



# 2023 | Report to the Community

**S** COMMUNITY FOUNDATION  
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY





## In memoriam

Community Foundation  
Honorary Trustee

### Rowland “Reb” Rebele

Reb was an Honorary Trustee of the Community Foundation. He was as fierce an advocate as he was a loving friend, devoted audience member, and forward-thinking philanthropist. Reb approached community with his sleeves rolled up ready to work and to lift up those who needed a hand. What Reb touched, he made more just. The impact of his generosity will last for generations.

#### FRONT COVER PHOTOS:

Clockwise:  
Digital NEST youth working on a film production.  
Photo: Genevieve Rico

Community Foundation Donors Margaret Leonard,  
Clare Sheils, Leola Lapides, and Bob Katz

Addy Rodriguez, Senior Case Manager, and  
Executive Director Mike Johnson in front of the  
Pajaro Valley Shelter Services-owned residence  
housing Cabrillo students

Activities 4 All's youth mariachi performers

The 2023 Rise Together coalition

# Finding Our Way Forward, Together

Our experience working to improve Santa Cruz County dates back to the devastating floods of 1982, when our founders came together to coordinate local giving for local needs in the disaster's aftermath. Over forty years later, we continue to be a trusted partner to people interested in taking on the challenges of today and helping build a more just, equitable, and resilient tomorrow.

When last winter's storm waters receded, we saw nonprofit partners step forward to expand programs, strengthen partnerships, and deepen investment in solving our most pressing challenges—all while still caring for those affected by multiple crises. Our collective giving made an enormous impact on our community, with \$30 million distributed across Santa Cruz County and beyond.



Your support and partnership help us respond to the needs of our community, as we work to strengthen and support each other across the county. Anybody interested in doing good has a place at our table. Together, we can make Santa Cruz County a place where all can thrive.

**Julie Haff**  
*Board President*

**Susan True**  
*CEO*

## Mission

*We bring together people, ideas, and resources to inspire philanthropy and accomplish great things.*

## Vision

*To make Santa Cruz County thrive for all who call it home, now and in the future.*

## Board Leadership 2023

### OFFICERS

Julie Haff, *President*  
Trevor Strudley, *Vice President*  
Chris Murphy, *Secretary*  
Jim Weisenstein, *Treasurer*  
David Doolin, *Immediate Past President*

### TRUSTEES

Rob Allen, Audries Blake, Gina Castañeda, MariaElena De La Garza, Liliana Diaz, Larry Donatoni, Doug Fischer, Lisa Fraser, Rogelio Ponce Jr., Sandy Skees, Kirk Schmidt, Esq.



**The Community Foundation has always given to community, but in recent years I've seen it really build community to help get good things done."**

*– Ginny Aragon, Community Foundation donor*

# Early Investment in Big Solutions

Local philanthropy is often the first to get behind great people and important ideas. The Community Foundation acts as a collective kickstart to new and emerging ideas that address community issues and enrich the lives of Santa Cruz County residents. Our resources build a future that is more just, equitable, and inclusive of our diverse community. We're proud to support nonprofits getting big ideas off the ground and helping them attract sustaining new sources of funding to propel their work.

**\$30  
million**

in grants,  
scholarships, and  
low-interest  
loans in 2023



*Pictured (L to R) NAMI Spanish program facilitators Leticia Rojas, Rosa Rivas, and Maria-de-Jesus "Marichuy" Bravo.*

National Alliance on Mental Illness Santa Cruz County (NAMI) works to reduce stigma and provide youth and families the mental health resources, education, and peer support they need to thrive.

