

**OJAI WOMEN'S FUND**  
**EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES OF 2023 BALLOT NOMINEES**

**2023 OWF ART NOMINEES**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Ojai Festivals, LTD.</b>  <i>Program: Artists-in-Residence</i></p>	<p>The Ojai Music Festival requests a second year of funding for their Artists-in-Residence program. During this program, six musicians perform interactive concerts for about 450 students attending two OUSD elementary schools, and Sunset Elementary in Oak View. Students at each school will benefit by experiencing three presentations per year in their own classrooms. At each interactive Artists-in-Residence presentation, the musicians talk with the students about the instruments they play, the history and cultural background of the music they perform, as well as their own individual paths to becoming professional artists. During this time of sudden change for students and families associated with OUSD schools, we believe that continuing our Artists-in-Residence program is essential in supporting the community by providing a reassuring sense of continuity.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Performances to Grow On</b>  <i>Program: Ojai Storytelling Festival</i></p>	<p>Since 1995, Performances to Grow On has presented audiences of all ages with educational, engaging and artistic performances that encompass a diverse variety of artistic and cultural traditions through renowned national and international artists and touring companies. PTGO has a strong commitment to arts education, fun experiential learning, and literacy improvement as evidenced by its programs, assemblies, workshops and school field trips in Ventura County and beyond. PTGO's eclectic programming provides social-emotional and educational enrichment to a very diverse audience from a variety of incomes and cultures by offering multi-cultural events that celebrate the history and diversity of the community. We believe in the power of live performance to expand our boundaries, to connect with others and to foster self-discovery.</p>

**2023 OWF EDUCATION NOMINEES**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Ojai Valley Youth Foundation</b>  <i>Program: General Operating Support</i></p>	<p>This year, it became apparent that the Ojai Unified School District was experiencing severe financial issues impacting our public schools' abilities to offer desired after-school educational programs to students. After meeting with Nordhoff High School Principal Dave Monson, it was determined that the Youth Foundation could greatly help the situation by providing enriching programs for junior high and high school students attending Nordhoff this coming school year. The programs being proposed include touring twelve college campuses, art instruction, music, cooking, improv, environmental activism, robotics, visits to ten cultural museums/institutions (Santa Barbara Museum of Art), and more. To meet this new challenge, the Youth Foundation is reaching out to the community for needed funding as it gears up to provide these programs for Ojai students.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Secure Beginnings</b>  <i>Program: 1:1 Bilingual Parent/Caregiver Consultations</i></p>	<p>Secure Beginnings, founded in 2000, serves parents/caregivers during the first five crucial years of children's brain development to build secure attachment, social/emotional learning, and learning readiness. Sliding scale/free programs in English and Spanish provide education, counseling, peer support, mentorship, early intervention/referral, and diapers for low-income families. This grant will expand the successful 1:1 Parent/Caregiver Consultation Program addressing challenging life events and parenting/child development concerns for Spanish-speaking families. Funds will provide scholarships and allow recruiting/training a Spanish-speaking Parent/Caregiver Consultant, bilingual marketing, and administrative support. The program will promote resilience and responsive, nurturing care at challenging stages of child/family development and life circumstances, with improved lifelong physical, social, academic, mental, and emotional outcomes for Spanish- and English-speaking families in our community.</p>

**2023 OWF ENVIRONMENT NOMINEES**

<p align="center"><b>Conservation Endowment Fund</b> <i>Program: Taft Gardens Native Pollinator Garden</i></p>	<p>The mission of the Pollinator Garden is to protect and preserve native pollinators through habitat restoration, increase understanding through scientific research, connect people with nature on a spiritual level, and educate the public about the vital importance of pollinators. Native pollinators are in decline due to habitat loss, pesticide use, and other environmental challenges. Pollinators are a cornerstone species for most of life on earth and we must protect and preserve them. Protecting native pollinators increases our food security by pollinating crops and protecting our climate by pollinating native plants. Educating the public about native pollinators helps them more deeply explore their relationship with nature and empowers them with knowledge on how they can do their part.</p>
<p align="center"><b>Ventura Land Trust</b> <i>Program: Ventura Wild Outdoor Education</i></p>	<p>The Ventura Wild Program, the education arm of Ventura Land Trust (VLT), is an environmental education initiative aimed at connecting children with nature through immersive outdoor experiences. VLT is a trusted local organization dedicated to preserving and enhancing open space in Ventura County while providing increased free access to the community. VLT is seeking funds to support the ability of Ventura Wild, to provide more opportunities for low-income Ojai households to enroll in this program, allowing their children to engage with nature, learn about conservation, and develop a deeper connection to the local environment. These communities are traditionally marginalized in terms of outdoor access and supplemental educational programming. The grant will lead to more equitable access and generations of Ojai youth developing a greater appreciation of open spaces and connection to their environment and a more sustainable future.</p>

