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Minnesota Helps Fund Continues to Distribute Resources to Support Survivors of the Drake Hotel Fire

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. – As of noon on New Year’s Eve, The Minneapolis Foundation has distributed \$133,000 from the Minnesota Helps – Drake Hotel Fire Recovery Fund to support the immediate and long-term needs of survivors of the fire. “As a community foundation, we are positioned to reach out to the broad community during a crisis and ask for their support,” explains Jo-Anne Stately, Director of Impact Strategy at The Minneapolis Foundation who has been leading the effort to deploy Minnesota Helps funding. “Since the first donations began pouring in, we have been working hard to understand the needs of the individuals and families experiencing this unthinkable crisis and deploy these funds quickly.”

Within the first 24 hours of launching the Minnesota Helps fund, distribution of dollars began. The Foundation’s goal was to immediately support urgent needs – such as safe temporary shelter, food, and emergency supplies – while also developing strategies to help families find affordable and stable long-term housing. Last evening, Stately was invited to First Covenant Church of Minneapolis, where 60-70 people displaced by the fire are being hosted for temporary shelter, to hear directly from the survivors about their most pressing needs.

“The situation is complex because each individual and family has different immediate and long-term needs. It is a core value of the Foundation to address community needs – whether in a crisis or otherwise – with equity as a responsibility,” says Stately. “We are working with community-based representatives and local nonprofit organizations to deploy the donations we have collected to directly support the specific needs of survivors.” In addition to deploying financial resources, The Minneapolis Foundation has helped facilitate securing transit passes for those in need of transportation support.

The Minneapolis Foundation approved two more grants today from the Minnesota Helps – Drake Hotel Fire Recovery Fund:

- \$25,000 to The Folwell Neighborhood Association who is on the ground providing direct support to the individuals and families impacted by the fire, including cash and gift cards

- \$25,000 to the Salvation Army Harbor Light Center who continues to provide basic needs support to the survivors

The Minneapolis Foundation is committed to ensuring 100% of donations are used to support the immediate and long-term needs of those impacted by the fire. Previous distributions from the Minnesota Helps fund include:

- An initial grant of \$25,000 to the Salvation Army Harbor Light Center to support their immediate response on the ground, providing food and emergency supplies to families impacted by the fire
- Provided financial guarantees on hotel rooms for some families to transition out of the temporary shelter at Bethlehem Church last weekend
- Began distribution of \$18,000 in Target gift cards and cash to those impacted by the fire on December 27, with distribution continuing through December 31
- \$40,000 to enable First Covenant Church of Minneapolis to provide a hospitable, safe, sanitary, and supportive temporary shelter to families for the next two weeks

As of noon today, more than \$418,000 has been donated to the Minnesota Helps fund. “Urgent basic needs are prevalent right now. We are operating with nimbleness to help our community partners address those needs quickly and help individuals and families get access to long-term, stable housing, and other support services,” says Stately. In partnership with local nonprofits, The Minneapolis Foundation is identifying opportunities to create accessible pathways for survivors to transition into permanent stable housing with financial assistance for deposits and rental assistance. “We are looking at deploying up to \$250,000 for direct housing support for the survivors as soon as later this week and will share more information as it becomes available,” says Stately.

The Minneapolis Foundation has been coordinating with the American Red Cross, the city of Minneapolis, and Hennepin County as well as community-based representatives, and direct service providers. They encourage questions related to direct service support and donation of goods be directed to the American Red Cross at (612) 871-7676.

This is not the first time the Minnesota Helps fund has been used to help the community recover after a disaster. In 2011 when North Minneapolis was hit by a devastating tornado, The Minneapolis Foundation activated the fund to provide a way for people to donate to a coordinated relief and recovery effort. In total, \$1.7 million was raised from individuals, corporations, and foundations. 100 percent of the \$1.7 million was distributed to help more than 60,000 North Minneapolis residents get their lives back on track. Donations supported emergency relief and met longer-term needs including food, housing, counseling, transportation, childcare, and more.

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About The Minneapolis Foundation: For more than 100 years, The Minneapolis Foundation has connected people, resources, and ideas to improve lives in Minnesota and beyond. The Foundation manages \$890 million in assets, providing customized and tax-smart giving solutions that result in the average annual distribution of more than \$50 million in grants. The Foundation brings people together to unite behind common goals and spark positive change in our community. www.minneapolisfoundation.org