



SANTA BARBARA
FOUNDATION

COUNTY CONNECTIONS

ARTS & CULTURE IN SANTA BARBARA COUNTY



OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2018
Youth Interactive, Grace Fisher Foundation,
Towbes Fund for the Performing Arts & More

A MESSAGE FROM RONALD V. GALLO, Ed.D. PRESIDENT & CEO

I am excited that we are devoting this 4th quarter report to the arts. Not just to express the joy and gratitude we have for those individuals and organizations in our Santa Barbara County communities that – often against great odds – consistently bring beauty into our lives, but also because the arts are vital and connected to everything good we strive to achieve.

From the very dawn of humankind, there has been the impulse to express love, connectivity to others and nature, hopes, and fears through a multitude of media. It is, quite simply, a part of being human. As a species we have the most evolved capacity to create, entertain, and communicate through arts in all its forms. That is both a blessing and a responsibility; the responsibility being an obligation to celebrate and support the arts and impress on each successive generation, their importance to our survival.

With the discord and dangers that seem to be everywhere around the planet today, we have never needed all forms of artistic expression more. Where debate and point-counterpoint discussions can fail to persuade, the arts can and often do provide an alternative way for difficult subjects to be approached; one that has the power all at once to educate, reveal truth, and lift spirits.

We are fortunate that the communities of our county have understood the importance of the arts, and that's why, for the number of people who inhabit this part of the Central Coast, we have a staggering amount of offerings, and of exceedingly high quality. From internationally-known institutions like the Music Academy of the West and CAMA, to the ingenious and consistently excellent offerings of the Solvang Festival

Theater and Pacific Conservatory Theatre in North Santa Barbara County, to grassroots and community ventures like VIVA EL ARTE and Youth Interactive, we are literally and figuratively humming nearly every day of the year.

The Santa Barbara Foundation has from its very beginning been an enthusiastic supporter of the arts. Indeed, one of the major motivations of our founding father, Colonel Max Fleischmann, for starting a community foundation was to preserve music. Today, the Santa Barbara Foundation continues to cultivate support for the arts throughout the county, in a variety of ways. Thanks to the generosity and foresight of the late Michael Towbes, we administer the Towbes Fund for the Performing Arts, which last year distributed nearly \$290,000 to over 25 arts organizations. We encourage our donors to support the arts through their Donor Advised Funds and they do so – in the millions of dollars – each year. We have been a quiet but major funder of an extraordinary collaborative effort, the Santa Barbara County Creative Communities Project, which has brought together over two dozen arts groups to create a master plan for the long-term support of the arts in our communities.

In this issue we highlight a small sample of the myriad of efforts to bring arts into our schools, into our neighborhoods, into our lives. Each of them inspires us. We are grateful for their passion, talents, doggedness, and empathy. Without them, we would be poorer in so many meaningful ways. With them, we achieve a level of civility and togetherness that makes living in this county such a great joy.



THANK YOU TO ALL WHO ATTENDED WE STAND WITH SBC EVENTS



October 25 and November 8 marked two special days in 2018 for the Foundation. During the We Stand with Santa Barbara County events, we gathered with friends and community leaders to unveil the Santa Barbara Foundation's new five-year strategic priorities. The Foundation is excited to move forward with these new priorities and continue its support of the nonprofit sector and Santa Barbara County's most vulnerable populations and working families.

PHOTO: Guests mingle at the We Stand with Santa Barbara County events on October 25 held at the Santa Barbara Zoo (bottom right) and on November 8 at the Presqu'ile Winery (top left).

The Foundation's reveal of its strategic priorities came after 18 months of rigorous planning, gathering data, and meeting with community leaders and local stakeholders. Over the next five years, the Foundation will continue its support of organizations providing resources to address basic needs, and in focus areas that include childcare, workforce development, and workforce housing.

PHOTO: Members of the nonprofit community gathered to learn about the Foundation's new strategic priorities.



