



Pacific Palisades Community Council

To Our Friends, Neighbors and Supporters:

Pacific Palisades Community Council (PPCC) has, for 52 years, been the voice of Pacific Palisades – the community that was devastated by, and is still reeling from, the unprecedented Palisades Fire. In the aftermath of the fire that tore through our community, we have seen extraordinary hardship and extraordinary generosity. As a Council comprised of residents, volunteers, and wildfire survivors, we want to take a moment to reflect on and commend the vital role that philanthropy has played in helping Pacific Palisades and surrounding areas begin to recover.

Earlier this year, the PPCC issued a letter posing questions about the allocation and use by recipients of certain philanthropic funds that had been donated to assist those in communities like ours, including funds raised by FireAid. Like many in the community, we were seeking clarity at a time when communication was scattered, and emotions were running high. Since that time, we have received an official statement from FireAid, as well as dozens of testimonies and direct information from organizations on the ground. These updates have painted a much fuller and clearer picture of how FireAid resources are being put to work—quickly, carefully, and with real local impact.

It is important to understand that confusion after a disaster is normal—especially in the vacuum left while federal, state and city resources take time to arrive. In that period of chaos, private donors, community institutions and nonprofit partners stepped in to fill critical gaps. The philanthropic families behind FireAid — the Azoffs, the Annenbergs, the Ballmers and others - did not wait to be asked. They showed up. And because of their early action, thousands of individuals and families received food, housing, trauma support and recovery services during their most vulnerable moments.

To date, since the crisis caused by the Palisades Fire (and Eaton Fire) in Los Angeles County, we have been advised that FireAid has distributed nearly \$75 million to more than 160 nonprofits, schools and local organizations in these communities. These funds address a wide spectrum of urgent needs, including temporary housing, legal aid, mental health services, food access, education support, soil testing, respite for children, household grants and fire prevention infrastructure. PPCC and its constituent representatives and organizations know many of the Palisades nonprofit recipients listed on the FireAid site (fireaidla.org) and we've worked alongside several of them. Their contributions are real, and measurable.

We also appreciate that FireAid is taking accountability seriously. The families who generously stood behind and created FireAid chose to have a third party audit conducted by KPMG to provide an additional level of assurance to donors and fire survivors and engaged the Latham & Watkins law

firm to review FireAid's governance and grantmaking practices. This level of scrutiny is welcomed and needed, and it helps ensure that donations are used with integrity, in alignment with the mission, and with full transparency.

We acknowledge that PPCC has received a grant from FireAid. After calling for scrutiny of fund disbursements and accountability, we realize that misinformation online has increased, particularly around the use of FireAid funds. It's understandable, as disaster leaves people in a state of loss, anger and uncertainty. As a community organization, PPCC believes it has a responsibility to counter false or incomplete narratives with emerging facts. That includes recognizing when the people who *could* help actually *did*. FireAid was, as the *Los Angeles Times* reported after its own independent investigation, "an urgent lifeline in the worst of the disaster and beyond."

There is still much to do. Recovery is a long, slow path, and PPCC continues to advocate for the public funding our community (and region) deserves, from federal programs, as well as state and local government funding sources. In the interim, we want to say clearly and publicly: we are grateful for the role philanthropy has played, and we hope donors continue to stand with our fire-devastated community as we rebuild — together. PPCC stands ready to work with all private philanthropical organizations like FireAid (and its grant recipients) and all public officials to accomplish the restoration and improved fire-readiness of our beloved Pacific Palisades.

As Angelenos, we stand with our fellow communities impacted by the terrible January fires and appreciate the role that FireAid has played to alleviate the devastation. We are grateful to all the musicians and donors who made it possible, and all those who continue to support us in our recovery.

Sincerely,

Pacific Palisades Community Council Executive Committee

Sue Kohl, President, Quentin Fleming, Vice-President, Jenny Li, Treasurer, Beth Holden-Garland, Secretary, Maryam Zar, Chair Emeritus, Christina Spitz, Elected Representative (At-large), John Padden, Organizational Representative (P.R.I.D.E.)

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