

Woolsey Fire Survivor Pays it Forward



At UP to Good 2025, UP thanked and honored 2018 Woolsey Fire Survivor Shelly Hiskey for extraordinary dedication to improving wildfire recovery, supporting disaster survivors and paying forward lessons learned.

When the Mountain Fire erupted in Ventura County in November 2024, Shelly Hiskey reached out to United Policyholders with a simple email.

“Do you need help with the Mountain Fire, I am local and am willing to help.”

Shelly was trained as a UP volunteer and served in the Mountain Fire Disaster Recovery Center connecting fire survivors with insurance claim guidance from United Policyholders. Shortly after, the Los Angeles Wildfires started and Shelly again stepped up at the Disaster Recovery Centers.

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Source: <https://uphelp.org/i-am-local-and-am-willing-to-help/> Date: April 9, 2026

She continues to pay it forward as a Roadmap to Recovery workshop speaker, most recently contributing to our “Survivors Speak”: Options and Strategies for Replacing Your Wildfire Destroyed Home webinar. For her volunteerism UP honored Shelly at our UP to Good Annual Event. Here is why Shelly volunteers, in her own words:

The first time I saw a United Policyholders’ table, I thought it was too good to be true.

How could it be that there were people who simply wanted to share information with fresh fire survivors—people like me—who were desperate for guidance on a subject none of us ever expected to learn?

And let’s not forget the special yellow book. That book never left my side for six months.

I remember receiving an entire box of pre-labeled files. I still have that box—and every single file.

One of the first volunteers I met was a wonderful woman who had lost her home in a San Diego fire. She looked me straight in the eye and said, “Shelly, you will get through this.” And in that moment, I believed her.

Here was someone who had walked through the devastation, who had educated herself about the process, and who was now reaching back to guide someone new—someone who had just lost a home of 22 years.

The information I received from United Policyholders was invaluable. Because of the knowledge they shared, I felt empowered to make sound decisions when everything around me felt uncertain.

It still amazes me how much this small but fierce team accomplishes—not just here in California, but across the country, whether it’s after a fire, a hurricane, or any disaster.

The need for clear, trusted information in those moments of crisis is enormous. And that is



the beauty of United Policyholders:

They are advocates with our government officials.

And who better to speak with representatives than those who truly understand insurance losses and the challenges they bring to our communities?

United Policyholders gave me back a sense of control at a time when life felt completely out of control.

For that, I—and my family—are deeply, deeply grateful.

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