

Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Pirkle Jones Fund of MCF Announces Four x \$100,000 Grant Recipients

Novato (July 8, 2025): Following a process that generated scores of applications, the Pirkle Jones fund of Marin Community Foundation can announce the recipients of four, \$100,000 awards. Each award is centered on four communities within Marin County: Marin City, the Canal district of San Rafael, Novato and West Marin. The challenge posed was to present a concept that used the arts to build, inspire, excite or unite community in one of these distinct areas.

The award recipients are as follows:

The Canal District of San Rafael: The Canal Arts. This collective of predominantly immigrant artists has been engaged in public art projects in the Canal for over five years, partnering with local nonprofits in the creation of mural art and art teaching workshops. Its proposal will deliver a series of six new murals on prominent buildings in the Canal, completed by Spring 2026. At completion, a community celebration – Mural Fest – will see a walking tour of the murals and a gathering with food, drink, live music and speeches. In addition, a documentary of the project will be screened and then be made available to all.

The group hopes that its work can visually transform the neighborhood and establish pride and connection in the community.

Marin City: a collaboration between Angela Colabella, Oshalla D. Marcus, Etienne Douglas and the California Film Institute. “Reel Marin City: Past is Present” will be a collaborative short film project and community screening designed to celebrate and center the voices and cultural legacy of Marin City, while engaging new voices to carry that legacy forward. The film project re-envision the short documentary, “Marin City:



Then & Now”, produced by Diana Oshalla Marcus in 1991, by recovering and reframing past narratives with new interviews, visuals and stories from local residents. The MC Arts Gallery, the Marin City Library will serve as hubs for the work.

The premiere of the finished film will be a community celebration at the MC Arts Gallery in January 2026 and also be screened at the Rafael Theatre in San Rafael as part of Black History month.

West Marin: Parachute Days by Gabriel Korty. What began as a single event in Point Reyes Station in 2016 will transform into a mobile community arts program for all of West Marin. Parachute Days is a community event space designed to bring accessible, multicultural programming to West Marin’s villages.

Each community will gather under a 64-foot parachute canopy structure and enjoy musical concerts, intergenerational storytelling, hands-on workshops, healing workshops, theater performances, group acupuncture, movie screenings and fundraisers. Each program will reflect the individual character and population of the respective community.

Gabriel will engage with local residents in each location – Bolinas, Point Reyes Station, Inverness, Marshall and San Geronimo Valley to ensure representation and authenticity. The first event will kick-off in August 2025.

Novato: a collaboration between the Museum of the American Indian, Carlisle Redthunder and Cale Sears. Novato’s history is inextricably connected to Northern California’s indigenous peoples and the proposed Indigenous Heritage Project is designed to both honor this, and to unite community around it. A comprehensive art initiative, it is designed to preserve, celebrate and share our rich heritage through multimedia storytelling.

A film will capture the personal stories of indigenous community members, elders and culture bearers. Portrait photography will create a visual legacy; a language of the land recording will create an aural legacy. Cultural demonstrations will highlight traditional practices. All components will come together at a community screening event at Novato City Hall in January 2026.

“We received a large number of compelling applications, and it was exciting to see the ideas that were sparked from the challenge,” said Julie Nakao, from Marin Community Foundation. “It was truly a difficult process to narrow down the decision to a single project per priority neighborhood, but the judging panel was incredibly thorough in its evaluation and believe they have identified fantastic projects that can really impact community.”



“Pirkle loved many things, but two in particular: creativity and community,” said Jennifer McFarland, Pirkle’s longtime assistant and director of the Pirkle Jones Fund. “Now more than ever we could use some hope in the world, and using art to bring community together is the perfect way to do so. He would be thrilled that his estate is supporting this.”

“The Canal Arts’ mission – teaching and creating inspirational art with the Canal community – is wonderfully acknowledged and encouraged by the Pirkle Jones grant!”, said Rich Storek from Canal Arts. “The Canal, historically underserved, now more than ever is living on edge. A vibrant community, invisible to many, of over 12,000 in the midst of healthy, wealthy Marin, providing much of the services and workforce for us all, is under imminent threat of disruption and deportation. What better time to bring colorful evidence of hope and affirmation through art? We are working now with artists and building owners to create six new murals this year, to celebrate next Spring.”

MCF will provide updates as to the timing of the celebrations in each neighborhood as each draws closer, and hopes that the entire community comes out to feel the impact of the these unique projects.

