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## f l o c k w o r k s

Volume 29 • Number 7 • Issue 681



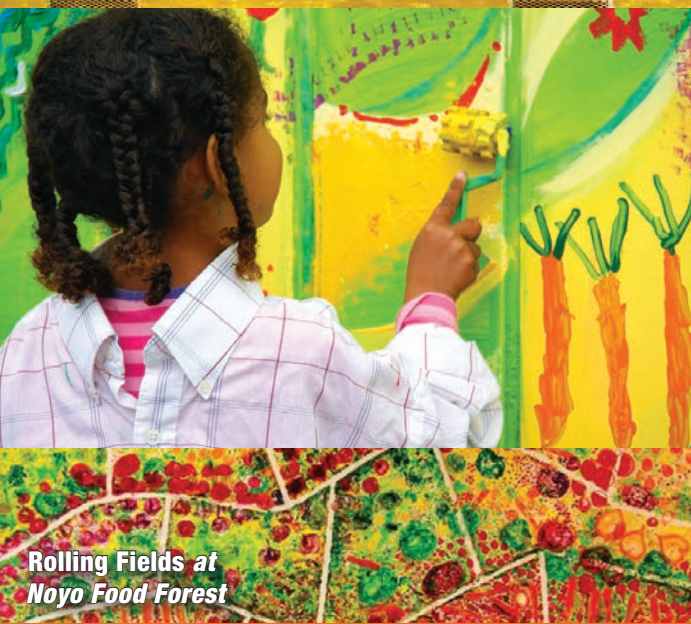
Thousand Prayer Project  
by Larry Thomas  
at Odd Fellows Hall



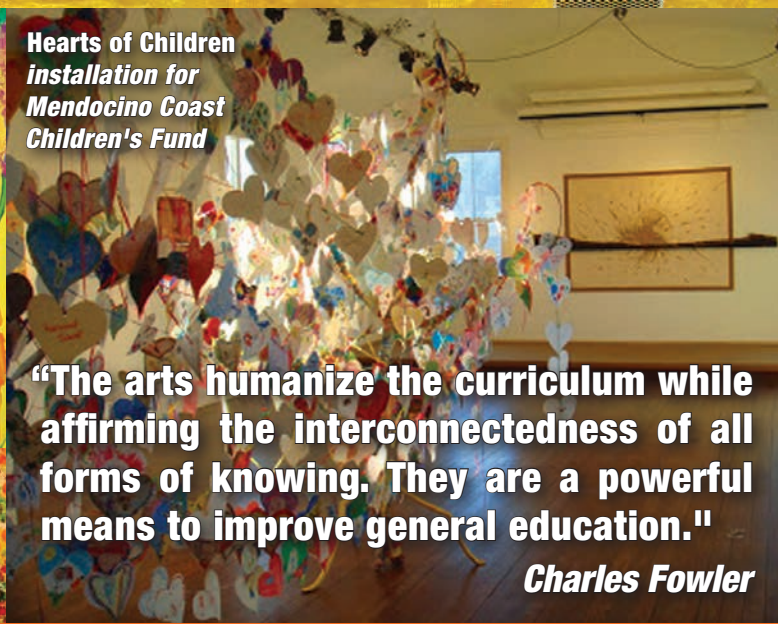
Book Arts installation at  
Odd Fellows Hall



Photos by Keith Wyner.



Rolling Fields at  
Noyo Food Forest



Hearts of Children  
installation for  
Mendocino Coast  
Children's Fund

"The arts humanize the curriculum while affirming the interconnectedness of all forms of knowing. They are a powerful means to improve general education."

Charles Fowler







## art + community = artful community

# flockworks

By Janet Self, Founder and Volunteer Director of Flockworks

**A**RT TIES US TOGETHER AND BELONGS TO ALL OF US. It's a celebration and an affirmation of life's wonders. Art matters in today's world as it has always mattered in human activities, layering meaning, beauty, skill, and non-verbal expression to everyday life. Creativity gives us tools to see things differently. Imagination keeps us dreaming, experimenting, and looking for new approaches. Stretching from the earliest cave drawings and woven through time in paint, music, dance, ceramics, basketry, and, really, *every* artform, art and creativity are fundamental to being human.

