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Walter R. White

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March 24, 2021

Dear Legislators,

As co-Chair of the effort to secure funding for expansion of the Keystone Food Shelf, I am writing to request your support for inclusion of Keystone Community Services in any state finance proposal and their funding request for \$3 million dollars for the rehabilitation of a new facility located near Allianz Field in Ramsey County. We fully support their plan to rehabilitate and repurpose a building along University Avenue to expand their food shelf and community services.

Residents of Ramsey County are in great need of the increase in the capacity of Keystone Community Services at their proposed new location. The plan for a larger community food shelf, warehouse and community center will provide a one stop shop for the neighborhood to receive critical services in a location that meets them where they live and work. We applaud the extensive community input they have received and will use in the design and construction of the building.

The new location and the 20,000 square foot refurbished facility will also allow Keystone Community Services to increase the amount of food that they can distribute to the broader community. The space will accommodate increased participation by volunteer groups and proper socially distanced shopping for clients. We anticipate that community needs will continue to grow as we face a slow economic recovery from the pandemic. We look forward to the ongoing partnership between our organization and Keystone to lift up our communities and meet basic needs.

Sincerely,

Walter White



03-23-2021

Dear Legislators,

On behalf of the faith community I serve, the community that surrounds this congregation and Keystone Community Services, I implore you to support the \$3 Million dollar funding request from Keystone Community Services to renovate and equip a new community food site to support Ramsey County residents.

Keystone is this congregation's #1 provider of food, and family crisis services to those in this community. Since the loss of their Roseville location they have been working – innovatively, resourcefully and frugally – to provide direct services from mobile food trucks, while lacking a centralized distribution site to support this model for service and outreach. Your approval of this \$3 Million funding request will enable them to better serve and grow their services while serving over 40,000 local residents in their first year, and help to make their ongoing work sustainable for years to come.

Mary McKeown, the President of Keystone writes, “With an investment of \$3M from the state and an additional investment of \$3.5M from community foundations, businesses and donors, this site will support 40,000 people in its first year of operations. The need for this new site is more urgent than ever as we predict an exponential increase in the need for food resources into the future, at least through 2021. The economic situation brought on by COVID-19 has destabilized many low-income households and free food resources will be needed for many months to come.”

You already know the truth of her statements and are familiar with the hunger and crisis needs of the greater community. Como Park Lutheran Church has partnered with Keystone for more than 25 years and we are excited about this particular opportunity to strengthen our involvement and volunteer engagement through Keystone's development of a new site to better serve the Ramsey County communities.

There are undoubtedly many funding proposals vying for your attention, but this one deserves your special laser-like focus. Keystone has an 80 year history of competent leadership, innovation, resourcefulness, and impact in delivering direct services to those in need, but they need your support to transform these services for the 21st century post-pandemic world. Please support this important coalition of food shelf providers and Keystone Community Services with a onetime investment to ensure that food resources are available to those who need them. It will be a vote that you can look back on with pride, for decades to come.

Sincerely,

Pastor Martin R. Ericson, serving Como Park Lutheran Church.



Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, ELCA
Roseville, Minnesota

Monday, March 22, 2021

Dear Legislators,

On behalf of Keystone Community Services, we recommend inclusion of Keystone Community Services and the coalition of their food shelf partners, in any state finance proposal and support their funding request for \$3M dollars to renovate and equip a new community food site to support Ramsey County residents.

Keystone has an 80-year history of supporting this community and is supported by many faith communities like Prince of Peace because working together brings more resources to our community. The new community food site proposed by Keystone will bring a much-needed asset to Saint Paul and Ramsey County and will provide more food and crisis resources to more than 40,000 people.

With an investment of \$3M from the state and an additional investment of \$3.5M from community foundations, businesses and donors, this site will support 40,000 people in its first year of operations. The need for this new site is more urgent than ever as we predict an exponential increase in the need for food resources into the future, at least through 2021. The economic situation brought on by COVID-19 has destabilized many low-income households and free food resources will be needed for many months to come.

As a valued partner in our ministry of loving our neighbors, we are excited to have Keystone increase their capacity at their proposed new location. We value the significant community input they solicited and received for this project which will be used in developing the core functions and design of the new community food site. This effort will make us a more responsive and faithful church.

Features of the new food site include vastly increased capacity to receive and warehouse available food resources and greatly improved support for mobile distributions through Keystone's Foodmobiles as well as drive-thru food distribution events. The site will also feature large volunteer spaces to tap the enthusiasm of corporate and community groups, a much larger shopping area for participants to select foods that meet their household's needs, and spaces where Keystone's Family Navigators can meet residents privately to discuss crisis assistance, share other community resources, and provide support.

We anticipate our community needs will grow as we face the slow economic recovery due to the public health crisis of COVID-19. We look forward to the future partnership between our organization and Keystone Community Services to support our communities during this challenging time to meet their basic needs. Please support this important coalition of food shelf providers and Keystone Community Services with a onetime investment to ensure that food resources are available for all who need them.

Sincerely,



Pastor Peter Christ