MICHAEL TOWBES' LEGACY OF GIVING LIVES ON

By Sam Waterstone

Few individuals have impacted a region as much as Michael Towbes has Santa Barbara County. A beloved businessman, philanthropist and community leader, Towbes embodied values that we hold dear: He believed in respect, equality, and working hard to help make his local community – and the world – a better place.

Towbes passed away in April 2017 at the age of 87, and is dearly missed by all who knew him, as well as those who benefitted from his extraordinary generosity. Fortunately, his legacy of giving lives on in programs that support the arts, promote sustainability, and help those in need.

Towbes was a treasured member of our Santa Barbara Foundation family. He served as trustee and chairman of the board for the Foundation, and was named the 1994 Man of the Year. A major advocate for the arts, he set up the Towbes Fund for the Performing Arts (TFPA), a community grant program managed by the Santa Barbara Foundation. In 2018, the Foundation awarded \$289,300 to 26 performing arts organizations through the TFPA grant program.

“Mike understood well the connection between the arts and a civil society,” said Ron Gallo, President and CEO of the Santa Barbara Foundation. “He knew that the arts not only lift one’s spirits and help us get in touch with our humanity, but they can be a powerful but subtle communicator of important ideas and community issues. We and communities throughout Santa Barbara County will be forever grateful to him for deciding that augmenting the Towbes Fund for Performing Arts would be a priority of his estate.”

In addition to his volunteerism with the Santa Barbara Foundation, Towbes served on myriad local nonprofit boards. He spent 27 years on the board of Cottage Hospital, including 5 years as chair, and served as president of Laguna Blanca School and Montecito Union School.

He also served as a board member of the Scholarship Foundation of Santa Barbara, the Santa Barbara Center for

the Performing Arts, the UCSB Economic Forecast Project, the Housing Trust Fund of Santa Barbara, the UCSB Foundation, the Foundation for Santa Barbara City College, Lotusland, and the National Multiple Sclerosis Society (Southern California & Nevada Chapter), amongst others.

Towbes’s devotion to serving California’s Central Coast went far beyond traditional philanthropy – his community-

“The Towbes Fund is a testament to Mike's endless generosity and his devotion to the Santa Barbara Community.”

-KRISTEN SULLIVAN

focused business endeavors played a significant role in shaping Santa Barbara County. He founded The Towbes Group, a large commercial and residential property management and development firm that emphasizes sustainability and philanthropy. Many of their residential properties are dedicated to affordable workforce housing and senior living facilities. The organization runs a “Give Where You Live” fundraising program, which combines public and private resources to create opportunities for local people struggling with poverty. Currently, the program benefits three local nonprofits: Future Leaders of America in Ventura, Guardian Scholars in Santa Barbara, and Community Action Commission in Santa Maria.

Additionally, Towbes and his late wife, Gail, founded The Towbes Foundation in 1980. The Towbes Foundation awards grants triennially to organizations focused on education, social services, promotion and preservation of the free enterprise system, and visual arts/arts education.

The Towbes Foundation’s impact is felt across our county, with grants offered to organizations large and small, ranging from the Cuyama Valley Family Resource Center to the United Way of Santa Barbara County.

“The Towbes Foundation is a testament to Mike’s endless generosity and his devotion to the Santa Barbara community,” said Kristen Sullivan, Executive Director of the Towbes Foundation. In total, the Towbes Foundation donates more than \$1 million a year to approximately 150 organizations.

Towbes founded and served as Chairman of the Board of Montecito Bank & Trust, the Central Coast’s oldest and largest locally owned community bank. According to the Santa Barbara Independent, the bank invested heavily in the community under Towbes’ leadership, “giving more than \$1.3 million annually to area nonprofits through the Community Dividends program, Anniversary Grants, and nonprofit sponsorships, focusing primarily on organizations whose missions support the arts, youth and education, social welfare and medical and health services sectors.” Today, Montecito Bank & Trust continues support of programs that benefit the community, including initiatives that address financial literacy, cyber security, and elder abuse.