It was this broad view of art that led to the formation, back in 2006, of Flockworks—a nonprofit framework for community art initiatives. Building community through creativity is Flockworks' mission, stated briefly, and in ten years' time this idea has actively been explored.

It began as our commitment to children's art and creativity and has grown to become an overarching value for Flockworks community commitment: We say yes!...and find the way to make it happen. When asked for help by any community volunteer leader—teacher, soccer coordinator, event manager, AmeriCorp volunteer, Leadership Mendocino, community center, Mendocino Coast Children's Fund, lighthouse, gardens—we work hands on and find a way to make projects happen. We believe creative engagement builds community.

We mobilize space, resources, time, and talents to bring people together through art and to creatively celebrate who we are. From the exhibit hall or beach trail, to a train track, a classroom, a playground, a soccer field, and Earth Day celebrations, to community centers, a health clinic, and more, this commitment to community has been a remarkable exploration.

Over twenty-five hundred adults and five thousand children have been involved in 110 community exhibits. More than four hundred banners, sixteen large-scale murals, plus in-class art, special projects, and community events have focused on children's art as happenings with schools or as community projects at-large. Collaborative projects have included Mendocino Coast Children's Fund, Noyo Food Forest, Mendocino Film Festival, Mendocino Coast Clinic, Mendocino Coast Writers Conference, and many others. One of Flockworks' newest endeavors began this year, Noyo Printworks in Fort Bragg, a community studio led by volunteer artists, dedicated to learning, teaching, and practicing letterpress, printmaking, and book arts. Additionally, a collaboration with the Noyo Center for Marine Science has broadened our creative outreach to youth.

### HOW DID IT ALL START?

A borrowed space for one exhibit inspired future projects. Van Phillips, owner of the historic Odd Fellows Hall (built in 1878), in Mendocino, agreed to loan the space and was open to an ongoing series of community exhibits. Flockworks was then created as a nonprofit and acquired the seller's permit, bank account, credit card system, lights, phone, etc. to make the exhibit happen. What had been the Zimmer Gallery for forty-two years, and prior to that the community's 4-H Hall, became Flockworks' first project, Art@OddFellows, in 2007.



Cube Upon a Stand, Kerry Marshall.  
Photo provided.

### ART@ODDFELLOWS

Mendocino Figure Drawing Collective, then led by local artists Bill Martin and Bob Ross, was the first featured exhibit in the series. "Our Figure Drawing Collective has been going steadily for over thirty years," said Ross. "This opportunity let us have a great show with our whole group. We even hosted visitors. We did another show in 2008 with work by professional and beginning artists. Our shows were rich and very diverse." Bob Ross said, "Flockworks has become a true leader, serving such a wide role in community art. Flockworks and Odd Fellows Hall are precious resources for our community."

### THE SECOND EXHIBIT AT ODD FELLOWS

Drawings and paintings of local birds from 340 local children were featured in the second Odd Fellows exhibit. It kicked off Mendocino Audubon Society's "Save Our Shore Birds" (SOS) research project and began a deep appreciation for the power of children's art. "SOS volunteers have done surveys of bird populations on our beaches, adding to the national data base, EBirds.com, for nearly ten years," said Becky Bowen, a leader for Audubon and key proponent in this citizen research. "Early on, we installed children's art posters out by nesting habitat. It caught people's attention and the message got out in ways that really worked — more effective than

