



Making a Difference in Rural Sacramento Valley





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When wind-whipped brushfires burned dozens of homeless encampments in Marysville, California, in October 2020, Ashten Phillips, MSW, and her team at Adventist Health and Rideout passed out food, blankets, and other relief items to the evacuees, serving side by side with others from local government and community agencies.

The team was able to respond quickly because it is plugged into the network of homeless service providers in Yuba and Sutter counties, the rural Sacramento Valley counties in the hospital's service area.

"Our mission of living God's love calls us to care for everyone in our community, and we're honored to do that," said Rick Rawson, president of Adventist Health and Rideout. "I'm grateful to our team, who continues to find new ways to impact the lives of those we serve."

Phillips, the hospital's director of community well-being, leads community-wide efforts to identify and impact root causes for poor health. The team is making a difference in its communities in several ways.

Street Nurse Program

Much of Adventist Health's involvement in this effort centers on providing preventive medical care for the homeless where they are, rather than waiting for them to arrive at the emergency department. A Street Nurse Program that began in 2019 provides medical screening at homeless service locations, shelters, and encampments. The program saves lives and shows Adventist Health to be a sincere and critical partner in serving the homeless.

This example of Adventist Health taking its mission outside the walls of the hospital has had a profound impact not only on the lives of those served but also on the staff involved and the community. The program also builds trust



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with homeless community members.

Agency collaboration is critical to meeting the needs of the most vulnerable people in the community, Phillips said. "Together, we can care for our community members and deliver results that foster change here at home."

Food Secure Program

The community well-being team also helps patients admitted to the hospital who are insecure about the availability of food. Through the Food Secure Program, patients receive case management, resources, and food when they return home. Recently, the program partnered with City Serve and other faith-based organizations to help deliver 4,800 food boxes a month.

Food bank support

The hospital provides support to help feed more than 9,000 Yuba-Sutter residents monthly, and associates collaborated with the Yuba Sutter Food Bank to provide 3,500 meals at Christmas. Adventist Health and Rideout physicians also donated over \$20,000 in 2019 and 2020 to support the food bank.

COVID-19 vaccination clinics

More than 18,000 community members have received COVID-19 vaccinations at Adventist Health and Rideout clinics, with generous staff and volunteer support.

By Linda Plummer