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La Mesa Small Business Disaster Relief Effort Exceeds \$160,000

The San Diego East County Chamber of Commerce Foundation has raised over \$160,000 thus far to provide much-needed relief to small businesses within the City of La Mesa, many recovering from significant property damage and other losses.

As widely reported, following a peaceful protest last Saturday, separate incidents arose of mostly outsiders taking incomprehensible advantage of the situation, resulting in significant damage to dozens of businesses in the heart of La Mesa.

In the days since, we've witnessed community members of all kinds – residents, shopkeepers, students, those involved in the peaceful protest, and many from neighboring cities throughout the region – come together to clean up the city and support the impacted businesses that need it the most.

We are proud to see those rightfully exercising their freedom to peacefully protest among those immediately responding with aid to their community, joining in the effort to clean up and donate funds.

All were shocked by such an important display of basic rights being turned into the extreme opposite, the original message of change and unity thus silenced, while devastating the businesses we all frequent and the owners and employees we know by name.

The team heading the La Mesa Business Disaster Recovery Fund exceeded its initial fundraising goal of \$50,000 in the first 13 hours last Sunday on GoFundMe and has now more than tripled that amount. The funds raised will be distributed to small businesses that suffered physical damage and other losses.

A list of affected businesses is being developed. Business owners are in the process of being contacted. A timeline, criteria and simple application are all in development for distribution of the funds. The GoFundMe page will be updated with the information in the days ahead. The East County Chamber of Commerce may also be contacted at 619-440-6161.

The East County Chamber and Foundation provides heartfelt thanks to the nearly 2,000 individual donors contributing to this effort so far.

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/la-mesa-business-disaster-recovery>