Janet Garufis, current Chairman and CEO of Montecito Bank & Trust, worked closely with Towbes for many years and witnessed firsthand his remarkable commitment to helping others. “Mike started Montecito Bank & Trust with one goal: to make the communities we serve better places to live and work,” said Garufis. “Not only was he the leader of this great bank for 42 years, he was a pillar of the community. He will always be admired as a savvy entrepreneur, a generous humanitarian, and a true gentleman who believed in giving back to the community that had given him so much.”

Michael Towbes’ legacy of giving lives on both in spirit and in philanthropic resources. He has inspired generations of residents all along the Central Coast, from Ventura to Santa Maria and everywhere in between, to give back to their communities. Most importantly, Towbes’ commitment to helping those in need continues to build a more resilient, empathetic and inclusive Santa Barbara County.

PERFORMING ARTS SPOTLIGHT: SING! PROGRAM AT MUSIC ACADEMY OF THE WEST

The Santa Barbara Foundation is proud to support 26 local performing arts organizations through the 2018 Towbes Fund for the Performing Arts, a field of interest fund. One such organization is the Music Academy of the West, who utilized their TFPA grant to help launch the Sing! Program, a choral program for Santa Barbara County children ages seven to eleven. In its first year, Sing! is providing free, accessible music education to over 60 students from eleven local elementary schools. The students attend after-school rehearsals and will perform in local venues throughout the year.

“The Sing! Program represents an exciting new chapter in the Music Academy’s distinguished history,” said Kevin Kwan Loucks, Director of Innovation and Program Development at the Music Academy of the West. “In addition to acknowledging the need to engage with our community, we feel that this program is doing it in the most meaningful way – through our young people.”

2019 Scheduled Performances

Saturday, June 8, 2019 at 7:30 pm:
Sing! Concert, Music Academy of the West
Sunday, June 9, 2019 at 4:00 pm:
Sing! Concert, Marjorie Luke Theatre



PHOTO: Students attending the Sing! launch party. Photo courtesy of Phil Channing.

YOUTH INTERACTIVE INTEGRATES ARTS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP TO EMPOWER SANTA BARBARA TEENS

By Quinisha Jackson-Wright

After more than five years of operating out of a 1600 square foot storefront in the Funk Zone, the Youth Interactive (YI) organization moved to a 13,000 square foot space on State Street in October 2018.

Walking into the new YI location is awe-inspiring. When entering through the front doors, visitors will find a retail shop filled with artwork and merchandise created by YI program participants and other local artists.

Beyond the shop, there is a large gallery with more art lining the walls, along with a room where businesses hold training sessions and seminars.

Stairs lead to a second level, where volunteers provide services for students who work at YI, including tutoring, business classes, and assistance with filling out financial aid forms for college. Several other rooms are office spaces rented by local nonprofit organizations.

Yet another staircase leads to a space that Nathalie Gensac, Founder and Executive Director, plans to build out into more areas for artists to hold discussions and create.

Even more impressive than the massive space is the dedication of every student who participates in the YI program. Twice a week, they diligently show up at the store after school to learn, create, and run a business with their peers. 100% of previous participants earn scholarship stipends from their business profits, and in the last two years, 100% have graduated from high school and gone on to college.

When asked how YI stands out from other arts organizations in Santa Barbara County, Gensac says it is a combination of arts and entrepreneurship that makes the organization unique.

“We implement the real-life skills necessary to operate a successful business,” she said. “They learn what sells, what doesn’t sell, and why. They earn their own money and decide what to do with it, which also teaches financial independence.”

She explains that students are given total control of how they run their businesses, from “hiring, giving raises, and even firing one another.” The latter is said with a shrug and ironic smile, as she adds: “Those are all realities of running a business.”

Although operating a business is a challenge, it keeps the teens engaged. Gensac explains that the key to maintaining that high level of engagement has been listening to students’ wants and interacting with them accordingly.

“When I first started the organization, I established partnerships with tech companies [due to their reputation of providing lucrative job opportunities],” she said.

