

GoFundMe announces fundraisers to assist Buffalo mass shooting victims

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Editor-in-Chief

In the wake of Saturday's mass shooting at the Tops Friendly Markets store on Buffalo's east side, GoFundMe officials announced the launch of a number of verified fundraisers this week to assist the victims.

"Our hearts go out to everyone impacted by Saturday's mass shooting at Tops Friendly Market in Buffalo. At GoFundMe, we are working to ensure the victims and their families receive the support they need during this difficult time," said Meghan Kee of GoFundMe.

She said that, immediately following news of the shooting, GoFundMe mobilized a crisis team and began monitoring the platform for fundraisers created to help individuals and families.

"GoFundMe has a dedicated trust and safety team reviewing fundraisers related to this tragedy," Kee said. "When a fundraiser is created to help another person or family, we safely hold all funds raised until the recipient is added to the fundraiser to withdraw and their identity has been confirmed or, we know the identity of the organizer, who they are raising funds for, the organizer's relationship to the recipient of the funds, and how the funds will be used. That's just one of the many ways we secure the platform and make sure the money quickly gets to the right party."

To assist the community, GoFundMe said it launched a centralized hub to identify all verified fundraisers. Accessed online at <https://www.gofundme.com/c/act/buffalo-mass-shooting-fundraisers>, the hub will be regularly updated as new fundraisers are verified by the trust and safety team.

Verified fundraiser sites include:
 ✓ <https://www.gofundme.com/f/the-families-of-the-buffalo-shooting>
 ✓ <https://www.gofundme.com/f/buffalo-memorial>
 ✓ <https://www.gofundme.com/f/buffalo-mass-shooting-help-the-families-fund>, and
 ✓ <https://www.gofundme.com/f/donate-to-the-victims-on-gofundme>.

GoFundMe also reported Tops Friendly Markets has teamed with the National Compassion Fund to assist the shooting victims and survivors, with \$500,000 pledged by Tops toward a \$1 million goal.

"In partnership with Tops, the National Compassion Fund has established the Buffalo 5/14 Survivors Fund to provide direct financial assistance to the survivors of the deceased and those directly affected by this tragedy. One hundred percent of the contributions donated to this fund will go directly to victims and survivors of this atrocity," according to a statement by the National Compassion Fund.

To assist, visit <https://www.gofundme.com/f/buffalo-survivors-fund>.

And as community interest continues to grow, GoFundMe announced six additional fundraisers. All sites are verified and include:

•The Aaron Salter Jr. fundraiser, organized by Aaron Salter III, the son of victim Aaron Salter Jr. "He gave his life to try and subdue the suspect that targeted a lo-

cal Tops for no reason and killed in cold blood. Please donate in this tragic time to help the family with this unforeseen tragedy," Salter said.

For more information, visit <https://gf.me/v/c/gfm/aaron-salter-jr-fundraiser>.

•The Mass Shooting in Buffalo, New York fundraiser, by Cher Desi, daughter of victim Ruth Whitfield, to cover traveling and lodging expenses.

"My family, along with all the other families involved, are devastated by the racist gun violence that took the lives of our loved ones. God bless," Desi said.

For more information, visit <https://gf.me/v/c/gfm/mass-shooting-in-buffalo-new-york>.

•The Tops Mass Shooting Victims, Buffalo NY fundraiser, by Fallon Simpson, on behalf of survivors Lamont Thomas and Julie Harwell, along with their 8-year-old daughter, Londin Thomas. The three visited the Tops store to purchase food for a birthday party on the day of the incident.

"Saturday, May 14, was not a typical day for this family," Simpson said. "Because of witnessing senseless and evil crimes, they're experiencing extreme mental battles added to the stress of already being homeless and struggling to survive. Lamont and Julie have been staying with family since Saturday. Londin, only 8, will remember this for the rest of her life."

For more information, visit <https://gf.me/v/c/gfm/tops-mass-shooting-surviving-victims-buffalo-ny>.

•The Help for Tracy and AJ fundraiser, by Kim Netti, on behalf of her cousin, Tracey Maciulewicz, who lost her fiancé, Andre Mackniel. Andre was also the father of their 3-year-old son, AJ.

