

NEWS CENTER's *Project Heat*: Mainers helping Mainers stay warm in 2015

(PORTLAND, ME) - On January 15 NEWS CENTER held its annual statewide *Project Heat* telethon, raising money for the Keep ME Warm Fund. It is estimated that the resulting funds from this year's drive will help more than 600 households.

Volunteers from Dead River Company, Norway Savings Bank, Pierce Atwood, Saco Biddeford Savings, and United Way of Greater Portland joined forces to answer an estimated 800 calls. As of this writing, NEWS CENTER's 2015 *Project Heat* has accepted donations totaling more than \$165,000, from individual donors, a matching gift of \$50,000 from Dead River Company, and \$15,000 from The Cohen Foundation.

The average maximum heating assistance benefit is \$600, which only covers a third of the total cost to heat a Maine home in the winter. "The United Way's Keep ME Warm fund bridges the gap for families who need additional funds to heat their home," said WCSH 6 President & General Manager Steve Carter. "One hundred percent of donations to Project Heat go directly to Maine families."

The opportunity to contribute is still open. The secure link to donate can be found at <http://keepmewarm.org>

Keep ME Warm provides emergency heating assistance through a statewide partnership of Maine's United Ways and Community Action Agencies. Donations are distributed through a formula based on federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) percentages and population, and are used to assist individuals directly, or designated to local organizations that provide emergency fuel assistance, including faith-based programs and nonprofit agencies. Keep ME Warm is the only statewide fuel assistance fundraising effort in the state of Maine.

If you or someone you know needs home heating assistance, call 211, a toll-free, state-wide resource and referral service.

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