



YUBA RIVER ENDOWMENT

FARMERS GIVING BACK | 2023

Supporting Local Veterans

TWO SURPRISE DONATIONS FOR THE STAND DOWN



During the Yuba Sutter Veterans Stand Down's January 2023 meeting, Endowment board members surprised the volunteers with a donation of \$10,000 to cover another 12 months of the organization's Marysville office rent.

You can imagine how surprised the Stand Down volunteer's were when again at their October meeting, the Endowment was back with a \$25,000 donation to cover expenses for the annual Stand Down event and 2024 rent!

The Stand Down volunteers provide services to veterans and veteran's dependents, including medical transportation, rehabilitation, housing, meals, shelter, burial costs, counseling services, and connecting vets to State and Federal service programs. They hold an an-

nual multi-day Stand Down event bringing all these services to one location. The 2023 Stand Down was held at the Yuba-Sutter Fairgrounds in August, and served over 650 veterans.

"It's an honor to help our local veterans with this donation," said Endowment Board Member, Mike Filice. "Without their sacrifice and service, we would not have the freedoms we enjoy today."



Stand Down volunteers were surprised with a second donation in 2023.

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.

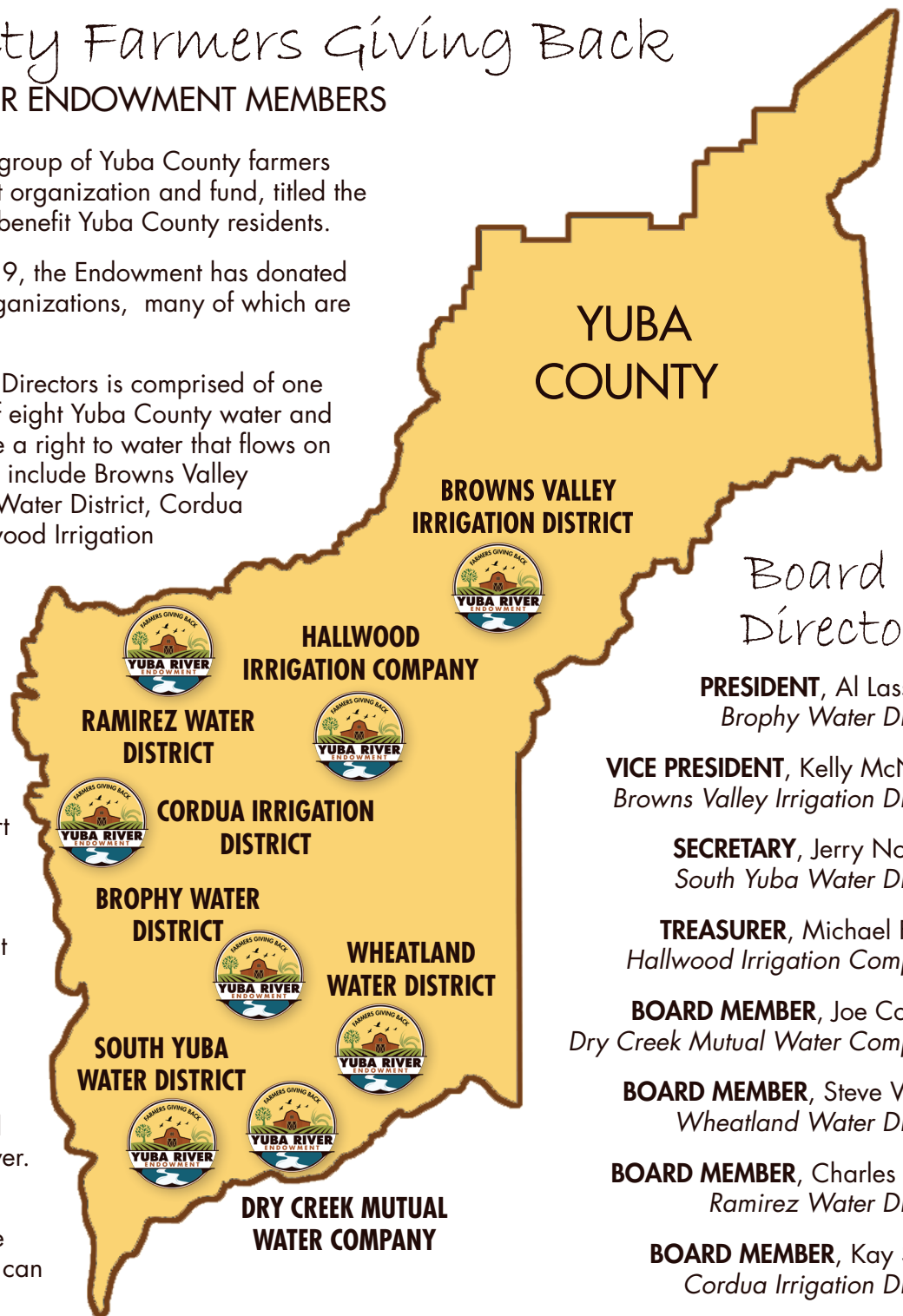
Since formation in late 2019, the Endowment has donated over \$650,000 to local organizations, many of which are featured in this newsletter.

