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**BriarPatch donates \$8,000 to Nevada County Relief Fund  
in effort to support local nonprofits**

*Grass Valley* – BriarPatch Food Co-op donated \$8,000 to the Nevada County Relief Fund, earmarking the funds for Western Nevada County nonprofits struggling to stay afloat during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Nevada County Relief Fund was created through a partnership between the County of Nevada, Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital Foundation (SNMH Foundation), Tahoe Truckee Community Foundation (TTCF), and the Sierra Business Council (SBC) in consultation with the Center for Nonprofit Leadership (CNL) and the Economic Resource Council (ERC).

The BriarPatch donation represented a portion of the Co-op's profits earned in mid-March, a time when customers filled their shopping baskets at unprecedented levels in response to news of the pandemic and the looming shelter-in-place order.

"We operate under a set of cooperative principles that guide us to support our local community, especially in times of need," said Andrea Echegaray BriarPatch Finance Manager. "So, it made sense for us to contribute to this important county-wide effort."

BriarPatch has a long history of supporting local nonprofit groups through programs like the Co-op CAUSE (a campaign that allows shoppers to round up at the register for local nonprofits) and Patchworks (mobilizing customers to volunteer for local nonprofits). In 2019, shoppers donated \$65,531 from the CAUSE program and BriarPatch donated an additional \$167,554 to the community, which represented more than 10 percent of the store's total operating profit.

To date, the Nevada County Relief Fund has raised \$331,000 and distributed \$210,000 in small micro-grants to eight safety net nonprofits and 28 small businesses.



“We’re just touched to be part of the first round,” said Naomi Cabral, Development Director for Interfaith Food Ministry, a group that improves food security for the region’s most vulnerable residents.

The Relief Fund received 175 applications from small businesses for its micro-grants of up to \$5,000 each, and nearly two dozen applications for the “safety-net” grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$20,000 each. The combined requests totaled over \$1,175,000, nearly six times more than the Relief Fund’s Community Advisory Council had available to award. Applications will open for the next round in the coming week.

Last week, Nevada County saw a 30 percent increase in COVID-19 confirmed case count and neighboring counties are seeing sharp increases as well. Despite the uptick in cases, Nevada County is now entering Stage 3 of re-opening, and a sense of optimism is emerging. But it remains to be seen what long-term impacts Covid-19 will have on the local economy.

“Yes, it is certainly good to see doors opening, but there is still a tremendous financial impact. We won’t go from being completely shut down to fully at capacity for months, perhaps even a year. It is important for our community to both be safe and take care of each other. It’s a complete ecosystem. As long as we focus on solidarity, we’ll come out stronger,” said Cristine Kelly, Chair of Marketing and Communications for Nevada County Relief Fund.

Learn more:

<https://www.nevcorelief.org/>

<https://www.briarpatch.coop/>



BriarPatch Food Co-op is a community-owned cooperative business. We provide our community with quality food and products, strengthen our local economy, and support local/regional businesses that are committed to regenerative agriculture, sustainability, humane practices, and organic farming.