



Press Release

December 11, 2018

*** Video from today's press conference can be found at:

<https://www.facebook.com/ColoradoAttorneyGeneral/videos/377325203012636/>

New Colorado Non-Profit to Help Victims of Mass Tragedy

Attorney General Cynthia H. Coffman, Lt. Governor Donna Lynne and Former Columbine High School Principal Frank DeAngelis announced launch of Colorado Healing Fund

DENVER- Colorado now has a non-profit dedicated solely to helping victims of mass tragedy crime. The Colorado Healing Fund (CHF) is a new 501(c)(3) non-profit organization founded by a group of community leaders and victim advocates. It establishes a safe, secure way for the public to give monetary donations to support victims and their families after a mass casualty crime in Colorado. Initial seed funding of \$1M was provided by the Colorado Attorney General's Office under the leadership of Attorney General Cynthia H. Coffman.

The mission of CHF is to provide financial assistance that meets both immediate and long-term needs not otherwise met for victims, survivors, families and communities affected by a mass tragedy event in Colorado. Both year-round and in the aftermath of a mass tragedy crime, CHF will serve as a trusted point for the collection of public donations. CHF will work in conjunction with community partners, other non-profit organizations, government agencies and law enforcement to determine the needs of victims and coordinate the appropriate disbursement of resources and assistance to them.

CHF is governed by a volunteer Board of Trustees that represents a wide range of communities and geographic areas within Colorado. CHF is also supported by an Advisory Committee comprised of experts in victim advocacy and assistance. The Board of Trustees includes: Attorney General Cynthia H. Coffman, Lt. Governor Donna Lynne, Bernie Buescher, James Davis, Frank DeAngelis, Retired Major General Michael Edwards, Robin Finegan, Dorit Makovsky Fischer, Dr. Tony Frank, L. Roger Hutson and Steven Siegel. <http://www.coloradohealingfund.org/governance/>

In the aftermath of a mass tragedy, many people want to help, and word can quickly spread through social media about ways to give. Unfortunately, this creates an opportunity for scams and fraud. After a crisis, scammers can come out of the woodwork and will attempt to use times of tragedy to line their own pockets.

"It's impossible to predict when a tragedy will happen," said Attorney General Coffman. "It's not something we want to think about. But because Colorado has been at the center of mass violence before, we must be prepared to take care of victims. We hope we never have to use the Colorado Healing Fund to respond to a tragedy, but we owe it to Coloradans to

use what we have learned from previous tragedies to ensure that in the future, we do all we can to support victims. I've seen money from good-hearted people land in the hands of scammers who take advantage of tragic circumstances rather than help those who desperately need it. That's why my office seeded the Fund with one million dollars. The CHF will provide a safe way for Coloradans to donate confidently now and in the event of a mass tragedy crime, and ensure that their money goes to help victims, survivors and their families."

The CHF is committed to working with other public and private agencies and organizations that respond to mass-casualty events.

"In the midst of a crisis, there are many different law enforcement agencies, first responders, government offices, and victim services organizations that respond immediately," said Lt. Governor Donna Lynne. "The Colorado Healing Fund will be partnering with those agencies and organizations to ensure that the generosity of Coloradans who donate will not be duplicative of work already being done, but can fill the gaps where resources are needed for victims, survivors, families and communities. We want to make sure that nothing falls through the cracks when it comes to supporting Coloradans in crisis."

During times other than an active crisis, CHF will conduct and support crisis management trainings for law enforcement, first responders and other stakeholders throughout Colorado to help them prepare to respond to, and protect Coloradans from, incidents of criminal mass tragedy.

"When tragic events happen that lean heavily on community resources, victims and survivors need both immediate and long-term help," said Frank DeAngelis, former Principal of Columbine High School. "The generosity and support of the community magnifies and multiplies us, giving us the capacity to do those things that need to be done but which we cannot do alone. It isn't just the days and weeks after an event when survivors need help, the impacts are felt for years to come. As I stated after the 1999 Columbine Tragedy, 'it is a marathon and not a sprint'. I am thankful that the Colorado Healing Fund will provide an additional level of support for survivors. "

Donations to the Colorado Healing Fund can be made online at www.ColoradoHealingFund.org. Checks and in-person donations will also be accepted at Colorado-based FirstBank (1STBank) locations.

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