PHOTO: Sophia Guerra performs in the Rolling Rock series during Santa Barbara's monthly 1st Thursday arts event in 2018.



“Then I sat with a group of students, and they all were doodling in sketch pads. They could care less about being on a computer.”

Although the focus on types of partnerships has shifted, YI has built and maintained many strong connections with other local businesses and organizations. This includes the Santa Barbara Bowl Foundation, which will enable the organization to create a music series in 2019 that supports area music schools and nonprofits, with a goal to offer a performance space for young artists in Santa Barbara. Another partnership is with Montecito Bank & Trust, a benefactor and supporter that assists students with financial literacy education.

While YI has achieved rapid success in just a few years, Gensac is in no rush to hastily expand the organization’s outreach. The number of teens accepted into the program has remained steady at around 75 to 90, which she says is best to maintain the quality of one-on-one interaction between the teens and YI volunteers. She is also waiting to reach the necessary operational and funding capacity before growing the student numbers in Santa Barbara County and replicating YI chapters throughout the country.

“Nonprofits [outside of Santa Barbara] have expressed interest in bringing YI organizations to their cities,” she added, “but I prefer to have a solid blueprint here before implementing it elsewhere.”

Among the projects Gensac has planned to make a solid blueprint are more community arts events to be held at the State Street location, along with a “mocktail” bar that will employ YI students while they attend college. By continuing employment for teens from high school through college, she hopes this will make a lasting impact on their lives, as well as the community they are a part of.

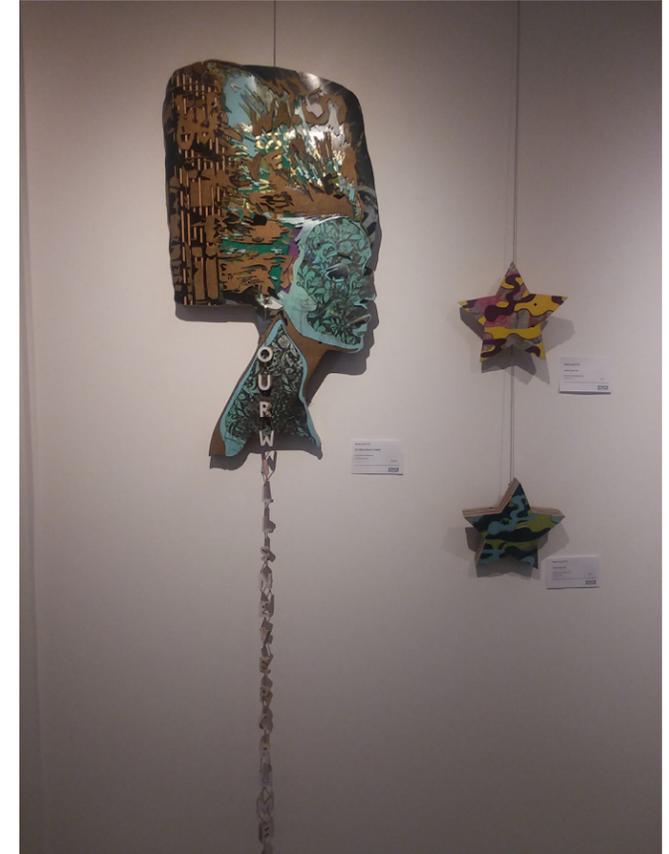


PHOTO: In addition to art created by students, Youth Interactive's gallery features the work of local artists, such as this piece by Inga Guzyte, made from recycled skateboard.

youthinteractive

WINTER MUSIC SHOWCASE BENEFITS GRACE FISHER FOUNDATION & FRIENDS

By Sam Waterstone

“No matter how little you have, you always have enough to give to somebody else.” Debbie Fisher, a fourth generation Santa Barbaran, learned this lesson from her mother, and she believes that it perfectly describes her 20-year-old daughter, Grace. Grace Fisher has endured extraordinary adversity – she was diagnosed with Acute Flaccid Myelitis during her senior year of high school and became paralyzed from the neck down. In the years that followed her diagnosis, Grace used music therapy and adaptive art to aid in her physical recovery, which also helped to heal her mind and soul. After harnessing the power of art and music to improve her life, Grace challenged herself to bring the arts to children with special needs and has devoted herself to giving back to her community. Even after losing so much, Grace is adamant that she still has plenty to give.

