**Wish Book donations help create a community of givers**

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If you’ve donated to the Wish Book, the Mercury News’ holiday giving campaign, you’re already a vital part of an effort that’s helping to make our valley a better place to live. You might think that in a region known for its wealth, your donation might not make much of a dent.

But I am here to tell you that it does. You’re making a huge difference, especially where it really counts.

Last week, Sobrato Family Foundation CEO Rick Williams and Packard Foundation CEO Carol Larson talked to the San Jose Rotary Club about “The Giving Code,” the landmark report about Silicon Valley philanthropy that the Packard Foundation released last year. There have been many such discussions over the past year, with one resounding take away: Some 90 percent of Silicon Valley’s philanthropic dollars leave the region.

It’s a stunning statistic. Currently, there are more than 76,000 millionaires and billionaires living in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties, according to the report. And, despite the region’s storied wealth and and overall increase in giving, many of those dollars are used to champion humanitarian causes around the globe or to support faraway places and institutions that are important to the valley’s success stories.

That’s not a bad thing in itself. But, as Larson pointed out, that wasn’t David Packard‘s philosophy and it’s not John A. Sobrato‘s, either. She summed up their viewpoint like this: “If you live here, you give here. If you work here, you give here.”

And that’s what Wish Book readers have been doing, donating more than $9 million since the program started in 1983. This year, in less than two weeks since the Wish Book campaign launched on Thanksgiving morning, readers have donated nearly $70,000 to make some of the wishes our reporters have written about turn into realities.

But there’s still a long way to go, and many more stories to share.

In the coming days and weeks through the end of the year, we’ll present more stories about our friends and neighbors who need help and the agencies that are working to support them. You’ll read about Habitat for Humanity East Bay/Silicon Valley’s efforts to repair more than four dozen homes at the South Bay Mobile Home Park that were damaged by February’s devastating Coyote Creek flood. We’ll tell you about Sourcewise, a San Jose-based group that has become a lifeline for seniors in the South County area by providing free transportation to senior centers in Morgan Hill and Gilroy. And you’ll discover how My New Red Shoes, a non-profit in Redwood City, is helping improve the lives and self-esteem of low-income families with new clothes, something many of us take for granted.

You can read more of these stories at [wishbook.mercurynews.com](http://wishbook.mercurynews.com/), where you can also make a tax-deductible donation and make a wish come true.

There are certainly people and foundations in Silicon Valley that could put us over our goal in an instant — and, hey, we’d welcome them to do so. But, in reflecting on the lessons of “The Giving Code,” there’s a value in creating an entire community of givers. We live here, we work here, we should give here, too.

Everybody can make a difference, and, together, that difference can be huge.

View the original Mercury News article [here.](https://www.mercurynews.com/2017/12/04/wish-book-donations-help-create-of-community-of-givers/)