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The Butte Strong Fund has awarded a $350,000 grant to a nonprofit that organizes volunteer home rebuilding projects in the Camp Fire footprint.

Hope Crisis Response Network has completed six homes, has 12 under construction and has another dozen projects ready to begin. Its goal is to build 15 homes a year.

The $350,000 grant will fund salaries for six full-time workers. The Butte Strong Fund has previously supported Hope Crisis Response Network with $550,000 in grants to provide funding for home recipients, organizational support and housing for volunteers.

“Hope Crisis Response Network has been a full-time presence in the Paradise area since shortly after the Camp Fire, and we’re excited this grant will allow them to continue this critical work,” said Chris Copeland, NVCF program officer. “They’re become a vital part of the rebuilding effort. Their networking to bring in volunteers from all over North America is impressive. NVCF and our Butte Strong Fund committee feel this is a perfect use of donated money, to help people who otherwise would not be able to afford to rebuild.”

Volunteers come here for anywhere from one week to six months, at their own expense, and go to work. Professionals are hired only to do the foundation, plumbing and electrical work.
There is no charge for the volunteer labor to homeowners, who have all been chosen by the case management system through the Camp Fire Collaborative or from referrals from town government.

The only cost to homeowners is for permits, materials and some professional labor — and even then, some expenses may be covered by other programs.

“Our greatest joy is handing the keys to a Camp Fire survivor and welcoming them home,” said Valerie Cox, community outreach coordinator for Hope Crisis Response Network. “Our volunteer home rebuilding project in Butte County would not be possible without the support of North Valley Community Foundation. Their support is rebuilding homes and restoring lives.”

Hope Crisis Response Network has existed for years, rebuilding homes after disasters, starting with Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans. Now the organization focuses solely on rebuilding after wildfires, and even then it has to pick and choose because of the large numbers of Western wildfires.

“We are blessed to serve Butte County with our volunteer home rebuilding project,” said Kevin Cox, CEO of Hope Crisis Response Network. “Our volunteers have been passionate about serving this community through rebuilding. The generosity of North Valley Community Foundation enables us to continue this important work.”

With this month’s grants, NVCF has funded $56,291,616 through grants and projects since the Camp Fire on Nov. 8, 2018.

Other Butte Strong Fund grants awarded this month include:

- $36,285 to the Butte County Office of Education to continue a program that places trauma-informed teaching artists in Paradise area schools. The program integrates arts education and the development of social emotional learning skills to mitigate the effects of trauma and to help make students more resilient when confronting new trauma.
- $15,344 to North State Public Radio to fund a dedicated reporter to cover wildfires in the north state through a national nonprofit called Report for America. Report for America places 300 journalists in newsrooms nationwide to report on under-covered issues and communities. Report for America pays for half the reporter's salary. The news organization must pay one-quarter and must raise money to cover the other 25%. The award was augmented by a grant of $31,787 from the Dixie Fire Funders Roundtable, which is organized by NVCF. The total of $47,131 represents the 25% total covering a three-year period. The reporter has already started working.

Organizations interested in applying for Butte Strong Fund grants can visit nvcf.org/buttestrongfund to determine if they qualify for funding. Donations to the fund can also be made on the web page.