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When the Bridger Foothills fire consumed more than 7,000 acres, the greater Bozeman community responded

BOZEMAN, Mont. -- March 15, 2021 -- Even before the flames were fully extinguished, **Greater Gallatin United Way** and the **One Valley Community Foundation**, in cooperation with the **Southwest Montana Community Organizations Active in Disaster (SWMT COAD)**, created the **Bridger Foothills Fire Relief Fund** in response to the community requests. In total, more than **\$405,000** in funding was raised to assist those impacted by the fire through direct community donations, hosted events, branded product sales, art auctions and other creative, community-driven efforts. Over **861 donations** to the relief fund **supported 105 individuals from 42 households** and provided funds to **six organizations** that responded to the fire and post-fire needs.

Donors from the **Yellowstone Club Community Foundation** provided immediate, flexible funding through this fund to Bridger Canyon residents for food, clothing, shelter and/or expenses incurred in advance or in excess of insurance covered losses. Early and significant support was also generously provided by the **Morgan Family Foundation, Morgridge Family Foundation, SWMT Mountain Bike Association, Murdoch's Ranch & Home Supply, Stockman Bank, and Frances & Townsend Burden Foundation**, among other local businesses and private individuals.

The Fund provided a reliable and trusted single location for financial donations, streamlining the allocation of funds to individuals and families impacted by the fire and directing support to organizations responding to the immediate emergency and serving the community in the months that followed. Notable partnerships throughout the fundraising and fund distribution process

allowed the partners to respond to the wide ranging needs and help address the damage caused by the fire.

The Bridger Foothill Fire Relief Fund allocated \$60,000 to the **Gallatin Watershed Council** to coordinate and address land remediation efforts such as tree replanting, weed mitigation, landslide prevention and stream health. Financial support was also provided to the first responders and other agencies that depleted their resources and supplies in the effort to contain the fire and/or protect and serve those most impacted. Funding was provided to the following organizations for their emergency response work and service to the community: **Bridger Canyon Fire Department, Central Valley Fire District, Fort Ellis Fire & Rescue, Gallatin Gateway Fire Department, and Bozeman Help Center/ 2-1-1.**

Greater Gallatin United Way and the One Valley Community Foundation, as administrators of The Bridger Foothill Fire Relief Fund, worked closely with disaster relief and local social service providers, including the **American Red Cross, Bozeman Help Center, HRDC, LOVE, Inc., and other Southwest Montana Community Organizations Active in Disaster (SWMT COAD) partners** to identify the wide ranging impacts of the fire and to ensure an equitable funding distribution of donated funds based on both impact from the fire and financial situation.

At this time, the Greater Gallatin United Way and One Valley Community Foundation are no longer actively fundraising for the Fund. However, the lingering impacts on the individuals and environment continue to unfold. **As such, approximately \$10,000 remains in the Bridger Foothills Relief Fund to provide for ongoing mental health and emotional support for adults and children affected by the fire.** Together with their community partners, Greater Gallatin United Way and One Valley Community Foundation will also continue to monitor the needs of the residents as they continue their rebuilding efforts.

In addition, as we enter the 2nd year of the COVID pandemic, both organizations ask that those in a position to support the ongoing needs of their neighbors impacted by the pandemic and ongoing economic uncertainty to consider a donation to the **Southwest Montana COVID-19 Response Fund**, hosted in partnership by Greater Gallatin United Way and the One Valley Community Foundation. To date, this fund has raised and distributed more than \$390,000 in support throughout Southwest Montana and continues to serve the needs of the region as we face this unprecedented global pandemic.

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About Greater Gallatin United Way

Greater Gallatin United Way's mission is to mobilize the caring power of our communities. We empower donors, volunteers, businesses, governments, nonprofits, and community groups to invest in neighbors and improve the quality of life for everyone in Gallatin, Madison, Meagher, and Park Counties. Working together, we identify the community's most critical needs and implement collaborative, innovative solutions. Learn more at www.greatergallatiunitedway.org.

About One Valley Community Foundation

One Valley Community Foundation's mission is to connect people to the causes they care about to build a better community. Through philanthropic services, strategic investments, and community leadership, One Valley Community Foundation helps people support the causes they care about, now and for generations to come. The Community Foundation has served Bozeman, Big Sky, Belgrade, Manhattan, Churchill, Three Forks, and the rural areas in between. Since its inception in 1998, the Foundation has galvanized more than \$6 million for 200+ local nonprofit organizations. Learn more at www.OneValley.org.