

BLACK LA RELIEF & RECOVERY FUND IMPACT REPORT



Photo Credit:
Leroy Hamilton

ONE YEAR OF CARE, POWER, AND RECOVERY

**BLACK
FREEDOM
FUND**

ONE YEAR AFTER THE EATON FIRE: A COMMUNITY-LED PATH TO RECOVERY



Photo Credit: Leroy Hamilton

One year ago, wildfires swept across Los Angeles County, leaving unprecedented devastation in their wake. Across the region, 31 lives were lost, over 40,000 acres burned, and more than 150,000 people were forced to evacuate their homes. Economic losses are estimated between \$250 to \$275 billion, making this disaster one of the costliest in U.S. history.

The data tells the story: Black communities are often hit hardest by crises like this, yet receive fewer resources and assistance during the recovery process than other groups.¹

Historically Black neighborhoods in Altadena and Pasadena, built on deep roots and lasting traditions of community, care, and love, were hit especially hard by the Eaton Fire and its aftermath. The Fire caused extensive loss and disruption—homes, businesses, schools, and places of worship destroyed; family heirlooms and cherished belongings completely lost; and the daily lives and routines that anchor stability for so many, upended.

For many Eaton Fire survivors, recovery is not winding down. It is only just beginning.

Over the past year, households have faced an impossible convergence of soaring housing costs, delayed insurance payouts, and rebuilding costs that have surged to nearly double pre-fire estimates. Beyond the tangible losses, we are just beginning to understand the long-term impact the Fire will have on the health of communities in these areas—from exposure to harmful toxins to the mental health consequences of a tragedy of this depth and breadth.

At the same time, public systems have fallen short of delivering a coordinated, timely, and equitable recovery response. While Southern California Edison's CEO acknowledged that company equipment likely caused the fire, survivors have largely been directed to navigate complicated voluntary claims processes that may limit legal recourse and delay meaningful compensation.²

This lack of clear accountability and comprehensive public support underscores why investing in community power is so critical. **When institutions falter, community-rooted organizations step forward to provide trusted guidance, direct aid, and collective advocacy to ensure residents are not left to navigate recovery alone.**

¹ <https://latino.ucla.edu/research/who-is-coming-home-altadena/>

² <https://calmatters.org/environment/wildfires/2025/09/edison-caused-eaton-fire-feds-say/>



Photo Credit:
Project Passion

Within a week of the fires, The Black Freedom Fund (BFF) partnered with the California Community Foundation to launch the Black LA Relief and Recovery Fund to direct resources toward a community-led, equitable recovery.

The Black LA Relief & Recovery Fund aims to stand in the gap by investing in community organizations with the expertise and relationships to meet the immediate and long-term needs of directly impacted residents. To date, the Fund has distributed over \$3.6 million to 37 trusted organizations to provide direct aid delivery, stabilize families, offer trauma-informed care, and organize long-term recovery and accountability efforts.

While a tremendous amount of work has been done to support Dena residents over the last year, there is still so much that lies ahead for full recovery, healing, and restoration. Many families are still struggling to meet their basic needs and to protect their community from outside threats more interested in profits than people. In fact, in the year since the Eaton Fire, **more than half of the properties sold in Altadena have been purchased by corporations³**, which will have serious consequences for the future of the community. BFF supports local leaders in implementing their own vision of restoration that is not dictated by predatory greed.

This report reflects what is possible when community leads. We remain in deep solidarity with Dena and are honored to support the organizations and leaders advancing a vision of recovery rooted in dignity, care, and self-determination. Together, we can continue building a recovery that is not only just—but lasting.

