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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**BALLARD FIRE BUSINESS RELIEF FUND RAISES MORE THAN \$80,000 TO SUPPORT AFFECTED EMPLOYEES AND BUSINESS OWNERS – \$47,250 RELEASED THIS WEEK TO SUPPORT 38 EMPLOYEES**

SEATTLE, Wash. (November 1, 2019) — Immediately following the October 7 fire in Ballard, the Ballard Alliance created the “Ballard Fire Business Relief Fund” to help support affected business owners and their employees. To date, the fund has raised more than \$80,000 from nearly 600 individual donors with additional funds still being collected. This week, \$47,250 was distributed to 38 employees affected by the fire.

To ensure that the funds were allocated in a thoughtful and expedient manner, the Ballard Alliance assembled the “Ballard Fire Relief Fund Advisory Board.” This advisory board is comprised of Ballard business owners and employees that were not affected by the fire, non-profit representatives, as well as members of the Ballard Alliance Board of Directors.

The advisory board met several times in October and created a method for fund disbursement to affected businesses and employees. The first priority is disbursement of funds to affected employees. To that end, the advisory board is distributing \$750 to employees who were working less than 20 hours per week on average, and \$1,500 to employees who were working 20 or more hours per week on average

“The level of community support for the relief fund is nothing short of amazing,” said Ballard Alliance Executive Director Mike Stewart. “We are pleased to disburse funds to employees this week and the advisory board will make determinations about disbursement to the affected businesses once there is a more complete understanding of the extent of the damage as well as the amount of coverage that will be provided by the various insurance companies.”

One Ballard-based company, Gravity payments contributed more than \$20,000 through a combination of business and employee contributions to the fund.

“These small businesses and their employees give vitality to our community, often getting way less credit than they deserve. It’s devastating to see them harmed. Our hearts go out to them, and we are grateful for the opportunity to help. We are rooting for each and every one of them.” said Dan Price, CEO of Gravity Payments.

The GoFundMe campaign will continue for the foreseeable future and will be managed by the Ballard Alliance. The advisory board will continue to make disbursement decisions in the weeks ahead as new funds are raised.

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