

Giving Back

VOLUNTEERS AND DONATIONS HELP LOCAL NONPROFITS CONTINUE THEIR IMPORTANT WORK IN THE COMMUNITY.

By LAGUNA BEACH MAGAZINE STAFF

From helping the homeless to assisting animals, preserving our open spaces and advocating for the arts, a wide range of nonprofits are diligently working to benefit the community. And as the year comes to an end, many residents look to make a difference for those in need or support a cause that’s close to their hearts. To encourage this giving spirit, we’ve compiled a roundup of organizations in the Laguna Beach area that could use your help, either through volunteer hours or through a financial donation. Read on to find a charity that would be grateful for your support this season.



Crystal Cove Conservancy is restoring cottages in the historic district of Crystal Cove State Park.

CRYSTAL COVE CONSERVANCY

Established in 1999 by Laura Davick to preserve Crystal Cove State Park’s historic district when developers wanted to turn it into a luxury resort, Crystal Cove Conservancy has worked tirelessly since then to protect this natural space, restore the century-old cottages and bring schoolchildren to the park for science-based field trips. Davick, a third-generation Crystal Cove resident, spearheaded this effort because she understood the importance of preserving this beautiful place for all to enjoy—now and in the future. The Conservancy is one of the state park system’s biggest public benefit organizations, even serving as a model for public-private partnerships across the country. Money from food concessions and overnight cottage rentals helps to pay for maintenance of the historic structures and also fund the park’s science, technology, engineering and math education programs for K-12 students; many are from low-income areas and have never been to the beach. The students learn while taking part in habitat restoration projects and conservation research in the backcountry as well as on the water and beaches. Notably, rare birds, threatened animals and endangered plants all call the park home. Data gathered by the students becomes part of university research projects and is used to help guide conservation management decisions. When it comes to the historic district, where people once lived in the cottages and several movies were filmed, 28 of those cottages and one Japanese language schoolhouse have been restored, with 17 cottages remaining to be fixed up. (crystalcove.org)

J. CHRISTOPHER LAJINI/COURTESY OF CRYSTAL COVE CONSERVANCY



Clockwise from top: Wyland Foundation’s Mobile Learning Center; sorting produce at Laguna Food Pantry; volunteers serving a meal at Friendship Shelter

WYLAND FOUNDATION

Marine wildlife artist Wyland—known for his whaling wall murals across the globe—established the Wyland Foundation more than 25 years ago to help preserve the world’s waterways. “The Wyland Foundation is a groundbreaking environmental education organization ... [that works to] encourage people of all ages to take action to ensure the future of our oceans, lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands. We directly inspire millions of people through well-known national and local programs,” says foundation President Steve Creech. One of those programs is the Clean Water Mobile Learning Experience, which brings a 1,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art science museum on wheels to schools and festivals. Running on biodiesel, the mobile classroom offers interactive stations and a multisensory theater with science-based lessons to teach students how water quality and availability affects our lives. Annually, the foundation also sponsors a conservation-focused student art contest, which awards classroom prizes and scholarships. Also every year, the foundation encourages waterway cleanups and partners with mayors nationwide for a friendly competition to see which city can be the most water-wise as residents pledge online to conserve water and energy. “The foundation is completely funded by our members and donors,” Creech says. “I’d encourage folks to take a look at our website and to please consider donating to support our work.” (wylandfoundation.org)

FRIENDSHIP SHELTER

Through an emergency shelter, permanent housing programs, meals and other services, Friendship Shelter aims to end homelessness in south Orange County. Founded in 1988, the organization started as an all-volunteer effort at St. Mary’s Episcopal Church and has grown over the years. “Friendship Shelter focuses all of its efforts, including shelter, street outreach and housing, on finding and sustaining a housing solution for every person we serve,” says Dawn Price, the

nonprofit’s executive director. “We believe that by solving that primary issue for every person experiencing homelessness, we create the safety and space for other improvements in health and well-being.” And, she notes, the numbers show the group’s efforts are paying off. “The 2022 Orange County ‘point in time count’ ... found that homelessness in south Orange County dropped 23% since 2019 and that street homelessness in Laguna Beach dropped by 60% during that period,” she says. Friendship Shelter operates the city’s Alternative Sleeping Location Emergency Shelter on Laguna Canyon Road, offering meals, showers, laundry facilities and other resources. The nonprofit also runs the Bridge Housing Program to secure housing and employment or other income for homeless adults. And scattered-site apartments are available for clients who are chronically homeless and have a physical or mental health condition. Whether in a shelter or housing unit, more than 200 individuals sleep in a safe, warm space every night, thanks to the nonprofit. (friendshipshelter.org)

