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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Community Celebrates Resilience at the "Florecita Farm Block Party: Voices of Resilience"

Altadena, CA — September 15, 2025 — The residents of Florecita Farm, a small neighborhood enclave nestled against JPL and just north of Altadena Drive, gathered in a heartfelt celebration of local heroes who helped save the neighborhood from the Eaton Fire. The event was held this past Saturday, September 13, from 3 to 7 p.m., as part of the "Florecita Farm Block Party: Voices of Resilience." An estimated 200 community members of all ages—ranging from 93-year-olds to newborn infants—came together to honor the unwavering strength, hope, and resilience that defines their neighborhood.

The event centered around recognizing the extraordinary efforts of 34 individuals who received formal certificates of recognition from the City of Pasadena for their heroism during the recent catastrophic wildfires. Thanks to these acts of selfless courage—fighting the active edge of the Eaton fire which had just consumed four homes above the neighborhood and then crept down the hillside—these heroes stepped up to put out spot fires with pool water and garden hoses, dug fire breaks, cleared flammable windstorm debris away from houses, turned off gas meters, located pets, and stayed proactive while first responders were stretched thin. And because of this heroism every home in Florecita Farm, except for one ADU, managed to remain standing in spite of the raging inferno.

This block party also celebrated the remarkable determination of the residents who faced and overcame significant hardship as a result of the fires including smoke damage, pollution, water and gas disruption, loss of community and services, as well as facing the emotional toll of surviving when so many friends and family members lost everything.

This unique celebration was made possible through generous donations from local vendors and community partners. Dulan's Soul Food provided delicious meals, Mighty Toddlers Soft Play created a safe and fun space for the youngest attendees, and Puro Party Rentals brought joy with two impressive bounce houses. The Altadena Rotary Club contributed funds in the form of gift cards for Grocery Outlet, supporting this local business which is one of the few remaining markets in the neighborhood. The DJ, photographers, and videographers—all experts in their fields—waived their fees for the event. And members of the Southern California Council of Quilt Guilds (SCCQG) gifted handmade quilts to every family in the neighborhood and one for each honored hero—enveloping the whole community with their figurative (and literal) warmth!

The event was graced by local officials and community leaders as well. "The resilience of our neighborhood shone through every moment of this event," said Judy Matthews, who lives in Florecita Farm, and serves as President of the Altadena Chamber of Commerce. "It's a testament to the strength of our community and our shared commitment to rebuilding and

thriving.” Pasadena Councilmember Tyron Hampton, First District, was also able to attend the event and called it “an inspiring celebration.”

This block party was organized by a dedicated group of neighbors—including Dr. Millicent Wilson, Connie Benton, Christine Garcia, Dori Laurisel, Lauren Marks, Asha Mashaka-Zienkiewicz, and Kim Sainten—many of whom did not know each other before the fire. But this group worked tirelessly to honor the brave community members and create a meaningful day of reflection and celebration for their neighbors.

Christine Garcia, who helped organize the event, was also one of the honorees. She and her family stayed behind, and without electricity or running water, they fiercely defended their beloved neighborhood. After the certificates were given out, Christine expressed her gratitude, sharing the sentiments of many of her fellow heroes. “Everybody was just so happy, thankful, and touched by everyone involved,” Christine said. “Thank God we found this beautiful neighborhood with the best neighbors you can ask for.”

In spite of the grief Altadena is profoundly experiencing as a whole, the organizers hope this celebration will pave the way for continued strength and connection. The success of this event highlights this community's incredible strength, a kinship formed by a unified purpose, and a formidable resilience that this fire simply could not burn.

List of recognized heroes:

1. Tysean Brown
2. Alec Garcia
3. Jillian Garcia
4. Luis Garcia
5. Derek Branum
6. Brian Lynch
7. Kimmit Haggins
8. Robert J. Goertzen
9. Milton Quintana
10. Norm Lewis
11. Mr. Dennis
12. Manny Cruz
13. Jorge Quesada
14. Thomas Morales
15. Celeste Rangel
16. Kamea Gianzon
17. Szymon Zienkiewicz
- 18□ Nick Fahey
19. Aaron Ebensperger
20. Noel Ekker
21. Rashaan Nalls
22. Kalib Moorman

23. *Maurice Purdy*
24. *SpencerHartling*
25. *Alya Toquinto*
26. *Dajin Yoon*
27. *Brian Hillenbrand*
28. *Sam Lee*
29. *Arice Jonian*
30. *Yolanda Serrato-Jonian*
31. *Richard Da Sylveria*
32. *Jewel Davis*
33. *Victoria Munizich*
34. *Joseph Munizich*

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