

Fundraisers working for Wilsonville fire victims

by: Velen Jones

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WILSONVILLE, Ore. (KOIN) — Two weeks after an under-construction apartment complex went up in flames and took with it about 20 structures and a number of vehicles, Wilsonville community members are sticking together even among the uncertainty.

James Brown and Michael Bell's home in the Villebois neighborhood was damaged in the blaze. Since the fire on March 31, they've suffered breathing problems and went to the doctor for visits and tests multiple times.

"I'm having a hard time that we are having to face reality," Bell said. "Our deductible is so high because we really didn't plan on these things happening to us. For us, we need to look after ourselves first. We need to be in good health in order for us to move forward."

He's thankful for people like Chanelle Walters, who owns Lux Sucre deserts. She's part of a group that deposited \$12,000 from fundraising events.

"Getting it deposited and knowing that it is going to start going out to the families this weekend is a huge relief, both for us as a business and really wanting to do the best we can but also for the families knowing that they are finally going to start seeing our efforts come through," Walters told KOIN 6 News.

That urgency was at the top of council member Ben West's mind when he made this GoFundMe page that's already raised \$15,000. West is leading efforts with a newly appointed board to distribute the donated money by Sunday.

"We created a simple, simple application process and now those applications are coming in and we have the ability to meet people's needs right now, where it is at shortly after the devastating fire," West said.

The amount of money will be determined based on need and income.

Even after the rubble has cleared, West hopes to develop the fund for future needs of the community.

"We already know that things will arise and we want to make sure we are watching out for each other, loving our neighbor and doing the best we can to take care of one another," West said.

There are other fundraising events planned.

On April 23, a concert with Whiskey Derby at the McMenamins Wilsonville Old Church & Pub, 30340 SW Boones Ferry Road. Half of all sales will go to the relief fund.

On May 9, another fundraiser is set at the Wilsonville Rotary Club, 25100 SW Parkway.