

# COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IN THE WAKE OF DISASTERS

**Throughout history, communities have come together at times of crisis to assist those in need. Often, community organizations and leaders must fill the gap when federal or local governments overlook the needs of those they serve.**

[illegible]

## FIGHTING RACISM AND DISPLACEMENT: AFTER THE 1906 EARTHQUAKE

many of San Francisco's white civic and business leaders spoke openly about their plans to relocate Chinatown, which was located in a profitable area. Instead, they planned to move the displaced Chinese population to an area on the outskirts of the city. However, Chinese business owners and community leaders fought against this racist initiative. They encouraged Chinese residents to hire lawyers to protect their interests, rebuild with haste, and sign new leases with white landlords before relocation plans could be finalized. Thanks to the community's efforts, Chinatown became an important tourist destination. It continues to bring people and money to the city of San Francisco over 100 years later.

## RESPONDING TO A DEVASTATING FIRE: AFTER THE CAMP FIRE.

a grassroots nonprofit serving survivors of the 2018 Camp Fire. Founded with the mission to serve the long-term needs of Butte County's disaster-affected population, the Foundation provides resources for residents, business owners, and the local workforce to rebuild in post-disaster Paradise. Some of their grant programs aim to reduce the cost of rebuilding for those in lower-middle to middle income households.



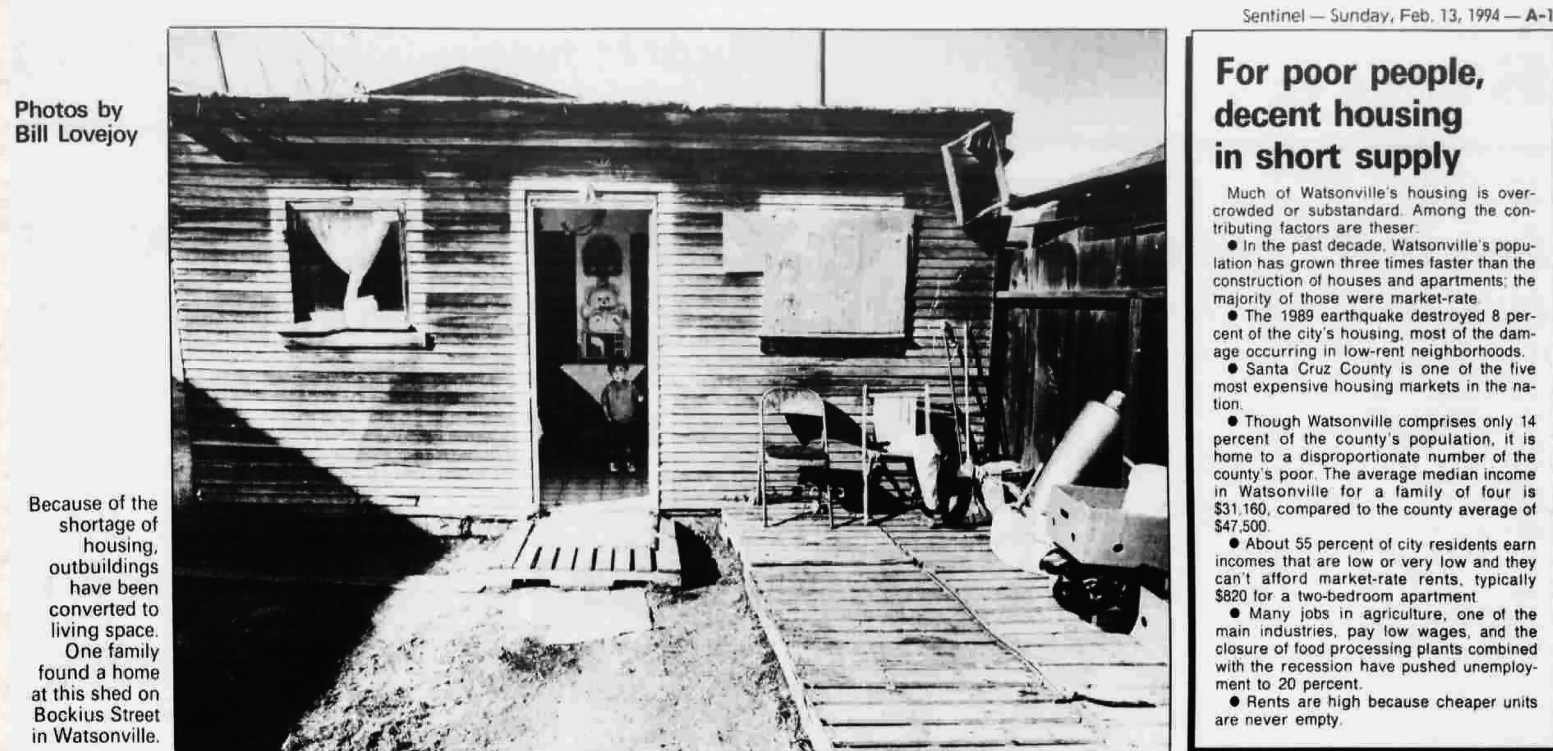
Construction of a fire-resistant home in Paradise after the Camp Fire. Photo by Douglas Keister.

In Northern California's Nevada City, elderly residents are also forming a buddy system to make sure they

are not left behind in the wake of a disaster. Led by Rosemarie Reeder, community members have entered into verbal agreements to check in with each other in case of disaster. The nearby city of Grass Valley also recognized its own vulnerability to wildfire after the Camp Fire, and created an organization to promote fire safety. This organization, the Washington Hill Fire Coalition, shares resources with neighbors on fire insurance and emergency alert systems, identifies and maintains evacuation routes, and provides other resources to investigate fire safety needs.

## ADVOCATING FOR HOUSING FOR ALL: AFTER LOMA PRIETA.

Loma Prieta earthquake, Watsonville's limited housing could not meet the needs of its majority working-class and poor population. Community leaders brought this issue to Watsonville's City Council, which was newly-restructured and now better representative of Watsonville's demographics because of a recent lawsuit. The Council created a Housing Task Force, through which community members recommended an inclusionary ordinance. This ordinance required all new development to have 15-20% of their units be affordable. Watsonville soon became one of the first cities in the area to implement this ordinance. The community continues to advocate for affordable housing for local farmworkers.



## Watsonville confronts a housing nightmare

"No Room to Move: Watsonville Tries to Solve a Nightmare of Housing" in the *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, Pg. A-11, Feb. 13, 1994. Notably, the article references how the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake destroyed 8% of the city's housing, mostly in low-rent neighborhoods.



"AB 101 Veto Outrage Sparks Riot" in the *Bay Area Reporter*, Pg. 1, Oct. 3, 1991. The *Bay Area Reporter* is the oldest, continuously-published lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender weekly newspaper in the U.S.

## EDUCATION AND ACTIVISM IN THE FACE OF HOMOPHOBIA: THE AIDS CRISIS. When

the AIDS epidemic arose, the U.S. government remained largely silent. Community activists and protestors pushed for action. The grassroots political group ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) had a local chapter based in Los Angeles. ACT UP Los Angeles advocated for clinical trials, promoted needle exchange programs, and distributed educational material, including material about women who are HIV+. Along with other organizations and activists like Connie Norman, ACT UP Los Angeles also pushed for the passage of AB101 in 1991. This bill would have prohibited employers from discriminating against workers on the basis of sexual orientation. When Governor Pete Wilson refused to sign the bill, a riot and subsequent protests broke out. One year later, the bill finally passed, and the governor signed it into law.