***"The Community Foundation's flexible grants helped us expand access to mental health support services for Spanish-speaking families by 700%!"***

—Therese Adams, NAMI's Executive Director



*Luna HighJohn-Bey, project lead for the London Nelson Legacy Initiative, with colleague Tahtahme during a celebration at Evergreen Cemetery honoring London Nelson and the 11 other Black people buried in plots without headstones or grave markers. Photo: Crystal Birns*



**The grants from the Community Foundation were a lifeline for the London Nelson Legacy Initiative. After two years of dedicated volunteer efforts, we faced a critical need for funding to sustain our work. These funds not only kept our research moving but also paved the way for significant national grants, enabling us to make a substantial impact on the well-being of Santa Cruz's Black Community."**

— Luna HighJohn-Bey, Project Lead and Lead Researcher, London Nelson Legacy Initiative





# Carrying Each Other

*A dad helps his daughter through the flooded streets of East Lake Avenue in Watsonville.  
Photo: Kevin Painchaud / Lookout Santa Cruz*

The winter of 2023 brought with it 11 atmospheric rivers, a bomb cyclone, and the breach of the Pajaro River levee over three intense months. San Lorenzo Valley residents, still recovering from the CZU fires, saw fallen trees on rebuild projects and washed-out roads in fire scarred areas. Capitola businesses faced extended closure and losses due to severe damage and Soquel residents were washed out after the flooding of Soquel Creek. In Pajaro, families dealt with flooded homes, displacement, and lost work. Community gifts to our Disaster Fund are still helping disaster case managers provide for the needs of their clients as they help people on the long road to recovery.

## \$4.7 MILLION

### recovery and rebuilding expenses

for hundreds of families since we helped launch the Long-Term Recovery Group (LTRG), a collaboration of nonprofits tending to the unmet needs of CZU fire survivors. Funding comes primarily from our Fire Recovery Fund.

## \$3.5 MILLION

### in storm & flood relief

from the Disaster Fund since January 2023 including \$1.3 million in funding to nonprofits offering assistance to residents affected by Pajaro levee breach.



*Disaster Case Managers at Catholic Charities help fire and flood impacted families navigate the recovery process. L to R: Celeste Islas, Erin Shiroda & Jennifer Villanueva-Herrera.*

**It's vital that donors know where to give when disaster strikes. The Community Foundation is a trusted partner who understands needs and can get funds out quickly to where they're needed most. This allows frontline nonprofits like us to stay focused on delivering critical services, building relationships, and ensuring we have the resources we need to respond to real time needs in the community."** *—Raymon Cancino, CEO, Community Bridges*





# Building Climate Resilience

Photo: Land Trust of Santa Cruz County

As we've responded to recent crises, we're also building towards long-term resilience to our changing environmental and climate realities. Thanks to forward-thinking donors, we've established new funds that work towards conservation and water and climate resilience, now and in the future.

## Tools to Protect our Home

We're deepening our support for an environmentally resilient Santa Cruz County. That's why we've established new opportunities for donors to join us in creating resources for working at the intersection of environmental conservation and climate change.

### ■ RAPID RESPONSE

The **Central Coast Climate and Conservation Action Fund**, known as the "Strike Fund," is a fast-acting tool to help Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, Amah Mutsun Land Trust, and Trust for Public Land acquire and conserve priority lands that offer important cultural significance, climate mitigation, and resilience opportunities such as estuary restoration and wildlife connectivity. As funding like state grants get secured, partners repay the loan, allowing for new lending to conserve more. Donors' dollars are used time and time again, multiplying the impact of each gift.

### ■ A PERMANENT INVESTMENT IN LOCAL SOLUTIONS

The **Santa Cruz County Climate Action Endowment** ensures perpetual support to a wide range of climate-related concerns and climate-change-affected areas of our community.

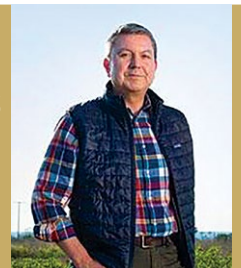
### ■ SUSTAINING OUR WATER SUPPLY

Our **Regional Water Management Foundation** focuses on building protections against drought vulnerability, saltwater intrusion, and sea water rise. RWMF has attracted state funding to award \$28 million in local grants for key water resource projects.

### ■ RESOURCES FOR WHAT'S NEXT

The **Disaster Response Support Endowment** ensures our team can provide an immediate, robust response to community needs after the next flood, drought, fire, or earthquake, while ensuring resources do not disappear as the response phases evolves into recovery.

