**Stories of Outsized Impact featuring Dennis Scott: Melvin F. & Grace McLean Foundation**

“Hi, my name is Dennis Scott. I’m the president of the McLean Foundation in Fortuna, California, located on the north coast, up by Oregon. I came to the north coast about thirty five years ago to work for Mel and Grace McLean in their saw mill operation. They had many operations- saw mills, power plants, timber- it was a great company. Mel and Grace were quite elderly and they had no immediate family. We ran the mills for many, many years- producing a lot of jobs. We were a major force in our area. Mel died in 1999 and we set up a Mel McLean and Grace McLean Foundation. All the money that they had from their businesses was basically donated to the McLean Foundation, so it was a tremendous gift to the community. Over the years after Mel’s death, we did a lot of really great projects for our community. We took care of the children, education, seniors- it was really, really a well-thought out plan. About four years ago, we started looking at the empty store fronts in Fortuna- the lack of jobs in Fortuna, and a lot of our kids were actually growing marijuana in the woods for jobs. The timber industry was really on a death spiral, mainly because of not being able to fall timber and log trees. So, we did a change. We did a needs assessment of our community, and we went around in cameras through our community. What people wanted more than anything were jobs. What we decided to do is refocus on the area where Mel and Grace made their money, which was the Fortuna area. We went to the city of Fortuna and they weren’t able to provide us any help- they didn’t have any money. So what we decided to do was recruit and hire an economic coordinated developer. She has thirty years of experience- a great person- and she now is writing grants and trying to help bring businesses to our area. Using her knowledge, we’ve got three major projects on the drawing board. We’ve got a community center that’s going to also house an economic development incubator, and we’ve got an open door clinic, that’s badly needed because we’ve lost most of our primary care physicians. So, our change is away from what we’ve been doing historically, but it is going to be the future of our community. We have to provide jobs for our children and our families.”