

Years of Building Hope



*A report to our community and donors
of our response and recovery efforts
five years after the Camp Fire*

5 YEARS OF BUILDING HOPE

Five years after the North Valley Community Foundation stepped up as the lead philanthropic organization in the Camp Fire response effort, our nonprofit organization has funded nearly \$64 million through grants and projects for fire relief and recovery.

As we have done with many disasters, we started a relief fund so people could contribute. But this was no ordinary disaster. It remains the deadliest and most destructive wildfire in California history. That allowed us to raise tens of millions of dollars.

In the first days after the fire, we issued grants to help fund emergency shelters and other organizations providing food, clothing, a place to sleep and other necessities to people who were evacuated.

At the same time, we were focused on a recovery that we knew would take years. NVCF was able to assist many aspects of recovery by being strategic and judicious with funding choices.

“When you look around Paradise and the Camp Fire footprint, NVCF’s role in relief and recovery is everywhere,” said former Town Manager Kevin Phillips. “The town would not be in its position without NVCF’s help. Most people don’t realize how

“With the help of so many partners doing incredible work, we showed that philanthropy can and must play a major role after a disaster.”

much NVCF and the Butte Strong Fund funded and supported, with millions of dollars in grants contributing to many projects.

“NVCF bridged the gap in funding so that the town could leverage millions of federal dollars to help in the recovery. The town and all government agencies worked arm in arm with NVCF to ensure that donations were put to the best use to help our area recover. We wouldn’t be where we are today without NVCF and the Butte Strong Fund.”

The Butte Strong Fund combined the fundraising efforts of NVCF, Sierra Nevada Brewing Co. and Aaron Rodgers under one grant program. The Butte Strong Fund Citizens Committee made the funding decisions for NVCF funds on larger grants \$50,000 and over, while smaller grants were vetted and approved by an NVCF internal committee.

More than half of NVCF’s \$64 million went for direct assistance or housing. The direct assistance grants



A flag remains untouched on a property burned by the Camp Fire on Nov. 8, 2018.

were mostly made through NVCF's investment in the case management system, both for hiring case managers and to provide assistance to fire survivors seeking help through that system. The housing grants included financial support for nonprofits building homes for low-income survivors, a program that helped people with the cost of government fees for rebuilding and grants to help rebuild septic systems, a tremendous up-front cost in the rebuilding process.

We also invested \$5.6 million to help more than 40 community development projects get off the ground, things like Magalia Community Park, the Welcome to Paradise sign, Gold Nugget Museum and Concow Community Pool.

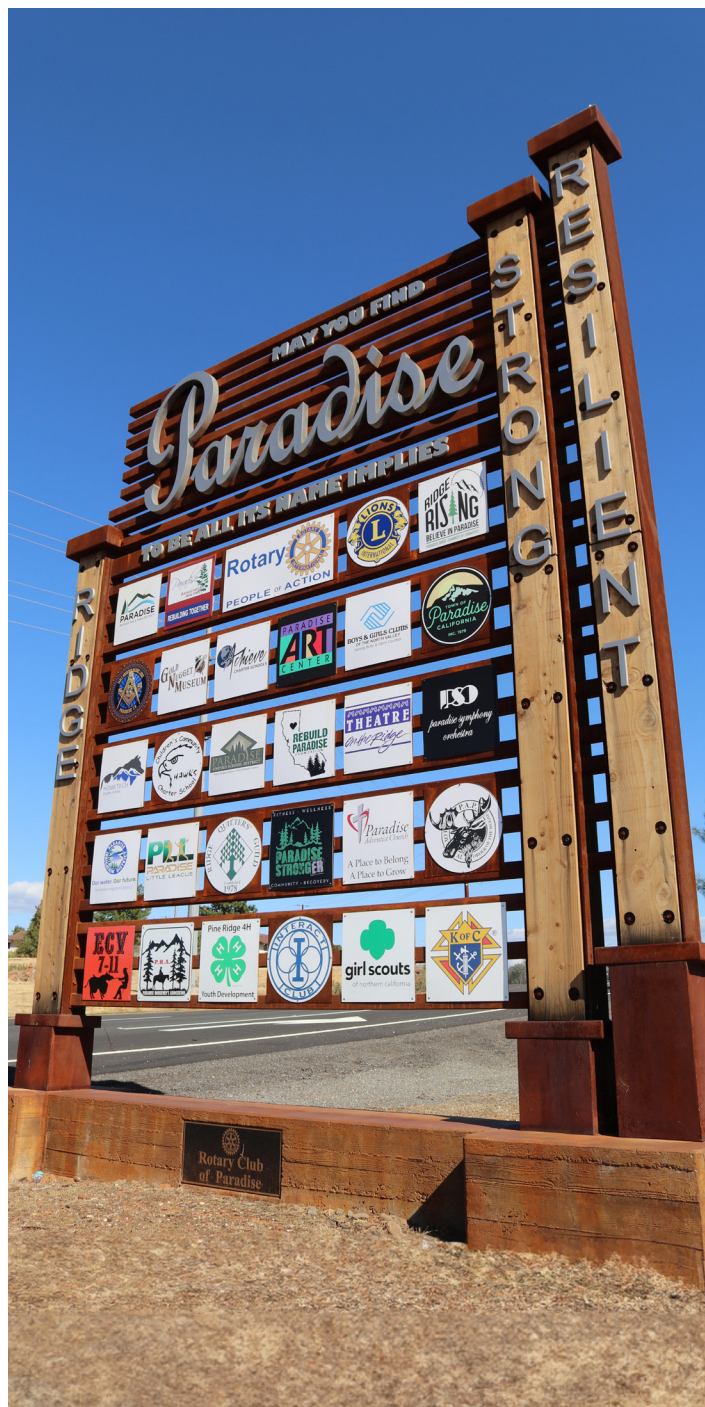
The Butte Strong Fund expects to issue its final grants this year when the last dollars in the fund are exhausted. NVCF's role in the recovery won't be going away, however.