"Andre went to Tops grocery store to purchase a birthday cake for their son AJ," Netti said. "It was AJ's 3rd birthday on the same day his father was murdered. Now Tracey is left a single parent. She is paralyzed with the reality that her partner is gone. Paralyzed with the fear of what the future holds. Their son AJ is left to grow up without his father. He is left to associate every birthday for the remainder of his life with the murder of his father."

For more information, visit <https://gf.me/v/c/gfm/help-for-tracey-and-aj>.

•The Buffalo "Food Desert" Neighborhood Needs Our Help by five-year east side resident Jessica Bogumil on behalf of the FeedMore Foundation of WNY.

"This neighborhood, in particular, is known as a 'food desert,'" Bogumil wrote. "That means that this is the only grocery store within walking distance for the people who live there. Leaving them with little access to affordable and nutritious food. Many people in this area do not have their own vehicle, so driving to an alternative grocery store is not an option. This horrific tragedy has left this community without easy access to food."

For more information, visit <https://gf.me/v/c/gfm/buffalo-food-desert-neighborhood-needs-our-help>.

GoFundMe said donations to registered nonprofits, such as the FeedMore Foundation, are typically 100% tax-deductible in the U.S.

•The Community Support to Feed the East Side of Buffalo fundraiser, by local business owner and activist Phylcia Dove, on behalf of Feed Buffalo, an organization by Dove and area Black women that aims to transform food deserts into thriving communities.

According to the fundraiser, "All money raised will provide hot meals, food deliveries, nonperishable items, toiletries and other items per family. This initiative is multifaceted and one we hope to continue past this traumatic event and act as a continuum of support to the east side of Buffalo."

For more information, visit <https://gf.me/v/c/gfm/community-support-to-feed-the-east-side>.

GoFundMe said donations to the Community Support, a registered nonprofit, are likewise 100% tax-deductible.

The organization closed by stating all the above listed fundraisers have been verified on behalf of the victims, survivors, and their families and are considered legitimate.

"We guarantee the funds from these fundraisers will reach the families," GoFundMe said in its press release.

LEWISTON POLICE BLOTTER

Continued from Page 18

issued for Lewiston Town Court.

Saturday, May 14

•**4400 block of Autumn Lane, domestic disturbance** – Patrols on scene for a 911 call. No further information.

•**5300 block of Military Road, Mount St. Mary's Hospital, domestic disturbance** – Patrols on scene for a 911 call. No further information.

•**800 block of Center Street, assist public** – Caller to 911 reported dropping his keys down a sewer grate. Patrol removed the sewer grate, entered and removed the keys; the caller way happy and continued on their way home with the recovered keys.

•**800 block of Oriole Lane, domestic disturbance** – Patrols on scene for a 911 call; no further information.

•**Locations on Niagara Scenic Parkway/Ridge Road; 900 block of Center Street; 700 block of Center Street; Lewiston Road/Mountain View Drive; Lewiston/Creek roads; N. Eighth/Center streets; and Model City/Ridge roads, vehicle/traffic stops** – All calls officer initiated. Violations per stop included driver cited for speed in zone; patrols reported citing eight other drivers for texting violations. Uniform traffic tickets issued for Lewiston Town Court.

Sunday, May 15

•**800 block of James Drive,**

noise complaint – Caller reported hearing loud noises and requested area check. Patrol responded and located two individuals in a garage. Patrol cleared the scene.

•**700 block of Northridge Drive, accident hit run** – Patrol on scene, no further information. Report taken.

•**800 block of Mohawk Street, assist public -- Officer initiated call. Caller had found a World War II era grenade in the basement. Patrol responded and made arrangements for its safe removal; no further information. Report taken.**

•**4000 block of Creek Road, LPD station, assist public** – Caller to 911 listed as an Uber driver requested to speak with patrol; caller had two subjects in the vehicle and did not feel safe. Patrols assisted; no further information given.

•**5800 block of Kline Road, assist public** – Patrol said the homeowner had moved an outdoor fire pit onto a covered porch and it was starting a fire; assistance requested. Patrol advised the homeowner, stating it was not a good idea and homeowner continued.

•**200 block of S. Seventh Street, fire** – Caller to 911 reported seeing smoke; occupant of apartment evacuated. Patrol and fire responders on scene; no smoke or fire reported. Sage found burning in apartment.

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