

## \$30,000 grant from WRCF and HAF bolsters effort to feed Crescent City hospital staff

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As COVID-19 cases soar in Del Norte County, the overworked staff at Crescent City's Sutter Coast Hospital is receiving much-needed meals provided by local restaurants, donations and a \$30,000 COVID-19 grant from Wild Rivers Community Foundation and Humboldt Area Foundation.

"When we heard that hospital employees are working 16-hour shifts, the hospital cafeteria is closed and they have little to no time for breaks and meals, we asked what can we do?" said Gina Zottola, vice president of Advancement & Philanthropic Innovation for WRCF and HAF. "This grant will provide our heroic health care workers with 175 meals and healthy snacks per day for four weeks."

Zottola said the grant was spurred by last weekend's efforts by Del Norte County Supervisor Valerie Starkey and resident Kelly Schellong, who organized with friends and local businesses to provide hospital employees with snacks and water. Over the weekend, the hospital received donated salads, sandwiches, snacks and

drinks from Frank's Heating and Refrigeration and Hiouchi Hamlet. Other businesses have since joined in the effort, Starkey said.

"We just wanted to do something to keep the staff fed," Starkey said. "They don't have a cafeteria and they can't simply run down and get a banana. This is something the community can do to show we care."

The \$30,000 grant will help Starkey and others work with local restaurants, food trucks and caterers to provide prepackaged meals from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 7:30 to 9 p.m. each day. Hospital employees are encouraged to take some of the food home to family members after their shift.

Starkey also encouraged residents to make posters with encouraging words that can be displayed at the hospital.

"Anybody can make a poster and it is a great way to show the hospital staff how important they are and that the community supports them," she said.

People who want to donate and businesses that would like to provide meals can contact Starkey at 707-490-9177 or Kelly Schellong at 707-218-5060.

Since pandemic lockdowns began in March, 2020, Humboldt Area Foundation and Wild Rivers Community Foundation have distributed \$3.3 million via 246 grants from its COVID-19 Regional Response Fund, most of which has been shared with nonprofits in Del Norte, Curry, Humboldt and Trinity counties. The grants range from \$1,000 to \$50,000 and support critical needs including food insecurity, technology access, health care access, racial equity and housing needs. Learn more about supporting the fund at [hafoundation.org/Giving/COVID19](https://hafoundation.org/Giving/COVID19).