LAKE COUNTY NEWS

Walmart Foundation grants $25,000 to Habitat for Humanity Lake County

Members of the Walmart store staff in Clearlake, Calif., led by Manager Travis Peck (fourth from right), presented a check to Habitat for Humanity Lake County President Richard Birk (standing, fourth from left) on Wednesday, December 9, 2015. Also present for the event were Clearlake Mayor Denise Loustalot (third from left), and Councilman Russ Perdock and Councilwoman Joyce Overton (second and third from right, respectively). Photo courtesy of Walmart.

CLEARLAKE, Calif. – The Walmart Foundation's California State Giving Council on Wednesday presented a $25,000 check to Habitat for Humanity Lake County to help the organization provide critical repairs to the homes of residents who were displaced by this summer's devastating wildfires.

The $25,000 grant was presented to Richard Birk, president of Habitat for Humanity Lake County, during a check presentation ceremony at the Walmart store in Clearlake.

The funds presented Wednesday are in addition to the $200,000 in cash and in-kind support which was committed to relief efforts surrounding wildfires in Northern California and other parts of the western U.S. earlier this year.

Nearly 2,000 structures – including more than 1,300 homes – were destroyed in the Valley fire.

The Clearlake Walmart store served as an evacuation point for the community during the fire, remaining open 24 hours a day to ensure the community had access to supplies. The store also provided continuous support with donations of food, water, cots, blankets, hygiene products and other necessities.

The Clearlake Walmart also donated supplies and merchandise to multiple evacuation sites, including the Salvation Army food truck, the local senior center and Moose Lodge, and an evacuation site in Kelseyville, among others.

"We are honored to support organizations like Habitat for Humanity Lake County, which is providing critical services to area families impacted by the recent Valley fire," said Travis Peck, store manager of the Clearlake Walmart. "Through this grant and our commitment to making a difference in people's lives, Walmart is helping Lake County and the greater Clearlake community rebuild and rebound."

Established in 2000, Habitat for Humanity Lake County completed its first home in 2002 and will complete its 19th home by the end of 2015.

In addition, the organization has provided more than 175 homeowners in Lake County with critical health and safety related repairs as part of its Home Repair and Veteran's Repair programs.

"The fires of 2015 presented our community with a number of unprecedented challenges, including the need to secure safe housing for the hundreds of families that were displaced," said Birk. "This generous grant from Walmart will help us repair homes which survived the fires and need to be made livable again, as well as build homes for those unable to rebuild or were displaced renters. We're so thankful for these funds which will make a direct and lasting impact on the lives of so many in our area."

In 2014, Walmart and the Walmart Foundation gave more than $58 million in cash and in-kind contributions to charitable organizations across California.

To be considered for support, prospective grantee organizations must submit applications through the Walmart Foundation State Giving Program's online grant application. Applicants must have a current 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status in order to meet the program's minimum eligibility criteria.

Additional information about the program's funding guidelines and application process are available online at www.walmartfoundation.org/stategiving .