

SANTA BARBARA TEA FIRE RESPONSE FUND

For Immediate Release

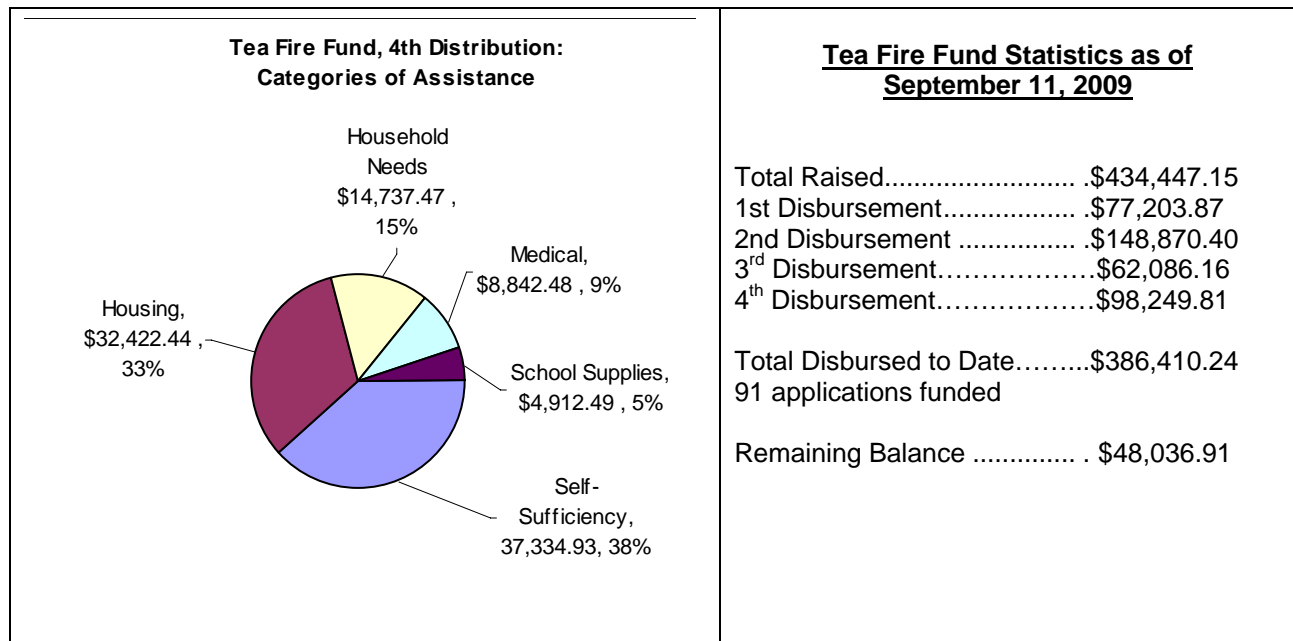
Media Contact: Candice Tang/Juliana Minsky, (805) 687-3322

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

Final Disbursement Scheduled for Tea Fire Anniversary Date

Santa Barbara, CA, September 15, 2009 – 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, is disbursing the fourth of five installments of the funds donated by individuals and organizations. To date, the funds donated total \$434,447.15. The last distribution of \$62,086.16 was announced in June. The current distribution totals \$98,249.81. The majority of these funds will go toward “self-sufficiency” (38%) and housing needs (33%). The remaining funds will go toward miscellaneous household needs (15%), School supplies (5%), and medical needs (9%), for those affected.

“We are pleased to report that we are on schedule getting this support out to those whose lives continue to be impacted by the Tea Fire,” said George Leis, President & CEO of Santa Barbara Bank & Trust and volunteer spokesperson for the Santa Barbara Tea Fire Response Fund. “During this recent phase, we were also pleased to have reached a number of people who did not know they were eligible for this assistance, so generously donated by our community.”



The fifth and final distribution of funds is planned for November 13th.



Santa Barbara 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 the Screening Sub-Committee which is made up of the following thirteen volunteer public and private organizations: 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, Santa Barbara County Chapter; 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.

Upon that group's additional review, recommendations are made to the Oversight Committee of local community leaders who provide direction and assurance that all monies are used appropriately. The Oversight Committee members are: 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.

The Santa Barbara Tea Fire Response Fund would like to acknowledge and thank the following organizations that gave generously of both time and money to create a fund where all the money donated could go directly to services to meet Tea Fire Survivor's needs: The Orfalea Foundation, Santa Barbara Bank & Trust, The Santa Barbara Foundation, The Mosher Foundation and United Way of Santa Barbara County. The Tea Fire Response Fund also thanks our gracious media partners who were instrumental in getting and keeping the word out about how to help those affected by the fire: KEYT3 TV, Cumulus Media, Rincon Broadcasting, and KZSB AM 1290. Thanks and recognition also go to the volunteer Oversight Committee, the volunteer Screening Sub-Committee and the American Red Cross, Santa Barbara County Chapter for providing case management services.

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 is committed to the long term recovery of the community. As such, the remaining disbursements will continue to be made throughout the 2009 year as unmet needs of fire survivors continue to be identified. United Way of Santa Barbara County is acting as the organizing fiscal agent, handling the monies for the fund. United Way is not charging for this service and 100% of all donations will go for services to Tea Fire Survivors. Disbursements will be made throughout the year until all funds are disbursed, no later than December 31, 2009.

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United Way 320 E. Gutierrez Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101
Phone: (805) 965-8591 Fax (805) 962-3461