

Gilroy Foundation's Gilroy Garlic Festival Oversight Committee was formed within 48 hours of the shooting. Members represented the Foundation's Board of Directors, Emeritus Board and a Staff Member from Silicon Valley Community Foundation.

The Committee met two to three times a week for the first several months, then once a week for the next two months, then as needed through the final months. Committee members also spent time outside of the meetings, doing research, talking to victims, attending fundraisers, and doing other work for the Committee.

It was an effective group: The members were also active in other community groups, so together they had a good sense of the Gilroy community. The Foundation had decided to not do actual fundraising themselves, but, rather, act as a vessel for the massive amount of money that was being raised by community groups, professional sports teams, other foundations, corporations and individual donors.

The Oversight Committee Members

Joel Goldsmith, Chair

Ted Becker

Edwin Diaz

Michelle Fries

Lori Kent

Karen La Corte

Sal Tomasello

Some of the Committee's comments:

"Being a part of the Gilroy Garlic Festival Victims Relief Fund (GGFVRF) Committee was both inspiring and heartbreaking. The overwhelming support for the victims and the work of the other Committee members demonstrated how compassionate and caring people are. At the same time, getting to know the victims and their families made me understand the grief and suffering that will last a lifetime. I am proud of our community for helping provide help to victims in their time of need." ~Edwin Diaz

"The applications were emotional and draining to read, to hear about the impact on so many people, but rewarding that we were able to help many." ~Sal Tomasello

"Challenging, stressful, emotional, consuming but rewarding!" ~Ted Becker

"Being on the Oversight Committee was life-changing. Through the tragedy, I saw our community band together like no other. I am proud to say I am from Gilroy. And, I would be honored to serve with this Oversight Committee again if we are ever needed by the community."

~Karen La Corte

“After the shooting, I was quick to volunteer for the Oversight Committee because I wanted to help the victims and get involved in order to get rid of the helplessness I was feeling. I had no idea what I was in for. It turned out to be both an experience I wish I never needed to have, and yet a positive experience that I will never forget.” ~Joel Goldsmith

It was an honor to serve on the Oversight Committee during an extremely difficult time in our community. While it was rewarding, it was more emotionally draining and stressful than I could ever have imagined. It made me proud to be part of such a giving community as well as a committee so dedicated to serve.”~Lori Kent

“It was my distinct honor, and a highlight of my professional career, to service the community by providing victim support as the liaison for Silicon Valley Community Foundation. The humbling experience of working so closely with the committee, Gilroyans whose desire it was to provide support to those most impacted by the horrific shooting, can only be described as life changing. #GilroyStrong ~Michelle Fries.

Gilroy Foundation and the Gilroy community will be forever grateful for the work they accomplished by being #GilroyStrong.