

## **Executive Director's Report, August 2019**

### **STAFFING**

It is with great disappointment I inform you Lashea Reams, former Assistant Administrator of Day Ministry at the Wilmington Empowerment Center, is no longer an employee at Friendship House and was asked to leave effective July 15. It was discovered she had possession of a client's debit card with knowledge of the PIN number and failed to inform her supervisors or document any transactions that occurred between her and the client. This broke many rules, and put the client, Friendship House and herself in an incredibly vulnerable position.

Patty Gross, also from the Wilmington Empowerment Center, remains out on short term disability as she continues to recover from brain surgery to remove a benign tumor. She is hoping to return August 12 part time pending doctor approval. The plan is to do a gradual return to work, and our hope is that she will be back to full time hours by November.

These staffing issues leave us very short staffed at the Wilmington Empowerment Center and therefore, to compensate, we are closing every day at noon instead of 2:30. Genell Walls, who runs our help line and manages the incoming financial assistance requests, is helping to cover some hours there and we will shift Paul Kielar and Josh Klein (both day ministry staff) around to ensure there are always three people at the center at all times (including Carey Philips, the permanent volunteer receptionist.)

In Housing, Heidi Hitchens resigned in June. She worked in women's housing and was mostly there in the evenings to assist with closing and dinners at Epiphany House. We hired two new men to help at Andrew's Place (James Chege and Chase Fitzgerald) overnight. Shortly after, Ben Sargent (a long time Andrew's Place overnight staff member) resigned. He is in his seventies and his health became a concern. We are not actively looking for new employees at this point. However, we always open to candidates!

At the Clothing Bank, Eileen Taylor left that location in order to help more at Women's Housing. She is now there on some weekends and one to two evenings a week. She is back to working day shifts at BJ's. We have brought on Cheryl Bryant to run our Job Training program at the Clothing Bank. It seems she and Robin are doing well and Cheryl brings a wonderful and delightful perspective to the ministry. As you will read in the Strategic Planning report, we are looking to capitalize on the many businesses frequenting the Clothing Bank. One way will be to reinstate the job training internship program. This program is where we send a Clothing Bank job trainee off site to a partnering location for one or more day a week while staying on our payroll. This gives her a chance to experience another work location, adapt to a different environment, and show the possibilities that may exist. Also, should the internship go exceedingly well for her, she could receive a letter of recommendation.

We have four summer interns at the office – three are administrative focus and one is communications/social media focused. Adwaidh, prior intern and then part time staff last semester, remains as a volunteer one or two times a week as well. They are all amazing and hopefully are joining us for our board meeting.

### **CORPORATE**

Due to the situation that occurred with Lashea, some possible vulnerabilities in our process are apparent. I will be working on updating the most pertinent policies and procedures for all staff to review and then sign for their personnel file immediately. I also would like to ask help in reviewing our Employee Manual

for a new release in 2020. This work will begin in September and I would like a few board members to lead this process. Please reach out to me if you are willing. The revisions will need to include more clear cut financial guidelines, social media guidelines, and use of property equipment.

As you hopefully aware, we are trying a different format for our board meetings. You are receiving more thorough committee reports which you are expected to read before the meeting. At the meeting, instead of committee chairs spending time sharing their reports with you, they will open up time to you for discussion. The following questions will be asked as a guideline: 1) what got you the most excited about the report? 2) what information do you still need? 3) what concerns you? 4) any other comments or feedback?

You will see in the Board Development/ Nominating Committee report we have a name change for this group to better describe its purpose of serving the board as a whole and as individuals. This does not need a vote and will get updated in the Policy and Procedural Manual and shared with you at the next board meeting.

Have you seen our new URL/ web address? The website looks and feels exactly the same, but the URL is different. We are now officially using [www.FriendshipHouseDe.org](http://www.FriendshipHouseDe.org) (capital letters are not necessary, just used for emphasis). The old web address is now redirecting to this new one! We will keep both as long as makes sense. We will begin updating all our materials as we require reprints of them. You will also learn in the Strategic Planning report, we are making the move to have corporate email addresses for staff. This assists us in security, management of materials as people leave the organization, and branding. By the end of summer, all staff will have an email address that follow this format:

[firstname.lastname@friendshipousede.org](mailto:firstname.lastname@friendshipousede.org).

After the annual meeting in May, I hosted an intimate “Coffee Talk with the Executive Director.” Although lightly attended, the feedback was all positive. This time together gave us an opportunity to talk together in community about Friendship House. It was a really nice way for me to connect with supporters and introduce Friendship House to a new person! This is a format I would like to begin doing quarterly. I am hoping the next one will be in September at my office. I will alternate between week day mornings and Sunday afternoons. The topics may vary, but generally it will be a way for people to talk directly with me and a board member regarding the state of Friendship House, trends we are seeing, and how we continue to fill gaps.

