

SANTA BARBARA TEA FIRE RESPONSE FUND

For Immediate Release

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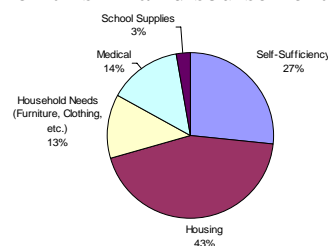
Tea Fire Response Fund, United Way of Santa Barbara County Announce Final Disbursement of Tea Fire Checks

Santa Barbara, CA, November 16, 2009 – On Monday, November 16th, the Santa Barbara Tea Fire Response Fund announced the final round of fund distributions and reported on the results of the program. The announcement took place following the Nov. 13th allocation of the fifth and final disbursement of funds remaining from over \$434,000 in donations from the community. The Santa Barbara Tea Fire Response Fund, a collaborative community partnership begun by United Way of Santa Barbara County in the days following the devastating Tea Fire of November 2008, has helped those affected by the fires with “self-sufficiency,” housing needs, school supplies and medical needs. **Representatives of the collaborative presented the results and honored members of first responder organizations and Tea Fire Response Fund recipients at a press conference held at United Way of Santa Barbara County.**

“We are pleased to report on the success of the Tea Fire Response Fund, a community-wide effort that ensured that money entrusted by our community reached the individuals and families in need, to get their lives back on track,” said George Leis, President & CEO of Santa Barbara Bank & Trust and volunteer spokesperson for the Tea Fire Response Fund. “We are grateful to all those who have generously donated to the fund, the dedicated volunteer committee members, and the organizations that responded effectively and compassionately to serve those affected by the Tea Fire.”

The Santa Barbara Tea Fire Response Fund, a collaborative community partnership begun by United Way of Santa Barbara County in the days following the devastating Tea Fire of November 2008, disbursed the funds remaining from the total \$435,319.33, including \$434,447.15 in donations and \$192.70 in earned interest. The most recent disbursement of \$98,249.81 was announced in September. The majority of the final \$44,101.79 disbursement was allocated to recipients’ long term recovery needs, focusing on housing and other household needs.

Short term “self-sufficiency” needs, especially for the resources or tools people needed to get back to work comprised 91% of the first disbursement in February decreasing to just 16% at this final disbursement. Over the past year, there was a significant shift to cover long term recovery expenses such as housing and household needs which grew from just 3% of the first disbursement to 84% of this final disbursement. Funds for self-sufficiency mainly went to members of the community who are self-employed and whose businesses were affected by the fire, including tools lost and materials destroyed. Housing and household needs included rent assistance, furnishings, and some clothing.



Please see attached fact sheet for graphs, fund and disbursement details.

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The report was delivered by George Leis, Volunteer spokesperson for the Santa Barbara Tea Fire Response Fund, and President & CEO, Santa Barbara Bank & Trust. **Salud Carbajal**, Supervisor 1st District, County of Santa Barbara and **Marty Blum**, Mayor, City of Santa Barbara were joined by **Santa Barbara Fire Department Chief Andrew DiMizio** and **Montecito Fire Department Chief Kevin Wallace** to recognize the work of first responder organizations. **Supervisor Carbajal and Mayor Blum also presented Chef Carlos Lima, a Tea Fire Response Fund recipient who lost his home in the fire, with a Certificate of Special Recognition for his outstanding service to the community.**

Members of the Tea Fire Oversight Committee who were invited included: **Marty Blum**, Mayor, City of Santa Barbara; **Salud Carbajal**, Supervisor 1st District, County of Santa Barbara; **Les Carroll**, General Manager, KZSB AM 1290; **G. Paul Didier**, President & CEO, United Way of Santa Barbara County; **Ron Gallo**, President & CEO, Santa Barbara Foundation; **Michael Granados**, CEO Smith Media, **KEYT3 Santa Barbara**; **Louise Kolbert**, CEO, American Red Cross, Santa Barbara County Chapter.

Additionally, members of the Tea Fire Fund Screening Subcommittee included: **Brian Clark**, Catholic Charities; **Joel Goforth**, United Way of Santa Barbara County; **Justin Haagen**, ServiceMaster; **Gracie Huerta**, City OES/SBFD; **Ed Lamb**, First Southern Baptist Church; **Jay McAmis**, County Office of Emergency Services; **Tom Reed**, Unity Shoppe; **Geri Ventura**, MERRAG/Montecito Fire Department; **Brett Williams**, Direct Relief International; **Michael Williams**, Wildland Residents Association; **Joe Woodruff**, Lions Club.

United Way of Santa Barbara County leveraged its proven experience in developing community partnerships to meet community needs when it helped launch the Santa Barbara Tea Fire Response Fund. United Way of Santa Barbara County has been committed to the long term recovery of the community and acted as the organizing fiscal agent, handling the monies for the fund. United Way did not charge for this service and 100% of all donations went to services for Tea Fire Survivors.

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