



# 2016 Alberta Fires

Three Year Donor Update



**Dear Supporters,**

It's been three years since the disastrous wildfires in the Wood Buffalo region forced 80,000 people to evacuate their homes and face the challenges of what would come next.

We know that recovering from disaster can take months and years, much of it spent coping with emotional stress and uncertainty, navigating obstacles, and making difficult decisions. But we also know that with the right support, individuals and families can overcome these challenges and get their lives back on track.

**Your generosity has been that support for the people of Fort McMurray and its surrounding area.**

Thanks to you and many Canadians like you, the Red Cross has been present in the region since day one, working hard to make sure everyone is supported until the very end of their own road to recovery.

Your help has meant rebuilding hope. Over the last three years, you've helped people rebuild their lives and their livelihoods, provided support for community recovery projects and partnerships, and ensured that families and communities are better prepared to deal with future disaster.

In this report, you will see how your donation was used and what it has accomplished in three years. Whether for small business owners, young families, workers, or community groups – you can be incredibly proud of the difference your generosity has made and continues to make today.

On behalf of the Red Cross, *thank you.*

Sincerely,

Conrad Sauvé  
President & CEO

# Three years later: Together, here's what we have made possible

## EARLY ASSISTANCE



**2,500+ cots, 3,000+ blankets and 2,800+ hygiene kits** to support 8 evacuation shelters in Edmonton, Calgary and Lac La Biche.



**\$73 million in immediate financial assistance** distributed to help people buy food, water, clothing, gas and other essentials.



**13 call centres** set up, taking **147,000+ calls** to assist evacuated people in registering and accessing assistance.



**10,900 plane and bus tickets booked** to help people return home as well as **37,000+ clean-up kits** distributed to returning residents.



**65,000 families registered** to receive support from the Red Cross.

## CONTINUED SUPPORT



**More than 16,000 families received recovery assistance**, including assistance with rent, mortgage, utilities, household goods, repair and reconstruction support, as well as referrals to other community resources. After three years, more than **575 families** continue to need assistance with their recovery.



**1,950 families received interim lodging** in Fort McMurray, Edmonton, Calgary, Red Deer, and other communities across Alberta.



**More than 130,000 electronic fund transfers** have provided direct financial assistance to help residents meet their individual needs.

## INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY RECOVERY



**3,296 eligible small businesses have received financial assistance.** This support has helped cover uninsured losses; rental of business equipment or vehicles to temporarily replace lost or damaged ones; clean-up and minor repairs including debris removal and bin rental; moving costs; and storage fees.



**Over 6,650 people attended recovery events** led by Indigenous communities and supported by Canadian Red Cross.



**10,000+ individuals supported** through mental health and psychosocial support programming. **More than 100 people** continue to receive trauma counselling supported by Canadian Red Cross.



**More than 120 partnerships** with community organizations (completed and ongoing) to help provide services to assist people and the entire community with recovery from the wildfire. This includes **21 partnerships with Indigenous organizations** working to enhance culturally-appropriate support structures and programs to help address emerging recovery needs and priorities.

# Your generosity is a fresh start for spring



**When Karen Goldie planted petunias beside her home in Fort McMurray this spring, she finally felt at peace after three years of upheaval and heartbreak.**

"I love petunias because they smell nice but they're also really tough because they have to be to live up here, just like me," she says with a laugh. "You know I couldn't joke like that until recently."

Goldie and her husband, Troy Webb, and son, Mitchell, lost almost everything after the wildfires swept through their community at Centennial RV Park, and destroyed their brand-new fifth-wheel trailer home. Even though they both had steady jobs and insurance, the recovery costs and emotional impact quickly overwhelmed them.

"I know people don't always understand how difficult, expensive, and long recovery can be. But there's so much to it, along with the trauma and memories," she says.

"You can't really explain what we went through and how it feels to drive through 50-foot flames and know that's all your stuff being destroyed."

It was also hard to finally ask for help, she recalls. "We did try to go it alone after the fires. And I would just love Canadians to know that we are an average middle-

"We're feeling good, but it's still a really emotional thing, probably always will be. I get teary-eyed when I even think about the amount of support and generosity that Troy and I received."

class family and we would not have made it without the support we got from Red Cross. There were times I thought we would just throw in the towel... There are no words to express our gratitude for the generosity of Canadians."

