



CORNERSTONE COMMUNITY OUTREACH

November, 2020

Dear Friends:

Hello! I hope this letter finds you and your loved ones well in this tough time. Here at Cornerstone Community Outreach we have nearly completed one of the most difficult, strange, unbelievable, surprising, and yet, successful years in our personal and work lifetimes. We are making it through a worldwide pandemic, while working together to keep our residents and dedicated staff safe.

Along with us, many of you experienced interruption, confusion, chaos, and even health setbacks in your personal and work life because of the pandemic. CCO would not have fared as well as we did in taking care of our residents, adapting to and adopting the many safety guidelines, if it had not been for your personal thoughts, well wishes, and contributions. Thank you!

We successfully partnered with the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services, the Chicago Department of Public Health, Heartland Health Alliance, and others, to provide quick on-site Covid testing and medical services for our residents who tested positive and/or showed symptoms. Because some of our residents live in congregate settings, this was quite a challenge. With our partners, we are able to address positive test results by providing swift, efficient care and placement. This response has greatly reduced the number of positive cases that might have been seen otherwise.

Many of our daily operations have been altered to protect the health and well-being of shelter guests and staff. Staff and residents alike continue to strictly adhere to the CDC standards of wearing masks, washing hands, and staying home when sick. We have rearranged our dormitory programs to adhere to health and safety guidelines and we can announce that everyone is 6 feet apart in their sleeping quarters. We continue to serve meals out of styrofoam containers (not our favorite) and are looking for ways to improve in all of these areas. We are so thankful for these successful outcomes.



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With the new Expedited Housing Initiative, since March 1 to present, we have been able to permanently house 20 families and 35 individuals, a miracle in the midst of a pandemic. We look forward to continued success in helping our families and singles toward the ultimate goal of permanent housing.

The holidays are coming and, unfortunately, will look quite different from past years. Creativity is needed as normal parties and/or celebrations will not happen. We are still unable to safely welcome volunteer groups and individuals who would normally enjoy sorting and wrapping the many gifts we usually get. This year's Holiday safety plan is to major on gift cards for each family and individual. This way, they will have the freedom to purchase things that they want and need in stores while practicing safe habits and social distancing. If you would be interested in contributing to our Holiday Gift Card Fund, please contact holidays@ccolife.org.

We want to thank each and every one of you for your support in helping CCO to care for our vulnerable residents experiencing homelessness during this time. Apparently, we are not out of the woods yet with the pandemic, but we encourage each one of you to continue to keep our residents in mind, especially as we approach the Holiday season. Let us know if there is anything we can do for you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sandra J. Ramsey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sandra J. Ramsey
Executive Director
Cornerstone Community Outreach