**The Strike Fund is a visionary initiative and shared tool for swift and decisive conservation action. With access to the early capital this fund provides, nonprofits can protect critical lands promptly and demonstrate immediate conservation while public and private support is rallied.”** – Guillermo Rodríguez, CA State Director, Trust for Public Land



# Together We Prosper, Now and in the Future

When you give with the Community Foundation, you're connecting to a powerful network of generous people who share your vision for a stronger, more vibrant Santa Cruz County. We're proud to be the home of more than 550 charitable funds created by your neighbors. You can give to any of these existing funds in arts & culture, education, the environment, racial equity, and more—or start your own. Find other local funds to support issues you're passionate about at [cfsc.org/give](https://cfsc.org/give).

## Giving for today.

Gifts to our non-endowed funds support lasting change in our community—while responding to the needs of today—across a variety of causes.

**GREATEST NEEDS FUND** grants support trusted nonprofits and creative solvers addressing pressing local issues as they emerge.

**THE RISE TOGETHER FUND FOR RACIAL EQUITY** fuels a coalition of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color leaders and a team from the Foundation in our collective effort to advance racial equity locally.

**THE HOUSING ASSISTANCE FUND** offers a flexible way to help those experiencing a housing crisis obtain and maintain stable long-term housing through assistance from local agencies.

## Giving for tomorrow.

Endowed funds are permanent, creating a pool of charitable dollars that can address the causes and organizations you care about—now and forever.

**THE FOUNDATION FOREVER ENDOWMENT** funds our work of bringing together people, ideas, and resources to inspire philanthropy and build a Santa Cruz County where everyone can thrive.

**THE SANTA CRUZ COUNTY SCHOLARSHIP ENDOWMENT** is a community scholarship fund that exists to benefit students of our region forever.

**THE FUND FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS** provides resources to nonprofits that support girls in education and women in securing financial stability and wellbeing.

**THE DIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP FUND** strengthens alliances, promotes respect, and enhances services for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community in Santa Cruz County.

**The Foundation is a great place to give to causes I care about. Every time our community needs a fund to give to, the Foundation starts it.”**

– Kristen Marinovic, Community Foundation donor and Founder & President of Equinox Wealth Management





# Your Partner in Effective Giving



*Our Fund for Women & Girls, supported by people including Gayle Ortiz (center), provides support for local nonprofits like Salud y Cariño, a Live Oak based teen girls empowerment program. Gayle recently got to learn more about the program and met students and mentors from Harbor High School. Photo: Jeremy Lezin*

**T**he Community Foundation loves helping people give with confidence and make a difference—today, and for many years to come. We're proud to be a place where charitable giving becomes local, personal, and meaningful.

We offer easy, flexible, and strategic giving methods tailored to your own charitable interests and financial goals. From a simple beneficiary form to a charitable trust, we have years of experience to help you give back to your community. For example, Gayle Ortiz (pictured above) makes an annual qualified charitable distribution from her IRA. She avoids the taxable income from her required minimum distribution (RMD) while giving to funds she cares about at the Community Foundation.



Thanks to the Community Foundation's guidance, we are more informed and think our giving can have a greater impact. And when disaster strikes, the staff's knowledge of nonprofit partners proved invaluable in getting help out quickly.

– Cory Ray, Donor-Advised Fundholder



## Who We Help

Individuals, families, businesses, and nonprofits to make a lasting impact in our community and beyond.



## What You Can Give

Tax-wise gifts include donations of cash, securities, real estate assets, required minimum distributions (RMDs) from retirement accounts (IRAs), and insurance.



## What We Offer

An opportunity to give to community funds to address urgent needs. Giving options also include donor-advised funds, endowed funds for many purposes, scholarships, funds for nonprofits, charitable remainder trusts, charitable gift annuities, legacy plans, and Memorandums of Charitable Intent.



## The Difference We Make

We bring relationships and an in-depth understanding of the issues, opportunities, nonprofits, and resources that shape Santa Cruz County.