LAGUNA FOOD PANTRY

Since 1993, the Laguna Food Pantry has been collecting and distributing free groceries to those in need, now providing about 100,000 pounds of provisions per week from its Laguna Canyon facility, where the addition of a covered outdoor distribution area was being completed this fall. “Inflation and the rising cost of gasoline, groceries and rent have impacted families already struggling financially before the pandemic,” says Anne Belyea, the nonprofit’s executive director. “... With inflation at a 30-year high, we expect the demand for services will continue to climb. Thanks to the generous support of the local community, we can purchase milk, eggs, fresh produce and meat to serve over 850 families per week.” The organization started as the Laguna Relief and Resource Center to aid those affected by the devastating 1993 fire and, later, the flood and landslides, providing food, clothing and even furniture; eventually, the nonprofit

TOP: COURTESY OF WYLAND FOUNDATION; BOTTOM LEFT: COURTESY OF FRIENDSHIP SHELTER



Clockwise, from above: trail work by Laguna Canyon Foundation volunteers; a performance at Laguna Playhouse; “Into the Woods” at No Square Theatre

narrowed its focus to food only. The pantry “rescues” groceries from local markets that would otherwise be sent to the landfill, and also purchases food from wholesale grocers. Located between the dog park and Pacific Marine Mammal Center, the pantry is open to everyone—no proof of need required—for shopping from 8-10:30 a.m. Monday through Friday. The non-profit can also help low-income clients apply for the CalFresh assistance program. Notably, 90 cents of every dollar donated to the pantry goes directly to helping food insecure families and individuals. Almost entirely volunteer-run, the organization distributed over 1.7 million pounds of food to 11,473 people in 2021. (lagunafoodpantry.org)

PROTECTING OPEN SPACES

Passionate about preserving its open spaces, Laguna Beach has more than one nonprofit working to protect its wildland areas. Laguna Canyon Foundation and Laguna Greenbelt both are committed to this mission. Laguna Greenbelt is a grassroots group started in 1968 by Jim Dille to protect wildlife habitat in OC, including a “greenbelt” of open space around Laguna. The organization led efforts to preserve a coastal wilderness area that is now 22,000 acres. Laguna Greenbelt continues to defend this landscape both for the people who enjoy it and the animals that call it home. The nonprofit writes educational brochures and pocket field guides, provides mini grants for Laguna’s teachers to offer field trips and projects that promote appreciation for the local environment, and awards scholarships for Laguna high school students who demonstrate involvement and leadership in environmental activities. Meanwhile, most of the public access and stewardship programs that Laguna Greenbelt launched and ran in Laguna Coast Wilderness Park have been transferred to the Laguna Canyon Foundation or to park naturalist staff for long-term management.

The foundation was formed following the 1989 March to Save Laguna Canyon. Laguna Beach voters passed a \$20 million bond measure in 1990 and the foundation was established to facilitate the acquisition of open space that the Irvine Co. had agreed to sell, partnering with OC Parks and the city of Laguna Beach to ensure these lands would remain public property. This led to the creation of Aliso and Wood Canyons and Laguna Coast wilderness parks. The foundation’s land acquisition work continues today in addition to offering naturalist-led hikes and guided bike rides, restoring habitat, repairing trails, advocating for open space and educating students about the importance of these natural areas. In short, the foundation is committed to preserving, protecting, enhancing and promoting the South Coast Wilderness. (Laguna Greenbelt: lagunagreenbelt.org) (Laguna Canyon Foundation: lagunacanyon.org)

THE PLAY’S THE THING

With two local theaters in town, those who love the dramatic arts have their choice of productions to enjoy at Laguna Playhouse and No Square Theatre. The Playhouse, established as a community theater in 1920, recently marked its centennial and is one of the West Coast’s oldest continuously operating nonprofit theaters (except for a brief pause on in-person shows during the pandemic). The Playhouse often presents premieres of new plays and has featured Hollywood stars like Rita Rudner, French Stewart, Ed Asner and even Harrison Ford. Current and upcoming plays include “The Wonderful Winter of Oz: A Holiday Panto” through Dec. 29; “Sister’s Christmas Catechism,” running Dec. 19-20; and “Chopin in Paris,” starring Hershey Felder, from Jan. 4-15, 2023. Laguna Playhouse also offers a youth theater program and educational outreach. Its presentation of the performing arts touches more than 80,000 patrons each season

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: JOHN BARBER; COURTESY OF LAGUNA PLAYHOUSE; COURTESY OF NO SQUARE THEATRE



