February 6, 2020

More than a month has passed since the Christmas morning fire at the Francis Drake Hotel and our community is still feeling the loss. While those impacted seek a path forward, People Serving People is working to support survivors and ongoing community efforts in any way we can.

In the immediate aftermath of the fire, People Serving People began to shelter impacted families and offered services and material support to the children and families staying in the Red Cross Disaster Center. Our staff also worked tirelessly to prepare People Serving People's shelter to welcome additional families and begin overflow operations if necessary.

Today, with support from Hennepin County, a significant number of families impacted by the fire are staying at our Minneapolis shelter. Additionally, People Serving People staff is providing outreach and support services to families who are staying in hotels across the county. We're offering direct financial support, resource connection, systems navigation, employment services, and further supports to the families impacted. We are grateful for the financial support of our donors and partners that have made that work possible. I'm proud of our staff's steadfast efforts and dedication to our families.

The Drake Hotel fire sheds light on the deeper issues of homelessness and lack of affordable housing in our state. Our community has united with great urgency to support those impacted by this tragedy. Going forward we hope to harness that same intensity in our everyday battle to end homelessness for children and families in Minnesota.

Thank you for supporting our community.
Daniel Gumit | CEO
December 27, 2019

The People Serving People community is saddened by Wednesday's fire at the Francis Drake Hotel and our hearts are with those impacted. We are grateful for the first responders and the people and organizations on the ground providing support and shelter to families that are now further displaced.

People Serving People has a long history with the Drake Hotel. During our early years, People Serving People operated from the Drake before relocating to our current shelter in 2002. Since then, when our shelter was at capacity, the Drake served as overflow shelter for families experiencing homelessness in Hennepin County. Many People Serving People guests have stayed at the Drake and have friends or family who were affected by the fire. It's a difficult loss for people with low incomes in our community. Minneapolis already struggles with a shortage of low-income housing units and shelter space.

The American Red Cross is leading the short-term crisis response over the next 3-5 days, providing food, shelter, supplies, emotional support and other assistance.

People Serving People is currently working to lend support. We’ve provided supplies and resources to help kids stay engaged in activities at the temporary shelter at Bethlehem Baptist Church. We’ve welcomed impacted families for meals and materials in the last few days, and our Family Support Services staff is available to assist with systems navigation and resource connection.

For people in the community looking to provide immediate support and assistance, consider a donation to the Minneapolis Foundation’s Minnesota Helps Fund or by texting “Drakefire” to 243725. The fund was set up to support the individuals and families directly impacted by the fire at the Drake.

In the weeks ahead, these and other families experiencing homelessness will continue to need your support as the crisis response dies down and the ongoing challenge of family homelessness persists. We’re working closely with the county, city, and state as well as our partner organizations to prepare to welcome more families. As the Drake is no longer available for overflow, we are preparing to provide overflow space at our shelter if called upon to do so. As always, we will work to provide support with dignity to those we serve.

We thank you for your support of families in our community.
Daniel Gumrit | CEO