

Students, artists, nurses and more share \$110,000-plus from Ojai Women's Fund

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The Ojai Women's Fund awarded more than \$110,000 in grants last week to 10 nonprofit organizations in the Ojai Valley.

OWF presented the 2019 grant awards Jan. 16 at a standing room only event at the Ojai Valley Woman's Club.

"It's such an exciting thing," said Sue Gilbreth, co-chair of the OWF Grants Committee, "knowing we were supporting people right here in the Ojai Valley."

OWF is a nonprofit, all-volunteer giving collective made up of more than 350 women who identify critical needs in the Ojai Valley and find organizations that best serve those needs.

All funds are raised through the donations of OWF members and other complimentary grants.

The fully funded grants, now in their fourth year, are awarded in five program areas: arts, education, environment, health and social services. This year, two recipients were chosen from each category.

The largest of the 10

grants, for \$20,000, was awarded to OjaiCARES for its "Patient Navigation, including Promotores Program."

Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology received a grant for \$19,900 for the Ojai Valley Schools STEM Lab, Tour and Bus Fund.

In the Arts category, a grant for \$13,555 was awarded to Focus on the Masters for its "Learning to See Outreach."

A grant for \$12,000 was given to the Wildlife Experience for the "Go Wild! In the Classroom — Connecting Students to Our Natural World" program.

Grants of \$10,000 each were awarded to Food Forward, the Livingston Memorial Visiting Nurse Association, the Boys and Girls Club of Ventura, and the Ojai Unified School District.

Rounding out the grants with awards of \$2,275 each were the Ventura Land Trust and Performances to Grow On.

In four years of giving grants, OWF has donated more than \$338,000 to 31 local nonprofit groups.

Gilbreth said the 25-member grants committee has a

strict vetting process that goes far beyond reviewing and discussing proposals. Committee members make on-site visits to the nonprofits, she said, "to gain a greater understanding of what they're all about and see them in action."

How did recipients react when accepting their grant awards? "They were just so happy," Gilbreth said. "There was so much positive energy and such a feeling of community and happiness."

Among the most inspiring recipients, according to Gilbreth, was OjaiCARES, which helps cancer patients and their families, and its program to help Spanish speakers.

For organizations interested in obtaining grants, OWF hosts a training workshop "to help applicants learn about what OWF is looking for in these grants," said Gilbreth.

For the 2020 grant awards, OWF will hold the workshop at the beginning of March. The grant application process opens in May, Gilbreth said.

For more information on OWF and its annual grant awards, visit www.ojaiwomensfund.org.



Photo by Stephen Adams

Representatives from the organizations receiving grants gather for the award presentation Jan. 16. First row, from left: Ally Gialketsis, Molly Livingston, Linnea Hall, Susan Kapadia. Second row: Tiffany Morse, Beverly Critcher, David White, Patti Birmingham and Donna Granata.