

People bring help to Watsonville

By TOM LONG
Sentinel staff writer

WATSONVILLE — Rosalie Perea didn't belong to an organization or charity. She isn't a professional fund-raiser.

But when she heard that hundreds of people were left homeless here after Tuesday's earthquake, she organized a caravan that brought supplies to those in need Saturday.

She was one of many people who brought soup, coffee and even tents to Watsonville High School Saturday to distribute to those in need.

Perea, of Castro Valley, organized friends in the Hayward area and gathered clothing, flashlights, tortillas and countless

other items for survivors during the week.

"These people needed water and baby food and other things so we just went out and got all this stuff ourselves," Perea said as she passed out bottles of water.

The bottled water was simply tap water from the Hayward area. After Perea checked to make sure the water was safe to drink she approached a local distilled water company and got a donation of hundreds of empty, sterilized plastic bottles which she and her friends then filled and sealed.

Perea said her home remained undamaged after the quake and she simply felt lucky. She said her motivation to raise supplies for

those in Watsonville couldn't be expressed in English.

"It takes what the Spanish call 'ganas' — you gotta wanna," Perea said as she passed bottles of water from the back of a truck to those in need.

As Perea passed out supplies, Jan Meyers of Watsonville helped set up a huge tent that her family was donating on the high school playing field.

"If we get it back, we get it back; if we don't, we don't," Meyers said.

The tent was set up just in time to beat a deluge of rain Saturday afternoon. Meyers looked out across the field, at families huddled beneath tarps, and began walking around to ask if anyone needed a place to live.