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!



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*



Ag in the Classroom

TOWER GARDENS FLOURISHING

In June, the Endowment donated \$11,000 to fund six tower gardens for Wheatland Elementary school. Members of the newly formed Wheatland Elementary Parent Teacher Committee coordinated this hands-on, indoor, classroom gardening project.

"Agriculture is the backbone of our Wheatland community, but our elementary school does not have the space to do an outdoor garden on campus," said Wheatland Elementary PTC Secretary, Angela Waltz. "We love the idea of having these Tower Gardens that can be fully functional, maintained, and secure within the classrooms. Students will have the ability to experience how plants grow via a hands-on approach from seed to harvest."

Using aeroponics, Tower Gardens grow plants with only water and nutrients rather than dirt. On average, aeroponic gardening grows three times faster than traditional gardening, with 30% greater yields. The Tower Garden has a vertical, compact design, that requires as little as 10% of the space and water as a traditional garden. The Tower Garden's three-tier system is designed for planting items like herbs, mini sunflowers and strawberries in the top; nasturtiums, mustard greens and snap peas in the middle; and chili peppers, cherry tomatoes, pumpkins and watermelons in the bottom.

The Endowment's funding will cover the purchase

In just a few short weeks, the tower gardens at Wheatland Elementary School were paying off!



of six Tower Gardens and lifetime curriculum access for the nearly 450 students of Wheatland Elementary's six grade levels – preschool, transitional kindergarten, kindergarten, 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades. The curriculum is grade and age specific, and includes over 30 lessons in literacy, math and science.



Mrs. Lake's 3rd grade students enjoying salads they made using the greens grown in their new classroom Tower Garden!



Wheatland High scholarship recipients



Lindhurst High scholarship recipients

Over \$70,000 in Scholarships Awarded

32 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 first year scholarship fund from \$50,000 helping 20 students, to \$71,500 helping 32 students.

The scholarship application was launched in late 2022. To be eligible to apply, the applicant's primary residence needed to be in Yuba County, or the applicant needed 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 2023.

100 students applied by the scholarship's January 31st deadline. As a reward, every student who applied was given a \$10 Dutch Brothers gift card. In late March, 32 of the applicants were interviewed by a panel of Endowment board members.

"Taking part in the interview process was a phenomenal experience," said Yuba River En-

dowment board member, Kelly McNally. "Whether they were heading to trade school or college, they were all very focused and driven. It was so inspiring to hear their goals and their passion to come back and better Yuba County."

The 32 scholarship winners include 21 high school seniors going on to higher education; two students attending trade school to be linemen; two students continuing at community colleges; and seven students continuing at four-year colleges.

Of the high school seniors, two are from the Marysville Charter Academy for the Arts, three from Wheatland High, seven from Lindhurst High and nine from Marysville High.

The 32 awards were distributed as twenty \$2500 scholarships, seven \$2000 scholarships, and five \$1500 scholarships. Endowment representatives attended the scholarship recognition events at each of the Yuba County high schools prior to graduation. All

How to Apply!

Access the online application at www.farmersgivingback.com

ELIGIBILITY

Your primary residence must be in Yuba County, or you must be currently enrolled at a high school in Yuba County.

You must be planning to attend, or continue at, a trade school, junior college, or college in the fall of 2024. No minimum GPA required to apply.

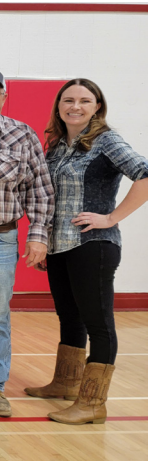
TIMELINE

Application deadline is Jan. 31, 2024

QUESTIONS?

