



27th July 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

In the immediate aftermath of the Pacific Palisades fire, there was no playbook, no roadmap, and no established structure for organizing the community. We were doing our best to connect neighbors, share information, and make sense of what came next — but we were starting from scratch.

When we first reached out after setting up multiple neighborhood WhatsApp groups, Jen Gray Thompson of After the Fire was on the phone with us within minutes. That kind of immediate, no-red-tape responsiveness was the first real lifeline we received.

Since that moment, After the Fire has stood with Team Palisades every step of the way — offering guidance, encouragement, and the hard-won wisdom that only comes from having walked this road before. They were the first organization to encourage the community to organize using a block captain model, a framework that has since allowed us to connect hundreds of Palisadian fire survivors across neighborhoods into a grassroots recovery network. Team Palisades simply would not exist in its current form without their early and ongoing support.

They were also the first group to bring Altadena and Palisades community leaders together in the same room, opening a space for solidarity, shared learning, and regional coordination. They've shown up in person every month, offering not just professional advice, but reassurance.

One of the most powerful things they've done is introduce us — face to face — with volunteer survivors from previous megafires. These peer-to-peer meetings have been profoundly moving. For those of us still reeling from loss, to be seen and supported by others who've lived through it has been a vital reminder that recovery is possible. While our disaster is uniquely complex, those who have survived and rebuilt after other megafires have become some of our most trusted and compassionate guides.

When we met with 25 other survivor volunteers at Team Molly on a (wet!) Saturday morning, Jen dropped everything that weekend to join us online. She provided a warm welcome and stayed with us to answer every single question we had as we began forming the Palisades block captain program. It was an early and defining moment in our journey — her presence made us feel seen, supported, and capable.

After the Fire also brought broader support to our efforts in deeply meaningful ways. Most notably, they arranged for Mayor Richard Bissen of Maui to visit Los Angeles and meet with many of our local community organizations. His encouragement, grounded in lived experience, offered us strength and clarity in a way no policy paper ever could.

Team Palisades now connects hundreds of survivors, volunteers, and neighborhood leaders, all working together to build a community-led recovery. We can say with confidence that no organization has done more to support this effort than After the Fire.

We would be happy to speak further about their impact and would strongly encourage others to work with and learn from them. This is what real partnership looks like.

Sincerely,

Tony Hocking & Darragh Danton

On behalf of Team Palisades

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