Marc Philpart
President & CEO, Black Freedom Fund

³ <https://www.saje.net/altadena-represents-a-systemic-failure/>

TOLL OF THE EATON FIRE

19 lives¹
lost

14,021 acres¹
burned

9,414 structures¹
destroyed

1,074 structures¹
damaged

2,800+ BLACK FAMILIES EVACUATED
FROM THE EATON FIRE²



Photo Credit: Leroy Hamilton
Artist Credit: Noel McCarthy and Michael Garza

Black households
were 1.3X more
likely to experience
destruction or major
damage than non-
Black households.²



Photo Credit: Leroy Hamilton



Photo Credit: Greenline Housing Foundation

¹ <https://www.fire.ca.gov/incidents/2025/1/7/eaton-fire>

² https://bunchecenter.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/LA_Wildfire_Altadena_Black_Community_Report.pdf

COMMUNITY PARTNERS IN ACTION



Photo Credit: Yemi Seyi



Photo Credit: Julian Clay Shelton for Hands in the Soil



Photo Credit: Neighborhood Housing Services of Los Angeles County



Photo Credit: Julian Clay Shelton for Hands in the Soil

The **Black LA Relief & Recovery Fund** invests in trusted community organizations meeting the urgent needs of the Black community and investing in organizing and building local power to ensure healing and flourishing for generations to come.

Relief & Recovery Fund partners are:

- ➔ Rooted in the Black community
- ➔ Organizing for an equitable, community-led recovery