Please email scholarships@farmersgivingback.com

students who meet the eligibility criteria are encouraged to apply again now. The 2024 scholarship deadline is January 31st, and the board unanimously voted to increase this year's scholarship pool to \$75,000!

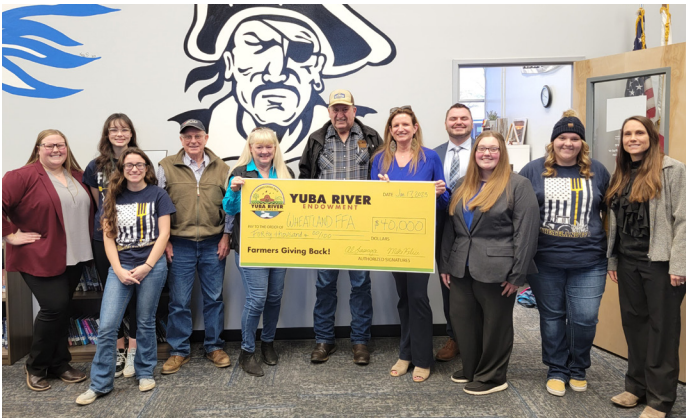


Marysville Charter Academy for the Arts scholarship recipients

Marysville High scholarship recipients

2023 Scholarship Recipients are Now Attending:





Wheatland High FFA SURPRISE \$40,000 DONATION!

During a special scholarship promotion event on campus in January, members of the Yuba River Endowment board surprised the Wheatland High School FFA advisors and superintendent with a \$40,000 donation. Half the funds will be dedicated to cover out-of-pocket expenses for FFA students to attend Field Day and State competitions for the current school year, and the other half to help with program expenses.

The funds for Wheatland FFA will go towards farm supplies, jackets and travel costs for their 320 FFA students to participate in their upcoming field trips and State competition.

"FFA at Wheatland High School is a vital part of our ag program, but we are not able to cover out-of-pocket expenses for students to attend competitions," said Wheatland High School FFA Advisor, Melissa Taylor. "The Yuba River Endowment funding will allow all of our students who qualify for FFA events to attend those events, and also allow us to complete much needed infrastructure projects at our school farm."

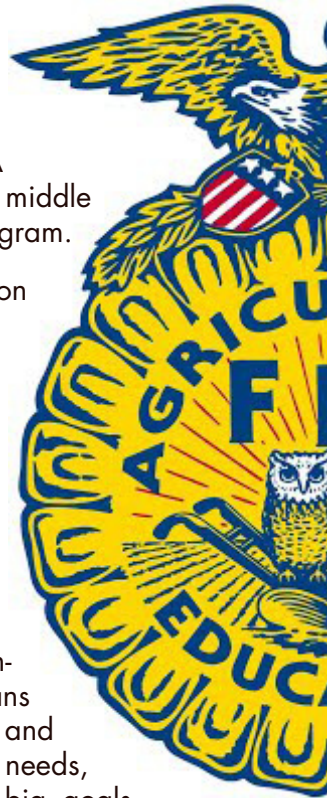


Bear River FFA MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM ROCKS

In October, the Endowment presented Bear River Middle School FFA with \$20,000 to go towards club expenses and to help 15 of their students attend the 2023 National FFA Convention. Bear River is one of two middle schools in the region with an FFA program.

This year's National FFA Convention was held in Indianapolis.

"Having only formed our chapter seven years ago, and having one of the only middle school chapters in California, Bear River FFA students are doing fantastic," said Bear River FFA Advisor, Shelli Stenson. "With the Endowment's help, we took 18 students to Nationals last year, and 13 got on the winner's stage. The Endowment's continued support means our students don't have to slow down and try to raise funds for their basic travel needs, and we can continue to shoot for big goals again this year."



Paragon Charter Academy YUBA COUNTY'S SECOND MIDDLE SCHOOL

In March, the Endowment surprised the Paragon Collegiate Academy middle school FFA advisor and students with a \$10,000 donation during their FFA meeting. The funds will be dedicated to cover out-of-pocket expenses for FFA students to attend Field Day and State competitions for the current school year, and to help with program expenses.