With support from the Make A Wish Foundation and the Santa Barbara Foundation, Grace launched the Grace Fisher Foundation in 2016, a nonprofit dedicated to spreading adaptive art and music education to the special needs community. Her work focuses on increasing opportunities for special needs youth, breaking down stereotypes about people with disabilities, and inspiring others to be compassionate and inclusive to people of all abilities. Grace has already made a significant impact in Santa Barbara County, and she is very grateful for the positive response she has received. “Living in Santa Barbara, this community has been so special to me,” Grace said. “I think the power of community, family and, ultimately, love that surrounded this tragedy really brings something good out of it. It hasn’t just been me, it’s been Santa Barbara.”

Since its inception, the Grace Fisher Foundation has organized three Allies For the Arts events, where special needs children and their families have the opportunity to create art and interact with one another. “There is such a large special needs population in Santa Barbara,” Grace explains. “I’ve gone into the Goleta Valley Junior High special needs class and talked with them and seen what their needs are. A lot of times, when a child lives with a disability, they go to school during the week, but that’s really the only interaction they have with other people. So I’ve done these Allies For the Arts events, and it’s not only been a fun way for these children to create art, but also for them to get involved in the community.”

On December 22, 2018, Grace and her team put on their largest event to date, a Winter Music Showcase benefitting the Grace Fisher Foundation and a number of other local music organizations. The event featured an amazing video that Grace created earlier this year, in which she plays the song Mia and Sebastian’s Theme (from the film La La Land) on the piano. Debbie came up with the idea to show Grace’s rendition of the song on a big screen with the Santa Barbara Youth Symphony backing her up with a live performance. The event was nearly derailed when Debbie learned that due

to copyright law, they could not use the song without explicit permission from the composer. Fortunately, Grace’s incredible ability to inspire others saved the day.

Grace reached out to the musician who wrote the song, Academy Award-winning composer Justin Hurwitz, and told him how meaningful it was to her: “Mia and Sebastian’s Theme meant so much to me,” she wrote, “because Mia and Sebastian were supposed to have this beautiful life together, and they didn’t have that life, but they still had beautiful lives – just different lives. Just like my life.” Within an hour, Justin emailed Grace back and said “I was so touched by this – that is exactly what I wanted the sentiment of the movie to be about.” He then sent the video to Damien Chazelle, the director of La La Land. They were both blown away, and enthusiastically approved Grace’s use of the song for nonprofit purposes.

“I think the power of community, family and, ultimately, love that surrounded this tragedy really brings something good out of it. It hasn't just been me, it's been Santa Barbara.”
-GRACE FISHER

The Winter Music Showcase also featured performances from several music nonprofits that Grace has been involved with, including the Santa Barbara Youth Symphony, the Santa Barbara High School Madrigals, Santa Barbara Strings, and the Santa Barbara Youth Music Academy. A portion of the proceeds benefited each of these organizations.

In addition to organizing events, Grace believes it is important to engage youth who might have misconceptions about what it means to live with special needs. “I know what it’s like to be a typically developing kid, and I think there is a lot of ignorance surrounding disability,” said Grace. “I was definitely a part of that before my injury.”

To address this issue, Grace gives art lessons to sixth grade classes and guides them through an art project with one special rule: everyone has to hold their paintbrush with their mouth, as Grace does, or with their non-dominant hand. Grace is very transparent and open about her disability, and the students love asking questions. Sharing her perspective with young people is one way that Grace is able to break down stereotypes about people with disabilities and create more inclusive and understanding communities.

