



THE AMERICAN EXPRESS CHARITABLE FOUNDATION: IMPACT THROUGH GOLF

By Darya Mead

Fifteen local charities received impactful donations – totaling more than \$1.1 million – in La Quinta on Nov. 4. The money was generated from The American Express Golf Tournament (part of the 2025 PGA TOUR season). The recipient organizations focus on health, wellness, education, youth, and family support. This year, the wide-ranging generosity was targeted toward the unhoused population – particularly those impacted by recent natural disasters.

Organizations including Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Desert, the Coachella Valley Rescue Mission, and FIND Food Bank received grants. Support for the latter is more vital than ever, due to strains on resources after the government shutdown and inflation of grocery prices.

“Putting on a first-class golf tournament and being able to give back to the Coachella Valley community is incredibly meaningful,” says Pat McCabe, executive director of the tournament for the last eight years.



Every January, 156 pro golfers, 156 amateurs, 1,200 volunteers, and more than 70,000 attendees enjoy a week-long premier golf tournament in La Quinta.

McCabe explains that he publicly announced the results of the 2025 season on Nov. 4. The generous donations to deserving organizations are the culmination of the 2025 event. They serve as an inspiration – and a tease – for the 2026 event. In years past, 30 to 40 organizations received smaller amounts. But now, the sums are “more meaningful and impactful,” McCabe says.

The majority of donations stays in the Coachella Valley ecosystem. However, McCabe mentions that this year, the fund gave generously to the American Red Cross after catastrophic wildfires plagued parts of California. Many victims are neighbors and share the beauty and resources of desert locales.

“In addition to assisting charities that support health and wellness, family support, youth sports, education, and homelessness, The American Express and The Impact Through Golf Foundation provided emergency funding to the American Red Cross of Southern California and the California Community Foundation shortly after the devastating wildfires this past January,” McCabe proudly states. “Whenever a natural disaster strikes our region, we are always willing to help and uplift those individuals affected by the tragedy. We were proud to lend a hand during a trying time.”

The American Express Charitable Foundation generated more than \$67 million. It supports more than 100 non-profit organizations and charities in the Coachella Valley region. This year’s



California Women for Agriculture Celebrate 50th Anniversary

By Darya Mead

full list of dedicated non-profits that received support includes:

- Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Desert
- Boys & Girls Club of Cathedral City, Coachella Valley, and Palm Springs
- Coachella Valley Boxing Club
- Coachella Valley Rescue Mission
- Coachella Valley Volunteers in Medicine
- FIND Food Bank
- First Tee of Coachella Valley
- Galilee Center
- Girlfriend Factor
- Hunter Lopez Memorial Foundation
- JFK/Ophelia Project
- Pueblo Unido CDC
- United Cerebral Palsy of Inland Empire

The 67th American Express Golf Tournament will take place from Jan. 19 to Jan. 25, 2026. The Pete Dye Stadium Course at PGA West is the host course; golfers will also play at the Jack Nicklaus Tournament Course and La Quinta Country Club. Previously, the week-long event included performances by musicians like Keith Urban and Stevie Nicks and the band Train. This year, Old Dominion and One Republic are scheduled to perform. Concession stands at the tournament feature many local small businesses. They will serve barbecue, açai bowls, and a variety of delectable offerings.

“The American Express has a long-standing tradition of giving back to the community since the tournament’s inception in 1960,” McCabe says. “In conjunction with The Impact Through Golf Foundation, we could not be happier to continue our charitable efforts this year.”

Tickets for this year’s events can be purchased at www.theamexgolf.com. Attendees can enjoy golf, live entertainment, and food. Come out and celebrate those who work hard to support the vibrant Coachella Valley community.

The Coachella Valley is a veritable powerhouse for agriculture, which is the second largest economic driver of the local economy. California Women for Agriculture (CWA) – founded in 1975 – is the largest all-volunteer, women-led agriculture organization in the state. When CWA was founded, women did not have much agency, economic power, or political power, and few women held leadership roles.

California Women for Agriculture celebrated its 50th anniversary in the Coachella Valley from Nov. 7 to Nov. 9. Members from across California gathered in La Quinta and Indio for various events. The anniversary weekend was designed to celebrate the organization’s impact and highlight the interconnect-edness between transportation, food service, and tourism.

Women were not able to obtain credit cards in their name in the United States until 1974. A year later, many women found their voices and harnessed their spheres of influence amidst the turmoil and liberation of the 1960s and early ’70s. A dynamic group of Coachella Valley women stepped into the spotlight in 1975 during a particularly challenging time for local farms. As harvest time approached and tensions grew, these brave women – many without farming experience – volunteered in the fields and supported growers and workers. They spoke to the general public about the importance of protecting the nation’s food supply.

The grassroots efforts were infectious and inspirational. More than 200 women gathered in Palm Springs in 1975 and established CWA chapters across the state. The founding members – Cherry Ishimatsu, Corky Larson, Jeri Taylor, and Beverly Sfingi – were all based in the Coachella Valley. They helped propel women to the forefront of the movement.

Ishimatsu was also the first state president of CWA. She celebrated her



100th birthday in 2025 and reflected on the milestone. “At age 100, I have done many things in my life, but nothing more meaningful than helping CWA thrive for the greater good of all Californians,” she said at the time.

As a teenager, Ishimatsu was interned in Jerome, Arkansas, during World War II with her family. After she was married, she and her husband moved to Indio in 1949. They raised a family there and farmed in Mecca. Ishimatsu was dedicated to public service. She worked for the Coachella Valley Unified School District for many years. In addition to serving as a founding member of CWA, she was appointed to the California Agricultural Labor Relations Board by Governor George Deukmejian.

Ishimatsu died in November after a long and prosperous life. Ellen Way, from La Quinta, is the current co-president of the Coachella Valley Chapter of CWA and a past state president. “I felt Cherry’s spirit throughout CWA’s 50th anniversary celebration,” Way says. “She held on to be with us and passed on Nov. 15 at the age of 100 and 8 months. What an incredible life she lived.”

Ishimatsu co-founded the Japanese Garden in Indio in 1986. She also started the Candy Striper hospital volunteer and scholarship program in Indio. She was a beloved leader and public servant.

Events for CWA’s 50th anniversary included a welcome party at Shields Date Garden in Indio, a local farm tour, a golden anniversary celebration dinner, and group discussions on the future of CWA programming and advocacy.

“Agriculture is our wisest pursuit because it will, in the end, contribute most to real wealth, good morals, and happiness,” Thomas Jefferson said. CWA embodies that spirit, advancing the voice of agriculture through education, advocacy, and leadership development.