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**\$100,000 Grant Kicks off Soccer Field Development for Southwest Fresno Youth**

*Wood Next Fund provides generous grant to Saint Rest CEDC*

Fresno, Calif.—Saint Rest Community Economic Development Corporation (CEDC) has received a \$100,000 grant to support the first phase of construction for a soccer field at southwest Fresno’s Saint Rest Baptist Church, a project which has been in planning for the past several years.

The area’s residents are impacted by decades of disinvestment, but Southwest Fresno community advocates and leaders in the area have been working alongside residents to address these issues. Recently the area has seen an increase in investments and new development.

Saint Rest Baptist Church formed Saint Rest CEDC to help address some of the issues affecting its surrounding community. The soccer field and multi-purpose green space aims to help provide a safe space for children living in the area to exercise and play. Currently an empty field, new turf will be installed as well as overhead lighting. A project like this can cost close to \$1 million dollars. The donation from Wood Next Fund is the second gift toward construction of the space. CalViva Health also previously contributed funds in support of the project.

“Wood Next Fund is excited to provide catalytic support for this project,” said the Fund’s director Nancy Chan. “We hope other funders will join us and coinvest in this much needed outdoor space for physical activity and community gathering.”



In 2019, Saint Rest CEDC and Saint Rest Baptist Church opened Saint Rest Plaza on Elm, a space for farmers markets, performances, and community activities. Within the last couple of years, the organization has also constructed a playground and youth center--which served as a distance learning space for neighborhood children during peaks of the pandemic, as many do not have in-home internet access.

"This generous gift serves as a greater gift to the greatest of our city, Southwest Fresno," said Saint Rest Baptist Church Senior Pastor D.J. Criner. "This seed gift of \$100,000 will be planted in good soil and in turn will produce a soccer field harvest that will feed, motivate, and stimulate growth, so that our community can kick the soccer ball of hope and score the goal of community economic success."

"At the Central Valley Community Foundation, our mission is to connect communities and financial capital to support just and thriving neighborhoods," said Central Valley Community Foundation CEO Ashley Swearingin. "We're thrilled to see this investment in a vision for more parks and recreational facilities that has been championed by Southwest Fresno residents for years."

This is the second grant Wood Next Fund has provided to a Central Valley nonprofit. Last month it donated \$180,000 to Next Generation Aviation Academy, an initiative focused on utilizing best practices and innovations to train the next generation of aviation professionals from communities of color and low-income neighborhoods within the San Joaquin Valley. Next Generation Aviation is also based in Southwest Fresno.

### **About the Central Valley Community Foundation**

The Central Valley Community Foundation (CVCF) has been a trusted partner in philanthropy in the Central Valley for more than 50 years. Its mission is to connect capital and communities for a just and thriving Central Valley. As the only nationally-accredited community foundation serving the six-county Central San Joaquin Valley, CVCF attracts investment and deploys resources to solve persistent economic, environmental, and social challenges in the Central Valley.

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## **About Wood Next Fund**

Wood Next Fund is the philanthropy of tech innovator and Roku CEO/founder Anthony Wood and his wife Susan. In collaboration with the Fund's director Nancy Chan, their philanthropic efforts are guided by their overall mission to advance human progress and remove obstacles to a fulfilling life. The Fund's priorities include mental health and related issues, scientific and biomedical research, and economic opportunity with a focus on addressing the root causes of poverty.

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