After the fires, they received a range of support, including help with a damage deposit, furniture, food, and many other basic living expenses. They rented a town house for two years, but never felt settled and secure until the fall of 2018, when they worked out a plan to buy their own place – an older mobile home which they're renovating.

"We were in rough shape before. It's taken three years but we're still here and doing so much better," she says.

"We're feeling good, but it's still a really emotional thing, probably always will be. I get teary-eyed when I even think about the amount of support and generosity that Troy and I received."

"But it's like we can finally see the rainbow after the storm."

*Thank you for your support of thousands of families like Karen's.*

# Supporting kids with emotional recovery through play



"You are giving them stability that they may not have had since the fire or even before the fire."

**Meryl Makinson enjoys playing around at work, especially since it's her job to help children access sports that encourage their emotional wellness.**

Makinson is executive director of KidSport Wood Buffalo, one of the many organizations and initiatives funded by the Canadian Red Cross that support people's emotional health and recovery after the fires in 2016.

The Wood Buffalo region is still healing, and Makinson says organized play is one way for children to manage lingering emotions and anxiety. "You are giving them stability that they may not have had since the fire or even before the fire."

As part of her role, Makinson enjoys leading an all-girls basketball team on the court. The girls clearly appreciate it, as they beam from ear to ear during their practice.

During a recent campaign to boost self-esteem and confidence, the girls also proudly displayed posters such as: "I am making new friends," and "I am sharing my culture." KidSport understands the importance of maintaining emotional wellness, she says.

"It's beyond even just seeing a smile on their face when they're playing the sport. It's knowing that it's helping their mental health beyond just being on the basketball court for one hour. They're getting out and being active. That is a form of stress relief, but then, knowing that they're creating a community of friends that they can talk to, that they can rely on – it's more in-depth than the kids just having fun," she explains.

Thanks to the generosity of Canadians like you, Red Cross support helped enable KidSport to fund access to sports for 788 children over the past two years.

Makinson says the experience is a rewarding one and admits the most enjoyable part of her job is just watching the kids play.

