

SANTA BARBARA TEA FIRE RESPONSE FUND

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Tea Fire Response Fund, United Way of Santa Barbara County Announces First Disbursement of Tea Fire Checks

Santa Barbara, CA, Feb. 23, 2009 – The Santa Barbara Tea Fire Response Fund, a collaborative community partnership, formed in the days following the devastating Tea Fire of November 2008, announced today the first distribution of the funds donated by individuals and organizations. **The total funds raised to date are \$434,426 and this first distribution totaled \$77,203.87.**

The recipients of the majority (91%) of this first distribution of this money is in the category of “self-sufficiency,” including self-employed individuals whose ability to work has been affected. 6% went to school supplies and 3% was dedicated to housing needs. 213 individuals and families have registered with American Red Cross Santa Barbara County Chapter and 48 applications representing approximately \$168,000 have been submitted so far. Of these 21 have been processed and approved. Ninety-nine percent (99%) of recipients were renters and 1% were homeowners.

Tea Fire Response Funds are being distributed based on a three-tiered screening and oversight system. A public-private partnership of agencies and officials provide screening at the social worker/case manager level and an oversight committee of local leaders provides direction and assurance that all monies are used appropriately. The fund is still open to applicants through November 1st and is still accepting donations.

Santa Barbara Tea Fire Response Fund **FACT SHEET 2/23/2009**

The Santa Barbara Tea Fire Response Fund (SBTFRF), a collaborative community partnership, formed in the days following the devastating Tea Fire of November 13-17, 2008, is disbursing the first installment of the funds donated by individuals and organizations on February 23, 2009.

The purpose of the fund is to identify and provide assistance for unmet needs of individuals and families affected by the Tea Fire. In every disaster, the people affected have short and longer-term needs. Organizations such as The American Red Cross and The Salvation Army are a community’s first line of disaster response. The SBTFRF was established to address the longer-term recovery of the community, and help people rebuild their lives.

The Santa Barbara Tea Fire Response Fund is continuing to work with community partners to identify and provide assistance for unmet needs of the affected families, and we will be here for the long term to support the whole community’s recovery.

Funds Raised To Date (as of February 23, 2009): \$434,426

How Funds Are Distributed:

Tea Fire Response Funds are being distributed based on a three-tiered screening and oversight system. Initially, a professional case manager, experienced in disaster recovery, working closely with those affected by the Tea Fire to identify needs, recommends to a Screening Sub-Committee (SSC) made up of thirteen volunteer public and private organizations. Upon that group’s

additional review, recommendations are made to an (Oversight Committee) of local community leaders who provide direction and assurance that all monies are used appropriately. In order to respond to the immediate and longer-term needs, the Oversight Committee will disburse funds on a periodic timetable.

Amount Distributed to date

\$ 77,203.87
21 applications approved
91% of funds went to Self-Sufficiency
6% of funds went to School Supplies
3% of funds went to Housing

How Community Members Can Still Apply:

Individuals and families affected by the fire who desire assistance must apply at The American Red Cross, Santa Barbara County Chapter at 2707 State St. Santa Barbara, California from 9am to 5pm Monday through Friday. Applicants should bring proof that their house was burned down, damaged, or that they have been adversely affected by the fire. All applications are confidential. If you have already applied to Red Cross you do not need to apply again. An American Red Cross Case Manager will meet with you to discuss your un-met needs. To set an appointment with a Case Manger, contact Pamela Voge at American Red Cross at (805) 687-1331. Applications will be reviewed through November 1, 2009.

Tea Fire Response Fund Oversight Committee Members:

George Leis, Volunteer Spokesperson for the Santa Barbara Tea Fire Fund, and President
CEO, Santa Barbara Bank & Trust.
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
Janet Stanley, CEO, American Red Cross, Santa Barbara County Chapter

Tea Fire Fund Screening Subcommittee Members:

Brian Clark, Catholic Charities
Joel Goforth, United Way of Santa Barbara County
Justin Haagen, ServiceMaster
Gracie Huerta, City OES/SBFD
Louise Kolbert, Director of Emergency Services, American Red Cross
Ed Lamb, First Southern Baptist Church
Jay McAmis, County Office of Emergency Services
Tom Reed, Unity Shoppe
Jim Rivera, Santa Barbara Foundation
Geri Ventura, MERRAG/Montecito Fire Department
Brett Williams, Direct Relief International
Michael Williams, Wildland Residents Association
Joe Woodruff, Lions Club

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