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New Fund Helps Pocono Hospitality & Restaurant Workers

Nearly \$70k raised so far, hundreds will receive assistance

December 15, 2020 – At a press conference this morning, [Pocono Mountains United Way](#) introduced its newly established [Hospitality & Restaurant Worker Relief Fund](#). The goal is to financially support hospitality and restaurant employees across the four-county Pocono region who are out of work due to [Pennsylvania's new COVID-19 restrictions](#), which took effect December 12, 2020.

United Way and chamber of commerce organizations throughout the Pocono Mountains are assisting with this initiative. The following entities have donated to the fund so far:

- Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau - \$50,000
- The Mattioli Foundation - \$5,000
- United Way of Lackawanna and Wayne Counties - \$5,000
- ESSA Bank & Trust - \$5,000
- Karl & Ann Weiler - \$3,000

“For the past ten months, hospitality and restaurant workers have increased their health and safety protocols while navigating the uncertainty of employment and the stressors of everyday living in a pandemic,” said Michael Tukeva, Pocono Mountains United Way President/CEO. “These individuals continue to show up. They smile while their hearts break. They offer discounts on their most prized dishes just to put bread on their own plates. Now, they need our help more than ever.”

As an offshoot of Pocono Mountains United Way’s Crisis Response Fund, 100% of all donations will be utilized in the form of direct mini-grants to workers. Hospitality and restaurant employees across the Pocono Mountains can [apply online](#) for financial assistance. The application requires basic demographic information as well as a 2019 Tax Return and most recent paystub to determine income eligibility and verify recent employment. Applications will be approved on a first come first serve basis and mini-grants of \$250 will be issued until funds are depleted.

In order to help as many people as possible, [online contributions](#) to the Hospitality & Restaurant Worker Relief Fund are greatly appreciated. Or, donors can mail contributions to Pocono Mountains United Way 301 McConnell Street Stroudsburg, PA 18360 and include "Hospitality & Restaurant Worker Relief Fund" in the memo.

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About the Pocono Mountains

With 2,400 square miles encompassing Pennsylvania's Wayne, Pike, Monroe, and Carbon counties, the Pocono Mountains region is home to rolling mountain terrain, breathtakingly beautiful waterfalls, thriving woodlands and 170 miles of winding rivers. Winters offer guests the opportunity to ski, snowboard, snow tube and even snowshoe their way through snowy wonderlands encompassing more than 163 ski trails, while summers also cater to the active traveler allowing exploration of 261 miles of hiking and biking trails, more than 30 golf courses, whitewater rafting, boating, fishing and open access to nine state and two national parks.