



GIVING MARIN

BUCKELEW EVENT RAISES MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS



Bike + Hike 4 Buckelew highlights the importance of being active outdoors. Photo courtesy of Buckelew Programs

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Hundreds of hikers and mountain bikers hit the trails in China Camp State Park on May 11 to raise funds and awareness about the North Bay's need for mental health care. The third annual Bike + Hike

4 Buckelew was hosted by Buckelew Programs, the region's largest nonprofit provider of behavioral health services. This year's event sold out with 200 attendees.

Bike + Hike 4 Buckelew coincided with Mental Health Awareness Month, with a focus on encouraging open conversations about mental illness and ending the stigma that prevents individuals from seeking help.

The event highlighted the mental health benefits of being active outdoors. Attendees of all ages enjoyed bike rides with guides and hikes with WildCare naturalists, followed by a post-trail party with a gourmet picnic and live music by local reggae band Dubcraft.

"We're in the midst of a national mental health crisis, which is mirrored here in the Bay Area," said Buckelew Programs CEO Chris Kughn. "Calls to our suicide and crisis hotline increased more than 24% between 2022 and 2023 to over 15,000 calls from five North Bay counties. We're projecting a 30% increase in call volume this year. Meanwhile, Sonoma County has had the Bay Area's second-highest rate of drug overdoses. And in Marin County, overdose deaths doubled in the past three years, primarily driven by opioids like fentanyl."

Buckelew Programs, which has provided treatment and housing for thousands of vulnerable North Bay residents since 1970, is focused on expanding access to care. Every penny raised on May 11 will support programs for people who, without services, would be at risk of homelessness, overdose, incarceration or death, according to the organization.

To learn more about the event and Buckelew's services, visit buckelew.org.