Clockwise from top left: Gallery Q winners at the Susi Q Senior Center; a kids art class at Festival of Arts; a Sally’s Fund outing for seniors

in the newly renovated Moulton Theatre at the entrance to Laguna Canyon. Over at the American Legion building downtown, No Square Theatre presents plays, musicals and “Lagunatics,” its popular annual roast of life on the coast. No Square, founded in 1997, gives amateur actors, directors and technical staff—including children—an opportunity to take their skills to the stage. Two musicals are coming soon: “Waiting in the Wings” is set to run Jan. 20-29 while April auditions have been announced for “Seussical.” No Square Theatre also offers Broadway master classes and youth workshops, including the new Access Excellence for those age 11 to 18 to receive expert advice on getting callbacks when auditioning for singing roles. In August, thanks to a grant from Festival of Arts, No Square also began presenting a special performance of each show with modifications like no loud noises or blinking lights to make it more comfortable for those on the autism spectrum—ensuring that the theater can be enjoyed by all. (Laguna Playhouse: lagunaplayhouse.com) (No Square Theatre: nosquare.org)

SENIOR SERVICES

Older residents have two nonprofit groups working on their behalf: the Laguna Beach Seniors, which operates the Susi Q Senior Center, and Sally’s Fund, which provides rides to medical appointments and stores for grocery shopping, among other services. Laguna Beach Seniors, started in 1975, was one of the first OC nonprofits catering to older adults. Since 2009, the organization has been based at the Susi Q, where more than 80 programs are presented annually from movie screenings to yoga and ukulele instruction, bingo games, writing workshops, current event discussions and support groups. Lunch is served at the Susi Q by another organization, Age Well Senior Services. Additionally, Laguna Beach Seniors runs the Lifelong Laguna program, connecting older adults with support needed to continue their quality of life; during the



pandemic, Lifelong Laguna distributed iPads to low-income seniors to take part in classes on Zoom and delivered handmade face coverings. Meanwhile, Sally’s Fund, established in 1982, offers door-to-door, assisted transportation and other essential services to Laguna Beach seniors and disabled individuals. “Sally’s Fund services are vital to keep seniors on the move, to maintain good health, to socialize with friends and attend cultural events,” says Rachael Berger, executive director of Sally’s Fund. “Our mission is to ensure seniors can remain in their homes living independently.” For doctor’s appointments, Sally’s Fund drivers will walk clients to the door and stay with them. For grocery shopping, the driver will push the cart and carry the bags for them. Sally’s Fund also provides rides to the Susi Q for lunch, classes and events as well as weekly outings to stores like Target and Trader Joe’s or cultural venues, plus home visits to offer companionship for those who are bedridden or homebound. (Laguna Beach Seniors: thesusiq.org) (Sally’s Fund: sallysfund.org)

THE ART OF GIVING

Laguna’s summer art festivals play a key role in showcasing local creativity, while also giving back to artists in need and helping underserved populations enjoy the arts. Sawdust Art Festival has the Artists’ Benevolence Fund, which provides financial assistance to local working artists going through a crisis. An annual art auction raises money for the fund, which started in 1987 and has granted more than \$100,000 in relief payments over the years. There’s also the Sawdust Art Enrichment Fund, which provides hands-on art workshops for at-risk youth and those in the armed forces and their families. Meanwhile, Festival of Arts has several programs that run independently from one another. The festival established the FOA Foundation in 1989 to create an endowment for student scholarships and grants to arts nonprofits and educational institutions in the Laguna area. In 2007, the festival took over funding the scholarships, so the foundation (a separate entity) now focuses on the grants; together, they have awarded more than \$3 million in grants plus more than \$3.5 million in scholarships. Additionally, the festival’s Masters at Giving program allows donors to purchase tickets to the Pageant of the Masters for charitable groups serving frontline responders, veterans, seniors and at-risk youth, giving the opportunity to see this “living pictures” show to those who couldn’t afford it. Through the Pageant Legacy Society, patrons may buy an Irvine Bowl seat (and add a small plaque engraved with the name of a loved one or business), helping the nonprofit make the arts more accessible to the community. Another nonprofit, The Artists Fund at the Festival of Arts, which was founded in 1999 and separated from the festival in 2007, offers financial assistance to exhibitors suffering hardships like illness, injury or the effects of natural disasters. Many artists don’t make enough money to afford health care or set aside funds for an emergency, so the Artists Fund helps them through these crises; it also awards enrichment grants to help further artists’ careers. The fund benefits from the Art-To-Go exhibit and sale at Festival of Arts. (Sawdust Art Festival, Artists’ Benevolence Fund, Sawdust Art Enrichment Fund: sawdustartfestival.org) (Festival of Arts, Masters at Giving, Pageant Legacy Society: foapom.com) (FOA Foundation: foafoundation.net) (The Artists Fund at the Festival of Arts: theartistsfund-foa.org)



