumpkin Weigh Off attracted growers from across the United States and the world. Last year's winner was Canadian Dave Chan, of Vancouver, British Columbia.

In all, the top 25 pumpkins won cash prizes, totaling over \$50,000. The current World Record pumpkin is 2,749 pounds, grown by Travis Gienger of Minnesota.

In addition to giant pumpkins, seven additional giant vegetable categories were judged and awarded cash prizes, including bushel gourd, long gourd, tomato, marrow, sunflower, watermelon, and field pumpkin.

If you would like to learn more on potentially growing a giant next year, join our email list at www.pumpkin-weighoff.com. You will instantly receive a reply email with a link to download the '25 Tips to Growing Giant Pumpkins' and over the coming months, will receive updates when seeds or plants will be available, and how to connect with other giant pumpkin growers.



ABOVE: The top 10 Future Farmers accept their winnings, totalling \$3500.
BELOW: Harrison, age 7, takes the top prize of \$1000 with his 856 lb giant.



Oregon's Jim Sherwood took home the overall win with his 2,543 lb giant.



Rescue Mission Endures Storm Damage

ENDOWMENT DONATES \$50,000 TO ASSIST VOLUNTEERS WITH REPAIRS

During a live radio interview in April, representatives from the Yuba River Endowment surprised the Twin Cities Rescue Mission Executive Director, Aaron Walrath, with a \$50,000 donation to assist in facility repairs caused by the recent storms.

"I thought I was going to fall out of my chair," said Walrath. "We are eternally grateful for the generosity of founding local farmers who started the Mission and now we have come full circle, thanking this new group of farmers who gave \$50,000 to rebuild it!"

The Twin Cities Rescue Mission was founded in 1958 with \$5.00 each from 16 local farmers. Located at 940 14th Street in Marysville, the Mission offers meals, showers, clothes, shelter, and services to local homeless men, and men overcoming addictions. The Mission is funded solely through private donations.

High winds during a recent major storm caused significant roof and internal damage to the Mission's



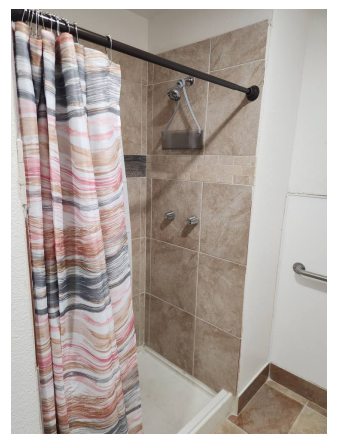
A severe spring storm tore through Yuba County, leaving massive damage to the Twin Cities Rescue Mission

dormitory building. The damage exposed significant additional work that is not covered by insurance, including electrical upgrades, asbestos and lead abatement, structural issues, and more.

"Most of us had no idea the vital role the Mission plays for our local homeless and addicted men," said Yuba River Endowment Board Member, Mike Filice. "Our community is blessed to have Aaron and the dedicated volunteers of the Mission. They are truly our unsung heroes."

"As farmers, we believe in a hand up, not a hand out," Filice said. "Hearing Aaron's success in turning the Mission's around and helping hundreds of local homeless men get off the streets and rebuild their lives is amazing, and we are honored to be a small part of helping this amazing group."

The Twin Cities Rescue Mission is actively seeking donations to the Building Restoration Fund. To donate, visit www.tcmmission.com.



ABOVE: Repairs have continued throughout the year. Asbestos, lead paint and rat infestations, slowed the work, but volunteers and donations have continued to support the efforts.



YUBA RIVER ENDOWMENT

P.O. Box 1602

Yuba City, CA 95992

Facebook.com/YubaRiverEndowment

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PERMIT # 1309



Elementary School Cooking Class Going Above & Beyond

ELLA ELEMENTARY GETS MUCH NEEDED FUNDS FOR EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES

Olivehurst's Ella Elementary School has over 550 students from K-6th grade, and has one of the poorest socioeconomic demographics in Yuba County.

With a high migrant and low income population, they have frequent issues with attendance. Staff member Joanna Leal started a culinary club after school as a way to engage students, teach life skills and give them something to look forward to and be proud of.

60 children from 2nd-6th grade are split into groups that meet twice a week for one hour after school. The kids set the culinary agenda, they work from hot plates and a microwave, and have made everything from enchiladas, to French toast, and spaghetti. The students will frequently choose not to eat the food in class because they are so excited to share it with their families. Even with a partnership with CalFresh and the YS Food Bank, Leal frequently comes out of her own pocket or puts supplies on her credit card to get enough. She presented a list of equipment and supplies needed to help take the program to a more professional and sustainable level.

The Yuba River Endowment board voted unanimously to donate the \$10,000 needed, and commends Leal for the extra effort she is putting in for these challenged children above-and-beyond what her job entails.



Yuba River Endowment board members were treated to student-made french toast during a check presentation ceremony in December.