I write this letter on May Day. For thousands of years it has been a day of renewal, rebirth, optimism and hope. In more recent times, also a day to acknowledge the workers of the world; those who trade their labor and industry to support families and contribute vitally to our economy. All of these images are bound up in the concept of resilience, to which this issue is devoted. Your community foundation is thinking a lot about resilience these days, because we are convinced that it is a major determinant of our county’s best collective future.

Resilience is bolstered by understanding and intelligently interacting with our beautiful, but ever more fragile habitat. In this issue’s article about the Conservation Blueprint, we show how the foundation and its community partners brought together diverse voices (farmers, ranchers, scientists, environmentalist, developers, and government representatives) to establish a common vocabulary and a repository for agreed-upon facts, facilitating more productive conversations in the pursuit of solutions to difficult landscape-related issues.

“Resilience” also speaks to matters of trust, shared experience, and all of us working toward ensuring that Santa Barbara County is a safe, welcoming and vibrant place for all its residents. That is why SBF has raised its profile with issues affecting our immigrant communities.

Our country is currently engaged in an important debate about what will define this great democracy, a place for all its residents. That is why SBF has raised its profile with issues affecting our immigrant communities.

For the Santa Barbara Foundation, this is not a matter of partisan politics. That is emphatically not our focus. Instead, it is our commitment to promoting our better, kinder instincts, and our conviction that a more empathetic and inclusive Santa Barbara is also a more resilient community.

And finally, I cannot write about resiliency without mentioning the tragic events of December and January, when fire and debris flow devastated portions of the southern landscape of our county. Loss of life, loss of property, loss of businesses, and the disruption of emotional equilibrium. All these things happened, and just as important, the full consequences are just now being catalogued and better understood. The needs are still mounting, the recovery is ongoing and will extend for years. That is why the Santa Barbara Foundation’s Community Disaster Relief Fund is focusing on long-term recovery. When others have turned their attention to other matters, we will still be “on the job,” thanks in large part to the impressive response to our appeal for donations. We can never express the depth of our gratitude to our donors, and even more so, to our nonprofit partners on the front lines. Together, we have demonstrated how vision + generosity + thoughtful stewarding of philanthropic capital creates yet another powerful example of community resiliency.

At the Santa Barbara Foundation, for all of the reasons elucidated in this commentary and in this report, we are sanguine about the future of this county. Happy May Day everyone!

Ronald V. Gallo, Ed.D.
President & CEO
Last December’s Thomas Fire and January’s Montecito debris flow sounded a wake-up call: Climate change is not a thing happening far away in other countries, or far in the future. It is happening here and now, in our backyards.

While we cannot attribute any specific disaster to climate change, the statistics and science are overwhelming: Extreme weather events are becoming more frequent, more severe, and ever less predictable. Globally, we’ve seen about a 330 percent increase in hurricanes, droughts, wildfires, and extreme storms since 1980. These severe weather events have disastrous consequences that destroy lives, damage property, depress economies, and tear at the fabrics of our communities. They have impacts that go far beyond the boundaries of the communities most immediately affected. Worldwide as well as in California, 2017 was a monster year for natural disasters, telling us that we are facing a new normal. The long-term forecast is for things to continue getting worse — until we succeed in drastically reducing the release of greenhouse gases and sequestering some of the excess carbon already in the atmosphere.

Even as we work to cool down our climate, we must confront the reality climate change poses now and find ways to protect human lives, limit damage to our economy and communities, and build systems that can bounce back more quickly after disruption — that is, we must build climate change resilience. The new reality of a changing climate means that we cannot go on doing things the way we always have, but need to examine all aspects of our lives and consider what we can do to change in order to sustain those things most essential for our existence and those of greatest value to us.

Building climate change resilience will be a daunting, though doable, task. It may require profound changes in environmental management, urban and regional planning, infrastructure and technology, communications systems, and administrative and political structures. In other words, in virtually every aspect of our lives. Most important, building resilience will require systems — whether technological, political, or social — that are flexible and adaptive so that the impacts of disasters are more effectively absorbed and recovery is quicker and less costly.