Clockwise from top left: Treating a pinniped at Pacific Marine Mammal Center; learning to garden with Boys & Girls Club of Laguna Beach; spending time with the residents of Blue Bell Foundation for Cats

PACIFIC MARINE MAMMAL CENTER

The only establishment of its kind in Orange County, the Pacific Marine Mammal Center has made a name for itself throughout its 51-year history. The nonprofit's mission is to rescue and rehabilitate sick and injured pinnipeds dealing with everything from infections and pneumonia to net strangulation and malnourishment, with the goal of returning them to the wild. Release days are especially thrilling. Research and education are also important to the center, with programs like Ocean Heroes and Camp Pinniped taking local youth behind the scenes to learn about marine science and the hospital's operations; a special education program passport event gives kids a way to track their learning. This holiday season, check out PMMC's 2022 Holiday Catalog to purchase apparel, home goods, jewelry, stuffed animals, holiday decor from Laguna-based Iconic Ornaments and more, all benefiting the nonprofit. Philanthropists can also purchase adoption kits or memberships, or donate to program scholarships or help cover the cost of food for PMMC patients. "Proceeds from the holiday catalog fund our hospital's operations as well as give-back programs that inspire those who need it most—like Healing Seals, a program that brings the PMMC experience into pediatric hospitals, and Sea Lions for Service Members, a healing experience for post-combat veterans transitioning back to civilian life," says Glenn Gray, CEO of the PMMC. Find the catalog at pacific-marine-mammal-center.myshopify.com. (pacificmmc.org)

BLUE BELL FOUNDATION FOR CATS

For more than 30 years, Blue Bell Foundation for Cats has helped provide shelter and care for senior cats whose owners pass away or can no longer take care of them. The group was started by Bertha Yergat and is now run by Susan and John Hamil, who help ensure that the property, set in Laguna Canyon, is a sanctuary for the pets that live there. Set amongst fresh greenery and gardens, the

cats live cage-free with cat trees/perches and comfortable beds, high-quality food, screened-in porches, around-the-clock health care and more. Loving volunteers help make the organization what it is. Community members may donate to several funds via the nonprofit's website, including the Veterinary Medicine Endowment, the Blue Bell Gardens Fund, the Campus Renovation Fund, a Gift of Love and more. But, this winter, financial contributions benefit another endowment. "Holiday donations ... [will] go towards our Community Cat Fund, which underwrites the cost of our Lifetime Care Program for senior, unadoptable cats from local shelters that are accepted as residents," says Jenna Mikula, the nonprofit's assistant director. "This year, we placed Claude, a blind old gentleman found wandering the streets. He has turned out to be an extremely affectionate lap cat and the Community Cat Fund ensures we can continue to provide happy endings for cats like Claude." (bluebellcats.org)

BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF LAGUNA BEACH

Children and teens are front and center at the Boys & Girls Club of Laguna Beach, where a number of programs are in place to help empower local youth. Aside from being a safe place, the organization helps kids learn life skills, discover their talents and prepare for the future—all while having fun and developing new hobbies. There are three locations in Laguna Beach, including the Bluebird branch, The Port High School Student Union for teens at Lang Park, and the Laguna Canyon branch, which is home to the club's preschool and transitional kindergarten as well as The Loft (an exclusive hangout for middle school students). After-school enrichment is a large part of the nonprofit's offerings, in addition to programming on leadership, career prep, health and wellness, fitness and the arts. Give a donation to the club's endowment fund to support its mission of empowering youth to help them reach their full potential. Donors can also opt to purchase an item from one of



Top left: Laguna Art Museum; top right: teaching the next generation at a Laguna Plein Air Painters Association event; bottom row: raising funds for SchoolPower at a golf tournament (left) and the organization's Dinner Dance

the Amazon wish lists, which are organized by branch and include everything from hand sanitizer dispensers, an electric griddle and card games to chef aprons and blank canvases for painting. (bgclagunabeach.org)