## **FUNDRAISING**

The Highmark Walk was a huge success. We can not thank Kay Preston enough for all she did to organize us! Thank you to all of you for making up teams, supporting staff, and soliciting for walkers and donations. Together we broke \$62,000!!!! We are looking for a few people to work with Kay for the 2020 event as that will be her last year chairing the event on our behalf. She will still be available and willing to help in future years, but we absolutely need people to get involved and make it a team effort.

Our Mother’s Day Garden fundraiser went well this year, too, bringing in almost \$16,000.

Finally, we also had Wilmington Garden Day in May, too. Although it was a great turn out of people and we felt lucky to have one of our houses on the tour, we are expecting a lower dollar amount gifted to us, which should come to us by August. Good news for us, Brenda Dean has agreed to chair this committee

for the 2020 event! Thank you, Brenda and good luck! She will come to you all for help as she needs it, I hope.

There are more details on our fundraising and income in the Treasurer's report.

We are actively working on creating a Planned Giving program (to be called the Friendship House Legacy Program) and to really push recurring giving (monthly or quarterly giving with an open end date) to be called the Champions Program. Please consider both of these as a board member. We do not set minimum donation amounts from our board, but we do expect every board member to contribute financially at least once in the year and for the Highmark Walk. This helps our grant writing process when we occasionally are asked if we have 100% board financial support (again, the amount which is given is never a question). That said, if you know how much you want to give for the year, then please consider setting it up into either 12 monthly payments or 4 quarterly payments. This can be done by a monthly check or through our online portal, <https://donatenow.networkforgood.org/friendshiphouse?code=Website> and choose "recurring" instead of "one time." This helps us manage our monthly income much better!

You will read more about our efforts to increase base income in the Strategic Planning report. One is through the on going efforts of our Annual Party committee, chaired by Brenda & Jane. In addition, Sharon Gidumal, in her role as Outreach Coordinator, has started a new effort to engage with local businesses, especially those frequenting the Clothing Bank. We are hoping to explain why their volunteer time is as important as monetary donations. Perhaps, we also will be able to pinpoint contacts for possible grants, too.

### **MISSION & VISION COMMITTEE**

The M&V Committee has been hard at work to think through the best way to promote and word the Friendship House vision and mission. Although it is enlightening to talk through who we are and what we want to accomplish, we have realized it is not easy to explain who we are in few words. In addition, we have noted that although we are a homeless ministry, there is a challenge in using the word "homeless" in our statements without spending 50 words defining it to match our philosophy. Homelessness means something very different to Friendship House than it does to most of the community. We need to show this in our day to day actions, how we treat those we serve, and how we talk about them and ourselves. It is hard to do in a single statement. We also find a similar challenge with the word Christian. Although we are a Christian ministry, "Christian" also now means something so different to every person. Will we alienate those who have come to believe Christians are exclusive? Especially since we, Friendship House, believe so deeply in the teachings of Jesus – everyone deserves a place at His table.

### **PROPERTY**

We are working on Concord House to sell this fall. Most of the work is being done by Donald Drane volunteering his time alongside Paul Slowik (Men's Housing Director) and Bill Perkins. Ken Copeland, a former board member, has also recently offered his assistance to do maintenance on our houses. We still do not know what we can sell the house for, or how quickly it will go. We also are working with Westminster Presbyterian Church to refurbish the third floor of the Daughtry House. The office is the first floor, and then the second floor is a very active stage two/ three house for men. Above that is a much smaller space for up to two men. Although this does not replace the 5 beds at Concord House, it will be a

much more convenient location for residents and staff. In addition, Concord House has not been full for some time.

Our houses continue to need maintenance, new appliances, and repairs. Although we can financially handle at the moment, we are not doing the best at budgeting for these needs. Therefore, I have asked Donald and Ken to help create a list of assets at every house and its purchase date so we can start thinking ahead of when something is coming to the end of its useful life and will need a replacement. This will be a “useful life table.” It also should help us plan for the expected depreciation each year.

### **SUMMARY TO SHARE**

- We are light on staff and will be looking to hire part time staff! Keep a look out for information to share with your congregations
- More oversight will have to go into place to protect staff, clients, volunteers and Friendship House. As we and the world become more digitally focused, we need to make sure we are covering all angles of security.
- We have a new website URL: [www.friendshipousede.org](http://www.friendshipousede.org) and staff will have new email addresses using that web address by the end of summer
- Kim plans to host quarterly intimate coffee chats with those interested in learning more about Friendship House.
- Our most recent Fundraisers went wonderfully well, however our income remains lower than last year.
- Friendship House is in a place of rebranding and as part of that we are scrutinizing our vision and mission statements to be easily recognizable and understandable.