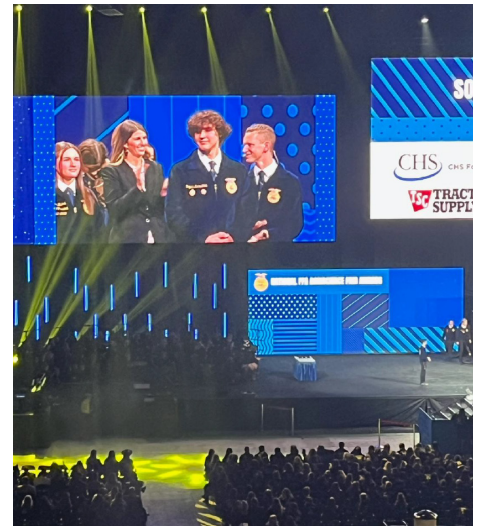
Marysville High FFA

A YEAR OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS MADE POSSIBLE

In November, the Endowment donated another \$40,000 to Marysville High FFA, the largest FFA in the region, with 435 members currently.


As with the previous donation, half will go towards the students' National Convention attendance and half towards attending Career and Leadership Development Events (CDE and LDE).

"The Endowment's previous support helped us send 20 students to National Convention," said Marysville High FFA Advisor, Alex Nisson. "Those students were able to visit three different states, two colleges, three ag tours, many sightseeing adventures, and more. The Endowment's continued support means our students' out-of-pocket costs can remain reasonable, so more students will have the opportunity to participate."



Thank you!

During their annual dinner, Marysville High FFA awarded the Endowment an Honorary Degree.



Paragon FFA MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM LAUNCHES

The California Association of Future Farmers of America amended their constitution at the 2017 State FFA Leadership Conference to allow for middle school membership. Paragon Academy joins Bear River as the second middle school program in Yuba County.

"It's been a great start for our Paragon Collegiate Academy FFA program, all 49 of our seventh and eighth graders are now involved," said FFA Advisor, Kimberly King. "The Yuba River Endowment funding will allow us to participate in more field day events, and build out our floral program infrastructure in our new greenhouse."



National Pumpkin Weigh Off

ENDOWMENT SPONSORS LOCAL YOUTH CATEGORY

Established in Vacaville at the Nut Tree in 1921, the National Pumpkin Weigh Off moved to Bishop's Pumpkin Farm in Wheatland this year.

A record number of growers from across the United States and Canada participated, vying for the highest prize pool in the world.

The Endowment sponsored the opportunity for local 4-H and FFA students to participate. Bear River Middle School FFA Advisor, Shelli Stenson, propagated and distributed 50 giant pumpkin seeds.

The Gryn/Middleton family (see photo) took the top youth prize, weighing in at 1,000 pounds. Not bad for their first ever attempt!

Overall first place went to Dave Chan of Vancouver, British Columbia, with a 2,212 giant. With a \$9 "pay-by-the-pound" award, Dave won \$19,908. In all, the top 25 pumpkins won cash prizes, totaling over \$50,000.

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



ABOVE: The Gryn girls of Rio Oso pose with their 1,000 lb giant, winner of the Youth Competition.



LEFT: Dave Chan of Vancouver, British Columbia won with a 2,212 lb giant.

BELOW: The top five heaviest pumpkins on display at Bishop's Pumpkin Farm.



Sprinklers Make All the Difference

OLIVEHURST LINDA LITTLE LEAGUE UPGRADES

In August, the Endowment donated \$4,000 towards the Olivehurst Linda Little League project to install sprinklers for the softball field.

Since inception, the softball field has been hand watered by volunteers, who frequently forgot to either turn on or turn off the water, flooding the field several times.

Volunteers worked fast before the fall season to install the system. As thanks, they are displaying an Endowment banner at the field.

Sprinkler system funding provided by the **Yuba River Endowment**.
Local farmers giving back!

Making Christmas Special

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FOOD PANTRY

In December, the Endowment presented the First Presbyterian Church Food Pantry of Marysville with Christmas gifts for the children they serve, and an additional cash donation, totaling \$2500. Each child received a toy and a hat/mitten set.

"We always try and give each child a present in their holiday food basket," said Pantry Coordinator, Judy McLeod. "For several years now the Endowment has answered our prayers with a donation of the gifts and additional funds. The need is as great this year as in the past. We are truly humbled by the Endowment's generosity."

During their weekly food distribution event, the First Presbyterian Church Food Pantry serves 100 to 120 families, and about 40 homeless. The pantry is located at 1905-C Covillaud Street in Marysville, and distributes each Friday from 10am – 12pm. The pantry is staffed by volunteers and funded through donations from church members and community grants.

