



Creating a future of opportunity.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UpValley Family Centers - Valley Fire One Year Later

From Jenny Ocón, Executive Director, UpValley Family Centers

“It’s hard to believe a year has passed since the Valley Fire ravaged nearby communities – and that nearly a year later the Clayton Fire hit, bringing a new wave of grief. Over this time, my appreciation has grown for the importance of close-knit community ties, and the value that family resource centers play in caring for our most vulnerable neighbors in times of need. Thanks to hundreds of donors and volunteers from near and far, we were able to help over 1,500 Valley Fire victims begin a process of recovery. Each donation of time and treasure made a difference.”

Jenny Ocon, Executive Director, UpValley Family Centers

From school penny jars to large donations like the initial grant provided by the Napa Valley Vintners, the UpValley Family Centers received a total of \$357,628 in donations from individuals, businesses, community groups, schools and foundations to aid Valley Fire victims.

From September 2015 through June 2016, we provided assistance in a variety of ways including financial help for housing-related expenses like security deposits and rental assistance and with essential basic support including food, gas, transportation, medical bills and utility bills.

Here is just one story of hundreds:

Rosa and Ociel (below) are long-time residents of Middletown, living there more than 45 years. Rosa is employed at a Napa County resort. They raised three children in the house that they owned for many years. Their two oldest children are married and have careers. Their youngest child was away at college when the disaster struck. Rosa and Ociel were forced to evacuate along with thousands of people, and came to the Calistoga Fairgrounds on September 12th. They received assistance from UVFC, including food and gas cards at the beginning of their stay at the shelter. About four days later, they learned that their house was completely burned down and heard about the opportunity to receive financial assistance and case management through UVFC. They applied, requesting funds for a down payment for a trailer that could serve them as a residence while rebuilding their home. They obtained a loan from their bank, and along with the financial assistance they received through our program, they purchased a trailer. They initially parked the trailer in the backyard of a kind local Calistoga business woman's residence, where they stayed until their property was cleaned of debris and cleared for return. They are now living on their property in the trailer, and in the process of rebuilding their home.



September 2015

UpValley Family Centers' Mission:

Our mission is to ensure community members have the resources to create healthy, happy lives for their families, to achieve self-sufficiency, and to develop the skills they need to participate fully in the community.

Organizational Overview:

- We operate family resource centers in Calistoga and St. Helena, annually serving 3,200 individuals in our rural communities. Approximately 30% of up valley residents use our services; the majority are low-income.
- Our clients live and work in the rural areas of Deer Park, Angwin, Pope Valley, Lake Berryessa, Oakville, Rutherford, Calistoga, and St. Helena.

- Our 17 staff provide services in English and Spanish to promote healthy, positive outcomes for individuals from babies to seniors.
- We collaborate with over 40 social service partners throughout Napa County to coordinate the services our clients need.

6 Program Focus Areas offered in Spanish & English:

- Health & Wellness: Counseling, domestic violence assistance, health insurance applications, drug and alcohol prevention and education
- Education: Parent education, school readiness/summer bridge, early literacy programs, parent/child playgroups, youth mentoring (CLARO/CLARA)
- Community Connections: Guided Resource and Referrals
- Economic Success: Emergency assistance for families in crisis, free tax preparation, financial literacy classes, employment assistance, workforce development classes
- Immigrant Integration: Citizenship and DACA outreach and application
- assistance, community involvement, ESL classes
- Seniors: Guided referrals, case management, resource fairs, educational workshops

History:

The UpValley Family Centers was established in February 2014 resulting from a merger between the Calistoga Family Center (founded 1999) and the St. Helena Family Center (founded 2005).

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