NVCF is the chief funder in the case management system coordinated by the Camp Fire Collaborative. There are still hundreds of families seeking and receiving help through case management. The case management system has served thousands of individuals and families. NVCF has also funded the salaries of many case managers working for various nonprofits.

The Aaron Rodgers NorCal Fire Recovery Fund at NVCF continues to provide grants for projects, especially those benefiting young people and recreational activities.

Also, we continue to be engaged with housing projects in conjunction with partners like Samaritan's Purse, Community Housing Improvement Program and Habitat for Humanity.

In addition, our wellness initiatives will continue to advocate for the mental health and wellness of fire survivors.



The new Welcome to Paradise sign as of October 2023.

"All these years later, I am just as humbled and honored that NVCF has been able to play a role in the healing here," said NVCF President and CEO Alexa Benson-Valavanis. "We take immense care with every grant to make sure donations that came to us have the greatest possible impact. With the help of so many partners doing incredible work, we showed that philanthropy can and must play a major role after a disaster."

Five years of Camp Fire grants

\$63,921,335

Total in grants, projects since the Camp Fire

\$18,954,318

Direct assistance

\$17,925,954

Housing

\$13,965,955

Health & wellness

\$5,273,932

Education

\$2,122,170

Economic recovery

\$5,679,006

Community development



Seana O'Shaughnessy (far left), president and CEO of CHIP, and others celebrate the completion of rental housing developments partly funded by the Butte Strong Fund.

Leveraging our grant funding

How less than \$1 million in NVCF grants was parlayed into \$238 million more

After the Camp Fire, when resources were limited and needs were immense, being strategic with grants was vital.

At NVCF, we paid particular attention to maximizing our outgoing grants, either by enlisting funding partners or leveraging the dollars. If there was a proposal where a relatively small grant investment had the potential to bring in millions of dollars in other funding, it perked up our ears.

Here's the story of how just \$749,476 in NVCF and Butte Strong Fund grants was leveraged into additional funding totaling \$237,803,817.

The first and perhaps best example of leveraged funding was the Paradise town government's request for a grant for a thorough assessment of every road in the town. The town knew it could get government funding for roadways damaged during what would be extensive cleanup operations, but only if there was proof of the roads' prior condition.

Two months after the fire, the town's finances were in a state of uncertainty, to put it mildly. Town leaders applied for a grant of \$24,500 from our Butte Strong Fund. The money would be used to hire a contractor to do a crack-by-crack inventory of town roads using innovative technology. That allowed the town to create irrefutable data on conditions of the roads before and after debris removal.

Nearly two years later, the town used its 2019 road assessment to secure \$93 million in state and federal funding.

"This is going to be the largest investment in infrastructure this town has ever seen," Marc Mattox, the town's public works director, said at the time.



Paradise Community Village, a 36-unit apartment complex created by the Community Housing Improvement Program funded partly by the Butte Strong Fund.

