

TSUNAMI AID: LOCAL RESIDENTS STEP FORWARD WITH CREATIVITY, GENEROSITY

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From the \$100,000 pledge of a hotel owner to fund-raising competitions organized by local students, Sonoma County residents are finding innovative ways to help victims of last month's tsunami.

On Dec. 30, Flamingo Resort Hotel and Convention Center owner **Pierre Ehret** promised to contribute a dollar for every dollar donated to North Bay Red Cross chapters, up to \$100,000. The money poured in, and within a couple of days the challenge was met. In the meantime, other people thought of different ways to contribute. Businesses are pledging a percentage of sales or offering gifts to patrons who make donations. Students at Windsor Middle School are competing to see which homeroom can raise the most money, and schoolchildren in other towns are holding bake sales.

As of Friday, in Sonoma County alone, more than \$300,000 had been sent to the local chapter of the American Red Cross -- and this doesn't include the money sent to other relief organizations.

This amazing outpouring of support for people half-way around the world speaks well of the generosity and creativity of local residents.