

Special thanks to Malibu Surfside News and reporter Barbara Burke for sharing the impact of the Open Hearts Foundation.

<https://www.malibusurfsidenews.com/p/life-arts-living/open-hearts-foundation-organizes-makeaseniorsmile-virtual-volunteer-event>

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Freedom Media

Open Hearts Foundation organizes #MakeASeniorSmile virtual volunteer event



Pictured is a screenshot of the virtual volunteers from across the globe who attended the Open Heart Foundation's #MakeASeniorSmile virtual volunteer day May 3. The organization was founded by Malibu resident Jane Seymour. Photo submitted



Just months after celebrating its 10th anniversary, Malibuite Jane Seymour's Open Hearts Foundation is spreading enormous amounts of love by coordinating volunteers to reach out to seniors during the coronavirus pandemic and assisting area charities as they try to respond to the vast array of needs here in Southern California and worldwide. ⚙️

On May 3, the organization sponsored a virtual volunteer session, #MakeASeniorSmile, an hour of creativity for all ages to gather and create uplifting, inspirational cards for lonely elderly citizens who are isolated in extended care facilities and senior housing.

Trena Pitchford, executive director of the Open Hearts Foundation, said the foundation was happy to host the event.

"The Open Hearts Foundation was thrilled to host a virtual volunteer hour with Jane Seymour and volunteers across the globe to #MakeASeniorSmile," Pitchford said. "This project is the first of 10 volunteer opportunities that the Young Hearts volunteerism program will host in 2020, led by co-chairs Katie Flynn, Ella Freyinger and Adee Zach. Our volunteers enjoyed their time creating fun, inspirational cards for seniors who are isolated during the COVID-19 pandemic. We look forward to bringing more smiles to seniors and engaging volunteers throughout 2020."

Volunteer Meagan King was so excited to participate.

"I had a blast talking to everyone and drawing with everyone," she said. "Doing this #MakeASeniorSmile truly put a smile on my face. Thank you for the amazing opportunity to do the two things I love to do most ... draw and do volunteer work."

It's not too late if readers want to join and help, the Organization's newsletter noted. For more information, visit www.openheartsfoundation.org/about-young-hearts.org.

Open Hearts is also reaching out in partnership with other Malibu charities.

"In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Open Hearts Foundation established an Emergency Relief Fund as part of its grantmaking program to provide grants in support of emerging and growing nonprofits on the frontlines who are serving women and children through this pandemic," Pitchford said. "Six charities were chosen for the initial investment of \$100,000. Since the Foundation launched the fund just a few weeks ago, more than 30 charities have requested support totalling more than \$350,000. The Foundation is actively seeking donations to support this fund and fulfill these requests.

"We're going to be starting several other efforts and plan to do as much as we can to increase the funds and write checks to those on the front lines doing great work."

Open Hearts is supporting two Malibu-connected charities with matching grants – charities that are responding to highly increased needs - and highly decreased donations – during the coronavirus pandemic.

Open Hearts has issued a challenge grant of \$25,000 to Malibu-based [Children's Lifesaving Foundation](#) to support the organization's Step Forward Family Emergency

Fund Campaign which provides at-risk children and families in their Vita Network with monies they need to make ends meet in the best of times and, now in the worst of times, monies they need to survive.

"We are so grateful to Ms. Seymour and Open Hearts Foundation for the challenge grant," said Maria D'Angelo, founder of CLF. "These are difficult times for everyone, with a majority of people out of work and this was a difficult ask, but with the help of Open Hearts and our wonderful supporters, we were able to raise funds to provide grants of \$1,000 each to needy families and to provide eleven college scholarships of \$500 each to our college students who desperately need support."

D'Angelo shared that the grants to families have been life-changing.

"One father who had just lost his job started crying when we told him that we would be sending him \$1,000," she said. "Students in our Care through College Program who received scholarships are going to school out-of-state or in Northern California and 95% of their families are Latino, deemed very low-income by L.A. County, and are highly at-risk of losing their homes due to this crisis."

Similarly, Open Hearts awarded a \$10,000 challenge grant to [Mending Kids International](#), a non-profit organization that is allocating the funding to serve vulnerable communities in the Greater Los Angeles area during the coronavirus crisis, according to Malibu's Isabelle Fox, executive director of Mending Kids International.

"This \$10,000 challenge grant is a call to action for individuals wanting to contribute toward Mending Kids' continuous efforts in supporting the front line heroes doing social and medical outreach." Fox said.

Mending Kids, which ordinarily focuses on overseas surgical missions and educating communities worldwide to become medically self-sustaining, has refocused its mission to fight against COVID-19, Fox explained.

"Because our overseas missions are grounded, we are able to redirect our efforts and provide much-needed medical supplies locally," Fox said, explaining that Mending Kids has helped area efforts to respond to COVID-19 by working with Sieglinde von Deffner, a coordinator for skid row services in Los Angeles County.

The need is great and growing greater and donors who can still donate are stretched, while many contributors who are used to donating generously are unable to do so in light of the Pandemic, both D'Angelo and Fox noted. With Open Heart's generous challenge grants, however, the two non-profits can amplify their efforts to respond to the ever-growing challenges.

For more information on the Open Hearts Foundation and to donate, visit OpenHeartsFoundation.org.

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About the Open Hearts Foundation:

The Open Hearts Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization, is a social impact accelerator that is committed to empowering emerging and growing nonprofit organizations whose origins and mission are consistent with the precepts of the Open Hearts philosophy. The Foundation, through its grantmaking and volunteerism programs, provides grants, expertise, resources and tools, enabling these nonprofits to not only raise their profile but also further their mission and objectives.

The Foundation has provided more than \$1,000,000.00 in its grant making history. Thanks to an incredible pool of donors and partners, during this worldwide pandemic, the Foundation is responding to support those nonprofits serving on the frontlines benefiting women and children. In 2020, the Foundation's Young Hearts Volunteerism program has innovated – creating an exciting new way for every generation to volunteer their time and talents, benefit the needs of dynamic nonprofits, and identify where passion meets purpose.

To learn more about the Open Hearts Foundation, visit www.openheartsfoundation.org.