



# YUBA RIVER ENDOWMENT

## FARMERS GIVING BACK | 2025



ABOVE: The top 10 Future Farmers pose with Trevor, age 9, who took the top prize of \$1000 with this 825.5 lb giant.

BELOW: Local grower, Karl Parker, took 14th overall, and his son took 3rd place in the Future Farmers!



### *Growing Big in Our Own Backyard* NATIONAL PUMPKIN WEIGH OFF FEATURES LOCAL YOUTH

The third annual National Pumpkin Weigh Off at Bishop's Pumpkin Farm opened with the Future Farmers category, where 12 youth, ages seven to 17, entered their giant pumpkins. Trevor Dyson, age 9, took home the top prize of \$1,000 for his 825.5 pound giant. Four of the Future Farmer winners were from the Yuba-Sutter area.

Big thanks to Bear River Middle School and the Gryn family for helping to propagate and distribute over 150 giant pumpkin plants for local growers.

An enormous pumpkin nicknamed "Fordzilla," grown by Russ Pugh, of Eugene, Oregon, weighed 2,204.5

pounds to take the \$15,000 first place prize. With the highest prize pool in the world at \$63,000, the Weigh Off attracted growers from across the United States.

If you'd like to try and grow a giant pumpkin, visit [pumpkinweighoff.com](http://pumpkinweighoff.com).



The top 5 giants from the 2025 National Pumpkin Weigh Off.

# Yuba County Farmers Giving Back

## MEET THE YUBA RIVER ENDOWMENT MEMBERS

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.

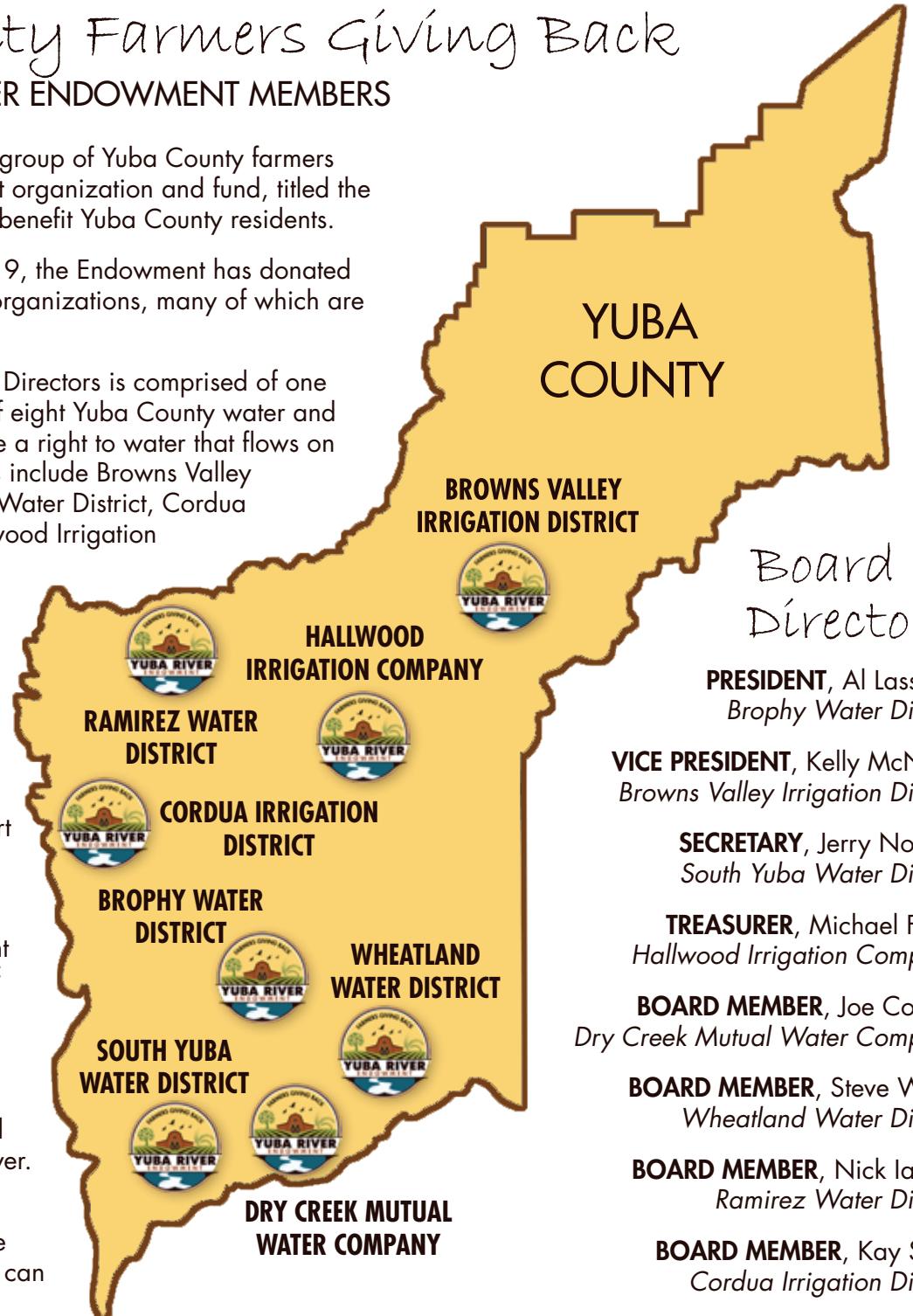
Since formation in late 2019, the Endowment has donated over \$1.4 million to local organizations, many of which are featured in this newsletter.