- ➔ Providing immediate relief to impacted families and residents



Photo Credit: Wally Skalij



Photo Credit: Julian Clay Shelton for Hands in the Soil



Photo Credit: Abolitionist Sanctuary



Photo Credit: Neighborhood Housing Services of Los Angeles County

BLACK LA RELIEF & RECOVERY FUND GRANTEE PARTNERS

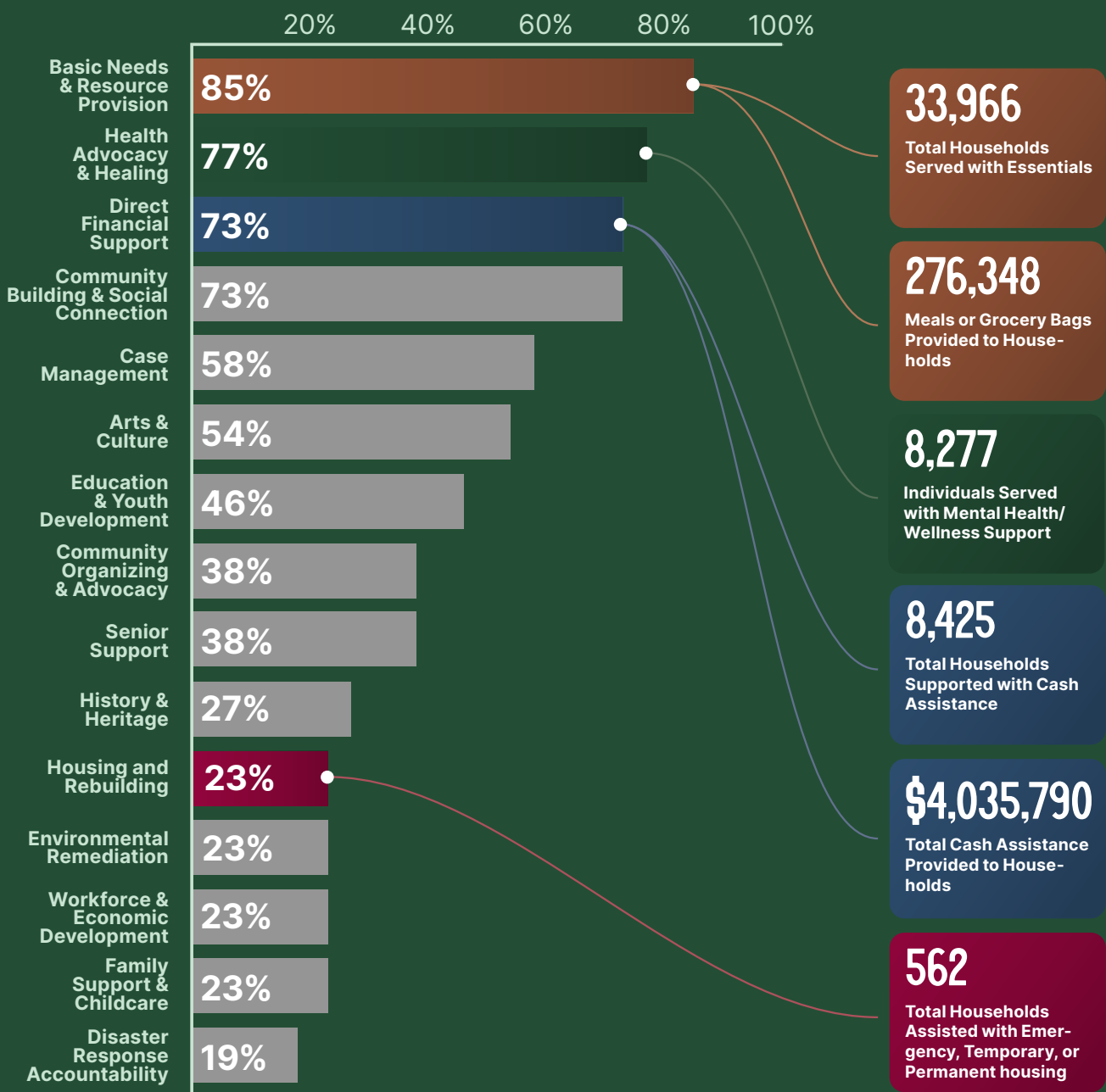
\$3.61M GRANTED ACROSS 37 ORGANIZATIONS

- A Sisterhood for Fatherless Daughters
- Abolitionist Sanctuary
- Alkebu-Ian Cultural Center
- Altadena Historical Society
- Altadena NAACP
- Altadena Rising
- The Center for Restorative Justice
- Community Women Vital Voices
- Essie Justice Group
- First African Methodist Episcopal Church – Pasadena
- Friends of KBLA
- Greenline Housing Foundation
- Hands In The Soil
- Harambee
- Hillside Tabernacle City of Faith
- Home of Kings and Queens
- Hope Now Community Resource Center
- The Juicy Little Society
- The Legacy Land Project
- Lifeline Fellowship Christian Center, Inc.
- Lift International
- Mentoring and Partnership for Youth Development
- My TRIBE Rise
- Neighborhood Housing Services
- Neighborhood Survants
- New Revelation Church - Faith Beyond the Flames Resource Center
- Outward Bound Adventures
- Pasadena/Altadena Ivy Foundation
- Pasadena Church
- Pasadena Friendship Community Development Corporation
- Pasadena Senior Center
- Project Passion
- Rockwood Leadership Institute
- Shepherd's Door Domestic Violence Resource Center
- Stars: Illuminate, Educate, Advocate
- Victory Bible Church of Pasadena, Inc.
- Xtreme Athletics

COLLECTIVE IMPACT: COMMUNITY RESPONSE & RECOVERY AFTER THE EATON FIRE

In recent months, BFF has invited our grantee partners to reflect on the work they are leading across Altadena and Pasadena. The impact highlighted on the following pages represents the full scope of their community-wide efforts, offering a powerful picture of how our grantee partners are shaping a more just recovery rooted in care, resilience, and power.

ISSUE AREAS RESOURCED



IMPACT—DIRECT RELIEF FOR IMPACTED FAMILIES



Project Passion

With funding from BFF, Project Passion rapidly expanded its disaster response by hiring local staff, increasing weekly distributions, and deploying a 14-foot box truck to reach families in impacted areas. This support also enabled the organization to build sustainable systems for long-term recovery, ensuring their efforts could grow beyond immediate relief. Building on that momentum, Project Passion launched the Freedom Store, a dignified space where Eaton Fire survivors can shop for clothing, household goods, and essentials at no cost.

Neighborhood Servants

In the aftermath of the fires, Neighborhood Servants rapidly set up multiple relief sites across the city and partnered with other local organizations to launch the Dena Relief Drive. Since January, 2025, they have supported over 10,000 families citywide through certified disaster case management, provided over \$30,000 in gift cards and direct financial aid, and distributed more than 1 million pounds of food, clothing, hygiene supplies, air purifiers, mattresses, and other essentials. Additionally, Neighborhood Servants organized a Back-to-School Giveaway that equipped more than 4,000 students with backpacks, shoes, and other critical supplies.