Recently, Grace’s community work has taken a backseat to her academic studies, but she plans to continue spending time at local schools, organizing events, and collaborating with like-minded nonprofits. Grace’s remarkable talent, work ethic, and passion for giving back has brightened the lives of many special needs children in Santa Barbara County, and her advocacy work has brought attention to the need for more inclusive spaces for individuals living with disabilities.

PHOTO: Grace uses her talents to create beautiful paintings and share the arts with kids of all abilities.

PHOTO: Grace's musical talent has inspired countless people, including the creators of La La Land.



CASA DEL HERRERO AND ITS CONNECTION TO THE COMMUNITY

By Jordan Killebrew

Nestled in Montecito, on the highest point of an 11-acre property, is a Spanish Colonial Revival Style mansion named Casa del Herrero. Casa del Herrero, or "The House of the Blacksmith," is the only National Historic Landmark in Montecito and was home to George Fox Steedman and his wife, Carrie Rob Howard Steedman. The estate has turned into a nonprofit that opens its doors to the public for collaboration, education programs, and tours.

In the early 1920s the Steedmans, originally from St. Louis, Missouri, came to Santa Barbara to visit George's brother James, who was being treated for diabetes by Dr. William David Sansum, the founder of Sansum Clinic. Spending summers in the area, the Steedmans forged a relationship with George Washington Smith, ultimately working with him to design the Casa.

Santa Barbara was hit with a devastating earthquake in 1925 and George Steedman moved into the perfectly intact home that same day, as his hotel and most of the area suffered severe damages from the disaster.

Steedman, known for his inventiveness, forged silver as a hobby and was a blacksmith in his own right. His large workshop in the home displays his aptitude for invention, and numerous patents suggest he was a man ahead of his time.

His wife was fond of gardening, and especially loved to grow camellias and roses. The estate has several beautiful garden spaces designed by Ralph Stevens, Lockwood de Forest, and Francis T. Underhill. Each area is planned with precision, offering beautiful views and unique flora.

PHOTO: Casa Del Herrero serves to maintain and preserve the Steedman/Bass estate for the benefit of the community and visiting public.