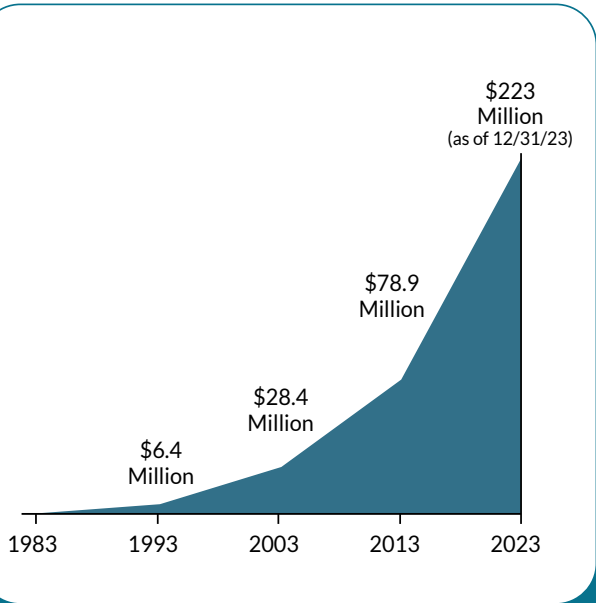
The Community Foundation is a trusted, smart, and thoughtful partner. I often recommend that my clients work with the Foundation as they plan for future giving.”

– Lee Ann Shenkman, Estate Planning Attorney-at-Law

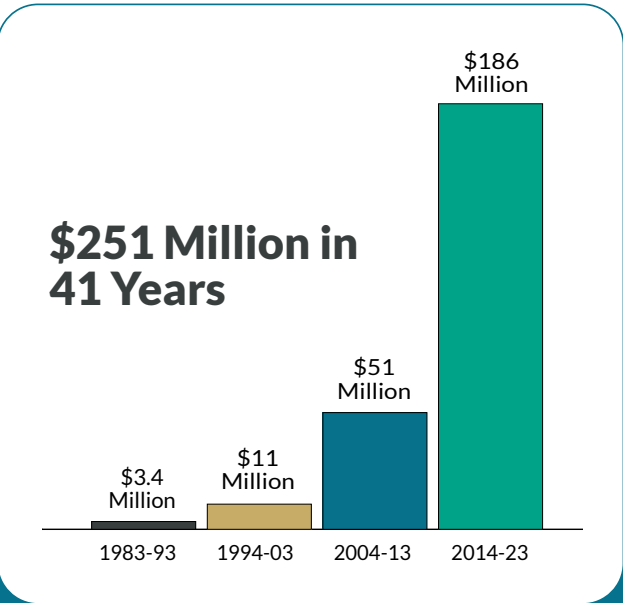
## Investments with a Purpose

Our investment strategies are among the most mission aligned portfolios in the nation. We started one of the field’s early socially responsible portfolios in 2004 and have launched new options such as our gender equality focused Women’s Inclusion Portfolio. We’re allocating capital with an eye on the racial and gender diversity of asset fund managers. Loan funds are hard at work locally, supporting new entrant farmers, easing our affordability crisis with workforce housing, and growing immigrant-owned small businesses. From our grants to our investment strategy, the Foundation’s assets are working to make Santa Cruz County a better place, now and in the future.

### Charitable Assets



### Grants, Loans & Scholarships



## Financial Highlights

Preliminary, as of December 31, 2023

### Assets

Cash & Equivalents .....	\$4,100,000
Investments .....	\$205,000,000
Charitable Trust Assets .....	\$2,400,000
Grants & Contributions Receivable .....	\$2,700,000
Loans Receivable .....	\$2,400,000
Loan Interest Receivable.....	\$30,000
Deposits & Prepaids.....	\$100,000
Fixed Assets .....	\$6,300,000

**TOTAL ASSETS..... \$223,030,000**

### Liabilities

Accounts Payable .....	\$250,000
Grants Payable .....	\$1,700,000
Agency Funds .....	\$20,000,000
Trust Liabilities .....	\$2,400,000
Charitable Gift Annuity Liabilities.....	\$600,000
Notes Payable .....	\$850,000

**TOTAL LIABILITIES.....\$25,800,000**

Our 2023 audit will be posted once prepared in 2024. View our financials and investment performance at [cfsc.org/financials](https://cfsc.org/financials).