

CMSA Mover Members Unite in Support After Devastating California Fires



As Northern California is recovering from the devastations of the firestorms that swept through Napa and Sonoma Counties in early October, we are now experiencing another wave of Mother Nature's wrath in Southern California. For all of the families and businesses that have been, (and are being), impacted by these unprecedented events, the overlying sense of community, concern and strength has been overwhelming. From all of the first

responders and public service members who put their lives on the line to protect us to all of our friends and neighbors who have provided, (and will provide), assistance and support through these trying times, it truly shows what the best of humanity is capable of.

Nowhere is that more evident than within our own Association. Right after it was apparent that the fires in Northern California had taken lives and destroyed over 8,000 structures, the desire of our CMSA members to reach out and help in any way they could was unbelievable. While there were many non-profit and charitable organizations setting up programs to help the displaced families and those who were most impacted by the fires, we had CMSA members throughout the State working with their own community charitable entities, collecting clothes, diapers, toys, household necessities, etc. **Mark Macy** and **Macy Movers** of Hayward, CA were one of the first companies to deliver new and gently used donated items to help those in need. The loaded trailer was dropped in the heart of the devastation at the warehouse of **Redwood Moving & Storage** in Santa Rosa. From there, the items were dispersed amongst multiple local organizations to supply free stores in helping to support the fire victims.

For the first two weeks after the fires, the need for clothing, toiletries and conveniences were prevalent. Many of the victims barely escaped their homes in the middle of the night with only their nightgowns, bathrobes and pajamas. The influx of those items nationwide was incredible. Ariel Kelley and the Healdsburg Corazon non-profit in conjunction with **Bob Fraser (Redwood Moving)** and Foss Creek Partners established one of the largest free stores in Sonoma County. For the next six weeks these items were distributed to those in need. Many of the

families began asking where they might find inexpensive furniture for the apartments and houses that they were able to find whether temporary or permanent. Ariel, Bob and Kevin Wardell, (Bergamot Alley, HBG), started looking for vacated commercial space to accommodate a free furniture store.

Vince Cardinale and **Cardinale Moving & Storage** of Monterey, CA reached out to **Bob** and suggested that, as well as collecting donated items from local churches and charities to help in the fire victim efforts, there might be an opportunity to deliver gently used furniture items from an Embassy Suites renovation project that he was working on. The timing couldn't have been more perfect. There was a location in Santa Rosa off of Airport Blvd that was generously donated for three weeks. The space was 5,000 square feet and between the trailer load of furniture from **Cardinale** and locally donated furniture pieces, it didn't take long to fill it up. On the Saturday morning of the distribution of the items, there was a line of families waiting to get in. Each and every one of them had a heart-wrenching story to tell of their harrowing experiences the night of the fires. And each and every one of them was so appreciative of the opportunity to receive furniture to help in restoring some sense of normalcy in their lives.

The first weekend of the free furniture store event was such a success that the landlords allowed an extra weekend use of their space. Bob got a call from **Ed Melton** and **Jeff Briggs** of **Chipman Relocations & Logistics** in Sacramento. Turns out that they had been working on a Holiday Inn remodel and had two trailer loads of furniture to add to the store. Again, the space was filled from wall to wall and the day of distribution was another huge success.

Bob and Ariel have received calls and emails from our mover members throughout the State wanting to help the fire victims in any way they can. **Carl Freese** of **Hollister Moving & Storage**, **Jay Casey** of **Casey Moving Systems** in Modesto and **Thomas McCarthy** of **McCarthy Transfer** in San Diego are just a few of the moving companies still holding and/or collecting furniture for the misplaced families. As there are still many families searching for places to live with the local housing inventory at an all-time low, the need for furniture appears to be a long term issue. The hope is to have another furniture distribution sometime in late January 2018.

It truly shows how strong our Association is not only within the structure of our moving industry, but also in our members' desires to help our communities when disaster strikes. As of this writing, wildfires are sweeping through Southern California. There will be families in need in those areas too. Please help and volunteer in any way you can. CMSA Strong.