



Providing help and hope for the homeless since 1983

Charity is a supreme virtue, and the great channel through which the mercy of God is passed onto mankind. – Conrad Hilton

From: Vickie Koth, Director, The Good Shepherd Alliance

To: Our Caring Neighbors in Loudoun County

September 16, 2018

Thank you...

If you are reading this letter, it means you thought enough of my plea on the envelope to open it. Thank you. I am not bolding things or underlining things. This is a personal letter from me to you.

Please read it to the end. It is very important for the existence of The Good Shepherd Alliance.

My name is Vickie Koth, a wife and mother of three grown children, who happens to have been privileged to be the director of Good Shepherd Alliance. When I came to the Good Shepherd Alliance nearly 12 years ago, I was looking for a Christian mission where I could help people.

I didn't have fancy degrees or political agendas, just a desire to be part of something bigger than myself where I could really make a difference.

Throughout these years, many individuals have joined me who feel the same way. Grace, Janet, Terri, Sarah, John, Crystal, Greg, Madison, Lynn, Pam, Matt, Jason, Kim, Carol, Nick and others. It is not just a job to us, but a mission that you cannot just walk away from, no matter how hard it gets.

It is hard to convey to others just how deep the love and pain runs for those we meet day in and out. To express the joys, sorrows, failures and successes, we are blessed to walk through with our residents.

"I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me." – Matthew 25:35-36

I believe that meeting them where they are with an outstretched hand – showing them the compassion that can only express their value and worthiness in this world – is what gives them the strength to push forward.

When you take that away, when you make it a hurry to cycle people through without any mind to solving the hurdles they have been stumbling over, they leave you with the same struggles they arrived with.

We sincerely want to improve their lives; give them hope and tools to stay confidently self-sufficient in their future. I knew that to remain true to ourselves, when I saw that the Commonwealth of Virginia wanted all recipients of any federal and state funding to follow guidelines that would require us to;

1. take residents sent through our county government only,
2. do away with any life skills program requirements,
3. take in those actively using drugs or alcohol with no requirement for counseling,
4. follow federal and state “best practices” rather than our own,

I could no longer accept federal and state funding.

If we continued to accept the funding, we would be under our local government rather than the autonomous non-profit we have always been operating the compassionate, purposeful, mission that makes us who we are.

I have received some comments since then telling me that it is foolish. Most, however, that they support our decision quite understandably. I’ve always trusted that God would supply all our needs.

It took two years to overcome the loss of this funding. However, we spent our reserves while raising additional funding.

Then, as most of you probably know, the Board of Supervisors this year decided not to include us for funding in the Loudoun County Regional Organization Grant. Once again, what small reserves I had begun to accumulate have diminished again.

I find myself in a heart-broken position. Once again, outside of my staff and me, those looking for a financial solution say, “maybe just take federal funds.” What we really need are new donors.

“I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.” – Matthew 25:35-36

I believe the tax changes may have affected giving for those who perhaps don't understand the significance of their gifts. They have dropped off.

- When I send letters, they don't get opened. I understand. I get letters that I don't open as well.
- Our social media gets plenty of attention and "likes," but people don't actually give.
- I set up a "Go Fund Me" that brought in only \$500.
- I've sent letters to 80 local churches to ask for support but got one response.
- I've sent postcards to every single resident in the County to let them know we are here but giving hasn't increased.
- I send out emails to our supporters, and they respond, but they cannot support us alone.
- We have sent out over a dozen grant requests, but those take time to hear back from, and local grants have been denied.
- Even those closest to our mission aren't giving.
- Our volunteers are so important to us, but without financial support, we cannot survive.

I am at a place where I don't know what else to do. I have worked quite hard, as do all our staff, to bring in support. We are as frugal as we can be. The County is in a "big government" mode and if we are to survive, we simply need the community to be there for us.

I am asking you to help in any way you can. If it is \$10 per month, wonderful. If you can do more, thank you. If you know others who have a heart for our mission for the homeless or those struggling with things such as abuse, addiction, divorce, cancer, single mothers, job loss or other things that bring them to crisis, please share this with them. If you want to do a fundraiser or a supply drive, God bless you.

I covet your prayers that God would bring forth an army on our behalf. Thank you so much for opening my letter. God bless you and your family.

Sincerely in His Service,



Vickie Koth
Executive Director
The Good Shepherd Alliance

"I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me." – Matthew 25:35-36