Pasadena Church

Pasadena Church is a community anchor for families recovering from the Eaton Fire, including 22 of their own members who lost their homes. Every Saturday, they serve 350 households through their Dena Relief Distribution program, providing essentials from food boxes and hot meals to diapers, hygiene kits, and gas and grocery cards. They also host gatherings for Eaton Fire survivors, creating space for connection, fellowship, and healing.

IMPACT-HOUSING

Greenline Housing Foundation

Greenline Housing Foundation is helping families stay rooted in Altadena and Pasadena by preserving land for community ownership and providing critical housing support for those displaced by the Eaton Fire. Funding from the Black LA Relief & Recovery Fund helped Greenline launch a community-driven landbanking model, and so far they have invested \$1.5 million to purchase three lots. Greenline has also awarded more than \$550,000 in interim housing grants to 33 families and over \$119,000 in down payment assistance for displaced renters.



Photo Credit: Leroy Hamilton

Legacy Land Project

After 90 families connected to their community church were impacted by the Eaton Fire, Legacy Land Project (LLP) was launched as a relief infrastructure system to meet immediate needs. What began as urgent coordination of food, housing, and resource distribution has since evolved into a comprehensive, housing-centered model designed to prevent displacement and strengthen local ownership by rebuilding homes, protecting generational land, and fostering sustainable development. Through free ADU construction and hands-on guidance, LLP connects families in greatest need to safe, dignified housing—ensuring families can remain rooted in their community with long-term stability and resilience.

“ The Black LA Relief and Recovery Fund’s investment made it possible for the Legacy Land Project to move from emergency response to sustainable systems transforming immediate relief into an enduring model of Black-led recovery, resilience, and renewal. ”

– Legacy Land Project

Neighborhood Housing Services of Los Angeles County

Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) has built a coalition of more than 100 organizations to help Eaton Fire survivors navigate the complex path to rebuilding through ongoing financial counseling, disaster case management, property inspections, and interim housing grants. In addition to ensuring local organizations have the expertise to support Altadena residents return to their communities, NHS provides direct funding to families looking to rebuild and has served 354 families with no-cost estate planning services.



IMPACT—HEALTH & HEALING

A Sisterhood for Fatherless Daughters

A Sisterhood for Fatherless Daughters creates culturally grounded healing spaces where women and children impacted by the Eaton Fire can process trauma, rebuild emotional stability, and find strength among others with shared experiences. Through healing circles, support groups, and their Bonding Time program, the organization has offered more than 80 women and their children intentional opportunities for storytelling, connection, and emotional restoration during an especially difficult time. They also launched a storytelling campaign that offered stipends for women to publicly share their journeys, helping break longstanding cycles of silence, shame, and isolation while creating new pathways for healing. One Sisterhood for Fatherless Daughters stipend recipient shared,



“ After the fire, I didn’t know how we would make it. The stipend gave me breathing room to focus on my kids instead of panicking. Having a community of women around me who understand has been the biggest blessing. I felt like I wasn’t alone for the first time in months.”

Hands in the Soil

Hands in the Soil (HITS) provides non-clinical, culturally grounded opportunities for fire-impacted residents to heal in community. Through BFF funding, HITS has served over 350 participants with cost-free health and healing programs, including men’s circles, yoga, and gatherings that help individuals regulate their nervous systems, release stress, and rebuild connection through mindful movement, reflection, and collective care.

In May 2025, HITS hosted its annual Sōl Day event, a community wellness gathering that welcomed 15 fire-affected families with free transportation, nourishing meals, and healing-centered activities. Deeply rooted in community and recovery efforts, Hands in the Soil has witnessed intergenerational families navigate the immediate crisis of the Eaton Fire and begin to rebuild through their healing justice, leadership development, and workshop services.



Photo Credit: Julian Clay Shelton for Hands in the Soil

“ We bring people together in rhythm, movement, and creative expression—inviting them to process grief and reconnect with life through music, meditation, and storytelling. These gatherings are not performances; they are living ceremonies rooted in Black wellness, community, and spiritual ecology.”

