

Dear Friends of Shepherd's Gate:

As I look back on this past year, I'm overwhelmed with gratitude for God's blessings on Shepherd's Gate. Our doors have remained open every day to safely care for our most vulnerable women and children during this coronavirus (COVID-19) emergency. The women and children we serve have faced homelessness, either living a life of fear each day because of their domestic abuser or living in a car each night because the lack of affordable housing. They didn't have a choice to 'stay at home' to avoid the risk of this life-threatening virus. The need for our long-term recovery program dramatically increased this past year.

Everyone from our staff, to volunteers, community partners and financial donors have all played an important role in living out God's plan to care for each woman and child that comes through our doors. In order to keep to CDC guidelines, on-campus volunteer positions were limited, and our amazing staff worked hard to replace them. Also, each campus quickly adapted to provide an all-day distance learning environment and other activities for our school aged children. We are so grateful for everyone's help during these critical times.

Our New Life Thrift Store experienced mandatory closure for a period of time due to the County's COVID-19 guidelines. But our landlord blessed us with a reduction in our lease until December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020. Once the store was able to secure a safe working environment and safe shopping experience, our regular faithful donors and shoppers returned in abundance.

We also saw God's favor on our Brentwood campus advancement project which finished its funding stage with the help of new donors and foundations. This expansion will provide an onsite learning and career center, after school & family reunification room and two additional offices which will make room for additional women and children to enter the program. This project is scheduled to be completed in July 2021 with the help of Home Aid and Signature Homes.

Over this past year, we have celebrated on numerous occasions as women have graduated from our program, women have regained custody of their children, children have raised their grades, children have found healing through online professional counseling and play therapy, women have committed their lives to Christ, women have reached major milestones of sobriety, and women have found employment and housing. We can honestly say that God is transforming and healing lives here at Shepherd's Gate.

We are truly grateful for each and every individual, church, company and foundation that has supported this vital ministry to help women and children finding healing and hope. There is no question that this past year has been a time of tremendous unrest and uncertainty. But even in a moment as challenging as this one – we remain focused on God's promise that He will always be with us. (Isaiah 41:10)

May God richly bless you and keep you safe,

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