



Season's Greetings to our extended Willow Tree family! As is our tradition, we wanted to take a few minutes to update you on our mission's past year and give you a glimpse of next year. This letter is somewhat bittersweet for me, as it will be my final one as Director of Willow Tree. As announced earlier this fall, I will be retiring from my position at the end of this year. Jill Maxey has been hired as the next Executive Director. You can read a note from her at the end of this letter to get to know her a little better. The mission will also be hiring a new Director of Services in the upcoming months. Along with our Director of Operations, Heather Denam, this leadership triad is an excellent one that is strong and diverse! Our goal remains, as always, to create a safety net of resources strong enough for any victim of DV to feel safe to "jump" into and trust it will hold them. I have the utmost confidence that the new leadership team will take the foundation we have built and grow it to incredible new levels!

Without a doubt, in 2021, transition has definitely been the key word! In April, we began a search for local properties to meet the needs of our mission. We thought we would be searching for two different properties: a newer and bigger location for our resale shop and efficiency apartment units for our clients to use as transitional housing. Little did we know that God had the perfect solution for us all under one roof! A few months later, we became the proud owners of the historic & iconic Kaiser Building right on the square in downtown Monticello!

We have big plans for this amazing facility! The main level will eventually house our resale shop, nearly doubling the square footage we currently have. The second level offers us office spaces and two amazing efficiency apartment units to serve as transitional housing for victims starting over. We have already done some renovations and have moved our Domestic Violence services into the second level. We launched our new online store out of a remodeled portion in the basement. We are continuing to tackle the renovations on the main level one task at a time. This is where WE NEED YOUR HELP!

As you can imagine, we are anxious to get into the new building and grow our mission. In order to move in and operate fully, our entire building needs to be retro-fitted with a sprinkler system. This one renovation item alone has a price tag of \$80,000-100,000. We also have thousands of square feet in flooring to purchase and install, as well as many other smaller expenses to tackle. This community has always supported our resale shop faithfully. This enables us to be self-funded and covers most of our operational costs every month. However, it does not provide the extra finances needed to tackle this renovation. This year, we find ourselves in the rare position of aggressively asking and pursuing additional funding down every possible avenue. We simply need all the help we can get. Can you help?

We are humbly asking you, our supporter, to help us tackle this obstacle. Whether it is with a one-time donation, or you choose to join us as a monthly partner, your financial support is vital to us and every dollar helps! Would you prayerfully consider supporting us in this way? We know it will be worth it to see the

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amazing things God does with our mission as we grow! Enclosed you will find an insert with the various ways you can donate to us. We DO have a few people who have joined on as monthly partners. This is a great way to make a bigger impact but spread it out over the year. If that's for you, you can sign up for this partnership on our website by clicking "donate" and choosing "recurring" on the form. There are also many great and easy ways to make a one-time donation. Please know that we truly do appreciate each and every single one!

Covid, along with many other stressors, have created some substantial needs this year. Your support every day has allowed us to rise up and meet those needs and for that we are extremely grateful. As I am closing out my final weeks as director, I cannot help but marvel at the amazing things that God has allowed our team to do for this amazing community! I will forever be grateful for my time here and for God allowing me to be a part of such a great mission. The mission is being left in great hands and I am 100% positive that God will use the next generation of leadership to take it to even greater heights. Thank you all from the bottom of my heart! I am forever blessed!

Sincerely,

Rachel LeJeune

Rachel LeJeune – retiring Director

NOTE FROM JILL

Hello family, friends, and neighbors! What a blessing it is for me to join this beautiful ministry we have right here at home. I admit, I'm a tidge out of my comfort zone with some aspects of this new role. Have you ever felt that way? Then you remember Isaiah 58:11 - where God guides, He provides! I know it isn't always quite that easy for some of us to drop everything and trust God; it wasn't that easy for me either. I had been praying for a new opportunity to serve others in a different way. Professionally, I'm an architect and I've worked mostly in higher education creating spaces and places that would positively impact students and really enjoyed that work, but I felt guided to do something else... to accept this opportunity. It's good for us to stretch and grow and build up that faith muscle! While I'm used to shaping and reconfiguring buildings, I'm excited to transition into a new role that allows me to participate in reshaping lives where Christ is at the center. The real work in this ministry is serving those who need extra help, extra love, extra kindness and empowering them through this place of hope. I feel honored and privileged to serve God's people in this way at this time, as Rachel described, it is such an exciting time for the mission. Now, my prayer is that everything we do, is done to glorify God and to let His light shine throughout our community. Would you stretch and grow too with your time, talents, and financial resources as we continue to move forward?

Doing His work with our hands and feet,

Jill A. Maxey

Jill A. Maxey, Executive Director

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