



Segerstrom Fund Matching Grant Spurs \$20,000 ATCAA Food Bank Donation



Sonora Area Foundation, ATCAA and fund representatives gather for a donation presentation. Back row, from left: Black Oak Casino Resort general manager Aaron Moss; Frank Helm; Michael & Kelly Dierker. Front row, from left: ATCAA board chair Lloyd Schneider; ATCAA executive director Raj Rambob; Kate & Charles Segerstrom; SAF board president Mark Kraft; and ATCAA food bank director Deni Avery.

“Giving Tuesday,” the day that for many marks the start of the holiday giving season, brought a memorable gift to Amador Tuolumne Community Action Agency’s (ATCAA) Food Bank: a \$20,000 check from Sonora Area Foundation.

Sonora Area Foundation (SAF) representatives on November 27 presented a check to ATCAA executive director Raj Rambob, food bank director Deni Avery and board chair Lloyd Schneider at the nonprofit’s Jamestown Food Bank.

The donation was spurred by a \$10,000 matching gift offered by Kate and Charles Segerstrom from their SAF fund in memory of Kate’s late mother, Marlee Powell, and her long-time support of ATCAA. Powell passed away on January 24, 2018 at the age of 85.

Powell, a Sonora resident since the early 1990s, was very active in local government. She served on a committee that created Sonora’s Hillside Preservation Ordinance, joined the Sonora Planning Commission, was elected to the city council and served a term as Sonora’s mayor (2002-2004). Her work for the city came to a close in 2005 when she resigned from the Sonora City Council, citing the desire to devote more time to “political and social issues as well as spend time with friends,” according to mymotherlode.com.

The breadth of Powell’s local involvement and volunteerism demonstrated the depth of her community-mindedness. Some of the organizations she supported included the Motherlode Martin Luther King Jr. Committee, the Sierra Business Council and ATCAA.

ATCAA, through its offices in Jackson and Sonora, promotes community resiliency and self-sufficiency through more than a dozen programs and services, including its Tuolumne County food bank. The food bank offers emergency food assistance as well as food programs that target children and seniors.

These programs were at risk this spring when the nonprofit experienced a funding shortfall due to loss of a federal Community Services Block Grant. SAF’s Board of Directors in May stepped in with a \$50,000 donation to help keep the food bank open.

The foundation’s November grant comes as the food bank is in the midst of its annual holiday food basket program. ATCAA distributes holiday dinner foods to those in need before both Thanksgiving and Christmas. This year, monetary and food donations enabled the nonprofit to distribute Thanksgiving baskets to more than 2,000 families.

In addition to donations, the food bank relies on volunteers such as Powell, a “kind-hearted, generous” woman, according to ATCAA Food Bank employee Joi Reeves.

“Marlee and her smile are missed here at the food bank. She would pop in on us just to lend a helping hand or words of encouragement,” notes Reeves. “Marlee will always have a special place in our hearts. Our community has certainly lost one of the ‘greats.’”

The Segerstroms sought to honor Powell’s generous service by offering a matching grant through the Charles and Kate Segerstrom Family Fund. The \$10,000 goal was met by contributions from the following SAF funds: AVA Fund (Dr. Ariana DeMers), Black Oak Casino Resort Community Fund, Boyd Family Fund (former SAF board member Celeste Boyd and husband Bill), Comazzi Family Fund, Dierker & Ferro Fund, Donald A. & Elisabeth Weber Fund, Helm Family Fund and Vanier Family Fund.

While the holidays and year’s end often inspire philanthropic pursuits, Sonora Area Foundation stands ready year ’round to partner with individuals, organizations and agencies to help them achieve their charitable goals through the establishment and management of donor funds.

THE POLAR EXPRESS DELIGHTS DOZENS



The Polar Express train ride on November 25 transported dozens of children on a storybook journey.

Jamestown’s Railtown 1897 State Historic Park operates the holiday train rides which bring to life the popular children’s book of the same name.

For the fifth year running Sonora Area Foundation (SAF) has sponsored a trip aboard The Polar Express for numerous

Young Polar Express travelers outfitted in pajamas and smiles

children ages 3 to 5 along with an adult companion. This year 117 children and their companions traveled to the North Pole, snacked on hot cocoa and cookies, and snuck a peek at Santa.

Children were selected through a random drawing that was open to all Tuolumne County children ages 3 to 5, regardless of income.

Interfaith benefits from cash drive

Sonora Area Foundation (SAF) on November 30 heeded the call to support a Sonora nonprofit during the Clarke Broadcasting Cash Drive for Interfaith, contributing \$24,100.

Nearly half the donation (\$10,000) was a proactive grant from SAF’s Board of Directors. The balance came from the following SAF funds: Irving J. Symons Foundation, Boyd Family Fund, Caldwell Insurance Community Fund, Calestini/Alves Family Fund, Charles & Kate Segerstrom Family Fund, Dierker & Ferro Fund, Dream Big Fund (Kimberly & Shawn Darr), Hope Springs Eternal Fund, Pat & Jim Johnson Family Fund, Ron & Ann Patel Family Fund, Roger & Judy Houghton Family Fund, Vanier Family Fund and Wilson Family Fund.

Interfaith Community Social Services provides an array of goods and services to Tuolumne County residents in need, including food, clothing, household and personal items, firewood, legal services and other assistance.

The ninth-annual drive raised \$118,100 for the nonprofit.

SAF welcomes new employees

While the autumn leaves turned, the Sonora Area Foundation experienced a turnover of its own. Longtime SAF employees Cathi Nies and Lin Freer retired in September and November, respectively, while two new employees joined the foundation’s staff:



**Allie Lincoln
Grants Administrator**

Allie came on board in September. She grew up in Tuolumne County and attended Curtis Creek Elementary School and Sonora High. After earning a master’s degree from C.S.U., Sacramento, Allie returned to Tuolumne County to start her career. She and husband Ethan live in Columbia.

**Ashlee DeCota
Finance Administrator**

Ashlee came to SAF in October after a career at Black Oak Casino Resort. Ashlee grew up in the central valley but since 2012 has called Tuolumne County home. This Columbia College student and mother of one is engaged to fiancée Ricky.