"The way North Valley Community Foundation stepped up and was willing to do something different – it was pretty incredible. We couldn't have done it without them."

Also in 2020, Butte Strong Fund grants served as the local match to leverage USDA funding for police and public works equipment, as well as audio-visual equipment for the Town Council Chambers. The Butte Strong Fund grants of \$242,476 secured \$327,200 in USDA funding. That allowed the town to purchase equipment like a wood chipper, backhoe, loader, plow, pickups and an animal control vehicle.

Butte County requested a Butte Strong Fund grant of \$282,800 so it could hire a grant writer to pursue relief and recovery funding. That person has filed applications that have resulted in \$138,769,617 million in grants for things like roadwork, fire station generators, multifamily housing, fire prevention projects and wastewater treatment plant upgrades.

One last prominent example is the Paradise Recreation and Park District, which received \$200,000 in Butte Strong Fund grants to develop planning documents detailing the district's future hopes for parks and trails. The grant helped PRPD win \$5.7 million in funding to develop Lakeridge Park and trails in Magalia.

Why NVCF took a lead role in disaster recovery after Camp Fire

By Alexa Benson-Valavanis, NVCF president and CEO

Leading the philanthropic response to the most destructive and deadliest wildfire in California wasn't a job we wanted to do – but it was a job we were created to do.

The North Valley Community Foundation exists to reduce suffering in the world. When a major disaster strikes, we often open a relief fund so local people can donate to recovery efforts. We'd done it for a tsunami in Indonesia, hurricanes in New Orleans and Houston and fires in Napa and Sonoma County. We'd find the local community foundation or disaster relief organization on the ground and send them the money. This time was different. We were the community foundation on the ground.

As the plume rose over the mountains, I called Logan Todd, our director of grants and communications. Logan was one of six part-time staff on our small team. We quickly opened the Wildfire Relief Fund (the fire was not named yet) and announced it on social media about five hours after the fire started.

Then the donations started rolling in, first a trickle and then a flood. It happened because of local relationships and the years of trust we had built up here through hard work.

The first mention of NVCF came when Sean Morgan, the mayor of Chico, was interviewed on MSNBC. Earlier I had told him we stood ready to help, so when MSNBC asked how people could help, Morgan mentioned our fund. Then it snowballed. We had the nation's attention and every story in the national news mentioned our fund and the millions of dollars being donated to help.

Ron Howard, Cyndi Lauper and ESPN's Adam Schefter were among the many well-known people with millions of followers who mentioned us on social media as the place to send help. Marc Benioff of Salesforce told Jim Cramer on CNBC's "Mad Money" that he was donating \$1 million to NVCF. Companies with huge name recognition like Wells Fargo, United Airlines, Verizon, JP Morgan Chase, Apple, PayPal, Raley's and Comcast made significant donations to NVCF, which encouraged customers, employees and other businesses to do the same.



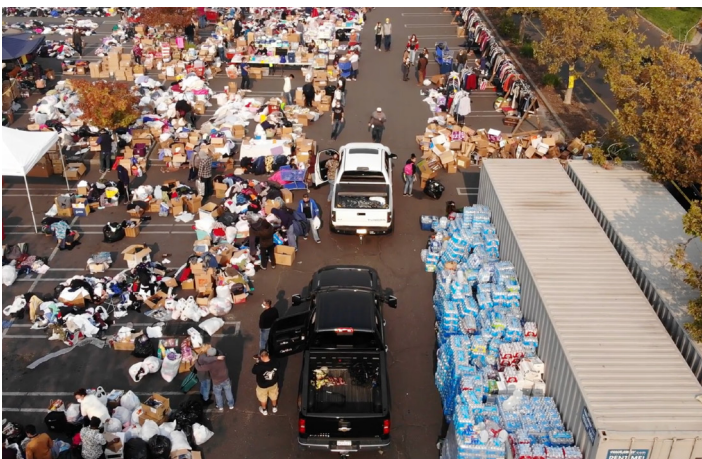
Mountains on the Paradise Ridge glow orange in the midst of heavy smoke from the Camp Fire in November 2018.

Sports franchises started donating and asked their fans to do the same. The Oakland Raiders were one of the first to call. Owner Mark Davis had attended Chico State and made a large donation. The San Francisco 49ers hosted the Paradise High School football team for a nationally televised game and encouraged fans and ESPN viewers to donate to the NVCF fund. The San Jose Earthquakes, whose star player Chris Wondolowski played at Chico State, made a substantial donation. The Golden State Warriors produced videos with their players encouraging donations to us.