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!



# 144,000 POUNDS OF LOCALLY GROWN RICE DONATED



## Feeding Those in Need

### 2025 NEED WAS GREATEST SINCE COVID

serve over 277,000 meals every month and distribute over 3.6 million pounds of food a year.

"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.

To learn more about the Yuba-Sutter Food Bank, visit [www.feedingys.org](http://www.feedingys.org).



Photos from some of the nine donations, each totalling 16,000 pounds of locally grown rice, headed to the plate of locals in need.

# INVESTING IN YUBA COUNTY'S FUTURE



ABOVE: A record-setting eight students received their California State Degree in 2025.

## Lindhurst High FFA

### A YEAR OF HISTORY-MAKING MAGIC!

In addition to having the most Endowment scholarship award winners, in 2025 eight Lindhurst High FFA students were approved for the California State Degree, the highest honor an FFA member can achieve at the high school level. Get this! Since Lindhurst FFA started in 1975, the chapter has earned 23 State FFA Degrees. With last year's record-setting achievement, it brought their historical total to 31 in just one year!

Check out all these "firsts" in Lindhurst High School history:

- Regional FFA Officer
- State FFA Nominating Committee Member
- Sacramento Leadership Experience Attendee
- Sectional LDE Speaking Champion
- Regional LDE Speaking Champion
- State LDE Speaking Reserve Champion
- Record number of eight State FFA Degrees
- Expanding to a third full-time FTE Agriculture Teacher
- Sectional Outstanding Agriculture Program
- Sectional & Regional Outstanding Plant Science Program
- First Sectional FFA Officer in 20 years and only the second in our history

Lindhurst has also seen record numbers of students participating in FFA and SAE activities, including 27 students attending the State FFA Leadership Conference.



RIGHT: 27 Lindhurst High FFA members attended the 2025 State Conference



ABOVE: Endowment scholarship recipient, Erika Rivera-Vargas, took Reserve State Champion in the El Credo De La FFA



ABOVE: Board Member, Steve Springer, accepts the Lindhurst FFA Honorary Degree for the Yuba River Endowment.



## Wheatland High FFA ANOTHER BANNER YEAR

Wheatland FFA had another banner year, thanks in part, to a \$25,000 donation from the Endowment in 2025, bringing the total donation to the group to \$120,000 to-date!

In 2025, 16 students attended the State Conference (photo above), four students received their California State Degree, and three students received their American Degree. Requirements for the American Degree include:

- Earned the State FFA Degree and been an active member for at least three years.
- Completed at least 3 years (540 hours) of agricultural education.
- Invested or earned at least \$10,000 through their Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) program, or a combination of investment and hours worked.
- Demonstrated outstanding leadership abilities and community service by completing at least 50 hours of community involvement.
- Maintained a record of scholastic achievement and uphold the ideals of the FFA.