— Hands in the Soil

IMPACT—COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

Essie Justice Group

Essie Justice Group has led several key advocacy efforts following the Eaton Fire, using community data to push for policy solutions that protect Black residents during disaster recovery. In partnership with the Vera Institute of Justice, Essie successfully amended SB 571, removing mandatory jail time and felony classifications from the proposed “anti-looting” bill. Essie also co-founded Altadena for Accountability with Altadena Rising and the California Black Power Network to demand an independent investigation by the Attorney General into Los Angeles County’s emergency response to the Eaton Fire, after the County attempted to rely on an insufficient report to avoid accountability. After months of collecting resident testimonies and building public pressure for transparency and reform, the coalition achieved a major milestone. In February 2026, the California Department of Justice launched a civil rights investigation into disparities in the Eaton Fire response.



Altadena Rising

Led by local organizers, Altadena Rising serves as a hub for local action and solidarity, ensuring impacted families shape recovery priorities after the Eaton Fire. Through its Unmet Needs Reporting and Policy Club, Altadena Rising maps urgent service gaps, aligns survivor-led solutions, and builds collective power to advance long-term, structural change. Altadena Rising works directly with elected officials to uplift trusted community input, and elevates local Brown and Black leaders in policy, media, and recovery efforts.

My TRIBE Rise

My TRIBE Rise is bringing residents together through in-person and online events to retain a sense of place and strengthen community resolve in the aftermath of the Eaton Fire. Through their Altadena Not For Sale rallies, they provide education, resources, and advocacy for bridge financing so families can hold on to their homes, businesses, schools, and generational land—reinforcing their message that “we aren’t re-building; we are future building.”



IMPACT-SENIOR SUPPORT

Pasadena Senior Center

The Pasadena Senior Center has become a lifeline for fire survivors, offering seniors free memberships, paid classes, celebration gatherings and fitness programs that restore joy and a sense of belonging after disaster. With BFF support, the Center has provided recovery support through targeted seminars, a resource hub with over 15,000 users, and personalized case-management with rebuilding tasks like navigating insurance, tax assessments, documenting losses and filing claims. The Center has also provided 178 recovery grants and 546 grocery gift cards, ensuring that no senior travels the road to recovery alone.



Hope Now Community Resource Center

Hope Now Community Resource Center's (CRC) Senior Support Program promotes independence, connection, and overall well-being for older adults in the community. The program offers consistent, welcoming opportunities for engagement that reduce isolation and strengthen social ties, including Senior Game Day every Friday and Senior Resource Days every Wednesday, where participants gather for companionship, activities, and access to community information.

To remove barriers to participation, Hope Now CRC also provides transportation assistance so seniors can safely attend medical appointments, social activities, and community events. Through regular gatherings and ongoing community presence, the program fosters stability, belonging, and hope for seniors navigating periods of transition and change.

“ Through case management, our trained staff and volunteers worked directly with affected residents to assess their needs, develop recovery plans, and connect them to essential services. ”

– Hope Now Community Resource Center

IMPACT—HISTORY & HERITAGE

The Center for Restorative Justice

With support from the Black LA Relief & Recovery Fund, The Center for Restorative Justice preserved and amplified the histories of Pasadena and Altadena in the aftermath of the Eaton Fire. Funding enabled two Pasadena Race & Place History Tours for 75 participants, and scholarships for local executive directors to join a Southern Civil Rights tour that grounded their recovery work in a long legacy of Black advocacy and freedom seeking. These programs help leaders tell their community’s stories through a restorative, heritage-centered lens. Grant funds also supported the capture and archiving of new photographs documenting the immediate aftermath of the fires and portraits of Black families impacted by the disaster. In total, 93 participants and 10 trained facilitators contributed to preserving cultural memory as a vital part of community recovery.



Photo Credit: Yemi Seyi

“ True recovery in our region means rebuilding not just what was damaged, but strengthening the relationships, trust, and shared story of resilience that make this place home. ”

– The Center for Restorative Justice



Altadena Historical Society

Altadena Historical Society is dedicated to amplifying the experiences of African Americans affected by the Eaton Fire. With funding, they’ve documented the experiences of more than 15 affected families through video-recorded oral histories, ensuring their voices are preserved for future generations. They also hosted a Juneteenth gathering that honored the legacy of Ellen Garrison Clark by creating space for community members to share, heal, and contribute to a more inclusive telling of Altadena’s history. All collected stories will be archived at the Altadena Historical Society, strengthening cultural memory and community resilience in the aftermath of the Fire.

