June 2024

DONOR Connection

PITTSBURGH MERCY
A HERITAGE OF HOPE

Meeting the Needs of Those Impacted by the Fire at Second Avenue Commons

On June 4, a three-alarm fire broke out on the top floor of Second Avenue Commons, home to Pittsburgh Mercy's year-round low-barrier shelter, the overflow shelter, and many of Pittsburgh Mercy's supportive services. For the 160+ people (plus nine pets) temporarily housed at Second Avenue Commons, the afternoon fire added yet another crisis to their lives.

Fire at Second Avenue Commons on June 4, 2024

Fortunately, everyone was safely evacuated that same day to the David L. Lawrence Convention Center. Pittsburgh Mercy, along with the American Red Cross and our partners, was able to provide all the arrivals with cots, warm meals, fresh blankets, and portable showers. We are deeply grateful to the City of Pittsburgh and its Bureau of Public Safety, Police, Fire, and EMS; Allegheny County Department of Health and Human Services (DHS); the American Red Cross; Pittsburgh Regional Transit; our partner homeless service providers; and all others who offered support.

The Convention Center was available for two weeks only. During this time, Allegheny County DHS with Pittsburgh Mercy's help conducted an exhaustive search for an alternate location to accommodate the shelter guests while Second Avenue Commons underwent repairs.

With the deadline looming and no suitable options available, Pittsburgh Mercy offered to relocate our shelter guests to the gymnasium at our North Side office on Reedsdale Street. Within 24 hours, we completed the necessary building modifications—including restrooms, electrical upgrades, temporary showers, bunk beds, meals, laundry facilities, and other services. On Saturday, June 15, the majority of shelter guests were successfully

moved to the new temporary location.

For many who sought care at Second Avenue Commons, this building was their home, and the loss is highly stressful. Pittsburgh Mercy has been working non-stop to manage the situation, focusing on the health and wellness of each person impacted by the fire. Our Street Outreach teams and Street Psychiatrist are making regular rounds at the temporary shelter to address both the physical and mental health needs of each person we serve.

“Pittsburgh Mercy has served those experiencing homelessness for over 70 years,” said **Tony Beltran**, President and CEO of Pittsburgh Mercy. “In keeping with the traditions of our founding Sisters of Mercy, we stand committed to serving those experiencing poverty and will do all we can to support those who count on Pittsburgh Mercy for their care.”

If you’d like to help, you can make your gift HERE.

In-Kind Donations Showcase Community Spirit

Judy Masucci, owner of Levana Bratique with Susan Wiedel, Pittsburgh Mercy.

Beyond food and shelter, a fire often means loss of personal items. For women, few things are more personal than a bra. Enter **Judy Masucci,** owner of Levana Bratique in Wexford and Affiliate Director for **I Support the Girls (ISTG) - Pittsburgh**, a nonprofit that provides bras, underwear, and menstrual products to those in need. Since 2017, Judy and her team of volunteers have donated over 200,000 items to local organizations.

Hearing of the fire, Judy generously packaged bras in the specific sizes needed, along with underwear, to be donated to each guest at the temporary shelter.

Thank you to Judy and ISTG!

Meet Brendan Copp, Pittsburgh Mercy's Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator

Pittsburgh Mercy is pleased to welcome Brendan Copp as volunteer and engagement coordinator. Brendan hails from Chicago and came to Pittsburgh with his wife, Elizabeth, following their schooling. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in sociology from the University of Notre Dame and previously worked for the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. He enjoys playing Ultimate Frisbee and singing

in his parish choir.

Joining at the perfect time, Brendan has been instrumental in recruiting volunteers to help at the emergency shelter following the fire. Anyone interested in volunteering can contact him at brendan.copp@pittsburghmercy.org.

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