LEFT: Wheatland High FFA American Degree recipients Abbi Oliver, Cody Frerichs, and Kelsie Gardner



## Marysville High FFA RECORDS BROKEN AT STATE & NATIONALS

Marysville High FFA had a fantastic showing at Fair, State & Nationals. Pictured above are their students who participated in Fair. Big shout out to Austin Johnson, Diana Crisp, Ethan Gibbs, and Jessica D'Agostini for qualifying for the Final Championship Drive; Austin Johnson for bringing home the Supreme Champion Market Hog title; and Jessica D'Agostini for winning 3rd overall market steer.

A record-setting 13 students received their State Degree at State Conference, including Lillian Boom, Leslie Cruz, Caleb Gray, Ariella Miller, Gunner W. Hyatt, Brody Lowe, Jackson Messick, Haddie Morris, Dalton Oilar, Dylan A. Pruitt, Ariona Thomas, Lilyanan J. Vining, and Wyatt O Wright. Also at State, Nicolaus Bump won State Proficiency for Outdoor Recreation.

Marysville High FFA also celebrated the success of two students named as new Sectional Officers, Diana Crisp as Vice President and Gracie Oliver as Secretary.

And drumroll please, at Nationals seven students received their American Degree!



ABOVE Marysville High FFA American Degree recipients Jacob Flavell, Alex Huerta, Christian Cisneros, Makenna Book, Ava Carberry, Claire Goss, and Taelynn DeMott



ABOVE: Six Wheatland Bear River FFA students attended National Convention in Indianapolis.



ABOVE: State winners! Wheatland Bear River FFA celebrated five state champions and three overall team wins. Headed to Nationals!

## Wheatland Bear River Middle School FFA NOW ONE OF THE TOP MIDDLE SCHOOL FFA PROGRAMS IN THE COUNTRY!

Wheatland Bear River FFA — middle school students — racked up as many or more awards and wins as our high school teams!

Six students qualified for Nationals! Congratulations to:

- Audrey Kay and Zachaary DeBrito for placing 6th in the nation in the Environmental Sciences/Natural Resources Division 2 at the National FFA Agriscience Fair.
- Charleigh Luce for earning 9th place in the nation in the Plant Systems Division 1 at the National FFA Agriscience Fair.
- Addison Nystrom and Keira Rumaldo for earning 5th place on the National Stage in the FFA Agriscience Fair – Food Products and Processing Division 2.
- 3rd in the nation in Agriscience Fair Animal Systems Division 1! Congratulations Abbagail Baker.



ABOVE: Endowment board members stand with Bear River FFA students in front of their brand new ride! Courtesy of a \$25,000 donation from the Endowment, and a matching California Department of Food & Agriculture grant.



LEFT: In her first year growing giant pumpkins, Wheatland Bear River FFA student, Brielle Gryn, was the 2023 National Pumpkin Weigh Off Future Farmer winner, with a pumpkin weighing exactly 1,000 lbs. In 2025, Brielle moved up to the main event, and even though her pumpkin was disqualified due to rot spots, it weighed in at an impressive 1,617.5 lbs! Just think what she'll do next year!



## Creating a Podcast YUBA COUNTY FFA TEAMS GET IN-FRONT-OF & BEHIND THE CAMERA

From January through April, each of the four Yuba County FFA programs took a month to create a podcast! In 2024, the Endowment helped 93Q Community Radio rebuild their podcast studio. In exchange, the 93Q team agreed to work with our FFA groups to teach them — soup to nuts — how to create a podcast.

This unique opportunity let the students create their concept and scripts, interview, edit and help finalize the video. Some even added their own commercials! Super cute.

TOP OF PAGE: Bear River Middle School FFA in the studio.;  
RIGHT: Lindhurst FFA's podcast team in action.; BELOW: Wheatland High FFA joins the Endowment live to talk about their podcast.



Watch the  
podcasts!



Scan to watch  
Lindhurst  
High FFA's  
podcast!



Scan to watch  
Wheatland  
High FFA's  
podcast!



Scan to watch  
Bear River  
Middle School  
FFA's podcast!

