



For Immediate Release

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## **United Way to Support Flood Victims through Reestablished Thomas Fire and Flood Fund**

**Santa Barbara and Ventura, CA, Jan. 10, 2018** – In response to the destructive flooding and loss of life following the Thomas Fire, United Way of Santa Barbara County and United Way of Ventura County have reestablished their support effort as the United Way Thomas Fire and Flood Fund.

The local United Way offices initially established the fund in December 2017, shortly after the Thomas Fire, the largest wildfire in state history, ignited. One-hundred percent of the donations will support those in communities affected by the wildfires and flooding. To date, close to 2.7 million has been raised.

“It’s heartbreaking that just weeks after the Thomas Fire devastated the Central Coast, our community is again facing terrible destruction and the tragic loss of family and friends,” said Steve Ortiz, United Way of Santa Barbara County President & CEO, and Eric Harrison, President & CEO, United Way of Ventura County, in a joint statement. “Our hearts go out to everyone who lost loved ones and their homes during these disasters. We are offering our full support.”

### **To give to the United Way Thomas Fire and Flood Fund:**

- Online at [www.unitedwaythomasfirefund.org](http://www.unitedwaythomasfirefund.org)
- By texting UWVC to 41444
- By phone or mail in Ventura: call (805) 485-6288 or checks may be sent to the United Way office at 702 County Square Drive, Suite 100, Ventura, CA 93003. Please write “Thomas Fire Fund” in the memo.
- Or by phone or email in Santa Barbara: call 805.965.8591 or checks may be sent to United Way of Santa Barbara County, 320 E. Gutierrez St, Santa Barbara, CA 93101. Please write “Thomas Fire Fund” in the memo.

Following the beginning of the Thomas Fire, local community partners determined that the United Way organizations, in both counties, are uniquely positioned and qualified to manage the disaster fund, accept contributions, make distributions, promote the fund and provide a report to the community on how the funds were used.

### **United Way of Ventura County**

In the aftermath of a disaster, United Way's Ventura County Volunteer Center will serve as an online, call, and walk-in center for spontaneous volunteers. The Volunteer Center will register volunteers and coordinate with the Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services to place them where they can do the most good for the community. 2-1-1 Ventura County will also be available 24/7 to register volunteers, answer questions, and connect those in need with the resources to help them.

### **United Way of Santa Barbara County**

United Way of Santa Barbara County (UWSBC) has the unique and positive vision that “in our community, everyone has a hopeful future.” Since 1923, UWSBC has served Santa Barbara County community through funding, volunteer development, and by utilizing its own unique initiatives that involve dozens of local non-profit and public sector agencies. UWSBC’s local community driven Power of Partnership™ priorities help children, families & seniors with a focus on Education, Income and Health.

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