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COVID-19 Joint Response Fund Distributed \$5.8 Million to Area Individuals and Nonprofits, Fund to Close in July

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, CA – The COVID-19 Joint Response Effort is set to close its response fund after 15 months. The COVID-19 Joint Response Effort was established in March 2020 by the [Santa Barbara Foundation](#), [United Way of Santa Barbara County \(UWSBC\)](#), and the [Hutton Parker Foundation](#).

“At the onset of the pandemic, Hutton Parker Foundation immediately sought ways to maximize philanthropic support throughout the County by partnering with fellow funders,” said Tom Parker, President & CEO of the [Hutton Parker Foundation](#). “The partnerships efforts would focus on ensuring critical services reaching our most vulnerable populations, and at the same time supporting all nonprofits to adapt and transition as needed. As a result, the COVID-19 Joint Response Effort Fund was formed to respond to this unprecedented emergency, to evolve as needed and to now successfully sunset.”

Thanks to the generous support of many donors, corporations, family foundations, and government agencies, \$5.8 million was distributed through the response fund to individuals, families, and nonprofits. Grant committee members, including representatives from [Aware and Prepare](#), [VOAD](#), [Hutton Parker Foundation](#), [United Way of Santa Barbara County](#) and the [Santa Barbara Foundation](#), met weekly for 65 cycles to distribute funds to nonprofits and UWSBC and [Family Service Agency](#) administered grants to individuals.

“With the increase in the number of people vaccinated and the decrease in COVID-19 cases, we are beginning to see a shift from pandemic response to recovery,” said Pedro Paz, Director of Grantmaking for the [Santa Barbara Foundation](#). “After these long 15 months, we will now begin the process of rebuilding, recognizing that people are still in need of support as they recover from this financial and public health crisis.”

The COVID-19 Joint Response Fund provided support for a variety of organizations that were meeting emergency needs of our most vulnerable, including a senior serving organization that provided hot meals to low-income seniors in the Goleta and Santa Barbara areas; an organization

that created a campaign on the importance of utilizing masks and manufactured and provided cloth masks to critical service workers, such as those in agriculture, unhoused populations, individuals with disabilities in care facilities, and those in group living situations; an organization that provided financial support to college students who were directly impacted by the pandemic; and, an organization that provided support, connection to resources, and financial assistance to clients who have a brain and spinal cord disease so that they could ensure they had the resources needed to maintain their physical and mental health during the COVID-19 crisis.

Alycia Harshfield, CEO of California Restaurant Foundation said, “The main accomplishment of [our] grant was getting critically needed funding to the most vulnerable...The top three uses for the funds were groceries, rent, and utilities. Our emergency stopgap funding filled fridges and kept the lights on during a chaotic time for restaurant workers.”

The Fund also provided support for organizations to adapt their services and sustain their operations. CEO of [Hospice of Santa Barbara \(HSB\)](#), David Selberg said, “In this time of the COVID-19 crisis, [the grant] allowed HSB to continue our mission to care for the growing needs of individuals and families experiencing the impact of a life-threatening illness or grieving the death of a loved one.”

Through the COVID-19 Joint Response Fund, individuals and families also received aid directly through the [United Way of Santa Barbara County](#) with support from the [Family Service Agency, its case management partner](#). Thanks to the response fund and additional donations from individuals, corporations, family foundations and secured government contracts, 4,388 households have received individual, rental and utilities assistance awards totaling \$14,381,219.

Steve Ortiz, CEO of United Way of Santa Barbara County said, “These grants have been a critical lifeline for families who are struggling to stay housed and meet basic needs during this crisis. We are honored to have the trust and support of so many generous donors and partners as we work to distribute these funds and provide significant relief to Santa Barbara County individuals and families.”

One anonymous individual wrote, “Thank you for your support as we all go through this difficult time. I am so blessed to live in a community that is generous and giving and is helping so many families get back on their feet – this includes myself and my daughter. There’s light at the end of the tunnel with this unprecedented circumstance. Thank you again for all that you’ve done for our little family we are forever grateful.”

In addition to the Joint Response Fund, Santa Barbara County’s philanthropic community formed a funders’ collaborative which was effective in providing a transparent and inclusive process that

encouraged the exchange of information about community needs; facilitated a coordinated, timely response; maximized resources for the community; and allowed for comprehensive tracking of philanthropic investments made during the pandemic. Since March 2020, 36 members of the collaborative provided over \$38 million either through the COVID-19 Joint Response Fund or directly to nonprofits. Smaller groups of funders joined together throughout the pandemic to address specific issues, such as critical public health needs, small businesses, emergency child care for essential workers, and learning and enrichment programs.

“The collaborative is a natural extension of the relationships that have formed over the years among our philanthropic community. In order to achieve adequate and equitable support for our community members and nonprofits, we know how important it is to work together,” said Jackie Carrera, President & CEO of the [Santa Barbara Foundation](#). “Information sharing among funders is key to making sure funds are allocated evenly across our region.”

We are incredibly grateful to our funding partners and everyone who came together over the past year to support nonprofits and community members throughout Santa Barbara County during this challenging time, Carrera continued.

For future COVID-19 support, the Santa Barbara Foundation will be accepting proposals from nonprofits with emphasis on recovery and rebuilding. To learn more, please visit SBFoundation.org/covid-19-response-grants.

Special thanks to the generous members of the Santa Barbara County COVID-19 Funders’ Collaborative, including:

- Anonymous (6)
- The Ann Jackson Family Foundation
- Audacious Foundation
- Jane & Paul Orfalea
- Brittingham Family Foundation
- BP Moser Trust
- Cottage Health
- City of Carpinteria
- City of Goleta
- City of Santa Barbara
- City of Santa Maria
- County of Santa Barbara
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James S. Bower Foundation
La Centra Summerin Foundation
Lewis-Towbes Family Fund
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Living Peace Foundation
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Mosher Foundation
McCune Foundation
The Muzzy Family
The Natalie Orfalea Foundation
Outhwaite Foundation
Tony and Kyra Rogers Foundation
Santa Barbara Foundation
Santa Ynez Foundation
The Towbes Foundation
United Way of Santa Barbara County
Yardi Systems
Zegar Family Foundation

About Hutton Parker Foundation

Hutton Parker Foundation strives to provide organizational sustainability to community-based nonprofit organizations throughout Santa Barbara County and to assist agencies in achieving their highest performance capacity and delivery of services resulting in stronger, more efficient communities for all. To learn more, please visit: huttonfoundation.org.

About Santa Barbara Foundation

The Santa Barbara Foundation is dedicated to improving the quality of life in Santa Barbara County for all who live, work, play and visit here. Working in partnership with individuals, community organizations, nonprofits and government, we strive to address our communities' most challenging needs. Recognizing that our work depends on the strength of the nonprofit sector, we are committed to its health and vitality. Nearly every Santa Barbara County nonprofit

organization and essential community project has been supported by the Foundation during its 93-year history. The Foundation connects those who give with those in need – and all who dream of stronger communities. To learn more, please visit SBFoundation.org.

About United Way of Santa Barbara County

Since 1923, United Way of Santa Barbara County (UWSBC) has been a key leader in local efforts to empower children, families, and communities through its own unique collaborative programs and initiatives, partnership convening efforts, volunteer development, and funding. UWSBC’s mission is to enrich the lives of children and families and build resilient communities by leading local programs and partnerships that improve school readiness and academic achievement, financial empowerment, and crisis response and recovery. To learn more, please visit unitedwaysb.org.

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