# Your generosity at work

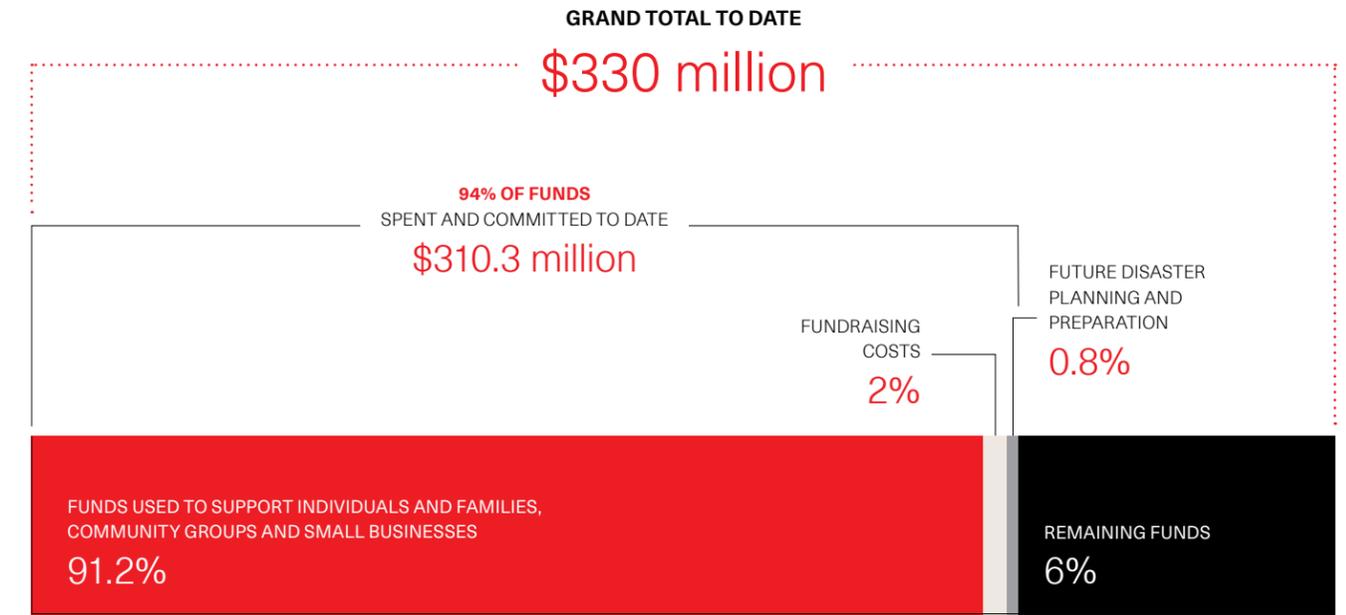
## Financial Update

To date, **\$310.3 million, which represents 94 per cent of funds received, has been spent or committed.** The Red Cross thanks generous individuals, governments, community groups and corporate partners who donated an unprecedented amount of funds in support of people impacted by the Alberta Fires. Together, we continue to have a lasting impact on individuals, families and the entire community as they recover.

### GRAND TOTAL OF FUNDS TO DATE

**\$330 Million**

This includes the initial matching funds of \$104 Million thanks to the Government of Canada and \$30 Million thanks to the Government of Alberta. In addition, this amount also includes \$2 Million each from the Government of Alberta and the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo to assist with interim housing support for people who are still not back in their primary home after the fire.



### BREAKDOWN OF FUNDS

TO SUPPORT:		ALLOCATED TO DATE	SPENT OR COMMITTED TO DATE
<b>INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES</b>	Providing help such as immediate supplies and shelter; direct financial assistance during the evacuation and throughout recovery to cover costs associated with urgent needs, transportation home, replacement of household goods, and assistance to help pay for rent, mortgage and utilities; repair and reconstruction of uninsured homes; emotional support to address the psychological well-being of people affected by the fires; and, projects to support and enhance community resiliency.	\$238.6 Million	\$220 Million
<b>COMMUNITY GROUPS</b>	The Canadian Red Cross is pleased to report the money allocated in support of community groups has been fully spent or committed. Funds have been dedicated to community organizations that are helping to meet recovery needs in the Wood Buffalo region. Further information regarding Red Cross funding for community organizations can be found online by visiting: <a href="http://www.redcross.ca/CommunityPartnerships">www.redcross.ca/CommunityPartnerships</a>	\$52 Million	\$52 Million
<b>ELIGIBLE SMALL BUSINESSES</b>	This financial support has helped cover costs such as the replacement of essential items including business tools and equipment; assistance with clean-up expenses; moving or storage; professional cleaning; small repairs; help with overdue utility bills; lease payments; and, short-term lease of business equipment or vehicles. Businesses that received assistance included: corporations (franchise and not franchised); individual/sole proprietorships; partnerships; and, other business entities. To further support eligible small businesses, the Red Cross continues to collaborate with the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo Economic Development and other community partners to explore learning and development opportunities for small business owners in the region.	\$30 Million	\$29.1 Million
<b>FUTURE DISASTER PLANNING AND PREPARATION</b>		\$2.8 Million	\$2.8 Million
<b>FUNDRAISING COSTS</b>		\$6.6 Million	\$6.4 Million
		<b>SPENT OR COMMITTED</b>	<b>\$310.3 Million</b>

### UNDERSTANDING THE NUMBERS

**Allocation of funds to date:** This is the projected budget across each area of spending for the grand total including the government funds (\$330 million). The allocations reflect the needs of the people and the community that have been identified to date. Many needs emerge over time and the above allocation amounts may be adjusted accordingly.

**Spent and committed to date:** These are the funds that have been already spent to assist those impacted by the fires, as well as funds that have been committed with signed contracts or agreements for recovery projects or initiatives.

**Future disaster planning and preparation:** These are the funds that ensure the Red Cross is ready and prepared to respond to future disasters in Canada. This means having pre-positioned stock, emergency supplies, and trained volunteers across the country that are ready to be deployed in their own communities or elsewhere in Canada when the next disaster strikes.

**Fundraising costs:** In the graph above, 2% represents the spent and committed fundraising costs in relation to the grand total of funds received. Fundraising costs are not applied to funds received from the government. Fundraising costs are only applicable to funds that are donated (\$189M) and will not exceed five per cent of the total donated funds for this appeal. These costs may include donation processing fees; credit card and bank fees; service fees for call centres and digital platforms; and, ongoing communications and reporting to donors.

“... we would not have made it without the support we got from Red Cross... There are no words to express our gratitude for the generosity of Canadians.”

**Karen Goldie**, Fort McMurray resident

