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THANKS TO THOUSANDS OF GENEROUS ALASKANS MORE THAN HALF A MILLION DOLLARS IN RELIEF IS ON ITS WAY TO WESTERN ALASKA

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA, OCTOBER 3, 2022 – It has been inspiring to witness the outpouring of generosity and concern for those impacted by Typhoon Merbok. Since The Alaska Community Foundation established the Western Alaska Disaster Recovery Fund on September 17th, over 2,400 generous individuals, families, small businesses, local foundations, statewide associations, Alaska Native organizations, and corporate sponsors have rallied to support the communities facing the storm’s devastating wake. To date, the fund has grown to over $1.25 million dollars committed for both short-term and longer-term recovery efforts. It is amazing to see so many donors helping their friends and neighbors in a time of extreme need and is a reminder of Alaska's strength and spirit.

"In this very difficult time for the people of our region, we feel the kindness and support bestowed upon us by fellow Alaskans and so many others. We are appreciative of every single person who has donated and grateful to the Alaska Community Foundation for establishing the fund and providing the platform to make it so easy for so many to help," reports Melanie Bahnke, President, Kawerak, Inc.

To understand the conditions in the communities affected, The Alaska Community Foundation sought guidance from regional and community leaders from the affected areas. The goal was to disburse funds quickly, so they could best address the immediate needs of the people and communities impacted by this devastating storm.

Based on advice from the regional leaders, the Alaska Community Foundation is distributing over half a million dollars to western Alaska this week. "We know there is much more to do to support our fellow Alaskans in this recovery effort, but we did want to directly provide as much support as possible to the communities that were hardest hit, including Golovin, Hooper Bay, Newtok, and Chevak. We will be looking to provide additional funding over the coming days as the needs are identified," stated Nina Kemppel, President and CEO, The Alaska Community Foundation.

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Homes in these areas were severely damaged, with high winds tearing off roofs and flood water ruining walls and flooring. The surge also destroyed food supplies, personal belongings, household goods, and appliances. Additionally, recovery efforts require cleaning supplies and equipment like generators and shop vacs to remove the water in the impacted homes.

"The recovery funds will go a long way in the villages damaged by the storm. The priority will be to repair the roofs and foundations of homes damaged by the storm and provide generators, heating stoves, and freezers lost to the flood waters." Andrew Guy, President and CEO, Calista Corporation.

A second round of funds will become available starting in early November to address further recovery efforts when the storm's repercussions are better understood. For instance, many families lost fish camps and cabins integral to their lives and culture that have been passed down through many generations. The storm damaged or washed away structures, houses, fish racks, fish nets, and smokehouses. There will also be a continuing need to rebuild houses and local buildings that are integral to strengthening our communities as winter approaches.

To support the ongoing needs of friends and neighbors in Western Alaska, give to the Western Alaska Disaster Recovery Fund at: https://alaskacf.org/western-ak-disaster-recovery-fund/

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Established in 1995, The Alaska Community Foundation (ACF) is a statewide platform for philanthropy that connects people who care with causes that matter. ACF's mission is to inspire the spirit of giving and connect people, organizations, and causes to strengthen Alaska's communities now and forever. Managing more than $195 million in assets and over 2,200 funds for the benefit of Alaskans, ACF, and their Affiliates, grant out over $10 million annually in charitable gifts to charitable projects and nonprofit organizations across the state. For more information, visit http://www.alaskacf.org or call 907-334-6700.