



Mile High United Way

Dear friends and colleagues:

Almost five years ago, Denver began a great journey in an effort to do what many people said was not possible. We decided as a community that we wanted to end homelessness as we know it. We started with 41 homeless commissioners, 350 volunteers and four foundations. Five years later we still have 41 commissioners... but we have amassed thousands of volunteers and the support of 33 local foundations and hundreds of businesses. We have developed over 1,500 units of affordable housing and prevented thousands of families and seniors from becoming homeless. This work has been done not by one person but by thousands of committed individuals who believe that we can end homelessness as we know it. To that end, Denver's Road Home has an extraordinary leadership team that exists now between the Denver Department of Human Services, the Mile High United Way and the Denver Housing Authority. Denver has proved that it is possible to tackle a complex social issue and to make big changes by doing business differently.

As we continue to move this initiative forward as a community, our Executive Director Jamie Van Leeuwen is announcing today that he is leaving Denver's Road Home to pursue a new career as the Policy Director for Mayor John Hickenlooper's gubernatorial campaign. We have a solid transition plan in place to ensure this process is a smooth one. Patricia Wilson Pheanious, Manager of Denver Human Services, will continue to serve as the chair of the Denver Homeless Commission and will be surrounded by the leadership of Christine Benero at Mile High United Way, Ismael Guerrero at Denver Housing Authority and Karla Maraccini at Denver Human Services. Jamie will be working closely with this team over the next month to support this process and to identify a new director for this initiative.

"Denver's Road Home is a long-term community effort to end homelessness as we know it. It is a long-term sustainable team effort that is not dependent on any one person, agency or group," said Patricia Wilson Pheanious, Denver Human Services Manager. "We remain fully committed to Denver's Road Home and the city's 10 year plan. An interim director will be appointed to continue the work of the program until a full time director can be hired to lead this community effort and continue making Denver a national leader in addressing homelessness. We wish Jamie all the best in his future endeavors. We are thankful for his leadership throughout our first five years and the momentum he has provided for Denver's Road Home to realize our plan to end homelessness."

"We at Mile High United Way wish Jamie all the best," said Christine Benero, President and CEO of Mile High United Way. "We will continue to lead the fundraising efforts among foundations and the private sector as we continue to ensure the sustainability of Denver's Road Home. As one of a vast network of community partners, we look forward to continuing our work with our unique, collaborative approach to ending homelessness."

"My five years with Denver's Road Home have taught me what a community can do when it puts forward bold leadership to solve complex social issues. I look forward to working with this community in a new capacity and watching Denver's Road Home grow as we continue, one by one, to ensure that every man, woman and child has an alternative to living life on the streets. I am grateful to each individual voice that is part of this important initiative," said Jamie Van Leeuwen.

Five years into our initiative, Denver's Road Home remains on track to achieving our goals, as defined by our 10-year plan. We embark upon the next chapter of the program with renewed energy, enthusiasm and commitment. We look forward to working with all of you as we create a sustainable, community program to end homelessness in Denver.

Sincerely,

Denver's Road Home Leadership Team

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Denver Human Services Manager

Karla Maraccini
Director of Office of Community Impact, DHS

Christine Benero
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Ismael Guerrero
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