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Birthday Benefit Bash hits a high note for North Bay youth music programs

4th annual celebratory event raises \$43,000 for the Redwood Credit Union Community Fund

Santa Rosa, Calif., June 24, 2026 — The fourth annual Birthday Benefit Bash, a community fundraiser that celebrates the birthdays of Brett Martinez, President and CEO of Redwood Credit Union (RCU), and Mark Nelson, lead singer of Walking Mirrors, raised \$43,185 to benefit a trio of youth music education programs in the North Bay.

The gathering brought together 250 guests at [HopMonk Tavern](#) in Sebastopol on April 18. It was a high-energy night featuring live music from The Walking Mirrors, a band based in Marin County that donates its ticket proceeds to local nonprofits. The event also featured the RCU Band, an extraordinary group of moonlighting musicians whose “day jobs” keep RCU running smoothly.

With this year’s fundraiser, the event’s cumulative impact has reached \$110,365, bolstering music programs that uplift, motivate, and change the lives of young people throughout the North Bay. Proceeds from this year’s sold-out event benefit the [Redwood Credit Union Community Fund](#), which will distribute the funds to support the following nonprofits:

- [Santa Rosa Symphony](#)- Summer Music Academy

This is a three-week music immersion experience that introduces students to playing an instrument for the first time, and helps deepen their musical studies while making new friends.

“This generous funding will empower us to expand access to our Summer Music Academy and provide need-based scholarships for numerous students,” said J. Andrew Bradford, President & CEO of the Santa Rosa Symphony. “This means more instruments in more hands, more hours of musical instruction, more mentorship, and more opportunities for kids to experience the joy of making music together.”

- [Napa Valley Education Foundation](#)- Summer Music Camps

These programs offer an enriching experience for students across a wide range of ages and interests. Participants hone their skills, explore their musical passions and gain a deeper appreciation for the arts.

“Music education is a lifeline for young people,” said Jennifer Stewart, Executive Director of the Napa Valley Education Foundation. “It’s skill building, team building and brings a level of connection and empathy that youth sometimes struggle to find. This support will fund our summer music camps and allow us to offer scholarships to waive the \$50 fee for students who cannot afford the cost.”

- [Marin Girls Chorus](#)

This organization empowers girls' voices through music and song, rooted in the belief that ensemble singing and the tradition and discipline of choral singing engender strength, confidence, collaboration, empathy, critical thinking, and artistry.

"Music has the power to unite people from diverse backgrounds and cultures, to instill confidence and self-worth through discipline and teamwork," said Cole Thomason-Redus, Artistic Director of the Marin Girls Chorus. "Now more than ever, music builds artful and critical thinkers who will lead their generation to a brighter future world. Thank you for supporting the voices of tomorrow!"

"Between celebrating our birthdays, enjoying amazing live music, and connecting with colleagues, friends, family, and the community, the night was a true reflection of who we are: a team that shows up, gives big, and has fun doing it," Martinez said. "Knowing our efforts help kids access programs where they can explore new interests, build confidence, and create lasting memories is the most meaningful part for me."

Donating proceeds from all performances to local nonprofits, Walking Mirrors is a rock band formed in 2019 by Nelson and guitarist/producer Craig Bartock, formerly of the band Heart. The group also features guitarist Aidan Nelson, a Berklee College of Music graduate; bassist David Sikes, previously of the band Boston; and the former drummer for Joe Satriani, Jeff Campitelli.

"Music has the power to change lives, and because of the generosity of RCU and the North Bay community, more young people in our communities will have the chance to experience that firsthand," said Nelson. "It's a great example of what we can accomplish when we all come together. Incredible things happen!"

The RCU Community Fund, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, channels 100% of donations directly into the community, supporting financial education, disaster relief, housing, and community wellness initiatives. Visit RCUCommunityFund.org to learn more.

About Redwood Credit Union

Founded in 1950, Redwood Credit Union is a full-service, not-for-profit financial institution providing personal and business banking to consumers and businesses in the North Bay and San Francisco. With a mission to passionately serve the best interests of its members, team members, and communities, RCU delivers many ways for its members to save and build money through checking and savings accounts, auto and home loans, credit cards, digital banking, business services, commercial and SBA lending, and more. Wealth management and investment services are available through Redwood Wealth Management, and [insurance](#) and [auto-purchasing](#) services are also offered through RCU Services Group (RCU's wholly owned subsidiary). RCU ended May at \$10.6 billion in assets and \$13.2 billion in assets under management and serves more than 536,000 members with full-service branches from San Francisco to Ukiah. For more information, call 1 (800) 479-7928, visit redwoodcu.org, or follow RCU on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [X](#), and [LinkedIn](#) for news and updates.

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