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Local community bands together

By Pippa Fisher



The Ripplers at the Roundup Saloon last Friday night. Photo Andy Scheck

It was a rainy night on a holiday weekend, but no one would have guessed it from the capacity crowd at the Roundup Saloon in downtown Lafayette who came together to raise over \$6,000 in a few hours for victims of the Butte County fire at a benefit concert Nov. 23.

As one of several local fundraising endeavors, the Ripplers played into the small hours of the morning, together with sets from SKOOL and No Flow, as people jammed into the bar to enjoy the music. Collection buckets filled and four separate raffles were drawn. The silent auction continued through the following day. The total amount raised is expected to grow.

Roundup owner Karen Johnson said the concert came from an idea that snowballed. As she listened on the news about the plight of all those who lost loved ones and homes in the Nov. 8 Camp Fire she said she realized she and her husband Mike Johnson had a vehicle for

raising money in the iconic downtown bar. She says she was happy to do it.

"I am so proud of the employees and customers - everyone's coming together. It's awesome," said Johnson, as she explained how a couple of bartenders voluntarily went door-to-door asking for auction donation items. She says regular customers donated, along with many businesses in Lafayette.

For several in attendance there were personal connections to the fire. Johnson said that one of the former Roundup bartenders came in. "She lost everything in the fire. She told me about her experience," Johnson explained. "It was very emotional."

Johnson said the benefit proved so successful that they are planning to hold a second such event after the New Year.

The event was one of several being held around Lamorinda to benefit fire victims, including a Nov. 30 benefit concert at Lamorinda Music, organized by Mighty Fine Guitars owner Stevie Coyle (see story on Page B3), the Blind Date with a Book program at Orinda Books (see story Page B5), and a fundraising drive organized by Rheem Elementary School students on behalf of their second grade teacher (see story Page A4).

To donate online, residents can go to the North Valley Community Foundation's website https://www.nvcf.org/?fbclid=IwAR1NVLvgdGyd2LF9KyCamwo2ENKxNVcvX9YUKgy6muV-2TCRYhPc0JFkcNA or can simply drop off a check at the Roundup.

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