More than $475,000 Raised for Chicagoland Nonprofits at the Insurance Industry Charitable Foundation’s Midwest Division Blazing the Trail Benefit

Chicago, IL (March 13, 2019) – The Insurance Industry Charitable Foundation (IICF), a nonprofit organization working with the insurance industry to help communities and enrich lives, today announced that over $475,000 was raised for the IICF Midwest Community Grants Program at its 8th annual Midwest Division Blazing the Trail Benefit, on March 7 at the Four Seasons Hotel in Chicago. More than 400 insurance professionals and industry supporters joined with representatives of local Chicagoland nonprofit and charitable organizations in celebration of the industry’s ongoing commitment to philanthropy and community.

Dino E. Robusto, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, CNA, served as the Chair of the 2019 IICF Blazing the Trail Benefit. “Though many of us are competitors by day, we are united in philanthropy. We work together on our personal and professional missions of making a difference in our communities. IICF has brought us together to celebrate this precious value we all share,” Robusto said.

The memorable evening also included an inspiring address by Dame Inga Beale, former Lloyd’s of London CEO and longtime advocate of industry philanthropic and diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Beale’s stellar philanthropic leadership led to her recognition as the 2019 IICF Trailblazer of the Year. In accepting the award, Beale stressed the importance of inclusion and giving back, sharing that “There is nothing more important than giving opportunities to others. Each and every one of us can play our part, and my wish for all of you is to play your part and we can make the world a much better place when we include everyone - wherever they come from, whatever their background is, because they all add value.”

One of the night’s featured nonprofits was The Wood Family Foundation’s Pitch in Program, founded by Chicago Cubs legend Kerry Wood and his wife, Sarah. This program is an after-school model that employs high-quality mentoring relationships and exposure to unique experiences to ensure that 4th - 8th grade students develop the academic and social-emotional skills and mindsets necessary to transition to high school successfully. Kerry and Sarah Wood shared their thoughts on giving back to local communities through an on-stage discussion with Chicago’s own, news anchor Rob Johnson of CBS 2, who also served as the Blazing the Trail emcee for the fourth consecutive year.

Proceeds raised by the Blazing the Trail event will directly benefit the IICF Midwest Division’s Community Grants Program, which helps support nonprofit organizations focused in the areas of health, education and safety. This year’s proceeds will fund grants to 12 local nonprofits addressing vital needs in underserved communities including:

- Assistance League of Southeastern Michigan
- Bridge Communities
- Chicago Lights
- Chicago Home + Aid
- Children’s Oncology Services – Camp One Step
- DuPage Pads
Since the founding of the Midwest Division, IICF has awarded more than $2.6 million in local community grants in Chicagoland and throughout the Midwest and has contributed more than 26,000 volunteer hours. This year an additional $22,000 was pledged by attendees of the Blazing the Trail Benefit through its text-to-give option.

“Each year we are thrilled by the generosity of our colleagues in the Midwest insurance community as they come together in support of so many impressive nonprofit and charitable organizations,” said Sabrina Hart, Chair, IICF Midwest Division Board of Directors and Executive Vice President, Zurich. “Helping people and companies in their time of need is what insurance is all about, and through the dedication of our IICF board members, board companies and our industry, we offer meaningful support to local nonprofits that meet the everyday needs of so many individuals and families in the communities we serve. As an industry, we are stronger together – truly helping communities and enriching lives.”

For more information and to learn how to join IICF to help communities and enrich lives, please visit https://www.iicf.org/about-iicf/midwest-division.html or contact Kelly Hartweg at (773) 991-2149 or khartweg@iicf.com

About the Insurance Industry Charitable Foundation (IICF)
The Insurance Industry Charitable Foundation (IICF) is a unique nonprofit that unites the collective strengths of the insurance industry to help communities and enrich lives through grants, volunteer service and leadership. Established in 1994, IICF has served as the philanthropic foundation of the insurance industry for more than twenty-five years, contributing over $31 million in community grants, along with 300,000 volunteer hours by more than 110,000 industry professionals. IICF reinvests locally where funds are raised, serving hundreds of charities and nonprofit organizations, for maximum community impact. IICF is a registered nonprofit organization under section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code. Learn more at www.iicf.org or follow us on Twitter @doubleicf.

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