SCHOOLPOWER

Advocacy for education is important, and SchoolPower makes a concerted effort to constantly improve local schools. The group helps fund academic endeavors, but also advocates for improvements to music as well as visual and performing arts, athletics, student support and more at El Morro and Top of the World elementary schools, Thurston Middle School and Laguna Beach High School through its grant program—meaning up to 2,900 students can benefit from donations. The nonprofit also hosts a number of fundraisers throughout the year, from golf and dodgeball tournaments to its annual gala and the Chef Challenge dining event. Aid is available for families outside of school hours as well, thanks to after-school programming and a resource center that offers financial assistance and mental health support. “With your support, SchoolPower can continue to help make Laguna Beach public schools extraordinary,” says Sarah Durand, executive director of SchoolPower. “Your year-end gift ... allows us to award more grants to educators and coaches, help more families through the Family Resource Center and offer robust after-school enrichment programming.” Each donation of \$100 or more comes with two Laguna Locals cards for discounts around town. (lbschoolpower.org)

ADVANCING THE ARTS

Laguna Art Museum has been a major player in the region’s art scene for the last 100-plus years, and is surely not going anywhere anytime soon. From exhibits of California artwork and special events to the collaborative Art &

Nature initiative each fall, there is so much to experience at this local arts institution. Give the gift of membership this holiday season, allowing the giftee unlimited admission and discounts on events, or contribute to Love Art, Love Laguna campaign. The museum hopes to raise \$119,000 by the Dec. 31 deadline. “It truly takes a community to achieve our goals and vision of being a locally loved and nationally recognized organization, and we are so grateful to everyone that supports at any level,” says Julie Perlin Lee, the museum’s executive director. “Contributing to the museum during the holidays through our Love Art, Love Laguna campaign or by giving the gift of a membership will directly benefit our major initiatives, education programs, exhibitions and community engagement.” Elsewhere in town, the Laguna Plein Air Painters Association is responsible for the annual plein air painting invitational that takes over the town each October. The group also opened an art gallery in north Laguna in 2021. Support LPAPA to keep landscape painting alive in Orange County—a topic near and dear to many local artists, given that the town’s status as an art colony dates back to plein air painters in the early 1900s. Also prominent in the Laguna art scene is LOCA Arts Education, which offers art classes, workshops and talks in town. Purchase a membership to get discounts while supporting the organization’s art classes. (Laguna Art Museum: lagunaartmuseum.org) (Laguna Plein Air Painters Association: lpapa.org) (LOCA Arts Education: locaarts.org)

OCEAN PROTECTION

The Pacific Ocean serves as a fantastical backdrop for all of Laguna’s best: snorkeling, paddleboarding, swimming, relaxing on the sand. But with so many people flocking to the beaches year after year, it’s important to protect local waters for the wildlife and future generations to enjoy. Laguna Ocean Foundation was launched in 2003, expanding on a program where



Clockwise from top left: Laguna Bluebelt Coalition teaching about ocean protection at Laguna Art Museum's Art & Nature event; a fundraiser for The Drake Gives, which helps provide music education for kids; Darcy, a special needs dog adopted out by Unconditional; a Laguna Ocean Foundation staff member in the field

docents were placed at local tide pools to educate guests on the wildlife within the water. "Our staff and volunteers are very grateful to have the honor of preserving the beauty and spirit of the Laguna coast," says Rob Lee, the foundation's managing director. "We are focusing on passing down the knowledge and love of our wildlife and ecosystems to younger generations, particularly to underrepresented communities through our new Emerging Leaders Program. Donations go to identifying, guiding, mentoring and providing funding to aspiring marine biologists, oceanographers, science journalists and community leaders." Laguna Bluebelt Coalition, too, is dedicated to protecting local waters. With an emphasis on preserving biological diversity and healthy habitats, this group has already worked to secure citywide protection for the local ocean and the creatures living within it, and participates in outreach programs to inspire others to keep the coastal waters safe and marine life thriving. Donations go toward the nonprofit's efforts and come with a Laguna Bluebelt keychain. (Laguna Ocean Foundation: lagunaoceanfoundation.org) (Laguna Bluebelt Coalition: lagunabluebelt.org)

THE DRAKE GIVES

When The Drake restaurant opened its doors in town, it was clear that the focus was on the live entertainment just as much as the luxurious cuisine—founder Alec Glasser, ever passionate about music, made sure of that. Glasser also launched The Drake Gives, a nonprofit that aims to provide youth with music education given the budget cuts that have affected school curricula across the country. Music is said to have positive emotional, academic and behavioral effects on children, with well over half of teachers reporting improved performance in school when enrolled in similar programs. On Dec. 1, the fundraising organization held a speakeasy-themed event called The Drake After Dark, complete

with a live and silent auction that will provide funds for the group. "Proceeds from The Drake After Dark ... will directly support the Anaheim Elementary School District and its music programs," says Wendy Misner, program director for The Drake Gives. "Together with Save the Music Foundation, The Drake Gives is focused on keeping music programs thriving in underserved communities within the Orange County public school system." Although the event has passed, philanthropists can still make donations at drakeafterdark.givesmart.com to benefit music education this winter. (thedrakelaguna.com/the-drake-gives)

