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# ‘Anonymous’ enables us to take on Hurricane Sandy

*A long-time but anonymous philanthropic family in northwest Connecticut extended a helping hand to Hurricane Sandy families in our region. The result: a much-needed relief effort, cooperation between sister community foundations, and a partnership with the United Way of Southeastern Connecticut*

**G**uy Rovezzi, president of our sister Community Foundation of Northwest Connecticut (CFNWCT), protects the identity of one of his region’s most generous philanthropists with a vengeance. He won’t say whether his key contact is a man or a woman, or young or old. He just notes that he or she represents a local family whose giving through CFNWCT is thoughtful, impactful, and, well, always anonymous.

“It’s become a bit of a mystery around here,” Rovezzi laughs. “People are always trying to guess who they are through their grants. They ask me about the family’s ‘Local Area Fund’: ‘Why do they give to this? Why do they give to that?’ I can only say that we are very proud to work closely with them on their many interests.”

## Family offers support for Hurricane Sandy victims in southeast Connecticut

Rovezzi says he wasn’t surprised when the family came to him wanting to do something for Hurricane Sandy victims.

“‘Anonymous’ was quite upset by the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina in 2005,” Rovezzi remembers. “They set a personal goal for bringing hope back into the lives of people who had lost so much.”

With the family’s \$50,000 commitment, Rovezzi challenged local schoolchildren to raise another \$20,000. With the family’s approval, he worked with the community foundation in New Orleans to direct the funds to individual relief efforts.

Seven years later, ‘Anonymous’ wanted to do the same for their neighbors who continued to suffer from the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy.

Rovezzi called Alice Fitzpatrick, his counterpart at the Community Foundation.

“I knew Alice would treat the family’s wishes and this issue with the same tenacity and diligence I would, even if she never met ‘Anonymous,’” Rovezzi says.

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## Alliance with United Way now underway after careful planning

Sure enough, armed with ‘Anonymous’ initial \$50,000 gift, Fitzpatrick herself spent months on the project. First, the Community Foundation surveyed towns, nonprofits, FEMA representatives and insurance agents on the “gaps” in coverage for impacted individuals, families, small business owners, and service providers.

Then Fitzpatrick partnered with the United Way of Southeastern Connecticut. The resulting relief network, “Our Communities United... Hurricane Sandy & Her Aftermath”, which kicked off March 1 of this year, would aid both social services agencies and individuals and families whose losses under Sandy were not covered by FEMA or other insurance.

“The support we can offer thanks to ‘Anonymous’ and the alliance is critical,” Fitzpatrick reports. “The impact of Sandy has made a difficult economy even worse for our families on the edge.”

She says individuals in any of the Community Foundation’s 42 towns need only call United Way’s 2-1-1 line to find a case manager, who will submit an application on their behalf.



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## Continued promise of due diligence...and mystery!

Fitzpatrick and Rovezzi are still partnering on behalf of ‘Anonymous’, as well as Hurricane Sandy’s victims.

“The family has said it will contribute additional funds if the need continues and it’s convinced that the money is being spent well,” Rovezzi points out. “Alice and I are committed to the proper due diligence. It’s a way of life for us.”

“I think ‘Anonymous’ can feel confident that we’re doing everything possible to bring the hope back they seek for our friends and

neighbors,” Fitzpatrick concludes.

“Plus,” she adds, “now we’re part of the mystery, too!”