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Donations, volunteers help fire refugees

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SAN DIEGO, Oct. 23 (UPI) -- From clowns to captains of industry, companies and individuals have been donating cash, supplies and their time to help evacuees from the California wildfires.

Major corporations have chipped in six-figure donations to the Red Cross and other relief organizations while volunteer doctors and nurses tended to Southern California evacuees with smoke-related breathing problems.

At evacuation centers across the region, volunteer musicians serenaded the growing crowds while clowns juggled and created balloon animals to keep restless children occupied.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger Tuesday singled out the California Grocers Association for providing truckloads of food and water.

The American Society of Human Genetics urged those attending this week's annual meeting in San Diego to double up in their hotel rooms in order to clear space for evacuees.

The Web site Craigslist was filled with offers of pet food, storage space, and the free use of a pickup truck for people needing to haul household goods out of harm's way.

The spirit was marred slightly by an ad for a house for sale in Oregon that included the mocking line, "Don't you wish you were here instead of running away from a fire and still paying on that monster mortgage?"

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