We had the nation's attention and tried to keep it. We knew that once the fire was under control, the world would move on. The government was projecting a \$16 billion disaster. Philanthropy would have to be involved.

The first 10 grants were issued Nov. 11, 72 hours after the fire started, to all the shelters caring for evacuees. These were the first of hundreds of grants we would make to help keep shelter doors open, water and food stocked, and provide gas and gift cards for daily necessities.

We knew the only way to help the tens of thousands in need was to help the helpers. We could never become the service providers directly. We couldn't possibly provide medical services, senior services, youth services and animal services.



Camp Fire survivors drive through a staged resource center to pick up essentials.



Raley's staff drop by the NVCF office to make a donation of \$109,035.13 to support Camp Fire relief in December 2018.

The army of helpers did amazing relief work but needed money. We had the money but not the staff. It was a perfect match.

Even with our relentless determination, the seven of us had a hard time keeping up. A missed call was potential help from United Airlines. Or AARP. Or Delta Dental. We all had the experience of answering questions from an unidentified caller who would ask about our organization, our service fee and where the donations would be deployed. Often the conversation would end with: "Thank you. We'll be sending you a check for \$100,000."

One morning I noticed a Facebook post from Priscilla Chan of the Chan-Zuckerberg Initiative. They were committing up to \$1 million in a dollar-for-dollar match through Facebook to help with the Camp Fire, and NVCF was their beneficiary. Their Facebook campaign would push our name around the globe.

We would get crates of mail every day. The envelopes would be full of checks, or sometimes we'd get packages full of gift cards. Our lobby was always full of people who had checks to present to us – Buddhist Monks who traveled from Sacramento, local restaurants with relief jars at the counter, bands playing benefit concerts, people who made shirts they sold and the underage kid who brewed beer to give all the money to help.

Gifts continued pouring in from throughout the United States. In all, we received nearly 600 donations of \$10,000 or more. But the fund probably got its biggest boost from a pair of nationally known locals, Aaron Rodgers and Sierra Nevada Brewing Co.

Sierra Nevada's owners, Ken Grossman and Katie Gonser, have long held a family foundation fund at NVCF. They have always taken care of the community with little fanfare. They did so again after the Camp Fire, both privately and through one very public campaign — they provided the recipe and the ingredients for more than 1,400 breweries nationwide to make Resilience IPA. The proceeds from each pint sold would come back to the community for Camp Fire recovery.

The Aaron Rodgers NorCal Fire Recovery Fund at NVCF raised more than \$3 million. His trust and national influence made a huge impact on our little operation. Two months after the fire, in early January, we created the Butte Strong Fund out of the Sierra Nevada, Aaron Rodgers and NVCF partnership.

That's when the real work started as we worked strategically to leverage the donations to best benefit



Sierra Nevada Brewing Co. -- a family-owned business run by Ken Grossman (center) and his children Sierra (left) and Brian -- is a vital partner in the Butte Strong Fund.

our area's long-term recovery. In the five years since the fire, we have issued \$64 million in grants through the Butte Strong Fund and all other Camp Fire funds.

We created NVCF to help reduce suffering in this world. We built trust and relationships for just such a moment. And then thousands of people and businesses, many of which had never heard of Butte County before Nov. 8, 2018, answered our area's call for help. At the worst possible time, we saw people at their best. And our area's recovery is much farther along because of it.



Buddha's Light International Association of San Francisco posed for a picture with NVCF staff with the donation of \$44,440 for Camp Fire Relief in December 2018.

Case management system provides assistance for Camp Fire survivors

Patricia Butler lost nearly everything in the Camp Fire, but she wasn't the type of person to ask for help.

Help found her anyway.

"It's been such a blessing," she said.

Butler was 65 and living alone on 5 acres near Concow the morning the Camp Fire hit. Her property was isolated and solitary, just what she wanted after a career in the U.S. Army left her with post-traumatic stress disorder. Help wasn't coming that day so she stayed to fight the fire, then retreated to a nearby hill when the flames were too much. She watched everything burn on her property except for a very old trailer and a couple of dog kennels.

With almost nothing left, she tried to navigate the process of getting help but soon gave up.

"I had a breakdown," she said. "Even though I'm not illiterate, I had trouble with all these questions and filling out forms and just concentrating. If I got stuck on one, I was no good. I'd be stuck there for hours, in my head."