UNCONDITIONAL

Senior and special needs dogs are often the hardest to adopt out, but Unconditional is working to change that by promoting the value that these pets bring to the table. The group rescues these animals from shelters and is currently preparing to break ground on a new center to house them in Laguna Canyon. More like a home than a boarding facility, the two-story structure will be able to accommodate up to 40 dogs at once while working to find permanent homes for them. While waiting for the center to be built, Unconditional is accomplishing its mission through other means. "While our physical rescue is being constructed, we are partnering with local rescues through our Pawtners Program to assist these groups in finding homes for their senior and special dogs," says Amy Mack, co-founder of Unconditional and president of the organization's board. "We are creating video and print content and developing a marketing strategy unique to each dog, all at no charge to our partner rescues. And the cool thing is that it works. Shortly after launching Pawtners, we made our first match—Darcy, a long-haired dachshund on wheels. We are thrilled to be providing this valuable service to the rescue ecosystem, and proving the value of being seen." (unconditionalrescue.org)

TOP LEFT: COURTESY OF LAGUNA ART MUSEUM; TOP RIGHT: PAUL EVENS

More Ways to Help

ABILITY AWARENESS PROJECT

Started by Shadi Poukashef, who goes by Anami, after her son experienced horrible harassment in a local school, the Ability Awareness Project aims to combat bullying while promoting kindness and inclusivity. The organization has developed presentations for students, parents, teachers and older residents at senior centers, who have experienced bullying, too. Anami's efforts also led to the city sponsoring an annual celebration of World Kindness Day in November. (kindandsafeschools.org)

ASSISTANCE LEAGUE OF LAGUNA BEACH

One of 120 chapters across the country, the Assistance League of Laguna Beach has a huge impact on the community. With funds raised through donations and the downtown thrift shop, the nonprofit organizes 15 programs, including Chapters for Children, which provides students with apparel for school, and Supporting Seniors, which dispenses technology to aging locals to ensure they are able to remain in their homes safely. (assistanceleague.org)

CHHAHARI INC. USA

Laguna Beach resident Christine Casey started Chhahari Inc. USA in 2007 after she took a trekking trip to Nepal and witnessed many sick and hungry children begging in Kathmandu's streets. Collaborating with a nongovernmental organization established in Nepal by a couple she met on the trip, they helped children to receive a quality education and health care to create better opportunities for their futures. Although the Nepal-based organization closed during the pandemic, a new organization, Chhahari Education & Opportunities, is now being funded by the U.S. nonprofit to aid more children. (chhahari.org)

COAST FILM FOUNDATION

Launched this fall in connection with the Coast Film & Music Festival, the Coast Film Foundation will foster and promote both emerging and seasoned filmmakers that inspire change through the power of film. The foundation will also award scholarships and grants, and give filmmakers a platform to share their stories about key environmental and social issues through the festival, cash awards, events across the country and online. The foundation will also donate to nonprofits that align with its mission. (coastfilmfestival.com)

COMMUNITY ART PROJECT

Designed to spread the word about art appreciation and education, Community Art Project, or CAP, applies donations toward art exhibits and public art pieces that are sponsored by the group. Although the group's permanent gallery at Wells Fargo has come to an end, recent showcases have taken place at Neighborhood Congregational Church and the Laguna Beach Cultural Arts Center. (caplaguna.org)

FRIENDS OF HORTENSE MILLER GARDEN

Situated on a picturesque slope in north Laguna, feminist and environmentalist Hortense Miller started the eponymous garden of her dreams in the 1950s, donating it to the city of Laguna Beach in 1973. This group was created a few years later to oversee the property, where public and private tours—as well as special events like art workshops and exhibits—are held. (hortensemillergarden.org)

FRIENDS OF THE LAGUNA BEACH LIBRARY

For more than 50 years, this group has helped make the local library—part of the Orange County library system—what it is by

allocating funds for everything from reading programs, college scholarships and magazine subscriptions to scheduling speakers, supplies for craft days and improvements to the library. This institution is also a point on the town's Poetry Trail and hosts its own poetry contest in the spring. (friendsofthelagunabeachlibrary.org)

GLENNWOOD HOUSING FOUNDATION

Offering housing and supported living services for adults with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities since 2013, Glennwood Housing Foundation also provides on-site and off-site activity opportunities based on residents' interests from visiting the summer art festivals to watching shows at Laguna Playhouse and volunteering in the community to learn new skills and develop social connections. (glennwoodhouse.org)

