

# LODGING

## Best Western Hoteliers Contribute \$1 Million to Charitable Initiatives

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PHOENIX—Best Western Hotels & Resorts' hoteliers have committed approximately \$1 million over the next five years in support of the brand's charitable arm—Best Western for a Better World (BWBW). Portions of these funds were donated to the American Red Cross—the charity's disaster relief partner—to aid victims in the aftermath of 2017's powerful hurricanes and wildfires.

“Since our brand's beginnings, Best Western hotel owners have felt a strong sense of responsibility to the communities in which they work and live,” said David Kong, president and chief executive officer of Best Western Hotels & Resorts. “Our employees and hoteliers were deeply saddened by the wave of disasters that impacted the nation this year. I am inspired by the many heroes, including members of our own Best Western family, who mobilized to support first response efforts and bring hope and healing to disaster victims.”

Members of Best Western's loyalty program, Best Western Rewards, also supported disaster relief efforts this year through the donation of BWR points. As a result, Best Western contributed an additional \$250,000 to the American Red Cross to bolster relief efforts associated with Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria. These funds were used to provide services to disaster victims such as meals, emergency shelter, and medical assistance.

“The Red Cross relies on the generous donations of our corporate partners to fuel our first-response efforts and provide emergency relief to families and communities impacted by disaster,” said Kurt Kroemer, CEO of the Arizona American Red Cross. “We thank Best Western—along with its hoteliers and BWR members—for their steadfast partnership and financial support, which helps us provide rapid, on-the-ground services when they are most needed.”

In addition to disaster response, BWBW supports initiatives in the areas of education and poverty. BWBW partnered with charity: water—a non-profit organization that provides clean and safe drinking water to people in developing nations—to fund water projects in the countries of Nepal and Ethiopia. The projects, completed in the spring of 2017, included the construction of water infiltration and well systems, which has brought clean drinking water and handwashing stations to local children and families.

In addition, BWBW has formed a partnership with the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Foundation (AH&LEF) in support of their Opening Doors to Opportunity campaign. One of the campaign's primary focus areas is to offer scholarship opportunities to some of the hospitality industry's brightest students.

“We are dedicated to ensuring a strong and thriving hotel industry both now and in the future,” said AH&LEF Interim President Rosanna Maietta. “It's partners like Best Western that make this critical endeavor possible, allowing us to identify and cultivate the leaders of tomorrow.”