*Flockworks – Continued on Page 4*

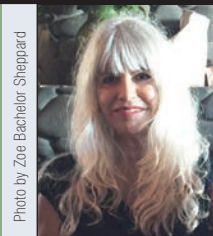


Photo by Zoe Bachelor Sheppard

### It's REAL!

#### A Note from the Publisher

Zida Borcich

Over the last weekend I was—I can only say *privileged*—to work at the sublime John Chamberlin Exhibit and Sale at Odd Fellows Hall in Mendocino on behalf of the Mendocino Coast Children's Fund, which benefitted from the proceeds, along with MUSE. It was a terrific opportunity to be, for extended periods, in the presence of John's legacy: almost 800 works, curated by Bob Ross and Kathy O'Grady, that, in the aggregate, depicted an overview of a movement and a generation: Mendocino culture from the early 'seventies on. From where he really swung out, his art, JC became an accidental historian, a chronicler, and it was clearly a

view into how he chose to live life on his own brilliant terms. I could feel the extent to which people who came to the show were moved by the display—the irony and funniness, and the skill, and of course, the actual memories those old boogie posters stirred up. It was a powerful moment for our community and I feel lucky to have been there. In working with Janet Self on this month's article, I kept thinking about the crucial nature of art in our lives, everyone's life, and how the work she is doing with Flockworks will exert a lifelong impact on all these kids she is working with, fomenting creativity and fearless invention, and providing a stage from which they can shine their exuberant individual and essential selves. I encountered this quote by the infinitely imaginative musician and artist David Byrne. He was musing upon how funding for arts education is constantly under siege, and how wrongheaded it is that art and music, poetry and theater are the first subjects to be sacrificed from school curricula when times are tight. He said, "In order to *really* succeed

in—whatever, math, and the sciences, and engineering, and like that—you have to be able to think outside of the box, and you have to be creative in problem solving. And the way those disciplines are taught is not totally creative—not at all. It's more like, *this is this, this is this, this is this...* The *creative* thinking is in the arts. And a certain amount of arts education doesn't mean your ambition is to be a painter, but you can *use* that kind of thinking and apply it to *anything* else—business, engineering, science—and be better at it. Yes, better at it...You succeed more and bring more to the world because you have these abilities that came from outside of your discipline. So, bringing different worlds together has definite tangible benefits, and to cut one or separate them is to injure them and cripple them."

I hope you enjoy our January read about how art absolutely makes community.

Happy New Year, everyone! Really.

*Zida*



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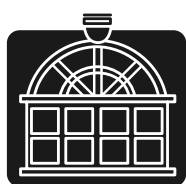
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## Flockworks – Continued from Page 2

a 'keep out' approach. The children's clear understanding of the hazards birds faced became an important reminder to adults." A Save Our Shore Birds children's book was created from the kids' art with a grant from Community Foundation of Mendocino and help from Flockworks.

The response to these early exhibits was terrific and the Art Series has been going ever since. Each month is organized and hosted by a different group of local artists, the entire project facilitated by volunteers. Flockworks provides organizational support for each group, plus each year curates several exhibits that weave in children, historical elements, and explore various themes. "It would be hard for me to overstate the impact that Flockworks at Odd Fellows has had on the local art community. I start-

ed organizing fine woodworking shows in the nineties when it was very difficult to find venues on the coast for month-long shows. Since Odd Fellows Hall became available through the organizing efforts of Flockworks it has become a focus point for the local art scene by encouraging a wide range of local artists to come together to show and sell their work. This opportunity has made a significant impact on our ability to make a living at our work as well as heightening our awareness of the wide range of creative people and endeavors on the coast," says woodworker Paul Reiber.

Annually, more than twelve thousand visitors from all over the world enjoy the exhibits, while art sales from these shows contribute directly to the local economy. Monthly shows offer a vibrant gathering place for community creativity and have spurred many collaborations among artists and other groups. Over the years, Art@OddFellows exhibits benefited Art Explorers, Mendocino Coast Children's Fund, Rotary, Winesong, Otsuchi Recovery Fund, Mendocino Area Parks Association, Mendocino Land Trust, Mendocino Film Festival and other organizations. With this all-volunteer approach, costs have been modest and a simple percentage from art sales helped pay for lights, phones, paint and other production costs and provided very small seed funds for Flockworks' other community initiatives.

