

# Hope in Trying Times

As it Celebrates 75 Years, the Community Foundation for Monterey County Mobilizes for Pandemic Relief

BY RENEE BRINCKS



Photo: Richard Green

**CFMC staff at Casa Abrego, one of the historic Monterey adobes the foundation helped preserve from development. "We make grants to create healthy, safe, vibrant communities in Monterey County and beyond."**

In mid March, as COVID-19 cases increased worldwide and California jurisdictions implemented shelter-in-place orders, the Community Foundation for Monterey County (CFMC) ramped up its emergency assistance efforts. Working with the Monterey Peninsula Foundation, CFMC staffers established the COVID-19 Relief Fund to support housing, health, human services and educational programs for vulnerable residents.

Within three weeks, as employees adjusted to new, pandemic-driven work-from-home protocols, the CFMC raised more than \$1.8 million for the fund and distributed its first \$935,000 in grants. And, those numbers

continue to grow. In addition to helping Dorothy's Place, the Salvation Army, VNA and other organizations providing direct assistance to individuals and families in need, the CFMC has assembled an online resource library and launched webinars to help nonprofits navigate this unfamiliar landscape.

"We started by focusing on the front lines. We want agencies to have adequate resources and supplies as they deal directly with affected populations," says Dan Baldwin, CFMC president and chief executive officer. "From there, we'll circle back to stabilization grants. We want to help alleviate nonprofits' short- and long-term obstacles, so they can continue



# Community Foundation for Monterey County







**Community Partnership for Youth Students jump for joy at Ventana Wilderness Alliance Youth in Wilderness Expedition in Big Sur. “The CFMC provides a bridge between people and community needs.” \$19.2 million was granted in 2019.**

their important programs in the face of these new challenges.”

The efforts come as the CFMC marks its 75th year of community service. Since it was founded in 1945, the foundation has distributed

more than \$205 million in grants – including \$19.3 million awarded to some 400 nonprofits in 2019 alone.

Prominent locals like poet Robinson Jeffers, designer Francis Elkins and Pebble Beach

Company founder Samuel F.B. Morse first established the Monterey Foundation in 1945 to acquire and protect Monterey’s historic adobes. The foundation moved into open-space preservation in the 1970s. Nearly a decade later, the group changed its name to Community Foundation for Monterey County, created a permanent endowment, and positioned itself to deploy more charitable resources.

“We’ve evolved into a robust organization that hasn’t lost sight of its fundamentals,” says Baldwin. “We want to maximize our impact, while meeting the expectation that we’ll find solutions to emerging community needs.”

In addition to leading recent coronavirus-related efforts, the organization collaborates with *Monterey County Weekly* and the Monterey Peninsula Foundation on the annual Monterey County Gives! campaign, educates local organizations through its Center for Nonprofit



Photo: Richard Green

**2019 Past Chairs’ luncheon (Standing l to r) Christine Dawson, Bob House, Bill Doolittle, Craig Johnson, Steve McGowan, Kurt Gollnick, Dan Baldwin (Seated l to r) Greg Chilton, Dick Borda, Kip Hudson, Birt Johnson, Jr., Kevin Cartwright.**



**Scholarship recipient Celeste Islas addresses the crowd at the annual Women's Fund Lunch. The foundation awards more than 375 scholarships each year, totaling \$1.4 million, thanks to generous individuals, clubs and businesses.**

Excellence, and distributes more than \$1.4 million in annual scholarship funds.

As an early supporter of Rancho Cielo, the Salinas facility that provides job training and education for at-risk youth, the CFMC has assisted with infrastructure grants, donor-advised gifts and guidance on a \$10 million capital campaign for the new Ted Taylor Ag Vocational Center.

"Dan Baldwin's professional assistance made us more successful and helped us reach our goal faster. He acts as a respected advisor in our community," says Susie Brusa, Rancho Cielo executive director.

By administering more than 550 charitable funds, the foundation also reaches all corners of Monterey County. CFMC investment commit-



Photo: Richard Green

tee member and donor Bill Doolittle has helped to raise money for everything from local Boys & Girls Clubs, to individuals impacted by the 2017 Big Sur road closure, to the Food Bank for Monterey County.

The Food Bank served one in five county res-

idents before the coronavirus pandemic; food security has become a more pressing issue as families face layoffs and lost wages. The organization received one of the foundation's first COVID-19 Relief Fund grants.

"Clearly, the need is there," says Doolittle. "The



Photo: Richard Green

**In 1961 the foundation collaborated with the Monterey History and Art Association and City of Monterey to purchase the Fremont Adobe on Hartnell Street, which was believed to be the headquarters of General John Charles Fremont in 1847.**