# \$100,000 in Scholarships Awarded...Again!

## 52 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 third-year scholarship fund from \$75,000 to \$100,000 again, helping 52 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 2025.

140 students applied and 52 were interviewed by a panel of Endowment board members. All 52 were given awards, including 26 high school seniors and 26 students continuing at colleges or trade schools.

Elizabeth Silva of Lindhurst High School was awarded the Merle Collins scholarship of \$5,000. Logan Beach, who is continuing at Chico State, was awarded the first \$5,000 Roger Murray scholarship.



Lindhurst High scholarship recipients



Marysville Charter Academy for the Arts scholarship recipients



Wheatland High scholarship recipients



Marysville High scholarship recipients



Scan to learn more about the contributions of Merle Collins & Roger Murray to Yuba County's water infrastructure.



## 2025 Scholarship Recipients



## Historic Loma Rica Hall

### COMMUNITY RALLIES TO RESTORE THEIR LANDMARK PROPERTY

Built "by the community for the community" more than a century ago, the 30-by-60-foot, two-story building has long served as a gathering place for youth organizations, town meetings, classes, celebrations of life, and wedding receptions... including our very own Endowment Board Member, Steve Springer, who celebrated his wedding reception there in 1979!

Also known as Grange Hall No. 802, the venue was constructed in 1923 and officially incorporated as a non-profit community center in 1948.

In August, the Hall volunteers, including Anita and Chuck Baker, launched a community campaign to bring this old gal back to life. Painting, gutters, porch repair, and much more were desperately needed.

The Endowment loves projects with "skin in the game", and the Loma Rica Hall volunteers had skin, blood and sweat in this game. They were able to raise enough funds from the community, and \$10,000 from the Endowment, to complete all needed repairs, plus a face lift, updated interiors, and a new sign.



## Sparkling Creativity & Competition for Local Youth MOBILE WELDING UNIT LETS YUBA COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ACHIEVE



In February, Yuba River Endowment Board Members presented the Yuba County Office of Education with \$12,000 to purchase a mobile welding unit for the Yuba County Career Preparatory Charter School. Thank you to their instructor, Yuba County Supervisor Renick House, for making this dream a reality for students.

Mobile welding competitions have gained steam in the past few years and the YCCPC students were unable to compete. The gift has been put to good use already as you see in the photos!

## A Year of Extreme Need THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FOOD PANTRY

In October, the Endowment heard from the First Presbyterian Church Food Pantry of Marysville. The government shutdown has hit their population hard, and they are now serving 160 families each week at their food pantry distribution, up from 125 earlier in the year.

The church was founded in 1850 and is celebrating their 175th year in service. Their pantry is located at 1905-C Covillaud Street in Marysville, and distributes each Friday. The pantry is staffed by

volunteers and funded through donations from church members and community grants.

RIGHT: The Endowment surprised the First Presbyterian Church with a \$7500 donation, the largest to-date.



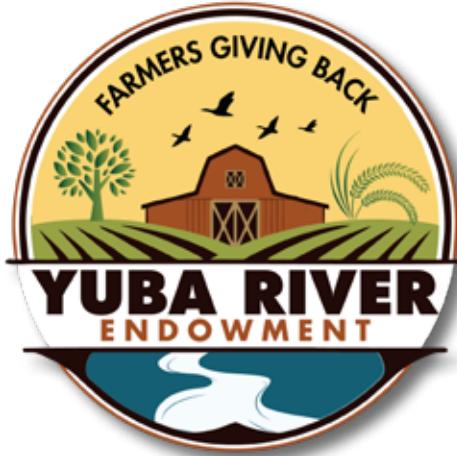
ABOVE: The Endowment has been supporting the food pantry since 2020, here are a couple of our favorite pics!

## Bringing HOPE to Homeless Students MJUSD PROGRAMS ENCOURAGE ATTENDANCE AND SUCCESS

Also in October, the Endowment donated another \$7,500 to the Marysville Joint Unified School District's (MJUSD) HOPE Program, to assist local homeless students. There are currently 607 homeless students in the District (up from 540 last year).

