



CITY OF SAINT PAUL

Mayor Christopher B. Coleman

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To Whom It May Concern:

Merrick Community Services was founded in 1908 and has served the East Side of Saint Paul for more than 10 decades. It has helped change the lives of thousands of children, youth, adults and seniors in poverty throughout its long history.

I am writing to you on behalf of Merrick to endorse its Capital Campaign to construct a new multi-service facility at 600 Lafayette Road in the Railroad Island neighborhood of Saint Paul. This facility would be an integral resource for residents on the East Side who are in need.

As you are aware, the East Side faces some serious economic and social challenges and has been hit hard by the recession. Merrick is an indispensable component in the effort to prevent and end generational poverty. There are few agencies on the East Side that offer a similar continuum of wraparound resources, programs and services. Although the organization serves nearly 15,000 people each year, it has operated in the same building on Edgerton Street for more than fifty years. Over this time, the building has deteriorated to the point that it can no longer support the increased community need for flexible, effective programming.

In an effort to propel the organization into the 21st century and stem the cycles of poverty on the East Side, Merrick is undertaking a bold capital project, with the goal of raising \$6 to \$7 million to construct a new, roughly 23,000 square foot multi-service center in Railroad Island. This building will allow for program innovation and more effective service-delivery to residents. It will also foster the development of new partnerships with other nonprofit agencies, neighborhood organizations, and both public and private institutions, thereby elevating program effectiveness and preventing duplication of service. Additionally, the new building will allow the number of individuals and families served per year to double, going from 15,000 per year to 30,000 East Side residents per year within five years of its construction.

Merrick Community Services has been a transformative organization for over a century. Your support would be a major step forward in helping to ensure the organization continues to bridge social gaps and reduce economic, educational, and ethnic disparities in our city for many more decades to come.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I hope you will agree that Merrick is a vital member of our community and should be provided the opportunity to expand and adapt to meet the emerging needs of our residents.

Sincerely,

Christopher B. Coleman
Mayor