Stars: Illuminate, Educate, Advocate

With support from the BFF, Stars is using cultural storytelling and cross-community learning to help youth understand resilience in the face of disaster. Stars produced a short film following their Book of Dena Spoken Word event, which centered resident experiences and stories from the community. They also created documentaries from immersive learning trips—first to Japan, where 10 teens studied how communities rebuilt after the 2011 earthquake and tsunami, and next to New Orleans, where students will explore the legacy of Black resilience, advocacy, and recovery after Hurricane Katrina.



IMPACT—STORIES OF RESILIENCE

Alkebu-lan Cultural Center

After losing everything in the Eaton Fire, a mother of seven arrived at a local distribution center with no housing, no supplies, and no clear path forward. Within 48 hours, Alkebu-lan Cultural Center mobilized support to meet the family's most urgent needs. The children received clothing and school supplies so they could return to class with dignity, while partnerships with a local church and grant funding secured emergency hotel housing and consistent access to food. This rapid response moved the family into safe, stable shelter. The mother later shared,



“ The first weeks after the fire were chaos. When we came to one of the distribution centers, the need was overwhelming, but the support was life-changing. Beyond the immediate relief supplies, the presence of the Black LA Relief & Recovery Fund partners meant we weren't just given a handout; we were given a lifeline.”

Shepherd's Door

Survivors of domestic violence, many navigating credit challenges, financial abuse, and unstable income, are among the most at risk of displacement after a natural disaster. In the wake of the Eaton Fire, Shepherd's Door stepped in to ensure domestic violence survivors, who face the compounded trauma of violence and displacement, are not pushed farther from their support systems or forced into situations of heightened danger with even fewer pathways to safe, stable housing.

One survivor, Bonnie, lost the new home she had moved into with Shepherd's Door's support in the Fire—just months after escaping an abusive partner. The Eaton Fire displaced her and her 4-year-old daughter into a FEMA-funded hotel far from her support network, jeopardizing the safety and stability she had just begun to rebuild.

Support from the Black LA Relief & Recovery Fund enabled Shepherd's Door to secure a new apartment for Bonnie close to her community and to expand their broader housing response, ensuring survivors can remain safe, supported, and rooted in the neighborhoods they call home.



“ The support from Black Freedom Fund and the Black LA Relief & Recovery Fund allowed us to respond swiftly in a time of crisis—providing direct assistance, expanding our trauma response efforts, and increasing our outreach to underserved Black families who are often the last to receive resources.”

– Shepherd's Door

BECAUSE OF BLACK FREEDOM FUND



Photo Credit: Leroy Hamilton

“ BLACK FREEDOM FUND CAME THROUGH WITH OUR FIRST. GRANT. EVER!!! BECAUSE OF THAT, WE’VE BEEN ABLE TO SHOW UP EVERY SINGLE WEEK WITH FRESH PRODUCE, GROCERIES, & HOUSEHOLD ESSENTIALS FOR MY BEAUTIFUL ALTADENA COMMUNITY. WE REALLY OUT HERE PERIOD! ”

– Krystal Lopez, The Juicy Little Society

BECAUSE OF BLACK FREEDOM FUND, OUR ORGANIZATION HAS BEEN ABLE TO...

“ ...CO-FOUND ALTADENA FOR ACCOUNTABILITY...TO ENSURE THIS LEVEL OF SYSTEM FAILURE DURING AN EMERGENCY NEVER HAPPENS AGAIN IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY. ”

– Essie Justice Group

“ ...CATER TO THE MENTAL WELLBEING OF THE YOUNG MEN WE ARE SERVING. ”

– Mentoring & Partnership for Youth Development

“ ...CREATE SAFE, JOYFUL SPACES FOR BOTH YOUTH AND SENIORS TO CONNECT, HEAL, AND THRIVE TOGETHER. ”

– Hope Now Community Resource Center

“ ...ENSURE THE RICH LEGACY OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY IN ALTADENA IS PRESERVED, NOT ERASED, BY THE DISASTER. ”

