

## Press Release from Town of Newtown First Selectman's Office Regarding Charitable Donations

### Preface

The purposes of this Release are threefold. **First, to thank the people all over the world** who have donated or are considering donating goods, services or cash to help those affected by the Sandy Hook Elementary School Tragedy. **Second, to provide guidance to assist donors** in insuring their donations go to good use and the purposes intended. **Third, to inform the world, in a necessarily general way, about the status of the moneys currently being collected by the United Way and Newtown Savings Bank in the Sandy Hook School Support Fund**, which is, of course, only one of many of funds collecting moneys. In addition, a transition team has been formed for to design an entity to receive that Fund, as detailed below. This statement emanates from the Town of Newtown but is issued after consultation with various collecting entities including the United Way, Newtown Board of Education, other local charities and places of worship, and appropriate State officials.

It is just as important to note what are NOT the intents of this Release. It is not, for instance, the intent of this Release to favor or discourage donations in general or as to any particular charitable entity or fund. Certainly it is not the intent to disparage any individual fund. And it is not an intent to speak for the entire charitable community. Finally, it is expressly not intended to speak for any of the families directly affected by this tragedy.

### I. General Guidance Regarding Donations of any type

a) *Select a donee that matches your intent in giving.* There are any number of charities and funds that have arisen: individual or group victim family funds, scholarship funds, funds to construct physical memorials, funds for specific purposes or activities such as the arts, pets, therapy, etc. If you have a specific purpose, you will no doubt find a fund that addresses your desire.

b) *Engage in some level of verification or examination of the entity you are considering.* Make sure you believe the entity is reliable because in these early days after the tragedy no general "vetting" or examinations may have been conducted of most funds, particularly smaller ones that have arisen to address this specific tragedy.

i) **Beware of groups that insist on immediate donations as most immediate needs are being met.**

**ii) If donating to a fund for a particular victim's family, a key factor is whether the victim's family itself knows and approves of the fund.**

**c) *Be patient and hold donations if possible to allow for processing, infrastructures and safeguards to develop.*** Within a matter of few days to a few weeks, structures will be developed to bring better organization to the charitable community. Right now many organizations are overwhelmed by the volume of giving. If, therefore, you are willing to wait a short time before donating, that may be helpful.

**d) *Cash and undesignated donations are often best.*** At this early stage all the costs, needs and consequences of the tragedy are not yet known, indeed some have not yet unfolded. Monetary donations allow the receiving entity to match resources to needs. ***This applies particularly to corporate and other large donors.***

## **II. Donations of goods**

“Goods” refers to physical items such as perishable food, teddy bears, school supplies, etc. Many such offerings have been sent to the Town, local places of worship, relief organizations and others. The following guidance applies:

**i) *Contact the receiving organization first to determine whether it wishes the donation and is prepared to receive it.*** Certain groups, including Town and Board of Education offices, may wish to have you hold or send your donation elsewhere, to a central processing point, for instance.

**ii) Please DO NOT send perishable goods any longer, except at specific request.** There is no way to distribute such in a timely fashion.

**iii) Again, patience would be appreciated.** Physical goods require resources for handling and those resources are strained.

## **III. Donations of Services**

“Services” refers to volunteerism ranging from manning phones to painting walls to visits or performances from those in the sports and entertainment fields. Many such efforts are already underway or in planning stages.

**i) *Grass roots volunteers should contact those entities they wish to serve directly.***

**ii) *Sports, entertainment and other national organizations are asked to register and coordinate with a point of contact soon to be established and publicized.*** In the interim, if such groups need information regarding where to place proceeds, contact specific funds of your choice.

**IV. The Sandy Hook School Support Fund at Newtown Savings Bank, established in partnership with the United Way**

The Sandy Hook School Support Fund at Newtown Savings Bank, established in partnership with the United Way, has been and will be receiving funds from those wishing to help with needs connected to the tragedy. Because there has been some misinformation circulating as to this Fund, the following three points of information are offered:

i) **Neither the United Way nor Newtown Savings Bank has been taking any portion of the Fund whatsoever for administrative or other purposes. The funds collected remain 100% intact.**

ii) **Neither the United Way nor Newtown Savings Bank will be determining how the moneys in the Fund will be distributed. Instead, the Fund will be turned over to a charitable entity to be formed by local officials with the input or assistance of State officials and disaster fund experts from the public and private sectors. The transition team working on that process and entity consists of: Attorney Will Rodgers, Selectman; Attorney Andrew Buzzi, Newtown Resident; Debbie Leidlein, Chairman, Board of Education; Kim Morgan, Chief Executive Officer, United Way; Elizabeth Goering, United Way; Attorney Andrew Zeitlin, United Way Board of Trustees; John F. Trentacosta, President & CEO, Newtown Savings Bank; Attorney David Grogins, Town Counsel, Cohen & Wolf; Attorney Floyd Dugas, Board of Education Counsel, Bercham, Moses & Devlin.**

iii) **One of the key elements of such an entity will be that both the scope of the assistance it provides, as well as each case by case decision to render assistance, will be determined with community input or by a community based board.**

iv) **This Fund is designed to receive only general, undesignated donations.**

**It is the hope that this information proves helpful to donors and recipients alike, and the Town thanks the media in advance for disseminating this Release as widely as possible. This complete document will be available on the Town's web site. You are encouraged to post the complete document to your web sites as well.**

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