



**SACRAMENTO
STEPS FORWARD**

Ending Homelessness. Starting Fresh.

September 22, 2017

Marlene M. von Friederichs-Fitzwater, Ph.D., MPH
Founder/Executive Director
Health Communication Research Institute, Inc.
5025 J Street, Suite 311
Sacramento, CA 95819

Dear Dr. von Friederichs-Fitzwater:

Sacramento Steps Forward is pleased to support and partners with Joshua's House, a hospice house for the terminally ill homeless, in Sacramento.

As the lead agency for Sacramento's Homeless Continuum of Care and a non-profit that is committed to ending homeless in our community, we are acutely aware of the challenges people face while living on the street and greatly appreciate programs like Joshua's House that provide people who are homeless and terminally ill with a safe, comfortable, home-like facility where they can spend their final days with dignity.

On any given night in Sacramento more than 3,600 people experience homelessness. More than 2,000 of those experiencing homelessness are unsheltered – living on the street, in a tent, a car, or a hand built structure that is not fit for human habitation. In general, that is no way to live. For people who are terminally ill, it is especially egregious.

On average, one homeless person dies on the streets every week in Sacramento County and that number has steadily increased in the past few years. This translates into rates three times higher than the housed population in Sacramento County. Approximately 38% die alone on the streets and 35% die in emergency rooms or as inpatients. Cardiovascular disease and internal disease (AIDS, cancer, etc.) account for more than 20% of deaths in this population.

While providing clients with the dignity and respect that they deserve, Joshua's House would also serve to significantly reduce healthcare costs while providing quality hospice care to those who are terminally ill in the homeless community.

The largest "service" cost for the city and county is the cost for the Fire Department to transport people experiencing homelessness in ambulances. Joshua's House would provide a place for local hospitals to discharge terminally ill homeless patients with the knowledge that patients would receive quality hospice care. Hospice care significantly reduces the costs of re-occurring ambulance usage, ER visits and short term hospital stays.

We are pleased to support and partner with Joshua's House and to bring much-needed hospice care to our homeless community. If we can be of any further assistance in this endeavor, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,



Ryan Loofbourrow
Chief Executive Officer