GROWERS FIRST

This organization helps poor farming families in remote regions around the world through training in agriculture and economics as well as health, faith and education efforts to increase crop yield and improve growing practices, including crop diversification, organic approaches and water conservation methods. Growers First also offers micro-loans for seedlings and supplies, life skills training, support for local schools and vehicles to transport crops to sell and travel to school or medical centers, teaming up with other nongovernmental organizations and commercial partners to replicate its successful models of sustainability. (growersfirst.org)

IMPACT GIVING

Based on the idea that greater things can be accomplished together than individually, this women's collective giving organization pools its partners' money and knowledge of local and global needs to make a difference by awarding grants to organizations like CASA of Orange County, Be Well OC and OC-based WisePlace. In this way, the group aims to support positive and sustainable social change while also building leadership of its partners. (impactgivingnow.org)

JUST GATHER

Focused on community-inspired wellness events to get children and teens to spend less time on electronic devices, as well as prevent and reduce addictions to alcohol and drugs, Just Gather is a newer organization offering activities such as yoga, meditation, drum circles, dance, hikes, farming, animal therapy, plein air painting and board game gatherings. The nonprofit hosts half-day nature and art retreats for youth ages 9 to 19 as well as bimonthly creative expression and nature outings, weekly in-community pauses to gather and more. (justgather.org)

LAGUNA BEACH COMMUNITY CLINIC

Established in 1970 with volunteer physicians to provide medical care to low-income and uninsured OC residents, and known for its groundbreaking work in HIV/AIDS testing and treatment in the 1980s, the Laguna Beach Community Clinic has grown over the years, now providing a full spectrum of low-cost medical and preventative health services for people of all ages. Private health insurance is accepted and sliding fee discounts are offered. (lbclinic.org)

LAGUNA BEACH CULTURAL ARTS CENTER

Art, poetry, theater, music, dance and cinema come together at this new cultural institution, which hosts regular events at

its Forest Avenue center. The nonprofit also launched its own broadcast TV channel during the pandemic, followed by a music school with classes in songwriting, guitar, vocals and more. (lbclulturalartscenter.org)

LAGUNA BEACH FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

The Laguna Beach Firefighters Association represents the firefighters and paramedics that keep locals safe.. The association also operates the Laguna Beach Firefighters Community Assistance Fund, a nonprofit that helps locals who have been displaced by a fire or flood with gift cards for essential items that they may not be able to afford on their own. (lbffa.org)

LAGUNA BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Ever since plein air painters made Laguna's landscapes famous in the early 1900s, it has been a haven for famous Hollywood actors to stay, play and sometimes even live. From the annual summer art festivals to special milestones and the notable people who helped to shape this community, the Laguna Beach Historical Society collects and archives the rich local history surrounding the town while also sharing materials to educate others. (lagunabeachhistory.org)

LAGUNA BEACH POLICE FOUNDATION

The local police department is the main focus of the Laguna Beach Police Foundation, with donations going toward specialized equipment, training and development, wellness services and counseling, and more. In addition to improving policing, the foundation raises funds for community events and charities like the Boys & Girls Club, the Police K-9 Unit and the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics Southern California. (lagunapolice.com)

LAGUNA BEACH SISTER CITIES ASSOCIATION

Best known for the annual Fête de la Musique, this all-volunteer nonprofit was created to maintain relationships with Laguna's sister cities: Menton, France; St. Ives, England; and San Jose del Cabo, Mexico. While the town is filled with music and dance during the festival, the group hosts other events within the cities mentioned as well. (lagunabeachsistercities.com)

LAGUNA REAL ESTATE/CHARITABLE ASSISTANCE FUND

Founded in 2004, this organization raises money to donate to local nonprofits to help support their missions as well as to Realtors and affiliate members to assist in times of financial, medical and local disaster hardship. The group's two main fundraisers include A Taste for Charity and the Pet Parade and Chili Cook-Off; although on hiatus during the pandemic, these events are scheduled to resume in 2023. (lre-caf.com)

MACGILLIVRAY FREEMAN FILMS EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

Through the power of Imax films and educational outreach programs at museums, the MacGillivray Freeman Films Educational Foundation inspires and empowers audiences around the globe to be ambassadors for science, the ocean and preservation of the environment. The nonprofit was founded in 2004 to produce giant-screen movies that help the public to better understand these natural wonders and the world's many cultures. (mffeducation.org)