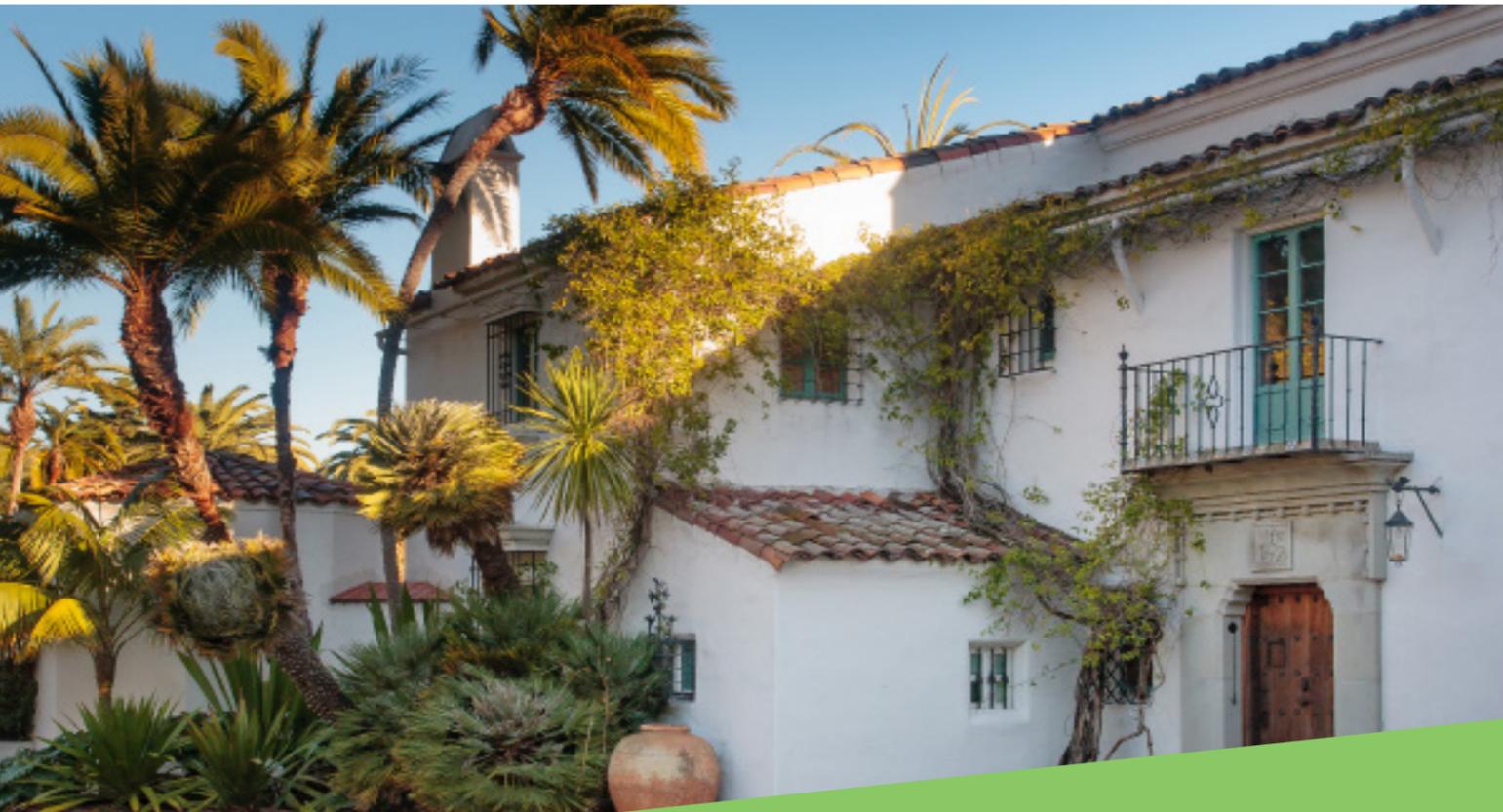


PHOTO: Casa Del Herrero is included on the National Register of Historic Places, and maintains its status as a National Historic Landmark.

The Steedmans left the Casa to their daughter Medora, who recognized the importance of the home and its connection to the community. After her death, her son George Steedman Bass worked to turn the property into a private foundation which was established in 1993. Today, Casa Del Herrero is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization where Executive Director Jessica Tade stewards the Steedman family legacy.

"Our primary role here is the preservation of architecture and history," said Tade. "George Fox Steedman and his wife Carrie were creative individuals and their home is an expression of that creativity that we now share with the community in various ways."

The Foodbank of Santa Barbara County comes to glean all the fruit trees, community members come to learn about gardening and create floral arrangements, and we are developing youth education programs to inspire creativity, an important tool essential to tackling challenges in life."

To stay up-to-date with technology, Casa del Herrero received two grants from the Santa Barbara

Foundation. The first was an Express Grant for a communications strategy to develop a brand and update their website for tour reservations. The second was a Capital Improvement Grant to update hardware and software.

"Funding from the Santa Barbara Foundation allowed us to completely overhaul our technology and rethink how we communicate with the community," said Tade. "We are grateful for the support to assist us in our ability to lay a strong foundation for our organization."

The estate is open to the public on Wednesdays and Saturdays every week by reservation only. To learn more about Casa del Herrero or to plan a trip, please visit their website at CasaDelHerrero.com. If you are interested in collaborating with Casa del Herrero, please contact Jessica Tade at Tade@CasaDelHerrero.com.

