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**\*\*\*MEDIA ALERT\*\*\***

## **CITY OF CHICO AWARDS \$150,000 IN AMERICAN RESCUE ACT FUNDS TO LOCAL NONPROFITS AS YOUTH WELLBEING GRANTS**

**(Chico, CA – September 13, 2022)** — At the Sept. 6, 2022 Chico City Council meeting the council heard from local nonprofits and applauded the meaningful outcomes of the City of Chico Youth Wellbeing Grant Program.

Made possible through one-time funds the City received through the American Rescue Plan, the Youth Wellbeing Program provided \$150,000 in grant funds to support existing organizations that were working to offset the impacts of COVID-19 for local school-aged youth. Organizations selected to receive funds through a competitive grant application process included: Girls on the Run of the North State, Salvation Army, North State Composite Mountain Bike Team, and Boys and Girls Club of the North Valley.

### **Girls on the Run of the North State**

Girls on the Run's (GOTR) mission is to inspire girls to be joyful, healthy and confident. Their curriculum is designed to enhance girls' social, psychological, and physical skills and behaviors to successfully navigate life experiences. Statistics show that 75 percent of girls are feeling more isolated and lonelier than before the pandemic. The Chico Youth Wellbeing grant was integral in helping Girls on the Run participants combat these feeling and get back to being social with one another, while also expanding their physical capabilities.

The ARPA funds enabled 166 girls to join GOTR and participate with a lower registration fee based on household income.

"The feedback we received was that the program was so incredibly helpful in providing girls with a positive and safe place to be, to build life skills, and to boost their confidence and return to a sense of normalcy they hadn't felt since before the pandemic." Claire Johnson, Executive Director for Girls on the Run of the North State. "We are so incredibly grateful the City of Chico recognized the need to help young girls in our community in a way that will help them not only learn how to get through tough times - but thrive."

### **Salvation Army**

During the pandemic, the Salvation Army expanded the youth offerings at their Community Center to include a music program, the Solid Rock Music Academy. With limited resources and equipment, students participating in the program shared instruments and rarely had the opportunity to take the instruments home to practice.

With the assistance from the Youth Wellbeing Program, the Salvation Army was able to purchase enough instruments to offer classes in electric and acoustic guitar, bass, ukulele, drums and piano.

“We have seen a growth in our students, both musically and mentally. Their confidence has grown, and their social interaction has improved greatly. Coming out of COVID, many students were quiet and shy. We have seen a dramatic impact on how they interact with adults and how they interact with each other. We have added 20 new students to our program, and we are continuing to grow”, explained Lieutenant Jeffery Boyd, Administrator of the Salvation Army Chico Corps.

### **North State Composite Mountain Bike Team**

With the goal of getting more kids on bikes and enjoying nature, the North State Composite Mountain Bike Team (NSCMBT) welcomes junior high and high school mountain bike riders of all abilities. Utilizing Bidwell Park and other Chico roadways as their practice course, NSCMBT competes in races throughout Northern California. During the pandemic, when the majority of sports programs were cancelled, the NSCMBT saw an 80% increase in member athletes.

Youth Wellbeing grant funds assisted NSCMBT to purchase a team trailer. With the help of team members, coaches, and families, the trailer was outfitted with everything the team needs to be successful in out-of-town events and rides such as shelving, water tank, sinks, tankless water heater, generator, several bike racks, canopies, tables, accordion chairs, various cooking equipment and a full set of bike repair tools.

“You have no idea how essential this trailer and its contents are to our team. Besides carrying our team supplies that directly contribute to each and every athlete on the team, it provides our ‘Pitzone’ - our community, our home, our station.” said Kelly Haight, Team Director. “The athletes and their families gather in the “Pitzone” to cook, serve and eat meals, tinker with their bikes, laugh and rally together for team cheers before sending the athletes to the start line.”

### **Boys & Girls Club of the North Valley**

To inspire and enable all young people to reach their full potential as responsible, productive, and caring citizens, the Boys and Girls Club of the North Valley (BGCNV) provides comprehensive youth development services, activities, and programs. Understanding the needs of local youth, the BGCNV developed and expanded multiple programs aimed at addressing the emotional and mental health needs of Chico students.

Supporting such deliverables as job mentoring, transportation scholarships, music therapy, art intervention, and expansion of their suicide prevention program “Hope Squad”; the grant funds provided kids and their families with a safe place to heal, recover, and flourish.

“The BGCNV continues to be a consistent space for youth and teens to find supportive, caring and significant relationships with both their peers and adults. Giving youth the constant care and space to be themselves, grow, explore, and be challenged significantly decreases traumatic events on a student’s psyche. Our members learn healthy coping mechanisms, resiliency, leadership skills, and job readiness every day at the BGCNV; making them more confident, caring, and productive individuals in our community”, stated Chief Executive Officer Rashell Brobst. Speaking to the City Council, Joe Hejl, Chief Operating Officer added “Thank you for your support. We are proud of the work we have done together”.

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