

## **CATALYST AWARDS Presented by Sonoma Valley Catalyst Fund**

Sonoma Valley Catalyst Fund works to improve our community's collective response to the Covid-19 crisis. That has given us a front row seat to the incredible work done by so many Valley leaders and volunteers on the frontlines of a crisis that still has no end in sight. These Catalyst Awards are given to the nine organizations who have courageously and persistently responded to the ever-changing needs of those most impacted. They reimagined and extended their services. They worked together in new ways. They have helped Sonoma Valley persevere through a very difficult time. They deserve our gratitude and praise.

### **Boys & Girls Clubs of Sonoma Valley**

In spring 2020, when the pandemic forced the local schools to abruptly close, Boys & Girls Club of Sonoma Valley (BGCSV) turned on a dime to create dozens of learning pods to help hundreds of students stay safely engaged in school and on track. BGCSV created an entirely new service structure focused on the wellbeing and safety of the kids and their families while meeting constantly changing CDC guidelines. No one knew exactly how to do it, but they never gave up trying to figure out how to do it better.

### **Food for All/Comida Para Todos**

The pandemic caused gaping holes in access to basic services for the most vulnerable in the Springs neighborhoods, so a group of neighbors stepped up and formed Food for All/Comida para Todos to make bi-weekly porch deliveries of essential food items to over a hundred families each week. This all-volunteer organization has grown to be a trusted local service provider, having served over 900 unique families and completed over 3000 porch deliveries, as well as provided over 150 emergency COVID food baskets.

### **Friends in Sonoma Helping (F.I.S.H.)**

In 2020, Friends in Sonoma Helping, an all-volunteer organization, did an extraordinary job distributing over \$910,000 of rental and utility assistance funds to 1,156 local families who lost their regular income and needed extra help. Despite this being five times their normal caseload, they efficiently processed applications for assistance for rent and utilities with grace and dignity for the families in need.

### **La Luz Center**

During the pandemic, the La Luz Center not only continued to reach out to help those most in need, but most importantly, they stepped up to partner with local health agencies to coordinate and provide ongoing, culturally welcoming vaccine clinics, greatly helping hundreds of people get vaccinated.

### **Sonoma Overnight Support**

Starting in March of 2020, Sonoma Overnight Support (SOS) quickly shifted to increase their food program to provide hundreds of warm, healthy meals daily to the homeless and housing insecure by moving to the Springs Hall. SOS continued to pivot to provide essential services such as a bi-lingual resource specialist for their Spanish speaking clients (now 43%), housing placement, safe parking, access to vaccine clinics and in-home meal deliveries for home-bound seniors in the Springs.

### **Sonoma Valley Chamber of Commerce**

When the world shut down, the economy took a dramatic nose dive. The Valley's Chamber launched daily and then weekly zoom calls to coordinate the local business response, share information and advocate to public officials. Special programs included safe reopening kits supplied to 100 businesses for free, signage and certification protocols for reopening, help to the city on parklets and to Rotary on the Catalyst-Rotary grant program, a special website to support holiday gift sales, a job posting board to aid in hiring, and much more. When community leaders gathered to solve the ever-changing problems, the Chamber was always at the table.

### **Sonoma Valley Community Health Center**

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Sonoma Valley Community Health Center's leadership exhibited creativity, flexibility, determination and hands-on practicality to overcome hurdle after hurdle to provide easy access to testing, clear health information for all, and finally, vaccinations. Despite countless changes in protocols, funding requirements and staffing needs, they bravely leaned-in and kept asking: how can we reach out and help more people?

### **Sonoma Valley Vintners & Growers Alliance**

Sonoma's signature industry received impressive and creative leadership from SVVGA, which provided a customized hub of resources, advocacy and support - a complement to the help the Chamber was providing. The vintners and their employees got daily information on navigating the impacts of the crisis through many channels. Multiple new marketing vehicles were launched, as sales and visits changed continuously. Covid testing was promoted. Then, in January 2021, SVVGA planned and established special vaccination clinics, resulting in more than 4,000 ag, wine and hospitality employees getting their shots early in the process.

### **Vintage House**

Sonoma's senior center was closed to the public for 18 months. Virtually everything they did had to change, as the center worked to provide support of many kinds to older residents enduring isolation. Communal meals became meal delivery and curbside pickup, and demand grew steadily peaking at 500 meals a day. Seniors learned to rely on daily check-in calls, grocery shopping, prescription delivery and online programming. Reopening has required yet another pivot, to a blend of old and new approaches. The programming pivots continue, complete with a leadership transition.