Photo: Richard Green

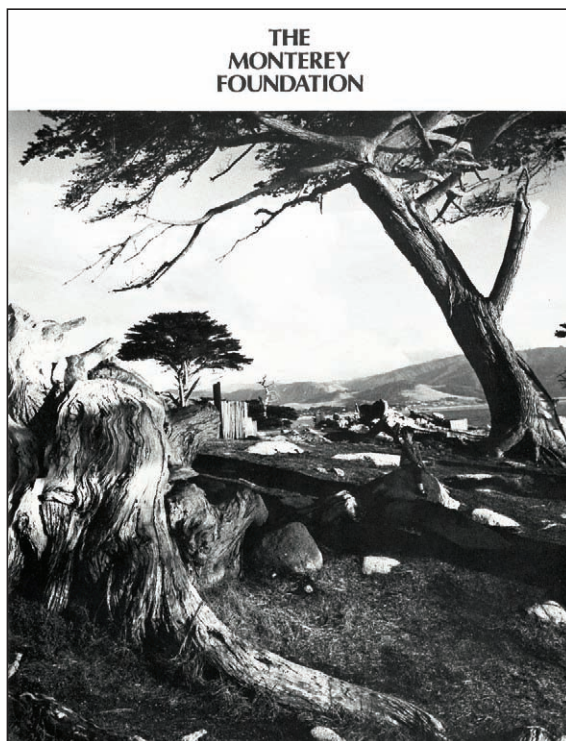
**The foundation granted more than \$2 million in the first 2 months from its COVID-19 Relief Fund to nonprofits helping vulnerable residents in response to the pandemic, including food distribution at the Salvation Army in Monterey and Salinas.**

Community Foundation for Monterey County helps organizations like the food bank recognize and address those needs.”

Current CFMC board member Michael Reid got involved with the foundation after an unsheltered woman alerted him to her counterparts sleeping on beaches and under bridges. Though many of the women worked locally, job losses, medical bills and other challenges limited their housing options.

With CFMC insight and seed money collected through a photo exhibition, Reid and some colleagues launched the Fund for Homeless Women. Together, they’ve raised more than \$1.5 million for services and shelter since 2012.

“The Community Foundation for Monterey County is not just an endow-



**The foundation helped preserve open space, including a parcel on Pescadero Point, shown here in the Annual Report, circa 1970.**

Photo: Courtesy of Community Foundation for Monterey County

ment. It starts and sustains programs that help community members, and each contribution is multiplied more than an individual one might be,” says Reid.

Maximizing contributions now matters even more, as communities address immediate coronavirus impacts.

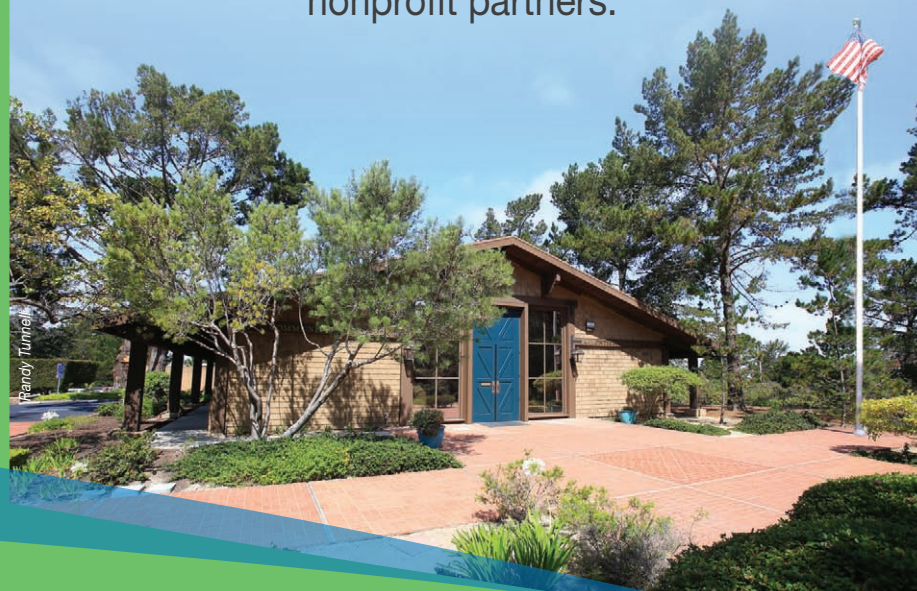
“We’re all affected by this in some way. If people want to help but don’t know how, our COVID-19 relief fund directs where the need is greatest. And if people have another favorite nonprofit, no matter what it is, I just encourage them to give,” says Baldwin. “This is a time when philanthropy can fill a lot of very important gaps.”

To support Community Foundation for Monterey County initiatives and for more information, please visit [www.cfmco.org](http://www.cfmco.org). ■

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# Carmel

magazine

The Lifestyle Magazine of the Central Coast Spring/Summer 2020

Carmel Magazine Inc.  
126 Clock Tower Place, Ste. 103  
Carmel, CA 93923  
Phone: 831/625-9922 • Fax: 831/626-3613  
[www.carmelmagazine.com](http://www.carmelmagazine.com)

## PUBLISHER/GENERAL MANAGER

Steve Snider

## CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Catrina Coyle, Brett Wilbur

## ART DIRECTOR PHOTOGRAPHER

Kelli Uldall

## CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Renee Brincks, Michael Chatfield,  
Dina Eastwood, Larry Harland,  
Mark Oman, Sharon Randall,  
Laird Small, Brett Wilbur

## CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

Heidi Borgia, Richard Green,  
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Randy Tunnell

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Marty Lewis, Jill Martin, Vicki McMillan,  
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