December, 2019

Dear Friend of Affirmations:

As you may know, Affirmations almost closed its doors permanently in early 2019. Thousands of community members that depend on the programs and services of the Center were at risk of losing vital support and connection.

“I was afraid that I would lose the place that feels most like home to me,” remarked Brooke, a youth that has been connected to Affirmations since 2014. Having accessed peer support and through participation in the youth workforce readiness program, she developed the skills required to secure her first job and advance her career in 2019.

Brooke’s remarkable path forward may not have happened without the care and support of Affirmations.

The past seven months have been the most challenging and rewarding of my career. When I arrived back home to Affirmations in late April, we were in a precarious place. Financial support from individuals, foundations and corporations had practically dried up. I am proud to report that at the time of this writing, finances have greatly improved and we are on track for an even stronger 2020.

Successes include:
• 12 new grants have been secured - with several more awards likely to be announced by year-end;
• Individual giving has rebounded -we have exceeded our original $50k goal by Thanksgiving for the “Coming Home” campaign that was launched in July and I was happy to announce at Fall Fling this year that we have now exceeded $60k;
• Our most successful Fall Fling Event ever was conducted in October - raising $60k with less than $200 in overall expenses;
• Center hours have been restored to Monday through Saturday 9 AM - 9 PM; and
• Programs continue to expand in all areas from youth to seniors, including many new groups such as Women’s AA, Queer and Trans People of Color and Overeaters Anonymous.

As you can see, the Center is vibrant and buzzing again.

In addition to the growing number of support groups, we have greatly expanded our community events. I could never list them all, but some quick highlights include the Aimee Stephens SCOTUS community send off, the Charles Alexander art opening, a wedding ceremony, the Secretary of State Press conference regarding new trans identity marker policy, the Trans Health Fair, computer coding classes, yoga on the sky deck and so, so much more!

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Affirmations has entered into discussions with Corktown Health Center to enhance our programming through the expansion of mental health services and introducing primary care to Affirmations.

This is particularly important at a time when our community is under attack with insidious religious exemption laws popping up throughout the state and around the country. It is imperative we protect our community's health and provide culturally competent, medically accurate and informed care for our community. Stay tuned.

As I stated during the summer, my biggest single concern remains cash flow. We are definitely in a much stronger position now than we were back in May, but we still have work to do. It is important to note that keeping the Center operating and healthy costs about $63k a month.

We are not out of the woods. We have strengthened the board and staff, recruited more than 200 volunteers in just the past four months, expanded programming and events, and are doing everything I know how to do in my 20-plus years of nonprofit experience to continue our slow and steady growth.

We cannot continue this remarkable turnaround and forward progress without your support.

It is that simple. I am asking that you please consider an end of year gift to Affirmations today by using our secure online donation system at GoAffirmations.org/donate or by returning the enclosed reply card.

I am proud of what we have been able to accomplish together in such a short period and am excited for the year to come. I would not have returned home from Los Angeles if I did not believe in the importance and great potential of this organization. We have a lot of work to do together for the rest of this year and into 2020. We must empower our youth, protect our seniors and our health, and - in the spirit of the holidays - celebrate the inclusivity and diversity of our entire community.

Happy holidays to you! It has been my privilege to return to the helm of this amazing organization that you have helped to create and build. My goal has been to provide much needed stability and continued slow and steady growth. We are doing just that. I ask that you help us continue.

In equality,

Dave

PSSSSST...have you heard the news? We are excited to announce that Spring Bash 2020 will return to a black-tie Gala format and will be held at the Dearborn Inn Marriott on Saturday, April 18th. Individual tickets, tables and corporate sponsorships can be secured now at GoAffirmations.org/spring-bash-2020.