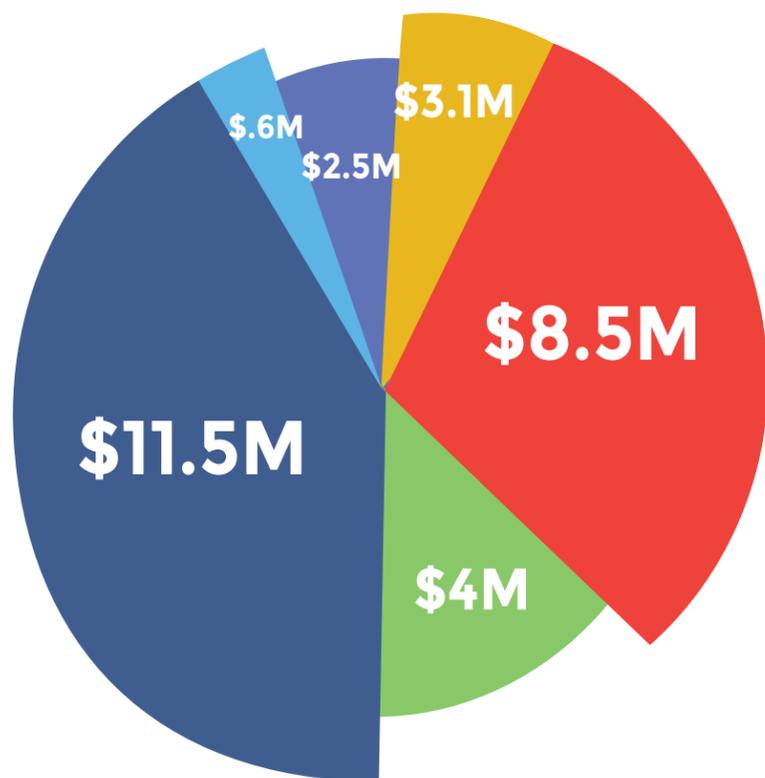
**A MESSAGE FROM
JACKIE CARRERA**
CHIEF REVENUE AND BUSINESS
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As a newcomer to this vibrant county, I am constantly amazed at the generosity of our donors. They care, and when considering Arts & Culture specifically, they care immensely. In 2018, our donors gave \$2.6 million to Arts & Culture nonprofit organizations from their personal donor-advised funds. This matched with an additional \$455,000 of discretionary grants totals \$3.1 million contributed by the Santa Barbara Foundation to Arts & Culture organizations in 2018. Thanks to our donors, Santa Barbara County is alive with song, dance and performances that enrich our lives. We are grateful to all of our supporters for their important contributions to our communities.

Jackie

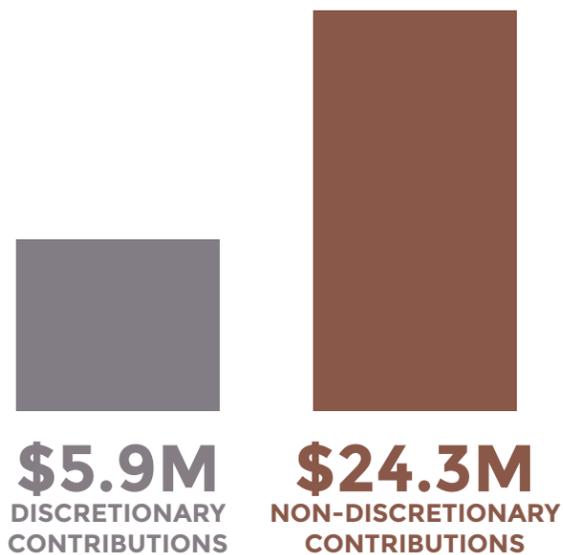
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KEY

- Arts & Culture
- Education & Youth Development
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ANY QUESTIONS? #ASKSBF

Our staff is always available by phone or appointment to engage with community members for any questions they have about the Santa Barbara Foundation. The Foundation will have #AskSBF open office hours for community members to walk in without an appointment, from 9 am to 12 pm on February 14, 15, 21, and 22. We also encourage you to post your questions on social media using the #AskSBF hashtag (or send us a direct message) and a member of the SBF team will get back to you.

We're here to help!

ON THE COVER:

Students in the Youth Interactive program learn more about arts and entrepreneurship during orientation at the organization's State Street gallery. Photo by Rebekah Beeghly.