**2023 OWF HEALTH NOMINEES**

<p align="center"><b>Oaks Restorative Ranch</b> <i>Program: Rescue Wendy</i></p>	<p>Oaks Restorative Ranch pairs horse rehabilitation with mental health services for children, youth, and adults, offering sessions that help people work through past, present struggles, and help them develop life skills like trust, communication, and boundaries. They focus on three things: healing for the individual, showing up for the equine, and supporting the community. They are currently mobile and want to create a more permanent space for both horses and humans to heal together, a place where they can build bonds that will carry them through their journey of healing and growth. They are requesting a grant of \$15,000 for the project “Rescue Wendy” to bring home their first rescue horse and begin to rent a space in the Ojai Valley where they can sustainably provide sessions to the community. Sessions are always free to allow access to mental care services for people who would not usually be able to afford them. Life is a journey, but you do not have to walk it alone.</p>
<p align="center"><b>OjaiCARES</b> <i>Program: Patient Navigation/Survivorship</i></p>	<p>OjaiCARES provides services and support, at no cost, to people in the Ojai Valley touched by cancer: individuals with new diagnoses, those receiving treatment, survivors, family, and caregivers. Prior to 2013, individuals dealing with cancer in the Ojai Valley had to drive to Ventura, Santa Barbara or further to receive such support. OjaiCARES is the only community-based, comprehensive cancer resource center, serving over 1300 individuals and providing 16,000 individual services at no cost since its inception in 2013, averaging twelve services per person. All services are non-medical and include: patient navigation, patient advocacy, peer counseling, support groups, oncology massage, reiki, guided imagery, and transportation. Patient Navigation is the largest and most important program OjaiCARES provides. This grant will allow OjaiCARES to continue this service, helping people receive timely and appropriate medical care and psycho-social support to help reduce the stress of living with cancer.</p>

**2023 OWF SOCIAL SERVICES NOMINEES**

<p><b>HELP of Ojai</b> <i>Program: Housing Assistance Fund</i></p>	<p>HELP of Ojai is seeking support for the Community Assistance Program's (CAP) Housing Assistance Fund (HAF) Inclement Weather Program. This program assists housing insecure and unhoused residents of the Ojai Valley in need of temporary shelter due to inclement weather conditions, health issues and/or domestic violence. The goal of this project is to prevent the community's most vulnerable residents (those over the age of 65, medically fragile, parent(s) with minor children, those fleeing a violent partnership) from living in substandard, and often unsafe, housing situations. The HAF allows HELP of Ojai case managers to place qualified clients in a hotel room temporarily during inclement weather such as severe rain, wind or low temperatures in the winter, and high temperatures in the summer. This program will provide a secure and safe housing solution for unsheltered and housing insecure clients during a time when their mental and physical health is most at risk.</p>
<p><b>Nate's Place, A Wellness and Recovery Center</b> <i>Program: General Operating Support</i></p>	<p>The mission of Nate's Place, A Wellness and Recovery Center is to serve teens and young adults (ages 13-25) in Ojai Valley and Ventura County, who are at risk of substance abuse and/or mental health disorders or are striving to attain and maintain sobriety and mental health in a safe, healthy manner. The programs include Healthy Replacement Activities, Peer Recovery Coaching, group therapy sessions and additional targeted bilingual programs. In February 2023 they opened a clubhouse-like center in a large, airy space at Oxnard Harbor to help teens and young adults live a stable, clean and sober life. Nate's Place was founded in memory of Nate Rhoades, who grew up in Ojai, and sadly passed away after a traffic collision. Nate's Place is a tribute to Nate's passion-filled life and honors the recovery model that he bravely accomplished in his early teenage years.</p>