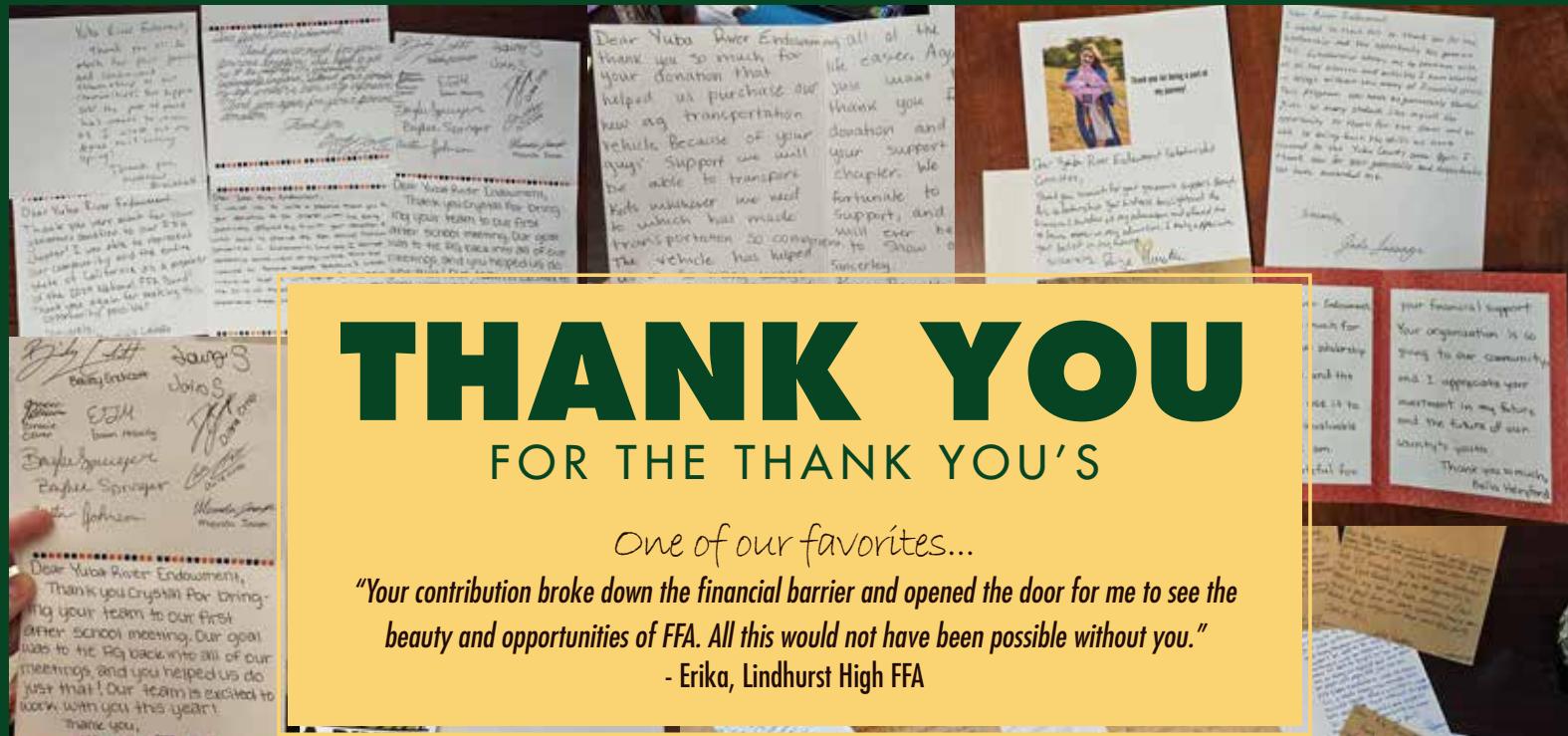
The funds will again be used for the four HOPE programs not covered through grants, supplying snack bags, attendance rewards, holiday supplies and supplemental funds for homeless students to participate in things like FFA, cheerleading, sports and attend Shady Creek.





**YUBA RIVER ENDOWMENT**  
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# THANK YOU

FOR THE THANK YOU'S

One of our favorites...

*"Your contribution broke down the financial barrier and opened the door for me to see the beauty and opportunities of FFA. All this would not have been possible without you."*

- Erika, Lindhurst High FFA

