



Dear friends,

As we move through winter into spring, I'm reminded that this season often symbolizes generosity, renewal, and togetherness. Those values were especially evident as our region faced an unprecedented rise in food insecurity this past year. In 2024, 22.5% of Humboldt County residents ages 18 to 59 were enrolled in CalFresh, a striking indicator of need – and our community rose to the challenge with compassion and resolve. I'm deeply proud of how our partners, donors, and staff stepped forward to support our neighbors during this difficult time.

One meaningful example of commitment came from our own team. Staff chose to forgo our traditional holiday party, directing those funds to grantmaking efforts. In its place, we held a warm and lively potluck, which brought us together in a way that felt both grounded and joyful.

We're also pleased to welcome Juan Ruiz, Director of Programs and Community Partnerships, and Danielle Frank, Program Officer for Native Cultures Fund, and board members, Sharrone Blanck and Mike Sullivan, who bring fresh energy and insight to our work. Looking ahead to our new fiscal year in July, we remain anchored by the strength and continuity of this community.

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Sara Dronkers,
Chief Executive Officer



Working Together to Meet the Moment

Meredith Knowles, Director of Grantmaking

Food security in our region is sustained by a strong, interconnected network of food banks, tribal programs, producers, schools, faith communities, and family resource centers. This network, which spans Curry, Del Norte, Humboldt and Trinity counties, represents a model for collective regional leadership, ensuring our neighbors can access food in ways that reflect our community values, culture, and dignity.

This network is facing enormous challenges to their work. Food costs are rising and the threat of public funding cuts have strained already lean operations. Thanks to the generosity of donors who have contributed to the HAF+WRCF Grantmaking Fund and other Opportunity Funds, we were able to respond quickly to emerging needs, granting to trusted community partners in ways that strengthen what already works.

Donor Advised Funds were essential during this time, representing almost half our total giving to support food access and food systems throughout the region. These fundholders exemplified the power of solidarity and community care as they worked with staff to direct their philanthropic resources toward food access during a period of heightened uncertainty.

These donor-recommended grants represent more than charitable giving. They signal shared responsibility: neighbors supporting neighbors, community members responding to real-time needs, and donors standing alongside frontline food providers.

Between November 2025 and March 2026, HAF + WRCF distributed 66 grants addressing food security for a total of \$175K. These investments reflect a shared belief that food security is an integral part of our community's wellbeing, and it is foundational to health, education, cultural continuity, and community resilience.

Nearly 40 organizations received food-related grants during this period, with support flowing to regional anchors as well as tribal and small, community-based partners. Significant investments in organizations such as Food for People, North Coast Growers Association, Family Resource Center of the Redwoods, Del Norte Unified School District, tribal food programs, senior centers, and rural resource hubs reflect the depth and breadth of leadership already present in our region.

These partners are not only meeting immediate needs. They are strengthening local food systems, supporting local farmers, honoring cultural foodways, and ensuring food access reaches remote and underserved areas.

DONOR ADVISED GRANTS

Donor advisors recommended 31 grants totaling \$83,900, supporting trusted organizations with operating support, holiday food efforts, and emergency food access.

During acute disruption to federal and state food benefits, HAF+WRCF mobilized to provide \$45,000 in responsive funding, strengthening community-led food programs and supporting urgent needs.

HAF + WRCF supported food security work across six grantmaking streams, directing resources to meet community leadership where it already exists:

HOLIDAY FUNDING

Holiday Funding Partnership grants, in collaboration with local funders through the North Coast Grantmaking Partnership, delivered \$31,500 to ensure families, elders, and children across rural and coastal communities had access to nourishing food during the winter months.

AGING TO THRIVE

Aging to Thrive grants invested \$15,000 in senior nutrition, honoring elders and supporting healthy aging.

Additional grant investments expanded food access for students and families and rapid-response grants addressed immediate needs as they emerged.



Thank You Donors!

Laurel Dalsted

Director of Donor Relations & Development

As a community foundation supporting the charitable giving of hundreds of local donors and organizations, we have the unique vantage point of getting to see in real time a snapshot of how our community steps up when their neighbors are in need.

As explained by Meredith Knowles, our Director of Grantmaking, on page 2, nearly half of the funding for grantmaking related to food security that went out between November 2025 and March 2026 was at the recommendation of generous donors who advise funds at HAF+WRCF.

Families and community groups saw the need and stepped up to send support to local food pantries, school nutrition programs, senior meal providers and more to help make sure their neighbors were fed as the holidays approached. At a time when the scale of need can feel overwhelming, we are grateful to all our donors who remind us through their generosity that together we can make a difference. Whether you give financial support, volunteer, or help a neighbor in need, thank you to all who contribute to caring for our community.

Helping the Helpers

Multiple grants totaling more than \$64,000 strengthened Food for People's role as a regional anchor, supporting core operations, senior nutrition, holiday distributions, and rapid response to rising demand to ensure stability and continuity during a period of system-wide strain. One such grant came from the Rotary Club of Eureka Sign Smith Service Fund, with the Rotary Club committing an up-to \$5,000 match for a fundraising challenge.



Food for People staff Britt, Eric and Ed at a distribution in Blue Lake.

Photo courtesy of Food for People.

Welcome New Funds!

