Nevada County Faces of Philanthropy

Happy National Philanthropy Day! For the fifteen days starting today and ending on Giving Tuesday, we will explore Nevada County’s exceptional philanthropic culture from a range of perspectives: volunteerism, government partnership, philanthropy as a component of a well-lived life, ways of providing financial support, and partnerships with local business. We hope that the series will leave you with a sense of awe for all the not-for-profit sector accomplishes in this community as well as a sense of empowerment to leave your unique philanthropic mark.

Nevada County stands out among rural communities for its natural beauty, emphasis on the arts, commitment to health and wellness, and intellectual curiosity and activism. These characteristics draw residents, visitors, and performers from around the world, and they seem so innate that it’s hard to imagine our community without them. This series of articles is a reminder that these traits are not inherent to our region. Rather, they are the result of a robust multi-generational effort by thousands of paid staff and volunteers in Nevada County’s nonprofit sector to make a vision of world-class living a reality.

Philanthropy may be described as private initiatives for the public good, focusing on quality of life. In Nevada County, such initiatives form the fiber of the community. The efforts of philanthropic staff and volunteers drive education, food security, religion, housing, agriculture, recreation, entertainment, the arts, environmental preservation, healthcare, human services, and animal welfare. They are also an economic lifeline to this community employing community members, encouraging visitors, increasing the purchase and consumption of local goods, and providing a community that is a desirable place to visit, live and retire.

Let us take a moment to imagine this community without its philanthropic base: Our hospital and nonprofit medical clinics are gone, and the community grows sicker; babies in need lose access to diapers and formula while parents lose access to parenting classes and emergency childcare services; schools no longer offer art and music; local government is the only resource to provide safety, supervision, and access to resources during a crises like COVID or after a fire; food insecurity is a central concern for individuals living in poverty, and particularly for those confined to their homes; the Yuba River and other watersheds have no protection from profit motivated lobbyists; our historic trails are no longer accessible to the public and development of new recreational spaces grinds to a standstill; children have fewer opportunities to learn about agriculture, our agrarian roots start to disappear; farm lands lose the designations that
preserve their historic and environmental uses and become opportunities for development; lost and abandoned pets are turned over the government systems for shelter, fewer are rehomed; we have no County Fair, renowned artists do not visit, there are no music or film festivals; the only services left for the sick and dying are provided by organizations with a profit motive and without the aid of trained and caring volunteers. These absences would render our home unrecognizable to those of us who, from the moment of birth to the last breath, benefit from these often-invisible charitable designs.

With this perspective on the strength and impact of our not-for-profit organizations, staff, and volunteers, we hope that you will join us in this celebration of Nevada County’s philanthropic endeavors, past and present.

Publish Date, Nov. 15th