Building climate change resilience may be expensive, but it is an economic truism that investing in prevention is, as a rule, far cheaper than recovering from failure. [According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 2017 was the most expensive year on record for disasters in the U.S., with hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria — combined with devastating western wildfires and other natural catastrophes — totaling over $306 billion.] Also, it needs to be understood that investment in resiliency measures can be optimized by focusing first on areas that are already slated for major public or private funding, such as rebuilding in the process of disaster recovery, repairing and replacing aging infrastructure, creating housing for existing needs, etc. Doing this will require a shift in investment priorities, and more broadly, the fostering of a political climate that embraces change and proactive thinking. Such shifts need to be based on inclusive, community-wide conversations that can build consensus around points of common interest.

Toward that end, four leading institutions of science, environmental conservation, and philanthropy in our region convened a town hall on building climate change resilience on April 25 at the Granada Theatre. Jointly organized by the UCSB Bren School of Environmental Science & Management, the Community Environmental Council, the Santa Barbara Foundation, and the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, Drought, Fire, and Flood: Climate Change and Our New Normal was the first of many community-wide conversations.

COMMUNITY DISASTER RELIEF FUND AT SBF

The Santa Barbara Foundation has made its initial distribution of $300,000 from the Community Disaster Relief Fund (CDRF) to support twelve nonprofit organizations with recovery efforts in Santa Barbara County.

“All of these organizations provide direct support to those displaced or otherwise harmed by disasters, and all have been stretched very far by our recent fire and debris flow,” said SBF Chief Strategy Officer Barbara Andersen.

Activated in the aftermath of an emergency, the Community Disaster Relief Fund supports nonprofit organizations that play a role in short-term and long-term recovery, providing critical services including emergency food distribution, immediate shelter and long-term housing, emotional and spiritual care, economic and rental assistance, education, healthcare, and more. These nonprofits support victims directly, and require funding to meet growing need.

Andersen points out that the Community Disaster Relief Fund’s focus on both short- and long-term assistance is unusual. “When disaster strikes, an average 73% of contributions go to immediate relief, while less than 5% goes to recovery and rebuilding, a process that can take up to 10 years. Long after media attention has shifted away from our community, we know there will be significant and long-term needs for our fellow community members trying to rebuild their lives.”

The fund builds on partnerships nurtured over the last 10 years as part of the Aware & Prepare Initiative, a countywide collaboration to strengthen emergency readiness. The Santa Barbara Foundation is also a member of the Community Long Term Recovery Group (CLTRG), which identifies individuals and families that will need sustained support because government assistance is insufficient to address all of their needs. The CLTRG meets frequently to coordinate with nonprofit organizations and government agencies.

“Our longstanding relationships enable us to make better, more coordinated decisions from the first moment disaster hits, and makes recovery efforts more effective and efficient,” said Ron Gallo, SBF President and CEO.

“We are tremendously grateful that so many people and organizations have contributed to the Community Disaster Relief Fund.”
“Despite being a nation of immigrants, America has always been ambivalent about immigration,” said Santa Barbara Foundation CEO Ron Gallo as he welcomed representatives from 20 grantee organizations that provide services to immigrant communities. “That it’s a recurring struggle doesn’t mean everything’s going to necessarily turn out okay. It means that it is our turn and our responsibility to fight for an American narrative of hope and inclusion. For the foundation this begins with mobilizing collective wisdom – that’s you.”

With immigrants making up nearly a quarter of Santa Barbara County’s population, new immigration enforcement priorities and expanded detention and deportation policies are causing social, economic, and health impacts throughout the county, affecting families, communities, and employers. On the Central Coast, immigrants make up almost one third of our workforce and contribute 27 percent of our GDP. According to many frontline service providers, such as Santa Ynez Valley People Helping People and Boys & Girls Club of Santa Barbara, it is apparent that Santa Barbara County’s immigrant communities are under duress. Widespread fear and instability have resulted in a decrease in individuals and families accessing education, health, and other safety net services; a drop in crime reporting, including for sexual assault and domestic violence; and an increase in abuse by landlords, employers and others seeking to capitalize on people’s fears. Sadly, numerous participants also reported increased schoolyard bullying based on race.

