Insurance Industry Raises More than $500,000 for Regional Nonprofits at the IICF Midwest Division Blazing the Trail Benefit in Chicago

Guests enjoy industry observations of featured speaker

Joel Wood of the Council of Insurance Agents & Brokers

Chicago, IL (March 14, 2017) – The Insurance Industry Charitable Foundation (IICF), a nonprofit organization working with the insurance industry to help communities and enrich lives, today announced that more than 400 insurance professionals and industry supporters attended its 6th annual Midwest Division Blazing the Trail Benefit on March 9th at the Radisson Aqua Blu Hotel in Chicago. While celebrating the industry’s ongoing commitment to philanthropy and community, $500,000 was raised to support grants that benefit nonprofits located throughout the Midwest region.

“The ability of IICF to harness the mighty giving strength of our industry and provide proliferated contributions throughout our communities would not be possible without the support of those in this room,” observed John Wepler, IICF Midwest Division board chair and MarshBarry Chairman and CEO, addressing the audience of community-minded insurance professionals. “Through our collective efforts, we have been able to give back more than $1.7 million to communities throughout the Midwest since 2011, helping thousands of families across our region in a very real and meaningful way.”

“We have accomplished this,” Wepler added, “by engaging insurance industry leaders across our regions who value philanthropy in their company culture and everyday lives – and who want to make a real difference in their communities.”

Guests at the event enjoyed the insightful commentary of featured speaker Joel Wood, Vice President of Government Affairs for the Council of Insurance Agents & Brokers (CIAB), who shared post-election observations and spoke on what the next decade holds for the insurance industry and philanthropy. IICF presented a $10,000 grant to the Foundation to Eradicate Duchenne, a 501(c)3 organization, founded by Wood and his wife Dana in honor of their son, which provides meaningful funding for research and treatments of Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy.

Proceeds from the Blazing the Trail Benefit will fund the IICF Midwest Division Community Grants Program, including $150,000 awarded at the event to representatives of eight nonprofits focused in the areas of health, safety and education, including:

- Breakthrough
- Chicago Lights
- Children’s Home + Aid
- Cornerstone School
- Gateway for Cancer Research
- Genesys Works Chicago
- Midtown Educational Foundation
- Oak Park River Forest Infant Welfare Society

Three additional grant recipients, designated as beneficiaries of onsite fundraising that totaled an additional $40,000 from event attendees, included:

- By The Hand Club for Kids
- build On
- Lazarus House
Those in attendance were privileged to hear from an inspiring young woman who shared how By The Hand Club for Kids, one of the Chicagoland grant beneficiaries, affected her life in a very significant and positive way – as it does for so many underserved children - through its mentoring, tutoring and scholarship support, ultimately helping her achieve her dream of becoming the first person in her family to attend college.

“We’ve awarded grants to 110 nonprofits and charities throughout our region since the inception of the Midwest Division six years ago, helping to further their critical work in our local communities, all through funds raised by events like our annual benefit dinner and others during the year,” noted Mary Cummins, IICF Midwest Division Executive Director. “Tonight, we’ve had the special honor of granting important funding to 11 nonprofits, all made possible by the support and generosity of the insurance industry giving back to the communities where they live and work.”

The IICF Midwest Division also honored three insurance executives and IICF board members at this year’s Blazing the Trail Benefit for their exemplary philanthropic leadership:

- Kevin Smith, EVP, North American Field Strategic Development Officer, Chubb
- John Wepler, Chairman and CEO, MarshBerry
- Clark Wormer, Managing Director, Mergers & Acquisitions, HUB International Limite

To hear more from these leading philanthropists about their work with IICF, please view this news segment from notable Chicago news anchor Rob Johnson of CBS 2, who graciously served as emcee of Blazing the Trail for the second consecutive year:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7QLKYjn9cqU&feature=youtu.be

For more information about IICF please visit: https://www.iicf.org/about-iicf.html

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 contributed $25.3 million in community grants, along with more than 240,500 volunteer hours, to hundreds of charities and nonprofit organizations, reinvesting in local communities where funds are raised. IICF is a registered nonprofit organization under section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code. Learn more at www.iicf.org.

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