## CHILDREN'S BANNER PROJECT

Flockworks sharpened a focus on children's creativity with a class visit to Odd Fellows in fall 2007. As part of their trip, children helped create a large abstract painting that was later sold. The fifth-grade class voted to use funds to make art banners to hang on the construction fences that surrounded the Mendocino K-8 School during major renovation. With Janna Hansen's class as art helpers, Friday lunch time on the playground engaged twenty-five to seventy kids each week in an open creative process. *Take turns and share space* were guiding principles and the fun-making process used stamps, tree branches, string, toy cars, marbles, and other unusual elements. By the end of the school year, twenty banners were hung around the school, and shared at the MUSE Big Fun Fair and other community events. Invitations from teachers, schools, and others like AmeriCorps and Leadership Mendocino came in, asking Flockworks to share this approach to the creative group project.

## SURPRISE YES! FOR CHILDREN'S ART

Imagine you are a teacher hoping to bring a creative project like the Banner project into your classroom. "The kids would love that!...Would you be willing to come if I can find money?...How can we make this happen in my class?" From the beginning, we wanted to say *Yes!* as often as possible to any teacher or community group wanting to bring in art. We were determined to overcome hurdles of materials, ideas, or budget to ensure these opportunities could be offered. Flockworks would find a way. Small grants from Community Foundation of Mendocino County, Mendocino Children's Fund, and others have helped make this work; others have added money for materials when they could, and we have always found a way to say that big *Yes!* School-wide projects, classroom work, coast-wide installation projects, and integrating art into ongoing curriculum themes followed.

A request by kindergarten teacher, Susan Joyer, from Redwood Elementary School, was one of early *Yes!* projects. The mural project called "Our Town" was undertaken by 450 young learners,

**BELOW:** The element of joy in working on these major collaborative art projects cannot be underestimated in its importance to instilling a love of learning and working together cooperatively: 'Take turns and share space.' Yay! Photo provided.



Our Town, Flockworks' first mural was undertaken by 450 young learners at Redwood Elementary School.

by A.D. Abramson Grant for Public Art from the Community Foundation of Mendocino and hangs in the school's multipurpose room. "Kind, Safe and Responsible" is a forty-foot playground mural that was supported by the Parents Club in 2014.

This year, a new mural will be done on the water catchment tanks in the School Garden at Redwood Elementary School. Dunbar School, in the heart of Sonoma County's wine country, has four Flockworks murals, supported with funds from the Sonoma Plein Air Foundation; and a Water Cycle Mural is planned for Spring 2016. A.D. Abramson Grant for Public Art from the Community Foundation of Mendocino County, will support a mural for the Mendocino K-8 School gym this year. The art by children brings classes and families out to visit the Odd Fellows Gallery shows, and often includes special hands-on activities for kids.



Welcome Mural is one of five murals painted with students at Dunbar School in Sonoma County. Photo provided.

learn organizational and study skills, work on critical thinking and asking probing questions, get academic help from peers or college tutors, and participate in enrichment and motivational activities that make college seem attainable. Flockworks' projects were a natural fit, building on academic and team skills, while undertaking artful explorations inspired by Picasso, Georgia O'Keeffe, Wayne Thiebaud, Ruth Asawa, Joseph Cornell, and others. Gail Porcelan, history teacher at Fort Bragg Middle School, leads the local AVID program and has served on the Flockworks Board of Directors.

