

Gatlinburg, Pigeon Forge and Sevierville Emergency Response Fund established by The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee

December 13, 2016

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Vicious fires have swept through the Smoky Mountains, displacing thousands of our neighbors and leaving many jobless. The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee, no stranger to emergency response, has created the Gatlinburg, Pigeon Forge and Sevierville Emergency Response Fund to support the affected communities and nonprofits that are helping victims address their ongoing needs.

Grants from the Fund will be made to nonprofits providing assistance both immediate and long term. To give to the Gatlinburg, Pigeon Forge and Sevierville Emergency Response Fund, visit: <http://bit.ly/smokymountainwildfires> or CFMT.org



CNN reports that more than 100 structures in Gatlinburg have been damaged, according to Mayor Mike Warner. More than 150 other structures have been either damaged or destroyed in other parts of Sevier County, county Mayor Larry Waters told reporters at a news conference.

Raging wildfires in and around the resort towns of Gatlinburg, Pigeon Forge and Sevierville spurred thousands of evacuations. Fires were at the edge of the Dollywood theme park near Pigeon Forge on Tuesday morning, CNN reported.

At least four people have been hospitalized with burns, the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA) said Tuesday morning.

Among the buildings destroyed in Gatlinburg are a 16-story hotel and an apartment complex, TEMA said.

"We know when disasters strike, there are no quick fixes," said Ellen Lehman, president of The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee. "We need to support the affected communities and the nonprofits on the ground helping victims and addressing their needs."

The Community Foundation has been involved in disaster response funding for more than two decades, including the 1993 ice storm and 1998 tornadoes in Middle Tennessee, and in 2004 when a tsunami slammed ashore in Southeast Asia. That was followed by Hurricane Katrina hit the New Orleans area and the Gulf Coast in 2007, tornadoes sweeping through Middle Tennessee in 2008, and then the historic Tennessee flooding in 2010 that resulted in 21 deaths across the state and \$2 billion in damages to private property in the Nashville area alone.

Through collaborative work with many local organizations and entities of government, a plan was outlined that resulted in The Community Foundation becoming an integrated part of the Nashville official disaster manual created by the Office of Emergency Management and has been designated by the city of Nashville as the central repository for giving at the time of disaster.

This collaborative work and advance planning served our community and Middle Tennessee well during the 1,000-year flood of 2010 and our record-breaking recovery.

About The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee

The Community Foundation exists to promote and facilitate giving in the 40 counties of Middle Tennessee and beyond. It does this by accepting gifts of any size from anyone at any time and by empowering individuals, families, companies, nonprofits, and communities to respond to needs and opportunities that matter. The Community Foundation works with people who have great hearts, whether or not they have great wealth, to craft solutions that reflect their intentions and goals. For more information, call 615-321-4939 or visit www.cfmt.org.

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