

Local charities get a bailout

Napa foundation comes up big for families in trouble

By JILLIAN JONES
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The Napa Valley Community Foundation today plans to announce a \$300,000 emergency grant to help 16 local nonprofits get through the economic downturn.

The weak economy is placing considerable pressure on local nonprofits, which are struggling to keep up with an increase in demand for services despite dwindling donations.

“We’re fortunate to have strong, well-managed nonprofit organizations in Napa County,” Community Foundation President Terence Mulligan said. “Still, demand for essential services is up by more than 50 percent compared to last year, even as donations and government grants are falling away.”

Mulligan said the gap between what is needed and what is available could grow to between \$3 million and \$5 million in Napa County over the next two years.

“That’s why we’re trying to rally the community to help us, and encouraging our donors to think of the long term,” he said.

About half a dozen local donors pitched in to give the \$283,250 grant.

Recipients of the grant include agencies ranging from the Calistoga Family Center to the American Canyon Family Resource Center, and from food pantries to agencies that help people at risk of foreclosure.

Another \$15,000 is available by application in 2009 for two or more nonprofits that wish to collaborate on projects to increase revenues or reduce expenses.

The Community Foundation has given more than \$15 million in grants over the past 14 years by pooling resources from local donors.

“No one in our community should have to go hungry, or choose between heat and prescription medication,” Mulligan said. “We’ve mobilized our board and engaged our donor base to try and make sure that those most likely to be challenged by the recession will not be forgotten.”

Joelle Gallagher, executive director of Cope Family Center, said her agency will use the extra \$35,000 to offer emergency assistance to local families and their children.

“The clients we see are working people,” Gallagher said. “In the best of times, they fight to keep their heads above water. In an economic climate like this one, many are just a pink slip away from falling through the cracks.”

Mulligan emphasized both the urgency of the short-term crisis, and the need for a collective and strategic approach over the long run.

“We’re not going to fix this this holiday season or even by the Fourth of July,” he said.

But Mulligan is optimistic that the community will band together to lend a hand to those who make it their job to help others.

“What makes us hopeful is that ordinary citizens in Napa County, when called on to help, consistently respond with compassion and generosity,” he said. “We want to do our part to help, and encourage others to do so, too. Recent events have reminded all of us that small donors, working together, can have a major impact.”

For information about donating, contact the Community Foundation at 254-9565.

The charities

The Community Foundation of Napa Valley is offering emergency grants to help local charities. Here’s a list of agencies who are getting a surprise gift:

- American Canyon Family Resource Center: \$10,000
- Calistoga Family Center: \$20,500
- Community Resources for Children: \$15,000
- Community Action Napa Valley: \$10,000 general, \$15,000 for Napa Valley Food Bank
- Cope Family Center: \$35,000
- Family Service of Napa Valley: \$20,000
- First Presbyterian Church of Napa: \$7,500 for the Table
- Greater Napa Valley Fair Housing Center: \$7,500
- Legal Aid of Napa Valley: \$15,000
- Housing and Equal Rights Advocates and Napa Valley Foreclosure Collaborative: \$50,000
- ParentsCAN, Inc: \$10,000
- Progress Foundation: \$20,000
- Salvation Army Napa Corps: \$10,000
- Spirit of Unity in Napa, Inc.: \$9,000, including funds for Puertas Abiertas
- St. Helena Community Food Pantry: \$2,500

- St. Helena Family Resource Center: \$11,250

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