## OUTREACH WITH THE BLUE DOOR

Mendocino Coast Clinics offers sexual counseling and reproductive health care aimed at young adults up to age twenty-five. Established in 2010 as a teen clinic, with AmeriCorps volunteers promoting the program, hosting the clinic hours, and doing health education classes with local schools, the demand for services has steadily grown. When Diane Rubin came in 2013, she wanted to broaden the image from a generic teen clinic to be a more welcoming place for young people. With full support of MCC, she set about re-defining how the space was viewed, from the inside out, and sought Flockworks' support. "Together, we created art pieces reflecting the new name, BLUE DOOR@MCC, and undertook other creative engagement projects with local youth," says Rubin. "Young people coming to the clinic recognize the art and feel connected. Creative materials and our friendly setting welcome our young clients. The Blue Door mural outside clearly identifies which door to enter. Art changed the atmosphere completely, got young people involved and helped us re-shape our image."

## ART SHAPES LEARNING

Last year, Flockworks was asked out to Noyo Lighthouse and Shelter Cove schools for a school-wide mural project. All students got involved and the resulting panels were woven into the chainlink fence surrounding the schools, dramatically changing the feel of the campus from "keep out" to "welcome." Ariela Marshall, then with the Mendocino Youth Project, joined forces with Flockworks and continued with projects about self-reflection, group effort, and cultural understanding. Resulting art was then exhibited at Odd Fellows, Headlands Coffee House, The BlackDoor Game store, and at several community events. A Mural@Safe Passage was completed by youth in their afterschool and weekend time. Marshall was asked to take on the Shelter Cove classes for the 2015-16 school year. She also joined the Flockworks Board.

At first glance, paint is everywhere, with students wielding brushes and palettes, working on multiple surfaces at once. This classroom scene could make anyone nervous. Yet Marshall is far from anxious, in fact she's in the middle of things. In this lively act of creation, not destruction, students are engrossed, mixing colors, and experimenting with technique. Rules are simple: respect the materials and one another's artwork. With freshly-painted canvases propped up against windows, on desks and tables, it seems more gallery than a typical classroom.

kindergarten to second grade and engaged the children in a lively process using wooden blocks, toy trucks, stamps, Q-tips, rollers, and more. Children worked together to build roads, bridges, houses, businesses and boats, and to explore ocean waves and marine creatures which led to a visual story of our community. Visitors to the C.V. Starr Center are greeted by "Bridge over Noyo," which was gifted to the city of Fort Bragg; "Sunny Day" went to Harvest Market in Fort Bragg in recognition of their leadership in building community. Cards and postcards from mural images raised money for school art and other children's projects. Redwood Elementary School has hosted three major mural projects and has taken part in many large-scale installation projects featured in other exhibits. "The Discovery Mural," painted on ninety feet of canvas was funded

## FOCUS ON YOUTH

Our work with middle school students began seven years ago, when Flockworks brought hands-on creative projects into the Fort Bragg AVID class. AVID—Advancement Via Individual Determination—is a college-readiness system serving low-income and minority students who will be the first in their families to attend college. Students



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This is the Shelter Cove Community School classroom, at the Alternative Education campus in Fort Bragg. The art materials, along with conceptual support, are supplied by Flockworks. How is this different than any other art class? The main distinction is that it isn't an art class and it can occur at any time of day, during almost any subject. Along with the usual textbooks and worksheets, science, geography, and history are expanded into the tactile realm of creative arts. A length of raw canvas features swirls and splatters overlaid with hand-drawn schematic of a hydrogen molecule chain. A round of wood becomes a cross-cut of the Earth's layers. The students are making sea creatures, specifically those found in local coastal waters, from a messy plaster substance. Ranging in age from ten to fourteen, many spend their free time fishing, and have taught their teacher, Ariela Marshall about the finer points of local marine life.

Marshall, in her first year as core lesson teacher, brings her prior experience as a crisis counselor and youth worker where creative arts were used as a medium for conflict resolution. While researching restorative justice for her master's thesis, Marshall volunteered in San Quentin prison in San Rafael, and served in a summer internship working with incarcerated gang members in Pollsmoor Prison, South Africa. In both cases, art and self-expression were central to her work. Currently, in the Shelter Cove classroom, Marshall draws on students' own knowledge and interests to promote creative opportunities for learning.

