

SBLS

Santa Barbara Life & Style Magazine

November/December 2024



GOOD TIDINGS

THE *GIVE* GUIDE

Be a beacon of local and global hope for the holidays, feeding the impact of pioneering local philanthropies

BY *Nicole Johnson*

SANTA BARBARA WILDLIFE CARE NETWORK

For over 35 years, the Santa Barbara Wildlife Care Network has ventured where the wild things are, and no few years have been as impactful as the last two. The nonprofit recently unveiled a state-of-the-art wildlife hospital, where veterinarians, volunteers, and community members tirelessly nurse over 3,500 animals back to health every year, representing an unprecedented scale and scope. Beyond expert rehabilitation, SBWCN promotes wildlife conservation through education across Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties, as embodied by their Wild Talks lecture series promoting symbiotic living with nature. Notably, SBWCN’s efforts will soon take to the big screen: a vivid documentary called “Wild Rescue: A Second Chance at a Wild Life” will capture SBWCN’s trailblazing wildlife rehabilitation efforts in vivid IMAX, premiering March 2025 at the AMC CityWalk IMAX Theater in Universal City. Until then, its force of volunteers will continue pushing the envelope on wildlife rescue—averaging 45 hours of service every day of the year—and act as a crucial source of conservation as the climate crisis unfolds. “Although we’re the apex predator, in a way, human interaction can uplift the natural world,” Communications Manager Rachel Mattovich shares.

sbwcn.org

SANTA BARBARA WILDLIFE CARE NETWORK



PHOTOGRAPHY RICHARD GARNICA

TEDDY BEAR CANCER FOUNDATION

A pediatric cancer diagnosis brings life—including heartfelt holiday traditions—to a screeching halt. Teddy Bear Cancer Foundation provides holistic financial, educational, and emotional care for patients throughout the year, and their holiday programs give families the extra ounce of festivity they so deserve during this challenging season. Supported by a seasonal food drive, their Project Turkey curates bountiful Thanksgiving feasts, personalized through family requests to ensure each unique tradition is honored true to form. Throughout December, TBCF’s Project Holiday delivers a reason to celebrate by fulfilling the wish lists of children in active families and embellishing their home with decorations, detailed down to Christmas tree trimmings. Executive Director Brittany Avila Wazny knows personally the healing power of holiday joy: years ago, her brother was in the tail end of his chemotherapy at this time. “It was such a sad and dark period for us, especially since you remember it’s usually a joyous one,” she recalls. “Nobody wants to be in the hospital over the holidays, especially a kid who looks forward to them all year long. It’s amazing that we not only take care of those wishlists so inundated parents have one less thing to worry about, but also that we really deliver the holiday to them so that kids can look back and think, ‘I never missed a Christmas.’” Both of TBCF’s holiday programs, serving between 50 and 70 Central Coast families annually, request donations by November 15.

teddybearcancerfoundation.org

SHELTERBOX

To those displaced by natural disasters or caught in the crossfires of conflict, ShelterBox acts as a guardian of life. Since its founding in 2000, the locally based nonprofit has deployed humanitarian aid boxes across the globe, delivering over 1.5 million people emergency survival tents and recovery tools including mosquito nets, cooking sets and water filters. Crucial aid is strategically pre-positioned in high-risk areas, and efficiently deployed when disaster strikes without warning—and the hands that guide it firmly hold principles of conflict neutrality and international independence. ShelterBox has provided protection on the ground in Gaza, where over 80 percent of homes have been reduced to rubble, and has helped over 130,000 in Ukraine survive brutal winter months. Aiding throughout drought, famine, earthquakes and hurricanes, their support uplifts those to not be defined by their crises, empowering them to transform their lives on the other side. By serving at the crux of the world’s disasters—increasingly exacerbated by climate change and political unrest—ShelterBox is a lifeline of healing and hope.

shelterboxusa.org



PHOTOGRAPHY VICTORIA SNIDER

DREAM FOUNDATION

This season, the Dream Foundation reflects on its 30th year forming final memories for terminally-ill adults and their families. The philanthropy’s Dream Program—the sole initiative of its kind across the country—has poignantly touched the lives of 35,000 recipients nationally, and nearly 800 locally. Individually tailored by each recipient’s imagination, these Dreams instill every ounce of joy into what may be a final holiday season, whether they honor a recipient’s desire to meet a hero, or a veteran’s final wish to visit a military memorial. Its vision is clear: forging a family’s legacy within those final wishes, and offering serene memories that will be forever cherished. In a former holiday season, Dream recipient Stanley lived out his long-held Dream to revive his childhood experiences riding a “Santa Express” monorail in his local department store—and passed that unforgettable feeling onto his grandchildren, Kai and Zac. “I had a wonderful day. I especially loved how my grandson’s eyes were bright and curious. We enjoyed hot chocolate, and Santa came through with candy,” Stanley reflected. “My grandsons have now felt the magic I felt as a boy.”

dreamfoundation.org



SANTA BARBARA AGRICULTURE & FARM EDUCATION FOUNDATION

At the root of every holiday feast is a farm, yet the source makes all the difference. As the only pesticide-free farm in Santa Barbara County, Santa Barbara Agriculture & Farm Education Foundation makes the impactful statement that regenerative practices are the sole way for produce to sustainably grow—and the only direction our food systems can go. The Foundation feeds unserved communities with food grown on their Summerland farm, ensuring universal access through its weekly contributions to the Summerland Food Bank and Santa Barbara County Veterans. On the daily, locals can visit the Foundation’s Sweet Wheel Farm Stand, now coloring the quaint porch of Farm to Paper and purveying freshly plucked produce to Lillie Avenue. Engaging with school children and community members alike, SBAFE Foundation’s hands-on advocacy programs educate on the disastrous social and environmental impacts of industrial agriculture, and inspire them with opportunities to truly do something about it.

sbfafefoundation.com