

noteworthy.

El Dorado County Leads With Heart

El Dorado County models the values of commitment and compassion we want to see in every student.

We were all deeply impacted by the unprecedented devastation of the Camp Fire in Butte County last November. The fire burned 153,336 acres, more than 18,000 buildings, and caused 86 fatalities. The Paradise Unified School District lost most of their schools, and more than 5,000 students were displaced. Driving through Chico, on my way to the makeshift Butte County Office of Education, it was disheartening to witness the overwhelming number of people affected by the tragedy.

Living up to our reputation, El Dorado County leaders responded to this in full force, bringing crucial support to our neighbors. Counselors and psychologists from the El Dorado County Office of Education (EDCOE) and local school districts all volunteered to travel to Butte County, providing urgent mental health care to students and families. El Dorado County's Public Health Nurse also responded, working alongside medical personnel at a shelter in Oroville.

Displaced families relocating to El Dorado County were welcomed with a tremendous network of support in place. Tara Turrentine, EDCOE's Homeless Youth Coordinator, worked with many families to locate spaces in El Dorado County schools. The Assistance League Sierra Foothills, meanwhile, took students shopping for school clothes through the Operation School Bell program. Margaret Fortune, El Dorado County resident and educational leader, led an effort to secure facilities for students who lost their schools.

In this time of crisis, the generosity of El Dorado County was on display as well. The Adventist Health Feather River Hospital, for example, was severely damaged in the fire, and many employees lost their homes and incomes. Marshall Hospital raised approximately \$20,000, through donations and matched funds, which they, in turn donated to the Feather River Hospital Employee's Assistance Fund.

The El Dorado Community Foundation established a fund on behalf of Butte's North Valley Community Foundation and raised more than \$100,000. The funding was provided by 440 individual donors and service organizations throughout El Dorado County. The Rotary Club of Placerville produced a major pasta feed fundraiser and presented a \$100,000 check to the Rotary Club of Paradise. Donations will directly aid fire victims.

The list of support goes on, and we are fortunate to live in this community of compassionate leaders. As we assist our neighbors in Butte County, we instill hope and remind them of a promising future. As we turn the corner to 2019, I am reminded that this is the same hope and promise we have for our students here in El Dorado County. In the new year we will continue to teach compassionate leadership, model civic engagement, and give them the tools to flourish, in college, career, and in life. Their futures are filled with promise.



*Ed Manansala, Ed.D.,
El Dorado County Superintendent of Schools*

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