More than two years later, she sought help and was connected to the disaster case management system. Roxanne Giron, a case manager employed by Northern Valley Catholic Social Service and funded by the NVCF's Butte Strong Fund, was assigned the case.

Giron navigated the rough dirt road to reach the property and found Butler living in that old trailer with no access to a bathroom or running water. Giron and Karol Freeze, NVCSS' construction cost analyst, found a fifth-wheel trailer for \$14,000 that



Patricia Butler (middle) with case manager Roxanne Giron (right) and Alyssa Hofman of the Tiny Pine Foundation.

was funded by NVCF and United Way through the case management Simple Unmet Needs process.

Butler didn't know it was coming – and she was thrilled.

"That was luxury," Butler said with her ever-present laugh. "I had a pop-out trailer. Oh my God."

But Giron and the case management system weren't done. A fifth-wheel isn't a permanent housing solution. They went to the Complex Unmet Needs Committee and received funding for a mobile solar system (\$14,300) and a 400-square-foot tiny home (\$59,812) through the Tiny Pine Foundation.



Patricia Butler (right) helps workers from the Tiny Pine Foundation frame her house near Concow.

Butler, as self-reliant as they come, is helping build the house. She's beyond excited about it.

"I came one day," Giron said, "and all of a sudden there's just a random chair on the foundation and she's sitting in it. I was like, 'What are you doing?' And she says, 'I'm in my living room.'"

Butler cackles at the story.

"I just sit there in the evening having a beer and just looking out over the view and just, yeah, imagining."

Her home will have a bedroom down below, along with a loft that could fit two queen-size beds. Alyssa Hofman, the remarkable executive director of the Tiny Pine Foundation, said she hopes to have the home finished by Christmas.

"It's been such a blessing," said Butler. "I love the way the universe works."

It's obvious, from hearing them banter, that there's a special bond between Butler and her case manager, Giron.

"Roxy has taken care of me," said Butler. "I don't even have to ask for anything. It's like she knows me. Sometimes she just gets in touch with me when she knows I'm not OK. And when things become available, like food giveaways, she makes sure I'm aware of them. I've been so blessed."

What is case management?

Butler and thousands of others like her were helped by the disaster case management system set up after the Camp Fire.

Thousands of people who suffered losses signed up to get government help through case management. Problem was, the federal government authorized 16 case managers in the aftermath of the fire. Each case manager can handle about 30 cases at once, and cases can take months to close.

That meant only about 480 cases could be handled at any one time, which caused the waiting list to swell. The waiting list reached 8,318 households at one point, about a year and a half after the fire.

Philanthropy and community-based organizations stepped in to help. They built a system that at its peak employed 100 case managers and 25 supervisors. The North Valley Community Foundation funded 79 of those positions through its Butte Strong Fund to make up for the government's deficiency.

As case management winds down, just three case managers remain, handling the roughly 175 open cases. Every week cases are closed and new ones are opened.

It is anticipated that case management will conclude in 2024.

Help comes unexpectedly

Dorrie Keith didn't sign up for assistance immediately. Like Patricia Butler, help came to her.

Keith has lived in a hilltop home on a beautiful four-acre lot off lower Clark Road in Paradise since 1981. As the skies darkened that day, she stayed – armed with hoses and a flashlight – to protect her home.

“When I realized the fire was coming here, I asked the Lord if I should stay,” said Keith. “I got a very strong feeling ‘yes.’

“The police came and said you'd better get out of here and I'd say, ‘I will, as soon as I can,’” she recounted.

Most of her neighbors' homes burned. The manzanita on her property and the dry grass and mulch next to her wood deck caught fire, but she'd put it out. The house survived.

“Every time I'd think I couldn't take another step, there would be another flare-up and I'd get another little burst of adrenaline and put it out. When I looked at myself in the mirror, I looked like a gray ghost,” she said.

After fighting the fire for eight hours, she drove away to look for her husband. He suffered from dementia and around 11:30 a.m., not realizing the severity of



Dorrie Keith (left) and her case manager Makayla Berlier.

the fire, said he was going to drive to Chico to get a hamburger. He was missing for three days before he showed up at a neighbor's chiropractic office in Oroville.

Though her home didn't burn, it soon became apparent the composite roof would need to be replaced. It had all but melted. Keith had no money for that. Two friends from church referred her to the case management system, and case manager Kakayla Berlier worked to get bids on the roof. The \$24,100 job was financed through the unmet needs process.