Studies have shown increasing evidence that learning through doing (physical learning) helps accelerate and solidify the absorption of new information, particularly for students with learning and behavioral challenges. Charles Fowler, an esteemed advocate for arts in education, wrote, "The arts humanize the curriculum while affirming the interconnectedness of all forms of knowing. They are a powerful means to improve general education."

Students at Shelter Cove often face considerable adversity in their lives, and often struggle with motivation and focus. The tactile experience through arts gives them a dynamic and flexible way to engage with learning. They bring their own strengths, and work in their own time, in a safe environment. A natural reinforcement happens as they recreate a lesson through art. "The process, in this case, is far more important than the product. The act of figuring out what you're doing as you go can be a potent means of growth, both cognitively and emotionally," says Marshall. A current board member of Flockworks, Marshall witnessed the transformative power of art and wanted to ensure creative opportunities continued on the Mendocino coast. "Kids start to think differently about themselves when they engage in these artistic processes," says Marshall.

Artwork by the students at Shelter Cove will be shown in the January 2016 Odd Fellows' show called "Making Space" opening Saturday, January 9, 2016.



## NOYO PRINTWORKS

Noyo Printworks is a new community studio in Fort Bragg led by volunteer artists and dedicated to learning, teaching, and practicing letterpress, printmaking and book arts. Gifts of equipment got things rolling, with the city of Fort Bragg giving unused space to incubate this start-up. Since doors opened in April 2015, the response has been enthusiastic. Nearly two hundred people signed up to participate. The space hosts visitors each First Friday Art Walk and workshops on printmaking. Studio Groups meet regularly cultivating many new creative projects.



LEFT: Monoprint series for 2016 Mendocino Coast Writer's Conference transforms the library of the Mendocino College Campus, Fort Bragg.

RIGHT-TOP: Monoprint series in "Art of Letter, Word & Book" Exhibit at Odd Fellows Hall.

RIGHT-BOTTOM (from LEFT): Artist Larry Thomas talks about his drypoint printmaking at Noyo Printworks in Fort Bragg. BOTTOM MIDDLE: New Sign for Noyo Printworks goes up, thanks to an enrichment grant from the Community Foundation of Mendocino County. BOTTOM RIGHT: One of two table-top platen presses at the Noyo Printworks community studio. Photos Keith Weiner.







Whale Bones add to the creative Ocean Celebration organized by Noyo Center for Marine Science and Flockworks.

## OCEAN UPWELLING— AN INTERSECTION OF ART AND SCIENCE

Oceans cover 71 percent of the earth's surface and contain 97 percent of the water in the entire world. Water issues alone suggest the ocean as a key to earth's whole eco-system. In fact, new studies suggest that ocean microorganisms may be a critical factor in bringing rain. Clearly, a healthy ocean is critical for all of us.

The Ocean Upwelling collaboration is an intersection of art and science that will draw us to imagine, understand, and connect with our special coastal environment. Upwellings are forces that draw deep, nutrient rich water up to replenish depleted surface layers. Together, Noyo Center for Marine Science and Flockworks have begun an on-going "Upwelling" to engage visitors and locals deeply in the wonders of the marine world and reconnect our "lost" coastal identity.

For over a hundred years, lumber operations dominated our local economy and literally blocked access to Fort Bragg's five-mile coastline. The city's new Coastal Trail is a dramatic step to reconnect to our coastal identity. With the incredible popularity of the trail, we have an opportunity with locals and visitors to cultivate a profound relation to our coastal ecosystem.

