



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**San Rafael Announced As 2021 Healthy Babies Grant Initiative Winner:
\$10,000 Pledged to Improve Children’s Health and Reduce Disparities**

San Rafael, June 10, 2021 – Healthy Babies Bright Futures (HBBF) and the Mayors Innovation Project announced San Rafael’s partnership with Community Action Marin as one of the recipients of a \$10,000 grant as part of their 2021 Healthy Babies Initiative. The program empowers city leaders to improve children’s health and reduce health disparities in communities by supporting efforts that decrease neurotoxic exposures.

Cities submitted proposals to scale up local efforts to support systematic change, responding specifically to needs heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic. From a strong pool of cities ranging from 32,000 to 250,000 in population, five city proposals were selected to receive grants along with technical assistance and an opportunity to present at a future Mayors Innovation Project meeting.

“Our city seeks to address food security for all people in San Rafael,” said Mayor Kate Colin of San Rafael, CA. “We are very proud to partner with Community Action Marin as a part of the 2021 Healthy Babies Initiative to help scale and improve their organic Production Farm, which helps to meet the nutritional needs of children and families of low income.”

“From COVID, to lead contamination, to food insecurity, and the racial and economic inequities present in each of these, cities and mayors around the country are under intense pressure to respond to these compounding crises,” said Katya Spear, Co-Managing Director of the Mayors Innovation Project. “This project offers an opportunity to support and lift up innovative local programs that will have real impacts on children’s health in both the short and long-term.”

One out of six children in the United States suffer from a neurodevelopmental disability, and there is strong evidence that links chemical exposures to neurodevelopmental delays. Though exposures to chemicals that harm the brain—from drinking water, food, air, soil and consumer products—are not the sole cause for these lifelong learning and developmental delays, they are among the most preventable.

“This project helps to weave a net of resilience for the children in San Rafael,” said Kyra Naumoff Shields, HBBF’s Bright Cities Program Director. San Rafael’s project provides a scalable model ready for uptake by other US cities. But, the ultimate winners are the babies in our lives whose health — and opportunity for a fairer start in life — is dramatically improved.”

This grant will enable Community Action Marin to scale production at its Production Farm located at the Old Gallinas Children’s Center in San Rafael. The site serves as a resource for fresh, nutritious and organic produce for children attending daily preschool classes. “It gives children and families a place to play, learn, grow while increasing food security” said the agency’s Vice President of Children and Family Services, Monique Liebhard. “We are thrilled to be able to strengthen our support of community through this work.”

The Mayors Innovation Project (mayorsinnovation.org) is a national learning network for mayors committed to shared prosperity, environmental sustainability, and efficient democratic government. Around the country, mayors are taking the lead on pressing issues. The Mayors Innovation Project supports mayors by providing cutting-edge thinking and concrete examples that mayors can implement. We provide clear, useful information on policies and programs for mayors and create high-quality peer learning experiences for local leaders.

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Healthy Babies Bright Futures (hbbf.org) is an alliance of scientists, nonprofit organizations and donors working to create and support initiatives that measurably reduce exposures to neurotoxic chemicals in the first one thousand days of development. Our efforts are inspired and supported by science and data, and designed to help restore the chance for a full life to children who would otherwise face brain-diminishing exposures to toxic chemicals beginning in utero.

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Community Action Marin (camarin.org) exists to eliminate the causes and consequences of poverty. With over 50 years of service and advocacy in Marin County, the agency advances greater food equity for communities of low income and works through a variety of programs and services to ensure self-sufficiency for all.

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About Community Action Marin

With a commitment to drive equity and fight the causes and consequences of poverty, Community Action Marin makes it possible for people to achieve well-being by providing the education, mental health, and vital services they need. As the largest non-profit provider of social services to people of low income in Marin, the agency provides 20,000 individuals and families each year with essential services, including safety net support, to move toward self-sufficiency. We put people first: covering unexpected financial needs, providing emergency cash and rental assistance, facilitating access to workforce development opportunities, ensuring high-quality early childhood education, and helping those living with mental illness gain access to recovery.

Community Action Marin also engages homeless populations through mobile outreach teams to provide connection to tele-health, drop-in support groups, and other peer support services. The agency is dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other. Together, we break down the barriers that get in the way of fair and lasting change, in service to better outcomes for all.

To learn more about Community Action Marin, visit our website: www.camarin.org.