

ST. HELENA STAR

Rutherford's Alpha Omega Foundation gives \$100,000 in wildfire relief

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Terence P. Muligan, left, of the Napa Valley Community Foundation and Davie Pina of the Rutherford Volunteer Fire Department received checks totaling \$100,000 from Michelle and Robin Baggett of the Alpha Omega Foundation. *Tom Stockwell, Star*

Michelle and Robin Baggett of the **Alpha Omega Foundation** — the philanthropic arm of Alpha Omega Winery in Rutherford — presented two checks totaling \$100,000 to the Napa Valley Community Foundation and the Rutherford Volunteer Fire Department on Tuesday, Jan. 30.

According to Kelly Carter, director of communications at Alpha Omega, the foundation collected donations from Alpha Omega Wine Club members and winery supporters in addition to the sale of event tickets for a barbecue to be held at Alpha Omega in July to reach its fundraising goal of \$100,000.

“My heart told me we had to give our Alpha Omega friends the opportunity to support community,” said Michelle Baggett, who presides over the Alpha Omega Foundation. “During the fires we had an outpouring of concern from our Wine Club members and customers, with many asking ‘How can we help?’” As a result, according to Baggett, the foundation created a goal of donating \$100,000 as quickly as possible.

Robin and Michelle Baggett also made a personal donation of \$25,000 to the Tipping Point Emergency Relief Fund, benefitting Napa and Sonoma Relief, in addition to providing 33,000 meals to first responders during the October wildfires, according to a press release. “But everyone at Alpha Omega wanted to do a little more to help those still recovering from the wildfires,” said Robin Baggett.

The wildfires broke out the evening of Oct. 8, the final day of the PGA Tour’s Safeway Open in the Napa Valley. During that event Alpha Omega donated 10 percent of its tasting room wine sales (\$10,000) to Samaritan’s Purse to help in the aftermath of the hurricanes that devastated cities in the Gulf of Mexico. “Little did we know that our community would be devastatingly impacted by wildfires and that our calling to help communities rebuild after a natural disaster would continue in our own neighborhood,” Michelle Baggett said.

Fire Chief Davie Piña of the Rutherford Volunteer Department received a check on Tuesday for \$5,000. “These funds are greatly appreciated,” Piña said. “They will go directly toward buying supplies and tools for the firehouse to improve training and preparation for the next fire.”

Terrance P. Mulligan, president of the Napa Valley Community Foundation, received a check for \$95,000. “With this extraordinary gift from the Alpha Omega Foundation, we will be able to support hundreds of local residents who are still struggling to recover from the October wildfires,” Mulligan said.

The presentation of the checks took place on the lawn at the Alpha Omega Winery at 1155 Mee Lane in Rutherford.

The Alpha Omega Foundation is a 501©3 nonprofit organization that supports organizations and initiatives that “energize the valley with a sense of responsibility for building a strong tradition of goodwill.” According to the foundation’s website, 100 percent of all monies raised go directly toward its mission. To learn more about the **Alpha Omega Foundation**, visit aowinery.com/Philanthropy

For more information about the **Napa Valley Community Foundation** visit napavalleycf.org