We are pleased to welcome the following new funds to HAF+WRCF, opened between November 2025 and March 2026:

Sequoia Park Zoo Animal Care Center Fund



Established by Sequoia Park Zoo to support animal health and veterinary care at the Zoo, covering emergency and unexpected veterinary expenses, medical equipment, staff training, veterinary transportation, Animal Care Center facility improvements, and other medically necessary items.

hafoundation.org/animalcarecenter

Rotary Club of Eureka - World Community Services Fund

Established to support organizations and projects that encourage community service locally and around the world.

Tom and Joan Crossan Fund



Joan was long-time local educator in physical education and gymnastics and a dedicated advocate for Eureka High students. Created in her memory by her husband Tom, this fund supports female graduating seniors from Humboldt County high schools who participated in athletics.



Out now: The 2024-25 Donor Yearbook and Annual Report! Contact Donor Relations for a copy or visit hafoundation.org/yearbook to view online.

For help with existing funds, establishing new ones, or including a charitable gift in your estate plans, contact our Donor Relations team.

donorservices@hafoundation.org

707-324-3501

Our Communities

Trinity Center Firefighter
Appreciation Dinner Oct. 25
Photo Credit: Pat Frost



A Disaster Response and Resilience Fund grant supported installation of a new generator at the Trinity Center Oddfellows Hall. The day after its installation local firefighters and community members gathered for a dinner.



Groundbreaking for the Eureka Chinatown Monument Jan. 30.

After a successful fundraising campaign that saw broad support from the local community, including through a number of donor-advised and other grants from HAF+WRCF, Humboldt Asian and Pacific Islanders in Solidarity (HAPI) officially broke ground on the new Eureka Chinatown Monument in Old Town.

Donor Celebration Party Nov. 13

In November, donors, nonprofits, and HAF+WRCF staff enjoyed spending time together reflecting on the past year at the Foundation's year-end donor celebration party.



Welcome New Staff and Board Members!



Sharrone Blanck

We were honored to welcome Sharrone Blanck as a new member of the HAF+WRCF Board of Directors in January. Blanck has lived in Humboldt County since 2015. For the first 15 years of her career, she worked in early intervention, supporting families with infants and toddlers – birth to age 3 – who have special needs.

She currently serves as the learning specialist for equity and inclusion at the Humboldt County Office of Education. Together with Meridith Oram, she co-facilitated an eight-hour training, Implicit Bias and the Four Dimensions of Racism, providing foundational learning for the region's largely white-identifying educator workforce.

Blanck also serves as president of the Eureka NAACP and is a founding member of B-Black, a Black-led community collaborative dedicated to advocacy, cultural connection and empowerment.



Danielle Frank

Please join us in welcoming our new Program Officer for the Native Cultures Fund. Danielle deeply believes that cultural revitalization, intertribal diplomacy, and land-based education are central to the health and abundance of Indigenous communities. Her experience strengthening tribal relationships, designing intertribal youth programs, and advancing Native-led philanthropy reflects a lifelong commitment to this belief. From co-leading the Paddle Tribal Waters Program and the historic First Descent of the Klamath River to training the next generation of Native youth grantmakers as a Coordinator for Native Americans in Philanthropy, Danielle brings a powerful blend of community listening, relationship-based grantmaking, and impactful storytelling that aligns with the values and vision of the Native Cultures Fund.



Juan Ruiz

Juan Ruiz recently joined us as the new Departmental Director for Programs & Community Partnerships! Juan is familiar with the region, having lived in both Humboldt and Trinity Counties. Juan earned a B.A. in Ethnic Studies from Cal Poly Humboldt and a M.S. in Student Affairs and Higher Education Administration from Colorado State University. Before joining the Foundation, Juan served as a Senior Program Officer at American Indian College Fund, where he led one of the nation's largest grant and scholarship programs supporting Tribal Colleges and American Indian and Alaska Native students.

Outside of work, Juan takes full advantage of the North Coast's outdoor beauty. He enjoys mountain biking in the Arcata Community Forest, backpacking in the Trinity Alps, and watching sunsets at the beach.



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Anna McGibbons, James Kloor and Laurel Dalsted at the Mar. 10 meeting.

The complete report can be found on our website at hafoundation.org/investments. Mission Lending information is available at hafoundation.org/lending.

Angeles Investment Meeting

Nearly 40 fundholders convened at HAF+WRCF's Bayside office and virtually for our annual Angeles Investment Review event on March 10. Anna McGibbons, CFA and Senior Managing Director for Angeles Investment Advisors was joined by staff to offer an overview of current investment strategy and the previous year's performance of investment pools. Highlights of the report included a strong year for the Long Term Mission Aligned Pool, which ended 2025 with \$182M in assets and returned 15.5% (net of fees) for the year. The Long Term Mission Aligned Pool is where the majority of funds at the Foundation are invested, including all endowed funds. The Medium Term Pool – which is used for capital campaign, reserve, and other funds with a shorter time horizon – also performed well and ended the year at \$4.2M in assets and returned 14.5% for the year. Of particular interest to attendees were updates on the Foundation's Mission Lending program, through which a portion of the Long Term Mission Aligned Pool is available for loans to local organizations.

GRANT DEADLINES

July 13 - Klamath River Fund Community Impact Grants

The Klamath River Fund invests in and amplifies restoration and revitalization efforts in the entire Klamath River Basin.

For more information about this and other grants, visit the HAF+WRCF Grants Portal at www.hafoundation.org/grants

GET IN TOUCH

To subscribe to the HAF+WRCF quarterly newsletter, scan the QR code or contact us at info@hafoundation.org.

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