

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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Westerlay Orchids Helps Feed Fire Evacuees

Chris Beytes

Westerlay Orchids, Carpinteria, California, donated \$11,000 to FOOD Share, the Ventura County food bank, to help feed folks displaced by the recent Thomas Fire. The money came from 100% of the retail orchid sales at Westerlay December 21-23.

“When you’re in the middle of a tragedy of this scale, you can feel helpless,” said Toine Overgaag, owner and president of Westerlay Orchids. “We wanted desperately during those weeks to find a way to help, so we decided to turn proceeds from our sales over to the food bank. The people at the food bank know how to leverage donations to have the greatest impact for the community.”

It’s said that more than 100,000 Ventura and Santa Barbara county residents had been displaced from their homes because of the fire. The food bank has had its resources stretched and has been soliciting both food and monetary donations to keep up with the increased demand for its services.

“We couldn’t do this without the support of generous businesses such as Westerlay,” explained Monica White, president and CEO of FOOD Share. “The need to feed our hungry neighbors is not over, nor will it end when the firefighters head back home. Westerlay’s generous donation is a wonderful demonstration of providing hope and help to those affected by the Thomas Fire.”

This isn’t Westerlay’s first good deed. They regularly hold fundraising drives for local non-profit community service groups, such as local schools and the Santa Barbara Breast Cancer Resource. **GT**