"Our motto for the Endowment is 'Local Farmers Giving Back'," said local farmer and Yuba River Endowment Board Member, Steve Waltz.



"As farmers, there is no better way for us to give back than to feed folks during the holidays and make sure that as many children as possible have a special gift to open on Christmas morning."



Christmas Angels

BRINGING JOY TO FOOTHILLS' FAMILIES

Also in December, the Endowment donated \$5,000 to the Yuba Foothills Agricultural Communities Association (YFACA) of Dobbins to aid with their annual Christmas Family Food Box distribution helping 50 needy foothill families identified through school sign-ups and referrals.

The all-volunteer YFACA has roots in the Dobbins-Oregon House communities dating back to 1949, with a commitment to helping their neighbors while keeping an agricultural focus.



Helping the Homeless

REGIONAL EMERGENCY SHELTER TEAM

In March, the Endowment surprised the Regional Emergency Shelter Team (REST) Director and Board President live on air with a \$30,000 donation to pay off the group's van loan – the largest single donation REST has ever received.

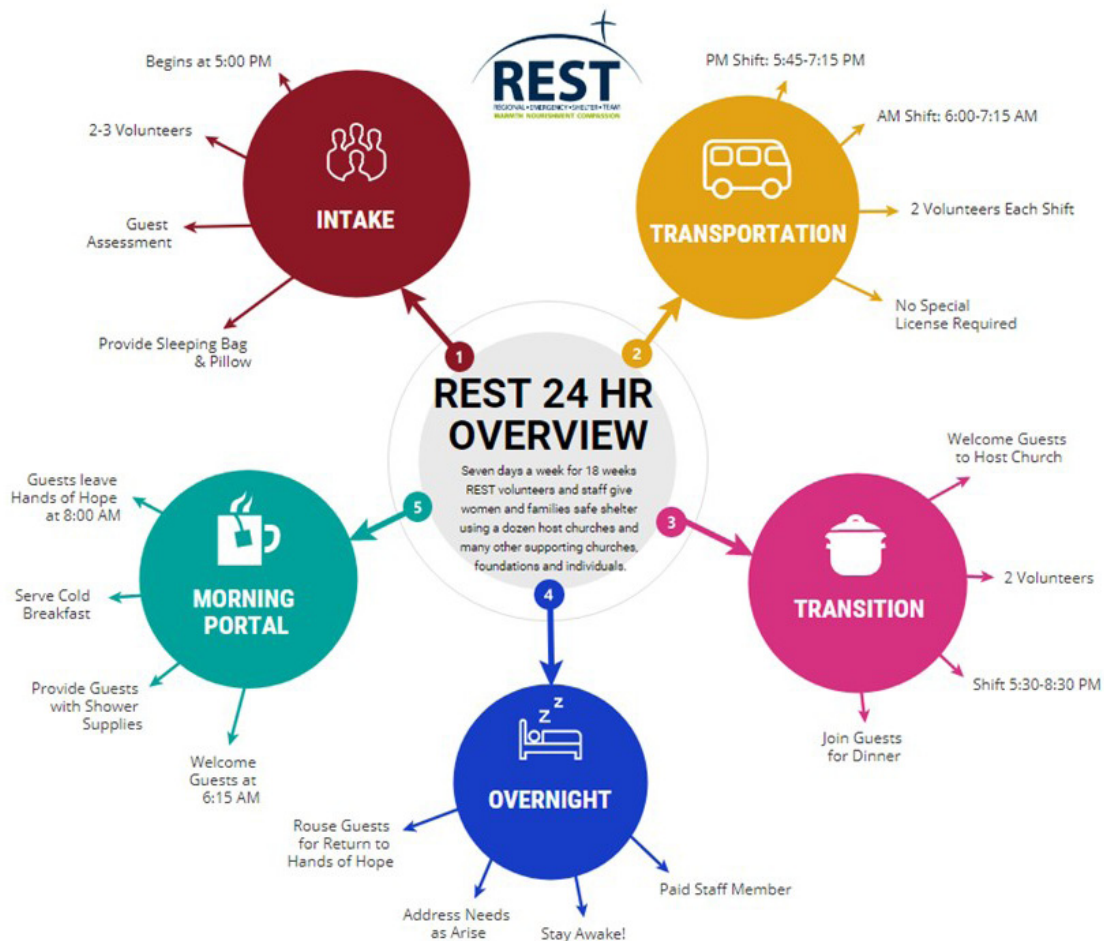
"I instantly got goosebumps," said REST Director, Nick Anderson. "We desperately needed the van to transport people from Hands of Hope to our partner churches each night. We had enough to put a down payment and we had faith our community would continue to support our efforts enough to eventually pay off the van. This donation from the Yuba River Endowment is nothing short of a miracle."

