



HOUSE OF MERCY

State of House of Mercy – Letter from the Executive Director

July 23, 2024

Dear House of Mercy Community,

As many of you know, we have had a challenging year. This has been the most challenging year since I have been here at House of Mercy for many reasons such as the loss of our beloved staff member Doris Chan, additional staff turnover, financial challenges, and almost a 50% increase in demand for services to name just a few.

Even with these challenges, we have seen our staff, volunteers, donors, and partners step up to the plate even more, and I am incredibly grateful for the dedication and heart of service this community brings. Your generosity and care for our clients does not go unnoticed.

Each year, at the end of our fiscal year (June 30), we take time to reflect on the past year and look forward to the coming year. This past year, we have experienced growth at an alarming rate and have not only been able to meet the demand to serve many more in the community, but we have also been able to introduce new programs to assist our clients as new challenges have been identified. This growth comes at a cost. For the first time we find ourselves in a position where we need to consider what our actual capacity is, and I believe we have reached it. I will mention it here and probably again, that our staff and volunteers are absolute heroes for banding together and taking on so much more than required this year to make sure our clients and customers were taken care of.

Our mission has always been that of Mercy, helping to alleviate those who are suffering, with compassion, relationship, and dignity. To that end, we have always tried to welcome everyone, and try our best to say “YES!” when someone comes to us in need. We know that the individuals and families that we serve have in many cases have already been to other food banks and services and received limited or no help, which adds to the already tricky situation the client is in causing them to be even further discouraged. We have heard so many stories of people being rejected, or falling through the cracks, yet, when they come to us, they are pleasantly surprised,



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and find new hope because we welcome them in. Even with other food pantries limiting their services, we have tried to take in many of their clients over the past 6-9 months, but that is a heavy burden for one organization to carry.

Many of you have answered the call this past year by increasing your contributions in time, talent, and treasure without which we would have never been able to meet the increased demand. For this we are forever grateful. However, we find ourselves at capacity for the first time since I have been here, and we now need to set some limits.

Therefore, after much deliberation, and looking at the resources we currently have, we are making the following changes to our ministry:

1. We are temporarily suspending our registration for new clients beginning on September 1, 2024. (We will continue to register and serve anyone who already has an appointment, but are suspending all new registrations after that). We will be utilizing a waitlist instead, and once we are able to accept new clients again, we will notify those on the waitlist first.
2. We will be checking in with our current clients and reviewing their accounts. We will start with our oldest clients and unless there are unusual circumstances, they will graduate from our program effective December 31, 2024.
3. We are temporarily suspending our clothing program for clients. Instead of free clothes and shoes, they will receive a 50% discount for only clothes in the Thrift Store beginning on September 1, 2024.
4. The status of any special programs that we hold throughout the year will be determined on an individual basis. We have already suspended our Employment Empowerment Program for this year. We will hold our Back to School program with some modified changes, and will determine how our Christmas program later in the fall will be affected. We will also look at our Foundations of Mercy program, Baby Bundle Program, and Cakes4Kids program, as needed.



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All the details of these changes will be announced to the appropriate people at the appropriate time. Should you have further questions specifically, please contact me directly.

Once we have gone through some of these temporary changes, we will be working on adapting our program more permanently to handle a certain capacity for the resources on hand. Part of our last 3-Year Strategic Plan was to make sure we were available for all new clients in need, but also to make sure a recurring client has the resources to become self-sufficient and graduate them from our program. We are always enhancing our program to fulfill this goal and will be doing so more intentionally in the coming year.

In an effort to continue to meet the existing needs of our clients, our goal is to raise a total of \$2.5 million this fiscal year. One of the best ways to help is to sign up for monthly donations, which help us to plan our expenditures better with more predictable income, thereby helping us to plan better for our client programs. This summer, we have a goal of finding 100 new donors at \$100 per month. If you can increase your donation or become a new donor, we would be very appreciative!

Other ways to help would be to volunteer, shop in our thrift store, donate food, connect your business/employer with House of Mercy, host a food drive, and just help us to spread the word!

Again, we are entirely grateful for the amazing House of Mercy Community who already contributes so much! You have made sure we have kept our doors open to over 79,000 people this year. We are looking forward to another great year.

God Bless,

Jessica Root
Executive Director
House of Mercy