

January 8, 2014

The Hon. William D. Sessoms, Jr. Mayor
City of Virginia Beach
Municipal Center/City Hall, Building #1
2401 Courthouse Drive
Virginia Beach, VA 23456

Dear Mayor Sessoms:

As we embark on a new year, I am writing to thank you for your vision and our work together to address the challenges of homelessness in Virginia Beach. Your leadership has been critical to these ambitious efforts.

As you know, Volunteers of America Chesapeake operates two ongoing programs in Virginia Beach to assist the homeless: the Lighthouse Center, serving more than 600 adult women and men annually (Winter Shelter 230 and Day Support over 400); and Baker House, a licensed supportive home for 12 adults with intellectual disabilities. We want you to know how much we appreciate our collaboration with you and Andy Friedman to serve these pressing human needs in the community.

In particular, we wanted to thank both of you for your participation in the recent National Homeless Memorial Night Vigil at the Lighthouse Center. From the polished rocks in the Memorial Garden to the reading of the individual names of homeless persons lost over the past 20 years, the December 21st ceremony was a moving reminder of what we have accomplished – and also how much more there remains to do.

We know you are committed to meet the emergency needs of the homeless, as through our Winter Shelter and Day Support program, while also addressing the fundamental causes of homelessness in our community. Your leadership has been vital in reaching the reality of the new Housing Resource Center and in increasing affordable permanent housing for those who are homeless. In the months and years ahead, we look forward to continuing to work with you toward ending homelessness in Virginia Beach.

Sincerely,



Russell K. Snyder
President and CEO

cc:

Andy Friedman
Director of Housing and Neighborhood Preservation
City of Virginia Beach

Franklyn Baker
Chief of Staff and External Affairs Officer
Volunteers of America Chesapeake

Deborah Maloney
Program Director, The Lighthouse Center