REST partners with local churches and faith-based organizations to provide cold weather shelter and warm meals to families, single women and families who are experiencing homeless in the Yuba-Sutter area. They take an active role in helping participants become housed and connect with other vital community resources to get back on their feet. REST fills over 2,800 beds each winter and provides an equal number of hot evening meals and morning breakfasts.



"Most of us had no idea the vital role REST plays for our local homeless women and children," said Yuba River Endowment Board Member, Mike Filice. "Our community is blessed to have the dedicated men and women of REST and their partner organizations. They are truly our unsung heroes."

"As farmers, we believe in a hand up, not a hand out," Filice said. "Hearing REST's success stories of local homeless women getting off the streets and rebuilding their lives is amazing. We are honored to be a small part of helping this amazing group with their mission."



During the coldest months, REST volunteers provide 24 hour shelter and access to services for local women and families.

Easy Access to Water

WATER FILLING STATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

In November, almost 4,000 reusable water bottles were distributed to 13 schools throughout Yuba County to promote recently installed bottle filling stations.

In 2021, Yuba Water Agency facilitated a grant to install 120 touchless water bottle filling stations at all Yuba County public schools, benefitting more than 13,000 students. The Yuba River Endowment sponsored the remaining \$10,000 needed for the project and to provide each student a reusable bottle and informational flyer about Yuba County's water system.

"This is a win-win to help conserve water," Nore said. "These bottle filling stations are powered with sensors so there's no running water if you're not using it. The waste piece is taken away."

Water bottle filling stations help to reduce the use of single-use plastics in schools and decrease pressure that water bottles put on the recycling industry.

"Installing water-filling stations at school sites is an innovative and environmentally sustainable approach to providing students with accessible drinking water. Investing in our students and staff in this capacity helps solve an out-of-date water source and provides much needed hydration to our students," Yuba Water officials said previously.



ABOVE: A Yuba County student and teacher use their reusable water bottles at a newly installed water filling station.

BELOW: In November, community volunteers distributed almost 4,000 of the reusable water bottles to local schools.



Thank you!

The Yuba River Endowment was honored to be voted one of Yuba-Sutter's Favorite non-profits in 2023!

Voting was open during the month of July, and over two dozen local non-profits were nominated. Only one was named "Best" and two were named "Favorite".

The recognition speaks to the phenomenal amount of great work our Yuba County farmers have accomplished in just a short few years.

Since inception in late 2019, the Endowment has given back over \$650,000 to aid Yuba County charities.





YUBA RIVER ENDOWMENT

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The True Unsung Heroes of Our Community

TRAUMA INTERVENTION PROGRAM GETS ANOTHER HUGE SURPRISE DONATION

During a live radio interview in December, the Endowment surprised the Yuba-Sutter Trauma Intervention Program volunteers with a \$20,000 donation – the second sizeable donation in as many years.

Yuba-Sutter TIP currently has about 25 volunteers who provide immediate emotional and practical support to survivors of tragedy. They cover both Yuba and Sutter counties, serving all 35 emergency agencies and Adventist Rideout Hospital. TIP volunteers are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and respond to all types of tragedies, some of which include accidents, suicides, homicides, drownings and fires. There are currently 14 regional chapters of TIP in the nation, serving over 250 cities. The Yuba-Sutter TIP chapter is the only one completely funded by donations.

“To say we were shocked is an understatement,” said TIP Director, Lisamarie Helmer. “We have been able to accomplish some great things with the Endowment’s first donation. We are extremely grateful the Endowment has once again ensured this amazing organization maintains a solid financial foundation.”

“Since learning of the vital role TIP volunteers play for our local first responders, we were eager to help them accomplish their goals,” said Yuba River Endowment Board Member, Jerry Norene. “Our community is blessed to have a TIP chapter, and these dedicated men and women. They are truly our unsung heroes.”



With part of the Endowment’s first donation, TIP created a bound Resource Guide for local citizens in crisis.

