

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT:** Lisa Bradshaw [info@dontwaitproject.org](mailto:info@dontwaitproject.org) or Jerry Agee 435-714-1776

November 11, 2019

Throughout the Carr fire, the country watched as devastation engulfed Shasta County. As former residents with ongoing family and friendship ties to Redding, California, Jerry Agee and Lisa Bradshaw wondered how they could work together to bring something hopeful to the people of Redding. Agee, a 1989 graduate of Shasta High School and the owner Life of Wood (Madera Mañana), a furniture manufacturing company, reached out to Bradshaw about an idea he had to give away dining room tables to people who'd lost their homes in the Carr fire.

Bradshaw is the founder of The DON'T WAIT Project—a 501c3 non profit organization committed to raising community awareness about how positive life choices can impact the health and welfare of individuals, organizations and communities. As a cancer survivor and widowed single mother by the age of 32, Bradshaw has learned first-hand about the importance of living a DON'T WAIT life and the lessons that can be learned in times of hardship.

“I believe that hardships are opportunities for crossroads in life, not impasses,” Bradshaw says. “I also believe that storytelling is a vehicle for empathy and wisdom in the face of tragedy. And gathering people around the dining room table when rebuilding after the fire creates an opportunity for healing.”

In November 2018, Life of Wood committed a donation of \$50,000 to the manufacturing and distributing of dining tables made from the exotic wood it imports from Costa Rica and manufactures in Redding, California. Agee and Bradshaw visited Redding last November and began interviews with people who were impacted by the fire, including residents, first responders, volunteers and business owners. This began phase one of DON'T WAIT to Gather Around the Table. Phase two began November 15-18, 2019 when Agee and Bradshaw returned to Redding and invite Shasta County residents to share their Carr Fire stories. These stories will be reviewed by a volunteer committee and families will then be selected to receive one table each at no cost to them. The effort of this project is both storytelling and encouraging family togetherness in the aftermath of this tragic fire.

“We couldn't imagine a more tangible yet symbolic gift beyond gathering families around the dining room table again, taking time to give thanks for what remains, even in the midst of so much loss,” Agee says. “The DON'T WAIT Project is the ideal partner for this effort because Lisa understands the impact storytelling can have on the people who are willing to learn from their own plight and the plight of others.”

### **HOW TO SHARE YOUR STORY:**

If you lost your home in the Carr fire, we encourage you to submit your story. Share the moments before, during and after the fire. Share what you learned and how it has impacted your thoughts about gratitude and giving thanks for what remains. You can also nominate a friend or family member who lost their home in the fire and would appreciate and benefit from a dining table. Submissions for consideration of entry to receive a Life of Wood dining table must be 500 words or less and received by Friday, January 31 at 5pm PST for consideration.

For more information about DON'T WAIT to Gather Around the Table or to submit your Carr fire story, please visit [www.dontwaitproject.org](http://www.dontwaitproject.org).