The Noyo Center for Marine Science, conservator of one of only twenty-one blue whale skeletons worldwide, has 11.5 acres on Fort Bragg's Noyo Headlands which opens right on the Coastal Trail, adding another powerful element to its program. Outreach through schools, events and special projects shapes understanding of critical issues. The long-range goal to build an Oceanarium for education and research will require strong local, regional, and global support for this vision. This collaboration aims to help lay groundwork for that future. Flockworks, known for lively creative engagement of children, youth, and community at large, undertakes art initiatives that capture imagination and foster wide participation around important themes. Together, the Noyo Center for Marine Science and Flockworks will weave art and science in understanding this "special place" and the fragile marine ecosystem on which we depend. The aim is to strengthen our local identity as a coastal community, enrich visitors' experience, strengthen the economy, invigorate local culture, and initiate a global network of interest in Fort Bragg and the Mendocino Coast.

## BONES AND BEYOND: AN OCEAN CELEBRATION

With the Noyo Center for Marine Science, Flockworks combines art and science, and offers activities with schools, exhibits, and special events. Sheila Semans, director for the Noyo Center, says, "Working with Flockworks adds so much to how we can engage locals and visitors of all ages in caring for our oceans and sea life. We have shared projects reaching out to the schools and have plans to integrate art into our new Discovery Center on the Noyo Headlands. Art and science help engage imagination and hands-on thinking in different ways. We are looking forward to how this partnership will grow."

Flockworks weaves community collaboration into everything. Events like Stone Soup or Mendocino Coast Children's Fund's 21st Anniversary bring arts together to strengthen the sense of community and address important local concerns. Creative support for Mendocino Film Festival, the Noyo Food Forest, Leadership Mendocino, youth soccer, Mendocino Coast Clinics, Safe Passage, MAPA, Mendocino Land Trust, local schools, and others, has been visible with banners, murals, exhibits, installations, painted faces, crafts, and more.

BELOW LEFT: Redwood Elementary School students print with cabbages for a Garden Panel of the mural.

BELOW RIGHT: Book Moth by Janet Self is made from reconstituted pages of Reader's Digest Condensed Books.



## NOW WE NEED YOUR HELP

Flockworks' accomplishments have all been done with volunteer time, minimal resources and an unwavering willingness to say yes whenever someone has asked. Now, after ten years, the challenge is to make this sustainable and able to respond to new opportunities. Support for added time and expertise is essential. We simply can't do it all with volunteer time alone any longer. For the very first time, we are asking for community help to continue this work. We are making our first financial appeal this winter, planning a March Art-A-Thon, and fundraising through grants, which will all enable Flockworks to continue to say *Yes!* to community creativity. Please contact us at [www.flockworks.blogspot.com](http://www.flockworks.blogspot.com) to find out how you can get involved. REM

# APPLEWOOD PROPERTY MANAGEMENT



Longterm rentals  
— residential & commercial —



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ABOVE LEFT: Fort Bragg Police Chief Fabian Lizarraga and Fort Bragg Police Community Officer Gretchen Leinen showcase a pair of 'jammies given away at Winter Warmth. ABOVE RIGHT: Taking a break before getting back to work are: PD staff (from L to R) Officer Angie Wilder, Police Chief Fabian Lizarraga, Sgt. Oscar Lopez, Technician Lesley Bryant, Administrative Coordinator Debbie Desmond and Officer Thomas O'Neal joined by MCCF volunteer, Harold Hauck, and MCCF Coast Coordinator, Chris Skyhawk (kneeling, center).

## MCCF & FBPD CO-HOST WINTER WARMTH

Over one hundred local children received sleeping bags, new pajamas, and warm winter jackets and outerwear at the first annual Winter Warmth event sponsored by the Mendocino Coast Children's Fund and the Fort Bragg Police Department.

Families with young children also received reminders about the importance of smoke/CO2 detectors and information on how to obtain them free from FIRST 5 Mendocino, simply by visiting the Fort Bragg Fire Department.

The Children's Fund worked with community partners up and down the coast to get sleeping bags, warm clothes, and holiday gifts to children in need over the holidays.

Donations to help make sure all kids are sleeping safe and warm throughout the year can be mailed to: MCCF, Post Office Box 1616, Mendocino, CA 95460. Learn more about the work of MCCF: [www.mccf.info](http://www.mccf.info).

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