



From left: Constance Grizzell, Morgan Smith RN, Gail Atkins, Kathleen Bianchi-Rossi, Sydney Randazzo, and Grace Meeks

On June 21, at its fifth Annual Meeting, Impact100 Sonoma awarded the \$100,000 grant to Redwood Empire Food Bank to fund its program, *Diabetes Wellness Project of Sonoma Valley*. As the winner was announced, cheers and applause filled the auditorium of Hanna Boys Center where Impact100 Sonoma members and guests gathered to hear presentations from the Impact Grant finalists, await the tallying of the membership votes, and share in the excitement of the day at a celebratory reception.

All three presentations provided important insights into projects that would impact Sonoma Valley. Speaking on behalf of the Redwood Empire Food Bank, Morgan Smith, RN began with recorded voices from their clients, the voices of hunger. "I know I can shake this. This is not my life," were the words of one of the clients who relies upon the Food Bank for sustenance. Smith reminded us that hunger plus diabetes presents a devastating situation for too many. Perhaps most surprising was his statement that one out of every six people in Sonoma Valley do not have enough to eat. The Impact Grant will allow Redwood Empire Food Bank, working in collaboration with Sonoma Valley Community Health Clinic, to expand its *Diabetes Wellness Project* to support low-income adults living with diabetes in Sonoma Valley by providing monitoring supplies, educational materials, wellness food boxes, and group clinics. Those voices may become "voices of hope," and that will be an important impact.

This year, 239 women joined Impact100 Sonoma, providing a total of \$239,000 to be awarded to selected Sonoma Valley nonprofits. This enabled the organization to award \$20,000 to both finalists for the \$100,000 grant: the Sonoma Land Trust for their *Transforming the Sonoma Developmental Center* project and Sonoma Valley Mentoring Alliance for their *Mentor 100 Project*. In addition, Impact100 Sonoma awarded the remaining funds, totaling \$99,000, in Community Grants to the following nonprofit organizations:



Sonoma Valley Community Health Center will receive \$13,000 to purchase equipment for its dental clinic that provides services to pediatric and prenatal patients and low-income families.



Sonoma Overnight Support will receive \$15,000 to expand its "drop-in" services and support for a growing number of homeless and other at-risk individuals and families seeking help in Sonoma Valley.



On the Move, in partnership with Sonoma Valley Unified School District and La Luz Center, will receive \$15,000 for developing a "parent university", a parent education program designed for low-income, English-learning families.



Jack London Park, in collaboration with Hanna Boys Center, will receive \$15,000 for a pilot program to employ at-risk teens in an 8-week summer program of vocationally-linked, trail restoration work days.



Sonoma Valley Teen Services will receive \$15,000 to install a walk-in refrigerator needed to expand The Lovin' Oven workspace, services, and products.



Friends in Sonoma Helping (FISH), in collaboration with Sonoma Overnight Support, will receive \$14,000 to implement a severe weather shelter for the homeless of Sonoma Valley and a survey to better assess their needs.



Ceres Community Project will receive \$12,000 to expand their current *Healing Meals for Healthy Communities* "proof of concept" pilot to a full program in Sonoma Valley.

Over the past five months, Constance Grizzell, Chair of Grants & Greater Impact, Grace Meeks, Chair of the Impact Grant, and Community Grants Chair Lorraine Ashton led the process of narrowing 40 initial letters of inquiry down to 3 finalists for the \$100,000 Impact Grant and 15 finalists for Community Grants. The finalists were selected after careful review by more than 60 Impact100 Sonoma members who served on financial and grant review committees chaired by Karen Roche, Kathleen Leonard, Elsa Nelson, Diana

Sanson, Erin Selby, and Meg Sokoloski.



Prior to the grant presentations, Theresa Rhodes, Program and Grant Manager of the Sonoma Valley Education Foundation, provided the audience with a glimpse of the results of the \$100,000 Impact Grant received by the Foundation the previous year that provided funds to support a new preschool at Sassarini Elementary School. She reminded members that those funds have already had an amazing effect on children's lives; have influenced not only the children, but their parents; and are positively changing the community one child at a time.

The annual meeting was underwritten by Union Bank and sponsored by Idell Family Vineyards, The Red Grape, North Bay Insurance Brokers, Inc., Laura Chenel Chevre, Inc., Walter & Pistole Attorneys at Law, Hanna Boys Center, and Debbie Drummond Information Technology Specialties. Hors d'oeuvres were prepared and served by students from the Sonoma Valley Teen Services Skills for Life program, the 2011 recipient of the Impact100 Sonoma \$100,000 grant.

* Photograph by Melania Mahoney

Left to right: Constance Grizzell, Chair of Grants & Greater Impact; Morgan Smith RN, Redwood Empire Food Bank (REFB); Gail Atkins, Director of Programs, REFB; Kathleen Bianchi-Rossi, Development Director, Sonoma Valley Community Health Center; Sydney Randazzo, President Impact100 Sonoma, and Grace Meeks, Chair of the Impact Grant.