

Waukesha Christmas Parade tragedy fundraisers raise nearly \$7 million for the victims in the last two weeks

EVAN CASEY | Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



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"It is absolutely heartwarming."

Those are the words used by Shelli Marquardt, president of the Waukesha County Community Foundation, when she heard the total amount of funds

raised for the victims of the Waukesha Christmas Parade tragedy so far.

But honestly, she's almost running out of adjectives to describe her feelings.

She's not alone.

As of Tuesday afternoon, individuals and organizations from around the world have donated nearly \$7 million for the victims and their families, according to an unofficial tally of the totals from some of the larger fundraising efforts.

That number is expected to grow in the coming days and weeks.

The largest source of funds comes from various fundraisers posted on GoFundMe as well as from the United for Waukesha Community Fund.

The United for Waukesha Community Fund has received \$3.6 million from about 13,700 donors from 17 countries and all 50 states, as of Tuesday afternoon.

An unofficial list from the Waukesha County Community Foundation also shows 77 organizations and businesses have had or will have their own fundraisers to benefit the fund, which was organized by the Waukesha County Community Foundation and United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County.

The Fotsch Family Foundation also pledged to match up to \$1 million of donations made to the United for Waukesha Community Fund from Nov. 29-Dec. 4.

More than 40,000 donors have given nearly \$2.1 million dollars through 30 verified fundraisers for victims and their families, according to a

spokesperson from GoFundMe.

Culver's locations at 840 Sunset Drive and 1650 E Main St., both Waukesha, together raised \$44,000. Jersey Mike's Subs raised \$18,000 between its two Waukesha locations.

Several other fundraisers from area businesses and organizations have also raised funds for the victims and will continue to raise money.

Waukesha Mayor Shawn Reilly was encouraged by the amount raised so far.

"It really speaks to the character of the people who live in southeast Wisconsin and beyond," Reilly said.

"The financial help will go a long ways toward relieving the anxiety of those injured or dealing with the loss of a loved one. Anything we can do to help those impacted will help us heal as a community," he added.

The United for Waukesha Community Fund will continue at least until the end of February 2022.

"We know the need is going to be great," Marquardt said.

"We're grateful for all of the support because it's going to make a difference for the community," she added.

How to help

The detailed protocol, claim forms and more details for the United for Waukesha Community Fund will be available at www.waukeshafoundation.org beginning Dec. 10.

You can donate to the fund at bit.ly/UnitedforWaukesha.

GoFundMe has an umbrella page of all the fundraising drives that are verified. To donate, visit www.gofundme.com/c/act/waukesha-christmas-parade-fundraisers.

Learn about other area fundraisers at bit.ly/ParadeTragedyFundraisers.

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