

January 25, 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Gray Area Foundation for the Arts' Oakland Fire Relief, Recovery, and Resiliency Fund
Announces First Phase of Allocations and Criteria For Donations Gathered in the Wake of
Ghostship Tragedy**

To date the funds collected through YouCaring.com amount to \$890,899 from 11,827 donors

San Francisco, CA— The first phase of allocations for the [Gray Area Foundation for the Arts' Fund](#)—set up as an immediate response to the Ghostship tragedy—have been reviewed by a research committee and program managers and approved by the Gray Area Board of Directors. As of January 25, 2017, 136 intake forms have been qualified. Documentation will be requested, and funds will be dispersed immediately upon receipt of qualification documentation.

To fully allocate the second phase of funds, Gray Area still needs those who may qualify to submit the required intake form. The form has been available since December 7, 2016, via the foundation's site at <http://grayarea.org/initiative/fire-relief-fund/>. The deadline to complete an intake form has been established as March 7, 2017 (90 days from the publishing date).

From now through the deadline, intake forms are continuously vetted by the fund's program managers, and the vetted claimants will be asked to provide additional documentation so their allocation can be processed as quickly as possible. Of the 400+ forms already received, many have been fraudulent and have slowed down the process immensely.

Gray Area received the officially vetted list of victims and their contact information 30 days after the fire, on January 2, and a discussion with the Red Cross took place on January 10. Upon receiving that critical information, we were able to ensure our data are cross-checked with official documents and responsible agencies, such as the City of Oakland and the Red Cross. Dependent on information from these agencies, Gray Area's formal plans were delayed over a month, as key documents needed to cross reference claims were not made available during this period. Now that these documents are in hand, the allocations will begin.

Gray Area has set out to address the needs of victims as well as, importantly, the needs of those who may not be identified under initial relief efforts that serve only next of kin and those displaced by and injured in the fire. Details on how the funds will be allocated are below. It is important to note that YouCaring's payment processor, WePay, takes a credit card processing fee of roughly 4.7% which must be deducted from the total amount shown on the crowdfunding page at <http://youcaring.com/oaklandfirefund>. This leaves a total of \$848,344 to be distributed in this first phase.

Relief

The Relief allocation includes funding for victims injured in the fire, the biological families of deceased victims, and displaced residents of the warehouse. These are the exact categories developed by the Red Cross in partnership with the Oakland A's Fund.

- Injured fire victims: Claimants who were injured the night of the event and received hospitalization and/or medical treatment.
- Families of deceased victims: One claim per family will be accepted in this category. In the case of conflicting or multiple claims submitted for a deceased victim, we require families of the victims to resolve all issues which may exist with regard to who the person legally responsible for administering the estate of the deceased is and therefore identify who is eligible to file the claim.
- Displaced: Residents of the Ghostship warehouse who were displaced by the fire and are not party to a lawsuit related to fault of the fire.

Recovery

Recovery allocation includes support for survivors of the fire and non-biological relationships that are considered family, such as life partners (who may have not been legally married) and relationships considered to be next of kin that may not be typically recognized by relief efforts.

- Survivors: Claimants who were physically present inside the Ghost Ship at the time of the fire and did not suffer physical injury requiring medical treatment but have suffered mental hardship, causing lost time at work. Claimants must not be party to a lawsuit in which they may be named at fault of the fire.
- Family Tree: Designed to recognize, support, and help those that are not legally connected to the victims but are experiencing emotional and financial hardship. Those eligible include significant others, roommates, business/artistic partners, family members who are not next of kin who can prove they incurred financial expenses, and friends of family who can prove they incurred financial expenses.

Resiliency

Through our casework, many families have declined financial support and requested that funds be allocated towards Resiliency programs designed for long-term impact and community renewal. This project will unfold in a third phase and will be informed by our current responsibilities along with community outreach following the allocation and disbursement process. Gray Area is committed to serving our community in 2017 and beyond, whether through supporting education, legislation, or providing the means necessary to create safe spaces.

About Gray Area's Fire Relief, Recovery, and Resiliency Fund for Oakland Fire

On Friday, December 2 at approximately 11:30 p.m. at 1305 31st Ave, Oakland, CA, 94601, a tragic fire took 36 lives and sparked a nationwide dialogue around warehouse spaces. On Saturday, December 3 at approximately 10:00 a.m., Gray Area Foundation for the Arts launched a YouCaring.com campaign as an immediate response to help those affected by the tragedy. As the story unfolded in the days and weeks that followed, a more detailed picture of the impact of the tragedy came to light.

[Gray Area Foundation for the Arts](#), a 501(c)(3) non-profit that has been involved in the greater Bay Area artist community for the last 10 years, has deep and personal connections with many of the presumed victims and community impacted in the tragedy. Gray Area is continuing to collect funds online and in partnership with foundations, businesses, and individuals. The fund will be managed to ensure relief of the victims' families, recovery of our extended community, and a resiliency effort to help ensure this doesn't happen again. To get involved, you can donate and volunteer, [here](#).

For additional inquiries please email oaklandrelief@grayarea.org or call 415.746.9767