“It was just a wonderful blessing to get this help,” said Keith. “I felt so blessed that I still had a house. It never occurred to me to seek help. I figured, well, I have to get a roof even if it cleans out every penny I've got. This help was a very, very pleasant surprise.”



Dorrie and Makayla chatting on Keith's porch.

How the case management system works

Case managers are brilliant at what they do. They know how to navigate the various avenues of funding and programs available to fire survivors, from furniture for a new home to mortgage assistance programs. They also help clients with the many forms and applications that need to be filled out.

Knowing where the resources are, case managers often can resolve and close a case without ever asking for outside funding from philanthropic sources.

When case managers have exhausted all resources and do need financial assistance for a client, there are two approaches – a Simple Unmet Needs Committee and a Complex Unmet Needs Committee. Cases in front of the Simple Unmet Needs Committee generally are limited to about \$15,000.

Patrica Butler, for example, got her temporary trailer from the Simple Unmet Needs Committee and part of her tiny home financed through the Complex Unmet Needs Committee. Dorrie Keith got her new

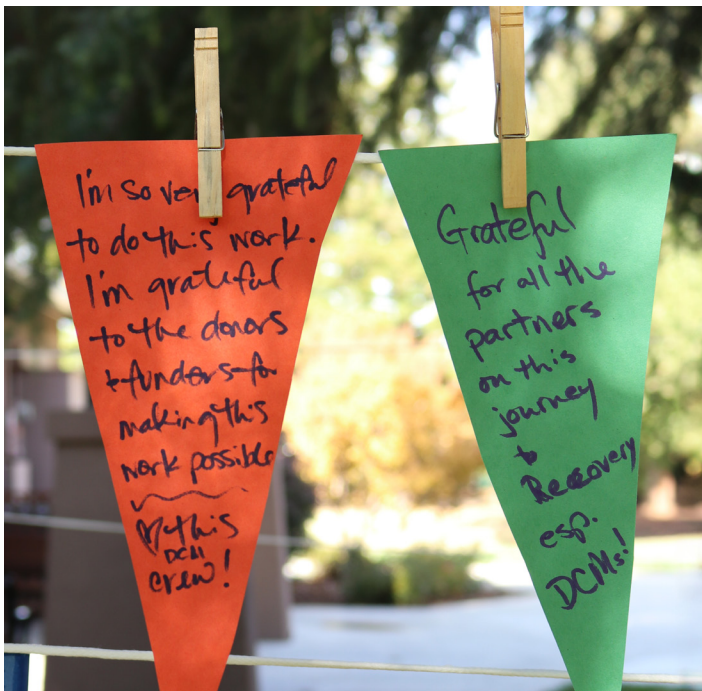


Kate Scowsmith, disaster case management systems facilitator at Camp Fire Collaborative greets invitees to a case management appreciation event.

roof through the Simple Unmet Needs Committee.

The Simple Unmet Needs Committee initially consisted of three funders – NVCF, United Way and American Red Cross. Now there are two – NVCF and United Way.

The Complex Unmet Needs Committee has a dozen funders: NVCF, Catholic Social Services through NVCSS, Golden Valley Bank, Lutheran Social Services, California Nevada District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, Sierra Nevada Resiliency Fund, California Nevada Conference of the United Methodists, United Methodist Committee on Relief, Northern California Episcopal Dioceses, First 5 Butte County, United Way and Camp Fire Collaborative. A centralized system ensures that help is distributed equitably. It takes into account a person's income, insurance payments received, federal assistance received, PG&E settlement money and any other factors. Case managers who appear on behalf of clients in front of one of the unmet needs committees know that is likely a last option for help.



Notes written at the case manager appreciation event expressing gratitude for donors, funders and partners that have supported recovery efforts.

A long road to recovery

The days and months after the Camp Fire were a blur for Sheryl Fakhouri and her family.

“We left here without even toothbrushes – you know, nothing,” she recalled. “It was so chaotic.”

They stayed in shelters, with family and did their best to find whatever help they could, but help was fleeting. Everything burned on their property in Paradise, just behind Town Hall. After the property was cleaned up, they parked an old motorhome there and lived for years without water or power, meaning no showers and no laundry.

Fakhouri’s husband suffered a heart attack in 2019, and this year went into a coma and was hospitalized for months after another heart attack. She is convinced that was caused by the stress of their living situation.

Then she learned about volunteers building homes with the Hope Crisis Response Network, an organization that received grants from NVCF.