MAULI OLA FOUNDATION

Through children's hospital visits and one-on-one surf sessions that bring together top action sports athletes and kids and young adults with life-threatening illnesses and disabilities, the Maui Ola Foundation aims to educate, raise awareness and provide alternative therapies for cystic fibrosis and other genetic disorders. The organization also hosts golf tournaments and concerts and also sells merchandise and accepts donations to support the cause. (mauliola.org)

THE PEACE EXCHANGE

From Congo to Kenya and Tanzania, The Peace Exchange works alongside nongovernmental organizations to help local artisans sell their handmade items through fair trade practices. Seamstresses in Congo use African wax print textiles to create bags, aprons and home goods. In Kenya, artisans make jewelry from snare wire traps that are removed from local parks to save wildlife. Also, widowed women in Tanzania craft handwoven baskets as well as beaded coasters, chargers and trivets. These are all sold on the nonprofit's website. (thepeaceexchange.com)

POLLINATOR PROTECTION FUND

Started by local author Laura Ford, this reserve was created in 2021 in an effort to rebuild the populations of Western monarch butterflies in Southern California. The Pollinator Protection Fund provides monetary support for butterfly gardens, with the founding garden located in Heisler Park in partnership with the Laguna Beach Garden Club. (protectmonarchs.com)

PROJECT SCIENTIST

Laguna Beach resident Sandy Marshall launched Project Scientist in 2011 when she was unable to find a suitable STEM program for

her daughter. Deciding to start one herself, the group's sessions are centered around science, technology, engineering and mathematics in an effort to empower young women and inspire them to find work within the scientific community. (projectscientist.org)

ROTARY CLUB OF LAGUNA BEACH

There are many facets to the work done by the Rotary Club of Laguna Beach, from community service and vocational experiences to international projects. Some of the biggest local efforts include the Classic Car Show held at the edge of Laguna Canyon each fall to benefit regional charities and the Grapes for Grads fundraising event that takes place in the spring to raise money for student scholarships. (lagunabeachrotary.org)

SEASIDE LEGAL SERVICES

From family law to elder legal issues, landlord-tenant disputes, immigration, consumer law, wills and trusts, end-of-life planning and disability law, Seaside Legal Services is a nonprofit public interest law firm that provides free legal help for those who can't afford legal counsel. The firm doesn't deal with criminal matters as the public defender is available for those who can't afford an attorney in criminal cases. (seasidelegalservices.org)

SOUTH LAGUNA COMMUNITY GARDEN PARK

For many, real estate prices in town are steep—and often don't include the outdoor space for a garden; however, the South Laguna Community Garden Park fills that gap, offering planters that locals can use to grow fresh fruits, vegetables, herbs, flowers and succulents. Donations go to OneOC, which holds funds for the nonprofit, which is in the midst of a yearslong effort to raise enough money to buy the land the garden is on. (southlaguna.org/garden)

VILLAGE LAGUNA

The Laguna Beach coastline remains iconic thanks to Village Laguna, whose members banded together in the 1970s to fight against proposals to construct high-rise buildings; the group was also responsible for creating Main Beach Park. Over the years, the nonprofit has continued to preserve the town's authenticity as well as local cultural heritage. (villagelaguna.org)

WHEELS 4 LIFE

Mountain Bike Hall of Famer Hans Rey and his wife, Carmen, founded Wheels 4 Life to provide bicycles to those in need of transportation in developing countries. Often, these people live in remote areas where the nearest doctor, school or workplace might be 10 to 20 miles away, and public transportation doesn't exist. Wheels 4 Life works with nonprofits, schools, health clinics and local leaders to find people in need of a bike. (wheels4life.org)

WITH MY OWN TWO HANDS FOUNDATION

Founded by former basketball player Lindsey Pluimer, the With My Own Two Hands Foundation helps provide people in Africa with access to clean water, sustainable agriculture and education. Various documentaries have also been released by the nonprofit, focusing on the work the group is doing overseas. (withmyown2hands.org)

WOMAN'S CLUB OF LAGUNA BEACH

Marking its centennial this year, the Woman's Club of Laguna Beach brings together women for friendship, community service and education, helping support hundreds of local charitable groups through volunteerism and donations. Over the years, the group has raised money to build Laguna's hospital and Bluebird Park playground, and assists women, children and families in need. (wclb.org) ■

Winter Camp
January 3-9, 2023

BOYS & GIRLS CLUB
LAGUNA BEACH

**SPORTS • ART • GAMES • STEM • HOT COCOA
PIZZA PARTY • FIELD TRIP TO DAVE & BUSTERS**

Canyon - Grades K-8th
7:30 am - 6:00 pm

Bluebird - Grades K-5th
8:00 am - 6:00 pm

~ TAKING REGISTRATIONS NOW ~

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