

# NEWS RELEASE

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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## **Greater Houston COVID-19 Recovery Fund Grows to \$16.8 Million as Region's Most Vulnerable Continue to Struggle to Meet Basic Needs**

*Well-known businessman, Charles Butt, contributes \$750,000 to support those in need*

**HOUSTON, TX** (June 18, 2020) – As the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect the area's most vulnerable families and individuals, the Greater Houston COVID-19 Recovery Fund has grown to \$16.8 million thanks to the generous gifts of foundations, corporations and individuals.

H-E-B chairman and CEO Charles Butt made a personal contribution of \$750,000 to the fund, with \$250,000 of the gift designated to support the work of the 211 Texas/United Way HELPLINE. Since March, more than 100,000 COVID-19-related calls have been answered by the helpline's call specialists from those seeking assistance with basics such as rent, utilities and access to food. Other recent gifts include \$100,000 gift from Macquarie Group and a gift of \$68,445 that resulted from contributions received during the NFL Draft-a-Thon fundraiser. The recovery fund continues to receive gifts of varying sizes from Houstonians concerned about the plight of their neighbors.

The [Greater Houston COVID-19 Recovery Fund](#) is a joint effort by United Way of Greater Houston and the Greater Houston Community Foundation to provide help for those facing the most severe challenges from the unforeseen economic crisis created by COVID-19. As the pandemic continues to limit access to work and wages, the lack of resources to obtain basic needs, including food, shelter and other human necessities, continues to distress the most vulnerable in our community. More information on how to make a gift and how funds are used in the local community is available at [GreaterHoustonRecovery.org](#).

To date, the fund has invested \$10.5 million in more than 90 trusted nonprofit partners and grassroots organizations that support food insecure households, those who need emergency financial assistance for basic needs and housing, domestic violence survivors, and the homeless population. The fund task force continues to monitor data and assess needs to prepare its next round of investments. Funding decisions are made in concert with the most current data identifying those disproportionately impacted by the pandemic based on the number of COVID-19 cases, unemployment insurance claims and pre-existing poverty conditions. The fund serves Harris, Fort Bend, Montgomery and Waller counties.

"Without assistance from the recovery fund, I wouldn't have been able to afford living in my apartment during the two-week period I was out of work due to COVID-19," said Dale Koliba, who works as a receptionist at The Center for Pursuit. "I'm so appreciative to everyone who has supported the fund to help those in need until we can get back on our feet."

Those who need assistance are encouraged to call the 211 Texas/United Way HELPLINE, the community's key 24/7 information source during times of disaster. United Way's 211 provides callers with the most updated information on assistance with utilities, food, housing or rent, crisis counseling, senior services, and more. Assistance through 211 can also be accessed through the following methods in the event of long wait times due to periods of heavy call volume:

- Visit [211texas.org](http://211texas.org) to search resources online or chat online with a specialist

- Email [help@unitedwayhouston.org](mailto:help@unitedwayhouston.org) for assistance

To give to the Greater Houston COVID-19 Recovery Fund visit [www.GreaterHoustonRecovery.org](http://www.GreaterHoustonRecovery.org) or Text “WEHELP” to 41444.

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### **About United Way of Greater Houston**

For nearly 100 years, United Way of Greater Houston has brought together diverse partners and approaches to address the complex challenges holding people back. We are a driving force for good that connects our neighbors with opportunities to thrive. We help our neighbors achieve financial stability. We provide services that support the physical and behavioral health of families and youth along with educational services that expand their skills and horizons. We provide a safety net that catches the most vulnerable. We manage every donation with care to make the greatest impact across the four-county region of Fort Bend, Harris, Montgomery and Waller counties. We connect neighbors with help 24/7 through our 211 Texas/United Way HELPLINE. For more information, please visit, [www.unitedwayhouston.org](http://www.unitedwayhouston.org).

### **About Greater Houston Community Foundation**

Greater Houston Community Foundation, one of Houston’s largest grant makers and leaders in philanthropic impact, has served the greater Houston community for 25 years. The organization supports high profile community and donor initiatives with the most comprehensive philanthropic resources, expertise, and innovative platforms. Greater Houston Community Foundation is widely considered the go-to partner for high-profile philanthropic partnerships in the Greater Houston area, including major disaster relief initiatives, such as the Hurricane Harvey Relief Fund as well as Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund. Greater Houston Community Foundation leads collaborations that support the wellbeing and vitality of Houston, including Understanding Houston, in partnership with Rice Kinder Institute. The Foundation provides individuals, families, corporations, foundations, and advisors with the ability to expand their philanthropic impact. For more information, please visit, [www.ghcf.org](http://www.ghcf.org).