The SAM Initiative, which represents a group of individuals including several Palisadians who have pooled their financial resources and experience to fund and support programs that promote social change, announced last week that L.A. Kitchen, Food Forward and The Downtown Women’s Center of Los Angeles will be the recipients of this year’s grants totaling $170,000.

All three recipients are addressing the community’s most pressing issues of food insecurity and homelessness.

The mission of The SAM Initiative is to serve as a catalyst to improve the lives of women, children and families in Los Angeles through expanded, engaged philanthropy.

“We seek to select causes that reflect our passions and we focus on community needs where we can have the greatest impact,” said SAM founder and Palisadian Mindy Freedman. “The projects to which we awarded grants this year fit with our goal of supporting social change through Sustainability, Accountability and Movement (SAM).”

The SAM Initiative is granting $70,000 to L.A. Kitchen. By reclaiming healthy, local food that would otherwise be discarded, training men and women who are unemployed for jobs and providing healthy meals to fellow citizens, L.A. Kitchen empowers, nourishes and engages the community.

The grant from The SAM Initiative will be used to support wages and fund an apprenticeship program for L.A. Kitchen’s Strong Food social enterprise business. This program will provide the life skills, training and mentorship to ensure employment success.

Food Forward will receive a grant of $60,000 to support its mission in rescuing fresh local produce that would otherwise go to waste, connecting this abundance with people in need.

The SAM Initiative grant will specifically provide funding and support for Food Forward’s Wholesale Recovery Program, which recovers thousands of pounds of viable, unwanted produce from wholesale donors in the downtown Los Angeles Wholesale Produce Market.

The Downtown Women’s Center (DWC) will receive a grant of $40,000 to fund critical move-in costs and provide housing and intensive case management services for 50 women.

DWC’s mission is to provide permanent supportive housing and a safe and healthy community fostering dignity, respect and personal stability, and to advocate ending homelessness for women.

As The SAM Initiative approaches its fourth funding cycle, it plans to continue building relationships within the community that can have meaningful impact.

For more information, visit SAMiniative.org.