“When I found out about the Town of Paradise offering applications for this, I basically jumped the fence and ran down there and got signed up for it because, you know, I was just trying to figure out how to get home,” said Fakhouri. “They actually broke ground on my birthday last year. That was the best birthday present. You sit there with hope for so long, you know? And when nothing happens, you start to get hopeless.”



Sheryl Fakhouri with her niece, Lexi Cain, and case manager, Makayla Berlier, on the porch of Sheryl's completed home.



Sheryl Fakhouri and her niece Lexi Cain enjoy the view from the porch at her new home in Paradise.

When the 1,120-square-foot house with two bedrooms and a den was complete in July 2023 after 10 months of construction, they moved in – but had almost no furniture or household items. Much of that came from Inspire Hope and the United Way’s Stable Housing Opportunities Program, both of which have received large grants from NVCF.

“I was starting to put things away in the dresser and just started crying because it’s the first dresser I’ve had in five years,” she said.

“I was overwhelmed by the amount of help that I got. That’s a good thing, not a bad thing, because we all need it, plain and simple. We were all lost. So many people still need help.”

But on this beautiful September morning, with Sheryl Fakhouri looking out from her new front porch with her niece Lexi Cain, this part of her journey was complete. Her case manager, Makayla Berlier, said goodbye with a bittersweet and gentle, “OK, I’m closing your case.”

They hugged.

“I can’t thank you enough,” Fakhouri told Berlier, “not only for what you’ve done for me, but for so many people like me. There are a lot of us. And I know not everyone is as appreciative as I am. You have a difficult job. So thank you.”

Other ways NVCF grants helped survivors

Thousands of Camp Fire survivors have received assistance because of donations that poured in to NVCF after the fire. They might not realize that help came from NVCF funds, however.

NVCF is not a relief organization. It's a funder of relief organizations, schools, nonprofits, local governments and others that serve fire survivors.

We raise money to help them help survivors. They are partners in a complex system that ensures that donated dollars get in the right hands, help the most vulnerable and that benefits aren't duplicated.

These are just a few of the type of projects NVCF funded entirely or partially to help fire survivors:

- A reduction in fees, up to \$3,500, at either the town or county level for people trying to rebuild.
- Grants of up to \$5,000 for help with surveying, architectural and engineering fees and water-system repairs through Rebuild Paradise Foundation.
- Grants of up to \$7,500 for septic replacement, also through Rebuild Paradise Foundation.
- Furniture and other household items for people moving into new homes through Inspire Hope.
- Reprints of old yearbooks for Paradise High School graduates who lost them in the fire.
- Counselors on campus at all schools in the Camp Fire footprint, in addition to funding for field trips, learning specialists, scholarships, computer equipment and software, tutoring, therapeutic art projects, play equipment, student transportation, after-school activities and more.
- An after-school hangout called Ridge Retreat at Paradise High School.
- Sheds built and delivered to people living on their properties in RVs after the fire.
- Helping with the insurance and lawsuit maze through United Policyholders.
- Weekly community dinners at Paradise Alliance Church.
- Direct assistance, including cash and gift cards, through groups like Chico Posse Foundation, Global Empowerment Mission, Throwing Starfish Foundation and many other organizations, in addition through disaster case managers.
- Food deliveries through Meals on Wheels.
- A tool lending program and portable sawmill in Concow.



A grant for a portable sawmill in Concow allow burned trees to be cut into boards for rebuilding.

Words from our grant recipients

All organizations that receive Butte Strong Fund grants are required to report back, usually a year later, and provide details on the grant's impact.

Here are a few highlights among the hundreds of reports NVCF has received.

Aaron Singer, Paradise Stronger

"While we are grateful beyond words for everything North Valley Community Foundation has done to help Paradise Stronger get its start, the truth is we've only just begun. The trust that North Valley Community Foundation bestowed upon us gave us the launch pad that we needed to become the organization that will serve the residents of the Ridge indefinitely. Paradise Stronger has grown its membership and its base of support to remain in this community for the long term. We are setting our sights on a five-year plan to purchase land and build a wellness campus. Thank you again for the support you provided to allow us to get our start."

Jenny Lowrey, From The Ground Up Farms

"There is nobody that understands the community needs like NVCF. Most funders are fire- and COVID-stressed and pretty much over funding aid. NVCF being local has been a game changer for so many and we are quite honored to be a part of how they have helped, especially in the impoverished areas of the Highway 70 corridor."

