DEAR FRIENDS,

It’s customary for the letter in an annual report to come from the CEO and/or the chair of the board of directors. I am neither one of those at Sulzbacher. So why are my thoughts occupying this space?

I am a Sulzbacher donor. And my company, Florida Blue, has made significant contributions over the years and continues to be a primary supporter of assorted Sulzbacher projects, programs and initiatives. As a matter of fact, Sulzbacher was selected as the 2019 Sapphire Award winner, the highest recognition we give to organizations that receive grant funding from the Florida Blue Foundation.

Our employees also devote hundreds of hours each year as volunteers and, on top of everything, I am fortunate to serve as a member of the Sulzbacher Board of Directors.

So you see, I am invested in this agency. I asked to author this letter to emphasize how proud I am to be making a direct and positive impact on the people and families in our community in need of help. As good as it feels to give, it feels even better when what you’ve given actually helps to change the course of someone’s life for the better. And that’s what my personal gifts and the funding provided by my company do when we support Sulzbacher.

This year alone, xxx formerly homeless individuals were placed into safe and stable housing. A total of xxx unemployed or underemployed adults secured jobs. And a staggering xxx meals were served to Sulzbacher residents and other hungry and food-insecure people in our community — all at no cost. And remarkably, Sulzbacher’s five healthcare centers treated xxx homeless and disadvantaged patients during xxx patient visits.

As you read through the accomplishments and outcomes that were achieved this past year, I hope you’ll understand that you, too, can make a positive difference directly on the lives of our struggling neighbors by supporting the programs and services provided by Sulzbacher. Take it from me — it will make you proud.

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This year alone, 521 formerly homeless individuals were placed into safe and stable housing. A staggering 516,006 meals were served to Sulzbacher residents and other hungry and food-insecure people in our community — all at no cost. And remarkably, Sulzbacher’s five healthcare centers treated 7,694 homeless and disadvantaged patients during 30,572 patient visits.

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Ribbon cutting for the Urban Rest Stop. L-R: Then-City Council President Aaron Bowman, Mayor larry Curry, Sulzbacher CEO, Cindy Firehouse, Dawn Cockrell, Dr. OP Strategic Partnerships for the City and Debra G/Neal, AHRC VP of Community Support.

Residents gain confidence and self-worth when they learn the skills they need to find a good job. They know that that’s what it takes to become independent and self-sufficient.

ADULTS

SMRT RNDLS WRTN

In addition, the landscaping in all of the common outdoor family areas and improvements to the multipurpose room. Additional enhancements at the Village included landscaping of the outdoor family areas and improvements to the multipurpose room. Also, we formed a partnership with Jacksonville Legal Aid, which is providing legal services to families utilizing the Pediatric Health Center.

HEALTH SERVICES

The opening of the Pediatric Health Center at Sulzbacher Village rounded out our healthcare services. We now have five locations throughout Jacksonville to serve uninsured and under-insured people around the city, including those experiencing homelessness. Providing primary care, dental, optical and behavioral health services, all of our locations operate on a sliding scale and can accommodate most patients in need of help.

There are a number of projects we’re working on that you will learn about in the coming months. For now, be assured that the board of directors, the leadership team, and the staff are sincerely grateful for your support and engagement. Every dollar or hour of volunteer time you invest helps a real person or family improve their circumstances so they can become independent and self-sufficient.

A BUSY AND PRODUCTIVE YEAR

There’s never a shortage of new projects, programs, events or initiatives at Sulzbacher and this past year is a perfect example of that.

IMPROVEMENTS DOWNTOWN

Our year began with a significant renovation and repurposing of the downtown campus on Adams Street. With women and families now housed at Sulzbacher Village or other subsidized housing units around the city, the former Women and Family dorm rooms were upgraded and converted to double-occupancy emergency housing for men as well as single-occupancy supportive housing rental units for men. The men’s medical respite unit also moved into this building, now accommodating up to 16 patients.

The areas vacated by the men were converted to the new Urban Rest Stop (URS). The URS is a joint project with the Mental Health Resource Center (MHRC), and the City of Jacksonville, which provided the funds to renovate the building. The new space houses MHRC, which provides services to residents and non-residents alike. An off-duty police officer is present Monday through Friday when the URS is open, also funded by the City. Showers, laundry, free phone usage and mail services are available to those visiting the Rest Stop. It also gives us the opportunity to offer visitors additional services that can help move them out of homelessness.

The Goodwill Job Junction moved into the former Children’s Building and a Men’s Career Clothing Closet was opened there, thanks to the JTA, which also opened a Women’s Career Clothing Closet at Sulzbacher Village earlier in the year. The playground was removed from outside the building and the area was converted into a paved patio with tables. In addition, the landscaping in all of the common areas throughout the campus was upgraded.

We have always taken security and the safety of our residents, staff and visitors very seriously and this past year security was enhanced and upgraded at both the Downtown Campus and Sulzbacher Village.

SULZBACHER VILLAGE

With a year of operations under its belt, it’s been a very busy 12 months at Sulzbacher Village, too. The Crawford Early Learning Center (CELC) celebrated the opening of the Family Garden, which is not only providing fun learning experiences for our children, but which is also providing fresh seasonal produce to their families. The CELC also held its first “graduation” for four of our pre-K children who will be moving on to kindergarten in the fall.

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