



October 12, 2016

Marlene M. von Friederichs-Fitzwater, Ph.D., MPH
Founder/Executive Director
Health Communication Research Institute, Inc.
5025 J Street, Suite 311
Sacramento, CA 95819

Dear Dr. von Friederichs-Fitzwater:

Sacramento Loaves & Fishes is pleased to support Joshua's House, a hospice house for the terminally ill homeless, on the Loaves & Fishes campus in Sacramento. We are aware that, on average, one homeless person dies on the streets every week in Sacramento County and that number has steadily increased in the past few years. This translates into rates three times higher than the housed population in Sacramento County. Approximately 38% die alone on the streets and 35% die in emergency rooms or as inpatients. Cardiovascular disease and internal disease (AIDS, cancer, etc.) account for more than 20% of deaths in this population.

I am the Executive Director of Sacramento Loaves & Fishes. We are one of the largest and most comprehensive non-profit organizations in the Sacramento area that serves homeless men, women, and children. Our mission is "In an environment of welcome, hospitality, safety and cleanliness we seek to provide an oasis for homeless men, women and children seeking survival services". Our philosophy of service is based on Matthew 25:40: "as often as you did it to the least of my brothers and sisters you did it to me". On any given day, we serve 600 -800 poor and homeless guests through our 12 programs located on our 5- acre campus in downtown Sacramento, Ca.

We agree that having a safe, comfortable, home-like facility for our terminally ill homeless neighbors where they would receive hospice care, have private rooms, regular meals and opportunities to interact with each other as well as caring volunteers would allow them to die with dignity and respect. The opportunity to keep their pets with them will be an added benefit.

Equally important, Joshua's House would serve to significantly reduce healthcare costs while providing quality hospice care to those who are terminally ill in the homeless community. The largest "service" cost for the city and county is the cost for the Fire Department to transport people experiencing homelessness in ambulances. Joshua's House would provide a place for local hospitals to discharge terminally ill homeless patients with the knowledge that patients would receive quality hospice care! Hospice care significantly reduces the costs of re-occurring ambulance usage, ER visits and short term hospital stays.

We are pleased to partner with you to bring much-needed hospice care to our homeless community and ensure that the poorest among us have an opportunity to die with dignity and respect.

Sincerely,

Sister Libby Fernandez, RSM (Religious Sister of Mercy)
Executive Director