– Alkebu-Ian Cultural Center

“ ...COMPENSATE BLACK AND BROWN FACILITATORS, HEALERS, AND ARTISTS WHO BRING CULTURAL AND EMOTIONAL WISDOM TO OUR COMMUNITY. ”

– Hands in the Soil

RISING TOGETHER AT THE ROSE PARADE

On New Year's Day, BFF and the California Community Foundation (CCF) came together at the 137th Rose Parade® to honor the resilience, courage, and unity of communities forever changed by the 2025 Eaton and Palisades wildfires. The BFF and CCF co-sponsored float, Rising Together, appeared before an international audience as a powerful tribute to the 31 lives lost and the more than 13,000 families who lost their homes in Altadena, Pasadena, Pacific Palisades, and Malibu. On parade day, the float was recognized with the Fantasy Award for its outstanding display of imagination and creative storytelling, underscoring the impact of its message of remembrance and renewal.

The Rising Together float told a deeply symbolic story through a phoenix rising alongside California native plants, coastal elements, and thirty-one sunflowers that stood in remembrance of those who lost their lives, serving as a visual expression of collective grief and enduring resilience. Every element of the float was intentionally designed to reflect both loss and hope, reminding viewers that recovery is possible when communities come together.

We were especially honored that those riding and walking alongside the float included wildfire survivors themselves—families who lost their homes, older adults facing ongoing uncertainty, grassroots leaders, and volunteers who mobilized mutual aid efforts in the fires' aftermath. Their presence was a powerful reminder that recovery is driven by community care and collective action. We extend our deepest gratitude to the volunteers, organizers, and partners whose dedication brought this tribute to life and ensured that the stories of those most impacted were seen, honored, and uplifted on one of the world's largest stages.



All Photos Credit: Wally Skalij

“ It was important to participate in the float because it represents the 19 lives lost. I’m carrying them with me as we rise together to rebuild our community. ”

**– Zaire Calvin, Xtreme Athletics
(pictured above)**

REBUILDING IS A COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT

Support for the Black LA Relief & Recovery Fund is fueling a coordinated, community-led response to one of the most complex recovery efforts Los Angeles has ever faced.

Our investments enable trusted local organizations to provide critical resources and support. Beyond meeting urgent needs, this work is focused on preventing permanent loss—helping residents remain rooted in their neighborhoods, preserve generational land, and access the resources required to rebuild.

Thanks to our dedicated network of supporters and over 700 donors who have stood with the Eaton Fire impacted community and contributed to the Black LA Relief & Recovery Fund, this work continues because of your generosity.

Together, we are ensuring that recovery is guided by the voices, leadership, and lived experiences of those most impacted. Through sustained investment, we are laying the foundation for long-term systems of care, accountability, and community ownership that make it possible for communities in Altadena and Pasadena not only to recover, but to thrive after disaster.



Photo Credit: Neighborhood Housing Services of Los Angeles County



Photo Credit: Yemi Seyi



Photo Credit: Wally Skaiij



Photo Credit: Pasadena/Altadena Ivy Foundation



Photo Credit: Julian Clay Shelton for Hands in the Soil



Photo Credit: Leroy Hamilton

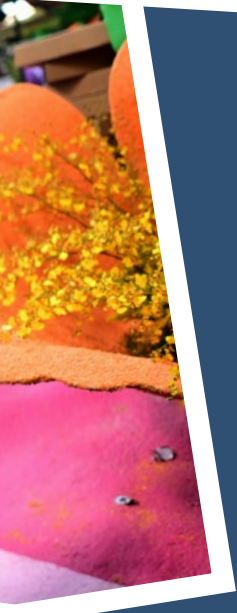


Photo Credit: Wally Skalij



Photo Credit: Wally Skalij



Photo Credit: Leroy Hamilton

A photograph of a woman in profile, smiling and playing a drum. She is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt, a white headband, glasses, and large hoop earrings. In the background, other people are visible, including a woman in a black headscarf and another in a striped shirt. The scene is indoors with a window in the background.

BLACK FREEDOM FUND

FundBlackFreedom.org