



SAINT CATHERINE CENTER FOR *Special Needs*

April 16, 2020

Dear Friends of Saint Catherine Center and Saint Catherine Academy,

Each day, I am challenged by the reality that a mission doesn't take a day off. These past five weeks have presented unfathomable challenges to deliver on a mission that is founded on building community and relationships within that community. We have relied heavily on this strong foundation that was built long before any of us had ever heard of the COVID virus. And some days, we have to settle on the assessment that we are doing the best we can when that would never have been enough in the past.

During the Easter season, Pope Francis reminded us that "life is a gift we receive only when we give ourselves away, and our deepest joy comes from saying yes to love." Saint Catherine Center is a community of people who have said yes to love, beginning with our families sharing their loved ones with us each day, our staff offering loving service, and our volunteers and donors committing their time and resources. **Simply said, "saying yes to love" is what we do.**

We continue to provide resources for our families in their efforts to meet the needs of their young people. While there are some very heartening stories that have been shared with us, it is important to acknowledge the extraordinary pressures our families are experiencing. We recognize that e-learning, electronic communication, and resources are not a substitute for in-person contact, instruction, and support. Our challenge is to continue to lift up our community while social distancing. In this effort we have:

- Communicated daily with all of our families doing well checks, and seeking to provide individualized support whenever possible
- Held weekly Music Zoom classes for students and young adults (and many of our extended family members)
- Created an extensive [listing of resources on our website](#) to provide support and activities
- Shared recorded stories and songs from a variety of "guest readers and performers"
- Established a technology lending program to increase access to online resources
- Applied for Federal relief programs to assist in bridging the revenue gaps in our programs

- Extended the closure of the Center to May 20, but have renewed our commitment to our staff that there will be no layoffs or furloughs during this period
- Postponed our Annual Dinner from June to late August, when we hope to gather again as a community

Thank you for being part of our community and saying yes to love. It is **this mission** that will never take a day off.

With gratitude,



Helen C. Burland

Executive Director