Organized as a learning session in lieu of a final report submission, the convening was both a real-time information exchange and an opportunity to forge future collaborations. Attendees shared their information and experience on five immigrant community challenge areas:

- Widespread fear, anxiety, and depression
- Misinformation on immigration and its legal complexity
- Unknown breadth of impact (Who is not receiving basic needs?)
- Lack of trust with service agencies
- Nonprofit capacity for increasing community needs

In an effort to share information and collectively learn what is happening in the community, prior gatherings hosted by The Fund for Santa Barbara and Legal Aid Foundation have included nonprofit and government community service providers, law enforcement, local immigrant rights advocates, and immigration legal service providers.

When something affects a quarter of our population, the ripples touch everyone. One family represented at the meeting described how their attempts to do things right – to remedy one family member’s legal status – turned into an ongoing nightmare of detention, deportation, and desperation as the family was torn apart and financially devasted.

While immigration is indeed a complex and controversial subject in the US, Santa Barbara Foundation Community Investment Officer Guille Gil-Reynoso sees nothing controversial in supporting organizations that support immigrant communities. “There aren’t many luxuries in the nonprofit world, but we do have the luxury of erring on the side of compassion – we need to feed hungry children. We need to help people get medical care. We need to ease suffering and fear. Our mission is about people and communities.”

“It means that it is our turn and our responsibility to fight for an American narrative of hope and inclusion. For the foundation this begins with mobilizing collective wisdom – that’s you.”

-RONALD V. GALLO Ed.D.

PHOTO: The FUND for Santa Barbara’s Executive Director Marcos Vargas opens the Santa Barbara Foundation’s ‘Supporting Local Immigrant Communities Grant Convening’ on March 29, 2018.

Attendees included representatives from the following SBF Funded Partners:

- AHA!
- Boys & Girls Club of Santa Barbara
- Boys & Girls Clubs of Santa Maria Valley
- Carpinteria Children’s Project
- Channel Islands YMCA
- Child Abuse Listening and Mediation
- Community Action Commission
- Council of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (CADA)
- Cuyama Valley Family Resource Center
- Domestic Violence Solutions
- Family Service Agency
- Future Leaders of America
- Girls Inc. of Santa Barbara
- Isla Vista Youth Project
- Just Communities Central Coast
- New Beginnings
- Santa Barbara Neighborhood Clinics
- Santa Ynez Valley People Helping People
- The Fund for Santa Barbara
- Youth Interactive
LAUNCH: SANTA BARBARA COUNTY CONSERVATION BLUEPRINT

“We hope the Conservation Blueprint will inspire more collaboration, and will be just as beneficial to farmers, ranchers, housing advocates, and developers as it will be to conservation,” said Sharyn Main, of Santa Barbara Foundation’s LEAF Initiative, during the March 14 public unveiling of the Santa Barbara County Conservation Blueprint.

A collaboration of The Land Trust for Santa Barbara County, Cachuma Resource Conservation District, and the Santa Barbara Foundation LEAF Initiative, the Conservation Blueprint includes an online mapping tool called the Atlas and a written report that focuses on five natural resource themes – water, flora and fauna, agriculture and ranchlands, climate change, and community and the land. In addition to showing opportunities and challenges related to each resource, the report demonstrates how thoroughly resources are interconnected.

“Santa Barbara County is a rare environment, and with extended droughts, increased fires, flooding, and debris flows, we need a greater understanding of the unique landscapes we call home,” said Ron Gallo, President of the Santa Barbara Foundation.

At launch, the Conservation Blueprint includes an online Atlas, housing nearly 300 datasets that can be viewed as maps to analyze and better understand land use and natural resources in the county, and the previously mentioned report that focused on major land conservation themes – water, flora and fauna, agriculture and ranchlands, and community and the land.

“The Blueprint is the first impartial, complete, up-to-date source of data that has been fully vetted and verified and made available to everyone, not just a single interest group,” said Pamela Doiron, a rancher from The Spanish Ranch in Cuyama Valley, and a member of the Blueprint Steering Committee.