Jen Goodlin, Rebuild Paradise Foundation

"The goal of the capacity funding grant is to help support Rebuild Paradise Foundation's wages and operations so we can continue our grants and other programs serving residents within the Camp Fire footprint. The Rebuild Paradise Foundation has been able to award over \$2 million between our Missing Middle and septic grants to over 500 households. In addition, 195 permits have been issued from our master floor plan library saving residents months of time and thousands of dollars. We also continue to have our mapping, drone and insurance resources to help the community. We continue to meet with community stakeholders, participate in community events and are continually an advocate for the recovery of the ridge community. We could not do any of this without the grant funding to run our day-to-day operations. We are thankful for each dollar donated and work hard to be a steward of the generosity bestowed upon us so we can keep our doors open."



Jenny Lowrey, executive director of From the Ground Up Farms.

Carrie Dawes, Paradise Unified School District

“The trend we continue to see is the need for counseling for both students and staff. We had a student suicide this school year and have put a lot of effort into suicide prevention awareness. We are finding the need for additional group counseling or counselors going into the classroom to serve more students at a time to address mental health awareness. We have found that the work we are doing resonates with students and staff, and mental health awareness is more freely discussed. However, there is a lot of work to continue to do.”



Paradise High School improvements were ready for the 2023-2024 school year.

Michelle Farrer, Children's Community Charter School of Paradise

“We love having our counselor on campus. A full-time counselor is the missing puzzle piece to a healthy campus. We love our counselor and we appreciate the funding. We hope to continue with this opportunity – it is beyond impactful.”

Steve Bolin, Paradise Alliance Church's community dinners

“People are coming for a meal and leaving encouraged, outfitted with resources, bonded to their community and excited for our future here on the Ridge. The intangible nature of the community sharing a meal is visible in the smiles and joy people find weekly as they have more opportunity to meet up with previous friends as well as new friends made at this dinner. Any new person is blown away at the efficiency of the service and the joyful nature of the community represented.”

Lindsey Churchill, Rebuild Paradise Foundation

“It's clear there is still a need for the Missing Middle grant even almost five years post-fire, especially as other recovery-driven programs dry up and rebuilding continues. During the lifetime of the grant one thing has been evident – all financial help is welcome. The financial burden of rebuilding is extensive, and although the Missing Middle grant covers a fraction of the costs, we hear from almost every grant recipient that “every little bit helps.” We have learned that grant recipients use their grant awards for things like building fences, planting trees, landscaping, building retaining walls or paying for the next step in their rebuild, furthering their own recovery and that of the community. I have even seen a grant recipient make a generous contribution to a family in need on the Ridge after receiving their grant awards.”



Volunteers at Paradise Alliance Church provided community dinners.

Leslie Johnson, Chico Housing Action Team

“The impact the CHAMP program (Camp Fire Housing Access Model Program) has had on the Camp Fire recovery is significant. Many landlords would not have rented to these 70 households but for their involvement in the CHAMP program and the support CHAMP provided to both the landlord and the CHAMP participant. Without the CHAMP program, many of these Camp Fire survivors who have been housed through the CHAMP program would have remained on the street, in their cars, couch surfing or any other precariously housed situation.”

Valerie Cox, Hope Crisis Response Network

“One of our homeowners described her experience with the volunteers like this: ‘I think they are fabulous. I loved coming to see them work and meet them. They had such good hearts. I was always so excited to see the progress and I think they just liked to see the expression on my face as I walked in and saw the changes. It was wonderful and exciting!’ Anette moved into her new home in December and was looking forward to hosting her adult sons for Christmas and making her traditional candy cane pie for the first time in four years. That’s the difference that volunteers make in the life of an HCRN homeowner. We are so thankful for the amazing support from the North Valley Community Foundation. Your support has given us the opportunity to continue serving at a high level.”

Joelle Chinnock, Paradise Adventist Church’s Love Gives program

“Love Gives has been able to provide survivors with a conservative estimate of \$2.5 million worth of product and over 8,200 individual items since its genesis in May 2021, helping 3,100 adults and 1,300 children. By far, the biggest thing we have learned is how grateful survivors are for what we are able to share with them. They recognize that our program is saving them thousands of dollars’ worth of furniture and for so many, rebuilding exhausted all their funds, including funds to furnish their houses. Without programs like Love Gives and Inspire Hope, many survivors would be stalled in their recovery because all their funding was spent on rebuilding their home.”



Hope Crisis Response Network volunteers construct a foundation for a home.