

Editor, Index-Tribune:

I was delighted to see the article “Summer School with a twist” by Bill Hoban on June 22nd. As the article mentioned, the school district is getting \$26,000 from the Sonoma Valley Fund to pay for eight curriculum-based study trips, bring in expert coach teachers for science and art, and hire high school mentors. As a result, the kids will benefit from experiences that would otherwise not be available to them. These study trips are being provided as part of a collaborative effort between Sonoma Valley Fund’s Youth Initiative and the school district.

I would like to clarify that while the Sonoma Valley Fund *facilitated* collecting the necessary \$26,000 required for the summer school enhancement, the actual money came from great generosity by a collection of community groups and individuals. The Rotary Club of Sonoma Valley committed to a full 50% of the goal. Shortly after, Exchange Bank stepped forward with \$5,000, as did the Scott Evans Foundation. Individual gifts from Ted and Pat Eliot and other local supporters of this initiative rounded out the balance. Without all of their support, this important enhancement to the summer school program would not have happened. I thank them for their commitment to the youth in Sonoma Valley.

In addition to the study trips described in the article, a second program of SVF’s Youth Initiative provided over \$6,000 in scholarships to enable kids to attend summer programs and camps that they would not have been able to afford. Again, the Rotary Club of Sonoma Valley paid \$2,500 of the initial goal of \$5,000, which was immediately matched by the Kiwanis Club of Sonoma Plaza. Then, when SVF board members and advisors learned that the \$5,000 had been committed, but there were still a few kids on the waiting list, they stepped forward to fill the gap. We do live in a truly generous and amazing community.

Your readers will be seeing more about the Youth Initiative in the days and weeks ahead. Sonoma Valley Fund is an affiliate of Community Foundation Sonoma County.

Best Regards,
Harriet Derwingson
President, Sonoma Valley Fund