“The Blueprint is the first impartial, complete, up-to-date source of data that has been fully vetted and verified and made available to everyone, not just a single interest group”

- PAMELA DOIRON

“It was important to ensure the voice of the farming and ranching community in the Blueprint,” said Anna Olsen, Executive Director of the Cachuma Resource Conservation District. “What is particularly significant about the Blueprint is that it levels the playing field and provides the same valuable information to everyone in the community, and that it’s not trying to create new policy or new regulations. It provides a common language for us to promote our own interests and passions, explain these passions to others, and work together to understand each other.”

To learn more about the Conservation Blueprint, read the full report and interact with the Atlas tool please go to: SBCBlueprint.net.

NEW WEBSITE!

The Santa Barbara Foundation has a new website that is now in a mobile responsive design to make your online experience more informative and easy. Please visit SBFoundation.org to view and to connect to Santa Barbara County!

RETURNING TO HER ROOTS IN VENTURA COUNTY

PHYLENE WIGGINS BRINGS HER PHILANTHROPIC PASSION AND EXPERIENCE TO VENTURA COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Senior Director of Community Investments Phylene Wiggins has accepted a position as Vice President of Programs and Grants at the Ventura County Community Foundation. “I think any nonprofit or organization working on improving their community is better off with Phylene Wiggins associated with them, as we have been for 14 years,” said Santa Barbara Foundation President and CEO Ron Gallo. “When I think of Phylene, I think of someone who is authentic, passionate, caring, and loyal.”

Serving at the Santa Barbara Foundation since 2004 (and volunteering for three years prior to that), Wiggins has deep knowledge and expertise in the fields of health and human services. Most recently, she led the Community Caregiving Initiative, a countywide effort to strengthen the long-term care safety net by addressing the needs of individual caregivers and aligning and integrating the various services available to family caregivers. In addition to her work at the foundation, Wiggins has been involved with a variety of nonprofit organizations for over 30 years in board, staff and volunteer roles.

In her new role, Wiggins, who grew up in Ventura, will work directly with nonprofit organizations for over 30 years in board, staff and volunteer roles. In her new role, Wiggins, who grew up in Ventura, will work directly with nonprofits, businesses, public agencies, and, as she says, “any number of different types of entities that make a community what it is.”

She says, “A community foundation is a unique entity that can bring together diverse perspectives in service of a shared purpose. Integrity of purpose makes community foundations a center of connections for local problem solving, a neutral convener in the search for solutions.”

-ACTIVE PF WIGGINS

“...a unique entity that can bring together diverse perspectives in service of a shared purpose. Integrity of purpose makes community foundations a center of connections for local problem solving, a neutral convener in the search for solutions.”

-PHYLENE WIGGINS
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$2,988,000

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NOMINATE TODAY!

The Man & Woman of the Year awards honor extraordinary service and voluntarism in Santa Barbara. Past recipients served Santa Barbara and strengthened the community by mentoring children, caring for people in need, responding in time of disaster, and promoting education.

Nominations for the 75th Man & Woman of the Year are open and nominations will be accepted until 12:00 p.m. on June 1, 2018. We encourage you to nominate any Santa Barbara resident whose service represents a meaningful commitment to the community, addresses a real community need or enhances the quality of life in Santa Barbara, or has involved acts of generosity, kindness, or innovation. We are especially interested in learning of the accomplishments and achievements of your nominee(s) in 2017. Nominate today at SBFoundation.org/MW75.

ON THE COVER

Members of the Santa Barbara County Conservation Blueprint Steering Committee and Executive Team (Left to Right): Santa Barbara Foundation Senior Director of Community Investments Sharyn Main; The Land Trust for Santa Barbara County Executive Director Chet Work; Santa Barbara Botanic Garden Executive Director Steve Windhager; Principal, Investec Real Estate Companies and The Land Trust for Santa Barbara County Trustee Greg Parker; Las Varas Ranch Farmer and Ranch Manager Paul Van Leer; and Cachuma Resource Conservation District Executive Director Anna Olsen. Turn to page seven to learn more about their efforts and the launch of the Santa Barbara County Conservation Blueprint!